

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:42:00 AM EEST

Job Number: 223498926

Documents (96)

1. Raising stakes, Israel sends ground forces to Gaza Territory split as troops seize key areas long fight expected

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

2. Gaza a battleground for hearts, minds; Osama bin Laden heaps criticism on Arab and Palestinian leaders, hoping to use Israel 's military action against Palestinians to rally moderate Muslims to support extremists' call for a global jihad

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

3. Army lays siege to Palestinian refugee camp amid worst internal violence since civil war

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

4. A TANGO WITH ISLAM The new Cold War within a conflict of civilizations

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

5. THE DIARY

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

6. One Turkish City Countering Fear Of Islam's Reach

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

7. God help England and Saint George

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

8. At Biennale, art that murmurs

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

9._World Report

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

10. Inside the Times, Dec. 26, 2008

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

11. Violent agenda carefully veiled

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

12. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

13. <u>Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Quiet war gets louder: Euan Ferguson returns to Sri Lanka to find conflict</u> between Tamil rebels and government forces intensifying and the island in a state of fear

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

14. The view from Jebl Mukaber

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

15. Bons Mots and Betes Noires

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

16. Drive in Basra By Iraqi Army Makes Gains

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"
Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

17. The Road Back to Damascus

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

18. <u>Using banks to stay a step ahead of Tehran As Iran circumvents conventional sanctions, U.S. official pushes</u> financial blockade From The New York Times Magazine

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

19. Just servitude?

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

20. Britain 's other big hitter While Andy Murray has grabbed the headlines, Britain 's No 1 woman, Anne Keothavong, has also had a breakthrough year, albeit a less glamorous one that has seen her play many obscure tournaments - including one in a war zone. She tells Paul Newman all about it

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

21. That Unruly, Serendipitous Show in Venice

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

22. Letters & emails

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

23. TOP OF THE WORLD

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

24. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

25. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

26. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

27. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

28. LETTERS & EMAILS

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"
Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

29. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

30. <u>Focus: Middle East Crisis: WHY ISRAEL WENT TO WAR IN GAZA: Last night Israel sent its ground forces across the border into Gaza as it escalated its brutal assault on Hamas. As a large-scale invasion of the Palestinian territory appears to be getting under way, Chris McGreal reports from Jerusalem on Israel 's hidden strategy to persuade the world of the justice of its cause in its battle with a bitter ideological foe</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

31. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

32. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

33. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

34. Beware 'managers' RAINWATER AND DESALINATION

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

35. INSIDE THE TIMES: May 16, 2008

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

36. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

37. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

38. On the brink of a bloodbath

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

39. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

40. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

41. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

42._"Ich werde nicht schweigen"

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

43. Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national employees

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

44. What if labor were allowed to go global? Rich nations can fight poverty by welcoming more guest workers, critic asserts From The New York Times Magazine

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

45. Top of the World

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

46. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

47. The latter-day sultan

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

48. What we're facing is 'genocidal terror'

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

49. FOR MIDEAST PEACE, END THE TEACHING OF HATE

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

50._UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

51. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

52. INSIDE THE TIMES: May 12, 2008

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

53. INSIDE THE TIMES: May 13, 2008

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

54. Movies

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

55. Front-page coup de grace

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

56. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"
Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

57. Stuart Levy's War

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

58. Islamic Democrats?

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

59. A Life of Unrest

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

60. Jordanian Students Rebel, Embracing Conservative Arm of Islam

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

61. Shadowing the slaughter of Sadr City

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

62. <u>Faith, hope and hard work; Ali Cheaib and Lorne Finkelstein have forged a friendship that may help bridge</u> centuries of animosity

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"
Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

63. FICTION She felt like she'd just been kicked squarely in the guts. Hard.

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

64. Stranger than fiction

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

65. <u>From shopping to Tolstoy - the best books of the year Our reviewers cover a wider than ever variety of</u> subjects, from politics and pop to Stalin and gardening, in 2007's finest reads

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

66. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

67. Escape: Travel Guides: Journey's end for the guidebook gurus?: It's the end of an era - Lonely Planet has been sold and the creator of Rough Guides has stepped down. Carole Cadwalladr looks at how their growth from humble beginnings into publishing leviathans has transformed our guidebooks... for better or worse

Client/Matter: -None-

News

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

68. Her Jewish State

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

69. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

70. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

71. When defeat means liberation

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

72. Carnage in Gaza: Is it a war crime? Both sides in the conflict accused of putting civilians at undue risk

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

73. Weighing Crimes and Ethics In the Fog of Urban Warfare

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

74. Scouting the future

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

75. 'Neither shall they study war anymore'

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

76. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

77. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

78. Yemen 's Exotic Secrets

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

79. Car bomb: the 21st century's weapon of mass destruction In 1970, an American student took two of the most basic components of civilisation - fertiliser and a car - and created the modern car bomb. Here, an ex-CIA agent - on whom George Clooney 's character in 'Syriana' was based - charts the history of the world's most lethal terrorist weapon - and how we are defenceless against it

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

80. Movie Guide and Film Series

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"
Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

81. Irish taking the bull by its horns

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

82. La colère dans les camps de réfugiés palestiniens de Sabra et Chatila

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

83. La colère dans les camps de réfugiés palestiniens de Sabra et Chatila Jour après jour, ils vont manifester contre Israël, mais respectent les appels à la retenue d'Hassan Nasrallah.

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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84. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

85. An Interview With President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

86. Movie Guide and Film Series

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

87. Observer Magazine: Special investigation: When al-Qaeda was formed 20 years ago, Dr Fad was its spiritual leader. His writings justified global terror. Last year, he denounced the use of violence- in a stroke undermining the entire intellectual basis of jihad. So can Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri fight the rebellion in its ranks?: Part Three

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

88. Movie Guide and Film Series

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

89. A Dishonorable Affair

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

90. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

91. Should We Globalize Labor Too?

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

92. No Headline In Original

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

93. Review of the Year

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

94. The greening of the red, white and blue: ONE MAN'S PLAN / More Americans than ever identify themselves as greens, but the dirty little secret is they are fooling themselves and will have to do much more in order to preserve their way of life - and the planet

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

95. A Statesman Without Borders

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to

Jan 31, 2009

96. The Power of Green

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah" **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to





Raising stakes, Israel sends ground forces to Gaza; Territory split as troops seize key areas; long fight expected

The International Herald Tribune January 5, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1602 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Isabel Kershner reported from Jerusalem. Ethan Bronner contributed from the Israel-Gaza border and Dina Kraft contributed from Sderot, Israel.

*

Israeli troops rolled into Gaza on Sunday under cover of heavy air, tank and artillery fire after to open a ground war against the militant group Hamas on Saturday night.

Witnesses said the Israeli forces had bisected Gaza's northern and southern parts and had taken over a number of strategic areas, including what the military said were rocket launching sites.

The campaign came after a week of intense airstrikes. Israel's stated goal was to destroy the infrastructure of Hamas, which controls the enclave, and to end the threat to southern Israel from Palestinian rocket fire.

In a telephone briefing for foreign correspondents, a senior Israeli military official said that Israeli troops would hold the areas they have taken inside Gaza at least for the duration of the operation to prevent militants from returning to fire rockets from there.

"We don't plan to retake the Gaza Strip but there are several places we control now and will control later," he said. "If it will be needed, we are prepared to stay there."

The military has warned that the campaign could take "many long days."

Even with the ground assault, though, Hamas continued its rocket fire - about 25 were fired at southern Israel by Sunday afternoon, the military said. One hit a house in the Israeli border town of Sderot. Touring the town some time later, Michael Bloomberg, the mayor of New York, had to be rushed into a protected space when Sderot's rocket-alert siren sounded.

Most of the fighting early Sunday was taking place in northern and eastern Gaza, in areas not far from the Israeli border. But at least five Palestinian civilians were killed and many were wounded Sunday morning when Israeli shells or rockets landed in the market of Gaza City while people were stocking up on supplies.

Raising stakes, Israel sends ground forces to Gaza Territory split as troops seize key areas long fight expected

The Israelis said that they had "hit" dozens of armed Hamas operatives during exchanges of fire overnight. But Palestinian hospital officials said that only about six Hamas fighters had been killed since the start of the ground invasion, a figure that could not be confirmed.

The Israeli Army said Sunday that a soldier has been killed in the fighting, the first Israeli fatality in the ground offensive, which was started late Saturday.

The army said the soldier was killed by mortar fire early Sunday in northern Gaza.

Hospital officials said that more than 30 Palestinian civilians had been killed by Sunday afternoon and more than 100 had been wounded since Israel began its advance. The Israeli military said that 30 of its soldiers had been wounded, two seriously, in clashes and from shrapnel.

The senior military official said that Hamas was using methods "imported from Iran and <u>Hezbollah</u>," the Lebanese militant group. Those methods, he said, were "guerrilla concept and tactics, exploiting both open areas and those of highest density of population." He said there had not been much man-to-man combat so far, and that Hamas was fighting back mostly with mortars and bombs of various kinds.

Wounded Palestinians poured into the emergency room of Shifa Hospital in Gaza City on Sunday, among them several <u>women</u> and children. Two young cousins and a 5-year-old boy from another family were killed by shrapnel on the flat roofs of their apartment buildings.

A woman who came to the hospital with a daughter, 15, who was wounded by shrapnel, said that soldiers had taken over their house in Beit Lahiya, had detained the men, who she said were farmers, and had told the rest of the family to leave. The daughter was wounded when the Israeli forces fired on the upper floors of the house before breaking down the front door.

Condemnation for the Israeli offensive grew across the Middle East.

A State Department official said in Washington on Saturday that the United States was working toward a cease-fire, The Associated Press reported. But the White House has blamed Hamas for the Israeli attack in any case, and has blocked approval of a United Nations Security Council statement on a cease-fire.

President Shimon Peres of Israel, meanwhile, rejected the possibility of a cease-fire on Sunday as Israeli forces pressed their offensive, but asserted that Israel did not intend to re-occupy Gaza.

Israel did not intend to occupy Gaza or to crush Hamas, Perez said, but to "crush terror."

"Hamas needs a real and serious lesson. They are now getting it," he added in an interview on the ABC News program "This Week." Peres also brushed aside the chances of a cease-fire to bring the fighting to a halt.

"We shall not accept the idea that Hamas will continue to fire and we shall declare a cease-fire. It does not make any sense," he said.

The Israeli ground assault escalated an offensive that had already killed more than 430 Palestinians. Four Israelis have been killed.

While a ground war in densely populated Gaza will probably increase the civilian toll there, the Israeli Army also faces threats. Since taking control of the territory a year and a half ago, Hamas has been able to smuggle in more and better weapons. Its more sophisticated arsenal has been on display in recent weeks, and even under heavy fire the group has shown its ability to keep hitting Israeli cities with long-range rockets.

Rockets fired from Gaza have plagued southern Israel for years, and they have drawn the military into the coastal territory repeatedly since troops formally withdrew and the Jewish settlements there were evacuated in 2005. A 48-hour raid in March 2008, aimed at inflicting a cost on Hamas for its continuing rocket fire, killed nearly 100 Palestinians.

Raising stakes, Israel sends ground forces to Gaza Territory split as troops seize key areas long fight expected

Israeli officials have said repeatedly that it was not their aim now to fully reoccupy Gaza. But it was clear that the military expected a grueling operation.

"This will not be easy and it will not be short," Defense Minister Ehud Barak said on national television shortly after the ground invasion began. He did not elaborate on how long Israel hoped to hold the rocket-launching sites.

The ground operation began after eight days of intensive attacks by Israeli air and naval forces on Hamas security installations, weapons stores and symbols of government in the Palestinian enclave.

"This has always been a stage-by-stage process," Shlomo Dror, a Defense Ministry spokesman, said in a telephone interview. "Hamas can stop it whenever it wants," by stopping its rocket fire, he added.

Hamas leaders in Gaza were in hiding, but a spokesman said Saturday by video that the "moment of decision has arrived" and that Gaza would be the Israeli Army's "graveyard."

Hamas has also vowed to use the invasion as an opportunity to capture Israeli soldiers. The group has been holding an Israeli corporal, Gilad Shalit, for more than two years.

The number of troops entering Gaza was not publicized, but the Israeli military said the operation involved "large numbers" of forces that included infantry and tanks, and engineering and artillery corps. On Saturday night, the prime minister's office said that a call-up of thousands of army reserve troops had begun.

An Israeli airstrike killed five Palestinians outside a mosque on Sunday, medical officials said. Another mosque in northern Gaza was hit during evening prayers Saturday - at least 11 worshipers were killed and about 30 wounded, Palestinian hospital officials said.

Hospital officials in Gaza City put the first week's Palestinian death toll at more than 430, including 26 <u>women</u>, 74 children and an unknown number of male civilians. Three Israeli civilians and one soldier had been killed.

At the United Nations in New York, diplomats said the United States had blocked approval of a Security Council statement that would have called for an immediate cease-fire, The Associated Press reported.

The UN ambassador for France, Jean-Maurice Ripert, the council president, said the 15 council members could not agree on a statement in closed discussions held after the ground invasion began. Several other members, speaking on condition of anonymity because the negotiations were closed, also said Washington was responsible for the failure to issue a statement. The AP said.

The U.S. deputy ambassador, Alejandro Wolff, said the United States saw no prospect of Hamas abiding by last week's council call for an immediate end to the violence. Therefore, he said, a new statement "would not be adhered to and would have no underpinning for success" and "would not do credit to the council," The AP said.

World reaction was intense. While thousands of protesters marched in cities across Europe to demand a halt to the Israeli bombing, in Prague, a spokesman for the new Czech presidency of the European Union said Israel's actions were "defensive, not offensive."

But other EU countries quickly distanced themselves from the Czech position. The French Foreign Ministry condemned "the Israeli ground offensive against Gaza as it condemns the continuation of rocket firing."

In London, the British foreign secretary, David Miliband, urged both sides to accept an immediate cease-fire.

More than 20,000 demonstrators marched against the Israeli air campaign in Paris and more than 10,000 in London, where some threw shoes at the prime minister's residence, a particularly Arab form of protest that gained worldwide currency last month when an Iraqi journalist hurled his shoes at President George W. Bush in Baghdad.

Both protests were held before the ground invasion began. Large protests also took place in at least seven other European countries and in Kuwait, Israel and New York.

Raising stakes, Israel sends ground forces to Gaza Territory split as troops seize key areas long fight expected

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

End of Document



Gaza a battleground for hearts, minds; Osama bin Laden heaps criticism on Arab and Palestinian leaders, hoping to use Israel's military action against Palestinians to rally moderate Muslims to support extremists' call for a global jihad

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

January 28, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: IDEAS; Pg. A15

Length: 1566 words

Byline: W. Andy Knight, Freelance

Body

A couple of months ago, at a conference at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Pakistani-born British author Tariq Ali suggested that Osama bin Laden might be seriously incapacitated, or dead. After all, the last time bin Laden went "public" was on May 18, 2008, when he made an urgent call for all Muslims to break the Israeli-led blockade of the Hamas-controlled Gaza strip.

When al-Qaida's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, released an audio tape mocking Barack Obama and commenting on the 2008 American elections, bin Laden's silence was deafening. Recall that in 2004, bin Laden was quick off the mark with a comment on the American elections -- suggesting that it did not matter whether Americans elected George Bush or John Kerry if U.S. foreign policy in the Muslim world remained unchanged.

Again, a couple of weeks ago, it was al-Zawahiri, rather than bin Laden, who called on Muslims to launch strikes against Israeli and Western targets around the world in retaliation for Israeli military raids in Gaza. This sparked further questions concerning the whereabouts of the al-Qaida leader.

Bin Laden's back

Well, we now know that bin Laden is still alive and seemingly well. He is back.

In a 22-minute audio message, posted Jan. 22 by the Islamic forum Al-Falija, bin Laden taunted America and railed against Israel for its attacks on Gaza. He criticized all the leaders of the Arab world for not coming to the aid of Palestinians in Gaza, calling them "enemies of the Islamic Ummah" -- that construct of an imagined global community of Islamic followers.

But his condemnation was not limited to Arab leaders.

Bin Laden also criticized the Palestinian leadership for basically betraying the Palestinian people. There is no love lost between the Salafist-oriented al-Qaida and Hamas. The Hamas leadership is more nationalistic in its fervour than the Salafist religious fanatics in al-Qaida. And, recently, Hamas's security forces killed nine members of Jaysh al-Islam, a Salafi extremist group with links to al-Qaida, in a shootout in Gaza.

Gaza a battleground for hearts, minds; Osama bin Laden heaps criticism on Arab and Palestinian leaders, hoping to use Israel 's military action against Palestin....

But bin Laden was also particularly harsh on Arab writers, journalists and intellectuals for their uncritical acceptance of what the U.S. is doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. He referred to them as "the Crusaders' agents."

In addition, the al-Qaida leader suggested that the current global financial crisis has exposed the Achilles heel of the world's sole superpower and that this weakness is sure to make Israel more vulnerable.

Thanks to Israel's disproportionate and indiscriminate military raids on Gaza, bin Laden and his group of extremists are back to doing what they do best -- that is, using a major foreign policy blunder as fodder for their recruitment drive.

By calling for a global jihad over the Gaza, essentially what bin Laden is trying to do here is to turn Muslim radicals, and even some moderates, into "extremists."

Radicals are individuals who desperately want to change the status quo and will use various forms of protest in order to accomplish their goal.

Extremists are those radicals who decide to resort to the use of violence as the means to achieve their ends, even when peaceful, legal avenues are available for them to pursue those goals.

Unfortunately, many of the already radicalized Palestinians living in the Gaza strip will heed bin Laden's message. Why? Because the 19-day Israeli onslaught on Gaza, which has resulted in more than 1,000 Palestinians dead and hundreds more injured, has become an accelerant doused onto an already simmering cauldron of adolescents, already primed for acts of martyrdom.

Israeli tactics under scrutiny

Senior UN officials and human rights groups like the International Committee of the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, and even the prominent Israeli human rights group B'Tselem are demanding the establishment of an independent international investigation into alleged indiscriminate shelling of residential areas in Gaza by Israeli forces.

During this conflict, the Israeli military used banned phosphorous shells on Gazans, as it did on <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrilla groups during the Lebanese/Israeli conflict in 2006. While these weapons are useful for illuminating and marking military targets or territory, they also cause severe chemical burns to humans who happen to be in the vicinity of legitimate military targets. White phosphorous is a translucent wax-like substance that, once ignited, creates intense heat and smoke. Its use in civilian areas has been banned by the Geneva Conventions.

The Israeli military has also been accused of targeting and killing civilian Palestinian police, who apparently did not have a military role; of killing 12 ambulance workers close to a medical facility; and of shelling the United Nations Relief and Works Agency -- drawing major condemnation from the international community.

It has also been alleged that Israeli soldiers used Palestinian families as human shields at certain points in the 22-day conflict.

It is these kinds of accusations that provide ammunition for extremists like bin Laden.

Normally moderate Muslim youth all over the world, who witnessed the carnage in Gaza on Al-Aqsa TV and on the Internet, will now be much more susceptible to the diatribe and violence-laden rhetoric of extremists like bin Laden.

When they see limp bodies of dead little Palestinian babies, or the bloodied faces of screaming and terrified infants being brought into dilapidated hospitals that have been shelled by the Israeli military, it is no wonder that young Muslims may be pushed over the edge and into the arms of extremists.

There is no question that Israel, as a recognized sovereign state, has the right to exist and the right to defend itself. It is also quite clear, as the Palestinian Authority leader on the West Bank, Mahmoud Abbas, has said, that Hamas

Gaza a battleground for hearts, minds; Osama bin Laden heaps criticism on Arab and Palestinian leaders, hoping to use Israel 's military action against Palestin....

is largely to blame for igniting the current Gaza crisis and putting Palestinian civilians at risk. After all, Hamas is responsible for the eight-year aerial barrage of rocket and mortar shells that targeted southern parts of Israel.

While Hamas's indiscriminate shelling of Israeli towns, like Sderot and Ashkelon, may have resulted in only a few deaths (28 fatalities since 2001), this does not absolve the Hamas leadership of responsibility for putting so many Palestinian <u>women</u> and children in harm's way.

While the core leadership of Hamas was safely hiding out during the Israeli barrage, it continued to give orders to its most loyal factions to keep up the random firing of rockets into Israel.

Hiding among civilians

Many launching pads for Hamas's rockets were deliberately located close to schools, hospitals and places of worship. Such acts are criminal.

Hamas leaders know full well that if Israel responded directly to demolish those rocket launchers, many innocent Palestinian lives would be lost.

The Israeli government's response was to stop the random rocket attacks that threaten close to one million Israelis on a daily basis. It also hoped to deter future rocket strikes by making the Hamas leadership pay a very heavy price.

To some extent, the Israeli military seems to have succeeded in that goal. More than 400 Hamas militants (Qassam Brigades) were killed in the conflict and much of the Hamas military infrastructure and capability have been degraded, if not completely destroyed. Additionally, the Israeli military was able to destroy a number of tunnels used to smuggle weapons and militants into Gaza from Egypt.

However, Israel's successful, but disproportionate, military response has resulted in it losing the propaganda war.

Hamas leadership knew that it was no match for Israel's military might. But it also knew that the "collateral damage" caused by Israeli strikes in the highly populated cities in Gaza would provoke international criticism.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) notes that Israeli attacks in Gaza were directed against government institutions, civil police stations, the interior, foreign affairs, finance, public works, justice, education, labour, and culture ministries, as well as the presidential compound, the prime minister's office and parliament. These are all civic institutions of the Palestinian people, not just of Hamas.

This Israeli response to Hamas's provocation has certainly creating fertile ground for extremism. Bin Laden, and other extremists like him, will now try to plant the seeds of extremism globally and reap the rewards.

What Barack Obama must do

Let's hope that U.S. President Barack Obama will somehow find a way to thwart bin Laden's plans. Let's hope that Obama will be able to convince whom-

ever is elected prime minister in the upcoming Israeli elections of the obvious diminishing returns of brute force and the absolute need for a diplomatic solution to this protracted conflict.

Obama's appointment of the former U.S. senator, George Mitchell (an Arab-American), is a reassuring sign that the new president is on the right track. So, too, is Obama's commitment to the "two-state solution" proposed by the UN Security Council last December.

Israel will never be at peace until there is a de jure and de facto Palestinian state.

And, the Palestinian people will continue to bury their young unless and until they come to recognize Israel's right to exist.

Gaza a battleground for hearts, minds; Osama bin Laden heaps criticism on Arab and Palestinian leaders, hoping to use Israel 's military action against Palestin....

W. Andy Knight is professor of international relations at the University of Alberta and a governor of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa

Graphic

Photo: Bloomberg News; A Palestinian boy is carried to hospital following an Israeli attack in Gaza City, on Jan. 14. Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden is hoping such images will cause normally moderate Muslim youths to embrace his call for holy war against Israel.;

Photo: Agence France-Presse, file photo; Osama bin Laden is shown in this undated file photo.;

Load-Date: March 23, 2009

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<u>Army lays siege to Palestinian refugee camp amid worst internal violence</u> since civil war

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

May 21, 2007 Monday

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Length: 1526 words

Byline: Bassem Mroue Associated Press

Body

TRIPOLI, Lebanon -- Lebanese troops pounded a Palestinian refugee camp with artillery and tank fire for a second day Monday, raising huge palls of smoke as they battled a militant group suspected of ties to al-Qaida in the worst eruption of violence since the end of the 1975-90 civil war.

Nearly 50 combatants were killed in the first day of fighting on Sunday, but it was not known how many civilians have been killed inside the Nahr el-Bared camp on the outskirts of the northern port city of Tripoli, the scene of the worst violence.

Palestinian officials in the camp reported at least nine civilians were killed Monday, along with 40 wounded. The figures could not be confirmed because emergency workers or security officials have not been able to get in.

Black smoke engulfed the skies over the camp as fires raged and heavy gunfire and explosions rang out constantly. The fierce fighting resumed after a brief truce that allowed the evacuation of 18 wounded civilians, according to Saleh Badran, an official with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

The battle was an unprecedented showdown between the Lebanese army and militant groups that have arisen in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camps, which are home to tens of thousands of people living amid poverty and crime and which Lebanese troops are not allowed to enter.

The troops were fighting a group called Fatah Islam, whose leader has said he is inspired by al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and was training militants to carry out attacks in other countries. Lebanese officials have also accused Syria of using Fatah Islam to stir up trouble in Lebanon, a charge Damascus has denied.

Lebanese officials said one of the men killed Sunday was a suspect in a failed German train bombing -- another indication the camp had become a refuge for Fatah Islam militants planning attacks outside of Lebanon. In the past, others affiliated with the group in the camp have said they were aiming to send trained fighters into Iraq and the group's leader has been linked to al-Qaida in Iraq.

Hundreds of Lebanese army troops, backed by tanks and armored carriers, surrounded the refugee camp Monday. M-48 battle tanks unleashed their cannon fire on the camp, home to 30,000 Palestinian refugees. The militants fired mortars toward the troops at daybreak.

An army officer at the front line said troops directed concentrated fire at buildings known to house militants in the camp. He said troops also had orders to strike hard at any target that directed fire back at them.

Army lays siege to Palestinian refugee camp amid worst internal violence since civil war

"Everything we know that they were present in has been targeted," he told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

A spokesman for Fatah Islam, Abu Salim, warned that if the army bombardment did not stop, the militants would step up attacks by rockets and artillery "and would take the battle outside Tripoli."

He did not elaborate on the threat, holding authorities responsible for the consequences.

"It is a life-or-death battle. Their aim is to wipe out Fatah Islam. We will respond and we know how to respond," he told the AP.

Earlier in the day, another refugee camp, Ein el-Hilweh in southern Lebanon, was tense after Lebanese troops surrounded it and armed militants went on alert.

At least 27 soldiers and 20 militants were killed Sunday, Lebanese security officials said. But they did not know how many civilians had been killed in the camp because it is off-limits to their authority.

Lebanon says it has no authority to enter the camps under understandings with the Palestinians that give the PLO the authority in the camps. But Lebanon also is believed to be leery of entering for fear that any such actions would cause widespread unrest, be very costly and could spark pan-Arab sympathy for the Palestinian refugees that would trigger a backlash against the country.

There were conflicting reports Monday about the arrangement of a truce that medical officials on the camp's edge said would allow the distribution of food and supplies and the evacuation of the wounded. Army officials said there was no cease-fire in place yet, but Hamas' Lebanon representative, Osama Hamdan, said an agreement was reached.

The clashes were triggered when police raided suspected Fatah Islam hideouts in several buildings in Tripoli, searching for men wanted in a recent bank robbery. A gunbattle erupted at one of the buildings between the group's fighters, and troops were called in to help the police.

Militants then burst out of the nearby refugee camp, seizing Lebanese army positions, capturing two armored vehicles and ambushing troops. Lebanese troops later laid siege to the refugee camp where Fatah Islam militants were believed to be hiding, unleashing fire from tanks, artillery and heavy machine guns.

It was unclear whether Lebanese authorities had known El-Hajdib's whereabouts, or the whereabouts of the group's leader, a Palestinian named Shaker al-Absi, before the gunbattle first broke out in Tripoli.

Al-Absi, wanted in three countries, told The New York Times in March that he was trying to spread al-Qaida's ideology and was training fighters inside the camp for attacks on other countries.

He would not specify which countries but expressed anger toward the United States. And he was sentenced to death earlier in absentia along with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq killed last summer by U.S. forces in Iraq, for the 2002 assassination of an American diplomat in Jordan.

Al-Absi had been in custody in Syria until last fall but was released and set up his group in the camp, where he apparently found recruits, Lebanese officials said.

Lebanon's national police commander, Maj. Gen. Ashraf Rifi, said Damascus was using the Fatah Islam group as a covert way to wreak havoc in the country. He denied Fatah Islam's al-Qaida links, saying it was a Syrian-bred group.

"Perhaps there are some deluded people among them but they are not al-Qaida. This is imitation al-Qaida, a 'Made in Syria' one," he told the AP.

Army lays siege to Palestinian refugee camp amid worst internal violence since civil war

Lebanese security officials said Fatah Islam has up to 100 members who come from Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and Syria, as well as local sympathizers who belong to the conservative Salafi branch of Islam.

The Lebanese Broadcasting Corp. TV station reported the dead militants included men from Bangladesh, Yemen and other Arab countries. Some of those killed were wearing explosive belts, security officials said.

Officials identified the suspect in the failed German train bombing as Saddam El-Hajdib, the fourth-highest ranking official in the Fatah Islam group, an official said Monday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. El-Hajdib had been on trial in absentia in Lebanon in connection with the failed German plot.

Mohammed Hanafi, identified by Al-Jazeera as a human rights activist in the camp, said 34 people had been killed inside, including 14 civilians, and 150 wounded. But that could not be independently confirmed and other estimates of civilian deaths were lower.

Ahmed Methqal, a Muslim cleric in the camp, told Al-Jazeera that five civilians had been killed.

"You can say there is a massacre going on in the camp of children and <u>women</u> who have nothing to do with Fatah Islam," he said. "They are targeting buildings, with people in them. What's the guilt of children, <u>women</u> and the elderly?"

He said sniper fire had confined the camp's 30,000 residents to their houses.

Lebanon has struggled to defeat armed groups that control pockets of the country -- especially inside the 12 Palestinian refugee camps housing 350,000 people, which Lebanese authorities can't enter.

Some camps have become havens for Islamic militants accused of carrying out attacks in the country and of sending recruits to fight U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq.

Palestinian officials in the West Bank sought to distance themselves from Fatah Islam and urged Palestinian refugees in the camp to isolate the militant group.

Palestinian officials who met Monday with Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Saniora said he was focused on saving lives and left it to him to decide whether to send the army into the camp.

"Entering the camp does not mean it will be easy to get rid of this (Fatah Islam) phenomenon," PLO representative Abbas Zaki warned.

Lebanese Sunni political and religious leaders backed the army and the government.

Lebanon was already in the midst of its worst political crisis between the Western-backed government and <u>Hezbollah</u>-led opposition since the end of the civil war. Saniora said Sunday the fighting was a "dangerous attempt at hitting Lebanese security."

Late Sunday, an explosion across the street from a busy shopping mall in the Christian sector of Beirut killed a 63-year-old woman and injured 12 other people, police said.

Beirut and its suburbs have seen a series of blasts in the last two years, many targeting Christian areas. Authorities blamed Fatah Islam for Feb. 13 bombings of commuter buses that killed three, but the group denied involvement.

Syria has denied involvement in any of the bombings. Associated Press Writer Hussein Dakroub in Beirut contributed.

Load-Date: May 21, 2007

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A TANGO WITH ISLAM; The new Cold War within a conflict of civilizations

What the Papers Say Part A (Russia)

April 16, 2007 Monday

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Section: PRESS EXTRACTS;; No. 68

Length: 1675 words

Byline: Alexei Malashenko

Highlight: Russia, the West, and the Islamic world; Fighting extremists hasn't brought Russia and America closer

together. The rising tension in relations between Russia and the West is giving Islamic radicals additional

opportunities for manuever.

Body

American-Russian relations have deteriorated. They are being labeled a new Cold War. From our experiences in the last Cold War, we know how important it is to have reliable allies - or at least some leverage for putting pressure on an opponent.

Under the circumstances, Islam is drawing additional attention.

When we take a detailed look at Islam as a political entity, its surface immediately breaks up into separate components: regions, countries, ideological trends, and so on and so forth. Nevertheless, many American, Russian, and European politicians and citizens still believe - if only at the instinctual level - in a kind of homogenous "average" version of Islam: alien at best, hostile at worst. The word "xenophobia" springs to mind.

The recognition of a conflict between civilizations cannot be concealed, regardless of hypocritical political correctness. On the opposite side, Muslims tend to speak of a war against Islam or a new crusade. The conflict exists in people's minds: not everyone, but many people. Consequently, it's bound to be reflected in their behavior and political orientation.

This clash is used as a scare tactic, forgetting that it has always existed: look at any medieval history textbook. It used to be entirely "concrete" - that is, military. It killed men, <u>women</u>, and children in far greater numbers than it does now. The conflict dies down and flares up again, but it's never extinguished entirely. Neither the Christian civilization nor the Islamic civilization will emerge from it victorious or defeated.

Something's going wrong between the Muslim and Christian worlds, and we're trying to come up with rational explanations for that.

Religion has always been more than a form in which various conflicts are expressed; it can make up their ideological foundations, and it has been used as a tool. Most importantly, it is part of the socio-cultural landscape in which politics takes place. This is particularly characteristic of Islam, although Christianity has also long since lost its political innocence.

Let's look at the reasons for the current inter-civilizational conflict.

A TANGO WITH ISLAM The new Cold War within a conflict of civilizations

First: the development gulf between the West and the Islamic world which claims to know the perfect model and believes in the certainty of its ultimate victory: that is, it believes in a multipolar Islamic world. And this point of view certainly isn't confined to Islamic radicals.

Second: the persistent influence of Islamism, especially its radical wing.

Third: local conflicts in which Muslims face non-Muslims. It doesn't matter who started these conflicts. No one believes they are to blame.

Fourth: Muslim migration - rapidly advancing into Europe (I would also add the Turkish question here), and creating problems in Russia and (to a lesser extent) in the United States).

Fifth: growing xenophobia on both sides. This can be provoked in various ways: the cartoon controversy, the Pope's incautious remark, arson attacks on mosques, talk of the inevitable Islamization of Europe and Russia. The media and the arts are also facilitating a rise in xenophobia. Negative stories always sound more convincing than positive stories.

All these reasons will persist indefinitely, nourishing the feeling of reciprocal alienation.

It is not the subject of this essay to work out why relations have cooled between Russia and the West, and primarily between Russia and America. Feeling stronger and simultaneously aggrieved, Russia is simply feeling out a game of its own, seeking partners (in the Islamic world and elsewhere), and trying to take advantage of the intercivilizational confrontation's circumstances. Fighting extremists hasn't brought Russia and America closer together.

Russia has some grounds for claiming a special relationship with the Islamic world. Russia has an Islamic component, and it is not fully part of Europe. Russia occupies an intermediate and uncertain position between civilizations. Contrary to our crude attempts at Eurasianism, there's nothing to be proud of in that.

Russia is positioning itself as part of the Islamic world; it has observer status with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Putin himself attended an OIC conference in Kuala Lumpur, where he heard the anti-Jewish remarks of a leading Muslim authority, former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohammed; the Duma has established a parliamentary formation called "Russia and the Islamic World: Strategic Dialogue." Officially, the Muslim direction is presented as a foreign policy priority.

Russia is speaking out against US policy in Iraq; it is playing a separate game in Iran; it is establishing its own position with regard to the Middle East - for example, it is engaging in dialogue with Hamas.

In 2006, Moscow "legalized" its categorization of Islamic radicals into good and bad radicals. Is Russia's present-day "tango" with radical Islamists reminiscent of the 1950s-1980s, when the Soviet Union assisted national liberation movements and its own satellites generated by such movements? I think not. Firstly, the scale is different. Secondly, the goals are different: back then, we sought to do more than cobble together a pro-Soviet group - we also sought to convert the more susceptible Third World regimes to our Marxist-Leninist faith. That approach is most unlikely to work on the adherents of radical Islam.

Paradoxically enough, in communicating with Hamas and Iran, Russia is encouraging them to make concessions in the West's favor - while simultaneously demonstrating to the West than Russia can influence the Islamists effectively.

Judging by Moscow's anti-American rhetoric, we are almost entirely on the side of the Islamic radicals. If we also look at our domestic ideological discourse - sovereign democracy, a special path of development, and so on - Russia seems more like the West's opponent than its partner in this "misunderstanding" between civilizations. After all, the Islamists also claim that their path is a unique alternative.

In the meantime, US Ambassador in Russia William Burns is saying that Russia and the USA have common interests in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and the Middle East. Believe me, his words aren't just paying tribute to politeness. Ultimately, Moscow certainly doesn't want the Taliban, or a nuclear-armed Iran, or the destruction of

A TANGO WITH ISLAM The new Cold War within a conflict of civilizations

Israel. Yes, Russia could cooperate with the USA. But it's held back by Ameriphobia - largely an internal political stratagem, not external.

An inevitable question arises: whose side is Russia on? If it's with the anti-Western Islamists, then it's on the Muslim side in the inter-civilizational conflict. Or is rapprochement with radical Islam just a means of self-assertion - an instrument of self-expression in global politics?

As ever, Russian officials are in no hurry to make things perfectly clear. They're categorically opposed to any contact with non-governmental Islamist organizations. The Muslim Brotherhood, for example, is denied access to the Kremlin or the Duma. Yet the Brotherhood's supporters - as long as they're official politicians - are granted high-level meetings in Russia.

The stern Kremlin doesn't sing the praises of Hamas. It delegates this task to its ideological kindred, the anti-Americans in "token opposition" movements: nationalists, imperialists, Eurasianists, and others in service to the regime. When Hamas leader Khalid Mashaal was interviewed by Alexander Prokhanov, chief editor of the nationalist "Zavtra" newspaper, Prokhanov expressed admiration for the Islamists and congratulated Hamas on its election vitory. (And how would Moscow have reacted if anyone had congratulated Shamil Basayev?)

Yet Moscow still isn't deriving any substantial benefits from Russian-Islamic friendship: neither Hamas nor Iran are making concessions to Russian negotiators. Russia hasn't managed to persuade the Palestinian Islamists to ease up on Israel. There's a heated dispute over the construction of a nuclear power station at Bushehr. Russia never managed to intervene decisively in the <u>Hezbollah</u>-Israel conflict in Lebanon in summer 2006. Russia's influence on the civil war in Iraq is zero. No Islamic radicals lifted a finger to help when several Russian Embassy staff in Iraq were abducted and murdered last year.

Contacts with radical Islam, which might be productive in themselves, aren't yielding any victory laurels for Russia. Why not? Possibly because the chief functionaries responsible for foreign policy in the Muslim direction have proved to be unprepared for such a turn of events. Rumor has it that the Russian Foreign Ministry didn't find out about the Hamas visit to Msocow until President Putin mentioned it in a speech in Madrid in 2006.

Besides, the Islamists simply don't trust Russia. They see it as part of a different civilization - wandering over the the Muslims for purely tactical purposes. They also remember the wars in Afghanistan and Chechnya.

So Moscow is having to prove its loyalty to the Muslims. Naturally, the Muslims aren't interested in weakening Russia. They'd have no use for it if it were completely helpless. Thus, while criticizing it for brutality in Chechnya, they have never recognized the Chechen separatists, and they have supported Russia's territorial integrity. Whatever else it may be, at least Russia is some sort of counterweight to the United States. There's also a certain amount of inertia here - a kind of lingering post-Soviet mindset, and fascination with Russia's nuclear might.

Overall, however, Russia is alien to them. It's on the other side; part of an alien, hostile civilization. And the new Cold War doesn't change that at all. At times, it seems like Moscow's activity in the Islamic world, including Putin's visit to the Middle East in February, simply soaks into the Arab sands and disappears. Russian companies usually don't do very well in the Islamic world, and companies from Islamic countries show no interest in Russia. There are many fine words, but all too few results.

Source: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, No. 76, April 13, 2007, p. 11

Translated by Elena Leonova

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THE DIARY

The Australian (Australia)

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All-round Country Edition

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Byline: Amanda Meade

Body

Boland gets cracking

THE Seven Network is screen testing male and <u>female</u> talent for a pilot to be filmed this month for a new tonight show. The baby of Sunrise producer Adam Boland, who has a snazzy new title to reflect his re-signing -- director of morning television and strategic initiatives -- the tonight show will be used as a vehicle to promote Seven's new HD channel. The format is for a newsy, edgy cross between CNN's Larry King Live and Ten's The Panel. One personality who is having a screen test is Zach Douglas, a gay corsetiere who was runner-up in the last series of Big Brother. Zach, now managed by Harry M. Miller, has also been talking to Foxtel about a Julian Clary-style show.

Brother of all battles

THE Ten Network's decision to give an exclusive story about the future of its lucrative reality TV franchise Big Brother to the News Limited Sunday newspapers may have backfired. It left The Daily Telegraph infuriated, not to mention the Fairfax Sundays. The stoush culminated yesterday in the publication of an angry rant against Ten by Tele media writer Fiona Connolly. She is upset because on Tuesday night she could not get confirmation for her front-page story saying Big Brother host Gretel Killeen had been dumped after seven years. Editor David Penberthy pulled the yarn after Ten's publicity department said it was "premature" to speculate. But when Ten was ready to make the announcement -- which included news Killeen was to be replaced with the FM radio broadcasters Kyle Sandilands and Jackie O -- they confirmed the story to The Sunday Telegraph and the Sunday Herald Sun. Connolly had revenge of sorts on Saturday by posting a story on the Tele website saying Killeen had been dumped. However, the story was then picked up by AAP and Fairfax Media's The Sun-Herald, ruining the exclusivity for the Sunday Tele and the Sunday Herald Sun. The Sunday Tele was less than impressed. Editor Neil Breen tells Diary: "The Sunday Telegraph and the Sunday Herald Sun had been pursuing the story for eight weeks and Jonathan Moran and Fiona Byrne confirmed it last week."

Creaky replacements

THE Saturday Tele online spoiler meant the story didn't get a huge run on Sunday, but that is the least of Ten's worries. Kyle and Jackie O may be the nation's top-rating FM jocks and appeal to the target BB demographic, but their national television appeal is far from confirmed. Everything Jackie O has done on TV has flopped (Popstars, Australian Princess, The Nation, Surprise Surprise Gotcha). Her blonde blandness also attracts the ire of many a critic. Kyle has form, not all of it good. He has not improved Australian Idol, and was a disaster when he appeared

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briefly on Big Brother earlier this year as a guest housemate. Neither of them has the intelligence or wit of Killeen, who at her best gave BB a credibility beyond its format. We hear Killeen was told she had to go late last week and it was a tense moment indeed.

No win-win at WIN

IT'S been a nervous few months for staff at Channel Nine in Perth since WIN took over the station, which is separate from the PBL Media-owned Nine Network. WIN first made an impression in the west last year when it set up a regional news service using young video journalists rather than experienced reporters. Other cutbacks include taking work cars away from camera operators and rewriting contracts without benefits such as mobile phone expenses and clothing allowances. The station's star police reporter Grant Taylor has already jumped ship to Seven. A race for the Nine news director's job has led to the resignation of the man widely regarded as the most experienced hand at WIN in Perth: news director Stewart Richmond, formerly executive producer of Today Tonight. Richmond missed out to Nine reporter and producer Adrian Beattie, which is thought to have prompted the veteran newsman to throw in the towel.

Aussie gets a Murrow

AUSTRALIAN broadcaster John Vause is part of the CNN team awarded an Edward R. Murrow Award in New York. The team won in the category of continuing coverage of a major developing story for its coverage of the Middle East and Israeli-<u>Hezbollah</u> conflict last year. Vause was based in Jerusalem throughout the conflict. Fellow Australian Michael Ware also contributed to CNN's coverage of the conflict.

Aunty will be upset

NINE has recently acquired some quality shows from the BBC including the final David Attenborough series, Life in Cold Blood; Secret Diary of a Call Girl, a sexy drama starring Billie Piper; and Rock Rivals -- an Idol-based drama series featuring an interactive audience element that allows viewers to select their own winner.

It wasn't the boss

ON Friday The Age ran a front-page story saying new ANZ chief executive Michael Smith had predicted there would be three interest rate rises. But the prediction was made by the ANZ economics department, not the chief executive. Economics departments at the big banks are pretty much free to say what they like whereas the executive has to be more circumspect. Treasurer Peter Costello and the ANZ were far from happy. A correction was published in Saturday's paper.

ABC pulls UN gongs

THE ABC's Foreign Correspondent program received a swag of awards at the UN Media Awards in Melbourne. Trevor Bormann accepted four gongs on behalf of the program, including one for his own story on two courageous <u>women</u> leaders in Afghanistan. Landline host Sally Sara, who is undertaking a fellowship in Boston, was also awarded for her story on aged care in South Australia's Port Broughton.

Butcher back

NEWS Corp's senior vice-president of corporate affairs and communications in New York, Andrew Butcher, is returning to his home town of Melbourne after a decade overseas. Butcher met his American wife Sara James while working on The New York Post for six months after starting out as a copy boy on the Herald Sun. Butcher tells Diary it's time to get his family down under so he and Sara, a reporter for NBC, can raise their children as "little American-Australians".

---- TALKING TURKEYS ----

THE DIARY

None of these offences are trivial crimes ... Irregardless, the village idiot knows most of them will never be paid ... The birds will begin chirping in the trees when God intended and not at 4.45am as they have been doing for the past six weeks, waking even the most heavy sleeper.

Columnist Anita Quigley mangles the English language three times in a single Saturday column. Where are the subs when you need them?

The Daily Telegraph, October 27.

The ALP has estimated that families with about 2.3 million children would be eligible for the (computer) concession, which grants a rebate of up to \$375 a year for primary school students and \$750 a year for those at secondary school.

With that many kids, these families need handouts.

The Australian IT, October 23.

---- Waley on the bench, ready for commercial return -----

AFTER almost three years in exile, former National Nine News presenter Jim Waley was welcomed back to the Willoughby fold to celebrate the 15th birthday of the news program on which he was the founding host, Nightline.

"I don't hold any grudges or bitterness, despite what happened on my way out," Waley told Diary. "There's life outside commercial television. I'm not retired, I'm just on the bench."

Waley fought a costly, bitter battle in the NSW Supreme Court with his former employers after he was dumped from the prized 6pm Sydney news bulletin to make way for Mark Ferguson, 20 years his junior, in January 2005.

It remains unclear how Nine's new chief executive David Gyngell, who arrived back from Los Angeles on Tuesday, felt about Waley being part of Nightline's party. It was Gyngell, you see, back in his first incarnation as CEO, who removed the man who had been working for the network for 37 years.

Waley was hosting Sunday when he was asked to replace the retiring Brian Henderson in November 2002. Nine's Sydney bulletin continued to beat Seven's in the ratings but Ian Ross was beginning to make dents in Nine's supremacy by winning the occasional night.

Nine panicked and got rid of Waley but the ratings continued to fall. Which must have been some comfort to Waley.

A healthy, rested Waley told Diary he successfully sued Nine for breach of contract, but he still has several months of a non-disclosure settlement to serve so he could not comment in any detail.

He did, however, praise Nightline for its focus on international news, and he chastised management for failing to give it a regular timeslot.

Nightline, now hosted by former foreign correspondent Michael Usher, can be on air as late as midnight. Before coming back to host Nightline, Usher's five years as a foreign correspondent featured heavily on the show with its focus on foreign news.

"I'm not pissing in his pocket but he's one of the best foreign correspondents we've ever had," Waley says.

It's clear the old guard, such as Waley, hark back to a time when Nine was the undisputed news leader.

"We were with Nine at a time when they were spending money on things and the results followed," Waley says. "I just hope Nine gets back to its great ways."

Waley, who is soon to turn 60, added mysteriously that he was "talking to another commercial network".

THE DIARY

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Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE; Sebnem Arsu contributed reporting from Istanbul.

Dateline: KONYA, Turkey, May 12

Body

In the not too distant past here in Turkey's religious heartland, <u>women</u> would not appear in public unless they were modestly dressed, a single woman was not able to rent an apartment on her own, and the mayor proposed segregating city buses by sex.

Fears of such restrictions, inflamed by secularist politicians, have led thousands of Turks to march in major cities in the past month. A political party with a past in Islamic politics led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has tried to capture the country's highest secular post.

Once it succeeds, the secularists' argument goes, Turkey will be dragged back to an earlier era when Islam ran the state. [Another march drew a million people in Izmir on Sunday.]

But here in Konya, a leafy city on the plains of central Turkey, Mr. Erdogan's party has done no such thing. In the paradox of modern Turkey, the party here has had a moderating influence, helping to open a guarded society and make it more flexible.

Konya is still deeply attached to its faith. Mosques are spread thickly throughout the city; there are as many as in Istanbul, which has five times the population. But in a part of the world where religion and politics have been a poisonous mix and cultural norms are conservative regardless of religion, it is an oasis: <u>women</u> here wear relatively revealing clothing, couples hold hands and bus segregation is a distant memory.

"We've been wearing the same dress for 80 years, and it doesn't fit anymore," said Yoruk Kurtaran, who travels extensively in Turkey. "Things used to be black and white."

Now, he said, "there are a lot of grays."

The shift shows the evolution of Turkey's Islamic movement, which has matured under Mr. Erdogan, abandoning the restrictive practices of its predecessors and demonstrating to its observant constituents the benefits of belonging to the European Union.

It also follows a pattern occurring throughout Turkey, where the secularists who founded the state out of the Ottoman Empire's remains are now lagging behind religious Turks in efforts to modernize it. But secular Turks, like those who took part in the recent protests, do not believe that Mr. Erdogan and his allies have changed.

The mayor who proposed segregation, for example, is now part of Mr. Erdogan's party. The protesters argue that the party may say it wants more religious freedom for its constituents, for example allowing observant <u>women</u> to wear their head scarves in universities, but it has never laid out its vision for how to protect secular lifestyles.

Mr. Erdogan's party has been the most flexible and open of all parties that consider Islam an important part of Turkish society. Its politics have so far been respectful of secular freedom in most cases. But there are harder-line members who would like to see a more religious society, and secular Turks fear that highly personal questions like their children's education and rights for unmarried <u>women</u> could be threatened.

In the country as a whole, religious Turks have felt like second-class citizens for generations, in part a legacy of Ataturk's radical, secular revolution in the early 20th century. Now, elevated by a decade of economic growth, they are pressing for a bigger share of power.

In Konya some of the change started from the top. In 2003, around the time Mr. Erdogan's party came to power, an irreverent ophthalmologist and a veterinarian with long hair were appointed to run Selcuk University in Konya. They immediately began challenging the sensibilities of this conservative city, organizing concerts and encouraging student clubs.

Kursat Turgut, the veterinarian, who became vice rector, said he had been confronted by a group of students who went to his office and demanded that he cancel a concert because they did not like the singer. He refused.

"Change is the most difficult thing," Mr. Turgut said, sitting in the rector's office, where paintings lined the walls. "It takes time to change a mentality."

The students were from a nationalist group with an Islamic tinge that for years had used scare tactics to enforce a strict moral code on campus. When Umit, who did not want to give his last name, started at the university's veterinary school five years ago he was chastised by students from the group for cuddling with his girlfriend and, on another occasion, for wearing shorts.

"They thought they were protecting honor and morals," said Aliye Cetinkaya, a journalist who moved here 12 years ago for college. "If we crossed the line there was a fight."

Mr. Turgut and the rector, Suleyman Okudan, shut down the group's activities. Now, four years later, there are more than 80 student clubs, students like Umit behave and dress any way they choose, and Mr. Turgut's concerts, open to the public, draw large crowds.

"It is like a different century," Ms. Cetinkaya said.

She still faces limitations. When she covered a demonstration in Konya early last year against the Muhammad cartoons published in Denmark, stones and shoes were thrown at her because she was not wearing a scarf. But such incidents are rare, and far outweighed by improvements. For example, there were only about 50 <u>women</u> in the two-year degree program she attended a decade ago. Now the number is above 1,000, she said.

The deep-rooted religiosity in Konya found public expression in politics in the late 1980s, when the city became one of the first in the country to elect a pro-Islamic party -- the Welfare Party of Necmettin Erbakan, the grandfather of the Turkish Islamic movement -- to run the city. Mr. Erbakan himself was elected to Parliament from Konya.

The administration was restrictive: it was a Welfare Party mayor, Halil Urun, who proposed, unsuccessfully, segregating the buses in 1989. But the city kept electing the party until the late 1990s, when it was shut down by the state establishment for straying from secularism.

Then, in 2000, a young member of the banned party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, began the Justice and Development Party. Mr. Erdogan had made a concerted effort to take Islam out of politics altogether -- aware that continuing to push religion would lead to the same end -- and it was unclear whether Konya voters would accept it.

They did. Of the 32 members of the City Council, all but two are now members of Mr. Erdogan's party.

It was economics that convinced Ahmet Agirbasli, 57, a businessman who sells car parts and pasta. When he was younger he did not shake hands with <u>women</u>. For years he voted for Mr. Erbakan's party. He did not believe that Turkey's future was with Europe, but he changed his mind after Mr. Erdogan's party began reforms with the intention of joining the European Union, and his business began to grow.

"Erbakan didn't have an open mind," Mr. Agirbasli said, eating a club sandwich in a hotel restaurant. "He didn't believe the country needed links with the rest of the world."

Now he sells macaroni to 50 countries. Five years ago he sold to only 10.

Akif Emre, a columnist at Yeni Safak, a conservative newspaper in Istanbul, argues that Mr. Erdogan has helped to bridge the gap between Turkey's religious heartland and urban, secular Turks.

"They really accept secularism," he said of Mr. Erdogan and his allies. "They are changing the mentality. Conservative people changed their lifestyle toward a more secular way."

Religious Turks, for their part, still harbor an unspoken wariness of the state. New civil organizations are more focused on building mosques than engaging in public debate, and people scrupulously avoid talking about politics.

Religious extremists have been found on the fringes. In January the authorities arrested a man they said was the leader of Al Qaeda in Turkey, and in 2000 a pile of bodies that showed signs of torture was found buried under a villa rented by a homegrown Islamist group called *Hezbollah*.

"Konya is one of the main hubs of traditional and conservative, anti-Ankara countryside," said Ersin Kalaycioglu, a professor of political science at Isik University in Istanbul. "It has a structure that takes religion very seriously and formulates social life around it."

Rahmi Bastoklu, the leader in Konya of the secularist Republican People's Party and the only one of the Konya district's 16 members of Parliament who is not from Mr. Erdogan's party, put it bluntly: "People have to leave Konya to enjoy themselves."

But an unspoken understanding between Konya's religious Turks and the secular state is in place, in which the mosques are left alone, but religious Turks do not press too many demands on the state. The balance is often held steady by Mr. Erdogan's party.

Still, pushing too hard against the secular establishment might mean the loss of recent gains. "It's not a useful thing to talk about," said Ilhan Cumrali, 36, sitting in his clothing store among racks of floor-length skirts. "We are trying to find the right path. If we do it too aggressively there will be a negative reaction."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: A young woman in a traditional black abaya sat waiting for the call to midday prayer on Friday outside the Mevlana Mosque in Konya.

Suleyman Okudan, left, the rector of Selcuk University, and Kursat Turgut, a former veterinarian in charge of student affairs at the university.

Students at Selcuk University's art department. Student clubs and activities have challenged the sensibilities of the conservative city.

Factories in Konya's industrial districts often build mosques for their workers. This one is under construction for a company called Molinos. (Photographs by Johann Spanner for The New York Times)(pg. A11) Map of Turkey highlighting Konya; Konya, on the central plain, is in the religious heartland of Turkey. (pg. A11)

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Byline: RICHARD LITTLEJOHN

Body

THEY'VE tried rebranding everything from the Spastics' Society to the Marriage Guidance Council and the Hunchback of Notre Dame for fear of giving offence.

Last year the Government bunged the Protestant Orange Order in Northern Ireland Pounds 100,000 to give the annual marching season a touchy-feely makeover.

Some bright spark thought it would be more 'inclusive' if the traditional celebration of King Billy's victory over the Catholics at the Battle of the Boyne were to be relaunched as 'Orangefest' - a sort of Unionist Blue Nose Day, complete with a bouncy Hillsborough Castle.

That way, Republicans might feel less inclined to throw petrol bombs at it.

Nothing is safe from the revisionists in the name of diversity.

So I suppose it wasn't going to be long before they got round to England's patron saint. Sure enough, just in time for St George's Day on Monday, there are calls to give him a political version of the Trinny and Susannah treatment.

The proposal is outlined in a new report from an ecclesiastical think tank, entitled: 'When The Saints Go Marching Out: Redefining St George For A New Era.' Simon Barrow, one of its authors, declared: 'It is time that St George was reclaimed from the dragon, from past associations with racism and the far right, and from images of arrogant flag-waving.' Writing in the latest edition of the Church Of England Newspaper, he says St George's Day should become a 'day of dissent' - celebrating 'the pro- democracy Putney Debates, the equality-seeking Levellers, the anti- slavery abolitionists, the <u>women</u>'s suffrage movement, conscientious objectors and peacemakers, antiracism campaigners, human rights activists and those struggling against debt and poverty'.

He seems to have missed out the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Bryant & May match girls, the Birmingham Six, the Dave Clark Five, the Guildford Four, the Fun Boy Three, the Forest Gate Two and the Winston Silcott One, but never mind.

It's the thought that counts.

This is St George, patron saint of the Guardianistas.

Funny how they never want to rebrand St Paddy's Day, to make it more acceptable to Glasgow Rangers supporters; or the Notting Hill Carnival, to make it less Caribbean.

So what would a modern tick-alltheboxes St George look like? The report says he should be recast as a champion of the oppressed and disadvantaged.

He'd probably be some kind of asylum seeker - sorry, 'undocumented' immigrant.

The red cross would have to go, for a start. Far too, well, English. And with its association with the Crusades, incredibly offensive to Muslims.

Maybe it could be replaced by an EU flag; or a CND badge; a set of Make Poverty History wrist bands; or a Greenpeace logo. Instead of a helmet and visor, he'd be wearing one of those modish Afghan peasant hats, so popular with the lentil-munching classes in Islington.

Rather than a broadsword, George could carry a Not In My Name placard, or - even better - a We Are All *Hezbollah* Now banner, sponsored by The Independent.

Perhaps an intifada headscarf and a fake suicide belt. They seem to be all the rage these days. A pair of Call Me Dave recycled sneakers, specially-designed to minimise his carbon footprint, would be obligatory.

Oh, and don't forget the iPod.

There'd be no fire-breathing dragon, either, not in a smoke-free environment. No dragon of any description, for that matter.

are probably on the endangered species list, anyway. George would be a paid-up member of the Dragon Liberation Front, roaming the land freeing dragons from animal testing laboratories, pausing only to sell the Big Issue on his way to kicking in the front window of McDonald's as part of an antiglobalisation protest.

Instead of slaying dragons, he'd smash up Range Rovers and other assorted 4x4s to demonstrate his deep concern for the planet.

His trusty steed would be replaced by an eco-friendly mountain bike.

George and his same- sex civil partner would adopt a child from Malawi over the internet and live happily ever after in a solar-powered squat in Stoke Newington with a B&Q windmill on the roof.

What the hell, why not get rid of George altogether and replace him with a differently-abled, mixed-race, wimmin's rites coordinator called Georgina?

That should satisfy even the most pernickety revisionist.

Enjoy yourself on Monday - in a diverse, non-judgmental, multicultural fashion, of course.

Cry 'God Help Harry, England and St George.'

Father Christmas voting for turkeys

COM-PEN-SAY-SHUN update. It was bad enough learning that Bernard Matthews is in line for a Pounds 600,000 payout for the cull of his flock of turkeys during the bird flu scare.

After all, he was the one who imported meat from Hungary - hardly one of the great poultry breeding nations.

We're not talking Poulet de Bresse here.

And even if he didn't commit any offence, inspectors uncovered evidence that wild birds were feeding from uncovered waste bins and polythene bags left out at his farm.

We shouldn't be handing out money like Father Christmas.

But this pales by comparison with a report that an Iraqi asylum seeker, jailed for a sexual assault, can also expect com-pen-say-shun from the British taxpayer.

He was wrongly released after seven months of a 15-month sentence.

Although he was rearrested, officials took too long to consider whether to deport him.

It was a breach of his yuman rites.

He was free to leave Britain at any time, but refused claiming it was too dangerous.

That's his problem, not ours. He should have thought about that before he abused our hospitality and committed a sexual assault.

Any foreign national who commits a serious criminal offence should be kicked out immediately at the end of his sentence.

This man is about as welcome as one of Bernard Matthews' Hungarian turkeys.

Fluffy Bits Felix

JUST when you thought the humiliation couldn't get any worse, along comes news that one of the 15 hostages wants to leave the services to become a TV weatherman.

Lieutenant Felix 'Fluffy Bits' Carman, 26, from South Wales, was filmed by his captors in front of maps showing where the British patrol was supposed to have crossed into Iranian territorial waters.

It seems to have convinced him he's a natural for television. This week he spent a day at Sky, being coached by one of their weather girls.

He may not have sold his story, unlike Faye Turney and Mr Bean, but he intends to cash in by reinventing himself as the Navy's answer to Wincey Willis.

I feel a deep depression setting in from the South West.

NHS negligence...send for the murder squad

THERE are some stories which are beyond outrageous, for which mere words are inadequate.

The squalid death of World War II veteran Ron Roberts is one of them.

I defy anyone to read his ordeal at the hands of our blessed NHS without being reduced to murderous rage.

First, 81-year-old Mr Roberts and his wife, Olive, 78, were forced to choose which of them would go blind because the health service said it couldn't afford to treat both of them.

(The same NHS, incidentally, which has just increased consultants' pay by a total of Pounds 715million - an average of Pounds 20,000 a year - in return for a reduction in the amount of work they do.) Selflessly, Mr Roberts did what any husband would do and put his wife first. After the Daily Mail took up his case, health chiefs relented and agreed to take in Mr Roberts for assessment.

While in Bath Royal United Hospital, he contracted the superbug Clostridium difficile and pneumonia. He had been left on a trolley for 24 hours, spent six days in a unit intended for short stays only and was found lying in his own faeces. Shortly afterwards, he died.

This was a member of a generation which believed in the NHS and was promised a Land Fit For Heroes.

The local primary health care trust says there will be a detailed investigation.

That investigation should be conducted by the police. Mr Roberts may have been unwell, frail and old, but the NHS killed him as surely as if someone had smothered him with a pillow.

Had he been taken off the street and subjected to the kind of inhuman treatment he went through in hospital, whoever was responsible would be guilty of premeditated murder.

This isn't the first case of its kind and it won't be the last. Thousands die each year of infections they pick up in filthy hospitals.

Everyone involved, from the Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt downwards, through the directors of the health care trust, to the hospital managers, doctors, nurses and porters on the ward, should be arrested and charged with corporate manslaughter, at the very least.

Until someone goes to prison, those who run our hospitals will continue their slapdash, callous indifference towards hygiene and patient care.

We owe it to Ron Roberts, to all the other victims of the NHS and their families, to make sure that his appalling death doesn't go unpunished.

LABOUR has voted shamefully against a rescue plan which could have helped thousands of pensioners whose schemes have collapsed.

MPs' pensions, naturally, are not affected.

They've awarded themselves millions of pounds of our money to make up a shortfall in their retirement funds. Incidentally, did I mention that Gordon Brown can expect to receive an index-linked Pounds 100,000 pension, paid for out of the billions he has stolen from our pension funds.

I did?

Sorry, it must have slipped my mind.

Load-Date: April 20, 2007



At Biennale, art that murmurs

The International Herald Tribune
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Body

After the artists, dealers, critics and hedge fund guys jetted off last weekend to shop in Basel and check out Documenta, the big show in Germany, it became easier to tell whether the 52nd version of the Venice Biennale was really as much of a bore as it seemed.

It's not. Quite. It's subtle and sober. And yes, maybe it's just a little boring.

But it can grow on you. What's always glorious about this oldest of the international festivals - aside, of course, from the simple fact that it's here (passing disappointments of art somehow wafting away on the sea breezes) - is its unruliness. It's an Italian thing. This means there is never really just one biennale but many of them, all mixed up, and you're free to like or kvetch about any or all of them.

A commissioner - this time, the former Museum of Modern Art curator, Robert Storr - deals with the crazy bureaucracy and is responsible for the main exhibition. As in the past, that show divides itself between the Italian Pavilion in the Giardini Publici, the biennale's traditional base, and the Arsenale, the former rope factory nearby, whose traversal, even when everything is as compulsively well-ordered as it is now, invariably feels like a forced march.

But then there are dozens of countries, more and more each biennale (76 now, a new record), which organize their own pavilions all over town. By chance, overlaps sometimes occur between a pavilion and the main show, implying unpremeditated coordination. Storr has included a work by Sophie Calle (a simple, heartbreaking memorial to her mother), who also takes over the large French pavilion with a virtual library of <u>women</u>'s reactions to an anonymous break-up letter she ostensibly received. Maybe you have to be a woman to love it as much as some people clearly did.

Storr also picked two works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, the Cuban-born American who (posthumously) represents the United States. His pavilion, put together by Nancy Spector of the Guggenheim, is the biennale's most elegant by far. Gonzalez-Torres (1957-1996), gifted beyond reason at making hard-nosed Minimalism into democratic, humane statements, gets the tribute he deserves. I returned a few times to the sepulchral white room in the pavilion where a rectangular carpet of licorice candies (you may take one, if you wish) evokes a gravesite beneath a rectangle of scrimmed skylight. My heart leapt every time.

I also finally made it into the German pavilion, having skipped the daunting lines over the weekend, and I saw Iza Genzken's appalling melange of mirrors, astronaut costumes, nooses and suitcases (something to do with

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"petrodollars," she has said, as if that's an explanation). Then I checked in on Tracy Emin's tortured, itchy, nude self-portrait etchings and drawings in the British Pavilion: as wan and second-hand as they had first looked. Like warmed over Egon Schieles, they left me feeling that the cunning but sophomoric Emin has fixed her sights on the art market's taste for collectibles while proving that even the cheekiest British artists are reactionaries at heart.

The Korean pavilion was a mild surprise. A young, Yale-trained artist named Hyungkoo Lee has fabricated the presumptive fossil remains of Bugs Bunny, Tom, Jerry and others, somberly presenting them in glass vitrines as if at a natural history museum; there's also something to do with devices to enhance his own physique and a surgical theater full of obscure instrumentation, conjuring up Matthew Barney. A pair of 8-year-olds accompanying me found this all quite fascinating, as they did David Altmejd's contribution on behalf of Canada, which is a house of mirrors full of stuffed squirrels, hair, berries, mushrooms, werewolves and other harum-scarum stuff typical of the artist. He gets the prize for the most industrious, if not the most profound, pavilion.

A near second, across the gardens, is Poland, where Monika Sosnowska has somehow shoehorned the huge twisted armature of a hypothetical building into that nation's whitewashed pavilion, recalling earlier coups of unlikely architecture by Gordon Matta-Clark and Robert Smithson. Cogitating supposedly on bygone utopias and Communism's fall, it impresses mostly as a logistical feat and was one of the few large-scale sculptural gambits that worked.

The funniest entry belongs to Jaime Vallaure and Rafael Lamata, calling themselves Los Torreznos, in the Spanish Pavilion. Seated side by side against a white backdrop in several different videos, they broadly gesticulate, shouting back and forth names and phrases in rhythmic, comedic crescendo: "Marx!" "Maaao!" Marx!" Maaaaaooo!" "Hitler!" "Maaaaaoooo!" "Kropotkin!!!!" A matter of timing, like all comedy, "Election Night" is funnier than it sounds.

Storr's show is not funny at all. In the Arsenale Storr relies on photographs documenting far-flung global crises. These blessedly avoid the usual art-world hectoring and two-bit posturing, providing instead, as Storr put it, "something to think about other than the art world." Well, thank goodness for that.

In the Italian Pavilion he stresses more estimable seniors, clearly catering not to jaded insiders but to a broader public, the one that comes to see the show when it's actually open, for whom the sight of new, or nearly new, paintings by Gerhard Richter, Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Ryman and Sigmar Polke does not provoke a rolling of eyes.

I confess to some eye-rolling. Storr's choices seemed dully risk-averse at first.

But then, I reckoned there was some sense to it. Storr, after all, has spent his career endorsing these very artists and others in the Italian Pavilion - Susan Rothenberg, Sol LeWitt (a spectacular pair of spidery wall drawings), Elizabeth Murray, Louise Bourgeois and Bruce Nauman. It would have been strange, not to mention disingenuous, had he ignored them to game the insiders' response, especially because his goal was to put on view the art he deems most worth looking at.

So in lieu of the usual bazaar, with hundreds of artists in no logical order, Storr limits his choice to 96. An argument, based on serendipity, can be made for a bit more chaos. But less scrupulously, chaos panders to commerce, making the biennale resemble an art fair. This show declines to emulate that model and also skips the navel-gazing and institutional critique that art festivals favor, stressing instead good old patient looking.

The closer I looked, the more turned up. Adel Abdessemed's circles made of barbed wire, tucked in a corner and easily missed, gave a subtle twist to a Minimalist theme. They were behind El Anatsui's chainmail tapestries, made of metal bottle caps and whisky bottle collars, which provided a rare dose of sheer eye candy.

Tomoko Yoneda's plainspoken photographs, on inspection, revealed themselves to be views of a minefield in the demilitarized zone in South Korea, a sniper's post in Beirut and a view of Israel from a <u>Hezbollah</u>-controlled village in Lebanon. They snuck up on me.

A Colombian artist, Oscar Munoz, on five adjacent screens, shows various faces being drawn in watercolor on stone. The faces evaporate in the heat, suggesting the disappeared in South America. It's lovely, and dovetailed

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with another remarkable work, by an American artist, Emily Prince, who makes palm-sized drawings of all the American soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Drawing in each case served as a kind of penitential remembrance.

This is quiet art. Much of this biennale seems to murmur, rather than shout. The art world these days bellows and struts. I doubt this will be recalled as a groundbreaking show among biennales but it is at least an independent one. A series of photographs of bombed-out buildings in Beirut by Gabriele Basilico, an Italian artist, hang near a cut-and-dry informational display by Yto Barrada, a French artist, about how indigenous flowers in Tangier have been overrun by commercial development. They're both works about civic demise, one linked to war, the other to prosperity.

There's the large brick model of a favela, put together by a group of Brazilian children called the Morrinho Project, which insinuates itself (meaningfully) outside the United States pavilion. It has become a playground for kids visiting the biennale, who clamber over it with toy cars. The favela reappears at the Arsenale in the work of Paula Trope, a Brazilian artist, who photographed the children of the Morrinho Project. The combination is a nice touch.

In the end, I found enough worth seeing twice. A Japanese artist called Tabaimo has concocted an animation of a dollhouse, furnished by disembodied hands that frantically scratch away at each other and then the rooms, revealing a kind of body underneath, before a flood begins the cycle again. Ilya and Emilia Kabakov have returned to form with an elaborate installation called "Manas," of a utopian city in northern Tibet, replete with intricate models of mountain observatories where inhabitants received cosmic energy and communed with extraterrestrials. On certain days, so the Kabakovs explain, an identical city could be seen hovering in the sky, the heavenly Manas to which the earthly one aspires.

That's not a bad metaphor for the biennale. In a different sort of eye-opening work, a video called "Shadow Boxing" by Sophie Whettnall, a Belgian, a tall young woman, I presume the artist, stands motionless while a boxer dances and jabs around her, his fist coming just millimeters from her face. The camera pans in. We see her hair move with the breeze of passing blows. Her expression remains impassive, studiously unaffected by the violence. But her eyes dilate. It's impossible, it turns out, to remain impervious to what's going on around her, no matter how cool she wants to look.

Maybe that's the best metaphor for art now.

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Body

MIDEAST

U.S. ARMS PACTS TO COUNTER IRAN, SYRIA: RICE

WASHINGTON - The United States Monday announced new military pacts worth US\$13 billion for Egypt, \$30 billion for Israel and billions more for Saudi Arabia and Gulf states, in a bid to counter Iran.

Details of the new Middle East military aid bonanza came as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates left Washington for a rare joint trip to the region, seeking assurances of help in stabilizing Iraq.

"To support our continued diplomatic engagement in the region, we are forging new assistance agreements with the Gulf States, Israel, and Egypt," Rice said in a statement.

The move will "help bolster forces of moderation and support a broader strategy to counter the negative influences of al-Qaida, *Hezbollah*, Syria, and Iran," she said.

FAN KILLED MOTHER AS TEAM LOST: PROSECUTORS

NEW YORK - A New York man has been charged with beating his mother to death with a barbell after losing his temper while watching a baseball game on television.

Michael Anthony, 25, was watching the New York Mets lose a game on Saturday from his home in the borough of Queens when he began furiously banging on the walls, Queens District Attorney Richard Brown said in a statement on Monday.

His father Fred Fischman shouted at him to stop, but Anthony punched him in the face and threw him to the ground, according to the criminal charges.

When Anthony's mother, Maria Fischman, 61, tried to intervene, prosecutors said he stabbed her once in the head with a knife before chasing her into a bedroom where he struck her several times with the nine kilogram barbell.

AL GORE'S SON PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG POSSESSION

LOS ANGELES - The 24-year-old son of former vice- president Al Gore pleaded guilty Monday to drug possession stemming from his arrest earlier this month for speeding about 160 km/h.

During a brief court hearing in Laguna Niguel, California, Albert Arnold Gore III also agreed to enter a nine-month drug treatment program.

If he completes that program successfully by Feb. 7, a judge would ultimately dismiss all of the charges against him, prosecutors said.

Gore, whose father is now a leading fighter of global warming, was driving an environmentally friendly hybrid Toyota Prius on a freeway south of Los Angeles on July 4 when he was pulled over by an Orange County sheriff's deputy at about 2:15 a.m..

Prosecutors say a search of his car turned up a small amount of marijuana, along with prescription drugs, including Valium, Xanax, Vicodin, Adderall and Soma.

WOMAN ACCUSED OF MUTILATING STEPFATHER

NEW YORK - A New York City woman allegedly strangled and sexually mutilated her stepfather, and then checked herself into the psych ward of a local hospital, a police spokesman said Monday.

The mutilated body of Eric Goodridge, 55, was discovered Saturday afternoon at the Queens home of his 26-year-old stepdaughter, Brigitte Harris. Goodridge had been strangled, the New York Medical Examiner's office said.

Officials suspect that Harris cut off Goodridge's penis after he was dead because he did not bleed to death.

Harris was discovered in the New York borough of Staten Island, where she had checked herself into a hospital psychological ward, the Queens District attorney's office said.

Police said the investigation is ongoing but that they planned to arrest Harris once she was released from the hospital.

Notes that seemed to accuse Goodridge of abuse were found in Harris' apartment, the New York Daily News newspaper reported. One note said: "At first, I blamed myself. Now I know it's not my fault." Another read: "He wrecked my life."

N.Y. TO SELL FOREIGN COINS FOUND IN PARKING METERS

NEW YORK - New York officials are to sell off more than 220 kilos of foreign coins found in the city's parking meters, the most common of them being Greek drachmas, according to a report on Monday.

"We have pretty much every denomination from every continent," Anthony Alfano, deputy chief of meter collections, told the New York Daily News. He said that drachma coins, replaced by the euro in 2002, were the most common.

Buyers in the past have paid up to US\$8.80 dollars a kilo for the coins, with the proviso that they take the lot.

Smarter parking meters, however, are making it harder for cheats. Nearly three times as many non-U.S. coins were found in the city's parking meters as recently as 2001.

ITALY LAWMAKER RESIGNS AFTER PROSTITUTE OVERDOSES

ROME - An Italian lawmaker, who once advocated drug tests for parliamentarians, resigned from his party in disgrace on Monday after being caught at a hotel with a prostitute who had overdosed on drugs.

Lower house deputy Cosimo Mele denied taking cocaine himself and said he was proud he took responsibility when the prostitute felt ill. He requested an ambulance for her at their posh Rome hotel.

"I'm proud of myself. When I alerted the hotel reception and then asked them to call an ambulance, I realized that my name could get out," Mele, 50, told Corriere della Sera newspaper.

"Many other guys would have taken off," added Mele, who is married with three children.

DUTCH CONVICTION FOR INSULTING THE QUEEN

THE HAGUE - For the first time in years a Dutch man was convicted for insulting Queen Beatrix after he called her a prostitute in front of police officers, the ANP news agency reported Monday.

The 47-year-old was officially convicted of lese majesty and sentenced to serve seven days in jail and pay a 400-euro (US\$547) fine.

In June the man got into an argument with police officers in Amsterdam. After giving a Nazi salute he called the queen a prostitute and proceeded to describe sex acts he would like to perform on her.

Although the judge ruled that the authorities including the queen should have thick skin he concluded that the man's comments could not be said to be social criticism because of the sexual content.

PATRIARCH TEOCTIST I DIES AGED 92 FOLLOWING SURGERY

BUCHAREST - The patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Teoctist I, died Monday aged 92 after suffering a heart attack following a prostate operation in Bucharest, a hospital source said.

"The patriarch died at 5 p.m. local time (10 a.m. EDT)," doctor Constantin Sava said.

Teoctist had been admitted to Fundeni hospital in Bucharest Monday morning for his operation.

Sava said the patriarch's condition following the operation had been "good" but he had then suffered a heart attack following "complications."

21 DEAD, HUNDREDS HOMELESS IN INFERNO

JOHANNESBURG - At least 21 people have been killed and hundreds of homes destroyed by a series of forest fires which have swept through parts of South Africa and Swaziland, officials said Monday.

Thirteen people died in the rural parts of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province while six firefighters died in neighbouring Mpumalanga over the weekend, said Hilgard Matthews, a spokesman for the water affairs and forestry department.

A statement from KZN's provincial government said thousands of pigs, sheep, cows and goats were either burnt alive or had to be put down.

Around 320 homes were destroyed in KZN while there was also widespread damage to property in Mpumalanga, although an exact tally has not been compiled.

In neighbouring Swaziland, two people were killed as a fire destroyed 80 per cent of a thick pine forest, as fires crossed over from South Africa, leaving some 100 people homeless.

WOMAN, BABY HAVE THROATS SLIT IN DRC: RADIO

KINSHASA - A woman and her three-month-old baby had their throats slit in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo by a man wearing a military uniform, a UN-backed radio station reported Monday.

The 23-year-old woman was harvesting corn in her field in the village of Kitchambuwa in the eastern North-Kivu province, near the Ugandan border, when she was raped and then killed with her baby, Okapi radio reported, quoting witnesses.

The woman's son found her body, covered in numerous deep wounds, according to the report.

Civil and military authorities in the province told Agence France-Presse they had launched investigations into the killing.

20 ILLEGAL MIGRANTS FEARED DROWNED OFF COMOROS

MORONI - At least 20 illegal migrants were feared drowned on Monday after their boat sank off Comoros en route to the French-administered island of Mayotte, residents said.

Kamaleddine Gharibou, director general of a hospital on Anjouan, one of Comoros' three main islands, said about 30 passengers including **women** and children were onboard the small fishing boat when it sank on Friday.

Seven survivors were brought to his hospital, Gharibou said, where four of them -- two Comorian men, a woman and a 5-year-old child from Madagascar -- later died.

LANDLESS RAID RANCH OWNED BY REV. SUN MYUNG MOON

BRASILIA - At least 100 landless people have taken over a ranch in southwestern Brazil owned by South Korea religious leader Reverend Sun Myung Moon and evicted his followers, said police on Monday.

The landless workers stormed onto the ranch Friday night, changing the locks on the gates, raiding the property's headquarters and kicking out everyone except a lone South Korean man who peacefully resisted, local media reported.

The 3,000-hectare Jamaica Ranch was used mainly for grazing cattle by a few dozen members of Rev. Moon's Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, said Luis Carlos Bonelli, an official for Brazil's agrarian land reform agency, Incra.

Incra had claimed the Jamaica Ranch and two adjacent properties for landless farm workers in 2004.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Al Gore III;

Colour Photo: Condoleezza Rice;

Colour Photo: Patriarch Teoctist;

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Body

International

FOR TURKEY'S RELIGIOUS MERCHANTS,

Wealth Comes with Spiritual Costs

While other Muslim societies are wrestling with radicals, Turkey's religious merchant class is struggling instead with riches. Observant Muslims in one of the world's most self-consciously secular states have become a new elite. "Muslims here used to be tested by poverty," said Sehminur Aydin, an observant Muslim businesswoman and the daughter of a manufacturing magnate. "Now they're being tested by wealth." PAGE A6

A FILMIC SAFE HAVEN IN MARSEILLE

France's second-largest city, Marseille, prides itself on being a rough melting pot of differences, but with unemployment rising quickly and nearly 40 percent of the population under the poverty line, unrest is near the surface of this port city. Some of the toughest districts are in the hills above L'Estaque where the city-owned L'Alhambra, a movie palace of the 1930s, has become an unexpected safe harbor for the community. PAGE A6

LEBANON ARMY DEFUSES 8 ROCKETS

Lebanese Army soldiers found and dismantled eight Katyusha rockets that were pointed south toward Israel. The rockets were found near the southern town of Naqura, where an expanded United Nations peacekeeping force has been monitoring an uneasy truce since the war in the summer of 2006 between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u>, the Shiite militant group. PAGE A8

In Sudan, Feud Puts Treaty at Risk A10

POPE DELIVERS PEACE MESSAGE

Delivering his annual "Urbi et Orbi" message from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Benedict XVI called for peace in the Middle East, Darfur and Zimbabwe and stability in other war-torn lands in a particularly politically pointed Christmas greeting to Rome and the rest of the world. PAGE A10

GOVERNMENT FALLS IN GUINEA COUP

In one fell swoop, most of the top politicians in Guinea surrendered themselves to the cadre of junior officers who began seizing power on Tuesday after the death of the country's longstanding ruler. "We're all happy," said Mamadou Bah, a tailor in Conakry, the impoverished West African country's steamy, seaside capital. He said that if the junior officers did what they promised -- namely, wipe out corruption and hold elections within two years -- the people would support them. PAGE A14

CHRISTMAS MASS IN WAR-TORN MOSUL

The northern city of Mosul remains one of the most dangerous places in Iraq and a stubborn holdout of the insurgency, but Iraqi Christians braved embattled streets and biting cold and rain to attend Christmas Masses and pray for their safety. PAGE A14

NATIONAL

TALKING TO FEDERAL PROSECUTORS

An Easy Choice for Obama

It is not exactly the ideal way to begin a presidency -- or a presidency in waiting -- talking to federal prosecutors. But President-elect Barack Obama's meeting with investigators looking into charges that his former Senate seat was up for sale was probably not a hard choice to make for several reasons. PAGE A20

A BONANZA FOR ANIMALS

It is so legendary in nonprofit circles that it has its own reverential name, "the Ad," a television advertisement for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that has raised about \$30 million since it started running in early 2007. And it came about more or less by accident. PAGE A20

SEEING BETTER IN THE DARK

The International Dark-Sky Association has a slogan for it: "Carpe Noctem," an edict of value to more than just vampires. The fact is, the increasing use of lighting has rendered the night sky unsuitable, in many places, for viewing stars. The glare of Las Vegas, for example, is intruding upon the darkness of Death Valley National Park. In response, the park has set an ambitious goal: to become the first official dark-sky national park. PAGE A22

FAMILY TIES

The complex connections between Robert Toussie and his son Isaac go beyond the political contributions by the father that led to the revoked presidential pardon for the son. The links include business, lawsuits and a chain fence. PAGE A22

NEW YORK

SHORT ON AMENITIES,

But the Price Is Right

It used to shuttle passengers between Martha's Vineyard and New Bedford, Mass. These days it makes an acceptable residence for those concerned more with price (free) than conveniences (patchy heating, nonworking showers, do-it-yourself toilets). Oh, and it may not be legal. PAGE A26

MAN ACCUSED OF FLEECING FLOCK

The \$500,000 that federal prosecutors say Bryant Rodriguez bilked out of members of the El Camino Church pales in comparison to the billions of dollars vanished in some other schemes. But everything is relative. And for the people whose money is missing, it hurts. PAGE A26

A MYSTERIOUS DISPLAY

The elaborate annual display, in the Baychester neighborhood of the Bronx, has saints religious (the Virgin Mary, St. Theresa) and secular (Rita Hayworth and Brigitte Bardot, among others). Big City, Susan Dominus. PAGE A29

BUSINESS

IN FRANCE, DOWNTURN

Costs Unions Influence

Union workers at a Peugeot car plant in eastern France once had enough clout to win shorter workweeks and longer vacations -- during the Great Depression. But in the current global financial crisis, the famously vociferous European workers have been relatively quiet, demonstrating in part how fragmented labor has become. PAGE B1 China's Changing Job Picture B1

OPPORTUNITY AMID THE DOWNTURN

China's closed financial sector has been largely untouched by the mortgage-backed securities that brought down many of the world's banks. But its insular nature has also kept it undeveloped, and companies are looking to take advantage of the worldwide financial downturn by hiring some of the newly unemployed to diversify and upgrade their own staffs. PAGE B1

Argentina's Entrepreneurial Spirit B1

EXPANDING CHANCES FOR WOMEN

Ngozi Okoli-Owube had a preschool for learning-disabled children in Lagos, Nigeria, but lacked training in running a business. A global program run by Goldman Sachs gave her and about 100 other <u>women</u> a chance to learn management. It is the kind of corporate approach helping to increase opportunities for <u>women</u> in emerging countries. PAGE B3

COST-CONSCIOUS FISHING

Anticipating a return of high fuel prices, Japan is exploring high-tech solutions for the commercial fishing industry. Among the approaches is a hybrid fishing trawler that switches between oil and electric-powered propulsion, biofuel-powered marine engines and computer-engineered propeller designs. The government is subsidizing the efforts; an international market is interested in the solutions. PAGE B3

SEEKING GOLD IN INFIRMITIES

Americans have known Royal Philips Electronics -- if at all -- as the maker of Magnavox televisions and Norelco shavers. But now it wants to focus more on items like hospital scanning and monitoring equipment, counting on an aging world population and chronic diseases to provide money in the bank. PAGE B4

Asian Stocks Rise as Oil Falls B4

BROADWAY GOES VIRAL

Broadway is trying to expand its online presence beyond sites with the standard cast bios and ticket-buying links to include a concept known as viral marketing. Productions are using social networking sites to offer updates, widgets for fans to embed in their own pages, music videos -- anything to produce word of mouth. PAGE B5

ESCAPES

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

To an Earlier Hawaii

Molokai is the least visited of the major Hawaiian islands; tourist amenities are scarce (with each factor probably sharing time as cause and effect). But, with a lifestyle more traditionally Polynesian and development discouraged, it is a good place to see what things were like before everything went the way of Oahu.PAGE D1

THE LESSER-KNOWN GULF COAST

Of the five states fronting the Gulf of Mexico, Alabama has the least amount of shoreline. But what's there includes Gulf Shores and Orange Beach and various housing options for the water-or-golf crowd. PAGE D3

Trying to Avoid Skier's Knee D4

A Roman Holiday in New York D4

SPORTS

SOONERS GET A RECRUITING GIFT

On Christmas Day, one of the biggest recruiting targets for Oklahoma and Texas, Jamarkus McFarland, a defensive tackle considered one of the nation's most promising players, gave himself as a present to the Sooners. PAGE B1

GIANTS KNOW THE DRILL

The Giants head into the last game of the regular season with no pressing need for a victory. But somewhere the lessons of last year's December game against the Patriots must be circulating. Harvey Araton, Sports of The Times. PAGE B1

LAKERS STOP CELTICS' STREAK

The Celtics had won a franchise-record 19 games. But the Lakers, in the first meeting of the teams since the Celtics won the N.B.A. championship in June, gave Coach Phil Jackson his 1,000th N.B.A. victory, 92-83. PAGE B10

ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE A MARK

Don Wakamatsu wanted to bring recognition of his Asian-American heritage to the major leagues, but lasted only 18 games for the Chicago White Sox in 1991. But now he has another chance, as manager of the Seattle Mariners, the first of Asian descent in the majors. PAGE B12

Editorial

GETTING IMMIGRATION RIGHT

If you uphold workers' rights, even for people here illegally, you uphold them for all working Americans. If you ignore the rights of illegal immigrants, you encourage the exploitation that erodes working conditions everywhere. In a time of economic darkness, the stability and dignity of the work force is especially vital. PAGE A38

A PARTING SHOT AT **WOMEN**S RIGHTS

As a parting gift to the far right, the Bush administration has proposed a regulation that aims to hinder <u>women</u>'s access to abortion, contraceptives and information necessary to make decisions about their own health -- all wrapped up in a phony claim to safeguard religious freedom. PAGE A38

WELFARE AS WE KNEW IT

A politically acclaimed reform of the 1990s -- "the end to welfare as we know it" in favor of "workfare" -- is fast fraying at the edges. The emphasis on shunting the poor toward low-paying, start-up jobs is becoming increasingly pointless as the job market ossifies. PAGE A38

Op-Ed

PAUL KRUGMAN

Franklin Roosevelt simultaneously made government much bigger and much cleaner. Barack Obama needs to do the same thing. PAGE A39

BOXING DAY IS FOR GIVING

Op-Ed contributor Judith Flanders, the author of "Inside the Victorian Home" and "A Circle of Sisters," calls for a new way of celebrating a very British holiday -- one that even Americans would be wise to embrace. PAGE A39

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTOS

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Violent agenda carefully veiled

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Body

The British plot has led to renewed calls for a ban on Hizb ut-Tahrir, writes Rebecca Weisser L

AST week Attorney-General Philip Ruddock said he would look again at whether Hizb ut-Tahrir should be banned in Australia. If Ruddock decides it should, Australia will become the first Western nation to proscribe the shadowy organisation, which is active in more than 40 countries across the world.

Former British prime minister Tony Blair came close to banning Hizb ut-Tahrir two years ago after the July 7, 2005 bombings. But in the end it was decided there wasn't sufficient evidence to show Hizb ut-Tahrir was a terrorist organisation or provided material support to terrorists.

The US came to the same conclusion. In Australia, NSW Premier Morris lemma has called for the organisation to be banned. But although ASIO has investigated it on two separate occasions, there has never been sufficient evidence linking it to terrorism to outlaw it.

According to Zeyno Baran, director of international security and energy programs at the Nixon Centre in Washington, DC: "Hizb produces thousands of manipulated brains, which then graduate from Hizb and become members of groups like al-Qa'ida. Even if Hizb does not itself engage in terrorist acts, because of the ideology it provides, it acts like a conveyor belt for terrorists."

Wassim Doureihi, a Sydney-based spokesman for Hizb ut-Tahrir in Australia, last week denied the conveyor-belt claim. When asked on ABC's Lateline whether his primary allegiance was to Australia, he said that as a Muslim his primary identity was derived through his allegiance to Islam. Doureihi said that he supported the line in the Koran that exhorts Muslims to kill Jews wherever they find them, but denied that Hizb ut-Tahrir was anti-Semitic.

He was also confident the organisation would not be banned. "They have conducted reviews previously in this country and in the UK, and there is no basis whatsoever under current legislation to tie Hizb ut-Tahrir to any form of violence," he said.

Probably the most famous member of Hizb ut-Tahrir to become a terrorist is Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was the leader of al-Qa'ida in Iraq until he was killed on June 7, 2006. According to New Statesman journalist Shiv Malik, who cited intelligence sources, Zarqawi was a former member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, as was the mechanical engineer Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged September 11 mastermind who has been implicated in a host of other

terrorist plots over the past 20 years including the World Trade Centre bombing of 1993, the Bali nightclub bombings and the murder of the Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl.

Radical cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed was the leader and spiritual head of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain until 1996, when he split with the group. Bakri praised the September 11 hijackers, has raised funds for Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, reaffirmed the fatwa on Salman Rushdie, called for terror attacks on Dublin airport because US troops transited there on their way to Iraq, and secretly called for nine terrorists to capture a Muslim soldier in the British army and videotape his beheading. He fled to Lebanon after the July 2005 bombings and has been banned from returning to Britain.

When author Ed Husain, a former member of the radical Islamist party, called in May for the organisation to be banned in Britain, his plea fell on deaf ears. But two months later his impassioned demand had been taken up by British Opposition Leader David Cameron, and featured in Prime Minister Gordon Brown's first prime ministerial question time. Cameron accused Hizb ut-Tahrir of "poisoning the minds of young people" and of calling for Jews to be killed wherever they are found.

The role of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the radicalisation of terrorists was demonstrated when it was revealed that four of the seven suspects in the failed terror attacks on London on June29 and in Glasgow on July1 had links to a Hizb ut-Tahrir cell in Cambridge. A Hizb spokesman has denied that anyone detained over the terror attacks was a member of the organisation, but Husain says that the group deliberately withholds membership from some of its associates so it can deny links with them if they break the law.

Another former Hizb ut-Tahrir member, Shiraz Maher, says that engineer Kafeel Ahmed, who drove the jeep into Glasgow airport, and his passenger, Bilal Abdulla, were both actively associated with the Cambridge cell members.

Hizb ut-Tahrir literature openly states that "Islam will naturally be at odds with, or even in conflict with, every other civilisation or ideology". But although Hizb ut-Tahrir has been able to take advantage of tolerant pluralist societies in the West to spread its message of Islamist intolerance, it has been banned in many countries in the Middle East, including Jordan, where it originated.

Hizb ut-Tahrir was founded in 1953 by a Palestinian court official, Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, living in East Jerusalem, which was then part of Jordan. It seeks to establish a global caliphate under strict sharia law. This would include the death penalty for any Muslim who renounced their religion, and a complete ban on adultery and alcohol. Hizb ut-Tahrir is opposed to democracy because it is government by people rather than by God. The only election allowed is that of the caliph by Muslims. The primary role of <u>women</u> is as wives and mothers, and the caliph cannot be a woman. There would be segregation of the sexes and Muslim <u>women</u> would be required to wear a jilbab, a long, loose-fitting garment, plus a headscarf.

Hizb ut-Tahrir is openly anti-Western. Nabhani blamed British plots and Western imperial conspiracies for preventing the return of the caliphate. In his book The System of Islam, Nabhani claimed that the Muslim world had stagnated not because it had failed to westernise but because it abandoned its adherence to Islam and because Muslims allowed foreign cultures and concepts to occupy their minds.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has been compared by Ariel Cohen of the Heritage Foundation to the Trotskyite wing of the international communist movement. Its goals are Islamist but its method of organisation is Leninist.

It has a three-stage plan to establish the global caliphate. In the first phase it recruits members who operate in secret cells; potential members are invited to join only after two years of study. In the second phase, members build support among Muslims for a caliphate and infiltrate government institutions. Once the organisation believes there is support for a caliphate, it will seek to overthrow the government through a coup d'etat, by gaining the support of army generals and other influential people.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has been involved in failed coup attempts in Jordan, Syria and Egypt. It is banned in much of the Middle East as well as in Russia. Its members have been arrested in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. It was proscribed in Pakistan but the ban was lifted.

Violent agenda carefully veiled

Hizb has not been proscribed anywhere in the West because it disavows violence as a means of establishing a caliphate. It was banned from public activity in Germany after handing out anti-Semitic leaflets that quoted the Koran as saying: "The stones and trees will say: O Muslim, o slave of Allah, here is a Jew behind me so come and kill him."

A Danish court also handed down a 60-day suspended sentence to a Hizb ut-Tahrir spokesman in 2002 for distributing racist propaganda. The leaflet said of the Jews, again quoting the Koran: "And kill them wherever you find them and turn them out from where they have turned you out."

Husain says Hizb ut-Tahrir advocates that British Muslims' allegiance should be to the coming caliph in the Middle East, rather than to Queen and country. "This caliph would instruct us to act as agents of the caliphate in Britain and open a home front by assisting the expansionist state," he explains. "We believed that all Arab governments were not sufficiently Islamic and were liable to removal; entire populations would submit to the army of the caliph, or face extinction."

According to Husain, Hizb ut-Tahrir members believe Britain, France, the US and Russia are enemies and the army of the Islamist state would "march on Downing Street and raise the Islamist flag above Westminster".

The main problem facing Western governments in deciding what to about Hizb ut-Tahrir is that it is extremely careful not to overstep the boundaries of what is acceptable in Western societies in its public statements, while preaching something different to its members.

Although it ostensibly eschews violence, Husain says it actually calls for "an expansionist, violent, totalitarian Islamist state".

Others such as Ameer Ali, the former chairman of the federal Government's Muslim Community Reference Group, claim that while banning Hizb ut-Tahrir in a Muslim country might be appropriate, it is totally inappropriate in Australia.

Ali told Radio Australia in January that the utterances of Hizb ut-Tahrir should be monitored, but banning it wouldn't be a wise move, "because once you ban them they go underground. That is much more dangerous."

Rebecca Weisser is a Sydney-based reporter.

LIFE OF THE PARTY

- * Hizb ut-Tahrir (sometimes abbreviated to Hizb) means Party of Liberation. It is a radical Sunni Islamist organisation whose goal is to establish a global caliphate (khilafah) and establish sharia law.
- * Hizb ut-Tahrir has a constitution for its proposed Islamic state with 187 articles.
- * It was founded in 1953 by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (1909-1977), a Palestinian Islamic jurist in Jerusalem, then part of Jordan.
- * Hizb was immediately banned by Jordan and in 1955 Nabhani was banned from returning to the country. He settled first in Damascus and then Beirut, from where he continued to lead the party.
- * Hizb ut-Tahrir's present leader is Ata Khalil Abu-Rashta (born 1943), a civil engineer who joined the party in the mid-1950s and became its first official spokesman.
- * Hizb ut-Tahrir is said to be active in 40 countries. It membership is not known but in 2004 an estimate by Shiv Malik put it at one million members worldwide, and its influence in Central Asia at 10 million.

Load-Date: July 8, 2007



No Headline In Original

Canberra Times (Australia)

May 12, 2007 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. B06 Length: 1006 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

AFP bashing Your recent reporting regarding the unfortunate Clea Rose incident is truly disappointing.

Every day's article appears to be an unashamed attempt at bashing the AFP's handling of the case and is unreservedly biased towards the views of those who obviously have an axe to grind with the police's management of the case.

I would suggest these people would be much better off directing their anger at the underage youths who came off relatively lightly in this affair instead of misguidedly taking it out on the officers who were trying to avoid an even bigger tragedy.

The morale of our police officers cannot be good if our daily newspaper is so openly biased against them when they try and perform their duties.

Thinus van Rensburg, Spence Senate control The reality of the Government's complete control of the Senate has just been illustrated again.

The baby bonus is to paid to under- 18s as a fortnightly instalment. Good idea, most people think.

But the question is what to do in a situation where most people would think a lump sum more appropriate (someone needing a car for the baby, someone needing heated accommodation for the baby, etc). A <u>women</u>'s non-government organisation suggested that retaining the flexibility to approve exceptional lump-sum payments would help. A social worker could be required to certify the wisdom of the alternative arrangement surely flexibility is important here.

The Government response was just to say that it had thought about it but, on balance, its decision was that it would stick with its uniform arrangement (Senate Community Affairs Committee Report, May 9, 2007).

No further discussion. No attempt at reasoned explanation.

The arrogance of just deciding, with that glib phrase on balance, to go ahead and ignore the reasonable, thought out, argued through suggestion is awful.

And it can do this with such comfortable confidence because there's nothing anyone can do about it (though the Greens did try).

No Headline In Original

Please God, if the election does nothing else, let it bring greater accountability and thought.

Marion Barker, O'Connor China 'unworthy' Thank you for publishing an extract of a Boston Globe editorial ("China is an enabler of evil", May 10, p18).

Placing it alongside a letter by C.

Thompson, of Forrest, advocating that the Australian cricket tour of Zimbabwe be cancelled (Letters, May 10, p18) was a nice touch.

I will support the cancellation of the tour of Zimbabwe, when the Australian Government condemns the Peoples Republic of China's support not just for the murderous regime in Zimbabwe, but also for those in Sudan, Burma and Uzbekistan.

This will be a first step towards highlighting why Beijing is an unworthy host for the 2008 Olympic Games.

Joseph P. Quigley, Tomakin, NSW Party candidates The behaviour of all parties in seeking candidates of fame and high profile has been a feature of recent and impending elections.

Local constituent branches are obviously irrelevant, other than to hand out how-to-vote cards.

This is despite recent experience indicating there is a significant gap between the name and the performance.

As various national executives ride roughshod over local branches, it is clear that the democracy that spawned the Curtins, Chifleys and Menzies of this world has long gone.

This situation in the Liberal Party is no surprise.

Over time the Liberal parliamentary leadership has assumed more and more power, dictating preferred candidature such as media personnel, merchant bankers etc.

In the Labor Party the position is more ambiguous.

While constantly lecturing the Government on inclusiveness and consultation, Labor leadership displays little stomach for these precepts in it own internal dealings.

No place here for the committed party hack seeking fairness and equity.

James Grenfell, Spence Against legacy Canberrans need to stand up against the National Capital Authority's planned Griffin Legacy changes. The beauty within the Lake environs is unequalled in the cities of the world that I have visited.

We, who love the lake as it is, can walk, jog, roller-blade, cycle, picnic and amble along the walkways with friends and relatives while drinking in the beauty and tranquillity of the surrounds. Why, we even have time to sit and stare.

In order to find out how our peace and tranquillity will be shattered by the planned Griffin Legacy changes, get along to the Regatta Point exhibition where you will see the Albert Hall seemingly buried by four buildings. We are told we need these buildings in order to liven up the Lake, to give us retail and coffee shop therapy. Look further at the Regatta Point exhibition and you will see that City Hall will also be buried by big buildings.

How the developers must love the planned Griffin Legacy changes.

They must be salivating at the prospect of such developments.

It would appear that the NCA is trying to turn West Basin and City Hall into another Darling Harbour.

No Headline In Original

Beryl Legge-Wilkinson Campbell Israel's war Roy Darling (Letters, May 8) complains that the Winograd report into Israel's war with <u>Hezbollah</u> last year doesn't criticise Israel's "deliberate killings of Lebanese civilians and UN peace- keepers", or "the use of banned weapons".

Why should it?

It never happened. According to both Israeli and Kuwaiti sources, between 600 and 800 of the alleged Lebanese civilians killed were actually *Hezbollah* fighters dressed in civilian clothes.

Terrorist groups like <u>Hezbollah</u> admit that they don't follow the laws of war, which require soldiers to wear uniforms to distinguish them from civilians.

Those civilians who regrettably were killed lost their lives due to the heinous <u>Hezbollah</u> tactic of using them as human shields.

Indeed, the UN peacekeepers had complained about <u>Hezbollah</u> firing at the Israelis from directly adjacent to the UN post.

Darling doesn't specify the banned weapons Israel allegedly used because there were none. As for the destruction of infrastructure, Israel sought only to destroy those items it needed to stop <u>Hezbollah</u> from using to target Israeli citizens.

Athol Morris, Scullin

Load-Date: May 11, 2007



Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Quiet war gets louder: Euan Ferguson returns to Sri Lanka to find conflict between Tamil rebels and government forces intensifying and the island in a state of fear

Guardian Weekly July 11, 2008 Friday

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*The*GuardianWeekly

Section: Pg. 25

Length: 2427 words

Byline: Euan Ferguson

Body

Hard not to laugh when you're told about Claymore landmines near a military checkpoint, and learn that the Claymore, shaped like a fat, convex laptop with little legs to bury in the ground, has embossed writing on the business end that says: "Front towards Enemy." Even the arms industry has health and safety disclaimers. One of the most effective counters to their tripwires is Silly String, which lands on, and discloses, them, without detonation. So the deadly weasels of modern warfare come with safety warnings, and they're fought by streamers for kids' parties.

Not much laughter here otherwise. This is a foul place to die, this inner country. Food rots at an awful rate. Vines and creepers twist around any dead animal or abandoned house, pulling them back to an ancient green. Wooden shacks tick at night in the heat; and in the morning, thin, young, scared sol diers, many disastrously untrained, smell of fear as they check bags and trucks, and channel their panic to the innocents. "Their mothers will get 200,000 rupees [\$6,000] when they are killed," explains Pearl Thevanayagan, an exiled Tamil, "so it is, if you like, a good career move to join. At least for the family."

Sri Lanka is one of the kindest countries on earth. Even when I was here after the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami, I was struck by the welcome from those who had nothing, both the majority Sinhalese and the Tamils. And, still, you can head south from Colombo, take a taxi to the beaches and beauty of Galle.

And then you try to go north. Here are the landmines. Here is one of the world's most vicious little wars. Here are not only the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) but their offshoot, the Black Tigers, the suicide squads. Between 1980 and 2000, the Tigers carried out 168 suicide attacks on civilians and military targets, easily exceeding those in the same period by <u>Hizbullah</u> and Hamas combined. And now they're going for the softest targets of all, the impoverished working people of Sri Lanka. At the start of 2008 the government vowed to break the Tigers within a year, and there is now fear among travellers, in markets, at any public event.

For all those decades of suicide practice, you'd think they might be getting the hang of it. But in Colombo's Fort Railway Station, a few weeks before my visit, it all went wrong. A <u>female</u> bomber was spotted acting oddly by police - too many clothes for the cloying heat - and fled from the turnstile back into the station. By platform three she sat

Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Quiet war gets louder: Euan Ferguson returns to Sri Lanka to find conflict between Tamil rebels and government forces intensifyi....

down and exploded and took 11 others with her. It is a miserable station, the ground dank with old fruit and poverty, but travel must go on. "I remember the smell, mainly," says Neel, who heard the explosion. "I couldn't get in to do anything, but I remember the smell from just outside." The dead included half a high school baseball team; 92 were injured.

A rank odour hangs over Mount Lavinia, a suburb south of the capital, when I get there just after hearing of a bus bomb. They're still mopping up. Outsiders are not welcomed by the authorities, but the shopkeepers are as friendly as most on this unhappy island. A passenger, Indrani Fernando, saw a suspicious bag left under a seat: "When no one claimed it I told the crew and shouted at people to get off." The bus halted in the middle of a junction and everyone filed off and began walking away, and the police were called. Twenty seconds after the driver had climbed off, the bomb exploded; 10 passersby were injured. Fernando later took a call from the president thanking her for her vigilance. I go to see the bus: no one would have survived.

Just before I arrived in Sri Lanka, another bus had been blown up outside Dambulla, a holy rest stop on the journey to the east. The 18 dead were almost all pilgrims, and included children. In the remote southern town of Buttala, rebels had recently failed to kill most of the passengers on a bus with a bomb; so they gunned down 32 passengers as they fled in flames. Desperate tactics have been adopted by the Tigers, but there are signs that by targeting civilians they are losing whatever sympathies they once had within the majority Sinhalese population.

In January the government ended a six-year official ceasefire that was a flimsy confection, but at least nominally policed by outside observers. The problem with Sri Lanka is the impossibility of access: it is a jungle out there. The government will give very little access north other than to carefully approved agencies, and it only allows them to see what it wants: journalists and aid workers have been targeted by both sides, and have disappeared.

For years there has been skirmishing, and quiet rearming, on both sides, and the gathering of funds, not least from London. An estimated 150,000 Tamils live in Britain, and there has long been fundraising there for the LTTE; the Sri Lankan government estimates \$140m is raised annually in Britain, despite the Tigers being a proscribed organisation.

There was a brief rapport, and even co-operation with the military, after the tsunami. But open war erupted this January. President Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected last year on a tough anti-Tiger ticket, and is winning more public sympathy, at home at least, than he had expected. (The western world still frowns on him, so the arms now come from China.) The UN's Norwegian observers, who'd been urging a political rather than military solution, have left in disgust. So the army, its numbers boosted to more than 150,000, now wages open war in the north. Even though government figures are spun - if you count the number of dead rebels claimed by its press releases, there would hardly be a Sri Lankan alive - and the press based in the capital are spoon-fed, everyone agrees there had been vital ground taken in the north-west, towards Mannar, where artillery battle still rages, and on the north-east coast. More than 1,500 rebels have died this year, according to the government, and although the Tigers dispute the figures they don't do so with much enthusiasm.

The rebels, pinned down in two territories, have taken to bombs on trains and on buses. In Colombo, around the presidential palace and the army HQ, the security is fierce. The main roads in the city begin to close shortly after sundown. Along the waterfront, just north from the tourist hotels, there is a sentry every 10 metres. Gunboats growl offshore. There are, away from the hotels, checkpoints everywhere. The rebels have had to go for soft targets.

We are stopped four times one night on the way to Colombo 13, a predominantly Tamil area. After a while it becomes a nuisance, although some police are more pleasant than others. Many are, like the Tamils, boys with guns. The Voeni Bar grows subtly more quiet on our entry. It's only after two hours, when most drinkers have got through a bottle of arrack, a fierce coconut liquor, that they will talk. However, "I have kept my mouth shut for 20 years," whispers one Tamil, "I'm not going to start talking now." This is the story of their lives: Tamils are wary of speaking either for or against the Tigers. Both the government and the Tigers are notorious for making people disappear. The UN working group on enforced and involuntary disappearances last year noted 317 in Sri Lanka, the highest number in the world. The security services deny involvement; the LTTE deny everything.

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Youngsters at the table are less reticent. "It is difficult to talk. Whatever you say, one side will see you as a traitor," says the most confident. "But I think things have changed, a little. A lot. LTTE used to have support from many people who were not Tamil. Here, in the cities, within the Sinhalese. These people are still our friends, my friends, we move freely. The man you are with . . ." He breaks off to take a cigarette from the taxi driver. "He is Sinhalese, and welcome. But most of them have fallen out with the LTTE now and do not like them. This business of bombing buses. It is the poorest people they get. It seems a mad thing to do."

We get stopped four more times on the way back to the hotel. It is good practice for the next day. The drive to Trincomalee, on the far east coast, should take about eight hours from Colombo, there and back. It takes 16. There are, at a rough count, 70 checkpoints. Each police or military commander is made to answer for any mistakes. Papers are checked four times, at heavy gunpoint. There are no computers, just pencils, and barked queries. There is much frustration. A quiet fear, beating away softly. The impenetrable nature of the forest beyond, the wilds of the Huluru reserve, where elephants still roam - we almost hit two of them, grey boulders swinging suddenly into the jeep-lights - lasts for hundreds of miles north, to the Tamil enclaves. The early tracks have all been mined, by both sides; according to a couple of soldiers they have lost count of where they are, as have the rebels. And beyond that lie few villages, and days of walking, until the northern provinces. No one wants to go, apart from a party of Buddhist pilgrims, trying to get to Tamil territory to visit a shrine, a few weeks ago. They were bombed at Dambulla.

The soldiers are talkative. They say little you couldn't read in the Colombo papers: we are winning, Tigers are dying, it will be over by the end of the year. It's getting others to talk that is excruciating. "I know who you are, but I do not know who you may be talking to," says a young woman, watching a stall. "Trust is not good here. You say the wrong thing and the wrong side hears . . . children have disappeared. Families have disappeared. Both sides have had these tactics." In Trincomalee, once a coastal hideaway for tourists, few hotels are open, alcohol licences have been revoked, there are no tourists at all. Fort Frederick, a picturesque castle on the headland, has become once more a garrison. Troops march and strut and sweat and shout.

Back in Colombo, the Hilton is at 40% occupancy, the ritzier Galadari at 25%. Visitors still sun themselves, inured by money. Half a mile away, life for the Sinhalese has not been this hard for years. Inflation is racing. Rice has trebled in price within four weeks. Everywhere, checkpoints. Everywhere, signs of hapless poverty. Rubbish lies burning on every corner at night - most of it. Some is left to rot. Old <u>women</u> drag themselves through the detritus of markets, seeking scraps. There is an improbable number of men with one leg: landmines. It is into these poorest parts that the Tigers have taken their battle, and you can feel former sympathies evaporate.

It is not, I am told, by both moderate Tamils and worried Sinhalese, that it has been a mad cause. Tamils were mainly brought over from India by Britain, to help run the plantations in what was then Ceylon: they were schooled in governance, bookkeeping, administration, better than the locals. After independence, there was resentment from the Sinhalese majority, now at 80%. Tamils were effectively exiled to the north, around Jaffna, yet given little say in their own affairs - hence the liberation fight. And 80,000 dead, about 6,000 in the past two years; and today again, far to the north-west, another pitched battle is breaking out on the Mannar peninsula. The Tiger cadres are formed mainly of **women** and, reportedly, heavily defeated: there is scepticism at government reports, but not too much.

I meet Ajith Nivard Cabril, one of the president's closest advisers. He speaks of the many great plans for highways, docks, a revitalisation of the economy. He grows most passionate when talking of the Tigers. "You have to remember that the LTTE is the most ruthless terrorist organisation you can think of . . . And the LTTE is certainly not the Tamil people. The moderates do not have a voice. I want them to have that voice, as does the president, all of us." I ask him to explain the government's apparent promise to the world to resolve things politically while, in its own country, boasting daily of new victories and promising a rout within a year.

"The government is trying to work out a political solution with the Tamils, but not with the LTTE," Cabril says. "I was part of the 2006 delegation to talks in Geneva and met these people, heard what they had to say . . . It is a war on terror. The LTTE will have to change, stop, come to the table or . . . be reduced. They said for a long time this war was unwinnable. Well, we are winning now." I point out that the UN, Unicef and other human rights organisations

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have pointed at his government for illegal abductions, detentions, threats and violations. "In a warlike situation, mistakes are made."

It is an unhappy walk back to a tourist hotel. Soldiers bristle throughout this fortified zone. The streets are quiet but for the fires: a population cowed, by the threat from the north and the security measures that have kept the government and military safe but shifted the war to school sports teams, innocents on their way home with a repaired Hoover. It is a subtly changed country and a hardening one, rank with propaganda on both sides. But unless the Tigers radically change tactics soon they will have lost all support in the south of the country. "There has to, must be, international intervention," says Thevanayagan, the exiled Tamil. "But it has to be neutral. Not India. Our duty, as exiles, is to hold meetings, do anything, somehow, to simply tell the world this can't go on. I am a Tamil, yes, but look at what is happening to the whole country. The Sinhalese are not exactly having a good time."

The night before I fly out, I wander down to the beach at Colombo. The last time I was here, two days after the tsunami, crowds wandered by the sea every sunset, to look at the ocean. Some would climb up a disused watchtower: there was a feeling something could happen again. Today from the watchtower two mounted guns and a bristle of rifles point directly down into their own people, the enemy within. Within a couple of weeks of my departure, a suicide bomber exploded at the start of a marathon just outside Colombo, killing 13. Then a parcel was left on a bus departing a depot just south of the capital: the fireball killed 24 and injured scores. The local hospital had to close its doors. The bloodiest proper encounter, near the Tigers' Jaffna strongholds, claimed 52 rebels and 38 soldiers. Last month, the rebels made it into central Colombo, killing six with a bomb close to the Hilton. Bus bombs have gone off on the road to Kandy, which is tourist central. Things are coming closer, speeding up. Observer

Load-Date: July 11, 2008



The view from Jebl Mukaber

The Jerusalem Post March 14, 2008 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 2386 words

Byline: LARRY DERFNER

Highlight: In the past, left-wing Palestinian national movements were especially popular in the affluent Jerusalem

village. But today, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and another Islamic party hold the greatest sway

Body

Inside a sliding front gate, a long flight of stairs leads down to the spacious hillside balcony of the Abu Dhaim home in Jebl Mukaber. On Monday afternoon, four days after Ala Abu Dhaim waged mass slaughter at Mercaz Harav Yeshiva before being killed by an IDF soldier and police, the succa-like mourning tent that the prosperous Palestinian family has put up around the balcony is hung with a couple of dozen posters of the terrorist. With the golden Dome of the Rock as background, the photo shows him young, clean-cut, smiling.

"The Islamic movement of Jebl Mukaber in Al-Kuds [Jerusalem] announces that the shahid [martyr] Ala Abu Dhaim has given his soul in a heroic act," the posters read.

The dusty gray roads that wind through the hills and valleys of the village are largely empty of people and heavier than usual with police jeeps. The schools, public organizations and many of the stores in this Muslim village of about 25,000, which at certain points sits very literally a stone's throw from the Jewish neighborhood of Armon Hanatziv (East Talpiot), are closed in mourning and solidarity with the murderer's family.

There are some strange sights: A white horse is trotting down the middle of an empty residential street, a boy leads a few goats across another one. A line of <u>women</u> in black robes and head scarves waits to pass through the IDF checkpoint that divides Jebl Mukaber's Jerusalem side and its West Bank side. Along a ridge of hills at the edge of the village, the high security barrier fortifies a different part of the Jerusalem-West Bank border. Across another hillside stretches the great anomaly of Jebl Mukaber: the sleek, 400-unit, Jewish-owned Nof Zion apartment project, all pink stone and dark glass, all empty.

On the Abu Dhaims' balcony, about 25 men, mostly in their 20s and 30s, are sitting on white plastic chairs. As the three of us - a photographer, a local "fixer" and translator for visiting journalists and I - walk past, the men stop talking. Their expressions show mainly suspicion, but also defiance, and under that, fear. As the photographer starts taking pictures, they all immediately turn their faces away.

Sitting barefoot against cushions on a row of mattresses is Ibrahim Abu Dhaim, the mukhtar, or elder, of the Abu Dhaim extended family, which numbers many hundreds in the village. In a white headdress and green cloak, the heavy-set mukhtar, 70, puts down his cigarette and hands me a printed statement from the family. It says that "what happened was a sudden shock for the family," that Ala Abu Dhaim had exhibited no "abnormal behavior" prior to the fatal Thursday night, that he was engaged to be married in the summer and that he was a "good person." I ask the mukhtar how he reacted when he heard the news.

The view from Jebl Mukaber

"It was a shock," he says in Arabic, adding that he knew Ala Abu Dhaim as "a gentleman." One thing that made the act so unexpected, he says, was that the young man was "well-off economically." The extended family owns various businesses in Jebl Mukaber and elsewhere in Arab Jerusalem.

I ask why he thinks Abu Dhaim, a 25-year-old minibus driver in a family transport company, did what he did. Pointing upward, the mukhtar says, "It's in God's hands."

One doesn't have to be a cynic to know that this is a practiced ritual, that the mukhtar is telling an English- speaking journalist what he thinks will reassure people about the Abu Dhaim family and Jebl Mukaber, and that he's said the same things to any number of other journalists already. His message contradicts the sentiments on the memorial posters hanging over his head. It also contradicts the demonstrative shutdown of public life in the village since Ala Abu Dhaim walked into Mercaz Harav and, with a assault rifle and two handguns, fired more than 500 bullets at the cowering yeshiva boys, killing eight of them and wounding nine.

One of the main questions for Israelis now concerns the 250,000 Palestinians of east Jerusalem, a great many of whom work in Jewish Jerusalem's hospitals, hotels, restaurants and construction projects, and nearly all of whom are legal residents of the capital, although not citizens of Israel. Unlike Palestinians in Gaza, Palestinians in east Jerusalem did not hold any public celebrations over the slaughter. East Jerusalem newspapers, which go through the IDF censor, published the denunciations issued by Palestinian Authority leaders.

But in the segregated, generally poor Arab villages and neighborhoods of the capital, whose residents have resented Israel's high-handed authority for the last 41 years, what do they really think of the Mercaz Harav massacre?

IT'S VERY HARD to find anyone in Jebl Mukaber who will talk about it frankly, on or off the record, to a journalist for The Jerusalem Post. I ask a man who works for the Jerusalem Municipality about reactions in the village. "They go in different directions," he says. "But people's livelihoods are at stake, so it's better not to talk."

The fixer, however, found two residents who would. They are both middle-aged family men, born and raised in the village, college-educated professionals, conversant in English and Hebrew, very well-connected in the village, thoroughly tuned in to Arab media, and both are secular Palestinians who support a two-state solution. I'll call them Jamal and Taher.

Sitting in my car, Jamal says that from talking with "dozens and even hundreds" of Jerusalem Arabs in different homes, at work, at cafes, in the street and from reading and hearing comments in the local and foreign Arab media, he finds overwhelming support for Abu Dhaim's atrocity.

"Ala has become a hero," he says. "Not just in Jebl Mukaber, but throughout the Palestinian territories and the Arab world."

An acquaintance told him of hearing an Arabic radio show in which Arab girls called in and said that if Abu Dhaim had survived, they'd marry him. "I didn't hear that myself, but I believe it," says Jamal.

Typically, he says, Arabs see the yeshiva murders as payback for the recent IDF attacks in Gaza, which killed more than 120 Palestinians, including many civilians, in retaliation for rocket attacks on Israel.

"People are preoccupied with the idea that Israel committed a massacre, a 'holocaust' - you heard him [Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilna'i] say that? - so they feel this is a kind of reaction. Israel is using tanks and fighter planes and helicopters against people in Gaza, and we're weak, we don't have tanks and planes, so they feel this is our only way."

If not for the bloodshed in Gaza, if Palestinians weren't dying in large numbers at the hands of Israel, he says, "you would find some people here in favor of what he did but also people against it, especially since he did it to civilians."

The view from Jebl Mukaber

But because of Gaza, because Palestinians feel they are being slaughtered by Israel, there are no dissenting voices now, says Jamal, adding that he can't even detect a silent opposition. "Even the people who are against violence will say that while they themselves wouldn't do such a thing, they won't condemn Abu Dhaim for doing it."

Most Arabs seem to feel outright pride over Abu Dhaim, Jamal observes. This was the boldest Palestinian attack on Israel in a long time. "Of course they won't say this publicly or on camera, but when they're sitting together, watching the news, you see in their reactions that they're really proud of it. I'm talking about ordinary people, and I'm sure it's the same with Palestinian academics and journalists - if they aren't proud, they aren't opposed, either.

"Revenge is very important to them. In Jerusalem I hear people saying, 'Olmert should know: We have someone who can take revenge. You kill our people in Gaza, we can kill your people in Jerusalem.' I hear it on the streets, in cafes, everywhere."

I ask how people can justify, even glorify, someone firing 500 bullets at teenage boys hiding under desks, how people can identify with an act of such sustained, face-to- face savagery against helpless adolescents - no matter what their fury and anguish over the deaths in Gaza, no matter what their feelings toward Israel.

Jamal replies that the media reports about the special character of the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva helped tremendously. Arabs learned that the site of the atrocity is the "heart of Zionism," that it "trains people to steal Palestinian land, kill Palestinians and build settlements," that it is the home of so many "fundamentalist, extremist leaders," he says. "This gave them the excuse to support such an act against civilians. This made it legitimate."

TAHER, HOWEVER, disagrees, at least with regard to the people of Jebl Mukaber. Sitting in his living room with three Palestinian guests, he says, "You can't put 25,000 people in the same basket with this murderer. Did you see any celebrations here? Did you see anybody here handing out candy? The expressions of happiness over this act came from other parts of the world."

He allows, however, that the public silence of some villagers might be due to "their self-interest. Some people may be happy inside, but they'll keep quiet not because they're Zionists, not because they love Israel, but because they work in Israel and have Israeli friends."

For example, says Jamal, the terrorist's father, Hisham Abu Dhaim, is a surveying engineer "who does a lot of work for the Jerusalem Municipality. I know him very well. He has about twice as many Israeli friends as Palestinian friends."

The municipality, however, denies the connection. "Hisham Abu Dhaim of Jebl Mukaber does not do work for the Jerusalem Municipality. He is a private building contractor," the city maintains.

With the possible exception of Beit Safafa, none of the Arab villages of Jerusalem has closer relations with Jewish Jerusalem than Jebl Mukaber, says Taher. "Ever since I was a child I would go to buy eshel [a once-popular Israeli dairy product] at Rafi's grocery store in Armon Hanatziv. I don't know if it's still there." he says.

He educates his son at a liberal, secular school. He doesn't even let the boy watch the news so he "won't ask me too many questions that I have no answers for." During the peak of the fighting in Gaza a couple of weeks ago, when Palestinians on Jerusalem's Salah a-Din Street stoned the car of a municipal inspector, he says, "I was there, and I tried to prevent it. Everybody here knows it."

As much as the mukhtar's words rang false, Taher's ring true. "Personally, I say that what happened at that school was murder, plain and simple, and there's nothing on Earth that can justify it."

IN JEBL MUKABER, as in Israel at large, there's a great deal of uncertainty about the origin of the yeshiva killings, mainly over whether Abu Dhaim acted on his own accord or was recruited by a terrorist organization. There have been news reports that he was arrested a few months ago, but the family says this isn't true, that he was never in jail.

The view from Jebl Mukaber

The killer's father and several brothers and cousins were arrested the night of the murders, but most were released the following morning. The father reportedly was freed from jail after agreeing to take down the Hamas and Islamic Jihad flags from the mourning tent. At press time, the terrorist's corpse remained in Israeli custody, and authorities say it will not be released for burial until the family agrees to hold a low-key funeral without media coverage.

Credit for the attack has been claimed by a Lebanese group calling itself the "Galilee Freedom Battalions," saying it was vengeance for last month's assassination of <u>Hizbullah</u> master terrorist Imad Mughniyeh. Anonymous callers have taken credit in Hamas's name, but Hamas officials say they had nothing to do with the killings, and Israeli intelligence hasn't pinned them on anyone beyond Abu Dhaim. If the mass murderer left a note or video behind, none has been made public.

"People here say they believe he acted on his own, but then they'll say, 'But who trained him? And where did he get the guns?'" says Jamal. Guns, though, can be purchased easily in nearby Bethlehem.

Since the intifada began in September 2000, there have been very few acts of terror by Jerusalem Arabs; the lone suicide bombing by a Jerusalemite killed nine people at a Hebrew University cafeteria in 2002. Four Jebl Mukaber men in their 20s were arrested in 2003 and later convicted of shooting at a police station and police patrols. (They hit no one.) In a few cases Jerusalem Arabs, whose Israeli ID cards give them freedom of movement, have been recruited by West Bank terrorists as accomplices. Two young Jebl Mukaber men were convicted of driving the Bethlehem suicide bomber who blew up a bus at the city's Patt junction in 2002, killing 19 people.

These six Jebl Mukaber gunmen and accomplices were members of Fatah terror cells. "During the second intifada, some of the leaders of the [Fatah] Tanzim in Jerusalem came from the village," says Hillel Cohen, author of The Rise and Fall of Arab Jerusalem, 1967-2007. Without mentioning their names, he says a senior Tanzim figure from Jebl Mukaber opposed attacks on civilians, while a less senior member "worked under [jailed Tanzim chief] Marwan Barghouti, who ordered attacks on civilians."

In the past, left-wing Palestinian national movements were especially popular in the village, says Cohen, a researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. But today, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and another Islamic party hold the greatest sway, followed by Fatah, says Jamal.

The name Jebl Mukaber means "the hill of the one who says Allahu akbar - God is great," says Cohen. The name comes from the traditional belief that Omar ibn el-Khattab, who conquered Jerusalem for Islam in the seventh century, uttered the words when he first saw Jerusalem from a hill where the village now stands.

In times of calm, says Cohen, most Jerusalem Arabs "tend to have reservations" about the use of terror, but these reservations recede and support for terror increases "emotionally if not operationally" when Palestinians are getting killed in large numbers, such as they were in Gaza on the eve of the bloodbath at Mercaz Harav.

"In Jebl Mukaber, just like in any part of Arab Jerusalem, anyone who wants to walk around there can do so safely," he says. "But on the other hand, there are also people living there who think they have to make war on the Jews."

Graphic

7 photos: The sleek, 400-unit, Jewish-owned Nof Zion apartment project, all pink stone and dark glass, all empty. Ibrahim Abu Dhaim, the mukhtar, or elder, of the Abu Dhaim extended family, which numbers many hundreds in the village. A village elder walks in Jebl Mukaber. Examining bullet holes from the Mercaz Harav massacre. A line of **women** in black robes and head scarves waits to pass through the IDF checkpoint that divides Jebl Mukaber's Jerusalem side and its West Bank side. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

The view from Jebl Mukaber

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Bons Mots and Betes Noires - Correction Appended

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Byline: By CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Vanity Fair, a media fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford and the author, most recently, of "God Is Not Great."

Body

LEFT IN DARK TIMES

A Stand Against the New Barbarism

By Bernard-Henri Levy. Translated by Benjamin Moser

233 pp. Random House. \$25

The election of Nicolas Sarkozy to the presidency of the French Republic, on a ticket of the Gaullist and centrist right, was marked by two kinds of defection from the left. In advance of the vote, a number of former Marxist Parisian intellectuals like Andre Glucksmann announced their intention of voting for Sarkozy and against the rather vapid and temperamental quasi-spousal Socialist party team of Segolene Royal and her significant other, Francois Hollande. And then, once the victory of Sarkozy had been assured -- probably rather more by the votes of former rightists than former leftists -- the new president offered some plum jobs to prominent Socialists like Bernard Kouchner, the ex-Communist and cofounder of the campaigning internationalist outfit Doctors Without Borders, who is now foreign minister, before himself proceeding to give new meaning to the term "husband and wife team" by marrying the former supermodel Carla Bruni in the Elysee Palace itself.

You might say that this situation was superbly designed for an address from Bernard-Henri Levy -- universally known in France as BHL -- who cuts a commanding figure both in the circles of the Left Bank intelligentsia and in the world of Parisian high fashion and salon society (and whose lovely wife, Arielle Dombasle, could look Carla Bruni in the eye any day). But the fact is that these developments make him feel extremely uncomfortable. He happens to have known Sarkozy since 1983, when Sarkozy was elected mayor of Neuilly; yet when he received a telephone call from Sarkozy last year, demanding to know when the BHL endorsement would be coming, he found himself unable to play ball. In fact, he found himself abandoning intellectual terrain for a moment and saying that he would cast his vote for the left candidate, as ever, because it was la gauche that was his "family."

Bons Mots and Betes Noires

The verbatim account of this telephone call, which forms a sort of prologue to "Left in Dark Times," is actually the key to the entire book. Levy defends himself vigorously from the aggressive and often vulgar baiting of a fairly obvious egomaniac, who loudly demands to know what he is doing in such a galere of fools and fellow travelers as the French left has become. While resenting the demagogy, BHL keeps being forced to admit that the candidate of the right has some shrewd points to make, about Darfur, about <u>Hezbollah</u>, about Chechnya. Indeed, I sometimes can't help feeling that it might be nice to live in a country where a presidential nominee will call you up, drop the names of your intellectual enemies and recall their perfidious reactions to one of your books, before adding, "Do you really think I'm an idiot or do you really believe what you are saying, that these people are your family?"

Rather than respond conventionally -- because after all, isn't a lot of family life like that? -- Levy embarks on a long excursion into what Diderot may have been the first to call l'esprit d'escalier, all the fine rejoinders that occur to one only when one is descending the stairs and it's just too late. He feels bound, in other words, to vindicate the honor of the left. And he also feels obliged to say that the left requires a bit of a makeover. Navigating these shoals, and continually asking himself as well as others to confront the hard questions, he produces a text that I think many readers will find highly absorbing.

I should not delay any further in saying that BHL and I have been on the same platform once or twice (on opposite sides in the case of the American intervention in Iraq and on the same side concerning the veiling of Muslim <u>women</u> in Europe) and that we have a fairly friendly truce on some other matters. If you wanted to sum up his political outlook in a phrase, you would find yourself borrowing Orwell's remark that it's not enough to be antifascist; one must also be in principle antitotalitarian.

I sometimes wish that Levy were capable of being this terse and lucid. He can take a long time to show how agonized he is by leftist compromises with every disgraced regime and ideology from Slobodan Milosevic to Islamic jihadism, but the effort expended is worthwhile and shows some of the scars of political warfare from Bangladesh to Bosnia. He is much readier to defend Israel as a democratic cause than are most leftists and many Jews, but he was early in saying that a Palestinian state was a good idea, not because it would appease Arab and Muslim grievances but for its own sake. (This distinction strikes me as both morally and politically important.)

So it is of some interest that he confronts Sarkozy on the very question that probably propelled the former mayor of Neuilly to the forefront of French politics in the first place: the highly toxic question of violent conduct in les banlieues. In these gruesome districts on the Parisian periphery, Muslim youths of Arab and African provenance have long been staging a rolling showdown with the French police. Some secular liberals and leftists agreed in general with Sarkozy when he referred to the rioters as "scum" or "riff-raff." These racaille were not deprived, but depraved. And behind their vandalism lurked the specter of radical Islam. The problem, then, was to be defined by Sarkozy only as one of law and order. In reply to this, Levy collects himself and delivers a very eloquent statement to the effect that one must never define the have-nots out of existence. He offers, first, a play on the word banlieue itself, which is associated with the medieval term lieu de banor place of the outcasts. For this one must substitute the term "neighborhood," Levy argues, and for the following reason:

"Better that than connotations of banishment; better something overly sociological than something that reeks of banished pariahs, the refuse of the social contract, rubbish, ghosts, the damned. Because after all . . . arsonists are one thing. But how useful is it to treat entire neighborhoods just as the 'dangerous classes' used to be treated?"

He continues in this vein for some time. One or two of his chapters can be described as almost an interior monologue or stream of consciousness, where the son of a man who fought for the Spanish Republic is having trouble with a redefinition of what the verses of the "Internationale" call "the wretched of the earth." Not everyone will share in the historic misery of this experience, of having seen Cambodia or Zimbabwe, say, turn into something rather worse than a negation of the liberating dream.

But for those who have, as well as for those who haven't, Levy provides a good register of what it felt like. And then there is this:

Bons Mots and Betes Noires

"I'm convinced that the collapse of the Communist house almost everywhere has even, in certain cases, had the unexpected side effect of wiping out the traces of its crimes, the visible signs of its failure, allowing certain people to start dreaming once again of an unsullied Communism, uncompromised and happy."

If this is not precisely true, even of those nostalgic for "Fidel," apologetic about Hugo Chavez, credulous about how "secular" the Baath Party was, or prone to sympathize with Vladimir Putin concerning the "encircling" of his country by aggressive titans like Estonia and Kosovo and Georgia, still it does contain a truth. One could actually have gone further and argued that the totalitarian temptation now extends to an endorsement of Islamism as the last, best hope of humanity against the American empire. I could without difficulty name some prominent leftists, from George Galloway to Michael Moore, who have used the same glowing terms to describe "resistance" in, say, Iraq as they would once have employed for the Red Army or the Vietcong. Trawling the intellectual history of Europe, as he is able to do with some skill, Levy comes across an ancestor of this sinister convergence in a yearning remark confided to his journal by the fascist writer Paul Claudel on May 21, 1935: "Hitler's speech; a kind of Islamism is being created at the center of Europe."

Levy is better when tracing these filiations and complexities than when making idealist generalizations like: "the double crown of freedom and equality a liberal torpedo in the egalitarian granite the two-headed eagle of the desire for emancipation." This constitutes, I think you may agree, a surfeit of metaphors. The possibility also exists that he may have been ill served by his translator, who renders the wicked old antireformist slogan of "the worse the better" as the confusingly neutral phrase the "politics of the worst."

In his last book, a retracing of Tocqueville's "Democracy in America," Levy appeared in the role of mediator at a time when French-American relations were in a sorry condition. Here, too, he takes a stand against the mindless anti-Americanism that is so prevalent among the lumpen intellectuals of Europe. In his view, the phenomenon has two highly unpleasant subtexts to it. The first is envy and resentment, deriving from the fact that the United States has several times intervened to save Europe from itself and from the consequences of its ideological dementias. The second, perhaps not unrelated, is a no-less-envious perception of America as a handmaiden and vassal of the Jews.

This blending of a relatively modern prejudice with the oldest prejudice of them all is what sickens Levy enough to give it the appellation "Red-Brown." It is the "new barbarism" of his subtitle. Against it, he counterposes the values of the Enlightenment, the France of the Dreyfusards, of Camus rather than Sartre, of Jean Moulin and Pierre Mendes-France rather than Maurice Thorez or -- BHL's true bete noire -- that debased Jacobin of today's French Socialism, Jean-Pierre Chevenement. The left, he insists, must renounce any version of ultimate or apocalyptic history, along with any mad schemes to create heaven on earth. A secular, pragmatic humanism will be quite demanding enough, thank you.

In conclusion, Levy repudiates radical sympathy with theocracy, and indeed theology, by inverting Pascal and saying that "we have to make an antiwager that we can win not by betting on the existence but on the nonexistence of God. That's the price of democracy. And the alternative, the only one, is the devil and his legions of murderous angels." It's hard not to wish him well in striving to purge the left of its demons. But an antiwager is still a wager, and one sometimes has the feeling that the dark times of the old left are only just beginning.

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Correction

A review on Sept. 21 about "Left in Dark Times," a book of political analysis by Bernard-Henri Levy, misspelled the given name of the president of France. He is Nicolas Sarkozy, not Nicholas.

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Graphic

DRAWING (DRAWING BY JOE CIARDIELLO)

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Body

Three hundred miles south of Baghdad, the oil-saturated city of Basra has been transformed by its own surge, now seven weeks old.

In a rare success, forces loyal to Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki have largely quieted the city, to the initial surprise and growing delight of many inhabitants who only a month ago shuddered under deadly clashes between Iraqi troops and Shiite militias.

Just as in Baghdad, Iraqi and Western officials emphasize that the gains here are "fragile," like the newly planted roadside saplings that fail to conceal mounds of garbage and pools of foul-smelling water in the historic port city's slums.

Among the many uncertainties are whether the government, criticized for incompetence at the start of the operation, can maintain the high level of troops here. But in interviews across Basra, residents overwhelmingly reported a substantial improvement in their everyday lives.

"The circle of fear is broken," said Shaker, owner of a floating restaurant on Basra's famed Corniche promenade, who, although optimistic, was still afraid to give his full name, as were many of those interviewed.

Hopes for a similar outcome in Baghdad's Sadr City district were undercut when an Iraqi armored unit was struck by three roadside bombs on Sunday, one day after a cease-fire there was negotiated.

The principal factor for improvement that people in Basra cite is the deployment of 33,000 members of the Iraqi security forces after the March 24 start of operations, which allowed the government to blanket the city with checkpoints on every major intersection and highway.

Borrowing tactics from the troop increase in Baghdad, the Iraqi forces raided militia strongholds and arrested hundreds of suspects. They also seized weapons including mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and sophisticated roadside bombs that officials say were used by Iranian-backed groups responsible for much of the violence.

Government forces have now taken over Islamic militants' headquarters and halted the death squads and "vice 'enforcers' " who attacked <u>women</u>, Christians, musicians, alcohol sellers and anyone suspected of collaborating with Westerners.

Shaker's floating restaurant stands as one emblem of the change since then.

Just two months ago, he said, masked men in military uniforms walked into the packed dining room and abducted a businessman at gunpoint. The man was never seen again, and the restaurant closed.

Now, however, customers who fled that evening are pressing the 34-year-old owner to stay open later at night, so they can enjoy their unaccustomed freedom from the gangs, which once banned the loud Arabic pop music now blaring from Shaker's loudspeakers.

"Now it is very different," he said. "After we heard that the lawless people have been arrested or killed, we have a kind of courage."

Even alcohol, once banned by the extremists, is discreetly on sale again in some areas.

Nevertheless, few Basra residents trust that the change is permanent or that the death squads have been vanquished.

Asked how long it would take for Basra to slip back into lawlessness if the army departed, Afrah, a 20-year-old theater student at Basra's College of Fine Arts, replied, "One day."

Capturing a mood that flits between bad recent memories, giddy relief and brittle future expectations, she added, "It is over, but it could come back any moment, because the people who are doing the intimidation on the streets, sometimes they are your neighbor and you trust them."

Mr. Maliki's hastily begun operation to rein in the extremists did not start with great promise.

The offensive, grandly named Charge of the Knights, was widely criticized for being poorly planned and ill-coordinated. It was derided as the Charge of the Mice by followers of the radical Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr after more than 1,000 soldiers deserted in the face of heavy resistance from his Mahdi Army and other extremist groups. The fierce early clashes halted only after a pro-government delegation went to Iran and struck a deal with the Sadrists.

An overwhelmingly Shiite city of more than three million people, Basra sits atop huge oil reserves, which, Western officials say, provide 40 percent of Iraq's annual oil revenue of \$38 billion.

Thus, stability in a city that could be Iraq's economic engine room is a major priority for the Shiite-led government. However, the Basra experience may not translate to other cities like Mosul or Kirkuk in the north, with a much more complicated religious and ethnic mix.

The push into Basra succeeded in part because people here were exhausted with the violence and in part because Mr. Maliki received crucial help from the American and British military.

British forces, who headed the coalition military forces in Basra beginning in 2003, handed security control to the Iraqis six months ago. But a British military spokesman said British and American forces were providing fighter jets, helicopters, surveillance and logistical support for the government operation.

In addition to the 4,000 British troops in Basra, he said, the Americans sent 800 people, including surveillance experts and around 200 transition team "advisers" embedded with Iraqi troops.

An American military spokesman in Baghdad confirmed that one American had been killed and eight wounded in the Basra operation but said the United States had not had "conventional ground forces in direct support of combat operations."

Iraqi commanders acknowledge that the American and British support helped them wrest control of Mahdi Army strongholds like Hayyaniyah -- a slum that is Basra's equivalent of Sadr City -- and other poor districts that are fertile recruiting grounds for militias.

But a majority of the military presence on the streets is Iraqi.

From the moment motorists drive through the huge arch at the city's northern entrance, they are confronted with a ragtag but daunting collection of armored police vehicles, Iraqi Army Humvees, cold war-era tanks, pickup trucks with turret-mounted machine guns and bullet-riddled personnel carriers.

Canal bridges are guarded by head-high steel pyramids, from which soldiers observe bustling markets through a bulletproof window.

Maj. Tom Holloway, a British military spokesman, conceded that the Iraqis would have "struggled" without the warplanes available to coalition forces. But he said: "I don't think it's a crutch. I think they would have tackled it in their own way and possibly, probably, achieved the same result."

And the result, whoever is ultimately responsible, is in many ways remarkable.

At the College of Fine Arts, <u>female</u> students said they felt more, but not entirely, free to wear the clothes they liked.

"I used to be challenged for what I wear," said Athari, a 19-year-old student wearing heavy makeup and a bright orange headscarf pushed high back on her head in the liberal fashion disapproved of by Islamic radicals. "Makeup was forbidden; short skirts were forbidden. I will not mention their name, but they were extremists. They are still here, but quieter now."

Qais, a music student, spoke of his relief at no longer having to hide his violin in a sack of rice in his trunk.

Most of the students were Shiite, but one youth named Alaa said that he was a Sunni and that 95 percent of his relatives had fled Basra after sectarian killings, including that of his uncle. "I want to thank Mr. Nuri al-Maliki, because he cleaned Basra of murderers, hijackers and thieves," Alaa said.

It was not an uncommon sentiment. In his city center office, Yahya, a wealthy businessman said he had just begun going onto the streets without his customary 10 bodyguards. Insisting that he was not a political supporter of the prime minister, he said he was nevertheless so grateful for the security improvements that he and colleagues had downloaded Mr. Maliki's face onto their mobile telephones as screensavers.

But as with the American-led surge in Baghdad, there are abiding uncertainties.

These center on how long such a heavy military presence can be sustained on urban streets, and what happens when it departs.

Gen. Mohan al-Freiji, the Iraqi commander in Basra, said the city was "75 percent" under control. He said the principal threat stemmed from rogue elements of the Mahdi Army and factions like the Iraqi <u>Hezbollah</u> (Party of God), Thairallah (Revenge of God) and Fadhila (Virtue).

Emphasizing the urgent need to address decades of poverty and neglect, he said the government had to provide jobs and investment to convert short-term military gains into long-term political and economic ones.

"This is a city which sits on top of oil, but its young people are unemployed," he said.

Sadrists protest that the Basra operation is a cynical exercise to weaken Mr. Maliki's Shiite rivals ahead of provincial elections in the fall.

At Friday prayers in Kufa last week, the Sadrist preacher, Sheik Abdul Hadi al-Muhamadawi, said, "There is a large-scale conspiracy to remove the Sadr movement from the government's way by all means, because it refuses the presence of the occupier in Iraq."

Such words underscore the widespread belief here that the Mahdi army has its own reasons for lying low and is by no means eliminated.

During one Iraqi Army patrol in Hayyaniyah at dusk, the soldiers, elsewhere relaxed, became jittery. Belying the local commander's insistence that the Sadrist stronghold was "90 percent or more secure," some pulled up face masks that they had not worn in other districts. They also fired bullets into the air at the slightest delay in traffic, an aggression unlikely to endear them in an area that, although calm, was noticeably less welcoming.

Haider, a policeman at a checkpoint outside the Sadrists' former headquarters, said his family had been threatened, even at his home in the capital.

"I have spent 60 days in Basra and haven't been home to Baghdad," he said. "I will be killed if I go now. My family have received dozens of fliers with threats from the Mahdi Army."

Nevertheless he, like many others, said the evacuation of the factions from their once-untouchable headquarters had brought about a psychological shift. Outside the Sadr office, Iraqi soldiers now sit atop the roof, their tripod-mounted machine guns overlooking the tin-roofed Sadrist prayer hall, which lies half-demolished.

"The Mahdi Army used to use this office like the Baathists when they were The Party," Haider said. "They were ruling like the government of a state. They stopped police doing their duty, from implementing the law."

Noting that the Baath Party of Saddam Hussein, once much stronger than the Mahdi Army, had been routed, he said, "The Mahdi Army will meet the same fate exactly, and worse."

Yet traces of the old order remain. One wall in central Basra still bore the unsigned scrawl: "We warn girls not to put on makeup and to wear scarves. Anyone who does not follow these orders will be killed."

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Graphic

PHOTOS: The Mahdi Army of Moktada al-Sadr, the anti-American Shiite cleric, has evacuated its Basra, Iraq, headquarters, at rear.

Iraqi soldiers at a vehicle checkpoint in Basra last week. The Iraqi Army has regained control of most of the city, officials say.

A violinist practicing at Basra's College of Fine Arts. Students say they feel they can express themselves more freely now.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY MOISES SAMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)(pg. A10)

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Byline: By SETH SHERWOOD

SETH SHERWOOD, based in Paris, is a frequent contributor to the Travel section.

Body

I FELT someone staring at me.

As I discreetly tried to photograph a Damascus sidewalk stand of militant Islamic religious posters -- including the <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah and his Kalashnikov-toting guerrillas -- I looked around and realized that the young, rough-shaven salesman had spotted my camera.

"Where you from?" he said, in English, as <u>women</u> in headscarves battled for plastic shoes from an adjacent sidewalk dealer.

"New York," I answered, lowering my lens and awaiting a tirade against my country -- or worse. Instead, he broke into a smile.

"New York, great city!" he said. "Ahlan wa sahlan bi Sham."

Ahlan wa sahlan bi Sham: Welcome to Damascus. During a weeklong visit in May -- during which I explored the Old City of Damascus (including its proliferating nightclubs), the Silk Road bazaars of Aleppo and the ruins of ancient Palmyra -- unexpected welcomes seemed to erupt from every corner of this ancient nation of Bronze Age, Classical, Biblical and Islamic history. No matter where I was or whom I encountered, local greetings were never long in coming.

Though most Americans might be wary of sojourning in a country whose authoritarian government stands accused of some serious charges -- financing *Hezbollah*, allowing foreign fighters into neighboring Iraq and assassinating the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri -- a week among the regular citizens of Syria and its cultural riches is eye-opening.

When I boarded Syrian Air in Paris, I knew only that Damascus claimed to be the oldest inhabited city on Earth and that some favorite writers -- Mark Twain, Gustave Flaubert, Agatha Christie -- had been swept away by the country's lore-filled past and landscapes. Many people told me vaguely to be careful, though none had ever been to Syria. My few acquaintances who had braved the country despite its tarnished reputation assured me that all would be fine. Head straight to the legendary Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, they said. Fill up whenever you can on excellent grilled lamb, baba ghanouj and pomegranate juice. And leave your preconceptions at passport control.

The country I discovered, in addition to being friendly and largely free of crime and related hassles, even showed glimmers of creaking open to the West after decades of closure. Under its London-educated, 41-year-old president, Bashar al-Assad, Syria has instituted private banking, removed a number of long-standing import barriers and passed measures allowing foreigners to own property. A Four Seasons hotel opened in Damascus with great fanfare in 2005; a five-star Inter-Continental is under construction.

A huge two-panel billboard in central Damascus embodied the changes afoot. One side trumpeted the "3rd Annual Tourism Investment Market Forum." On the other, the avuncular white-bearded face of Colonel Sanders, ringed in red Arabic script, heralded the arrival of Kentucky Fried Chicken in Syria.

GO back as far as you will into the vague past, there was always a Damascus," wrote Twain, who visited in the 1860s. "To Damascus years are only flitting trifles of time. She measures time not by days and months and years, but by the empires she has seen rise and crumble to ruin. She is a type of immortality."

He was scarcely embellishing. The Babylonians blasted through under Nebuchadnezzar, before the Persians did likewise under Darius and Xerxes. The Romans captured the country in 63 B.C., and Mark Antony campaigned there against the Parthians. It was on the road to Damascus, most famously, that the Jewish traveler Saul was blinded by the light, initiating his conversion to Christianity and a new identity as the Apostle Paul. And it was on the road to Damascus, six centuries later, that the Prophet Muhammad stopped in his tracks and refused to enter the city, saying that "man should only enter paradise once." In succeeding centuries, the Egyptians, Ottomans and French all took their turns as occupiers before Syria became independent in 1946.

Today, the route to the inner sanctum of the eighth-century Umayyad Mosque -- the spiritual and historical heart of Damascus's Old City -- seems culled from some time-worn star map. First you cross under the Roman archway, just south of the tomb of the fabled Islamic warrior Saladin, who defeated Richard the Lionhearted during the Crusades. Then you enter the vast gates of the mosque, whose stony expanses rest atop a former Byzantine church, which overlays a mostly vanished Roman temple to Jupiter, itself erected on the former site of a disappeared Aramaean shrine. Finally, you make a quick jog across the courtyard, past the mausoleum of John the Baptist and into the tomb of Hussein, a grandson of Muhammad and a martyr venerated by Shiite Muslims.

The afternoon I visited, the stone room echoed with clicking prayer beads, muttered Koranic verses and sobs. Men prostrated themselves, pressing their foreheads to the stone. Student-age girls and toothless, wizened old <u>women</u> in black veils wept openly. One bespectacled young woman cried uncontrollably, grabbing at the walls.

Places of powerful faith fill every corner of Damascus. In a small, silent street in the Christian Quarter of the Old City, I tracked down the Church of Ananias, the man who cured St. Paul of his blindness and baptized him into Christianity. Though entirely empty of worshipers, some handwritten notes and trinkets from visitors were stuck between the stones. "Clean and serene for 60 days," read a green keychain, in English. Utterly different again, and equally haunting, was the reconstructed ancient Jewish synagogue in the National Museum, an evocative time capsule of relics from forgotten Bronze Age cities, vanished Roman outposts and other Ozymandian monuments pulled from Syria's sands.

Found at the city-state of Dora Europos, a trade center decimated by the Persians in the third century, the towering stone walls of the synagogue glowed with painted panels of temple priests, strange animals, sad-eyed **women**, scrolls, menorahs, winged angels, horse dancers and serene-faced desert wanderers.

"It's astonishing to find a synagogue that has paintings," said Michel al-Maqdissi, the museum's director of archeological excavations, speaking in French. A small radio filled his office with an opera aria. "The Jewish religion forbids painted representation, just like in Islam. It accepts decorative elements, but not the human form. That's why it's such a unique piece."

Nearby, the lanes of the Old City brimmed with energy. Black-veiled <u>women</u> led teenage girls -- some in loose robes, others in punishingly tight jeans -- into fabric stalls. With chiming bells, bicyclists parted the crowds to deliver loaves of bread while old men rolled Sisyphean pushcarts of pastries and bottles of deep blue bilberry juice.

"Ahlan wa sahlan," said Tony Stephan as he ushered me into his antiques and craft emporium along Souk al-Hamidiyeh, the most famous of Damascus's venerable bazaars. Elderly and courtly, he gave me a tour of his store, which was stocked floor to ceiling with inlaid wooden boxes, elaborate backgammon sets, hammered urns, mosaics, Bedouin jewelry and rich textiles -- many of them woven on a click-clacking loom in back.

"That's Jimmy Carter, that's Warren Christopher, and that's Nancy Kissinger," he said, pointing out photos of the famous figures who, in times of less fraught international relations -- before the White House had declared the country a "rogue nation" and a member of the "junior varsity axis of evil" -- had snapped up furnishings and fabrics in his shop. Much more recently, in April, the House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her delegation had strode through the souk during an official visit -- the first in recent memory by a top American official -- prompting local talk of a possible rapprochement.

Twilight in the Old City evokes a certain wistfulness. As the final call to prayer echoes through the blue-black evening, strolling couples and families fill the paved lanes around the mosque, licking at ice creams from the venerable parlor Bakdash. In the cafes, old men in threadbare suits sip Turkish coffee and chat. I whiled away more than a few nights among those smoking narghiles, as water pipes are called there, and drinking mint tea at the old world Al Nafoorah coffeehouse, as the nightly pageantry of Damascus flowed past. It was the perfect place to meditate on the city, a great palimpsest on which so many peoples, faiths and empires wrote their stories.

To see the most famous of Syria's crumbled cities, Palmyra, I set out at dawn. The bus rolled across the arid emptiness, past loping camels, past goatherds in checkered headdresses, past tents of Bedouin nomads. Finally, three hours later, the majestic, blocky ruins emerged. Corinthian columns, eroded archways, theaters, ornate hillside tombs and temples to forgotten gods -- Bel, Nebo, Arsu, Baalshamin -- spread across the landscape.

Here, in Syria's largest oasis, an ancient Silk Road trade center flourished some two millenniums ago. Someone surveying the landscape then would have seen a thriving market city, echoing with talk in Aramaic and filled with arriving camel trains bearing ebony, dried foods, spices, perfume, ivory and silk from as far away as India and China. From Palmyra the exotic goods would be shipped westward to Rome -- which for a time controlled Palmyra - where they fetched up to 100 times their original cost.

Today, a surreal Hollywoodesque scene was playing out among the ruins as hundreds of Syrian teenage boys dressed in gladiatorlike costumes prepared a tightly choreographed dance number for the annual Palmyra Festival, which was scheduled to kick-off at dusk. In the well-preserved amphitheater, workmen were deploying a stage, curtains and lighting banks to accommodate the Bolshoi Ballet and various orchestras on the festival program. This week, the dead city would live again.

The miles of stony passages and thousands of shops in the souks of Aleppo, another Silk Road stop that's now Syria's second-largest city, briskly destroy flimsy descriptors like "diverse" or "eclectic." Such hollow words splinter under the tonnage of caftans, coffee beans, lutes, Teletubbies, silk cushions, mosaics, perfumes, gold, carpets, gumdrops and olive-oil soaps.

Dodging mule-carts and mustached men chewing pistachios -- a local specialty -- I flowed with the thick crowds past ornate Ottoman-era stone warehouses and the eighth-century Great Mosque, resting place of the head of Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. Time seemed barely to exist. The stone arches, massive wooden portals and iron-barred windows appeared unchanged since their construction in the Middle Ages. Today, the only signs of 21st-century life were the schoolgirls in Barbie backpacks milling about the battlements of the storybook medieval citadel and the screaming schoolboys fighting unseen invaders.

A kind of phantom world lurks among the time-worn stones of Aleppo. Strolling the souks, I could not help thinking that I was walking in the footsteps of Mohamed Atta, the Egyptian leader of the Sept. 11 hijackers. As an urban planning student in the 1990s, he spent several months in Aleppo, writing a thesis that argued for the preservation of the age-old Islamic market against the threat of modernization. Later, sitting in a club chair in the bar of the Hotel Baron, a faded grande dame from the era of steamer trunks and ragtime, I half expected Charles Lindbergh, T. E. Lawrence, Teddy Roosevelt or Agatha Christie to descend from their old rooms.

Married to an archeologist who worked in Syria, Christie wrote some of "Murder on the Orient Express" while holed up here. The young Lawrence also worked on archeological digs in the area, though apparently he found time for less rugged and martial pleasures. "These three days have been frenzied rushes and bargains for antiques (we have spent nearly two hundred pounds) from breakfast till after dinner in the evening," he wrote to his mother in 1912, gushing about having spotted "the loveliest painted and lacquered gilt ceiling that I ever dreamed of."

BACK in the Old City of Damascus, midnight settled on the Christian Quarter and a slow-moving line of black S.U.V.'s and silver Audi sedans cruised slowly down the Roman-era Straight Street, depositing the well-heeled and the high-heeled at trendy new resto-lounges tucked in the surrounding labyrinthine lanes.

Famous as the place where Saul received his baptism and was christened Paul, "the street called Straight" (as it's called in the Bible) and its environs are once again witnessing some astonishing conversions, as young, enterprising Syrians transform Old World buildings into 21st century D.J. bars, clothing shops and stylish small hotels.

"You can see renovation everywhere," said Amjad Malki, a co-owner of the jet-set Villa Moda fashion boutique, as we dined on grilled meats and excellent mezze dishes at the stylish Al-Khawali restaurant. In what was a 17th-century stone stable, Mr. Malki's shop has swapped hay and oats for Prada handbags, Jimmy Choo shoes and Dolce & Gabbana leopard-skin bikinis, as well as dresses by Kenzo, which was host of a fashion show in Villa Moda's upstairs salon a few months ago.

"People are buying, and prices have tripled," Mr. Malki said, ticking off a list of hotspots like Leila's restaurant and the Talisman hotel, where Ms. Pelosi and President Assad lunched during her visit. "It's the place to be."

Inside the Marmar nightclub, a Damascus favorite of expatriates and the Syrian upper crust, evidence of the city's elevating style quotient was all around -- D.J.-remixed club beats, madly dancing bodies, low necklines, high hemlines, clinking bottles of German beer, a haze of Gauloise cigarettes, T-shirts reading "Rock Star" and "Tequila Lounge." Even a few gay Middle Eastern men discreetly mingled in the global crowd, which showed no signs of flagging even as 4 a.m. approached.

"Five years ago, night life was not really a socially acceptable thing," said Omar Barakat, an extremely tall Syrian electrical equipment importer, battling with the loud remix of "Sweet Dreams Are Made of This" shaking the dance floor. Now, he said, "the scene is improving so much."

Surveying the blissful tumult, Firas Salem, a 20-something Syrian corporate lawyer, couldn't suppress a grin. "We didn't use to have people kissing in a public places," he said. He added that he had once lived in London but was drawn back to his hometown.

"Damascus is becoming a cool place," he said as throbbing electronica and chatter in a half-dozen languages spilled into the ancient streets. "Something strange is happening."

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PAUL (AND AGATHA CHRISTIE)

HOW TO GET THERE

Because of United States sanctions against Syria, there are no direct flights from the United States to Damascus. Al Italia airlines (www.alitalia.com) offers flights to Damascus from Kennedy airport in New York with a connection in Milan for around \$1,520. An alternative -- and potentially cheaper -- option is to fly to Europe independently and then use Syrian Air (www.syriaair.com) from any of several European capitals. Flights from London Heathrow to Damascus cost around \$:296 (about \$592 at \$2 to the pound) for departures in late June.

A visa is required for Americans entering Syria. It can be obtained from the Embassy of Syria, 2215 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20008; (202) 232-6313, ext. 106; www.syrianembassy.us; the fee is \$100.

HOW TO GET AROUND

Traveling around Syria is extremely cheap. The Kadmous Transport company (963-11-331-1901; www.alkadmous.com) provides comfortable modern intercity buses all over the country. A trip from the Damascus bus station (called Mahata al-Pullman) to Palmyra costs 120 lira (as Syrian pounds are commonly called; about \$2.25 at 53 lira to the dollar) and takes two to three hours. A trip to Aleppo, four to five hours away, costs 230 lira for the extra-comfy "V.I.P." bus. There are several buses a day to and from each destination. Buy your ticket at the bus station about 30 minutes ahead.

Within Damascus and Aleppo, the abundant yellow taxis can be hailed on the street any time of day or night. A daytime journey within the city rarely costs more than 50 lira. By night, few drivers use the meter (il-adaad in Arabic). Just get in, announce your destination, and give 75 lira upon arrival. If you try to negotiate a price in advance, the driver will typically ask for much more.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

In the wake of a 2006 attack attempt on the American Embassy in Damascus -- during which one Syrian security guard was killed before the attackers were killed or subdued -- the online travel advisory of the State Department urges American citizens "to defer all nonessential travel to Syria." (A full text of the advisory is at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis--pa--tw/tw/tw--3036.html.) More recently, in April, a Canadian traveler, Nicole Vienneau, disappeared during a stay in the city of Hama and has not been found.

That said, Syria remains a tightly controlled society that is largely devoid of street and organized crime, due in part to extensively deployed police and undercover intelligence services. Militant groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood are officially banned and suppressed -- sometimes very brutally -- by the nation's ostensibly secular Baathist leadership. For travelers, the risk of theft, attack or even harassment remains small. In my own travels, I never felt threatened and never once heard of any other tourists being accosted.

WHAT TO SEE

In Damascus, your best bet is to simply get lost in the truly ancient Old City, with its Roman arches, medieval citadel, venerable Islamic madrassas, and Ottoman mosques and palaces.

Built in the early eighth century, the imposing Umayyad Mosque (Muslim Quarter, Old City) is one of the holiest sites in Islam. Its grounds contain the tombs of three remarkable historical figures: the martyr Hussein, grandson of Muhammad; John the Baptist; and the fabled Islamic warrior Saladin. Free entry.

A 15-minute walk outside the Old City walls, Syria's National Museum (Shoukri al-Quwati Street, 963-11-221-9938) contains relics from an amazing array of peoples and civilizations -- Hittite, Canaanite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Aramaic, Roman, Byzantine -- that flourished or set up camp in Syria. Entry 150 lira. Also in new Damascus is the excellent Atassi Gallery (Rawda, New City, 963-11-332-1720; www.atassigallery.com). It is run by the knowledgeable, multilingual Mouna Atassi, one of Syria's leading authors on contemporary art, and specializes in the top Syrian artists of the 20th century.

In Aleppo, the gloriously ruined medieval citadel (Old City, admission 150 lira) offers sublime views from its crenellated ramparts. The Great Mosque, just north off the main east-west thoroughfare of Souk al-Atarin, was built in the eighth century and then rebuilt, after a fire, in the 12th. A kind of little brother to the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, this one holds what is said to be the head of Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. Free admission.

In Palmyra, exploring Syria's most famous ruined city -- a Silk Road stop that was founded around the second millennium B.C. and flourished under Roman control in the first few centuries A.D. -- could take a couple of hours or a couple of days, depending on how keen you are to explore every temple, tomb and theater. The ancient city comes alive twice a year, for the Palmyra Festival in May and the Silk Road Festival in the fall.

WHERE TO STAY

The Old City of Damascus is witnessing a boom in boutique hotels. Near Bab Touma gate, in the thick of the dining and nightlife scene, the intimate eight-room Beit al-Mamlouka (963-11-543-0445; www.almamlouka.com) is

loaded with Oriental carpets, impeccably chosen traditional Syrian furniture and even frescoes and mosaics. Doubles from \$135. In the more tranquil Jewish quarter, the 16-room Talisman (116 Tal El-Hijara Street, 963-11-541-5379; www.hoteltalisman.net) is a neo-Sultanic conversion with a courtyard pool, a vaulted period-rich lounge and a hammam. Doubles from \$175. Along Straight Street is Al Khair Palace (Bab Sharqi, 963-11-543-1716; www.alkhairpalace.net). The 12 rooms are smallish but tastefully furnished with Syrian inlaid wooden furniture. Doubles are \$90.

The colonial-style Hotel Baron (al-Baron Street, 963-21-211-0880; www.the-hotel-baron.com) in Aleppo is more to be recommended for its history -- Charles Lindbergh, Agatha Christie and T. E. Lawrence all stayed there -- than for its somewhat worn and chipped time-warp decor. Doubles from \$50. The cozy 14-room Beit Wakil (As-Sissi Street, Al Hatab Square, 963-21-211-7083; www.beitwakil.com) is in a nicely restored 16th-century mansion in the Al Jdeidah quarter; it also has one of the city's best restaurants. Doubles are \$100 and \$130.

WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

Unless otherwise noted, prices reflect a three-course meal for two, without wine.

In Damascus, in an old stone house refitted with slick contemporary furnishings, Al Dar 111 (Christian Quarter, Old City, 963-11-542-3232; www.aldar111.com) does excellent fatoosh (finely chopped salad with tangy grenadine, molasses and pomegranate), baba ghanooj (enlivened with sesame, tomato and lemon juice) and sujok (diced lamb sausages with peppers and spices). Around 1,000 lira. Carnivores will enjoy the mixed grill of skewered meats and the Tunisian sausages stewed in zesty tomato-onion sauce on offer at Leila's Restaurant and Terrace (Muslim Quarter, 963-11-544-5900). In a stylishly modernized old courtyard house next to the Ummayed Mosque, the restaurant also does vegetarian-friendly baba ghanooj, hummus and burek (cheese pastries). Terrace tables have killer views. About 1,000 lira.

Just off the southeast corner of the Ummayad Mosque, Al Nafoorah is the ideal place to sip Turkish coffee (35 lira), smoke a narghile (100 lira) and watch Damascene life go by.

When in Aleppo, Bazar al-Charq (Karmel Street, 963-21-224-9120; www.bazaralcharq.com) and its Orientalist-fantasy decor merit a visit for the sublime lahmeh bi karaz (kebab in sour cherry sauce) alone. The hummus (with ground lamb and pine nuts) and chicken with sesame sauce are also worth indulging in. About 900 lira.

WHERE TO SHOP

Damascus's Old City is a giant Aladdin's lair of Middle Eastern treasures. In the main bazaar, Souk al-Hamidiyeh, Tony Stephan (963-11-245-1075) stocks an excellent selection of silver, carved wooden furnishings, hand-woven caftans and shimmering Damascene fabrics, some of them created on site. For contemporary styles, Anat (Bab Sharqi, 963-11-542-7878; www.anat-sy.org) sells modern folkloric-chic textiles, handbags and <u>women</u>'s clothing handmade by rural Syrian <u>women</u> using traditional techniques.

WHERE TO PARTY

Done up in kitschy Middle Eastern gothic decor, Oxygen (963-11-544-4396), a bar-restaurant in the Christian Quarter of the Old City (a few twisting streets southwest of the Bab Touma gate), is where young Damascenes go to pre-party. The local Barada lager (100 lira) is a crisp Syrian answer to Rolling Rock. After midnight, especially on Thursdays, head a couple of blocks north to Marmar (al-Dawanneh Street, 963-11-544-6425). The 600 lira cover charge gets you three drinks, D.J.-spun dance music and a spirited Syrian and international crowd.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: The medieval citadel of Aleppo presides over the ancient city

(Photographs by Lynsey Addario for The New York Times) (pg. 1)

At night in the main bazaar in Damascus.

Right Outside the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. It contains the tombs of Hussein the martyr, John the Baptist and Saladin, the Muslim warrior.

(Photographs by Lynsey Addario for The New York Times) Map of Damascus, Syria (Map by The New York Times) (pg. 8)

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<u>Using banks to stay a step ahead of Tehran; As Iran circumvents</u> <u>conventional sanctions, U.S. official pushes financial blockade; From The</u> <u>New York Times Magazine</u>

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Body

It has been almost 30 years since the last shah, with a small jar of Iranian soil in his hand and the empress by his side, flew into exile, ending 2,500 years of dynastic rule and a valuable American alliance. The United States vowed to "honor the will" of Iran's people. Over the next nine months, however, young zealots twice seized the American Embassy and its diplomats, a harbinger of tensions to come. Washington has struggled to figure out what to do about Tehran ever since. Fear still defines policy.

Iran will be perhaps the most daunting strategic challenge for a new American president. It has become the superpower in the region where the United States has invested the most manpower, money, blood and prestige. Washington can't make enduring progress in the Middle East or South Asia without a denouement in the long showdown with Iran.

Since 1979, five American presidents have failed to influence, engage or outwit Iran. The new president will inherit few effective tools. Diplomacy is, at the moment, going nowhere. Efforts by the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency have done little to prevent Iran from growing ever closer to acquiring the capacity to manufacture nuclear fuel. At the same time, there is very little genuine enthusiasm in Washington today for a military option in Iran.

What remains, in one form or another, is the idea of sanctions. Over the decades, Washington has embargoed imports from Iran, forbidden visas for officials and even sanctioned the entire Revolutionary Guard Corps. But each effort has fallen short. Energy-hungry China now buys Iran's oil in huge quantities. Tehran has found other outlets for trade and travel. And sanctions are slow to take effect.

One new concept, however, has begun to get Tehran's attention. In January 2006, Stuart Levey, the U.S. Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, was having breakfast in Bahrain when he noted a local newspaper article about a big Swiss bank that cut off business with Tehran. It gave him an idea.

Governments traditionally focus on actions they can enforce themselves. Reading about the Swiss bank, Levey decided that it was time to mobilize the private sector, starting with the world's banks, to join the effort to sanction Iran. His idea was to prevent a country reliant on global trade from being able to do business outside its borders.

Using banks to stay a step ahead of Tehran As Iran circumvents conventional sanctions, U.S. official pushes financial blockade From The New York Times Magazine

The best place to get a feeling for the challenge Iran poses to any sanctions program is Dubai, where Levey spent a great deal of time refining his approach. Unlike Iranians, citizens of the cosmopolitan emirate, situated near the mouth of the Gulf, are mostly Sunni and Arab. Yet trade across the Gulf has gone on so long that many of Dubai's elite, including members of the emir's inner circle, are of Iranian descent. Each major change in Iran creates a new wave of migrants: merchants left in the 19th century to avoid Persia's new tariffs; traditional families fled in the 1930s after the modernizing monarchy banned the chador; modern-minded Iranians left after the 1979 Islamic revolution forced <u>women</u> back into the chador.

The biggest migration, however, began five years ago, in anticipation of sanctions and other U.S. pressures. Thousands of Iranian businesses simply set up local offices, opened bank accounts and imported goods from abroad to Dubai. When wares arrived, they were turned around and sent to Iran by dhow, container ship or air. Dubai now has as many Iranians as it does its own citizens. Trade has grown steadily; according to Nasser Hashempour, vice president of the Iranian Business Council in Dubai, it topped \$14 billion last year.

So, despite sanctions, Iran's shelves are well stocked, even with American goods. Legal American exports to Iran-from clothing and cigarettes to musical instruments and bull semen, all considered agricultural, educational or humanitarian goods and thus exempt from sanctions - increased tenfold during the administration of President George W. Bush.

"The easiest thing to do in the world today is trade," the Iranian foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, said this past summer in an interview in New York. "Economic advantages attract partners. Right now, a number of American companies are working with Iran. But because of their conditions, I can't give their names."

Iranians now have an estimated \$300 billion in assets in Dubai alone. Emiratis profit handsomely from these ties: Outside Dubai's new free-trade zone, entrepreneurial foreigners need local partners, who must hold 51 percent of any business. Citizens of Dubai can earn up to \$100,000 annually just by putting their names on a license, leaving the work to the Iranians.

"Dubai," one U.S. official said, "is not going to shoot itself in the foot financially" for the sake of sanctions. Dubai and Iran are now so economically interdependent, local analysts said, that the city-state has become to Iran something like what Hong Kong is to China. Sanctions seem only to strengthen such ties.

Levey knew his idea might be a tough sell. He was not part of the Bush administration's inner circle.

In February 2006, his colleagues in the Treasury Department persuaded Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to let him travel with her to the Middle East. On the way home, he was summoned to Rice's private cabin to lay out his seven-point proposal.

Levey's pitch was simple: Banks were only as reputable as their clients' practices. And the reputations of banks that did business with Iran were at risk as long as Iran financed extremists and pursued missile and nuclear technology. More basically, he argued, Iran had bad banking habits, with little oversight to prevent money laundering. It had even begun asking foreign banks to remove traces of a transaction's ties to Iran, a practice known as "stripping." Levey's idea was to press banks not to do business with Iran until it complied with international standards.

Rice bought in. "It gave us a new lever," Rice later said. "It's not sanctions in the traditional sense."

Levey has since made more than 80 foreign visits of his own to talk to more than five dozen banks. U.S. intelligence, he told them, had traced \$50 million transmitted by Bank Saderat of Iran through a London subsidiary to a charity affiliated with Shiite militant group <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon. Saderat has 3,400 offices worldwide. Its Lebanon branch, Levey said, also supposedly sent millions of dollars to Palestinian extremists.

The Treasury Department then started blacklisting Iran's biggest banks, urging other nations to follow suit. In 2006, Saderat was barred from direct or indirect business with U.S. banks. In 2007, the department sanctioned Bank Sepah for financing projects to develop missiles that could carry nuclear weapons. The Treasury Department then

Using banks to stay a step ahead of Tehran As Iran circumvents conventional sanctions, U.S. official pushes financial blockade From The New York Times Magazine

blacklisted Bank Melli, the largest Iranian bank, for supposedly helping to finance military industries under UN sanctions.

Iran has angrily denied illicit activity. Its banks pledged compliance with international practices. Tehran complained to the International Monetary Fund. Some banks even wrote to the Treasury Department to protest. Yet the innovative efforts have spread.

Actions against Iranian banks became a feature of UN Security Council sanctions resolutions, beginning in 2006. In June of this year, the European Union blacklisted Melli and froze its assets. Last month, Australia sanctioned Melli and Saderat, while the U.S. blacklisted the Export Development Bank of Iran, which it claimed had taken over many of Sepah's accounts and provided services for missile programs. The Treasury Department is also scrutinizing Iran's central bank and considering blacklisting it, too, which could undermine not only the country's banking system but also international support for the U.S. campaign.

Big banks in Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Italy curbed business with Iran, even with longstanding clients. Even banks in Muslim countries, from Bahrain to Malaysia, have cut back their Iran business, bankers said. Most surprising has been the shift by several Chinese banks. "We haven't had Chinese banks tell me that they won't do deals with Iran," Levey said. "They just stop."

So far, more than 80 banks have curtailed business with Iran. Gulf bankers said medium- and long-term credit for development and trade was drying up. Saderat, Melli and Sepah - which together serviced 80 percent of Iran's international trade - were losing customers and struggling to find new banking relationships, despite many offices abroad. (None of these sources wanted to be identified as cooperating with the U.S. Treasury Department.)

The Treasury Department also galvanized global groups. The Financial Action Task Force, a financial monitor representing the world's 34 biggest economies, warned that Iran posed a "significant vulnerability" for the global financial system. And the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which includes 30 of the world's richest nations, has twice increased the credit risk for Iran, which now stands at six on a seven-point scale.

The financial squeeze on Iran has had a ripple effect. Iran has the world's largest natural gas reserves after Russia. The world's largest natural gas field is shared by Iran and Qatar, but the development of Iran's share has been dragging on for years.

"Qatar cut a deal quickly and was on its merry way," said Fareed Mohamedi, an executive in the Washington offices of PFC Energy, a consulting firm. "But Tehran never had the funding or technology to develop the gas field independently."

Cliff Kupchan, a former U.S. State Department official now at the Eurasia Group, said: "We've been extremely effective at dissuading multinational oil companies from going into Iran. Like with the international banks, we've invoked reputation risks. That really cramped the Iranian energy sector and could, more or less, impair the gas sector for the foreseeable future."

Ordinary businesses have been hit hard as well, according to Western officials and Iranians. Big companies and small bazaaris, as traditional merchants are called in Iran, are increasingly required to pay for imports in advance, in cash. Exporters are losing clients; raw materials for non-energy industries are harder to pay for. Boutique banks in Europe and Asia have filled some of the vacuum, at hefty costs, although U.S. officials suggest the global economic crisis may scare them away from Iran, too.

Levey's campaign has coincided with Iran's own crisis. In his 2005 presidential campaign, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed to put Iran's oil wealth on every dinner table. But his populist policies have flopped. Calling interest rates "the root cause of injustice," Ahmadinejad twice ordered banks to lower them, first to 12 percent and then to 10 percent, while inflation has gone as high as 30 percent. The dollar, worth 70 rials at the revolution, is today worth 9,600 rials. Iranians complain that produce prices have tripled over the past two years while housing prices have doubled.

Using banks to stay a step ahead of Tehran As Iran circumvents conventional sanctions, U.S. official pushes financial blockade From The New York Times Magazine

Ahmadinejad has faced unusual public criticism from senior clerics, former chief nuclear negotiators, former speakers of Parliament and several economists. He has fired six cabinet ministers with economic portfolios and two central bank governors. And in October, Iran's bazaaris shuttered their shops to protest against new tariffs, forcing the regime to back down.

For the first time in 30 years, U.S. officials contend, Washington has found a tangible way to put pressure on Iran. Whatever happens with the Bush administration's diplomatic or intelligence efforts, this is the program most likely to be continued by the next administration.

*

Robin Wright, author of "Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East," is a scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington.

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Byline: CARL HOFFMAN

Highlight: New Profile believes Israel is an overly militarized society, and the group will help anyone, no matter

what the reason, to avoid the draft. Box at end of text.

Body

You are either going to love this group or hate it, depending on where you stand in Israel's contemporary political spectrum. Chances are you're familiar with the group already and have already made up your mind.

The organization is called New Profile - A Movement for the Civil-ization of Israeli Society. Founded as a feminist organization 10 years ago to combat what it sees as the "over-militarization" of Israel, New Profile's primary objectives are to end compulsory military service, provide aid and support to imprisoned refusers and conscientious objectors, offer counseling on "all forms of draft resistance and conscientious objection" to high- school graduates prior to their enlistment, advocate resistance to Israel's "occupation" of the West Bank, and conduct educational programs aimed toward raising public awareness of what the group believes is the over-emphasis of military themes in Israeli society and culture.

The group's charter states: "We, a group of feminist <u>women</u> and men, are convinced that we need not live in a soldiers' state. Today, Israel is capable of a determined peace politics. It need not be a militarized society. We are convinced that we ourselves, our children, our partners, need not go on being endlessly mobilized, need not go on living as warriorsÉ We will not go on being mobilized, raising children for mobilization, supporting mobilized partners, brothers, fathers, while those in charge of the country go on deploying the army easily, rather than building other solutions... We oppose the use of military means to enforce Israeli sovereignty beyond the Green Line. We oppose the use of the army, police, security forces in the ongoing oppression and discrimination of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, while demolishing their homes, denying them building and development rights, using violence to disperse their demonstrations."

Unlike most other Israeli non-profit organizations, New Profile receives little of its income from private donations. New Profile's funding comes principally from international Christian organizations like the Quakers (United Kingdom) and Bread for the World (United States).

New Profile has worked in tandem with groups like <u>Women</u> in Black, and in conjunction with the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions to rebuild houses of West Bank Palestinians demolished by the IDF.

But it is such programs as "Think Before Enlisting" and other draft resistance campaigns that have placed the group at the opposite end of the spectrum from such organizations as Shivyon - The Israeli Forum for the Promotion of an Equal Share of the [military] Burden, with whom New Profile is often at bitter odds.

The latest flashpoint was the recent imprisonment of Udi Nir, 18, of Herzliya, who was ordered jailed last August 21 for refusing to serve in the IDF. Nir is one of a group of high-school seniors who recently signed a collective declaration of refusal to serve.

The group, which calls itself "12th Graders' Letter 2008 - Refusing the Occupation," has a page on Facebook and is featured as a hero of conscience on New Profile's Web site.

In September, the Justice Ministry announced that the police would investigate whether the New Profile Web site was violating Article 109 of the Penal Code, which forbids incitement to evasion of duty - an allegation which the organization swiftly denied.

Claiming some 2,000 supporters and run by "40-60" active volunteers, New Profile operates with a "feminist, non-hierarchical" system of organization. Accordingly, the group prides itself on having no leaders, no one occupying any official positions, no fixed division of labor, or even an office. New Profile members run the group from their own homes.

The organization also lacks an official spokesperson, but Dr. Diana Dolev, a founder and prominent figure within the group, agreed to speak about New Profile's general ideology and activities.

Dolev, a fifth-generation Israeli, holds a PhD in the history and theory of architecture and teaches at the Holon Institute of Technology. She is involved primarily with New Profile's outreach educational programs.

If I understand you correctly, New Profile's basic position is that Israel is an "over-militarized society." I have lived in some highly militarized countries, like Indonesia under General Suharto, when the army ran the country and anyone of any importance was an actively- serving army general. Few people look at Israel and see anything like that here.

If people don't see it, it's because they don't want to see it. There's this trick here of melting down the border between what is civil and what is military. So you don't see soldiers marching in formation. We don't have all that. We ridicule this kind of militarism. Our soldiers aren't tidy soldiers. They're very schlumperich [unkempt], which creates this image of a soldier that is half civilian, one of the hevre, not a "soldierly" soldier. But I think this is a sort of cover. I think that actually, in a more concealed way, this image contributes to militaristic ideas filtering into civil society without our noticing it.

Such as?

Such as lots of advertising, based on [images] of a soldier and his mother, or a soldier and his girlfriend. We show examples of this in our exhibitions. Or, for instance, show business people posing on the covers of magazines, saluting. They're civilians - why should they be saluting? What's the idea there?

And you can see today with all the political crises [about] how [Foreign Minister] Tzipi Livni is being attacked as unsuitable to be prime minister because she hasn't got experience leading the nation into war. People don't even question this idea. If you're not a general or an ex-general, you're not suitable to become prime minister.

But isn't the military's cultural importance due to the obvious fact that we're in a bad neighborhood, with dangerous enemies, under threat?

That's a very common idea. But we quote a book by Motti Golani, a professor at the University of Haifa, called Wars Do Not Just Happen. Although he comes from a very militaristic family, he has analyzed all our wars and says it's not true that the wars were all caused by our neighbors. We [took] an active part. We don't have to automatically believe everything we are told by our leaders. We have to look into things a bit deeper, and we will find out that, for different reasons, our leaders wanted the war, or they were never able to think about conflicts other than war and the force of our army.

Are you saying, then, that some of our wars were unnecessary?

The last wars, of course. This is without any question. Both of the wars against Lebanon should have been avoided. But we can go back even to other wars - wars that there's a positive consensus about, and Dr. Golani says that they could have been avoided as well. But from reading the newspapers, including yours I suppose, you can see that the discourse is always in militaristic terms. We think that if we change people's mind-sets, the discourse will change also. And then people will be searching for other solutions.

Do you really believe that whether we have war or peace is up to us?

People keep saying, "Well, it's not up to us. We have bad neighbors." But we have peace with Egypt, we have peace with Jordan. Lebanon never started a war against Israel, and Syria is [doing] its best not to attack Israel. So what are we talking about? Iran? [Laughs].

In your opinion, what is our best alternative?

The alternative is diplomacy, of course, but the problem is very complicated because the militarism here is so deeply rooted. It would take a new way of looking at our neighbors. If one of our leaders failed to speak of Arab leaders in a degrading way, he would not be considered the kind of strong leader that we want for Israel. People would think that he was weak. It's all about being strong. But in my opinion it's not about showing your muscle. Being strong is also being polite, compassionate, talking about another leader as your equal or someone you can learn from and have a dialogue with. Israeli leaders have not done that at all.

Why do you think our leaders have not tried your approach?

I think it's a combination... of always seeing ourselves as the victim, thinking that the whole world is against us and that we are under constant threats to our existence. All that has been overused and has been one part of creating our militarization.

But what about the threats to our existence? What about *Hizbullah* or Hamas?

Well, Hamas is a difficult question because we've probably gone too far in undermining Palestinian society in the territories. Israel created Hamas. We created Hamas because of this idea that if we get the Palestinians to fight each other, we win. If they destroy each other, we win. This strategy has failed completely. It failed in Lebanon, and we've paid a high cost for this. Same with the Palestinians. I think Israel should simply leave them alone. We should leave them alone, pay them compensation for what we owe them for so many years of occupation and let them go on with their lives.

We can leave the Palestinians alone, but will the Palestinians leave us alone?

It's worth trying. Up to now, the military force that we've been using against them hasn't brought us any peace and quiet, any end of danger. So maybe we should try. Maybe they will be so busy organizing their lives, maybe they'll be so overwhelmed [by] children going freely to school, being able to do business, to travel around freely without the humiliation and suffering of going through checkpoints - who knows?

So, in your opinion, how large an army does Israel actually need?

I don't often quote Ehud Barak, but I will now. He has said that Israel needs a small and smart army. When we call ourselves "New Profile for Israel," we are referring both to the centrality of the military induction "profile" that every kid gets when he goes into the army, and to changing Israel's civil profile. We think that this has to change so that the military profile will not be central at all, but will instead be marginalized in Israeli society, in our civil profile.

What is New Profile's attitude toward Israel's non- military compulsory national service?

We don't have a unanimous opinion about this, or anything we could declare as New Profile's "position" on the subject. It's a complex issue for us. Some of our members did do civil service, some did service with political organizations like Physicians for Human Rights, and that seemed right to them. On the whole, we think people ought to be educated to contribute to society for many years - not just one or two or three.

Also, we feel that [in the case of] national service, the state interferes with people's lives. And in a state where people have so much difficulty finding jobs, it's not right for the state to fund "volunteer" work that isn't volunteer at all by young people just out of school taking the place of someone who really needs the job.

And also, we feel that [national service also] becomes a tool to separate people into first- and second-class citizens, depending on whether they did their service or not. We resent that.

Are there any circumstances under which you think that war is justified or necessary?

Oh, yes. I'm not a pacifist. A lot of people in New Profile are not. I guess there are such circumstances. I recall meeting a delegate to an international conference of <u>Women</u> in Black. I think she came from the United States. We told her how we use a tank as a visual image of war to show how militarized we are. But she said, "You know, my image of a tank is one of rescue." She was a child in Germany during WWII and hid in a cellar until she realized she was surrounded by US army tanks. So for her, the tank was an image of rescue, of life. So yes, I'm sure there are there must be - circumstances in which war is justified. But what we're trying to say is that our leaders do not explore all of the other possibilities before deciding to go to war.

What kind of Israel are you trying to create?

Paradise. A country with friendlier relations with its neighbors. A more just state for all its citizens. A genuinely pluralistic society. A country that knows you don't have to be strong all the time, where real "strength" is about defending people who have been weakened. We are a very violent societyÉ New Profile is about looking at society critically - not through nationalist lenses, but about ourselves as people in a highly militarized society to find out how our mind-sets have been influenced. We want to open people's eyes.

(BOX) Starting young

Although a lot of New Profile's energy and resources are directed toward "educational programs" like training workshops and traveling exhibitions, the group's major focus is helping young people avoid service in the IDF.

New Profile goes about this in two ways: by organizing youth groups where options and alternatives to army service are presented and discussed, and by maintaining a network of counselors who assist individual boys and girls who have decided not to serve.

Lotahn Raz, 27, is a co-founder and co-coordinator of New Profile's youth groups program. Raz was himself a conscientious objector and was imprisoned for two months in 1999 for refusing to enlist.

What happens in a New Profile youth group?

The goal is to create a space for young people to openly think, talk and discuss issues related to military service. It's about creating a space to ask questions and think thoughts that don't have space to be thought or discussed otherwise.

Our principle is that in Israeli society there is no space for young people to talk about military service - it's considered to be a non-question. But in our perspective, it's a political issue, a political question. And the fact that military service is shoved down people's throats without having the space to ask questions is undemocratic and very problematic. Space needs to be made for people to ask questions and think. And that's the idea. It's not our perspective to say what people should do; it's just to create the space to talk about things.

Do these people come to you or do you go to them?

Mostly people come to us. We get a lot of emails from young people from around the country, asking for a place to talk. When we open a youth group, we go around and look for young people that we know are interested in these questions. Like any other youth group would do, we look for places where people would be interested in what we have to offer. At this point, we have groups in Jerusalem, Beersheba, Haifa, Tel AvivÉ we're opening one in the Sharon, we had one last year in Rehovot and another in Pardess Hanna. And we're looking to open one in Galilee.

Do you provide draft counseling at these youth group meetings?

No. That's done within our counseling network. Our youth groups are there to provide young people with space to think, ask questions and make decisions. The purpose of the counseling networks is to follow individuals through the process of draft resistance. We give people information that does not exist elsewhere - what are the different possibilities, how does one go about refusing.

So what are the different possibilities?

The main one, the political one, is to go the conscientious objector route, to go before the government's Conscientious Objectors Committee and end up imprisoned like I was, and then eventually receive "unfit for military service" status. And then there are the exemptions for medical reasons, mental health reasons, or other issues.

How far does New Profile actually go in counseling people about, say, medical exemptions? Would you advise a sane person to act "crazy" or a healthy person to pretend to be sick?

We would never tell anybody to lie. That would be immoral and wrong. What we do is give information about how the system works - about how a psychiatric release from the army is decided upon, for example.

So are you saying that you inform people about how the army decides that someone is psychologically unfit for service and then tell them to take it from there?

Well, yeah. Our job is to give people information and help them through the process. People need to do the work and basically it's their decision. But remember, the one who decides to release people from the military is the military itself. New Profile has no impact on that. It's the military's decision to decide who they want and who they don't want.

Further information about New Profile is available at their Web site, www.newprofile.org

Graphic

5 photos: Working the system. New Profile does not counsel youth to seek medical exemptions - it merely 'informs' them about the process. New Profile's funding comes principally from international Christian organizations. A new recruit says good-bye to her mother before leaving for her first day in the army. (Credit: IDF Spokesman; Illustrative photo/IDF Spokesman)

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Britain's other big hitter; While Andy Murray has grabbed the headlines,
Britain's No 1 woman, Anne Keothavong, has also had a breakthrough year,
albeit a less glamorous one that has seen her play many obscure
tournaments - including one in a war zone. She tells Paul Newman all about

it

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Body

In a year that has taken her from Bratislava to Barnstaple, from Monzon in Spain to Makarska in Croatia, from gunfights in Lebanon to gung-ho performances in New York, it was fitting that Anne Keothavong's season should finish last weekend in an unlikely tennis outpost, Krakow in Poland.

It was appropriate, too, that it should end in victory, the 25-year-old Briton rounding off her most successful campaign by avenging three previous straight-sets defeats at the hands of Romania's Monica Niculescu to claim the biggest win of her career. "I've been to places that were so obscure that I can't even remember the names of the towns where I was playing," Keothavong said on her return to London this week. "It's good to be back home."

Unlike Britain's other No 1, Andy Murray, who was in the world's top 10 by the age of 19, Keothavong has taken her time to climb the tennis ladder. At 19 she had yet to break into the world's top 200 and even at the start of this year was ranked No 132. In this week's updated ranking list, however, she was at a career-high No 61 after a season that has yielded four titles, appearances in two other finals and a run to the third round of the US Open, the best performance there by a British woman for 17 years.

If Keothavong can maintain or improve that ranking next year, she can look forward to playing regularly on the main Sony Ericsson <u>Women</u>'s Tennis Association tour rather than at some of the far-flung venues on the International Tennis Federation's calendar.

"Even when you're travelling to places like Italy and France on the ITF tour you're not going to the main cities," Keothavong said. "You have to look them up on the map. They can be very isolated. You're often playing in a tennis centre in the middle of nowhere with not too many people around. Sometimes it's a good thing if you have more than 10 people watching your matches."

Britain 's other big hitter While Andy Murray has grabbed the headlines, Britain 's No 1 woman, Anne Keothavong, has also had a breakthrough year, albeit a less....

Jounieh in Lebanon, where victory this May propelled Keothavong into the world's top 100 for the first time, may not be on her schedule next time around. While she was playing there six months ago, <u>Hezbollah</u> and Sunni fighters were engaged in fierce combat just 10 miles away in Beirut, resulting in more than 40 deaths.

"Although it was perfectly safe where we were, it was scary to think of what was happening nearby," Keothavong said. "I think my parents were very worried. They got in touch and wanted me to get home as soon as possible. I was on my own because I wasn't working with a coach at the time. The last thing they wanted was for their daughter to be caught up in anything like that.

"The Spanish Embassy were very helpful. At the end of the tournament I tagged along with the Spanish girls. We were escorted all the way to the Syrian border. A few of the French girls took a boat to Cyprus, but the only way we could get out by air was through Damascus because they had closed down Beirut airport. There was a security car, armed with lots of guns, driving two minutes in front of us. We went through one of the towns that had been heavily bombed and you could see all the bullet holes in the walls of the buildings."

Keothavong's parents know all about the horrors of war, having arrived in Britain in the 1970s from Laos, a bloody battleground of the Vietnam War. "Laos was one of the most heavily bombed countries," Keothavong said. "My Mum came here as a refugee to escape what was going on. It was here that she met and married my Dad."

Born and bred in Hackney in London's East End, Keothavong was introduced to tennis by her father. "He's a big tennis fan. One of the first things he did when he came to England was to go and watch tennis at Wimbledon. When I was four my parents took me and my older brother to short tennis classes at the weekend. When I was seven they had free tennis camps in the summer and we played together with friends in the park."

She cites her parents as the biggest influences on her career. "They put so much into my tennis right from the beginning. When I was a kid they did so much, ferrying me round to tournaments every weekend, to training after school, chaperoning me to places. They gave up so much time for me, my brother and my sister. My parents are very special people to me and the older I get the more I appreciate them. I think that if I could do half of what they've done when I become a parent, I'll be doing well."

While Keothavong's talent was evident from an early age, it was only after she left school at 16 that she seriously considered a professional career. "I tried doing A-levels by correspondence, but I was training at the same time with Alan Jones and Jo Durie at their academy at Hazelwood. I was junior national champion. The A-levels soon got pushed to the side, but my parents fully supported me."

Progress was steady but slow and by the start of last year Keothavong was beginning to consider her future. "I was feeling that if I didn't break into the top 100 by the end of this year I might be questioning what I was doing," she said. "Much as I love tennis I never wanted just to be stuck between 150 and 200. Maybe the dream would have been over and I would have looked to do other things."

However, making the semi-finals of a WTA tournament in India last September brought a timely confidence boost, even if subsequent injuries meant that her breakthrough into the top 100 was delayed. "I knew I could do it," she said. "You just have to have a little bit of luck and a little run somewhere to reassure yourself that you're on the right path."

This year, her ranking boosted by improved results, Keothavong became the first British woman for nine years to earn direct entry into a Grand Slam tournament when she played at Wimbledon. "Playing without 'WC' [wild card] by my name at Wimbledon was very satisfying," she said. "I've had my fair share of wild cards. I've appreciated the opportunities they've given me, but this year was much more satisfying.

"As a British player Wimbledon is the place where you want to do well. That's where you receive the most exposure and have your friends and family watching you. You want to do well not only for yourself but also for everyone who's helped you.

Britain 's other big hitter While Andy Murray has grabbed the headlines, Britain 's No 1 woman, Anne Keothavong, has also had a breakthrough year, albeit a less....

"I went there for the first time when I was eight. I remember getting Boris Becker's autograph. When kids come up to me for my autograph and ask what my name is and where I'm from, it reminds me of when I used to do that at Wimbledon."

Keothavong beat Vania King in the first round - only her second victory in eight appearances in the main draw at the All England Club - before a battling defeat to Venus Williams, the eventual champion. Two months later she did even better at the US Open, enjoying the finest win of her career against Francesca Schiavone, then the world No 27, before losing a hard-fought contest against Elena Dementieva, the Olympic champion, in the third round.

Over the summer Keothavong spent three months playing on the main <u>women</u>'s circuit and was pleasantly surprised by what she found. "The gap with the level I'd been used to wasn't as big as I thought," she said. "I used to put the top girls on a pedestal and think they were so good. But having been around the bigger tournaments for a while and had the opportunity to train with some of the top girls, it has made me realise the gap isn't that big. I know I can stay with these girls and beat them."

Keothavong has had a number of coaches, but is an independently-minded individual, equally happy whether she is working and travelling on her own or with assistance. Claire Curran, a former doubles partner, and Nigel Sears, the head **women**'s coach at the Lawn Tennis Association, have both been working with her recently, but neither of them on a full-time basis.

"I like my independence," Keothavong said. "I feel I'm focused enough and know what I'm doing. Having Claire or Nigel around to support me has been great, but technically I can't make any big changes to my game now. That has to be done at a younger age."

A whole-hearted competitor with an attacking game, Keothavong has developed the confidence to keep going for her shots. "I have to believe in how I play. Sticking to my game is what will take me further. Just because you miss one shot doesn't mean you won't make the next one.

"Tennis is a very mental game. Playing against Dementieva and against Venus made me realise that I can keep up with the biggest hitters. I can give them a good run for their money.

"When you're around better players you're forced to raise your game. Playing against and practising with them can only help you to become a better player.

"I just have to take it one step at a time. Having broken into the top 100, my next target was to get into the top 75. Now I've done that, my sights are on the top 50."

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The number of ranking places Anne Keothavong has risen this calendar year

Healthy competition helps women be fit for purpose

Anne Keothavong is not the only British woman to make progress this year. Mel South is at a career-high No 116 in the world rankings, followed by Elena Baltacha (136), Katie O'Brien (154) and Georgie Stoop (208). Of the emerging younger players, Naomi Cavaday, who has performed well against Martina Hingis and Venus Williams at Wimbledon in the last two years, has been hampered by injuries, but Laura Robson, the 14-year-old junior Wimbledon champion, won the title at Sunderland last weekend in only her fifth senior tournament.

While the progress of the British men has been slow - Alex Bogdanovic (182) is the only player other than Andy Murray in the top 200 - their <u>female</u> counterparts are showing the benefits of the changes made since Carl Maes and Nigel Sears, the former coaches of Kim Clijsters and Daniela Hantuchova respectively, took charge of British <u>women</u>'s tennis two years ago.

Britain 's other big hitter While Andy Murray has grabbed the headlines, Britain 's No 1 woman, Anne Keothavong, has also had a breakthrough year, albeit a less....

They have worked in particular on the players' fitness and on developing a more positive approach. "The British girls have definitely helped each other," Keothavong said. "We all train at the National Tennis Centre at Roehampton and we push each other. There's a healthy rivalry. We always want to be one step ahead of each other. We're good friends but we're all very competitive people."

Paul Newman

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That Unruly, Serendipitous Show in Venice

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Body

After the artists, dealers, critics and hedge-fund guys jetted off last weekend to shop in Basel and check out Documenta in Germany, it became easier to tell whether the 52nd version of the Venice Biennale was as much of a bore as it seemed.

It's not. It's subtle and sober. And, well, yes, maybe it's just a little boring.

But it grows on you. It did on me, anyway. Aside, of course, from the simple fact that it's in this ancient paradise of sun, honeysuckle and stone (passing disappointments of art somehow invariably wafting away on sea breezes), what's always glorious about this oldest of the international festivals is its unruliness. There is never just one biennale but many of them, all mixed up, and you're free to like or kvetch about any or all.

A commissioner -- this time the former Museum of Modern Art curator, Robert Storr -- deals with the crazy bureaucracy and is responsible for the main exhibition. As in the past that show divides itself between the Italian pavilion in the Giardini Pubblici, the biennale's traditional base, and the Arsenale, the former rope factory nearby, whose traversal, even when everything is as compulsively well ordered as it is now, feels like a forced march.

But then there are dozens of countries, more and more each biennale (76 now, a record), which organize their own pavilions all over town. By chance, overlaps occur between a pavilion and the main show, implying actual coordination. Mr. Storr has included a work by Sophie Calle (a simple, heartbreaking memorial to her mother). Ms. Calle also takes over the large French pavilion with a virtual library of <u>women</u>'s reactions to an anonymous breakup letter she ostensibly received. Maybe you have to be a woman to fully grasp its virtues, which many people did, but not me.

Mr. Storr has also picked two works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, the Cuban-born American who (posthumously) represents the United States. His pavilion, put together by Nancy Spector of the Guggenheim, is the biennale's most elegant by far. Gifted beyond reason at turning hard-nosed Minimalism into humble, humane art, Mr. Gonzalez-Torres (1957-96) gets the tribute he deserves. I returned a few times to a sepulchral white room in the pavilion where a rectangular carpet of licorice candies (you may take one if you wish) evokes a gravesite beneath a rectangle of scrimmed skylight. My heart leapt.

I also finally made it into the German pavilion, having skipped the daunting lines over the weekend, and saw Isa Genzken's appalling melange of mirrors, astronaut costumes, nooses and suitcases (something to do with "petrodollars," she has said, as if that's an explanation). Then I checked in a second time on Tracey Emin's tortured, itchy, nude self-portrait etchings and drawings in the British pavilion; they looked as wan and second-hand as they had the first time. Warmed over Egon Schieles, they left an impression that Ms. Emin has her sights on the art market while also suggesting that even the cheekiest British artists are really reactionaries at heart.

The Korean pavilion was a nice surprise. A young, Yale-trained artist named Hyungkoo Lee, has fabricated the presumptive fossil remains of Bugs Bunny, Tom and Jerry, and others, somberly presented in glass vitrines as if at a natural history museum; there's also an installation having to do with devices to enhance the artist's physique and a surgical theater full of applicable instrumentation, conjuring Matthew Barney. A pair of 8-year-olds accompanying me found this quite fascinating, as they did David Altmejd's contribution on behalf of Canada: a house of mirrors with stuffed squirrels, hair, berries, mushrooms, werewolves and other harum-scarum concoctions typical of the artist. He gets my prize for the most industrious, if not the most profound, pavilion.

A near second on that score, across the gardens, is Monika Sosnowska, who has somehow shoehorned the huge twisted armature of a hypothetical building into Poland's pavilion, recalling coups of unlikely architecture by Gordon Matta-Clark and Robert Smithson. Cogitating on bygone utopias and Communism's fall, the work impresses mostly as a logistical feat and as one of the few large-scale sculptural gambits at the biennale.

The funniest entry belongs to Jaime Vallare and Rafael Lamata, calling themselves Los Torreznos, in the Spanish pavilion. Seated side by side against a white backdrop in several videos, they gesticulate and shout back and forth names and phrases of political figures in rhythmic, comedic crescendo: "Marx!" "Maaao!" Marx!" Maaaaaooo!" "Hitler!" "Maaaaaoooo!" "Kropotkin!!!!" It is funnier than it sounds.

Mr. Storr's show is not funny. In the Arsenale he presents various photographs documenting far-flung global crises. These blessedly eschew the usual art world hectoring and two-bit posturing, providing instead, as Mr. Storr put it, "something to think about other than the art world." Thank goodness for that.

In the Italian pavilion he stresses estimable seniors, catering not to jaded insiders but to a broader public for whom the sight of new or nearly new paintings by Gerhard Richter, Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Ryman and Sigmar Polke (huge translucent tours-de-force of darkling mystery, the color of molasses or crude oil) does not provoke the rolling of eyes.

I confess to some eye rolling. Mr. Storr's choices seemed risk-averse.

But then, I saw the sense of them. Mr. Storr has spent his career endorsing these artists and others in the Italian pavilion -- Susan Rothenberg, Sol LeWitt (a spectacular pair of spidery wall drawings, one light, one dark), Elizabeth Murray, Louise Bourgeois and Bruce Nauman (a fountain, made with molded plastic heads turned inside out and industrial sinks). It would have been strange, not to mention disingenuous, had he ignored them to anticipate the insider response, especially considering that his job was to put on view the art he deems most worth looking at.

In lieu of the usual bazaar, with hundreds of artists in no logical order (not many biennales ago, the bewildering total topped 350), Mr. Storr limits his choice to 96. An argument, based on serendipity, can be made for more chaos. But less scrupulously, chaos panders to commerce, making the biennale resemble an art fair. This show declines to emulate that model and also skips the navel-gazing and institutional critique that art festivals favor, stressing instead good old patient observation.

The more I looked, the more turned up. Adel Abdessemed's circles made of barbed wire, tucked into a corner and easily missed, gave a twist to Minimalism. They were nearly hidden behind El Anatsui's great chain-mail tapestries, made of metal bottle caps and whiskey bottle collars, richly colored, providing a rare dose of sheer eye candy.

Tomoko Yoneda's photographs, on inspection, revealed themselves to be views of a minefield in the demilitarized zone in South Korea, a sniper's post in Beirut and of Israel from a *Hezbollah*-controlled village in Lebanon. They

That Unruly, Serendipitous Show in Venice

snuck up on me. Ms. Calle's memorial to her mother came to mind before a suite of videos in the Arsenale by a Chinese artist, Yang Zhenzhong, who asked strangers on the street and elsewhere to say "I will die." A Japanese schoolgirl giggled the words. An elderly swimmer on the beach added, "But not yet." A gruff young man spoke the phrase, then glared at the camera, which panned out to reveal a policeman's badge on his chest.

There were links and themes. A Colombian artist, Oscar Munoz, on five adjacent screens, is showing various faces drawn in watercolor, outdoors, on stone. The faces evaporate in the heat, suggesting the disappeared in South America. It's deeply moving, and it dovetailed with another remarkable work, by an American artist, Emily Prince, who makes palm-size drawings of all the American soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This is quiet art. Much of this biennale murmurs, it doesn't shout. The art world these days often bellows and struts. I doubt this biennale will be recalled as groundbreaking or dynamic, but it is an independent show, strong in its convictions. A series of photographs of bombed-out buildings in Beirut by Gabriele Basilico, an Italian artist, hang near a cut-and-dry informational display by Yto Barrada, a French artist, about how indigenous flowers in Tangier have been overrun by commercial development. They're works about civic demise, one linked to war, the other to prosperity.

There's a large brick model of a favela, put together by a group of Brazilian children called the Morrinho Project, which insinuates itself (meaningfully) outside the United States pavilion. It has become a playground for children visiting the biennale, who clamber over it and play with toy cars. The favela reappears at the Arsenale in the work of Paula Trope, a Brazilian artist, who photographed the children of the Morrinho Project. The combination is a nice touch by Mr. Storr.

I shouldn't fail to mention another Brazilian he includes, Waltercio Caldas. Mr. Caldas has arranged glass panes, metal brackets, dangling colored strings, rocks and painted black rectangles, all placed just so, in a room of the Italian pavilion. The work pays implicit homage to postwar compatriots like Lygia Clark and Helio Oiticica. Everything is still, except the strings, which move slightly when people pass. I don't think it's coincidental that Mr. Storr has included elsewhere sculptures by Fred Sandback, the American master of ethereal string geometries, a gentle genius, who died in 2003. Better late than never to honor him too.

Let me not forget a Japanese artist called Tabaimo, who has concocted an animation of a dollhouse, furnished by disembodied hands that frantically scratch away at each other and then at the rooms, revealing a kind of pulsing body underneath, before a flood comes and causes the cycle to begin again. Ilya and Emilia Kabakov have returned to form with an elaborate installation called "Manas," of a supposed utopian city in northern Tibet, replete with intricate models of mountain observatories where inhabitants receive cosmic energy and commune with extraterrestrials. On certain days, so the Kabakovs explain, an identical city could be seen hovering in the sky, a heavenly Manas that the earthly one mirrors.

That's not a bad metaphor for the biennale. A video called "Shadow Boxing" by Sophie Whettnall shows a woman standing motionless while a boxer dances and jabs around her, his fist coming just millimeters from her face. The camera pans in. We see her hair move with the breeze of passing blows. Her expression remains impassive. She pretends to ignore the violence.

But her eyes dilate. It's impossible to remain impervious to what's going on around her, no matter how she tries to seem otherwise.

Come to think of it, maybe that's the right metaphor for the state of art now. The Venice Biennale, "Think With the Senses, Feel With the Mind: Art in the Present Tense," continues through Nov. 21; www.labiennale.org.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: The Venice Biennale -- This year's version of the sprawling festival flanks "Dusasa I," a chain-mail tapestry by El Anatsui, with Adel Abdessemed's barbed-wire circles. (Photo by Librado Romero/The New York Times)(pg. E29)

A scene from a video work by Tabaimo called "dolefullhouse."

Works at the Arsenale include a series of photographs of bombed-out buildings in Beirut by Gabriele Basilico of Italy.

Among the biennale's largest works is the twisted skeleton of a hypothetical building by Monika Sosnowska, at the Poland pavilion. (Photographs by Librado Romero/The New York Times)(pg. E34)

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Letters & emails

Sunday Age (Melbourne, Australia)

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Body

Booze biz hooks teens with sweet mixer drinks

The front page of The Sunday Age (10/6) had two unremarked upon but almost identical story threads: above the masthead, "Teens & booze", and as the major front-page story, "Food giants axe 'fat' ads luring kids".

These are basically two similar problems originating from the same "profit above all else" attitude that seems to be the norm for the commercial world. If kids and teenagers have money, they are legitimate targets for increased sales.

For unhealthy foods, often marketed as being somehow "healthy" when they're patently not, perhaps a line has been drawn in the sand. But for teenagers hooked and destroyed by an immoral and predatory alcohol industry, it may well be too late. The battle has long been lost.

The growth over the past 15 or 20 years of sales of sweetened mixer drinks - a cynical ploy to bridge the gap between processed drinks that simply rot the teeth and high-alcohol beverages - has been massive.

Once alcohol was a simple product - the choice for teenagers as they aged was between expensive "hard" alcohol such as whisky and vodka, and the lesser alcohol percentage drinks such as beer or wine. These were not natural taste steps for the young; there was often an initial distaste for alcohol flavours.

That was the past, of course. Now liquor stores are packed with drinks that make a few people, legally, very wealthy, while ensuring a smooth transition for young consumers from lolly water to hard booze. The "soft" drink manufacturers love it: profit without any thought for consequence or honesty.

MARTIN DIX, Healesville

Grow up, parents

The best way to fight childhood obesity is neither with food companies nor the Federal Government but with parents.

As mother to a 17-month-old boy, I have every intention of teaching him to eat healthily.

If parents can't control what their children eat, or can't say no to them when they ask for junk food, it is irresponsible to rely on anyone else.

It sickens me to see obese children, not because I think the Government isn't doing enough, but because I can't believe parents allow their children to become like that, and then have the nerve to blame food companies and the Government.

Parents, grow up and start taking responsibility for your children's health.

MELISSA HART, Werribee

Some ads do good

I have two children below 3 1/2 years old who recently have benefited from advertising of the kind that companies have agreed to cease.

Coca-Cola Amatil is to be congratulated for using Disney/Pixar characters in support of its Mount Franklin range of water products.

My children now are choosing water over sugared juices - a not insignificant victory. In my opinion, this is a clear case of using advertising in a positive way.

PETER McGARRY, Brighton

Recycle, not restrict

The recycling of televisions, computers and the like to reduce landfill is certainly desirable (Sunday Age, 10/6), but an up-front fee added to the price of the products is not.

The price increase would make little or no difference to people on the average wage, but for people on pensions, it would make the cost of replacing such items prohibitive.

It seems as though our politicians have forgotten about them, but pensioners are human too and would like to maintain some connection with the outside world.

Computers for correspondence and televisions for news and entertainment should not become unaffordable luxuries.

Up-front recycling fees would be just another tax on the poor. The chronically ill and aged are already struggling on pensions below the poverty line.

HELEN MOSS, Croydon

Right step, wrong word

"Evil stepmother state," indeed! (Opinion, 10/6). I loved Rob Moodie's article. I raced through it, eagerly cheering and shouting things such as "About time!" and "Yes! Thank God someone is sending this message!" But I crashed miserably on the "stepmother" speed hump.

I am a stepmother. Of all the people in my various groups of friends - decent, enlightened, intelligent parents and non-parents - I am the most likely to challenge teenage drinking.

Although I usually bite my tongue, in my mind I hear, "Are you serious! You're buying booze for your 15-year-old?"

The parents I do broach about this issue usually reply with something like, "You wouldn't understand. You're not a parent."

Well, what I do understand are the statistics highlighted in Moodie's article about the horrors of teenage drinking.

And can I say, Rob, that while I support you vehemently, making few friends along the way (especially among teenagers), I absolutely object to the "stepmother" reference.

KATHRYN LEDSON, Richmond

Animals feel, too

Any belief system that promotes prolonged suffering in animals so that they can do penance for their previous life's crimes (or "live out their karma", according to the Dalai Lama) is cruel and should be ignored. Animals are sentient beings that need all the help we can possibly give them.

SIMONE STELMASIAK-VAN MOURIK, Maribyrnong

In the wrong, Lane

Terry Lane (10/6) once again brilliantly proves the adage: why let facts get in the way of a good story? Here Lane continues in his tired crusade by focusing only on the US and Israel as the "purveyors" of cluster bombs. Some inconvenient facts (Human Rights Watch, April 2007):

- · Manufacturing states: from Lane's tirade, you would assume the US and Israel only. Actually, 34 countries manufacture cluster bombs.
- Exporters: Lane ignores 11 countries that export them.
- · Manufacturers: Lane mentions only "Israeli military industries", but 85 companies make cluster bombs, more than half of which are in Europe.
- · Stockpiles: 75 countries possess these.
- · Use: in the past 15 years, they have been used by Yugoslavia, Russia, the Northern Alliance, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, NATO, the US, the UK, Netherlands, Israel and *Hezbollah*.

Yes, cluster bombs are horrific. Yes, they (and the wars that trigger their use) should be banned. But let's have the journalistic integrity to admit that half the world still considers them appropriate, rather than pushing an agenda.

RONNIE BRAVERMAN, Elsternwick

Tax parking, not roads

The Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce's David Russell said Victoria needed something more "scientifically based than just taxing car-parking spaces in the CBD" (10/6).

Taxing all motorists parking in the CBD would be much cheaper than installing new toll lanes or fancy GPS technology. A CBD parking tax would prevent motorists from using secondary roads and arterials to avoid city congestion tolls.

Parking taxes would leave the freeways/bypasses user-friendly to visitors and motorists traversing the city. Having a dedicated toll lane in this day and age could be perceived as dividing the rich and poor using the same roads.

ADRIAN JOYCE, Werribee South

Scratched by the itch

"The 27-year itch" by Claire Halliday (10/6) attempts to be fair, but the overriding theme is that it is primarily men who can't communicate.

While it seems true that many men may need help, and the article covers this well, all men are tarred with the same brush, as if men are solely responsible for a relationship's demise. For instance, there is no indication in this article of a woman asking for what she wanted, only a negative response to the husband such as "too little too late".

<u>Women</u> are portrayed as leaving the relationship when financially able, or after having re-appraised their life, and that the decision to quit was correct.

All this with no regrets, implying <u>women</u> generally have none. No mention is made of <u>women</u> (or men) who did have regrets, and the idea of commitment and renegotiating relationships was not even broached.

The media is powerful and, despite the best intentions, this type of article, I believe, misrepresents many men and is ultimately damaging to people it tries to help.

NICK THEOPHILOU, South Caulfield

Keep it to yourself

Why, oh why is it when some people are diagnosed with cancer, they feel they must impose their illness on other people by either writing a magazine column, book or, to be really "cool", a blog (10/6)?

Sorry, Stephanie, and others indulging in such hubris, we really don't want to know. Keep the details to yourself; don't confuse "poor me" with the grandiose thought that you might be helping others. You might not.

Am I qualified to criticise? Last September I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I already have cardiomyopathy, spinal arthritis, pulmonary disease and a bung knee, and that's only part of it.

So, Stephanie, by all means don the hair shirt, but do so quietly.

ROBERT BRADSHAW, Melton West

Classic lines

Thanks for commending classic novels, Chris Middendorp, and highlighting the impending horror of shortened, "compact editions".

Like you, I began these wonderful works as an adult, and agree that cutting them would change the tone, the feel and the point of the story. And that can lead to another problem: a loss of richness in the depiction of characters, and thus of the lessons they hold for us.

Your copy of David Copperfield, for example, needs all of its 795 pages to do justice to Dickens' wisdom on the best and worst of human nature. The character of David Copperfield is a beautifully rounded ideal.

And then there is the flip-side of goodness, Uriah Heep, who masks his clever, cunning and devious personality in a cloak of false humility. He is Dickens' warning of how not to be taken in by fakes and flatterers. All that wisdom cannot be retained with a 40 per cent cut. There is so much to learn from the classics.

KAYE MATTHEWS, Moonah, Tasmania

The best for less

The Sunday Age M magazine (10/6) featured Melbourne . . . \$30, \$300 or \$3000 for a day out. What about the pensioner with a Seniors Card? For just \$3 I can have a fabulous day out in Melbourne. Sure, I take my own lunch, but on Sundays, when public transport is free . . . I have a \$3 cappuccino.

EVELYN LAWSON, Karingal

Enough already

After reading Waleed Aly's article about Paris Hilton, the only thing I could think of was "speak for yourself". It's no choice of mine that this nonentity was on the front page of The Sunday Age. I try to avoid most commercial media

precisely because I don't want to know about the doings of the rich and useless. Unfortunately, the media is not publicly owned or controlled, and it is the managers and editors who decide what it is we see and hear.

I try my best to exercise any choice I may have. I buy The Age to read news and I get Paris bloody Hilton; I listen to the ABC to get current affairs and hear journalists talking about "our obsession" with such people. Such is my freedom of choice.

Enough! Please, Mr Aly, focus your attention on the real source of this rubbish and don't try to put such obsession with these trivialities on to we, the people. Some of us genuinely don't give a rat's about Hilton, Cartwright, Big Brother, et al, but can't escape their influence. Even when reading articles from thinkers such as yourself.

ANDREW McINTOSH, Glenroy

Give teachers a go

As a teacher for more than 30 years, it has been a privilege to see many exciting and innovative teachers enter our profession . . . but then leave. Your article, "Parent rage" (10/6), once again reinforced in my mind how our society undervalues teachers and teaching.

What happened to "Children are our future?" Is it possible to promote, rather than denigrate and abuse dedicated professionals who spend many hours devoting themselves to the future citizens of the world.

SUSAN THOMAS, Ormond

sunday@theage.com.au

Graphic

CARTOON BY GOLDING

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TOP OF THE WORLD

thespec.com

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Byline: The Hamilton Spectator

Graphic

Photo: Reuters, LEBANON A car bomb killed six United Nations peacekeepers patrolling a road in southern Lebanon yesterday. Three of the dead were Colombian and two were Spanish. The nationality of the sixth soldier was not known. The attack marked the first time that the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has come under attack since it was reinforced last summer after the war between <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas and Israeli forces in Lebanon. Thirty countries contribute to the 13,000-member force. *Hezbollah*, which has had good relations with UNIFIL since the troops were first deployed in Lebanon in 1978, was quick to denounce the attack. Though it was uncertain who was behind the explosion, there have been warnings that the UN peacekeepers could be hit by a terror attack, particularly from al-Qaeda and its sympathizers. UNIFIL, with 15,000 Lebanese troops, patrols a zone along the Lebanese-Israeli border, in support of a UN ceasefire resolution that halted last summer's 34-day war.; Photo: BRITAIN Prince William and Kate Middleton, pictured earlier in the year, have resumed their relationship, British newspapers reported in yesterday's editions. The young couple, who announced in April they had split, attended a party at an army barracks together earlier in June, newspapers claimed. The Mail on Sunday reported that William, 25, has also invited Middleton to attend a memorial concert next Sunday in honour of his late mother, Diana, Princess of Wales. Britain's News of The World tabloid claimed the couple had been on a string of low key dates since their April split. William, second in line to the British throne and a second lieutenant in the country's army, celebrated his 25th birthday Thursday and gained access to part of the inheritance left him by his mother.; Photo: PAKISTAN Torrential rain and thunderstorms have killed 228 people and injured more than 200 others in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi, officials announced yesterday. Many people died in roof collapses and electrocutions before much of the city plunged into darkness Saturday after its power grid blacked out. Many of the victims came from a cluster of villages with mud houses and other flimsy structures on Karachi's eastern outskirts. The worst-hit area was the impoverished Gadap neighbourhood, where roofs of shanty houses collapsed on families. The storm dumped 17.2 millimetres of rain within one hour.; Photo: Reuters, EGYPT A worker adjusts Jordanian and Israeli flags prior to today's summit in Sharm El-Sheikh. The meeting is intended to show Arab support for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas while isolating the hardline Islamic Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Israel has agreed to release desperately needed funds to the Abbas government based in the West Bank. The funds, mostly customs duties that Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinians, were frozen when Hamas swept to power in January 2006.; Photo: IRAQ Saddam Hussein's cousin, known as Chemical Ali, and two other regime officials were sentenced yesterday to hang for slaughtering more than 180,000 Kurdish men, women and children with chemical weapons, artillery barrages and mass executions two decades ago. Ali Hassan al-Majid gained his nickname for ordering the use of mustard gas and nerve agents against the Kurdish population in response to their collaboration with the Iranians during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. Also yesterday, two other defendants were

TOP OF THE WORLD

sentenced to life in prison for their roles in the crackdown, known as Operation Anfal. A sixth defendant was acquitted for lack of evidence.; Photo: Reuters, BRITAIN Britain's next prime minister, Gordon Brown, pledged vesterday to learn lessons from the Iraq war as he took over leadership of the Labour party from Tony Blair. The Treasury chief, who succeeds Blair as British leader on Wednesday, promised a new focus on international policy, saying global extremism would not be defeated by military force alone. "It is also a struggle of ideas and ideals that ... will be waged and won for hearts and minds here at home and round the world," Brown, 56, told a party conference in Manchester, where he made his maiden speech as leader.; Photo: CANADA Former Liberal MP Joe Comuzzi is joining the Conservatives, says the Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal. The paper says Prime Minister Stephen Harper will be in Thunder Bay tomorrow to make the formal announcement. Comuzzi has been sitting as an independent MP for Thunder Bay-Superior North since he was thrown out of the Liberal caucus by leader Stéphane Dion for pledging to support the Conservative budget on March 21. Comuzzi, first elected in 1988, favoured a Conservative budget that promised millions in research money that could benefit Thunder Bay.; Photo: UNITED STATES Officials confirmed yesterday that a body found at the end of a days-long search for a woman nearly nine months pregnant is indeed hers. Investigators were piecing together the case against a police officer accused of killing her. The body found Saturday in a park was that of Jessie Davis, 26, pictured, of Canton, Ohio, whose due date was July 3. Bobby Cutts, far left, who authorities suspect is the father of the unborn child, is charged with two counts of murder. The cause of death had not yet been determined. The fetus was still inside the woman's womb. Davis was reported missing after her mother found Davis's two-year-old son, Blake, home alone, bedroom furniture toppled and bleach spilled on the floor. Blake gave investigators their first clues, saying: "Mommy was crying. Mommy broke the table. Mommy's in rug." Thousands of volunteers searched for Davis for several days, while investigators questioned Cutts, 30, who is married to another woman. He is scheduled to be arraigned today.; Photo: Jessie Davis

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<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

Body

Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

Mexican newspapers including La Jornada are reporting that information has been uncovered in the current investigation indicating the Beltrán Leyva organization had developed paid sources inside Interpol and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, and that the source in the embassy has provided intelligence on Drug Enforcement The source at the U.S. Embassy was reportedly a foreign service national Administration (DEA) investigations. investigator, or FSNI. The newspaper El Universal has reported that the U.S. Marshals Service employed the FSNI This situation provides us with a good opportunity to examine the role of foreign service national employees at U.S. missions abroad and why they are important to embassy functions, and to discuss the Foreign Service Nationals U.S. embassies and consulates can be counterintelligence liability they present. large and complicated entities. They can house dozens of U.S. government agencies and employ hundreds, or even thousands, of employees. Americans like their creature comforts, and keeping a large number of employees comfortable (and productive) requires a lot of administrative and logistical support, everything from motor pool vehicles to commissaries. Creature comforts aside, merely keeping all of the security equipment functioning in a big mission - things like gates, vehicle barriers, video cameras, metal detectors, magnetic locks and residential alarms - can be a daunting task. In most places, the cost of bringing Americans to the host country to do all of the little jobs required to run an embassy or consulate is prohibitive. Because of this, the U.S. government often hires a large group of local people (called foreign service nationals, or FSNs) to perform non-sensitive administrative FSN jobs can range from low-level menial positions, such as driving the embassy shuttle bus, functions. answering the switchboard or cooking in the embassy cafeteria, to more important jobs such as helping the

embassy contract with local companies for goods and services, helping to screen potential visa applicants or translating diplomatic notes into the local language. Most U.S diplomatic posts employ dozens of FSNs, and large embassies can employ hundreds of them. The embassy will also hire FSNIs to assist various sections of the embassy such as the DEA Attaché, the regional security office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the anti-fraud unit of the consular section. FSNIs are the embassy's subject-matter experts on crime in the host country and are responsible for maintaining liaison between the embassy and the host country's security and law enforcement organizations. In a system where most diplomats and attachés are assigned to a post only for two or three years, the FSNs become the institutional memory of the embassy. They are the long-term keepers of the contacts with the host country government and will always be expected to introduce their new American bosses to the people they need to know in the government to get their jobs done. Because FSNIs are expected to have good contacts and to be able to reach their contacts at any time of the day or night in case of emergency, the people hired for these FSNI positions are normally former senior law enforcement officers from the host country. senior police officials are often close friends and former classmates of the current host country officials. This means that they can call the chief of police of the capital city at home on a Saturday or the assistant minister of government at 3 a.m. if the need arises. To help make sure this assistance flows, the FSNI will do little things like deliver bottles of Johnny Walker Black during the Christmas holidays or bigger things like help the chief of police obtain visas so his family can vacation at Disney World. Visas, in fact, are a very good tool for fostering liaison. Not only can they allow the vice minister to do his holiday shopping in Houston, they can also be used to do things like bring vehicles or consumer goods from the United States back to the host country for sale at a profit.
As FSNs tend to work for embassies for long periods of time, while the Americans rotate through, there is a tendency for FSNs to learn the system and to find ways to profit from it. It is not uncommon for FSNs to be fired or even prosecuted in local court systems for theft and embezzlement. FSNs have done things like take kick-backs on embassy contracts for arranging to direct the contract to a specific vendor; pay inflated prices for goods bought with petty cash and then split the difference with the vendor who provided the false receipt; and steal gasoline, furniture items, computers and nearly anything else that can be found in an embassy. While this kind of fraud is more commonplace in third-world nations where corruption is endemic, it is certainly not confined there; it can even occur in European capitals. Again, visas are a critical piece of the puzzle. Genuine U.S. visas are worth a great deal of money, and it is not uncommon to find FSNs involved in various visa fraud schemes. FSN employees have gone as far as accepting money to provide visas to members of terrorist groups like *Hezbollah*. In countries involved in human trafficking, visas have been traded for sexual favors in addition to money. In fairness, the amount that can be made from visa fraud means it is not surprising to find U.S. foreign service officers participating in visa fraud as well. Liabilities While it saves money, employing FSNs does present a very real counterintelligence risk. In essence, it is an invitation to a local intelligence service to send people inside U.S. buildings to collect information. In most countries, the U.S. Embassy cannot do a complete background investigation on an FSN candidate without the assistance of the host country government. This means the chances of catching a plant are slim unless the Americans have their own source in the local intelligence service that will out the operation. In many countries. foreigners cannot apply for a job with the U.S. Embassy without their government's permission. Obviously, this means local governments can approve only those applicants who agree to provide the government with information In other countries, embassy employment is not that obviously controlled, but there still is a strong possibility of the host country sending agents to apply for jobs along with the other applicants. It may be just coincidence, but in many countries the percentage of very attractive young women filling clerical roles at the U.S. Embassy appears many times higher than the number of attractive young **women** in the general population. This raises the spectre of "honey traps," or sexual entrapment schemes aimed at U.S. employees Such schemes have involved female FSNs in the past. In one well known example, the KGB employed attractive *female* operatives against the Marine Security Guards in Moscow, an operation that led to an extremely grave compromise of the U.S. Embassy there. Because of these risk factors, FSNs are not allowed access to classified information and are kept out of sections of the embassy where classified information is discussed and stored. It is assumed that any classified information FSNs can access will be compromised. Of course, not all FSNs report to host country intelligence services, and many of them are loyal employees of the U.S. government. In many countries, however, the extensive power host country intelligence services can wield over the lives of its citizens means that even otherwise loyal FSNs can be compelled to report to the host country service against their wills. Whereas an American diplomat will go home after two or three years, FSNs must spend their lives in the host country and are not protected by diplomatic status or international conventions. This makes them very vulnerable to pressure. Additionally, the aforementioned

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Load-Date: December 14, 2012



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

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Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

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Load-Date: December 10, 2012



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

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Load-Date: December 7, 2012



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

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Mexican newspapers including La Jornada are reporting that information has been uncovered in the current investigation indicating the Beltrán Leyva organization had developed paid sources inside Interpol and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, and that the source in the embassy has provided intelligence on Drug Enforcement The source at the U.S. Embassy was reportedly a foreign service national Administration (DEA) investigations. investigator, or FSNI. The newspaper El Universal has reported that the U.S. Marshals Service employed the FSNI This situation provides us with a good opportunity to examine the role of foreign service national employees at U.S. missions abroad and why they are important to embassy functions, and to discuss the Foreign Service Nationals U.S. embassies and consulates can be counterintelligence liability they present. large and complicated entities. They can house dozens of U.S. government agencies and employ hundreds, or even thousands, of employees. Americans like their creature comforts, and keeping a large number of employees comfortable (and productive) requires a lot of administrative and logistical support, everything from motor pool vehicles to commissaries. Creature comforts aside, merely keeping all of the security equipment functioning in a big mission - things like gates, vehicle barriers, video cameras, metal detectors, magnetic locks and residential alarms - can be a daunting task. In most places, the cost of bringing Americans to the host country to do all of the little jobs required to run an embassy or consulate is prohibitive. Because of this, the U.S. government often hires a large group of local people (called foreign service nationals, or FSNs) to perform non-sensitive administrative FSN jobs can range from low-level menial positions, such as driving the embassy shuttle bus, functions. answering the switchboard or cooking in the embassy cafeteria, to more important jobs such as helping the

embassy contract with local companies for goods and services, helping to screen potential visa applicants or translating diplomatic notes into the local language. Most U.S diplomatic posts employ dozens of FSNs, and large embassies can employ hundreds of them. The embassy will also hire FSNIs to assist various sections of the embassy such as the DEA Attaché, the regional security office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the anti-fraud unit of the consular section. FSNIs are the embassy's subject-matter experts on crime in the host country and are responsible for maintaining liaison between the embassy and the host country's security and law enforcement organizations. In a system where most diplomats and attachés are assigned to a post only for two or three years, the FSNs become the institutional memory of the embassy. They are the long-term keepers of the contacts with the host country government and will always be expected to introduce their new American bosses to the people they need to know in the government to get their jobs done. Because FSNIs are expected to have good contacts and to be able to reach their contacts at any time of the day or night in case of emergency, the people hired for these FSNI positions are normally former senior law enforcement officers from the host country. senior police officials are often close friends and former classmates of the current host country officials. This means that they can call the chief of police of the capital city at home on a Saturday or the assistant minister of government at 3 a.m. if the need arises. To help make sure this assistance flows, the FSNI will do little things like deliver bottles of Johnny Walker Black during the Christmas holidays or bigger things like help the chief of police obtain visas so his family can vacation at Disney World. Visas, in fact, are a very good tool for fostering liaison. Not only can they allow the vice minister to do his holiday shopping in Houston, they can also be used to do things like bring vehicles or consumer goods from the United States back to the host country for sale at a profit.
As FSNs tend to work for embassies for long periods of time, while the Americans rotate through, there is a tendency for FSNs to learn the system and to find ways to profit from it. It is not uncommon for FSNs to be fired or even prosecuted in local court systems for theft and embezzlement. FSNs have done things like take kick-backs on embassy contracts for arranging to direct the contract to a specific vendor; pay inflated prices for goods bought with petty cash and then split the difference with the vendor who provided the false receipt; and steal gasoline, furniture items, computers and nearly anything else that can be found in an embassy. While this kind of fraud is more commonplace in third-world nations where corruption is endemic, it is certainly not confined there; it can even occur in European capitals. Again, visas are a critical piece of the puzzle. Genuine U.S. visas are worth a great deal of money, and it is not uncommon to find FSNs involved in various visa fraud schemes. FSN employees have gone as far as accepting money to provide visas to members of terrorist groups like *Hezbollah*. In countries involved in human trafficking, visas have been traded for sexual favors in addition to money. In fairness, the amount that can be made from visa fraud means it is not surprising to find U.S. foreign service officers participating in visa fraud as well. Liabilities While it saves money, employing FSNs does present a very real counterintelligence risk. In essence, it is an invitation to a local intelligence service to send people inside U.S. buildings to collect information. In most countries, the U.S. Embassy cannot do a complete background investigation on an FSN candidate without the assistance of the host country government. This means the chances of catching a plant are slim unless the Americans have their own source in the local intelligence service that will out the operation. In many countries. foreigners cannot apply for a job with the U.S. Embassy without their government's permission. Obviously, this means local governments can approve only those applicants who agree to provide the government with information In other countries, embassy employment is not that obviously controlled, but there still is a strong possibility of the host country sending agents to apply for jobs along with the other applicants. It may be just coincidence, but in many countries the percentage of very attractive young women filling clerical roles at the U.S. Embassy appears many times higher than the number of attractive young **women** in the general population. This raises the spectre of "honey traps," or sexual entrapment schemes aimed at U.S. employees Such schemes have involved female FSNs in the past. In one well known example, the KGB employed attractive *female* operatives against the Marine Security Guards in Moscow, an operation that led to an extremely grave compromise of the U.S. Embassy there. Because of these risk factors, FSNs are not allowed access to classified information and are kept out of sections of the embassy where classified information is discussed and stored. It is assumed that any classified information FSNs can access will be compromised. Of course, not all FSNs report to host country intelligence services, and many of them are loyal employees of the U.S. government. In many countries, however, the extensive power host country intelligence services can wield over the lives of its citizens means that even otherwise loyal FSNs can be compelled to report to the host country service against their wills. Whereas an American diplomat will go home after two or three years, FSNs must spend their lives in the host country and are not protected by diplomatic status or international conventions. This makes them very vulnerable to pressure. Additionally, the aforementioned

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Sunday Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 18, 2009 Sunday

First Edition

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Section: EXTRA; Letters; Pg. 20

Length: 2115 words

Body

THE BIG ISSUE

SEX EDUCATION

There's value in waiting

RE: "PUSH for sex ed from age 10" (11/1). I do agree that sex education is necessary in Victorian schools, however these classes should not merely focus on the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. They should also focus on the value of sex in marriage. Many teenagers seem to think that it is normal to have sex before marriage because they are satisfying a biological need. The real question is how many teenagers in Australia know about the value of waiting to have sex until they get married.

In these sex education classes, happily married couples would express in clear terms the value and joy of having sex when they were married. Teenagers need to understand that sex is not evil but sacred, that it is an expression of deep love and not an act to satisfy one's sexual desire.

KON BOUZIKOS, Yarraville

Time to get a wriggle on

USUALLY it is sex education that is too little, too late, but this time it seems it is the AMA. Its call for a pilot program to train teachers in a trial of sex education is replicating an initiative of several years ago.

The AMA is right about the need for more teacher training on sexuality, but at this stage initiatives need to be statewide, involving far more than the suggested 50 schools over four years. The time for trials and pilot programs is long past. It is time to consolidate resources, assessments and experiences to build the curriculum to truly support teachers, parents and, ultimately, the relationships and sexual health of our youth.

ERIC GLARE, Elwood

A little trauma never hurt anyone

I DARESAY there'll be a bit of controversy over this idea, but I'm all for the teaching of sex to 10-year-olds. Knowledge has always been the best defence and the reason so many of our young people are contracting diseases or getting pregnant is ignorance. Let's help them prevent it.

Oh sure, you can run around blindly saying, 'But they're too young, they should be interested in something else', but that's plainly not the case. Will they be traumatised by it? Not if the curriculum is well thought-out and is actually age-appropriate. And would a little trauma be too bad? I still remember learning about sex in school, and as soon as I found out what had to be done to make a baby, I decided then and there that it just wasn't for me. Keep in mind, I was 13 at the time.

So, to those who would just dismiss this out of hand, answer this: would you rather your child be traumatised for a short time knowing about sex, sexually transmitted diseases and sexual pressure; or would you rather they be traumatised by having to go through the sex alleyway blind?

DAVID JEFFERY, East Geelong

Let's admit girls just want to have fun

THE high incidence of unwanted teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases is not just an issue of smart sex education, but also a matter of morality.

Our society still denounces sex as dirty for young <u>females</u> - and while some might be emotionally ill-equipped to deal with sexual encounters, that doesn't acknowledge that young girls may still want sex; for whatever reason, be it curiosity, need or experimentation. The truth for <u>female</u> adolescents is that unless they acknowledge they want to have sex, no safe and healthy precautions will be practised. Sex education is clearly one positive step, but until we, as a society, can allow young girls to openly admit they want sex, without fear or shame, sex education will continue to fall on deaf ears, at whatever age.

PAULYNE POGORELSKE, East Melbourne

Go public, go free

REGARDING your story "Game, set and match to the developers" (11/1), I was surprised to read the only viable solution proposed for the reduction in the amount of tennis being played is to increase the number of backyard tennis courts. Backyard courts have gone the way of market gardens in Richmond, never to return.

What we do need are free, council-maintained tennis courts at parks all over Melbourne, something that already exists in Adelaide (probably not coincidentally the birthplace of Lleyton Hewitt). Only this level of free access will get large numbers of kids from all backgrounds playing tennis rather than other sports, not just the rich.

MATTHEW McCORMACK, Thornbury

Too lazy to thrive

JOHN Alexander likes to believe the demise of backyard tennis courts at the hands of property developers has caused a lack of top 10 players from Down Under. How, then, does he explain Ana Ivanovic, who learned to play tennis in a war-torn swimming pool shell?

The problem is not the lack of tennis courts; it is the lack of drive. Many of today's top players come from countries where being good at tennis holds the promise of a better life - Russia, Serbia and Slovakia. In contrast, Australian children already have that better life and prefer to sit in front of the TV or network on Facebook.

ALEXANDRA BUSSELMAIER, Melbourne

More cameras = less speed

THE call for urban speed limit reductions in Victoria ("Pedestrian deaths drive push for speed-limit cuts", 11/1) is well-intentioned, but the issue is speed reduction and there are more acceptable ways of achieving this.

Speed limits are a blunt instrument for achieving speed reduction, as opposed to more rigorous enforcement of current limits. A 50per cent increase in speed cameras' current 6000 operational hours per month would reduce urban fatal crashes by more than 30per cent. Even a doubling of hours would be economically justified.

DR MAX CAMERON, Albert Park

Shine a light on subject

REID Sexton's informative articles on pedestrian deaths could go a step further to achieve some radical reductions in fatalities. Several years ago in a medium-sized US town, pedestrian accidents were reduced by more than 60per cent when car drivers were requested to drive with headlights on during daylight hours.

Returning to Melbourne, I wrote to the chief traffic officer of police suggesting a similar practice be tried in Victoria. After consultation with the RACV, the police replied that the burden of flat battery call-outs was too much for the RACV to handle and they thanked me for my letter. Today most car lights are turned off with the ignition. Here is a solution to the huge increase in pedestrian deaths recorded in 2008.

W. BRUCE NIXON, Yarra Glen

Lost in transit

ALTHOUGH transit lanes are a great idea in theory, in practice there are far too many drivers who flout the system. I have seen far too many single-occupant vehicles travelling along the T2 lane on the Eastern Freeway. Where are VicRoads when you need them? Drivers who break the T2 laws must be fined.

We need dedicated bus lanes along the entire length of Springvale, Stud and Warrigal roads to help speed up buses and make them a viable alternative to the private car.

We also need red-coloured pavement, T2 lanes along the Princes Highway from Dandenong, Nepean Highway from Mordialloc, Monash Freeway from EastLink, Eastern Freeway from EastLink, Calder Freeway from WestLink, and West Gate Freeway from WestLink, not just during peak time, but all day to help change the mindset of everyone.

The supposed transit lane on the Tullamarine is a joke. No one obeys it and unless it's rigorously enforced, it might as well not be there.

STEVE STEFANOPOULOS, Armadale

Swimming in chemicals

FOLLOWING on from "Common pool cleaners 'a risk to kids" (11/1), simazine works by disrupting hormone and enzyme systems, the immune system, the allergy system and altering the functioning of our genes. Simazine allows other chemicals to act and preset our bodies for illnesses (allergies, asthma, auto-immune diseases, neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's) and cancers.

The type and severity of the effects depends on the time that they affect us, and the mixture of toxins that we are exposed to, but the effects are maximal to unborn babies and children. Hormone disruptors work at extremely low concentrations. The total biological effects of these and other toxic pesticides on all the animals in our ecosystems, including humans, have not been fully investigated, let alone quantified.

It is a disgrace that the APVMA continues to allow the sale and use of simazine for this purpose when the balance of evidence clearly demonstrates that simazine can cause harm and there are safer alternatives for algal control in swimming pools.

DR ALISON BLEANEY, Binalong Bay, Tasmania

It didn't start at Beersheba

RE: "The ties that bind" (11/1). It is misleading to imply the involvement of the Australian Army in Palestine during World War 1 was instrumental in forming close ties between Australia and Israel.

As Australian First World War memorials attest, our grandfathers fought in a country called Palestine, the purpose being to wrest control from the Turkish empire. There is no mention of Israel, because it did not exist.

Those Australian Light Horsemen who famously charged Beersheba would turn in their graves if they knew what happened to that town's Arab Palestinians. It is a little-known fact that the Palestinians were forced out of Beersheba during the 1948 war that founded Israel and ended up as refugees in Gaza.

Australian government/diplomatic ties may be close with Israel, but most Australians hold no such bond. The average Australian is more likely to sympathise with the Palestinians, who continue to be savaged by the Israeli military. They obviously deserve "a fair go".

BILL O'CONNOR, North Fitzroy

The bond of conquerors

THERE is one formative experience shared by Israel and Australia. That is the fact that both nations exist because they ruthlessly displaced the original inhabitants of the lands they now occupy and now have to endure the shame of their prosperity as those displaced live as refugees in the land of their ancestors.

PHILIP LETHLEAN, Williamstown

The same values

GOOD article, but confounded itself with references to Sussan Ley and her "lonely place". Michael Danby, on the other hand, is a stalwart to our friendships with Israel. Seriously, though, we are really namesakes in that we share hardships, aspirations and democracy - and eucalypts. Unfortunately, Arabs tend to disavow those cherished values and, yes, they do hate each other. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait would no sooner talk to Hamas or **Hezbollah** than fly to the moon, and they also hate Iran, Syria and Lebanon.

RICHARD PEARSE, Hawthorn East

Unsafe for a long time

Chris McGreal describes Israel tethering the media by refusing journalists entry into Gaza (11/1) but omits to mention the lack of safety for Western journalists in Gaza led to their evacuation long before the Israeli invasion. The kidnapping of the BBC's Alan Johnston in March 2007 led to all Western media organisations shifting their people into Israel.

McGreal's second claim that Ashkelon is not part of the war zone is at odds with the fact that it is only 19 kilometres north of the Gaza Strip, not to mention that Hamas spokesmen have expressed the desire to knock out its Rotenberg power station. This appears consistent with other Hamas initiatives to support the Gazan population, given that Rotenberg also supplies two-thirds of Gaza's electricity.

JOE LEDERMAN, Frankston

The sin of spin

MELISSA Fyfe's article regarding the lack of empathy the Brumby Government has with Victorian people is correct. I used to be interested in politics but I don't listen to anything Brumby says now as I consider it all spin and no substance. I have children and am concerned about the future with climate change. The Brumby Government has not accepted that climate change is real and has no long-term plan, except to look after big business and forget about the average person and our world.

R.W.WEST, Eltham

A selfless example

THE article on Wirginia Maixner brought me to the verge of tears. Her selflessness and humility should be an example to us all.

HUNOR CSUTOROS, Moonee Ponds

Newsflash: people do it everywhere

AT WHAT point in slipshod journalism does people fornicating become front-page news, even for a Sunday? Either The Sunday Age is becoming a worse tabloid than the Herald Sun, or it's been a shockingly slow news week. This entire story reeks of a desperate PR stunt to get people attending, and possibly having sex in, a tourist attraction no one really wanted in the first place.

Would it shock The Sunday Age to know that people are having sex in cars, public bathrooms, nightclubs, the Botanical Gardens and the driver R&R booths at Flinders Street Station? Perhaps we can have a report about, and more photos of, people having sex in their bedrooms.

In fact, I think I can see Mr Irwin with a telephoto lens in a car outside my house right now. I'd better disrobe.

AVI BERNSHAW, Oakleigh

sunday@theage.com.au - or select Sunday at theage.com.au/letters/submit

Graphic

CARTOON BY GOLDING

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<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

Body

Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

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Load-Date: December 4, 2012



Focus: Middle East Crisis: WHY ISRAEL WENT TO WAR IN GAZA: Last night Israel sent its ground forces across the border into Gaza as it escalated its brutal assault on Hamas. As a large-scale invasion of the Palestinian territory appears to be getting under way, Chris McGreal reports from Jerusalem on Israel's hidden strategy to persuade the world of the justice of its cause in its battle with a bitter ideological foe

The Observer (London) (England)

January 4, 2009

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The Observer

Section: OBSERVER FOCUS PAGES; Pg. 19

Length: 2144 words **Byline:** Chris McGreal

Body

It is a war on two fronts. Months ago, as Israel prepared to unleash its latest wave of desolation against Gaza, it recognised that blasting Hamas and "the infrastructure of terror", which includes police stations, homes and mosques, was a straightforward task.

Israel also understood that a parallel operation would be required to persuade the rest of the world of the justice of its cause, even as the bodies of Palestinian <u>women</u> and children filled the mortuaries, and to ensure that its war was seen not in terms of occupation but of the west's struggle against terror and confrontation with Iran.

After the debacle of its 2006 invasion of Lebanon - not only a military disaster for Israel, but also a political and diplomatic one - the government in Tel Aviv spent months laying the groundwork at home and abroad for the assault on Gaza with quiet but energetic lobbying of foreign administrations and diplomats, particularly in Europe and parts of the Arab world.

A new information directorate was established to influence the media, with some success. And when the attack began just over a week ago, a tide of diplomats, lobby groups, bloggers and other supporters of Israel were unleashed to hammer home a handful of carefully crafted core messages intended to ensure that Israel was seen as the victim, even as its bombardment killed more than 430 Palestinians over the past week, at least a third of them civilians or policemen.

The unrelenting attack on Gaza, with an air strike every 20 minutes on average, has not stopped Hamas firing rockets that have killed four Israelis since the assault began, reaching deeper into the Jewish state than ever before and sending tens of thousands of people fleeing. Last night Israel escalated its action further, as its troops poured

Focus: Middle East Crisis: WHY ISRAEL WENT TO WAR IN GAZA: Last night Israel sent its ground forces across the border into Gaza as it escalated its brutal assau....

across Gaza's border, part of what appeared to be a significant ground invasion. And a diplomatic operation is already in full swing to justify the further cost in innocent lives that would almost certainly result.

Dan Gillerman, Israel's ambassador to the UN until a few months ago, was brought in by the Foreign Ministry to help lead the diplomatic and PR campaign. He said that the diplomatic and political groundwork has been under way for months.

"This was something that was planned long ahead," he said. "I was recruited by the foreign minister to coordinate Israel's efforts and I have never seen all parts of a very complex machinery - whether it is the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Ministry, the prime minister's office, the police or the army - work in such co-ordination, being effective in sending out the message."

In briefings in Jerusalem and London, Brussels and New York, the same core messages were repeated: that Israel had no choice but to attack in response to the barrage of Hamas rockets; that the coming attack would be on "the infrastructure of terror" in Gaza and the targets principally Hamas fighters; that civilians would die, but it was because Hamas hides its fighters and weapons factories among ordinary people.

Hand in hand went a strategy to remove the issue of occupation from discussion. Gaza was freed in 2005 when the Jewish settlers and army were pulled out, the Israelis said. It could have flourished as the basis of a Palestinian state, but its inhabitants chose conflict.

Israel portrayed Hamas as part of an axis of Islamist fundamentalist evil with Iran and <u>Hezbollah</u>. Its actions, the Israelis said, are nothing to do with continued occupation of the West Bank, the blockade of Gaza or the Israeli military's continued killing of large numbers of Palestinians since the pullout. "Israel is part of the free world and fights extremism and terrorism. Hamas is not," the foreign minister and Kadima party leader, Tzipi Livni, said on arriving in France as part of the diplomatic offensive last week.

Earlier in the week Livni deployed the "with us or against us" rhetoric of George W Bush's war on terror. "These are the days when every individual in the region and in the world has to choose a side. And the sides have changed. No longer is it Israel on one side and the Arab world on the other," she said. "Israel chose its side the day it was established; the Jewish people chose its side during its thousands of years of existence; and the prayer for peace is the voice sounded in the synagogues."

It was a message pumped home with receptive Arab governments, such as Egypt and Jordan, which view Hamas with hostility. "Large parts of the Muslim and Arab world realise that Hamas represents a greater danger to them even than it does to Israel. Its extremism, its fundamentalism, is a great danger to them as well," said Gillerman. "We've seen the effect of that in numerous responses, in the public statements made by [Egypt's] President Mubarak and even by [Palestinian president] Mahmoud Abbas and other Arabs. This is totally unprecedented."

Indeed, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, said his government knew exactly what was coming: "The signs that Israel was determined to strike Hamas in Gaza for the past three months were clear. They practically wrote it in the sky. Unfortunately they [Hamas] served Israel the opportunity on a golden platter."

Also crucial was what was not said. Just a few months ago Livni was talking of wiping out Hamas, but that would be unpalatable to much of the outside world as a justification for the assault. So now the talk is of pressing Gaza's government to agree to a new ceasefire. Occasionally someone has got off-message. A couple of days into the assault on Gaza, Israel's ambassador to the UN, Gabriela Shalev, said it would continue for "as long as it takes to dismantle Hamas completely". Infuriated Israeli officials in Jerusalem warned her that such statements could set back the diplomatic offensive.

In the first hours of the attack, Israel repeated the same messages to the wider world. Livni and the Labour defence minister, Ehud Barak, were widely quoted on international TV. The government's national information directorate sought to focus foreign media attention on the 8,500 rockets fired from Gaza into Israel over the past eight years

Focus: Middle East Crisis: WHY ISRAEL WENT TO WAR IN GAZA: Last night Israel sent its ground forces across the border into Gaza as it escalated its brutal assau....

and the 20 civilians they have killed, rather than the punishing blockade of Gaza and the 1,700 Palestinians killed in Israeli military attacks since Jewish settlers were pulled out of Gaza three years ago.

Lobby groups, such as the British Israel Communications and Research Centre (Bicom) in London and the Israel Project in America, were mobilised. They arranged briefings, conference calls and interviews. The Israeli military posted video footage on YouTube. Israeli diplomats in New York arranged a two-hour "citizens' press conference" on Twitter for thousands of people. At the same time, Israel in effect barred foreign journalists from witnessing the results of its strategy.

Livni has suggested that Israel's assault is good for the Palestinians by helping to free them from the grip of Hamas. "She's basically trying to convince me that they're doing this for my own good," said Diana Buttu, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's legal counsel and negotiator with the Israelis over the 2005 pullout from Gaza. "I've had some Israeli friends reiterate the same thing: 'You should be happy that we're rooting out Hamas. They're a problem for you, too.' I don't need her to tell me what's good for me and what's bad for me, and I don't think carrying out a massacre is good for anybody."

And when the killing started, Israel claimed that the overwhelming majority of the 400-plus killed were Hamas fighters and the buildings destroyed part of the infrastructure of terror. But about a third of the dead were policemen. Although the police force in Gaza is run by Hamas, Buttu said Israel is misrepresenting it as a terrorist organisation.

"The police force is largely used for internal law and order, traffic, the drug trade. They weren't fighters. They hit them at a graduation ceremony. Israel wants to kill anyone associated with Hamas, but where does it stop? Are you a legitimate target if you work in the civil service? Are you a legitimate target if you voted for Hamas?" she said.

Similarly, while Israel accuses Hamas of risking civilian lives by hiding the infrastructure of terror in ordinary neighbourhoods, many of the Israeli missile targets are police stations and other public buildings that are unlikely to be built anywhere else.

Israel argues that Hamas abandoned the June ceasefire that Tel Aviv was prepared to continue. "Israel is the first one who wants the violence to end. We were not looking for this. There was no other option. The truce was violated by Hamas," said Livni.

However, others say that the truce was thrown into jeopardy in November when the Israeli military killed six Hamas gunmen in a raid on Gaza. The Palestinians noted that it was election day in the US, so most of the rest of the world did not notice what happened. Hamas responded by firing a wave of rockets into Israel. Six more Palestinians died in two other Israeli attacks in the following week.

"They were assaulting Gaza militarily, by sea and by air, all through the ceasefire," said Buttu. Neither did the killing of Palestinians stop. In the nearly three years since Hamas came to power, and before the latest assault on Gaza, Israel forces had killed about 1,300 people in Gaza and the West Bank. While a significant number of them were Hamas activists - and while hundreds of Palestinians have been killed by other Palestinians in fighting between Hamas and Fatah - there has been a disturbing number of civilian deaths.

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights says that one in four of the victims is aged under 18. Between June 2007 and June 2008, Israeli attacks killed 68 Palestinian children and young people in Gaza. Another dozen were killed in the West Bank.

In February, an Israeli missile killed four boys, aged eight to 14, playing football in the street in Jabalia. In April, Meyasar Abu-Me'tiq and her four children, aged one to five years old, were killed when an Israeli missile hit their house as they were having breakfast. Even during the ceasefire, Israel killed 22 people in Gaza, including two children and a woman.

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Perhaps crucial to the ceasefire's collapse were the differing views of what it was supposed to achieve. Israel regarded the truce as calm in return for calm. Hamas expected Israel to lift the blockade of Gaza that the latter said was a security response to the firing of Qassam rockets.

But Israel did not end the siege that was wrecking the economy and causing desperate shortages of food, fuel and medicine. Gazans concluded that the blockade was not so much about rocket attacks as punishment for voting for Hamas.

Central to the Israeli message has been that, when it pulled out its military and Jewish settlers three years ago, Gaza was offered the opportunity to prosper. "In order to create a vision of hope, we took out our forces and settlements, but instead of Gaza being the beginning of a Palestinian state, Hamas established an extreme Islamic rule," said Livni. Israeli officials argue that Hamas, and by extension the people who elected it, was more interested in hating and killing Jews than building a country.

Palestinians see it differently. Buttu says that from the day the Israelis withdrew from Gaza, they set about ensuring that it would fail economically. "When the Israelis pulled out, we expected that the Palestinians in Gaza would at least be able to lead some sort of free life. We expected that the crossing points would be open. We didn't expect that we would have to beg to allow food in," she said.

Buttu notes that even before Hamas was elected three years ago, the Israelis were already blockading Gaza. The Palestinians had to appeal to US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and James Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, to pressure Israel to allow even a few score of trucks into Gaza each day. Israel agreed, then reneged. "This was before Hamas won the election. The whole Israeli claim is one big myth. If there wasn't already a closure policy, why did we need Rice and Wolfensohn to try to broker an agreement?" asked Buttu.

Yossi Alpher, a former official in the Mossad intelligence service and an ex-adviser on peace negotiations to the then prime minister, Ehud Barak, said the blockade of Gaza is a failed strategy that might have strengthened Hamas. "I don't think anyone can produce clear evidence that the blockade has been counterproductive, but it certainly hasn't been productive. It's very possible it's been counterproductive. It's collective punishment, humanitarian suffering. It has not caused Palestinians in Gaza to behave the way we want them to, so why do it?" he said. "I think people really believed that, if you starved Gazans, they will get Hamas to stop the attacks. It's repeating a failed policy, mindlessly."

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

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<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

Body

Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

Mexican newspapers including La Jornada are reporting that information has been uncovered in the current investigation indicating the Beltrán Leyva organization had developed paid sources inside Interpol and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, and that the source in the embassy has provided intelligence on Drug Enforcement The source at the U.S. Embassy was reportedly a foreign service national Administration (DEA) investigations. investigator, or FSNI. The newspaper El Universal has reported that the U.S. Marshals Service employed the FSNI This situation provides us with a good opportunity to examine the role of foreign service national employees at U.S. missions abroad and why they are important to embassy functions, and to discuss the Foreign Service Nationals U.S. embassies and consulates can be counterintelligence liability they present. large and complicated entities. They can house dozens of U.S. government agencies and employ hundreds, or even thousands, of employees. Americans like their creature comforts, and keeping a large number of employees comfortable (and productive) requires a lot of administrative and logistical support, everything from motor pool vehicles to commissaries. Creature comforts aside, merely keeping all of the security equipment functioning in a big mission - things like gates, vehicle barriers, video cameras, metal detectors, magnetic locks and residential alarms - can be a daunting task. In most places, the cost of bringing Americans to the host country to do all of the little jobs required to run an embassy or consulate is prohibitive. Because of this, the U.S. government often hires a large group of local people (called foreign service nationals, or FSNs) to perform non-sensitive administrative FSN jobs can range from low-level menial positions, such as driving the embassy shuttle bus, functions. answering the switchboard or cooking in the embassy cafeteria, to more important jobs such as helping the

embassy contract with local companies for goods and services, helping to screen potential visa applicants or translating diplomatic notes into the local language. Most U.S diplomatic posts employ dozens of FSNs, and large embassies can employ hundreds of them. The embassy will also hire FSNIs to assist various sections of the embassy such as the DEA Attaché, the regional security office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the anti-fraud unit of the consular section. FSNIs are the embassy's subject-matter experts on crime in the host country and are responsible for maintaining liaison between the embassy and the host country's security and law enforcement organizations. In a system where most diplomats and attachés are assigned to a post only for two or three years, the FSNs become the institutional memory of the embassy. They are the long-term keepers of the contacts with the host country government and will always be expected to introduce their new American bosses to the people they need to know in the government to get their jobs done. Because FSNIs are expected to have good contacts and to be able to reach their contacts at any time of the day or night in case of emergency, the people hired for these FSNI positions are normally former senior law enforcement officers from the host country. senior police officials are often close friends and former classmates of the current host country officials. This means that they can call the chief of police of the capital city at home on a Saturday or the assistant minister of government at 3 a.m. if the need arises. To help make sure this assistance flows, the FSNI will do little things like deliver bottles of Johnny Walker Black during the Christmas holidays or bigger things like help the chief of police obtain visas so his family can vacation at Disney World. Visas, in fact, are a very good tool for fostering liaison. Not only can they allow the vice minister to do his holiday shopping in Houston, they can also be used to do things like bring vehicles or consumer goods from the United States back to the host country for sale at a profit. As FSNs tend to work for embassies for long periods of time, while the Americans rotate through, there is a tendency for FSNs to learn the system and to find ways to profit from it. It is not uncommon for FSNs to be fired or even prosecuted in local court systems for theft and embezzlement. FSNs have done things like take kick-backs on embassy contracts for arranging to direct the contract to a specific vendor; pay inflated prices for goods bought with petty cash and then split the difference with the vendor who provided the false receipt; and steal gasoline, furniture items, computers and nearly anything else that can be found in an embassy. While this kind of fraud is more commonplace in third-world nations where corruption is endemic, it is certainly not confined there; it can even occur in European capitals. Again, visas are a critical piece of the puzzle. Genuine U.S. visas are worth a great deal of money, and it is not uncommon to find FSNs involved in various visa fraud schemes. FSN employees have gone as far as accepting money to provide visas to members of terrorist groups like *Hezbollah*. In countries involved in human trafficking, visas have been traded for sexual favors in addition to money. In fairness, the amount that can be made from visa fraud means it is not surprising to find U.S. foreign service officers participating in visa fraud as well. Liabilities While it saves money, employing FSNs does present a very real counterintelligence risk. In essence, it is an invitation to a local intelligence service to send people inside U.S. buildings to collect information. In most countries, the U.S. Embassy cannot do a complete background investigation on an FSN candidate without the assistance of the host country government. This means the chances of catching a plant are slim unless the Americans have their own source in the local intelligence service that will out the operation. In many countries. foreigners cannot apply for a job with the U.S. Embassy without their government's permission. Obviously, this means local governments can approve only those applicants who agree to provide the government with information In other countries, embassy employment is not that obviously controlled, but there still is a strong possibility of the host country sending agents to apply for jobs along with the other applicants. It may be just coincidence, but in many countries the percentage of very attractive young women filling clerical roles at the U.S. Embassy appears many times higher than the number of attractive young **women** in the general population. This raises the spectre of "honey traps," or sexual entrapment schemes aimed at U.S. employees Such schemes have involved female FSNs in the past. In one well known example, the KGB employed attractive *female* operatives against the Marine Security Guards in Moscow, an operation that led to an extremely grave compromise of the U.S. Embassy there. Because of these risk factors, FSNs are not allowed access to classified information and are kept out of sections of the embassy where classified information is discussed and stored. It is assumed that any classified information FSNs can access will be compromised. Of course, not all FSNs report to host country intelligence services, and many of them are loyal employees of the U.S. government. In many countries, however, the extensive power host country intelligence services can wield over the lives of its citizens means that even otherwise loyal FSNs can be compelled to report to the host country service against their wills. Whereas an American diplomat will go home after two or three years, FSNs must spend their lives in the host country and are not protected by diplomatic status or international conventions. This makes them very vulnerable to pressure. Additionally, the aforementioned

criminal activity by FSNs is not just significant from a fiscal standpoint; Such activity also leaves those participating in it open to blackmail by the host government if the activity is discovered. When one considers the long history of official corruption in Mexico and the enormous amounts of cash available to the Mexican drug cartels, it is no surprise that members of the SIEDO, much less an FNSI at the U.S. Embassy, should be implicated in such a case. The allegedly corrupt FNSI most likely was recruited into the scheme by a close friend or former associate who may have been working for the government and who was helping the Beltrán Leyva organization develop its intelligence Limits It appears that the FSNI working for the Beltrán Leyva organization at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City worked for the U.S. Marshals Service, not the DEA. This means that he would not have had access to much DEA operational information. An FSNI working for the U.S. Marshals Service would be working on fugitive cases and would be tasked with liaison with various Mexican law enforcement jurisdictions. Information regarding fugitive operations would be somewhat useful to the cartels, since many cartel members have been indicted in U.S. courts and the U.S. government would like to extradite them. Even if the FSNI involved had been working for the DEA, however, there are limits to how much information he would have been able to provide. First of all, DEA special agents are well aware of the degree of corruption in Mexico, and they are therefore concerned that information passed on to the Mexican government can be passed to the cartels. The special agents also would assume that their FSN employees may be reporting to the Mexican government, and would therefore take care to not tell the FSN anything they wouldn't want the Mexican government - or the cartels - to know. The type of FSNI employee in question would be tasked with conducting administrative duties such as helping the DEA attaché with liaison and passing name checks and other queries to various jurisdictions in Mexico. The FSN would not be privy to classified DEA cable traffic, and would not sit in on sensitive operational meetings. In the intelligence world, however, there are unclassified things that can be valuable intelligence. These include the names and home addresses of all the DEA employees in the country, for example, or the types of cars the special agents drive and the confidential license plates they have for them. Other examples could be the FSNI being sent to the airport to pick up a group of TDY DEA agents and bringing them to the embassy. Were the agents out-of-shape headquarters-types wearing suits and doing an inspection, or fit field agents from a special operations group coming to town to help take down a high-value target? Even knowing that the DEA attaché has suddenly changed his schedule and is now working more overtime can indicate that something is up. Information that the attaché has asked the FSNI about the police chief in a specific jurisdiction, for example, could also be valuable to a drug trafficking organization expecting a shipment to arrive at that jurisdiction. In the end, it is unlikely that this current case resulted in grave damage to DEA operations in Mexico. Indeed, the FSNI probably did far less damage to counternarcotics operations than the 35 PGR employees who have been arrested since July. But the vulnerabilities of FSN employees are great, and there are likely other FSNs on the payroll of the various Mexican cartels. long as the U.S. government employs FSNs it will face the security liability that comes with them. In general, however, this liability is offset by the utility they provide and the systems put in place to limit the counterintelligence damage they can cause.

Load-Date: December 11, 2012



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

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October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

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Load-Date: December 15, 2012



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

Body

Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

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Load-Date: December 12, 2012



The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

August 26, 2008 Tuesday

First Edition

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Body

THE major problem for the "managers" promoting desalination ("Desal plan sparks water tank wars", The Age, 25/8) is that water tanks comprise a distributed system that is not amenable to central control and which would reduce profits in a fully privatised water system, which appears to be the eventual aim of the Victorian Government.

Professor Peter Coombes' studies contradict Melbourne Water's studies on the ability of tanks to collect sufficient water.

Another furphy promulgated by "managers" is that the power required to pump water from tanks would be more than that needed for the desalination plant. These gentlemen have never heard of gravity, which is all that is needed for many applications. One hopes that our politicians have enough wisdom to follow Coombes' advice.

Frank Pederick, Castlemaine

Questions for the Premier

IF THIS Government continues to ignore the opportunity of instituting a visionary water policy comprising economic and environmentally responsible measures (including water tanks) and, instead, hands our community's water security to a multinational company such as Veolia (which owns Melbourne's struggling railway network), we Victorians will have to ask Mr Brumby at the next state election: "Which CON NEXT?"

Rosemary Daniel, Inverloch

Full cycle on water

THE Government is contemplating dropping support for rainwater tanks because it fears they may lead to expensive de-salted water getting pumped back to sea. But there is a less scandalous solution for excess water: pump it north-west, over the hills, to support cotton and rice farms in the desert.

Those crops can then be burned to produce power for the pumps and the desalination plant. A wonderfully closed and sustainable cycle, in line with government approaches to sustainability.

Ralph Bohmer, St Kilda

Pumped and powered

ADVOCATES of water tanks seem to forget that, to be of any real benefit, each would need a 700-watt motorised pump to provide pressure. Even though the running period for these pumps would be low, the combined power usage would be greater than the proposed desalination plant because power consumption spikes multiple times on start-up and small motors are less efficient than a constantly running large installation. Then there is the maintenance. Having lived in the country for 25 years and been dependent on tank water, I can tell you that the frequent cycling of the pumps causes many breakdowns, often at the most inconvenient times.

Zona Severn, Mount Martha

It's not rocket science . . .

IF A mug handyman like me can virtually drought-proof our small garden with 1600 litres of rainwater tank capacity, some poly pipe and a bit of common sense, why can't the Government encourage people with far more skills than I to do the same? Perhaps because no big-wig merchant bank would fund such a project as a public-private partnership?

Kevin Chambers, Thornbury

... but there are rules

BE AWARE, tanks not installed by a registered plumber do not qualify for the rebate. We discovered this, to our chagrin, after installing two rainwater tanks and a grey water capture system.

Bella Kolber, Caulfield South

It's about people, not politics, Mr Baillieu

HOW disappointing to read the Victorian Opposition Leader, Ted Baillieu's, reaction to sensible policy proposals from the Sandringham branch of the Liberal Party and also to a recent responsible warning from Premier John Brumby regarding the high rate of Victoria's population growth ("Blame it on Labor, not migration: Baillieu", The Age, 25/8). Mr Baillieu seems to carry a child-like belief that correct planning can cope with any level of population growth.

Just as some sanity is emerging in his own party and from our Labor Premier, the Liberal leader panics and silences his party members, who are pointing out that the emperor has no clothes - we cannot keep growing at this rate and maintain our quality of life. It seems Ted scolded the naughty children and silenced their well-founded concerns.

In fact, Victoria's population cannot keep growing at any rate and be compatible with long-term survival - but I was not at the Liberal Party meeting and I'm not sure if anyone pointed this out.

Jill Quirk, East Malvern

No magic pudding

OPPOSITION Leader Ted Baillieu sinks to new lows of irrationality when he concludes that the problem with trains and the lack of water resources is not caused by there being too many people.

He compounds this by warning Liberals to "be very careful when you discuss these things" and "don't allow anyone to say we are opposed to population growth".

Why ever not? Surely the logic is pretty straightforward - if we keep on getting more people and we still have the same amount of water (or land), then the amount per capita has to go down. No amount of planning by the Liberals will change that.

Australia is not a magic pudding that can keep on accommodating more people forever. Eventually we have to decide that we have enough. I would have thought running out of water was a pretty clear signal that the time had arrived.

Graham Parton, Stanley

D- for this idea

BRONWYN Pike's plan to improve results in struggling schools promises to be a disaster ("Brightest and best to help difficult schools", The Age, 25/8).

Is there any evidence to suggest that high-achieving students make better teachers? There is a huge body of evidence that tells us that schools with a well-resourced library staffed by a qualified teacher-librarian perform better in standardised testing, yet too many of Victoria's school libraries struggle with diminishing budgets and no qualified staff.

Teacher-librarians support students and staff with appropriate, up-to-date resources and the integration of information literacy programs in the curriculum.

Can Bronwyn Pike tell us the budgets and staffing of the libraries in these underperforming schools, and explain how these novice teachers will have access to the best available resources, both print and online, to support their teaching?

Leonie Paatsch, Little River

Taxed and perplexed

PROPOSALS for tolls on existing roads ("Tolls and taxes on roads agenda", The Age, 25/8) are a strong indication of budget blues for the Brumby Government.

Despite a doubling of annual revenue since Labor came to office, on the back of a multitude of tax increases, we could now face yet more taxes in the form of tolls.

With little investment in trains, trams and tracks forthcoming, forcing ever more people onto congested roads, they may in turn be charged, when little alternative transport exists. After the Scoresby freeway back-flip, which saw tolls introduced, the question is: where are all these taxes and tolls going?

Mathew Knight, Malvern East

Turn over a new leaf

RE "BUNNINGS fined for selling noxious weeds" (The Age, 25/8): my local hardware shop is also selling seedlings of Acacia elata, which is listed in Victoria as an environmental weed.

These grow to 25 metres, self-seed in their thousands and choke out everything else.

Garden suppliers might like to consult the weeds lists of local councils, and include warnings, before offering pest plants to customers.

Judy Archer, Croydon

Remember those who stay at home

PUTTING aside discussions about the treatment of unskilled guest workers, their pay rates and conditions, there is another debate forgotten by the Australian media - the gendered implications of labour mobility schemes.

For agricultural work, those chosen to participate will inevitably be male - as was the case in New Zealand - helping only to reinforce the traditional stereotype of the male breadwinner leaving the wife at home, to prepare for his return. Critically, evidence from the United Nations and others directly links labour mobility to the spread of HIV/AIDS; increased rates of domestic violence, including sexual assault and partner rape; and the disintegration of the family unit.

Let's pause for a moment, farmers et al, and think about the mothers, daughters and wives of those carefully chosen Pacific Islands that are soon to face this.

Danae Bosler, Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, Sydney, NSW

Rights of citizens

PHILLIP O'Carroll's belief "that public opinion decides when the time has come for a right to be defended in law" (Letters, 25/8) raises the question: whose public opinion?

Public opinion is diverse. Some may decide that Australia does not need a charter because they personally feel no need. Others, looking beyond their own needs, may believe that these rights should be enshrined to ensure that no one misses out.

Among this group, there is growing public support for a charter of human rights because of the evidence of recent events.

There is an Australian law that allows an innocent person, neither accused nor charged, to be deprived of their liberty for their life, without recourse to law. Another law allows non-citizen children in Australia to be imprisoned and denied access to the law to gain release, even when there is proof that this imprisonment is causing them irreparable harm. These laws breach human rights and cry out for change.

It is critical that human rights in Australia are enshrined in law and placed out of the reach of party politics and shock jock opinion makers. Human rights are for all human beings, not just for citizens.

Pamela Curr, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Melbourne

Making peace, slowly

WHAT is it about co-operation between Israelis and Palestinians, as exemplified by the Peres Peace Team, that so angers groups like Australians for Palestine ("For Palestinians and Israelis, it's peace in our time-on", The Age, 25/8)? The Peres Peace Centre works on the principle that ordinary men, <u>women</u> and children building relationships will eventually force governments to do the same. Throughout Israel - in workplaces, educational institutions, in shops, the arts and on sporting fields - that's what people are doing.

Sure it's slow and, yes, it's hard work. But it's also the only way to achieve peace.

Geoffrey Zygier, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Caulfield South

A crying shame

THE symbolism in the fact that Palestinians have to drive four hours to practise for one hour, while the Jewish members literally walk down the street, says everything about the equity and intentions behind the formation of a supposed team of peace. Played under an Israeli name. Absolutely astounding.

The crying shame is that it is taking place here in Melbourne, where enslavement of one people by another is not usually accepted. I agree with Mosheer Amer, there is great harm in such misrepresentation. Let's not go into the issue of politics in sport.

James Vergis, Carlton North

Casting stones

MOAMMAR Mashni, of Australians for Palestine (Letters, 25/8) seems to be unable to distinguish between criticism and slander. Pointing out Israel's brutalities is valid criticism, and not in the least anti-Semitic. Repeating the Blood Libel - the claim that Jews use the blood of Christian children in the Passover celebration - is an abhorrent piece of slander.

It is the latter this <u>Hezbollah</u> station indulges in, and that sort of thing (be it anti-Semitic or any other form of abuse) has no place in any civilised society.

Louise Deutscher, Pakenham

Demands on doctors

DOUG Travis, president of AMA Victoria (Letters, 25/8), implies that doctors are bound by medical oath not to provide a service on demand unless, in their professional judgement, the patient gives consent. Therefore, he argues, there is no such thing as abortion on demand.

To which I reply, pull the other leg.

The consultation prior to the provision of a medical service, especially for elective procedures, which the vast majority of abortions are, consists of the doctor outlining the potential risks, which always include death, and the signing of the consent forms to absolve the doctor and hospital of any liability, should anything go wrong or the patient change his/her mind. It is a mere legal formality to protect the doctor and has little to do with the possible denial of service "on demand".

I find it extraordinary that in this day and age, it is supporters of abortion who are twisting language and denying self-evident truths. For example, if a human life does not start at conception, why do we advise people to use contraception, to avoid a pregnancy? Conception is but the first, sine qua non, step of human life.

Paul Borg, East Burwood

Graphic

CARTOON BY PETTY

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End of Document



The New York Times
May 16, 2008 Friday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 2178 words

Body

international

RUINED BURMESE FARMERS

May Miss Fall Harvest

Tens of thousands of farm families lost their draft animals, their rice stocks and their planting seeds in Cyclone Nargis. Normally at this time of year, Burmese farmers in the southern delta of Myanmar would be draining their rice paddies, plowing their fields with their water buffaloes and preparing to plant seeds for an autumn harvest. But now the harvest is in doubt as well. PAGE A6

PROTESTS OVER JOB CUTS IN FRANCE

Hundreds of thousands of French teachers, students, parents and civil servants staged a one-day strike across the country to protest government plans to cut jobs in the public sector. The strike was another test of President Nicolas Sarkozy's resolve in his efforts to decrease the size of France's large civil service as a way to reduce budget deficits and create more competition in the economy. PAGE A12

GROWING CONCERNS OVER FOOD

Thieves in Kandahar, Afghanistan, raided the city flour market in broad daylight a few weeks ago, shooting and wounding two people before escaping with their loot. So the merchants got together and hired eight private security guards. But their fears remain, not only over gunmen, but because they sense a growing hunger and desperation in the general population. PAGE A8

IMMIGRANTS IN ITALY ARRESTED

Police officers in Italy arrested hundreds of people this week in a sweep of migrant shanty towns in major urban areas, a strong signal from Italy's new right-wing government that it will keep its promises to pursue tougher policies toward immigrants. "The anti-immigrant sweep was a positive thing because that's what people want," said Umberto Bossi, the minister of institutional reforms and federalism. PAGE A6

ANSWERS AFTER ABRUPT RESIGNATION

The resignation this week of Marina Silva, the environmental minister of Brazil, sent shockwaves through the international environmental community, who saw her as an important bulwark against deforestation of the Amazon. Ms. Silva blamed "stagnation" in the government for her decision and acknowledged that governors in frontline Amazon states were pressuring the president to rescind measures intended to check deforestation. PAGE A14

Afghans Killed With Impunity A9

NATIONAL

IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE.

Drink Your Fill.

Faced with the possibility of the most severe water shortages in decades, Los Angeles is planning to increase fines for watering lawns during restricted times, tap into more groundwater, encourage the use of more efficient plumbing fixtures, and to augment drinking water supplies with sewage. Cleansed sewage, that is. Heavily cleansed. PAGE A15

INCREASE IN MASTECTOMIES

Magnetic resonance imaging, a relatively new technique that detects more possibly cancerous growths than does mammography, may be leading more <u>women</u> to have their entire breast removed, researchers said. The study was based on patients at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and there is some evidence pointing to a wider tendency. PAGE A16

HOUSE PASSES VETERANS' AID

The House approved an expansive new veterans education benefit that would be paid for by a tax on affluent Americans. Republicans joined in approving the aid, but an effort to provide \$163 billion for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan went down in a surprise defeat, at least temporarily, because of objections from members of both parties. PAGE A21

A SMALL BUT FEISTY MENACE

They're so newly identified, scientists aren't sure what to call them yet. But among the names the people south of Houston have given them is "running ants." Whatever the name, they have a staggering propensity to reproduce, no known enemies, and they bite. "They're the ant of all ants," said one specialist. PAGE A15

PRISON FOR SPITTING ON OFFICER

A homeless man who spit in the mouth and eye of a Dallas police officer and then taunted him, saying he was H.I.V. positive, was sentenced to 35 years in prison on Wednesday for harassing a public servant with a deadly weapon: his saliva. Because of the deadly weapon finding, the man will not be eligible for parole until he has served half his sentence. PAGE A16

Threats Against Blacks A17

Red Cross Seeks Federal Money A17

Indictment in MySpace Suicide A15

BUSINESS

MICROSOFT WILL JOIN

Low-Cost Laptop Project

Microsoft and the computing and education project One Laptop Per Child have resolved their yearslong feud, making it possible to put Windows on the organization's computers. Microsoft had long resisted joining the project because its laptops used the Linux operating system, a freely distributed alternative to Windows. PAGE C1

YOU'RE FIRED. KEEP IT QUIET.

Layoffs are nothing new for Wall Street; they come with the territory in hard financial times. People in the business have noticed something different about the recent round of cutbacks: they're so quiet they're being referred to as the "stealth" layoffs. PAGE C1

A CALL FOR LESS SUN

Its aggressive push into renewable energies has made cloud-wreathed Germany an unlikely world leader in the race to harness solar power. But even at a time of record oil prices, solar development is encountering resistance from conservative lawmakers who want to pare back generous government incentives. They say it is growing at an unhealthy pace, threatening to burden consumers with excessively high electricity bills. PAGE C1

STRONG QUARTER FOR EUROPE

Led by the German economy, which grew 1.5 percent, the euro zone grew 0.7 percent during the first quarter of the year, about double what most economists had expected. The figures suggested a resilience that had seemed unlikely, but economists said they obscure severe slowdowns in Ireland and Spain and a probable recession in Italy. PAGE C3

The Dreaded Piggyback Loan C1

Blackstone Group Losses C6

French Bank to Sell Assets C8

New York Report

A LONG ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Puts the World in Every Class

Globalization has hit the Herricks school district in Nassau County, N.Y. Reading lists that had names like Hawthorne and Hemingway now include names like Lahiri and Hosseini. Gifted fifth graders learn comparative economics by charting the multinational production of a pencil and representing countries in a mock G8 summit. PAGE C11

LIVING BUDDHA COMES TO AMERICA

Ugyen Trinley Dorje, 22 -- the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, or living Buddha, one of the most important leaders in Tibetan Buddhism -- is visiting the United States for the first time in an 18-day whirlwind tour. Stops will include New York; New Jersey; Boulder, Colo.; and Seattle. In Manhattan he will be speaking to the faithful at the Hammerstein Ballroom. PAGE C12

SPORTS

NEVER MIND CHEATING IN SPORTS,

Just Keep Congress Out

People in the National Football League cheat. We know that. They take drugs to make them even more humongous, and they spy on one another to pick up signals. And we should all let them cheat, or let the N.F.L.

commission stop them, George Vecsey writes in Sports of The Times. "Just don't let Senator Arlen Specter hold a committee hearing into cheating in the N.F.L., as he is threatening to do." PAGE C16

RUNNING FOR SECOND?

Big Brown has won each of the four races he has entered, by a combined 33 * lengths. His trainer thinks he's "even money" to win the Triple Crown. But still, for whatever reasons, 12 other horses have been sent to Baltimore to take him on in the Preakness Stakes. "If you have a good 3-year-old in your barn, you owe it to him and your owners to take a shot," one trainer explained. PAGE C14

THE RISE OF THE NATIONALS

Saddled with a pitcher rather than a designated hitter in its batting orders, the National League has not scored more runs than the American League since 1974, the year before the D.H. was instituted. But before Thursday's games, National League players had 10 of the top 11 batting averages in the major leagues, 13 of the top 14 home run totals, 8 of the top 12 in runs batted in, 8 of 11 in on-base percentage, 9 of 10 in slugging percentage, and 9 of 10 in runs scored. What's going on? PAGE C13

OBITUARIES

WARREN COWAN, 87

One of Hollywood's most powerful and innovative publicists, he was the representative of generations of celebrities -- from Doris Day to Bette Midler, Frank Sinatra to Elton John, Ronald Reagan to Arnold Schwarzenegger. PAGE C18

OAKLEY HALL, 87

A writer, he produced a steady stream of novels, most set in the American West, of which the best known is "Warlock" (1958), a fictional reimagining of the gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Called "one of our best American novels" in a Holiday magazine review by Thomas Pynchon, it was made into a film of the same name with Richard Widmark and Henry Fonda. PAGE C18

JOHN PHILLIP LAW, 70

A strikingly handsome movie actor, he captured attention as an angel in the futuristic "Barbarella" and a lovesick Russian seaman in "The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming." PAGE C18

WEEKEND

SPONTANEITY AS THE MEDIUM

And as the Message

Art viewers familiar with Robert Mapplethorpe's posed and polished studio photography of the 1980s may not know that a decade earlier he was making quickie photographs with Polaroid cameras. That medium for instant photography is now headed for oblivion and "could not have hoped for a better sendoff than the Whitney's exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's Polaroids," Karen Rosenberg writes. PAGE B25

OUT OF THE WARDROBE, INTO A WAR

Since last we met our "Chronicles of Narnia" heroes, a year or so has gone by for them, while in Narnia centuries have passed. So everything there has changed, as has, A.O. Scott writes, the feel of the new movie, "Prince Caspian," itself: less children's fantasy, more Jacobean tragedy. "It is also in some ways more satisfying," he adds. PAGE B1

BEFORE MR. ED

"The Horse," which opens Saturday at the American Museum of Natural History, explores the interaction of that beast and man over history. Maybe for you horses' greatest role was to ferry TV and movie cowboys around the American West. But consider this: you owe your very trousers to them. PAGE B21

ON FRIENDS, BY FRIENDS

"Reprise," a film about two longtime friends written by the Norwegian director Joachim Trier and a longtime friend of his, "is a blast of unadulterated movie pleasure," Manohla Dargis writes in her review. It leaps from present to past and to possible futures, borrowing freely from film history -- in a good way. PAGE B12

WHICH WINE WITH BUG LARVAE?

"Man vs. Wild" is back, with Bear once again depositing himself in a different treacherous landscape each episode to, as Ginia Bellafante writes, "see what it takes to wing it in deserts and wind tunnels and other conditions requiring whole inventories of North Face clothing." And she does not begrudge the star his previously unrevealed, off-camera perks. PAGE B1

Rauschenberg on Display B30

When Artworks Collide B21

ESCAPES

ALABAMA TOP TO BOTTOM,

Powered by Paddles

It won't be the fastest way to get from one end of Alabama to the other. But the new 631-mile Alabama Scenic River Trail, which officially opens next month, will offer boaters, kayakers and the like the longest water trail in a single state and access at a number of spots from the Alabama-Georgia line to Mobile Bay. PAGE D6

MARKETING IN SAN FRANCISCO

Residents of San Francisco already know all about the city's farmers' markets, but visitors can take advantage, too. Sure, they're less likely to be putting together a meal back in the hotel room, but there is still loads to taste and buy, not to mention the sights, sounds and world-class people-watching. PAGE D1

LET'S STOP HERE

Life is a journey, not a destination, or so the saying goes. But the journey to get to a weekend home is all about the stops -- the ones that break up the journey, define it, and make it bearable. PAGE D1

Havens: Gold Canyon, Ariz. D3

Fractionals and Time Shares D2

EDITORIAL

SEE HOW THEY RUN

It seemed like an extraordinary moment on Thursday when Senator John McCain promised not to ignore or flagrantly violate any laws. Such is the sorry state of affairs after seven years of Republican lawmakers' marching in mute lockstep with President Bush into one policy disaster after another. PAGE A22

BLACKWATER'S IMPUNITY

After guards from Blackwater Worldwide killed at least 17 Iraqis in a hail of bullets last September, we hoped the Bush administration would rethink the folly of relying on mercenaries, who have no accountability to Iraqi or American law. It hasn't. PAGE A22

A DISGRACEFUL FARM BILL

Congress has approved a \$307 billion farm bill that rewards rich farmers who do not need the help while doing virtually nothing to help the world's hungry, who need all the help they can get. President Bush should veto it. PAGE A22

OP-ED

DAVID BROOKS

Is Barack Obama naive enough to think that an extremist ideological organization like <u>Hezbollah</u> can be mollified with a less corrupt patronage system and some electoral reform? PAGE A23

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Body

ABORTION

Forced counselling an insult to women

SINCE the State Government introduced its Law Reform Abortion Bill last Tuesday there has been a clamour from several quarters that the bill is flawed because it contains no mandatory counselling requirements. There are a number of reasons why counselling or waiting periods should not be imposed on <u>women</u> prior to terminations.

First, it essentially assumes that all <u>women</u> are unable to reasonably determine what is best for them or to rationally reflect on their decision prior to having the medical procedure.

Second, it also feeds into the deliberate misinformation about abortions and the fictional post-abortion syndrome peddled by the religious right.

Third, such counselling being mandatory in these circumstances would come to be a burden which <u>women</u>, who may already be going through a tense and emotionally strained period, are forced to go through. <u>Women</u> need to be free to make their own decisions in their own time.

Finally, the Victorian Law Reform Commission examined the issue of mandatory counselling and whether it should be mandated in legislation. After investigation of the evidence, it concluded that no new abortion law should contain a requirement for mandatory counselling.

Anne O'Rourke, vice-president, Liberty Victoria

It starts with pregnancy

THE discussion about whether, and how, the passing of proposed abortion law reforms will affect the number of abortions performed in Victoria overlooks one obvious fact. A termination of pregnancy, by definition, can occur if and only if a pregnancy has occurred. Therefore the most straightforward way to reduce the incidence of abortion, if that is the goal desired by policymakers, is to reduce the incidence of unintended and unwanted pregnancies.

This is best achieved by increasing the quality and availability of reproductive health services and information available to <u>women</u>, and more generally through a regime of openness and empowerment in relation to <u>women</u>'s reproductive and sexual options. None of this is assisted by the intrusion of the criminal law into <u>women</u>'s life choices.

Paul Norton, Highgate Hill, Qld

Leap of logic

PAUL Austin's article (Comment & Debate, 21/8) fails to mention two key facts - no woman falls pregnant with the aim of being able to have an abortion. And no woman describes the decision to have an abortion as an easy or enjoyable one.

Taking these facts into account, how on earth do you come to the conclusion that law reform will have <u>women</u> flocking through the doors for more abortions? What kind of people do you think Victorian <u>women</u> are exactly?

Samantha Smith, Caulfield

A slippery slope

JULIE Anderson (Letters, 21/8) says: "It would be a cruel society to force <u>women</u> to become mothers when they clearly don't want to, or are not prepared for the huge task ahead of them".

Excuse me, Ms Anderson, but toddlers can be very demanding, and often not wanted. By your reasoning, we should just bump off little two-year-old Johnny or Sally. After all, it's a mother's right to choose, and we don't want society to be cruel and force poor mums into looking after children who are unwanted.

Bill Muehlenberg, Heathmont

The dark side of desalination?

I AM not against the use of desalination technology where it is needed. But to spend \$3 billion on a new plant in order to create a lifetime legacy of expensive water within an effectively privatised water scheme, is thick-headed and dangerous planning.

To pump the 1.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year (The Age, 21/8) is not environmentally sensible; to attempt the implementation of this before the issues of water use reduction, recycling, and domestic water tanks have been properly addressed, is an example of mega-planning at its worst. It is expensive, destructive and long-term, and I am bewildered as to the Government's motives in this.

Could the push towards the use of desalination have less to do with securing the delivery of water, and be concerned more with an urgent need of big capital to privatise the Victorian water supply?

Simon Veitch, Blackburn

Even free speech must have its limits

AS BARNEY Zwartz reveals ("Move to block 'terror TV' ", The Age, 21/8), <u>Hezbollah</u>'s television station al-Manar promotes and raises money for terrorism. This is illegal in Australia. It is therefore disappointing that Australian Arabic Council chairman Roland Jabbour defends the station, citing freedom of speech. Speech is free only to the extent that it does not breach the law, as al-Manar clearly does.

Given both its pro-terror stance and its virulent anti-Semitism, it is even more concerning if the channel is indeed popular among Arabic speakers here, as Jabbour claims.

George Greenberg, Malvern

Walking the talk on wellbeing

I WOULD have thought the fact that such a small country as Australia is right up there with the likes of economic and population giants China, the US, and Britain was evidence enough that there is already too great a level of funding support for our elite athletes. This is especially so when you consider the widespread rising epidemic of

"lifestyle" diseases such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease - an epidemic largely brought about by poor land use and transport planning that effectively prohibits walking to schools, shops and public transport.

As one of the State Government's partners in the "Go for your life" healthier living campaign for the past four years, I am all too aware of the billions it costs each year to help people recover from or endure these lifestyle diseases. I am also, unfortunately, aware of how all but impossible it is to get traffic engineers, planners and developers and their government regulators to work together to ensure the provision of safe, attractive and convenient walking environments in new and established urban areas. If only we cared half as much about the wellbeing of all Australians as we seem to about winning at the Olympics.

Bernadette George, St Kilda

Move over, Coates

IT IS all very well for John Coates to storm and rail against the stick he is receiving from the Brits. He doesn't live in Britain and it is much worse here.

The fact remains that Australia has had a poor Games, by our own standards.

As in most companies when there is a failure, heads roll. So perhaps it is time to find a new team to lead the Australian team to 2012.

Anne Molyneux, London, UK

Kosky riding the wrong train

I HAD the rare opportunity on Wednesday morning to meet our reluctant Transport Minister, Lynne Kosky, who was on the Werribee line. Foolish me could have been under the illusion she was actually catching the train to get to work, but I was informed later she was on her way to a media opportunity at North Melbourne train station to release public transport patronage figures. When I told the minister that our transport system was shockingly overcrowded, constantly delayed and that the Government should take it back into public hands, she smiled at me and informed me that's not what people were telling her.

I am not sure who Lynne Kosky is listening to but it certainly is not the travelling public, which is overwhelmingly and increasingly in favour of government-run public transport. If Kosky is so confident the public is happy with the status quo, why doesn't she call a plebiscite on public transport and prove us all wrong?

Margarita Windisch, Yarraville

Avoiding the rush

ANYONE who travels during the day or late at night has no trouble finding a seat. The problem is that all city office workers are obliged to arrive at 9am and mostly leave at 5pm. If the rush hour began at 8am and extended to 10am each morning, then the transport people would be better able to cope. The arrival time could be staggered from 8am through to 10am and similarly in the evening.

When I worked in the city, I made an arrangement with my employer to arrive at 7am and leave at 3pm to avoid the mad squash in the train and I completed all the tasks assigned to me in that time frame.

Michael R. Nolan, Mansfield

A carbon con

HENRY Derwent (Comment & Debate, 20/8) curiously cites the example of the European emissions trading scheme in an attempt to defend the implementation of an emissions trading scheme in Australia. You mean the one that witnessed an overall increase in carbon emissions, allowing polluters to make not millions, but billions of dollars

in profit from speculation on a \$100 billion market, and letting them off the hook for not reducing their own emissions?

Emissions trading diverts attention from the real demands that could be made, such as massive investment in renewable energies and adequate public transport. There's a reason carbon trading has been favoured by oil and coal companies: it means they don't have to pay for climate change or clean up their act in any way, but the real costs can be shifted to ordinary working people.

Jimmy Yan, Thomastown

Not liveable for long

IT IS ironic that just when Nillumbik is named as the most liveable area in Victoria (The Age, 20/8), the State Government has reignited debate over driving a freeway straight through the green wedge shire.

First raised 30 years ago and persistently denied by government spokesmen of both Liberal and Labor hue ever since, the "missing link" proposal to connect EastLink with the Western Ring Road appears to be alive and kicking (The Age, 18/8).

The green wedge is a vital component of the lungs of Melbourne, needed ever more as the population swells. The great parklands and nature reserves of the great cities of the world are testament to civic leaders of vision and integrity whose horizons extended beyond the next election campaign.

Let's hope our current crop of politicians are up to the task of ensuring that Melbourne 2108 will be as liveable as they like to boast it is today.

Dick Davies, president, Warrandyte Community Association

Will the real rogue state stand up?

THE signing of the missile deal by Condoleezza Rice with Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski (The Age, 21/8) was breathtaking in its hypocrisy. The motive of this is to protect US and NATO interests in Europe against rogue state attacks from such as Iran and North Korea.

It would be interesting to see missiles installed within 180 kilometres of the US borders in Canada or Mexico. But wait a minute, didn't that occur back in 1962? The definition of rogue states also includes nations that do not adhere to international agreements. The US has not signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (among many).

Rob Park, Surrey Hills

Rough and Russian

BY ITS actions in and around Georgia and its threats against other countries, Russia has managed to turn public opinion in Europe in favour of the installation of US-backed missile defence system in that part of the world. Its latest threat to take unspecified, non-diplomatic, measures against Poland for agreeing to be part of the above system has only confirmed the growing fear throughout the world that the Russian bear is not to be trusted.

Michael J. Gamble, Belmont

Buckley came first

THE Fawkner-Batman debate (The Age, 20/8) is just a smokescreen to save our embarrassment about Melbourne actually being visited first by the convict William Buckley, an escapee from Captain Collins' convict settlement at Sorrento in 1803. From Sorrento, Buckley needed to cross the Yarra River at the present site of Melbourne on his way around Port Phillip Bay to Geelong where he lived off and on with Aborigines for 32 years. It is believed an old kettle belonging to Buckley was found by the earliest Melbourne settlers.

No acknowledgment of Buckley's journey across the future site of Melbourne has been recognised or endorsed. Captain Lancey therefore takes second prize at best.

Bruce Nixon, Yarra Glen

Misplaced honour

STAN Marks may have the best of intentions, but his assertion that local Aborigines "founded Melbourne" (Letters, 21/8) is simply nonsense. Can the previous owner of farmland claim to have built the house now occupying that block? Denying that indigenous peoples have suffered in all sorts of ways is cruelly dismissive; according them achievements that historically they never made is demeaningly patronising. Neither serves the cause of justice.

Leonard Colquhoun, Invermay, Tasmania

Graphic

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<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

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Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

Body

Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

Mexican newspapers including La Jornada are reporting that information has been uncovered in the current investigation indicating the Beltrán Leyva organization had developed paid sources inside Interpol and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, and that the source in the embassy has provided intelligence on Drug Enforcement The source at the U.S. Embassy was reportedly a foreign service national Administration (DEA) investigations. investigator, or FSNI. The newspaper El Universal has reported that the U.S. Marshals Service employed the FSNI This situation provides us with a good opportunity to examine the role of foreign service national employees at U.S. missions abroad and why they are important to embassy functions, and to discuss the Foreign Service Nationals U.S. embassies and consulates can be counterintelligence liability they present. large and complicated entities. They can house dozens of U.S. government agencies and employ hundreds, or even thousands, of employees. Americans like their creature comforts, and keeping a large number of employees comfortable (and productive) requires a lot of administrative and logistical support, everything from motor pool vehicles to commissaries. Creature comforts aside, merely keeping all of the security equipment functioning in a big mission - things like gates, vehicle barriers, video cameras, metal detectors, magnetic locks and residential alarms - can be a daunting task. In most places, the cost of bringing Americans to the host country to do all of the little jobs required to run an embassy or consulate is prohibitive. Because of this, the U.S. government often hires a large group of local people (called foreign service nationals, or FSNs) to perform non-sensitive administrative FSN jobs can range from low-level menial positions, such as driving the embassy shuttle bus, functions. answering the switchboard or cooking in the embassy cafeteria, to more important jobs such as helping the

embassy contract with local companies for goods and services, helping to screen potential visa applicants or translating diplomatic notes into the local language. Most U.S diplomatic posts employ dozens of FSNs, and large embassies can employ hundreds of them. The embassy will also hire FSNIs to assist various sections of the embassy such as the DEA Attaché, the regional security office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the anti-fraud unit of the consular section. FSNIs are the embassy's subject-matter experts on crime in the host country and are responsible for maintaining liaison between the embassy and the host country's security and law enforcement organizations. In a system where most diplomats and attachés are assigned to a post only for two or three years, the FSNs become the institutional memory of the embassy. They are the long-term keepers of the contacts with the host country government and will always be expected to introduce their new American bosses to the people they need to know in the government to get their jobs done. Because FSNIs are expected to have good contacts and to be able to reach their contacts at any time of the day or night in case of emergency, the people hired for these FSNI positions are normally former senior law enforcement officers from the host country. senior police officials are often close friends and former classmates of the current host country officials. This means that they can call the chief of police of the capital city at home on a Saturday or the assistant minister of government at 3 a.m. if the need arises. To help make sure this assistance flows, the FSNI will do little things like deliver bottles of Johnny Walker Black during the Christmas holidays or bigger things like help the chief of police obtain visas so his family can vacation at Disney World. Visas, in fact, are a very good tool for fostering liaison. Not only can they allow the vice minister to do his holiday shopping in Houston, they can also be used to do things like bring vehicles or consumer goods from the United States back to the host country for sale at a profit. As FSNs tend to work for embassies for long periods of time, while the Americans rotate through, there is a tendency for FSNs to learn the system and to find ways to profit from it. It is not uncommon for FSNs to be fired or even prosecuted in local court systems for theft and embezzlement. FSNs have done things like take kick-backs on embassy contracts for arranging to direct the contract to a specific vendor; pay inflated prices for goods bought with petty cash and then split the difference with the vendor who provided the false receipt; and steal gasoline, furniture items, computers and nearly anything else that can be found in an embassy. While this kind of fraud is more commonplace in third-world nations where corruption is endemic, it is certainly not confined there; it can even occur in European capitals. Again, visas are a critical piece of the puzzle. Genuine U.S. visas are worth a great deal of money, and it is not uncommon to find FSNs involved in various visa fraud schemes. FSN employees have gone as far as accepting money to provide visas to members of terrorist groups like *Hezbollah*. In countries involved in human trafficking, visas have been traded for sexual favors in addition to money. In fairness, the amount that can be made from visa fraud means it is not surprising to find U.S. foreign service officers participating in visa fraud as well. Liabilities While it saves money, employing FSNs does present a very real counterintelligence risk. In essence, it is an invitation to a local intelligence service to send people inside U.S. buildings to collect information. In most countries, the U.S. Embassy cannot do a complete background investigation on an FSN candidate without the assistance of the host country government. This means the chances of catching a plant are slim unless the Americans have their own source in the local intelligence service that will out the operation. In many countries. foreigners cannot apply for a job with the U.S. Embassy without their government's permission. Obviously, this means local governments can approve only those applicants who agree to provide the government with information In other countries, embassy employment is not that obviously controlled, but there still is a strong possibility of the host country sending agents to apply for jobs along with the other applicants. It may be just coincidence, but in many countries the percentage of very attractive young women filling clerical roles at the U.S. Embassy appears many times higher than the number of attractive young **women** in the general population. This raises the spectre of "honey traps," or sexual entrapment schemes aimed at U.S. employees Such schemes have involved female FSNs in the past. In one well known example, the KGB employed attractive *female* operatives against the Marine Security Guards in Moscow, an operation that led to an extremely grave compromise of the U.S. Embassy there. Because of these risk factors, FSNs are not allowed access to classified information and are kept out of sections of the embassy where classified information is discussed and stored. It is assumed that any classified information FSNs can access will be compromised. Of course, not all FSNs report to host country intelligence services, and many of them are loyal employees of the U.S. government. In many countries, however, the extensive power host country intelligence services can wield over the lives of its citizens means that even otherwise loyal FSNs can be compelled to report to the host country service against their wills. Whereas an American diplomat will go home after two or three years, FSNs must spend their lives in the host country and are not protected by diplomatic status or international conventions. This makes them very vulnerable to pressure. Additionally, the aforementioned

criminal activity by FSNs is not just significant from a fiscal standpoint; Such activity also leaves those participating in it open to blackmail by the host government if the activity is discovered. When one considers the long history of official corruption in Mexico and the enormous amounts of cash available to the Mexican drug cartels, it is no surprise that members of the SIEDO, much less an FNSI at the U.S. Embassy, should be implicated in such a case. The allegedly corrupt FNSI most likely was recruited into the scheme by a close friend or former associate who may have been working for the government and who was helping the Beltrán Leyva organization develop its intelligence Limits It appears that the FSNI working for the Beltrán Leyva organization at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City worked for the U.S. Marshals Service, not the DEA. This means that he would not have had access to much DEA operational information. An FSNI working for the U.S. Marshals Service would be working on fugitive cases and would be tasked with liaison with various Mexican law enforcement jurisdictions. Information regarding fugitive operations would be somewhat useful to the cartels, since many cartel members have been indicted in U.S. courts and the U.S. government would like to extradite them. Even if the FSNI involved had been working for the DEA, however, there are limits to how much information he would have been able to provide. First of all, DEA special agents are well aware of the degree of corruption in Mexico, and they are therefore concerned that information passed on to the Mexican government can be passed to the cartels. The special agents also would assume that their FSN employees may be reporting to the Mexican government, and would therefore take care to not tell the FSN anything they wouldn't want the Mexican government - or the cartels - to know. The type of FSNI employee in question would be tasked with conducting administrative duties such as helping the DEA attaché with liaison and passing name checks and other queries to various jurisdictions in Mexico. The FSN would not be privy to classified DEA cable traffic, and would not sit in on sensitive operational meetings. In the intelligence world, however, there are unclassified things that can be valuable intelligence. These include the names and home addresses of all the DEA employees in the country, for example, or the types of cars the special agents drive and the confidential license plates they have for them. Other examples could be the FSNI being sent to the airport to pick up a group of TDY DEA agents and bringing them to the embassy. Were the agents out-of-shape headquarters-types wearing suits and doing an inspection, or fit field agents from a special operations group coming to town to help take down a high-value target? Even knowing that the DEA attaché has suddenly changed his schedule and is now working more overtime can indicate that something is up. Information that the attaché has asked the FSNI about the police chief in a specific jurisdiction, for example, could also be valuable to a drug trafficking organization expecting a shipment to arrive at that jurisdiction. In the end, it is unlikely that this current case resulted in grave damage to DEA operations in Mexico. Indeed, the FSNI probably did far less damage to counternarcotics operations than the 35 PGR employees who have been arrested since July. But the vulnerabilities of FSN employees are great, and there are likely other FSNs on the payroll of the various Mexican cartels. long as the U.S. government employs FSNs it will face the security liability that comes with them. In general, however, this liability is offset by the utility they provide and the systems put in place to limit the counterintelligence damage they can cause.

Load-Date: December 16, 2012



The Sunday Times (London)
May 27, 2007

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Section: FEATURES; News; Pg. 12

Length: 2009 words **Byline:** Marie Colvin

Body

A group of Muslim fanatics are pinned down in a Lebanese refugee camp threatening a fight to the death. Marie Colvin reports on the terrifying stand-off

Not far from the Islamic extremists holed up in northern Lebanon this weekend, a boy called Yousef Abu Radi was lying on his side, swathed in bandages. He had escaped the hell of Nahr al-Bared refugee camp, but only just.

"I was with my father and my mother and my little sisters and we were trying to get out of the camp," said the 12-year-old, his brown eyes wide and fearful as he clung to a blue sheet. "We were about 40 metres from the army checkpoint when there was shooting at the bus.

"The bus flipped and I was trying to shield my little sister when I felt something hit my back. I saw my mother was hit in the head and she was dead instantly. My little sister doesn't know yet."

Youset's mother Montaher, 38, was six months pregnant. In the mayhem the driver of the bus was also killed.

Yousef's 10-year-old sister Jinan survived uninjured; a second sister, Jana, 2, was hit in the hip by shrapnel from an exploding shell. Shrapnel wounded Yousef, too, piercing his small intestine.

They were among the thousands of terrified Palestinians trying to flee Nahr al-Bared, a ramshackle settlement in northern Lebanon that, until last week, was home to about 40,000 Palestinian refugees.

A jumble of breeze-block buildings and narrow streets that lies between the Mediterranean and orange groves, Nahr al-Bared is one of the most densely populated residential areas in the world. So when fighting broke out last week between Islamic militants who had infiltrated the camp and the Lebanese army, civilians soon found themselves caught in the crossfire.

Rockets and shells went astray, hitting homes of those in the camp who have no love for the militant group known as Fatah al-Islam. At the same time extremists were said to be firing on anyone suspected of aiding the Lebanese.

Desperate civilians began streaming out of the camp with little more than the clothes on their backs when a fragile truce took hold on Tuesday afternoon.

Yousef's family were among those who made it, though at terrible cost. After the attack on the bus a neighbour drove them, with the body of Yousef's mother, to a hospital in Beddawi, another Palestinian refugee camp nearby.

There Yousef's father Radi Abu Radi said the Lebanese army had tried to help them after they were hit, but he remained distraught and bitter.

"No one (in the camp) supports Fatah al-Islam," he said, standing in the corridor of the Safad hospital. "They are not Palestinians. But the Lebanese army is killing us - innocent civilians. They are shelling the camp."

Over and over last week Palestinians streaming out of the camp said the same thing. There was anger at Fatah al-Islam for bringing this catastrophe on the camp, but also at the Lebanese army for shelling and shooting into a heavily populated area.

This weekend the Lebanese army surrounds the camp; about 20,000 civilians are still inside; and the several hundred Fatah al-Islam extremists, their bodies strapped with bandoliers and bombs, remain defiant.

So far the fighting has killed at least 70 people and injured many more; over 30 soldiers have died - and four reportedly had their heads cut off. "They (Fatah al-Islam) will fight to the last drop of blood," claimed one supporter.

"They are religious people who love to be martyrs for Islam."

It is Lebanon's worst internal violence since the civil war that ended in 1990. Is it a bloody, isolated incident? Or is it part of a wider drive by Al-Qaeda and its allies to spread death and destruction further through the Middle East? THE leader of Fatah al-Islam is a fugitive Jordanian citizen of Palestinian origin who denies links with Al-Qaeda but embraces similar jihadist ideology.

Friends in Beirut say Shakir al-

Abssi, 49, started his political career as a member of Yasser Arafat's secular Fatah movement in the Palestine Liberation Organisation; then he broke away and joined a movement called Fatah al-Intifada (Uprising), moving to Damascus, the Syrian capital, with other rebels.

Later he returned to Beirut and lived in the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp with his wife, daughter and two sons. He made little impression. Friends say he was more religious than most, and proud, but no extremist.

At some point he became inspired by the ideology of Osama Bin Laden and made an alliance with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a fellow Jordanian who led Al-Qaeda in Iraq until he was killed by US forces last year.

Abssi was charged in Jordan along with Zarqawi over the murder of Laurence Foley, an American diplomat, who was shot in Amman in 2002. In absentia Abssi was sentenced to death.

By then he was in prison in Syria, only to be mysteriously released and allowed to cross into northern Lebanon where he rejoined the ranks of Fatah al-Intifada. It wasn't radical enough for him, so last year Abssi and other militants split away and created Fatah al-Islam, publishing a statement of intent on jihadist websites.

"Know that our goal is fighting the Jews and all those who support them from the Zionist Crusaders of the West in order to liberate our sacred land," their open letter announced. It urged Muslims to join its ranks and training camps.

A small group of Fatah al-Islam followers surfaced in the Beddawi refugee camp in northern Lebanon, but was ejected by the camp authorities. They moved on to Nahr al-Bared nearby where they seized three breeze-block buildings from Fatah al-Intifada.

Abssi raised the group's black flag and declared he was going to bring religion to the Palestinians and fight in the global jihad espoused by Al-Qaeda. He began training fighters and, camp residents say, by last week had a group of about 250, mostly non-Palestinians. Among them were Saudis, Syrians, Yemenis and Algerians.

"We could tell from their accents," one camp resident said.

They are thought to have entered Lebanon either via Beirut airport, where Gulf residents are often waved through, or across the Syrian border, legally or illegally.

They had amassed powerful weaponry, probably smuggled in from Syria. The crisis erupted last Sunday when the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) mounted a dawn raid on a flat in the nearby port town of Tripoli, chasing what they thought were bank robbers. The men inside were members of Fatah al-Islam, and in the ensuing gun battle many security agents as well as militants died.

Abssi's men in Nahr al-Bared reacted brutally. They attacked Lebanese soldiers at checkpoints guarding the roads out of the camp, killing many and seizing their poorly protected concrete pillboxes. The ISF had given no alert; the soldiers were mostly snoozing in the sun.

The Lebanese army regrouped and retook the posts but dared not take the fight into the camp. Under a 1969 Arab agreement, Palestinians police themselves inside the camps and the Lebanese army guards only the perimeter.

Intense fighting broke out. Sniper fire, heavy machinegun rounds and rocket-propelled grenades poured out of the Fatah al-Islam bases. The Lebanese army fired back with heavy machineguns and antiquated tanks and artillery.

Terrified civilians were caught in the middle.

On Monday a shell fired by the Lebanese army hit the roof of a mosque where hundreds of people were sheltering. It may have been aimed at a Fatah al-Islam fighter - the Lebanese army said the extremists were sniping from rooftops and minarets - but the victims were innocents. Two men died immediately, dozens were injured.

There was little help to hand. "When people called us, we took the seriously injured to the clinic," said Maamoun Ahmed, 22, a volunteer nurse who later got out of the camp. "If we were fired on, we had to turn back. We left a lot of injured in their houses. We don't know what happened to them."

By the end of the third day, the volunteer nurses at the camp's main medical centre had run out of supplies. "The work was continuous. If we even tried to sleep for a minute, there would be an explosion and we would jerk awake," Ahmed said. "We piled the bodies of the dead in our garage, wrapped in blankets. It was too dangerous to bury them."

He stored two <u>women</u>, two boys and eight men. He doesn't know their names: he was too busy trying to keep the injured alive. "I was performing surgery, and I have no training," he said. "I pulled bullets out. We had only local anaesthetic."

Then two medics were injured when the Lebanese army fired on their ambulances. The volunteers decided, along with thousands of others, that it was time to escape while they still could.

By this weekend, about 20,000 people had fled Nahr al-Bared and arrived in Beddawi, which was already overcrowded. Some were taken in by families who found themselves living 20 to a room; others slept on the floors of mosques and schools, or in dirty courtyards under tin shelters. Everyone seemed filthy and exhausted; few places had water or sanitation.

Even if they had no injured or dead among their relatives, the Nahr al-Bared refugees were in dire straits. The extended al-Jundi family were typical of about 1,500 refugees camped in a school on the floor or dirty pallets. They had not bathed in days, and had just been delivered their first food, a plastic bag of yoghurt, bread and rice. But they had no means to cook it.

THE Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, claimed the fighting was part of a plot by Syria to destabilise Lebanon. Syria vehemently denied it, saying it has a warrant out for Abssi's arrest. Others suggested the rise of Fatah al-Islam was the unintended consequence of US efforts to combat *Hezbollah*, the Iranian backed militant group in southern Lebanon.

Whatever the precise backing of Fatah al-Islam, its leader speaks in the global jihadist language of Al-Qaeda. He told The Sunday Times recently: "Muslim people from any part of the world will not be able to witness their people being killed and not take action in return."

A Palestinian source said last week that Abssi's son-in-law, married to his only daughter, was killed fighting in Iraq 12 days ago. He said the group considered him a martyr who would go directly to heaven because he had died fighting the American occupation forces.

Yesterday there was no sign of an end to the standoff at Nahr al-Bared. The once-bustling camp appeared devastated, with cars and shops torched and the streets strewn with wreckage and dead rats. About 20,000 Palestinian civilians remained, unwilling or unable to leave.

Lebanese soldiers had reinforced the perimeter and taken up ambush positions in the orange groves. On Friday, five cargoes of weapons arrived for the Lebanese army - one from the US, two from the United Arab Emirates and two from Jordan.

Elias Murr, the Lebanese defence minister, threw down the gauntlet. "The army will not negotiate with a group of terrorists and criminals," he said. "Their fate is arrest, and if they resist the army, death."

Abu Saleem Taher, a spokesman for Fatah al-Islam, told The Sunday Times by mobile phone from the camp: "We will not surrender, this battle is just beginning."

Fatah al-Islam fanatics had left their buildings and were living in the potholed streets, sleeping and eating in shifts. Most were dressed in Afghan-style clothing, with belts of bullets swaddling their bodies, according to Sophie Amara, an Arab journalist working for France 24 in Lebanon who managed to infiltrate the camp and get out again safely.

Amara said she met many Saudis along with Syrians, Yemenis, Algerians and Pakistanis among the fighters. They were using a captured United Nations pick up truck to broadcast fiery sermons. "One bearded man yelled over the microphone, 'Allahu akbar (God is greatest)' and gave a long, ugly prayer, shouting for the need to follow the path of jihad," Amara said.

"They told me they will not surrender, they said they will fight to the last bullet."

Additional reporting: Hugh Macleod and Sarah Baxter, Washington

Hugh Maclead/Rawan For the latest news on the fighting at the Nahr al-Bared camp, go to www.timesonline.co.uk/mideast

Load-Date: May 27, 2007

End of Document



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

Body

Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

Mexican newspapers including La Jornada are reporting that information has been uncovered in the current investigation indicating the Beltrán Leyva organization had developed paid sources inside Interpol and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, and that the source in the embassy has provided intelligence on Drug Enforcement The source at the U.S. Embassy was reportedly a foreign service national Administration (DEA) investigations. investigator, or FSNI. The newspaper El Universal has reported that the U.S. Marshals Service employed the FSNI This situation provides us with a good opportunity to examine the role of foreign service national employees at U.S. missions abroad and why they are important to embassy functions, and to discuss the Foreign Service Nationals U.S. embassies and consulates can be counterintelligence liability they present. large and complicated entities. They can house dozens of U.S. government agencies and employ hundreds, or even thousands, of employees. Americans like their creature comforts, and keeping a large number of employees comfortable (and productive) requires a lot of administrative and logistical support, everything from motor pool vehicles to commissaries. Creature comforts aside, merely keeping all of the security equipment functioning in a big mission - things like gates, vehicle barriers, video cameras, metal detectors, magnetic locks and residential alarms - can be a daunting task. In most places, the cost of bringing Americans to the host country to do all of the little jobs required to run an embassy or consulate is prohibitive. Because of this, the U.S. government often hires a large group of local people (called foreign service nationals, or FSNs) to perform non-sensitive administrative FSN jobs can range from low-level menial positions, such as driving the embassy shuttle bus, functions. answering the switchboard or cooking in the embassy cafeteria, to more important jobs such as helping the

embassy contract with local companies for goods and services, helping to screen potential visa applicants or translating diplomatic notes into the local language. Most U.S diplomatic posts employ dozens of FSNs, and large embassies can employ hundreds of them. The embassy will also hire FSNIs to assist various sections of the embassy such as the DEA Attaché, the regional security office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the anti-fraud unit of the consular section. FSNIs are the embassy's subject-matter experts on crime in the host country and are responsible for maintaining liaison between the embassy and the host country's security and law enforcement organizations. In a system where most diplomats and attachés are assigned to a post only for two or three years, the FSNs become the institutional memory of the embassy. They are the long-term keepers of the contacts with the host country government and will always be expected to introduce their new American bosses to the people they need to know in the government to get their jobs done. Because FSNIs are expected to have good contacts and to be able to reach their contacts at any time of the day or night in case of emergency, the people hired for these FSNI positions are normally former senior law enforcement officers from the host country. senior police officials are often close friends and former classmates of the current host country officials. This means that they can call the chief of police of the capital city at home on a Saturday or the assistant minister of government at 3 a.m. if the need arises. To help make sure this assistance flows, the FSNI will do little things like deliver bottles of Johnny Walker Black during the Christmas holidays or bigger things like help the chief of police obtain visas so his family can vacation at Disney World. Visas, in fact, are a very good tool for fostering liaison. Not only can they allow the vice minister to do his holiday shopping in Houston, they can also be used to do things like bring vehicles or consumer goods from the United States back to the host country for sale at a profit.
As FSNs tend to work for embassies for long periods of time, while the Americans rotate through, there is a tendency for FSNs to learn the system and to find ways to profit from it. It is not uncommon for FSNs to be fired or even prosecuted in local court systems for theft and embezzlement. FSNs have done things like take kick-backs on embassy contracts for arranging to direct the contract to a specific vendor; pay inflated prices for goods bought with petty cash and then split the difference with the vendor who provided the false receipt; and steal gasoline, furniture items, computers and nearly anything else that can be found in an embassy. While this kind of fraud is more commonplace in third-world nations where corruption is endemic, it is certainly not confined there; it can even occur in European capitals. Again, visas are a critical piece of the puzzle. Genuine U.S. visas are worth a great deal of money, and it is not uncommon to find FSNs involved in various visa fraud schemes. FSN employees have gone as far as accepting money to provide visas to members of terrorist groups like *Hezbollah*. In countries involved in human trafficking, visas have been traded for sexual favors in addition to money. In fairness, the amount that can be made from visa fraud means it is not surprising to find U.S. foreign service officers participating in visa fraud as well. Liabilities While it saves money, employing FSNs does present a very real counterintelligence risk. In essence, it is an invitation to a local intelligence service to send people inside U.S. buildings to collect information. In most countries, the U.S. Embassy cannot do a complete background investigation on an FSN candidate without the assistance of the host country government. This means the chances of catching a plant are slim unless the Americans have their own source in the local intelligence service that will out the operation. In many countries. foreigners cannot apply for a job with the U.S. Embassy without their government's permission. Obviously, this means local governments can approve only those applicants who agree to provide the government with information In other countries, embassy employment is not that obviously controlled, but there still is a strong possibility of the host country sending agents to apply for jobs along with the other applicants. It may be just coincidence, but in many countries the percentage of very attractive young women filling clerical roles at the U.S. Embassy appears many times higher than the number of attractive young **women** in the general population. This raises the spectre of "honey traps," or sexual entrapment schemes aimed at U.S. employees Such schemes have involved female FSNs in the past. In one well known example, the KGB employed attractive *female* operatives against the Marine Security Guards in Moscow, an operation that led to an extremely grave compromise of the U.S. Embassy there. Because of these risk factors, FSNs are not allowed access to classified information and are kept out of sections of the embassy where classified information is discussed and stored. It is assumed that any classified information FSNs can access will be compromised. Of course, not all FSNs report to host country intelligence services, and many of them are loyal employees of the U.S. government. In many countries, however, the extensive power host country intelligence services can wield over the lives of its citizens means that even otherwise loyal FSNs can be compelled to report to the host country service against their wills. Whereas an American diplomat will go home after two or three years, FSNs must spend their lives in the host country and are not protected by diplomatic status or international conventions. This makes them very vulnerable to pressure. Additionally, the aforementioned

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Load-Date: December 8, 2012



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

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Obviously, this means local governments can approve only those applicants who agree to provide the government with information In other countries, embassy employment is not that obviously controlled, but there still is a strong possibility of the host country sending agents to apply for jobs along with the other applicants. It may be just coincidence, but in many countries the percentage of very attractive young women filling clerical roles at the U.S. Embassy appears many times higher than the number of attractive young **women** in the general population. This raises the spectre of "honey traps," or sexual entrapment schemes aimed at U.S. employees Such schemes have involved female FSNs in the past. In one well known example, the KGB employed attractive *female* operatives against the Marine Security Guards in Moscow, an operation that led to an extremely grave compromise of the U.S. Embassy there. Because of these risk factors, FSNs are not allowed access to classified information and are kept out of sections of the embassy where classified information is discussed and stored. It is assumed that any classified information FSNs can access will be compromised. Of course, not all FSNs report to host country intelligence services, and many of them are loyal employees of the U.S. government. In many countries, however, the extensive power host country intelligence services can wield over the lives of its citizens means that even otherwise loyal FSNs can be compelled to report to the host country service against their wills. Whereas an American diplomat will go home after two or three years, FSNs must spend their lives in the host country and are not protected by diplomatic status or international conventions. This makes them very vulnerable to pressure. Additionally, the aforementioned

criminal activity by FSNs is not just significant from a fiscal standpoint; Such activity also leaves those participating in it open to blackmail by the host government if the activity is discovered. When one considers the long history of official corruption in Mexico and the enormous amounts of cash available to the Mexican drug cartels, it is no surprise that members of the SIEDO, much less an FNSI at the U.S. Embassy, should be implicated in such a case. The allegedly corrupt FNSI most likely was recruited into the scheme by a close friend or former associate who may have been working for the government and who was helping the Beltrán Leyva organization develop its intelligence Limits It appears that the FSNI working for the Beltrán Leyva organization at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City worked for the U.S. Marshals Service, not the DEA. This means that he would not have had access to much DEA operational information. An FSNI working for the U.S. Marshals Service would be working on fugitive cases and would be tasked with liaison with various Mexican law enforcement jurisdictions. Information regarding fugitive operations would be somewhat useful to the cartels, since many cartel members have been indicted in U.S. courts and the U.S. government would like to extradite them. Even if the FSNI involved had been working for the DEA, however, there are limits to how much information he would have been able to provide. First of all, DEA special agents are well aware of the degree of corruption in Mexico, and they are therefore concerned that information passed on to the Mexican government can be passed to the cartels. The special agents also would assume that their FSN employees may be reporting to the Mexican government, and would therefore take care to not tell the FSN anything they wouldn't want the Mexican government - or the cartels - to know. The type of FSNI employee in question would be tasked with conducting administrative duties such as helping the DEA attaché with liaison and passing name checks and other queries to various jurisdictions in Mexico. The FSN would not be privy to classified DEA cable traffic, and would not sit in on sensitive operational meetings. In the intelligence world, however, there are unclassified things that can be valuable intelligence. These include the names and home addresses of all the DEA employees in the country, for example, or the types of cars the special agents drive and the confidential license plates they have for them. Other examples could be the FSNI being sent to the airport to pick up a group of TDY DEA agents and bringing them to the embassy. Were the agents out-of-shape headquarters-types wearing suits and doing an inspection, or fit field agents from a special operations group coming to town to help take down a high-value target? Even knowing that the DEA attaché has suddenly changed his schedule and is now working more overtime can indicate that something is up. Information that the attaché has asked the FSNI about the police chief in a specific jurisdiction, for example, could also be valuable to a drug trafficking organization expecting a shipment to arrive at that jurisdiction. In the end, it is unlikely that this current case resulted in grave damage to DEA operations in Mexico. Indeed, the FSNI probably did far less damage to counternarcotics operations than the 35 PGR employees who have been arrested since July. But the vulnerabilities of FSN employees are great, and there are likely other FSNs on the payroll of the various Mexican cartels. long as the U.S. government employs FSNs it will face the security liability that comes with them. In general, however, this liability is offset by the utility they provide and the systems put in place to limit the counterintelligence damage they can cause.

Load-Date: December 9, 2012



<u>Analysis: Counterintelligence implications of foreign service national</u> employees

defenceWeb

October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 2078 words

Byline: Stratfor's Fred Burton and Scott Stewart

Highlight: Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said Oct. 27 that five officials from the anti-organized crime unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Mexican Attorney General (PGR) have been arrested for allegedly providing intelligence to the Beltrán Leyva drug trafficking organization for money.

Body

Two of the recently arrested officials were senior SIEDO officers. One of those was Fernando Rivera Hernández, SIEDO's director of intelligence; the other was Miguel Colorado González, SIEDO's technical coordinator. This episode follows <u>earlier announcements</u> of the arrests in August of SIEDO officials on corruption charges. Medina Mora said that since July, more than 35 PGR agents have been arrested for accepting bribes from cartel members bribes that, according to Medina Mora, can range from \$150,000 to \$450,000 a month depending on the quality of information provided.

Mexican newspapers including La Jornada are reporting that information has been uncovered in the current investigation indicating the Beltrán Leyva organization had developed paid sources inside Interpol and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, and that the source in the embassy has provided intelligence on Drug Enforcement The source at the U.S. Embassy was reportedly a foreign service national Administration (DEA) investigations. investigator, or FSNI. The newspaper El Universal has reported that the U.S. Marshals Service employed the FSNI This situation provides us with a good opportunity to examine the role of foreign service national employees at U.S. missions abroad and why they are important to embassy functions, and to discuss the Foreign Service Nationals U.S. embassies and consulates can be counterintelligence liability they present. large and complicated entities. They can house dozens of U.S. government agencies and employ hundreds, or even thousands, of employees. Americans like their creature comforts, and keeping a large number of employees comfortable (and productive) requires a lot of administrative and logistical support, everything from motor pool vehicles to commissaries. Creature comforts aside, merely keeping all of the security equipment functioning in a big mission - things like gates, vehicle barriers, video cameras, metal detectors, magnetic locks and residential alarms - can be a daunting task. In most places, the cost of bringing Americans to the host country to do all of the little jobs required to run an embassy or consulate is prohibitive. Because of this, the U.S. government often hires a large group of local people (called foreign service nationals, or FSNs) to perform non-sensitive administrative FSN jobs can range from low-level menial positions, such as driving the embassy shuttle bus, functions. answering the switchboard or cooking in the embassy cafeteria, to more important jobs such as helping the

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They are the long-term keepers of the contacts with the host country government and will always be expected to introduce their new American bosses to the people they need to know in the government to get their jobs done. Because FSNIs are expected to have good contacts and to be able to reach their contacts at any time of the day or night in case of emergency, the people hired for these FSNI positions are normally former senior law enforcement officers from the host country. senior police officials are often close friends and former classmates of the current host country officials. This means that they can call the chief of police of the capital city at home on a Saturday or the assistant minister of government at 3 a.m. if the need arises. 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Load-Date: December 13, 2012



"Ich werde nicht schweigen"

Neue Zürcher Zeitung 15. Juli 2008 Dienstag

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Body

Die Fernsehjournalistin May Chidiac kämpft weiter für die Freiheit Libanons

Die libanesische Fernsehjournalistin May Chidiac war Opfer eines Bombenattentats. Doch sie kämpft weiter für die Freiheit in ihrem Heimatland. Rebecca Hillauer hat sie in Deutschland getroffen.

"Sie haben mir eine Hälfte meines Körpers genommen: Sie können auch die andere Hälfte nehmen - aber nicht mich mundtot machen." May Chidiac, die attraktive Fernsehmoderatorin, weiss sehr genau, was sie sagt. Es war der 25. September 2005: Eine Bombe zerreisst den Geländewagen der Fernsehmoderatorin. Die 40-jährige blonde Christin ist in Libanon bekannt für ihre antisyrische Haltung. Ihre Polit-Talkshow "Guten Morgen" war das Aushängeschild des privaten Beiruter Senders LBC. An diesem Sonntagmorgen hatte die Journalistin in ihrer Show die syrische Regierung der Ermordung des ehemaligen libanesischen Premiers Rafik al-Hariri beschuldigt.

Niemand mehr wird geschont

"Ich dachte, sie hätten keine Journalisten im Visier, nur Politiker und politische Aktivisten." Doch nach dem Attentat auf sie selbst begriff May Chidiac: "Sie können nicht einmal mehr das geschriebene und gesprochene Wort tolerieren." Der Angriff brach darüber hinaus ein ungeschriebenes Gesetz: Sogar während des Bürgerkriegs hatte es keine gezielten Attentate auf Frauen gegeben. "Früher mischten Frauen sich auch nicht in die Politik ein." May Chidiac vermutet, an ihr sei ein Exempel statuiert worden, um allen Frauen zu signalisieren: "Niemand mehr wird geschont."

May Chidiac hat überlebt. Mit schweren Verbrennungen und Beckenbrüchen, ihr linker Arm und das linke Bein mussten amputiert werden. Sie hat 26 Operationen hinter sich und kann nur noch mit einer Prothese gehen. Wenn die Rückenschmerzen zu stark werden, muss sie im Rollstuhl sitzen. Von diesen Schwierigkeiten ahnt man nichts, wenn man sie vor sich sieht: Ihre Frisur sitzt perfekt, sie trägt eine schwarze Hose, ein tiefdekolletiertes schwarzes Top, einen roten Blazer. Ihre Fingernägel sind sorgfältig im gleichen Farbton lackiert.

Das Attentat auf May Chidiac führte zu einer Protestwelle gegen die Gewalt und die Unterdrückung der Meinungsfreiheit in Libanon. Abertausende Menschen pilgerten täglich zum Krankenhaus, um ihr ihre Sympathie auszudrücken. "Das hat mir die Kraft gegeben weiterzumachen." Libanesische Politiker und Abgesandte ausländischer Regierungen bekundeten ihr am Krankenbett ihre Anteilnahme. Der damalige Uno-Generalsekretär Kofi Annan verurteilte den Anschlag, der syrischen Geheimdienstkreisen zugeschrieben wird, als "abscheuliche Tat". Die Starjournalistin gilt als Symbolfigur für den Widerstand gegen die syrischen Machtinteressen in Libanon vor allem für die Christen im Land. Chidiac selbst ist Maronitin und Anhängerin der antisyrischen Christlichen Miliz.

"Unmittelbar vor dem Attentat war ich beim Gottesdienst, dass ich gläubig bin, half mir zu überleben. Es war ein Wunder."

Unerschrocken

Mit Unterstützung von al-Walid bin Talal, einem saudischen Emir und Aktionär des Senders LBC, geht May Chidiac zur weiteren medizinischen Rehabilitation nach Frankreich. Staatspräsident Jacques Chirac erkundigt sich sieben Mal telefonisch nach ihrem Befinden. Die Monate in der Klinik sind qualvoll, immer neue Operationen und Transplantationen. "Warum ich?", fragt sie sich lange verzweifelt, denkt einmal sogar daran, sich umzubringen. Doch mit demselben unbeugsamen Willen, mit dem sie dies alles übersteht, kehrt sie zehn Monate nach dem Attentat nach Libanon und auf den Bildschirm zurück. Ihre neue Polit-Talkshow heisst "Unerschrocken". Attraktiv wie zuvor präsentiert die Moderatorin sich den Zuschauern. In Frankreich hatte sie einen Spezialisten gefunden, der ihr täuschend echte Prothesen gemacht hat.

Demonstrativ hebt May Chidiac mit der gesunden rechten Hand ihren linken Arm auf die Tischplatte. Er bleibt leblos liegen, während sie beim Weiterreden lebhaft mit der rechten Hand gestikuliert. "Sie haben mich früher einen Schmetterling genannt. Ich bin nicht gelaufen - ich bin geflogen. Ich hatte einen schönen Körper. Und plötzlich begriff ich: Ich werde nie mehr dieselbe sein." Zum Glück ist ihr Gesicht unversehrt geblieben. Nur deswegen war es für sie möglich, wieder vor die Kamera zu treten. Sie bestand auch auf einer Beinprothese, bei der sie hohe Absätze tragen kann. So hat May Chidiac sich ihr weibliches Aussehen bewahrt. "Das Wichtigste aber ist: Ich habe noch meinen Verstand."

Ihren Kampfgeist hat May Chidiac trotz dem Attentat nicht verloren. Ein Jahr später erhielt sie für ihren couragierten Journalismus 2006 den Preis für Pressefreiheit der International <u>Women</u>'s Media Foundation und den Unesco/Guillermo-Cano-Preis. "Ich werde nicht schweigen" heisst auch ihr neues Buch. Darin schildert die Journalistin in einer Art Tagebuch nicht nur ihre persönliche Geschichte: Sie gibt auch Einblick in das Interessengeflecht der libanesischen Hauptstadt, wo der schiitische <u>Hizbullah</u>, sunnitische und christliche Parteien sowie die Statthalter Syriens um die Macht ringen. Eine ebenso spannende wie anrührende und erhellende Lektüre, gewürzt mit Humor und orientalischem Pathos.

Eines wird klar: May Chidiac sorgt sich um Libanon, das lange als das liberalste Land des Nahen Ostens galt. Bis 1975 der Bürgerkrieg ausbrach, gab es dort so gut wie keine jungen Frauen mit Kopftuch. "In der Schule wusste ich nicht, ob meine Freundinnen Musliminnen, Drusinnen oder Christinnen waren." Heute gewinnen Extremisten mehr und mehr an Boden. May Chidiac sieht darin nicht ein Problem zwischen Christen und Muslimen, sondern einen Konflikt zwischen gemässigten und fundamentalistischen Muslimen.

Hoffen auf Gerechtigkeit

May Chidiac will weiter dafür kämpfen, dass die moderaten Kräfte in Libanon die Oberhand gewinnen. Ihrer Ansicht nach wird dies nur mit Hilfe der internationalen Staatengemeinschaft möglich sein. Sie soll Druck ausüben auf Syrien und Iran sowie auf deren Verbündete, den <u>Hizbullah</u>. Andernfalls, fürchtet die Journalistin, könnte Libanon sein liberales Gesicht verlieren.

May Chidiac hat keine Angst vor einem neuen Attentat. Ihr grosser Wunsch: Diejenigen, die sie ermorden wollten, sollen zur Rechenschaft gezogen werden - nicht nur die Handlanger, sondern auch die Auftraggeber. "Damit das Wort Straflosigkeit nicht länger Tradition hat." Dann, hofft sie, wird nicht nur Libanon Frieden finden, sondern auch sie selbst. Vielleicht wird sie dann tief drinnen das Gefühl haben, ihr Ziel erreicht zu haben. All dieses Leiden soll nicht umsonst gewesen sein. "Nicht nur mein eigenes Leid", betont sie, "sondern das aller Märtyrer - viele enge Freunde von mir." May Chidiacs Stimme zittert, in ihren Augen stehen Tränen. "Unser Leid soll wenigstens dazu beigetragen haben, dass ein Libanon entsteht, wie wir es uns wünschen." Ihre Stimme stockt für einen Augenblick ganz, dann schluckt sie ihre Tränen hinunter und blickt auf die Uhr.

Ein TV-Team wartet bereits, um May Chidiac in der Lobby des Hotels zu filmen. Für diese Aufnahmen verdrängt sie die Schmerzen, die sie am Morgen in den Rollstuhl gezwungen haben. Langsam steht May Chidiac auf, streckt ihren Rücken und geht aus dem Zimmer. Stolz, kämpferisch und schön.

Rebecca Hillauer

"Ich werde nicht schweigen"

May Chidiac / Amal Moghaizel: Ich werde nicht schweigen. Aus dem Französischen von Michael von Killisch-Horn. Blanvalet-Verlag, München 2008. 255 S., Fr. 30.90.

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End of Document



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October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Mexican newspapers including La Jornada are reporting that information has been uncovered in the current investigation indicating the Beltrán Leyva organization had developed paid sources inside Interpol and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, and that the source in the embassy has provided intelligence on Drug Enforcement The source at the U.S. Embassy was reportedly a foreign service national Administration (DEA) investigations. investigator, or FSNI. The newspaper El Universal has reported that the U.S. Marshals Service employed the FSNI This situation provides us with a good opportunity to examine the role of foreign service national employees at U.S. missions abroad and why they are important to embassy functions, and to discuss the Foreign Service Nationals U.S. embassies and consulates can be counterintelligence liability they present. large and complicated entities. They can house dozens of U.S. government agencies and employ hundreds, or even thousands, of employees. Americans like their creature comforts, and keeping a large number of employees comfortable (and productive) requires a lot of administrative and logistical support, everything from motor pool vehicles to commissaries. Creature comforts aside, merely keeping all of the security equipment functioning in a big mission - things like gates, vehicle barriers, video cameras, metal detectors, magnetic locks and residential alarms - can be a daunting task. In most places, the cost of bringing Americans to the host country to do all of the little jobs required to run an embassy or consulate is prohibitive. Because of this, the U.S. government often hires a large group of local people (called foreign service nationals, or FSNs) to perform non-sensitive administrative FSN jobs can range from low-level menial positions, such as driving the embassy shuttle bus, functions. answering the switchboard or cooking in the embassy cafeteria, to more important jobs such as helping the

embassy contract with local companies for goods and services, helping to screen potential visa applicants or translating diplomatic notes into the local language. Most U.S diplomatic posts employ dozens of FSNs, and large embassies can employ hundreds of them. The embassy will also hire FSNIs to assist various sections of the embassy such as the DEA Attaché, the regional security office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the anti-fraud unit of the consular section. FSNIs are the embassy's subject-matter experts on crime in the host country and are responsible for maintaining liaison between the embassy and the host country's security and law enforcement organizations. In a system where most diplomats and attachés are assigned to a post only for two or three years, the FSNs become the institutional memory of the embassy. They are the long-term keepers of the contacts with the host country government and will always be expected to introduce their new American bosses to the people they need to know in the government to get their jobs done. Because FSNIs are expected to have good contacts and to be able to reach their contacts at any time of the day or night in case of emergency, the people hired for these FSNI positions are normally former senior law enforcement officers from the host country. senior police officials are often close friends and former classmates of the current host country officials. This means that they can call the chief of police of the capital city at home on a Saturday or the assistant minister of government at 3 a.m. if the need arises. To help make sure this assistance flows, the FSNI will do little things like deliver bottles of Johnny Walker Black during the Christmas holidays or bigger things like help the chief of police obtain visas so his family can vacation at Disney World. Visas, in fact, are a very good tool for fostering liaison. Not only can they allow the vice minister to do his holiday shopping in Houston, they can also be used to do things like bring vehicles or consumer goods from the United States back to the host country for sale at a profit.
As FSNs tend to work for embassies for long periods of time, while the Americans rotate through, there is a tendency for FSNs to learn the system and to find ways to profit from it. It is not uncommon for FSNs to be fired or even prosecuted in local court systems for theft and embezzlement. FSNs have done things like take kick-backs on embassy contracts for arranging to direct the contract to a specific vendor; pay inflated prices for goods bought with petty cash and then split the difference with the vendor who provided the false receipt; and steal gasoline, furniture items, computers and nearly anything else that can be found in an embassy. While this kind of fraud is more commonplace in third-world nations where corruption is endemic, it is certainly not confined there; it can even occur in European capitals. Again, visas are a critical piece of the puzzle. Genuine U.S. visas are worth a great deal of money, and it is not uncommon to find FSNs involved in various visa fraud schemes. FSN employees have gone as far as accepting money to provide visas to members of terrorist groups like *Hezbollah*. In countries involved in human trafficking, visas have been traded for sexual favors in addition to money. In fairness, the amount that can be made from visa fraud means it is not surprising to find U.S. foreign service officers participating in visa fraud as well. Liabilities While it saves money, employing FSNs does present a very real counterintelligence risk. In essence, it is an invitation to a local intelligence service to send people inside U.S. buildings to collect information. In most countries, the U.S. Embassy cannot do a complete background investigation on an FSN candidate without the assistance of the host country government. This means the chances of catching a plant are slim unless the Americans have their own source in the local intelligence service that will out the operation. In many countries. foreigners cannot apply for a job with the U.S. Embassy without their government's permission. Obviously, this means local governments can approve only those applicants who agree to provide the government with information In other countries, embassy employment is not that obviously controlled, but there still is a strong possibility of the host country sending agents to apply for jobs along with the other applicants. It may be just coincidence, but in many countries the percentage of very attractive young women filling clerical roles at the U.S. Embassy appears many times higher than the number of attractive young **women** in the general population. This raises the spectre of "honey traps," or sexual entrapment schemes aimed at U.S. employees Such schemes have involved female FSNs in the past. In one well known example, the KGB employed attractive *female* operatives against the Marine Security Guards in Moscow, an operation that led to an extremely grave compromise of the U.S. Embassy there. Because of these risk factors, FSNs are not allowed access to classified information and are kept out of sections of the embassy where classified information is discussed and stored. It is assumed that any classified information FSNs can access will be compromised. Of course, not all FSNs report to host country intelligence services, and many of them are loyal employees of the U.S. government. In many countries, however, the extensive power host country intelligence services can wield over the lives of its citizens means that even otherwise loyal FSNs can be compelled to report to the host country service against their wills. Whereas an American diplomat will go home after two or three years, FSNs must spend their lives in the host country and are not protected by diplomatic status or international conventions. This makes them very vulnerable to pressure. Additionally, the aforementioned

criminal activity by FSNs is not just significant from a fiscal standpoint; Such activity also leaves those participating in it open to blackmail by the host government if the activity is discovered. When one considers the long history of official corruption in Mexico and the enormous amounts of cash available to the Mexican drug cartels, it is no surprise that members of the SIEDO, much less an FNSI at the U.S. Embassy, should be implicated in such a case. The allegedly corrupt FNSI most likely was recruited into the scheme by a close friend or former associate who may have been working for the government and who was helping the Beltrán Leyva organization develop its intelligence Limits It appears that the FSNI working for the Beltrán Leyva organization at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City worked for the U.S. Marshals Service, not the DEA. This means that he would not have had access to much DEA operational information. An FSNI working for the U.S. Marshals Service would be working on fugitive cases and would be tasked with liaison with various Mexican law enforcement jurisdictions. Information regarding fugitive operations would be somewhat useful to the cartels, since many cartel members have been indicted in U.S. courts and the U.S. government would like to extradite them. Even if the FSNI involved had been working for the DEA, however, there are limits to how much information he would have been able to provide. First of all, DEA special agents are well aware of the degree of corruption in Mexico, and they are therefore concerned that information passed on to the Mexican government can be passed to the cartels. The special agents also would assume that their FSN employees may be reporting to the Mexican government, and would therefore take care to not tell the FSN anything they wouldn't want the Mexican government - or the cartels - to know. The type of FSNI employee in question would be tasked with conducting administrative duties such as helping the DEA attaché with liaison and passing name checks and other queries to various jurisdictions in Mexico. The FSN would not be privy to classified DEA cable traffic, and would not sit in on sensitive operational meetings. In the intelligence world, however, there are unclassified things that can be valuable intelligence. These include the names and home addresses of all the DEA employees in the country, for example, or the types of cars the special agents drive and the confidential license plates they have for them. Other examples could be the FSNI being sent to the airport to pick up a group of TDY DEA agents and bringing them to the embassy. Were the agents out-of-shape headquarters-types wearing suits and doing an inspection, or fit field agents from a special operations group coming to town to help take down a high-value target? Even knowing that the DEA attaché has suddenly changed his schedule and is now working more overtime can indicate that something is up. Information that the attaché has asked the FSNI about the police chief in a specific jurisdiction, for example, could also be valuable to a drug trafficking organization expecting a shipment to arrive at that jurisdiction. In the end, it is unlikely that this current case resulted in grave damage to DEA operations in Mexico. Indeed, the FSNI probably did far less damage to counternarcotics operations than the 35 PGR employees who have been arrested since July. But the vulnerabilities of FSN employees are great, and there are likely other FSNs on the payroll of the various Mexican cartels. long as the U.S. government employs FSNs it will face the security liability that comes with them. In general, however, this liability is offset by the utility they provide and the systems put in place to limit the counterintelligence damage they can cause.

Load-Date: December 6, 2012



What if labor were allowed to go global?; Rich nations can fight poverty by welcoming more guest workers, critic asserts; From The New York Times <u>Magazine</u>

The International Herald Tribune

June 9, 2007 Saturday

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Byline: Jason DeParle - The New York Times Media Group

Body

The Arniko Highway climbs out of Katmandu in long, wending loops that pay tribute to the impassability of Himalayan terrain and the implausibility of its development. Outside Africa, no country is poorer than Nepal. Its per capita income looks like a misprint: \$270 a year. Sudan's is more than twice as high. Nearly two-thirds of Nepalis lack electricity. Half the preschoolers are malnourished. To the list of recent woes add regicide - 10 royals slaughtered in 2001 by a suicidal prince - and a Maoist insurgency.

The journey ends, 12 hours after it began, above a forlorn canyon. Halfway down the cactus-lined slope, a destitute farmer named Gure Sarki recently bought four goats.

The story of Gure Sarki's goats involves decades of thinking about foreign aid and the type of program often seen as modern practice at its best. Two years ago, an organizer appeared in the canyon to say that the government of Nepal, with money from the World Bank, was making local grants for projects of poor villagers' choosing. First villagers had to catalog their problems. With Sarki as chairman, the village of Chaurmuni made its list:

"Not able to eat for the whole year."

"Not able to send children to school."

"Lack of proper feed and fodder for the livestock."

"Landslide and flood."

"Not able to get the trust of the moneylender."

A week later, they agreed to start a microcredit fund and expand their livestock herds. Twenty villagers would buy a total of 55 goats at \$50 apiece. The plan specified who would serve on the goat-buying committee, the per diem the goat buyers would get and the interest rates on the loans (just over 1 percent). The papers went off to Katmandu, where officials approved a \$3,700 grant.

Within two months of the first meeting, Sarki had his goats. They doubled the value of his livestock holdings. He prizes them so much that he sleeps beside them inside his house to protect them from leopards. He plans to sell them next year for a profit of about \$25 each.

What if labor were allowed to go global? Rich nations can fight poverty by welcoming more guest workers, critic asserts From The New York Times Magazine

Lant Pritchett says he has a better idea. Pritchett, a development economist and practiced iconoclast, has just left the World Bank to teach at Harvard and to help Google plan its philanthropic efforts on global poverty.

In a recent trip through Chaurmuni, he praised the goats as community-driven development at its best: a fast, flexible way of delivering tangible aid to the poor.

"But Nepal isn't going to goat its way out of poverty," he said. Nor does he think that as a small, landlocked country Nepal can soon prosper through trade.

To those standard solutions, trade and aid, Pritchett would add a third: He wants a giant guest-worker program that would put millions of the world's poorest people to work in its richest economies. Never mind the goats; if you really want to help Gure Sarki, he says, let him cut your lawn.

Pritchett's migration manifesto, "Let Their People Come," was published last year to little acclaim - none at all, in fact. When they are being polite, Pritchett's friends say he is ahead of his time. Less politely, critics say that an army of guest workers would erode Western sovereignty, depress domestic wages, abet terrorism, drain developing countries of talent, separate poor parents from their children and destroy the West's cultural cohesion.

Life in Nepal is hard. The same could be said of Ireland in the 1850s, Italy in the 1880s and Oklahoma in the 1930s. In each case, large populations suffered economic shocks and responded in the same way: They left. Following the potato blight, the Irish population fell by 53 percent, at least as much because of migration as the deaths caused by famine. That benefited the migrants, of course. But Pritchett notes that it also left Ireland with fewer people to support; gross domestic product per capita never fell.

While some distressed regions can adapt and prosper, by far a preferential fix, Pritchett argues that hundreds of millions of people are stuck in places with little chance for development. For them, he said, only "out-migration can prevent an extended and permanent fall in wages."

Nepal is a small, landlocked country with little manufacturing, daunting terrain, low literacy and scant infrastructure. What it does have is cheap workers, many of whom already go abroad. While most go to low-wage countries like India, they still send home about \$1 billion a year. That accounts for 12 percent of Nepal's GDP. Despite the country's troubles, remittances have helped cut the poverty rate by 25 percent and would cut it further, Pritchett says, if more Nepalis could work in the West.

In the Ramechhap district, Pritchett was getting a report - goats bought, fodder trees planted - when an overseas worker wandered in. Indra Magar, home from Qatar, had the air of a visiting prince. He was 25, with crisp jeans and a shirt stamped "United Precast Concrete." The way his father beamed, it could have said "Princeton."

The father, Singha Madur, had spent his life as a human mule, hauling goods by foot over the mountains from a road nine days away. His son made \$400 a month, nearly 10 times the local wage, and was saving to start a shop in Katmandu. I asked the father the best part of his son's life. "He's full!" he said. "Full all the time."

Migration is Pritchett's religion. He was raised a Mormon in Utah and Idaho, venerating ancestors who crossed the Plains to chase their dreams of Zion. Mormon tradition required Pritchett to go on a mission after his first year at Brigham Young University. His two-year mission in Argentina awakened him to global poverty.

But if Joseph Smith, the founder of Pritchett's church, offered one lodestar, Adam Smith, the father of laissez-faire economics, offered another.

Pritchett entered graduate school in 1983, received his doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1988 and joined a group of researchers at the World Bank known as the "*Hezbollah* of Free Trade." There he found a mentor in Lawrence Summers, the bank's chief economist, famed as a critic of received wisdoms.

What if labor were allowed to go global? Rich nations can fight poverty by welcoming more guest workers, critic asserts From The New York Times Magazine

The basics of Pritchett's idea are simple: The rich world has lots of well-paying jobs and an aging population that cannot fill them. The poor world has desperate workers. But while goods and capital can easily cross borders, modern labor cannot. This strikes Pritchett as bad economics and worse social justice.

Pritchett sees five irresistible forces for migration, stymied by eight immovable ideas. The most potent migration force is the one epitomized by Nepal: vast inequality. In the late 19th century, rich countries had incomes about 10 times greater than the poorest ones. Today's ratio is about 50 to 1, Pritchett writes in "Let Their People Come." The poor simply have too much to gain from crossing borders not to try.

What arrests them are the convictions of rich societies: that migration erodes domestic wages, courts cultural conflicts and is unnecessary for - perhaps antithetical to - foreign development.

The key to breaking the political deadlock, Pritchett says, is to ensure that the migrants go home, which is why he emphasizes temporary workers. About 7 percent of the rich world's jobs are held by people from developing countries. For starters, he would like to see the poor get another 3 percent, or 16 million guest-worker jobs - of which 3 million would be in the United States. They would stay three to five years, with no path to citizenship, and work in fields with certified labor shortages.

He assumes that most receiving countries would not allow them to bring families. Taxpayers would be spared from educating the migrants' children. Domestic workers would gain some protection through the certification process. And a revolving labor pool would reach more of the world's poor.

In effect, Pritchett is proposing a Saudi Arabian plan in which an affluent society creates a labor subcaste that is permanently excluded from its ranks. His does so knowing full well that his agenda coincides with that of unscrupulous employers looking to exploit cheap workers. But to insist that migrants have a right to citizenship and family unification, he says, is to let men like Gure Sarki go hungry.

Letting guest workers into the developed world "doesn't create an underclass," he said. "It moves an underclass and makes the underclass better off."

Part of Pritchett's argument is mathematical. Drawing on World Bank models, he estimates his plan would produce annual gains of about \$300 billion - three times the benefit of removing the remaining barriers to trade. But the philosophical packaging gives his plan its edge. Pritchett assails a basic premise: that development means developing places. He is more concerned about helping Nepalis than he is about helping Nepal.

Indeed, Pritchett attacks the primacy of nationality itself, treating it as an atavistic prejudice. Modern moral theory rejects discrimination based on other conditions of birth. If we do not bar people from jobs because they were born *female*, why bar them because they were born in Nepal?

But even Pritchett's friends fear he has not come to grips with the numbers. The West is nowhere close to accepting 16 million guest workers, and the developing world has a labor force of nearly 3 billion; what if most of them moved?

"There's no way that migration is going to substitute for economic development at home," said Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and author of the best-selling book "The End of Poverty." Sachs grows angry at Pritchett's willingness to abide more family separation, which, Sachs contends, has spread adultery, divorce and AIDS across the developing world.

"It's tragic!" he said. "Let them come as a family! Having tens of millions of men separated from their families in temporary living conditions is hardly going to be conducive to the kind of world we're aiming to build."

Pritchett's old mentor, Summers, who has since served as U.S. Treasury secretary and until recently as president of Harvard, wonders if the West can create migrant subcastes without compromising its values and fears that voluntary compacts do not solve the moral problem.

What if labor were allowed to go global? Rich nations can fight poverty by welcoming more guest workers, critic asserts From The New York Times Magazine

And those are migration allies. People who think migration is too high say that Pritchett is prescribing cultural suicide.

"All guest-worker programs result in permanent settlement," said Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies, a Washington group that seeks less immigration. Krikorian fears that immigrants are already forming parallel societies whose numbers do not even bother to learn the local language; adding to those ranks, he said, would speed the cultural secession.

Pritchett responds defiantly. Moral coarsening? "We're already being morally coarsened by allowing people to live as fourth-class citizens in the rest of the world," he said. "We're just not forced to confront it." Scale? Yes, his plan would start small by global terms, but Pritchett argues that it contains the seeds of its own expansion. With lots of old people to support, rich countries will "get hooked on" the migrants' labor and especially on the taxes they pay into retiree health and pension funds.

With more access to global labor markets, Pritchett predicts some poor countries will develop quickly while others, like Zambia, will depopulate as the world grows comfortable with higher levels of permanent migration. Eventually over a century, say - the combination of population adjustments and policy innovation will raise the living standards of most poor countries to that of the West without pulling the West down, just as the rise of the Japanese has not meant the fall of Americans. The labor forces of the West are shrinking, which, he says, should keep wages high despite increased migration.

But the greatest risk posed by the Pritchett plan is cultural conflict, or even conflagration, which Pritchett greets with a shrug.

"I don't think about it a lot because I'm an economist," he said. "If you say your culture can't survive an influx of migrants, you have a pretty dim view of your culture."

Load-Date: June 17, 2007

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Top of the World

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Section: CANADA/WORLD; Pg. A04

Byline: The Hamilton Spectator

Graphic

Photo: Evan Vucci, the Associated Press, UNITED STATES Two women who lost their brothers in the 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Beirut stood together outside a Washington courthouse yesterday after a federal judge ruled that Iran must pay \$2.65 billion to the families of the 241 U.S. servicemen killed. Iran has been accused of supporting the Lebanese group *Hezbollah*, which carried out the bombing. The ruling allows nearly 1,000 family members and estates to try to collect Iranian assets from various sources around the world.; Photo: Shakil Adil, the Associated Press, PAKISTAN As supporters of Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, pictured, left Karachi Railway Station yesterday to welcome their leader in Islamabad, a court ordered the arrest of his brother. The brothers are returning to Pakistan to challenge President General Pervez Musharraf in coming elections. Sharif was toppled in Musharraf's 1999 coup, convicted on charges of hijacking and terrorism and sentenced to life imprisonment before being released into exile in Saudi Arabia. He has vowed to fly home from London on Monday to counter Musharraf's re-election bid and run for parliament, despite veiled threats from senior officials to jail him. "These are all cooked up, bogus cases to prevent Mr. Sharif and his brother from returning," said Nadir Chaudri, a spokesman for Sharif in London. An antiterrorism court in Lahore yesterday ordered the arrest of Sharif's younger brother Shahbaz in a murder case. He is charged with ordering police to kill five men in Lahore in 1998. At the time of the killings, Shahbaz was the chief minister, or top executive, of Punjab province.; Photo: Fred Chartrand, the Canadian Press, CANADA There's no need for a full-blown public inquiry into mismanagement of the RCMP pension fund, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day insists. Day, appearing before the House of Commons public accounts committee yesterday, fended off repeated opposition demands for a formal commission to look into the problems. He repeated what he said months ago -- that an inquiry would take too long and cost a lot of money. He said the auditor general, the Ottawa police and David Brown, a Toronto lawyer and former securities commissioner, have all investigated the matter. Brown's report found no evidence to support allegations of a coverup by top Mounties, and it rejected the idea of a formal public inquiry. The Ontario Provincial Police are now investigating to see if any criminal charges are warranted.; Photo: Toronto Star File Photo, ONTARIO Proceedings Appeal available live now http:,,ontariocourtswebcast.com,court,appeal,index.asp. Under the pilot project, certain proceedings in courtroom No. 1 will be streamed live, recorded and made available to the media. Ontario usually bars cameras in courtrooms.

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No Headline In Original

The Bismarck Tribune
November 23, 2008 Sunday

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Section: WIRE; Pg. 2A

Length: 938 words

Byline: IAN JAMES Associated Press Writer

Body

CALABOZO, Venezuela - The foremen bark out instructions in broken Spanish, saying "aqui" and "mas" as they direct crews to lay water pipes and smooth out cement. But on their lunch break, they switch into Farsi - the language of Iran.

Their Iranian company is building thousands of apartments for Venezuela's poor. Iran is also helping to build cars, tractors and bicycles in Venezuela and has opened new embassies in Bolivia and Nicaragua.

The deepening alliance between Iran and these left-led nations is based largely on antagonism to the United States, with both Iran's hard-line leaders and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez consistently needling the U.S. government. But Iran's drive into Latin America also has practical motivations as a way to lessen its international isolation.

The most visible impact so far has been the arrival of Iranian businesses. The public housing project alone has brought more than 400 Iranian engineers and specialists to Venezuela, where many have learned basic Spanish.

"For us, it's very different, but we adapt quickly," said Ehsan Keyvanfar, a 29-year-old engineer on his first assignment outside Iran for Kayson Co., a Tehran-based construction business. A supervisor with nearly fluent Spanish, Keyvanfar has adopted the nickname "Alejandro" to spare Venezuelans from trying to pronounce his name.

He and his wife, Sara, are accustomed to city life in Tehran and have struggled with the slow pace and isolation of Calabozo, a farming town of pickup trucks and rice silos in Venezuela's dusty southern plains. But Keyvanfar sees it as a hardship assignment that will advance his career and allow him to save money.

Keyvanfar says the reason for the relationship between Iran and Venezuela is simple: "I think the two presidents don't like the United States - that's the only thing."

Iran is courting Latin America's leftist bloc with active diplomacy, joint business projects and aid while gathering support for its much-criticized nuclear program. Nicaragua has received Iranian aid pledges for a dam and milk-processing plants, and is playing down U.S. concerns about Iran's nuclear-weapon ambitions. Iran has also promised Bolivia \$1 billion in aid and investment, including plans to build a cement plant, dairies and two public health clinics.

"We're here to offer our help to support the people," Hojjatollah Soltani, Iran's top attache in Bolivia, said in an interview at the newly opened embassy in La Paz.

No Headline In Original

Some of Iran's ambitions may be dampened by falling oil prices, but its checkbook diplomacy is likely to continue.

"Iran will take every opportunity to show that it is not isolated and in the process question Washington's influence, even in its own backyard," said Farideh Farhi, a researcher at the University of Hawaii who writes frequently about Iran's foreign policy.

Venezuela could also give Iran breathing space as it tries to weather the financial pressure of U.N. and U.S. sanctions over its nuclear program. Venezuela could end up being an outlet for Iran to move money, obtain high-tech equipment and access the world financial system.

This concern has already led Washington to impose new sanctions on an Iran-owned bank in Caracas last month, accusing it of providing financial services in support for Iran's weapons program. The bank, Banco Internacional de Desarrollo, recently opened an unobtrusive office on the eighth floor of a Caracas high-rise that looks out over the palm trees of an exclusive golf course. Its president didn't respond to repeated interview requests by The Associated Press.

Venezuela has already become Iran's gateway for travel to the region, with a flight between Tehran and Caracas every other Tuesday. Chavez says Venezuela's state airline bought an Airbus jet especially for the route, which includes a stop in Damascus, Syria. Venezuela has a large Arab community of Syrian and Lebanese immigrants, many of whom arrived decades ago.

At the airport, <u>women</u> in head scarves pushed luggage carts and strollers out of customs on a recent evening as they returned from trips to visit family in Syria and Iran. Several engineers from Kayson Co. greeted their wives with hugs.

U.S. officials say they are worried about the possibility of terrorists and Iranian intelligence agents arriving on the flights. The U.S. State Department charged in an April terrorism report that "passengers on these flights were not subject to immigration and customs controls."

Top American diplomat Thomas Shannon, assistant secretary of state for the Western Hemisphere, has said the U.S. is concerned about "what Iran is doing elsewhere in this hemisphere and what it could do if we were to find ourselves in some kind of confrontation."

One of the biggest worries for U.S. and Israeli officials is Iran's long history of funding and aiding Islamic militant groups like Lebanon's <u>Hezbollah</u>. They point to accusations by Argentine authorities that Iran backed <u>Hezbollah</u> in carrying out the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires which killed 29 people, and also the 1994 attack which leveled the Jewish community center there and killed 85. Iran and <u>Hezbollah</u> have denied involvement.

Chavez, who plans another visit to Tehran by year's end, ridicules the idea of Venezuela and Iran teaming up as an "axis of evil."

His own government plans to start its own nuclear energy program and insists it won't be used for weapons. Chavez once joked, riding a bike produced by an Iranian-Venezuelan joint venture, that the two countries are building the "atomic bicycle."

Iran also says its aims in Latin America are purely peaceful.

Iran raises profile in Latin America

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Australian Financial Review November 21, 2008 Friday First Edition

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Section: REVIEW; Pg. 5

Length: 7837 words

Byline: Akbar Ganji Akbar Ganji is an Iranian journalist and dissident who was imprisoned in Tehran from 2000 to 2006 and whose writings are currently banned in Iran. His latest book is The Road to Democracy in Iran, MIT Press,

2008. FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Body

Akbar Ganji describes power and politics in Iran

As the Iranian parliamentary elections of March 2008 approached, many Iranians wondered nostalgically: If a reformist had won the 2005 presidential election instead of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, would Iran be in its current dismal state? For Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, a former government spokesperson, Iran's situation is "worse today that it has ever been over the past 50 years." And for many Iranian opposition leaders, as well as much of the Western media and political class, Ahmadinejad is the main culprit of Iran's ills today: censorship, corruption, a failing economy, the prospect of a United States attack.

But this analysis is incorrect, if only because it exaggerates Ahmadinejad's importance and leaves out of the picture the country's single most powerful figure: Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader. The Iranian constitution endows the supreme leader with tremendous authority over all major state institutions, and Khamenei, who has held the post since 1989, has found many other ways to further increase his influence. Formally or not, the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government all operate under the absolute sovereignty of the supreme leader; Khamenei is the head of state, the commander in chief and the top ideologue. He also reaches into economic, religious and cultural affairs through various government councils and organs of repression, such as the Revolutionary Guards, whose commander he himself appoints.

Of all of Iran's leaders since the country became the Islamic Republic in 1979, only Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the revolution's leader; Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran's president for much of the 1990s; and Khamenei have had defining influences. Despite all the attention he receives, Ahmadinejad does not even rank among Iran's top 100 leaders over the past 30 years. Khamenei supports Ahmadinejad immeasurably more than he did any of Ahmadinejad's predecessors, but Ahmadinejad is only as powerful as he is devoted to Khamenei and successful at advancing his aims. Khamenei's power is so great, in fact, that in 2004 the reformist Muhammad Khatami declared that the post of president, which he held at the time, had been reduced to a factotum. Blaming the country's main problems on Ahmadinejad not only overstates his influence; it inaccurately suggests that Iran's problems will go away when he does. More likely, especially regarding matters such as Iran's foreign policy, the situation will remain much the same as long as the structure of power that supports the supreme leader remains unchanged.

To be sure, there are differences between the presidencies of Khamenei himself (1981-89), Rafsanjani (1989-97), Khatami (1997-2005) and Ahmadinejad (2005-). The tenure of Khatami was superior in many ways; he at least tried to usher in significant political liberalisation. And yet, as ill advised as Ahmadinejad's leadership has been in some respects, it has not been as great a departure from the past as it might seem. And although on some issues Iran has fared worse under Ahmadinejad, in other respects things have accidentally gotten somewhat better.

Judging by the freedom of Iran's elections, there has been little progress. Whether they are for the post of president, the unicameral parliament (known as the Majlis), or local councils, elections in Iran are rigged pseudoelections. Candidates must pledge in writing that they are committed, in theory and in practice, to the Iranian constitution, Islam, the absolute sovereignty of the supreme leader, and the late Khomeini. Many left-wing members of parliament were banned from running for re-election in the 1992 contest, when Rafsanjani was president. In the Majlis elections of February 2004, under President Khatami, about 190 of parliament's 290 seats were earmarked in advance for specific conservative candidates and about 43 per cent of the registered candidates (3500 of 8172) were disqualified - this was "a parliamentary coup", according to Mostafa Tajzadeh, a reformist and the deputy interior minister at the time. The presidential election that Ahmadinejad won, in 2005, was so rigged that several top officials resigned in protest. Matters have not improved much since. In the Majlis elections earlier this year, 158 seats were earmarked (leaving only 132 spots open for contest) and about 26 per cent of the registered candidates (2000 of 7597) were disqualified. The reformist group Mujahideen of the Islamic Revolution Organisation decried these "made-to-order" elections as an attempt by the leadership to fashion an obedient Majlis.

In other areas, the situation has improved modestly. The first decade after the revolution was the Islamic Republic's worst in terms of violent repression. Political prisoners were systematically tortured; in the summer of 1988, several thousand were executed on Khomeini's orders - and on Khamenei's watch as president. Under Rafsanjani, the Intelligence and Security Ministry routinely assassinated opposition figures in Iran and abroad, and the torture of political prisoners continued unabated. Soon after Khatami was elected, the Intelligence and Security Ministry killed a number of dissidents, and although the human rights situation improved because of greater press freedom and increased discussion of human rights abuses, those of us who wrote about these continuing injustices were thrown in jail. Detention conditions remain deplorable today - over the past year alone, a young *female* doctor and a Kurdish student have died in custody - but they have generally improved compared to the 1980s. This progress has had little to do with Ahmadinejad, however. If instances of political repression have decreased over the past three decades, it is largely because notions of democracy and human rights have taken root among the Iranian people and thus it has become much more difficult for the government to commit crimes.

Similarly, criticism of the supreme leader is more frequent. Journalists such as Ahmad Zeydabadi and Issa Saharkhiz, the Association for Press Freedom in Iran, the theologian Ahmad Qabel (who argues that religion recommends but does not mandate that <u>women</u> cover their heads), and various reformist political groups have written open letters and essays condemning Khamenei. Enforcement of the state's long-standing project for "promoting societal security" - a euphemism for social repression, especially through the enforcement of an official dress code - has not been as strict under Ahmadinejad as it was previously. In fact, younger Iranians have adopted lifestyles that are totally unacceptable to the regime.

Ahmadinejad's populist rhetoric has also had the unexpected effect of allowing greater scrutiny of his policies. By using plain language to criticise his political opponents, Ahmadinejad has prompted them to speak in plainer and more forceful terms, too. Early this year, when Ahmadinejad dismissed reformist politicians as being "ill qualified" to run in the upcoming parliamentary elections, Mohsen Armin, a prominent reformist, shot back: "If ill-qualified people are being advised to desist from registering as candidates so that they don't inflict a cost on the country, Ahmadinejad is undoubtedly the first person who should be banned from standing in elections." Pointing to "inflation growing by the day and the people suffering hardship in various ways," Tajzadeh, the former deputy interior minister, has charged Ahmadinejad with being "incompetent on executive and economic affairs." Sayyid Mohammad Sadr, deputy foreign minister in Khatami's government, has written that the defining features of Ahmadinejad's foreign policy are "his inexpert and delusory outlook," "a sense of self-adoration," and "profound ignorance." Sadr continues: "He doesn't know that he doesn't know, so he doesn't ask anyone . . . Ahmadinejad needs to travel a bit." Such attacks had no parallel during Khatami's presidency. Khatami and his fellow reformists

were often accused of being irreligious and anti-Islamic. Ahmadinejad is charged with subscribing to "superstitious religiosity", magic and the occult. Some people have even called him crazy.

Of course, press censorship continues. At the end of 2007, the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), which formulates Iran's security policies, instructed the press on what it could publish about US -Iranian relations, Iraq, and the parliamentary and presidential elections and banned the dissemination of dissenting views on Iran's nuclear program, minority unrest near Iran's borders with Afghanistan or Iraq, and the rationing of petrol. But such censorship also took place during the terms of Rafsanjani and Khatami. For example, Khatami once prohibited the deputies of the sixth Majlis (2000-2004) from reading a letter criticising Khamenei's position on the nuclear question at an open session of parliament and the newspapers from publishing it.

Ahmadinejad deserves little credit for whatever progress Iran may have witnessed under his presidency, but nor does he deserve to be singled out as considerably worse than his predecessors or his peers. And yet antagonism towards him has so blinded observers that when other conservatives step down or are set aside, they instantly are viewed as better fellows than he. Ali Larijani was missed as soon as he resigned as chief negotiator on nuclear issues, in late 2007, even though during the decade that he headed the state broadcasting organisation, he repeatedly broadcast television programs that sought to tarnish the reputation of dissidents and reformists through half-truths, fabrications and outright lies. Similarly, when Yahya Rahim Safavi was replaced as the commander of the Revolutionary Guards, reformists started muttering that his successor was a very dangerous man. Apparently, they had forgotten that Safavi once said that his job consisted of pouring water into their "snake holes".

If any single person is to blame for Iran's state today it is Khamenei, who over the course of two decades as supreme leader has secured a complete stranglehold on power in Iran. "Where domination is primarily traditional, even though it is exercised by virtue of the ruler's personal autonomy, it will be called patrimonial authority," Max Weber wrote in Economy and Society in 1922; "where it indeed operates primarily on the basis of discretion, it will be called sultanism." Sultanism is both traditional and arbitrary, according to Weber, and it expresses itself largely through recourse to military force and through an administrative system that is an extension of the ruler's household and court. Sultans sometimes hold elections in order to prove their legitimacy, but they never lose any power in them. According to Weber, sultans promote or demote officials at will, they rob state bodies of their independence of action and infiltrate them with their proxies, and they marshal state economic resources to fund an extensive apparatus of repression. Weber might have been describing Khamenei.

Iran today is indeed a neosultanate, not a totalitarian state, nor even a fascist one. Such regimes create single-voiced societies, and "The military's involvement in the economy has also increased significantly."

many different voices can be heard in Iran today. Contemporary Iran is still officially an Islamic theocracy, but no single ideology dominates the country. In the totalitarian Soviet state, there was nothing but Marxism and the official Bolshevik version of it at that. In Iran, liberalism, socialism and feminism have all been tagged as alternatives to the ruling ideology, and many Iranians openly identify with these currents. Iran has no single all-embracing party in charge of organising society. It has dozens of parties - such as the pro-reform Mosharekat (Participation) Party and the pragmatic conservative Kargozaran-e Sazandegi (Executives of Construction) Party - and although they are not as free or autonomous as parties in democratic countries, they represent views that deviate from the government's. To some extent, too, Khamenei has to address their concerns. Facing an uproar over the continued killings of political dissidents in 1998, for instance, Khamenei was forced to address the public - and from a Friday prayer pulpit in Tehran - to blame the murders on rogue elements within the Intelligence and Security Ministry.

Nor does Islam run Iran. The ruling religious fundamentalists lack a unified vision, and fundamentalist, traditionalist, and modernist versions of Islam compete for attention among Iranians. Since the 1979 revolution, religion has served the Iranian state, not the other way around. Khomeini held a resolutely sultanistic view of Islam. "The state . . . takes precedence over all the precepts of sharia," he wrote in 1988. "The ruler can destroy a mosque or a house if it impedes the construction of a road . . . The state can temporarily prevent the hajj [the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina] when it considers it to be contrary to the interests of the Islamic state." Although there are, of course, both fascists and fascistic readings of Islam in Iran, these do not make Iran a fascist state. Whatever the intentions and

aims of the country's ruling fundamentalists, it is the social facts on the ground that determine what kind of regime Iran really has.

One of these facts is that Article 57 of the Iranian constitution grants the supreme leader absolute power. It states that the "powers of government in the Islamic Republic are vested in the legislature, the judiciary and the executive powers, functioning under the supervision of the absolute religious leader". Moreover, the Council of Guardians, the constitution's official interpreter, has ruled that this clause defines only the supreme leader's minimum prerogatives. Khamenei has used his broad mandate to exercise control not only over all three branches of government but also over economic, religious, and cultural affairs, sometimes directly and sometimes through various councils or through the Revolutionary Guards. Such absolute sovereignty allows the supreme leader to arbitrarily intervene in the lives of his citizens. The fact that such broad power is granted by the constitution does not make its application any less discretionary.

A major lever of power is the supreme leader's ability to appoint and dismiss senior government officials. President Rafsanjani allowed Khamenei to choose his culture minister, interior minister, intelligence minister, higher-education minister and foreign minister. (Khamenei has always been particularly interested in those ministries as well as in foreign affairs.) From the time of his appointment in 1989, Khamenei has limited his appointees' terms and regularly dislodged the occupants of sensitive military and police posts. It matters little that Khamenei is not likely to sack Ahmadinejad; the point is that he can.

Khamenei also exercises significant control over the Majlis. Officially, the Interior Ministry oversees elections, but in reality that is the work of the Council of Guardians, half of whose members are appointed by the supreme leader. In addition to ensuring that pending legislation conforms to the constitution, the 12 clerics and jurists who sit on the council vet all candidates for the presidency, the Majlis, and the Assembly of Experts (a clerical body that, in turn, elects and supervises the supreme leader). In 1992, after Khamenei said that the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line, a left-wing Islamic faction that was behind the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran in 1979, were "seditionists", the Council of Guardians prevented 41 third-term Majlis deputies from that faction from running for reelection. In all, according to Behzad Nabavi, a founder of the reformist Mujahideen of the Islamic Revolution Organization, more than 3500 people were eventually disqualified from running in the 1992 parliamentary elections, including more than 80 Majlis incumbents. Khamenei frequently criticised the pro-reform sixth Majlis for being "pro-American" and "radical" and for having a "general voice" that was "contrary to many of the regime's interests", and he openly praised the conservative seventh Majlis (2004-8). Months ahead of the March 2008 parliamentary elections, he ordered the disqualification of deputies who had taken part in a sit-in before the 2004 elections. The Council of Guardians also has the authority to veto any law approved by the parliamentarians (the president has no such power). For example, it did not even allow the distrusted sixth Mailis to reduce the state broadcasting organisation's budget. Abolghassem Khazali, a former member of the Council of Guardians, has declared that if just four members of the council oppose what 60 million Iranians approve, "that is the end of the matter".

More broadly, Khamenei exercises control over all of Iran's elected institutions by virtue of a constitutional provision (Article 110) that empowers him to set the state's general policies. Khamenei draws up countless military, economic, judicial, social, cultural and educational policies and conveys them to state bodies for implementation via the Expediency Council. (This council, whose members are appointed by the supreme leader, is tasked with resolving policy disputes between the Majlis and the Council of Guardians.) In other words, even if the reformists could gain control of the elected bodies, any independent policies they tried to implement would be countered in the name of upholding the state's general policies. For example, when Khamenei found fault with the Majlis' budget bill for 2008-9, both he and Rafsanjani, now chair of the Expediency Council, asked the Council of Guardians to alert the Majlis of these flaws. Soon afterward, the Majlis amended the bill, appending proposals from the Expediency Council to it. And this was a conservative-held Majlis; a reformist-controlled parliament would obviously have fared much worse.

The judiciary, too, falls under Khamenei's sphere of influence, and he has long used it as a tool of repression. The Islamic Revolutionary Court, which has wide discretion to try sedition cases, is subject to the supreme leader's whims. Saeed Mortazavi, the judge who presided over the crackdown on the reform movement during the Khatami presidency and now the senior prosecutor in Tehran, has been issuing detention orders for civil-society activists

and sending hundreds of them to jail. The intelligence minister, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejeie, has for years been ordering the detention and jailing of opposition figures via the Special Court for the Clergy and the Disciplinary Court for Government Employees, both of which are controlled by the office of the supreme leader. Mehdi Karroubi, the Speaker of the Majlis in 1989-92 and 2000-2004, has said that he won the release of the Majlis deputy Hossein Loqmanian (who had been jailed on charges of insulting the judiciary) by "ask[ing] for an audience with the eminent leader". The banning of newspapers and the jailing of journalists are often the handiwork of the judiciary. In 1998, Khamenei went so far as to instruct then president Khatami to confine the investigations into the so-called chain murders of 1998 to the time of Khatami's presidency (during which only four of the several dozens of killings took place) and not to probe any higher than the level of Saeed Emami, the deputy intelligence minister and the prime suspect in the case.

As the state's head ideologue, Khamenei also has power over religious matters. He has sidelined Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Mahdavi-Kani and Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, two conservative clerics who had enjoyed great influence under Khomeini but occasionally displayed some independence of thought. He controls the mosques and appoints all Friday-prayer leaders. Each week, the prayer headquarters in Tehran (which are controlled by Khamenei) dictate what issues sermons throughout Iran should discuss. Seminaries have historically been independent of the government, but Khamenei has extended his influence over them by increasing their funding from the state. In a break with tradition, he determines who can be a high-ranking jurist with the authority to interpret Islam's foundational texts.

Likewise, Khamenei has a hand in cultural and academic matters. Although the president is, ex officio, the chair of the SNSC, the supreme leader controls the council's composition and endorses its decisions and practices, one of which is to censor the media in the name of national security. Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli, one of the council's former first deputy secretaries, said in an interview with the conservative Tehran-based Mehr News Agency last February that disagreement among council members was "ruled out, because, on overarching and fundamental issues, the SNSC proceeds on the basis of the leader's commands and decisions . . . The leader makes the decisions, and the government implements them." In the late 1990s, Khamenei made sure that Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, a one-time heir to Khomeini who had criticised human rights abuses in Iran, was kept under house arrest for several years on the basis of a decision by the SNSC.

Khamenei's interferences in cultural and academic affairs apply to matters big and small. In 1998, he forbade Abdollah Nouri, the interior minister under Khatami, from speaking at a countryside Sunni mosque during a time of turmoil among Iran's minority Sunni population. When Nouri disobeyed, Khamenei arranged for him to be removed from the cabinet and tried before the Special Court of the Clergy. (Nouri was sentenced to five years in prison.) Furthermore, Khamenei personally vetted the list of writers who would be honoured at a 1998 conference commemorating "20 years of literary fiction". At the request of conservative clerics, he ordered the deletion of part of the entry about Haj Sayyid Mohammad Rashti, a prominent 19th century cleric, in the Dehkhoda encyclopedia. (The offending passage suggested that Rashti may have carried out 120 executions in the name of religious punishment, beheading defendants after having made them confess and telling them "he would personally intercede on their behalf on Judgment Day".) Similarly, Khamenei routinely influences the media through the policies of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, all of whose current members he personally appointed. He also makes his political preferences widely known, expecting everyone to work towards satisfying them. In 1998, Khamenei lavished the conservative Association of Muslim Journalists with praise: "I thank you all. You are the ones who defend Islam's borders on the frontline of the battle against the West's cultural invasion. You all have machine guns in your hands. But I'd like to extend a special thanks to Kayhan newspaper. Kayhan not only has a machine gun in its hand, it is also a very capable sniper."

At his first meeting with cabinet ministers as supreme leader, in 1989, Khamenei expounded a "theory of terror" that has since defined his approach to internal security issues. Based on his interpretation of the Koran and the early history of Islam, he said at this meeting, "The majority of the people in the state are silent. A selfless group of individuals can make the state endure by using terror." This theory has served as the justification for assassinating dissidents in Iran and abroad and otherwise silencing anyone who has posed an ideological challenge to the regime.

In keeping with Weber's understanding that under a sultan "traditional domination develops an administration and a military force which are purely personal instruments of the master," Khamenei has relied on the intelligence services and the armed and security forces to implement his policies - to an unprecedented extent. After the overthrow of the shah in 1979, Iranian revolutionaries and left-wing groups called for the armed forces to be disbanded. Khomeini did not oblige, and instead he reconstituted the army, executing or dismissing many of the top commanders who had not already fled abroad. He also established a parallel military force, the Revolutionary Guards, to protect the revolution and ordered the creation of the Basij, an all-volunteer paramilitary organisation to help with law enforcement, the policing of moral issues, and the provision of social services. The Revolutionary Guards developed air, naval and ground capabilities in parallel to those of the conventional army, and they assumed command over the Basij. Still, Khomeini frequently and openly opposed its involvement in political affairs. As a charismatic figure and an established senior cleric with a solid base among the religious establishment and the pious masses, he hardly needed the military's backing.

Khamenei, on the other hand, lacks such credentials - so much so that the conservative Association of Seminary Teachers, in Qom, refused to endorse him as a senior cleric until 1992, when the Revolutionary Guards surrounded its headquarters. Thus, he desperately needs the military's support. He has also long been interested in military and security work. He was Khomeini's representative in the Defence Ministry during the interim government in 1979, then worked on the military's joint staff, and later served as deputy defence minister. When the Intelligence and Security Ministry was created in 984, while he was president, Khamenei argued that it should fall under his jurisdiction.

Over the years, Khamenei has gradually empowered the Revolutionary Guards, giving them increasing say in both the country's politics and its economy. After Mohammad Bager Zolgadr, a senior commander of the Revolutionary Guards, failed to bring victory to Khatami's main rival during the May 1997 presidential election and during the reformist era that followed, commanders of the Revolutionary Guards and the Basij increasingly mobilised against the reform movement. Karroubi, then the Speaker of the Mailis, recently described a tense exchange he had with a top Revolutionary Guards commander during Khatami's second term in office (2001-5), as the Majlis was contemplating a reform bill proposing to limit the Council of Guardians' powers to vet electoral candidates. Karroubi recounted challenging the commander, who was concerned about the bill's passing, by asking whether he would continue to endorse screening by the Council of Guardians if, say, the two reformist senior clerics Ayatollah Yusuf Saneii and Ayatollah Abdolkarim Mousavi Ardebili were on the council. "If these two are appointed," the commander responded, according to Karroubi, "we will have to move to Bangladesh." Moreover, according to an official source cited by the Emrooz web site, a reformist site connected to the Mosharekat Party, last February, then Police Chief Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf (now the mayor of Tehran) contributed to the disqualification of candidates for the Majlis elections of 2004 by making unauthorised statements about the candidates' commitments to Islam to the vetting authorities. More military officers found their way into the Majlis at those elections than ever before, and men with backgrounds in the military or security forces also became councillors in the local elections that followed.

The Revolutionary Guards have been empowered even more during Ahmadinejad's presidency. Iran's military budget has doubled since Khatami's era, to almost 5 per cent of the country's GDP. Most of Ahmadinejad's appointees once held posts in the regular military, the intelligence services, or the public prosecutor's office. Khamenei has named members of the Revolutionary Guards to head the state broadcasting organisation. Although the election law states explicitly that no military officer can be involved in any stage of the electoral process, Brigadier General Alireza Afshar was nonetheless assigned to head the Interior Ministry's election headquarters for the 2008 Majlis contest, and many military officers served on the elections' executive or supervisory board. Major General Hassan Firouzabadi, the chief of staff for the armed forces, warned before the parliamentary elections in March that reformists "must not be allowed to find their way into the Majlis again and to repeat their past performance," adding, "These factions and individuals, who are supported by [US President George Bush, do nothing but fulfil US interests, and Bush sees them as guarantors of US interests. Has the Iranian nation not already tasted this bitter shame once?"

The military's involvement in the economy has also increased significantly and is now officially sanctioned. Many long-standing disputes over the Revolutionary Guards' allegedly illegal economic activities have been whitewashed. Members of the force have been granted oil contracts or have made major profits under questionable real estate

deals. Since the 1990s, the Revolutionary Guards, the regular armed forces, and law enforcement officers have financed large-scale construction projects in the residential suburbs in northern Tehran. Before Ahmadinejad was elected president, the local authorities had refrained from issuing permits recognising the buildings' completions, which made it impossible for the owners to secure legal deeds. But after Ahmadinejad came to power, and conservatives replaced reformists on Tehran's city council, the municipalities awarded permits for all the relevant buildings, and those involved have made huge profits.

The implications for the economy are not good. Companies controlled by the security forces are increasingly gaining access to low-cost loans and credit, but they tend to be bad borrowers, which has contributed to the banking system's problem with outstanding loans. In early 2008, the Majlis approved a bill for the establishment of the Basij Construction Organisation, a move that would hand over economic projects from the private sector to the Basij, further enlarging an already bloated state bureaucracy and hurting the economy.

With such thorough interdependence between the state administration and the security forces, one may wonder who controls whom. In fact, the extensive infiltration of the Revolutionary Guards by Khamenei's network has seriously undermined the Revolutionary Guards' independence. The late Khomeini used to confine himself to appointing the Revolutionary Guards' top commander; Khamenei appoints even brigade commanders himself. All of this suggests that Iran is not a military dictatorship or a garrison state but a latter-day sultanate.

Given Khamenei's hold on power, it is safe to expect more continuity than difference even if Ahmadinejad loses next year's presidential election. This is especially true in the realm of foreign affairs: Ahmadinejad's blustery rhetoric aside, the defining features of Iranian foreign policy have been more or less constant over the past three decades.

Critics of Ahmadinejad say that he has made the country vulnerable to military attack (by the US or Israel) by adopting foolhardy policies and making unwise remarks. The standoff between the Western world and the Iranian government is indisputable, and the possibility of a military attack is very real. But what is Ahmadinejad's part in all this? Much as the late Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi did, Khamenei keeps foreign policy under his control. According to the Iranian newspaper Etemaad Melli, Sadeq Kharrazi, a former deputy foreign minister under Khatami, in 2007 told a Newsweek reporter who had asked him who really ran Iran, "The Americans should not try to get around the [supreme] leader by speaking to other officials. Talking to the Iranian state means talking to the leader. He knows about every word that is exchanged in negotiations. Iran's domestic policy may be dispersed, but its foreign policy is extremely centralised."

One long-standing feature of Iranian foreign policy has been tense relations with the US. This relates to US support for the shah and Washington's role in the 1953 coup against prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq. Relations hit a low point with Khomeini's endorsement of the 1979 occupation of the US embassy in Tehran by the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's line. According to Iranian officials today, Washington struck back by instigating Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in September 1980, which, after an eight-year war, left Iran with nearly half a million dead and \$US1 trillion worth of damages. It took the USS Vincennes' attack on Iran Air flight 655 in 1988 for Khomeini to "drink the cup of poison", as he famously put it, and accept the UN resolution establishing a cease-fire with Iraq.

After the war and Khomeini's demise, Tehran, under the new leadership of Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Rafsanjani, decided that ties with the West should improve. Despite some small progress at first, relations quickly soured again in the 1990s, with the systematic assassination of Iranian dissidents in Europe and the discovery of missiles on an Iranian ship near Belgium. In early 1997, Iran found itself once more at risk of a US military attack. On June 25, 1996, a bomb explosion killed 19 US soldiers and injured about 400 at a US air base in Khobar, Saudi Arabia. The FBI believed Tehran was behind the operation, and according to William Perry, the US secretary of defence at the time, the Pentagon reportedly drew up a plan for attacking Iran. The risk of war was arguably greater then than it has ever been under Ahmadinejad.

But the evidence did not convince US President Bill Clinton, and rather than order an attack, his administration pursued a policy of dual containment. According to Hassan Rowhani, formerly secretary of the SNSC, this approach had six features: imposing economic sanctions on Tehran, blocking its access to foreign loans, stopping the transfer

of sensitive and advanced technology that could be used by the military, keeping the Iranian government from gaining access to modern weapons to strengthen its defence foundations, preventing it from using nuclear energy (even for peaceful purposes), and using propaganda and psychological warfare to discredit it. After the reformists' victory in May 1997, it did seem as though a new era in bilateral relations might begin. "When Khatami attended the UN General Assembly in 2001, which had been designated as the year of the dialogue of civlisations," Nabavi, a reformist parliamentarian at the time, explained in an interview earlier this year, "conditions were more favourable for talks between the two countries" than they are today. But after the UN meeting, Clinton reportedly waited outside the men's room to shake Khatami's hand but gave up when Khatami lingered inside. Fearing that the reformists would get credit for re-establishing ties with the US (a move that would have been widely popular inside Iran), Khamenei had opposed the meeting.

Still, following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Tehran co-operated with Washington. Welcoming the fall of the Taliban, a longtime enemy because of their extremist Sunni views and their attacks on Afghan Shiites and Iranian diplomats in Afghanistan, Tehran helped the US-led coalition form a new Afghan government at the Bonn conference. Even after Bush's famous "axis of evil" speech and the US invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, Tehran made a conciliatory gesture. After co-ordinating the move with Khamenei, Kharrazi, then the Iranian ambassador in Paris, delivered an unsigned letter to the Swiss embassy in Tehran suggesting that the Iranian government would contemplate recognising Israel, reining in the region's radical organisations, and proposing a security plan for the Persian Gulf. But the Bush administration, drunk on its quick military victory in Iraq, disregarded the offer. All sections of the Iranian regime, including Khatami and the reformists, interpreted the brush-off to mean that after Iraq, it was Iran's turn to be invaded by the US.

Whereas Tehran took few serious steps during either Rafsanjani's or Khatami's term towards holding bilateral discussions with Washington, talks have recently begun under Ahmadinejad. The level of contact is due to be raised; Ahmadinejad has even said that he is ready to meet Bush. (But Bush is not prepared to meet with him.) Rafsanjani and Khatami, who were both seen as supporters of detente with the West, felt that they could not hold talks with Washington without Khamenei's official sanction for fear that Iranian conservatives would accuse them of selling out. Ahmadinejad, on the other hand, is seen as both a revolutionary and a fundamentalist and is trusted by Khamenei. As for his current intentions regarding the US, Khamenei has said, "Breaking off ties with the US is among our fundamental policies. Of course we have never said that this breaking off of ties is forever. But the US administration's conditions are such that establishing ties is currently detrimental to the nation, and naturally we will not pursue them . . . The day when ties are advantageous, I will be the first to say that you should establish ties."

That day may be long in the making, however, given some fundamental differences between the two countries' national interests. There is the nuclear issue, for example. In a statement posted on the Expediency Council's web site in May 2006, Rowhani, who was Iran's top nuclear negotiator under Khatami, explained that Tehran had for years been working very deliberately and very incrementally to complete the fuel cycle. That objective was established in 1989, the year Khamenei became supreme leader. Centrifuges, other necessary equipment, and nuclear technology were then brought into Iran during Rafsanjani's presidency, and the centrifuges were upgraded under Khatami. Throughout, Rowhani explained, it was the supreme leader who set the policies. After Rowhani went to Germany to talk with European officials about Iran's nuclear program in 2005, Ahmadinejad claimed that he had held these talks at his own discretion. But in September 2007, Rowhani told the Mehr News Agency, "Over the past 18 years, I have not travelled anywhere without the knowledge of and co-ordination with the eminent leader. On important issues, this co-ordination has taken place without intermediaries, and, on occasion, it has taken place through intermediaries."

Although at the end of Khatami's presidency Khamenei ordered the suspension of uranium-enrichment activities, he is unlikely to do so again. In a speech to university students earlier this year, Khamenei explained why not: "Today, whoever demands a temporary suspension from us, we tell them: 'We had a temporary suspension once already, for two years . . . What was the use? . . . Suspension turned into something sacrosanct that Iran had no right whatsoever to touch! . . .' And, at the end of it all, they said, 'Temporary suspension is not enough; you have to close down the nuclear business altogether'!" Even if Khamenei committed to suspending Iran's nuclear operations again, such work might not actually be halted. "It is true that we accepted suspension, but not in order to close things down," Rowhani told Etemaad newspaper in November 2007 of Khatami's agreement to halt nuclear

activities in 2004. "During the suspension, we built the centrifuges, we built the Arak plant . . . Whatever was incomplete, we completed under the shadow of suspension. The West was demanding a suspension so that we would close things down, but we suspended things in order to complete the technology." And the Iranian government was ready to go further, even under the reformist Khatami. "For my own part," Rowhani recalled, "I said at several meetings with the officials in charge of the technical side, "Whenever you are ready for enrichment, let us know and we will break the suspension."

Ahmadinejad's own preferences seem simply to be aligned with Tehran's longtime nuclear policy. At a meeting with the Assembly of Experts earlier this year, Khamenei said that Ahmadinejad's role and steadfastness have been very prominent in Iran's progress on the nuclear issue and added, "The [conservative] seventh Majlis, too, unlike some people in the previous [reformist] term, really stood firm on the nuclear issue." That is, Ahmadinejad stood firm in implementing the supreme leader's orders.

Another major difference between Iran and the US that is likely to last beyond Ahmadinejad's term is their diverging visions of the Middle East. Washington is eager to advance its interests in the region, but it has not been prepared to recognise Tehran's own legitimate security interests. Tehran has long aspired to turn Iran into the leader of the Islamic world and an unrivalled power in the Middle East and thus has been deeply involved in the politics of the region. The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (now known as the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council), a major Shiite political party in Iraq, was established by Iraqi exiles in Tehran in the early days of the Iran-Iraq War. Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of *Hezbollah*, has said that both before and since Khamenei became supreme leader, he has been directly in touch with him. Even while Iranian policymakers have at times collaborated with Washington in Afghanistan, they have recently been working to keep the US government embroiled in the turmoil in Iraq and distracted by Lebanon and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The goal, says Rowhani, is to keep Washington busy with greater priorities than pressuring Tehran.

Wise or unwise, Tehran's policy of meddling in the business of its neighbours has very little to do with Ahmadinejad; this has always been the approach favoured by the supreme leader. Iranian officials have said, for example, that the 33-day war between <u>Hezbollah</u> and Israel during the summer of 2006 was conducted under Khamenei's guidance. Larijani, once Iran's chief nuclear negotiator and a former secretary of the SNSC, described the conflict as "a very sweet and astounding moment to me" and attributed <u>Hezbollah</u>'s victory to Khamenei: "The victory is indebted to a strategic piece of guidance by the eminent leader of the Islamic Revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei (may God protect him), after the first week of the fighting."

Israel will remain a bone of contention between the US and Iran. Tehran has long seen the Israeli government as the main instigator against Iran, but by calling for the destruction of Israel and denying the Holocaust, Ahmadinejad has given the world a pretext to mobilise against Iran. And yet even in this respect, he is less different from other Iranian leaders than he might seem. Khomeini used to say, "Israel must cease to exist." He did not believe that the creation of two independent states with equal rights, one Israeli, the other Palestinian, could bring peace. He distinguished the Jews from Israel but argued, "Israel is a cancerous tumour, and it has to be destroyed." Rafsanjani also repeatedly caused international uproar with statements opposing Israel's existence. And Khatami and the reformists never presented any alternative. In fact, when The Washington Post quoted Khatami as suggesting that he might be prepared to accept a two-state solution, he claimed to have been misquoted. By zealously repeating Khomeini's own positions, Ahmadinejad only makes his ideological lineage clearer.

Although denying the Holocaust has been an initiative of Ahmadinejad's, it is unlikely that he would make such a claim, which could be very detrimental to Iran, without the supreme leader's consent. Khamenei has been careful not to personally engage in Holocaust denial, but he has downplayed the effect of Ahmadinejad's fierce remarks and openly defends him. "Let's imagine that the president uses a fierce turn of phrase," Khamenei told a gathering of university students last January. "Suddenly, the gentlemen, the so-called wise men, say, 'This was a fierce remark, it will attract US enmity.' No, gentlemen! US enmity doesn't follow these expressions and terms. It is a fundamental enmity . . . The Iranian nation has always had the threat of military attack dangled over it; it is nothing new."

The problems of the Middle East go far beyond such inflammatory remarks about Israel and the Holocaust and farther back than the 1979 Iranian Revolution. So long as Washington's official policy is to ensure that Israel has strategic superiority in the Middle East and Israel refuses to accept the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, perceptions among the people of the region will not change and there can be no peace in the Middle East. Bush said during a January 2008 trip to the Middle East that "Iran's actions threaten the security of nations everywhere." But Iran cannot be held solely responsible for the quagmires into which the US has sunk itself in Afghanistan and Iraq. Iraq's Baath Party, al-Qaeda, the Pakistani military, and Saudi money have also played fundamental parts. To focus obsessively on Ahmadinejad is to ignore the broader set of actors and problems that have contributed to instability in the Middle East.

Next June, Iran is expected to hold a presidential election. However, given the country's structure of power and, especially, Khamenei's hold on power, it is unlikely to significantly change either Iran's domestic policy or its foreign policy. Real change will come later, and only when Iranians figure out how to move beyond the current sultanistic regime. In systems such as Iran's, the transition to democracy depends on whether reformists can find enough room to maneuver among the ruler's relationships with state bodies (especially the military), social elites, and foreign powers so as to create various social movements and then use those to inch the country towards democracy.

In the end, there is no question that diplomatic negotiations and the establishment of bilateral relations between the US and Iran would serve the two countries' respective national interests. But such efforts ought to be carried out so as not to undermine human rights activists and democracy advocates in Iran. To date, Washington's principal concerns have focused on curbing the Islamic Republic's nuclear program and guaranteeing the strategic supremacy of Israel in the region. Meanwhile, the aim of Iranian dissidents and Iranian advocates of human rights and democracy is to bring about, through non-violent action, a democratic system fully committed to the cause of freedom, human rights and federalism. These actors are strongly opposed to Washington's threats of a US military strike against Iran and talk of "regime change". This language and, more generally, Iran policy under the Bush administration have only strengthened the hand of Sultan Khamenei and made Iran's transition to democracy much more difficult.

This article was adapted from Nilou Mobasser's translation of a Farsi text by Ganji posted on www.akbarganji.org on February 6, 2008.

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: Yes, Iran. Iranians at the resort island of Kish in the south of the country, November 2007. Picture: ZIYAH GAFIC / GETTY IMAGES Election officials seal a ballot box, Qom, Iran, March.Picture: MORTEZA NIKOUBAZL / REUTERS Ahmadinejad kisses the Koran, Tehran, 2008.Picture: MORTEZA NIKOUBAZL / REUTERS

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What we're facing is 'genocidal terror'

The Jerusalem Post March 28, 2008 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

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Byline: DAN IZENBERG

Highlight: The Hebrew University's Elihu Richter and Ted Tulchinsky argue that the legal notion of 'proportionality'

takes on a new meaning when one side intends to destroy the other, and they fiercely dispute UN Special

Rapporteur John Dugard's 'understanding' of rocket attacks

Body

Last year, the European Journal of Public Health published an article arguing that had the United Nations, human rights organizations and the media used the term "genocide" rather than "ethnic cleansing" to describe events in Rwanda, Darfur and Bosnia, tens of thousands of lives might have been saved.

The article was written by Dr. Rony Blum and Elihu Richter of the Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem-Hadassah Ein Kerem; Prof. Gregory Stanton, president of Genocide Watch; and HU law student Shira Sagi.

According to their findings, precise and accurate terminology is of crucial, practical importance in dealing with and preventing, or at least intervening at an earlier stage to halt, genocide. "The term 'ethnic cleansing,'" they wrote, "corrupts observation, interpretation, ethical judgment and decision-making, thereby undermining the aim of public health. 'Ethnic cleansing' bleaches the atrocities of genocide, leading to inaction in preventing current and future genocides."

According to the figure published in the article, 800,000 people were killed in Rwanda, 200,000 in Bosnia and 400,000 had been killed in Darfur at the time the article was published.

Richter and a group of his public health colleagues in Israel believe the same principle applies to the terminology used to describe the campaign waged by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. Before presenting their views, it needs to be emphasized that Richter and the others, including Dr. Ted Tulchinsky, who also teaches public health at Hadassah, are neither right-wing political ideologues nor indifferent to Palestinian suffering. Richter and Tulchinsky have spent many years participating in joint Israeli-Palestinian medical projects and training programs and believe the commitment to public health on the part of both Israeli and Palestinian doctors and scientists provides fertile ground for the most positive kind of cooperation.

Over the past few years, Richter and Tulchinsky have concluded that the terror groups headed by Hamas are waging a campaign of "genocidal terror" against Israel and that their actions meet the criteria established by the UN in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The convention defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Richter maintains that if the UN, human rights organizations and the media were to define the rocket attacks on Sderot and other civilian communities as "genocidal terrorism" rather than "war crimes," as they do today, they would be presenting a much more accurate depiction of the threat with which Israel is contending.

In trying to explain the difference between "regular" and "genocidal" terrorism, Richter told The Jerusalem Post, "Note that Hamas and its Iranian sponsor, backer and funder are explicitly committed to the destruction of Israel. In contrast, take terrorists in Colombia. They target prominent individual Colombians, some for political reasons, others for ransom money. The same holds true for the Weathermen, who kidnapped Patty Hearst, or the Red Brigades. They were targeting specific political figures from their own countries without reference to national, ethnic or religious status. They were kidnappers, robbers and murderers."

RICHTER IS not a lawyer. He said he came to his conclusion on the basis of the same kind of epidemiological studies that are applied to natural disasters or epidemics. "The idea evolved out of the efforts of some of us to understand what was happening, based on an examination of who, when, where, which, how and what the data were telling us," he said.

For example, he examined the gender and age breakdown of Palestinian and Israeli fatalities during the second intifada and found that there was a disproportionate number of elderly, <u>female</u> and child victims on the Israeli side, compared to a disproportionate number of young male victims on the Palestinian side.

In developing the concept of genocidal terrorism, Richter also consulted with legal experts including Stanton, co-author of the ethnic cleansing article, who is currently professor of human rights at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. "I think genocidal terror is exactly what al-Qaida, Hamas and <u>Hizbullah</u> are doing," he wrote. "I think the key nexus is that genocidal killing is intended to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Terror is aimed at killing members of another group, making no distinction between civilians and combatants. That distinction is required by the Geneva Conventions and Optional Protocol I and II and Common Article 3 apply the conventions to non- state actors."

Richter also referred to Israel Charney, executive director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, Jerusalem. Charney, who has written several books on genocide, told Richter, "I am pessimistic about the growing violence in the world from the emerging 'transnational genocide terrorism.' I sadly anticipate and fear deeply that before long, there will be a use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by terrorists, including suicide bombers, with resulting horrendous widespread deaths, agony and breakdown of civilized life in widespread areas."

Perhaps the most prominent jurist in the world working on redefining international law to address the changes that have taken place in the nature of terrorism over the decades is Harvard University's Alan Dershowitz. In an interview with the Post published on March 14, Dershowitz said the clear distinction between civilian and combatant breaks down in a war against terrorists, and international law must acknowledge and deal with this. "The anachronistic theory that you can clearly tell the difference between civilian and combatant must be updated to deal with the new reality in which terrorists use civilian population for fighting purposes," he said.

Instead of the either/or duality of civilian versus combatant, Dershowitz proposes what he calls the "continuum of civilianality."

"You can rank people on a scale of one to 10, one being an infant baby, 10 being a grown man with a shoulder rocket about to fire. In between, there are those people who allow their homes to be used for rocket launches or storage, imams who encourage suicide bombing, people who make explosive belts," he explained.

In a recent article published in The Wall Street Journal, Dershowitz appeared to go even farther. He referred to a report in The New York Times that quoted Zahra Maladan, the editor of a Lebanese <u>women</u>'s magazine, as warning her son at the funeral of arch-terrorist Imad Mughniyeh, "If you're not going to follow in the steps of the Islamic resistance martyrs, then I don't want you."

In this new kind of terrorism, Dershowitz continued, "there is a new image of mothers urging their children to die, and then celebrating the martyrdom of their suicidal sons and daughters by distributing sweets and singing wedding songs. As more <u>women</u> and children are recruited by their mothers and their religious leaders to become suicide bombers, more <u>women</u> and children will be shot at - some mistakenly. That, too, is part of the grand plan of our enemies. They want us to kill their civilians, whom they also consider martyrs, because when we accidentally kill a civilian, they win in the court of public opinion. We need new rules and strategies to deal effectively and fairly with these dangerous new realities. We cannot simply wait until the son of Zahra Maladan, and the sons and daughters of hundreds like her, decide to follow [their] mothers' demand."

In calling for a redefinition of international law, Dershowitz maintained that in today's world, the old notion of deterrence, achieved by massive superiority, plays less of a role than prevention and pre-emption. For example, he wrote, "You can't deter a person who wants to die or a nation prepared to sacrifice itself, as some in Iran have suggested they're prepared to do."

International law today does not state that it is illegal to kill a civilian in the process of striking at a military target. However, it invokes the principle of proportionality, which states that in deciding whether or not to attack a military target, the state must take into account whether the number of potential civilian casualties is proportional to the anticipated military gain. If the estimated casualties are "disproportionate," the strike is illegal. By introducing the concept of a "continuity of civilianality," it appears that Dershowitz seeks to change the numerical balance between civilians and combatants who would be potential victims of the strike in favor of the combatants.

IN A VIEW similar to Dershowitz's, Richter maintains that large segments of Palestinian society in Gaza are involved in terrorism. "If 40 percent of all families know someone who has been killed 'fighting the Israelis,' i.e. launching terror attacks or defending their perpetrators, and latest estimates are that some 20,000 Gazans are under arms in various military units, it would seem that we are dealing with population-wide involvement in such terror attacks and not a few 'extremists.'"

Asked whether his estimation of the "population-wide involvement" in terror gave Israel moral and legal license to strike at the entire population, Richter replied, "When the goal is genocidal and the threat is disruptive to the way of life of an entire population [i.e. the Israeli population], it seems that the proportionality of the threat [to Israel] and not only the actual losses [to the Israeli population] becomes critical in framing the scope of a response compatible with ethical norms. When those producing the threat are receiving support from sizable segments of the population, or taking refuge among the population, it would seem that the perpetrators of genocidal terror - and adult members of that population - bear responsibility for the losses to that population resulting from the use of force against them. The outburst of joy over the murder of eight students at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva on March 6 bespeak of this support. At the same time, everything must be done to try to limit the damage."

In order to limit damage to innocent civilians, Richter suggested giving advanced warning before destroying areas used for launching rockets.

Several weeks ago, Richter protested to the Post following an article in the paper which quoted from an official of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Middle East region. The official had provided figures regarding the damage to Gaza hospitals caused by the severe fuel import restrictions imposed by Israel beginning in October 2007. Richter, Tulchinsky and other Israeli physicians have been actively involved with WHO over the years, but Richter complained that in the past year, there has been a growing "selective indifference on the part of the regional office to the problem of terror."

He and his colleagues were particularly incensed over a two-page interview with John Dugard, the outgoing Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories, which appeared in the September-October 2007 edition of Bridges, the WHO regional bi-monthly.

Dugard, to put it mildly, is the bte noire of many Israelis who are personally involved in, or closely follow, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

"The mandate of Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Palestine, created in 1993 by the discredited and now defunct UN Commission on Human Rights, is to investigate only violations by Israel, a one-sided duty John Dugard has zealously embraced since his appointment to the post in 2001," Richter charged. "His reports stand out, even by UN standards, for their virulently anti-Israel prejudice. There are many UN figures who like to lambast Israel. But Mr. Dugard has the dubious distinction of being the only appointee of the UN who regularly rails against the UN-sponsored Quartet and its road map for the Middle East [for not demanding an end to Israel's alleged human right violations in Gaza]."

Richter and Tulchinsky were particularly incensed by what Tulchinsky described as "the bashing of Israel on medical referrals to Israel, which has been a big issue pushed by WHO and Dugard."

This would obviously be a particularly sensitive point for public health physicians. WHO wrote that of the total number of Palestinian patients from Gaza who requested permits to enter Israel in 2007 for hospital treatment (in Israel, the West Bank or Jordan), 18.48% were rejected, compared to 9.84% in 2006. In their response, Tulchinsky, Richter and Ronny Starkshall - another member of the Braun School - pointed out that the number of patients who had received permits jumped from 4,932 in 2006 to 7,176 in 2007, an increase of 45%. Regarding the disturbing figures that only 64.5% of Gazans had been granted permits in November 2007 and 64.3% in December 2007, shortly after Israel's pronouncement that Gaza was a "hostile territory," the three wrote, perhaps naively, that "the recent difficulties with approvals are being addressed at [the] Erez crossing and by the local WHO office in goodwill meetings with the Israel Defense Forces Coordinator's Office." This comment came as a result of a meeting between Maj.-Gen. Yosef Mishlev, Coordinator of Activities in the Territories and his staff, WHO officials and three Israeli doctors, including Tulchinsky.

As for the Dugard interview in Bridges and a controversial report that the special rapporteur presented to the UN General Assembly on January 21, Tulchinsky, Richter and Starkshall wrote that they "strongly object to the unbalanced and erroneous remarks of Prof. John Dugard. Dugard addresses Palestinian rights issues but fails to address the fundamental rights of Israelis to be free from terrorist rocket and suicide bomber attacks by the Hamas government and terror organizations aimed at population centers, notably Sderot, with the specific intention of killing and injuring civilians. Terror attacks directed against a civilian population fall within the definition of genocide by the UN Convention on Genocide."

Dugard's seventh and final report to the UN, released on January 21, was indeed controversial and went so far as to show "understanding" for the terrorist rocket attacks against Israeli civilian population centers.

In an exclusive interview, Dugard replied to questions by the Post on his comments made in the annual report. (See interview, Page 18)

IN THE final analysis, Richter bases his arguments on the following axiom: "The right to life," he says, "trumps all other human rights."

"Funerals are forever, closed border crossings can be reopened. Their effects are reversible." As for the water and electricity shortages suffered by Gaza hospitals as a result of Israel's fuel and electricity sanctions, Richter said, "Hospitals should be sanctuaries, but not if used as sites for arms storage, hiding of armed terrorists, launching sites. But we have to be careful in ascertaining what is truly happening. Last time around, the power outages were staged and Hamas reportedly siphoned off electricity for its own uses. Regions under siege are entitled to receive water shipments. But in such cases, the strong steal from the weak."

It is important to note that Richter gives little, if any, credence to the claim that the Palestinians resort to violence because they have no other way of opposing the Israeli occupation of their land. As far as he is concerned, terrorism is caused by the hate language and incitement of its leaders.

"It is the children who are the most vulnerable to hate language and incitement," Richter wrote. "Perpetrators of genocide or genocidal terror use hate language to stigmatize and dehumanize the 'other,' without which they cannot recruit their followers. If the Kassams are the hardware of genocidal terror, the incitement of children and youths provides the software. The claim that the occupation is the cause of the terror, and by implication, the cause of the incitement to terror, is not sustainable. The incitement reappeared in Palestinian textbooks with the establishment of the PA and Israel's first withdrawals, and its ebb and tide bear no relationship to subsequent Israeli withdrawals."

According to Richter and Tulchinsky, the overwhelmingly disproportionate criticism of Israel by the UN, international human rights organizations and the media constitute "an upscale variant of classical anti-Semitism. This trend seems to apply different standards to the value of life of Israelis and Palestinians and attributes the problems of the latter exclusively to the barriers, curfews and checkpoints and not to failures of the Palestinian leadership in taking charge of its own society."

Tulchinsky told the Post that "The buzzword is that Israel is illegitimate in its methods. The message is that Israel is illegitimate."

HEBREW UNIVERSITY professor Yuval Shany, an expert in international law and academic director of the Minerva Center for Human Rights, said most violations of international criminal law fall into the category of war crimes or crimes against humanity. Determining that a crime constitutes genocide is, in general, more controversial. Furthermore, he said, "it is one thing to call to update international law by bringing it more in line with current realities, and another thing to call for violating the law as it currently exists."

On the other hand, Shany added that international law does not provide the complete answer to complex situations which must take contradictory factors into account. Furthermore, it leaves much leeway for interpretation. For example, what may be a proportional act in the eyes of one party may be disproportional to another. Unless an international court rules on the matter in accordance with the independent opinions of its judges, there can be no unequivocal answer to such a question.

But, continued Shany, for those (like Dershowitz) who maintain that international law is a barrier to democracies fighting fairly against tyrants, there are others, including many human rights activists, who maintain that it fails to sufficiently protect the rights of innocent civilians. Thus, neither side is satisfied with the provisions of international law, which may not necessarily be negative, since it can be indicative of its balanced nature.

In general, Shany regards international law as a restraining factor rather than a set of clear-cut legal provisions unequivocally detailing what may and may not be done in war. The most that can be said is that without it, many countries would likely treat enemy civilians more violently than they do.

While Shany did not comment on the entire range of the comments in Dugard's January 21 report, he told the Post that the UN official's analysis of the legal situation in Gaza was biased. Shany believes Israel's disengagement from Gaza brought an end to the occupation and that Israel no longer bears the responsibilities of a belligerent occupier as laid down in international humanitarian law. In other words, the Palestinians are no longer a protected population and Israel has no special responsibility for their well-being.

"Dugard's report is based on a tendentious analysis of the law," Shany said. "I disagree with his conclusions."

According to Shany, the relations between Gaza and Israel today are governed by the laws of war and, specifically, by the laws governing situations of siege. "When A breaks the law against B, B may punish A," he explained. The only limitation is that punitive measures cannot cause a humanitarian crisis such as starvation and the applied sanctions must be proportional to the original violation. Thus, B may not block humanitarian supplies from reaching A. Beyond that threshold, however, B may legally impose economic sanctions against A and they will not be

regarded as violations of international law even though they constitute a form of collective punishment, provided that they meet the test of proportionality.

Indeed, Shany is of the opinion that the initial sanctions taken by Israel against the Gaza Strip after Hamas defeated Fatah and took exclusive control over the area in June 2007 were legal. However, he thinks Israel's recent fuel and electricity cutbacks might be illegal because of the humanitarian hardships they have caused the Palestinian population.

Graphic

5 photos: 'One man's freedom fighter is essentially another man's terrorist,' says John Dugard. Dr. Ted Tulchinsky points out that while percentages have gone down, the number of Palestinians who received permits for medical treatment in Israel has gone up by over 2,000 in one year. A Sderot resident examines rocket damage to his house. Prof. Elihu Richter calls Kassams 'the hardware of genocidal terror,' and incitement 'the software.' (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski; AP)

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Body

Articles by Jeffrey Goldberg and Susan Taylor Martin - Jan. 18

Thank you, Jeffrey Goldberg, for the Perspective article, Why Israel can't make peace, and to the St. Petersburg Times for publishing it. It stirs the brain cells, as contrasted with merely strumming the heartstrings, as in the Susan Taylor Martin article (For civilians in Gaza, there's no escape from fighting). While Martin laments the plight of Gaza's citizens, and rightly so, she offers no basis on which to improve their plight. Goldberg on the other hand does, but his implied solution requires a change in ideology and religious dogma.

For once a newspaper article openly discusses the origins of Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u> Jew-hatred, the true obstacle to peace. Further illuminating Goldberg's thesis is a book by Andrew Bostom, entitled: The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism, in which the writings of the Koran, Hadith and Sira on this topic are clearly advanced, along with the viewpoints of modern commentators. Only through such understanding, versus naivete, can the world community ever come to a solution on the plight of Gaza's residents, or to a larger-scale solution to jihadist terrorism worldwide.

Israel cannot solve the plight of Gaza's citizens. They tried by forcefully evacuating all Israelis from Gaza and ceding the land to the Palestinians, but the experiment was a failure, leading to the ascension of Hamas, an incessant shelling of Israel from Gaza and hence the necessity for the latest defensive war. Why the experiment failed is articulated in Goldberg's article and expanded on by Bostom. It is imperative that we all understand this.

Peace can only come when hatred ceases to be taught. This is not about moral equivalency; it is about moral behavior, and the onus must be placed squarely on those who promote hatred. To achieve Martin's implied goal of improved human condition we must heed the lyrics of Rodgers and Hammerstein, "You've got to be carefully taught," and Crosby, Stills and Nash, "Teach your children well."

Only when Palestinians cease teaching their children to hate Jews and other infidels will there be any chance for either a lasting peace in the Middle East or an end to jihadist terrorism worldwide.

Robert H. Weisberg, Tierra Verde

* * *

When you elect terrorists

I take issue with Susan Taylor Martin's article on Jan. 18. Her heart bleeds for the civilians in Gaza, but not for the innocent Jews who daily absorb rockets.

Gaza is run by a terror organization. Israel is run by responsible people. Hamas was duly elected by these very civilians whom Martin defends. Jews, on the other hand, want nothing more than to live in peace. That's why Gaza was given away in 2005, before it became a launching pad for Hamas rockets, intended to kill Jews. Martin is dead wrong in arguing that you can't blame Gaza civilians for electing Hamas to public office. Sorry, but it's a sad truth of history and international law that the people of rogue nations will get hurt when they elect psychotic despots to power.

If the so-called "Palestinians" want to become a real nation, all they need to do is put aside hatred and learn to be responsible about whom they put in power. Otherwise, they will sadly get caught in the crossfire when the "Zionist infidels" have to act in self-defense to take out Hamas.

Michael Stepakoff, Palm Harbor

* * *

Targeting the U.N.

We learned recently that Israel had attacked the United Nations headquarters in Gaza, destroying food and other humanitarian supplies that were stored there. A couple of weeks ago, they fired on a U.N. school, killing a number of children.

These are not new tactics. In April 1996, Israel attacked a well-known U.N. outpost in southern Lebanon housing over 800 Lebanese who had taken cover there. More than 100 were killed.

I don't think the Israeli army is so inept that these things were mistakes. I think it was sending the same message to the United Nations that it sent to the people of Gaza: "We are the most powerful military force in the Middle East and we are backed by the United States. So get out of our way."

Joseph A. Mahon, St. Petersburg

* * *

No tears for Gaza

Susan Taylor Martin is again writing from her extremely myopic vision of Gaza and Hamas. After picturing the poor, mistreated Gazans (having electing a terrorist government, exactly what were they expecting), she notes that the right of free passage never developed.

The reason it never developed was that the first people in line to cross into Israel were the suicide bombers seeking to blow themselves up on buses and in pizza parlors.

I have long suggested that the Israelis choke off Gaza. Stop all electricity, gasoline, water, medicine and allow them nothing. Shortly those old black-robed <u>women</u> will be in the streets beating Hamas with sticks. When the <u>women</u> get tired of all that squalor and their children dying, the problems in Gaza will start to turn around.

Lynn O'Keefe, Largo

* * *

Law of self-defense

The Palestinians, through their elected officials as well as many other groups, have declared total war on Israel, with their acknowledged goal as Israel's extermination. This is called "genocide," and no one doubts that if they had the means, they would do it.

How can any group that makes such declarations be considered anything but a pariah in the world community?

If Israel decided to completely wipe out this cancer that continually threatens them, who would blame them? This is called the law of self-defense, and it applies to nations as well as people.

Mitchell McConnell, St. Petersburg

* * *

Cruel killings

In Pakistan the Taliban recently bombed five schools as part of its effort to prevent the education of girls. Some boys schools were also bombed. This seems disgusting and primitive from our vantage point as a Western civilization. How could they be so cruel? Were they financed by Syria? Where were the weapons made?

By the way, Israel also bombed at least two schools in Gaza during the same period, using aircraft, munitions and financing from the United States.

Mark E. Reinecke, St. Petersburg

* * *

Seniors should remember: Some income beats none

"I'm on a fixed income." "I'm a senior citizen." "I can't afford that."

Sad to say (age-wise), these three statements all apply to me.

But I read an article on Jan. 10, Families feel COBRA's sting, that comments on the COBRA program, the cost of which "is prohibitively high for many, especially when compared with average unemployment benefits." Also there have been many recent TV spots about food stamps, unemployment, downsizing and outsourcing on a national level.

This makes me think of my fellow seniors as crybabies. True, a fixed income may limit you, but you can't deny it is an income. Medicare may not be what we had, but it is health care. All we have to do is live another month and we get paid - for living! The millions of people laid off have no income, save for unemployment which, according to the article, isn't even enough to pay for health care here in Florida.

We seniors lived in a society of American goods, made in America by Americans who never considered another country as a source of anything except immigrants, and which could be a vacation destination. Many of us retired from jobs where we spent most of our entire adult life. Now many of us have stock portfolios that demand performance from companies pretty much encouraging outsourcing and downsizing. Looks like we're doing this to ourselves, huh?

Joe Brickman, Largo

* * *

Out of work, and out of patience - Jan. 18, story

Unemployment mess

Your article regarding dealing with the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation really hit home.

My son, who lives in Brandon, has been trying to talk to a "live body" at that office for three weeks to no avail. I decided to call them, just to see what it was like. Their current voice mail says "Due to heavy calls, the average wait

is one hour." At that point, their phone immediately cuts you off. Not only does their phone cut you off, but there is also no actual office where someone can talk to you face to face.

Obviously no one is going to contact the unemployment office unless they have lost their job. To subject these unemployed citizens to this type of treatment is unconscionable. After reading your article and visiting their Web site, it appears they are more set up for denying a claim than allowing someone to make a claim.

Helen Dewalt, St. Petersburg

* * *

Officials get their way

To paraphrase the late Rodney Dangerfield: "We can't get no respect." Howard Troxler in his Jan. 22 column (What did they think "contract" meant?) referenced the Pinellas County School Board breaking the contract between itself and the teachers' union. Even though it was a flagrant breach, the superintendent simply stalled until it was too late to change things and then said, we're going to do it anyway.

Unfortunately, with government officials, this seems symptomatic today. A glaring example is the Florida Legislature's raiding of the Lawton Chiles Endowment Fund. Just because the state is in a financial crisis they figure it's okay to penalize the least fortunate and take from a fund that was intended for the benefit of children affected by the scourge of Big Tobacco. How is it that we're able to aid private NFL football teams to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars for stadiums, but when it comes to children and education all of a sudden we ain't got no money? I guess we can't get no respect!

Stephen L. Goodman, Tampa

* * *

Middle school teacher contract

Think of the students

Being a middle school teacher, I have been able to read a lot of correspondence within the system that Pinellas County teachers and employees have shared in reference to their opinions about teacher contract negotiations and violations.

I support the fact that our contract was violated, and there should be some resolution and accountability. In fact, I was ready to support going back to five out of six periods a day for second semester simply because that is the proper thing to do. However, one conversation with my eighth-grade son during winter break completely changed my mind.

"Hey, Mom, are they really going to change our schedules and take away one of our classes when we go back to school second semester?"

"I don't know, honey? Why do you ask?"

"Because if they do, I'm going to lose one of my favorite teachers."

My heart skipped a beat. That was enough said for me.

Let's allow our children to finish the school year with the least amount of disruption as possible and do our best to resolve this issue before the start of the next school year. After all, our students are the reason we chose to become teachers in the first place.

Janet Whedon, Clearwater

* * *

Insurance inflation

I now know why insurance costs are so high. After a major surgery, it was necessary for me to get one of those seats you put over a toilet. I was provided one by a home health care group because the one I ordered wasn't going to arrive in time. The one I ordered was \$20 off eBay, practically brand new.

Then I received the statement from my health insurance on the claim from the home health care group. The cost was \$212! Now I'm sure it was newer, but something I paid \$20 for - and they charged \$212.

I found the exact chair online, regularly \$109, on sale for \$97. That's a difference of \$115. That is why our medical insurance is so high!

S. Bennett, Largo

* * *

Let's designate a "clothing optional" beachJan. 17, letter

An unsavory sight

Considering the tiny percentage of Americans who really look good with no clothes on, I believe we should be spared this dismal prospect.

My sister and her husband, both very liberal free thinkers, worked for a while at a nudist resort. They still shake their heads in amazement at how unappealing people look with no clothes on.

It's bad enough we have to be reminded of the pitiful physical condition of the average American in their swimsuits at the beach. Please spare us the sight of their nude bodies.

Pete Wilford, Holiday

* * *

Let's designate a "clothing optional" beachJan. 17, letter

An unwelcome option

My family has a long and happy attachment to Fort DeSoto Park/Mullet Key. Just before World War I, my father installed electrical generators at the fort under an Army contract. In my time I buried two whales and numerous sea turtles there as chief of the National Marine Fisheries Service Law Enforcement Division. All six of our children grew up exploring the beaches of the park. One of my sons was a lifeguard there. We now have a little wooden sailboat to teach our grandchildren to sail along the fort's northern boundary.

During all these years we have had free run of all the beaches at Fort De Soto Park with little or no concern for the safety (physical and moral) of our progeny. It will be a sad day for us and very many like us if the county should designate "clothing optional" areas of our beautiful park.

Charles M. Fuss Jr., St. Pete Beach

Graphic

Getty Images Two Palestinian children sit amid the rubble of a home in the Gaza Strip where as many as 29 family members were reportedly killed during the Israeli attack on the Hamas-controlled area. Associated Press Masked gunmen were among those declaring a Hamas victory after a cease-fire in Gaza.

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UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)
September 13, 2008 Saturday 4:41 PM EST

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 13 -- The substance of this column last week was about the orchestrating of a planned grand performance on the international stage about a humanitarian catastrophe in Sri Lanka, and the willingness of some international news channels to write the score for it.

It now appears that there are others more eager than these news channels, to do their own tear-jerking performances on the world stage about what they would like to project as a humanitarian crisis in what was once known, very aptly too, as "This Other Eden".

Similar to the situation so well described in the Sinhala adage about the one who is waiting to cry being poked in the eye, the choreographers of this Sri Lankan Jeremiad have taken the cue from the decision of the Government to call on all UN and INGOs to carry out their relief operations from Vavuniya, instead of from the Vanni, where the fighting to defeat the LTTE's terrorism is getting more intense each day.

At last Monday's high level policy meeting of the Consultative Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (CCHA), its Chair, the Minister for Disaster Management and Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe informed the CCHA that the Secretary/Defence had communicated a decision taken by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) that all UN agencies and INGOs working in the Vanni should relocate their humanitarian and development operations to Vavuniya with immediate effect for the safety of personnel and property.

This was immediately interpreted by the BBC and some other news outlets as the Government ordering UN and other aid agencies out of the Vanni. Precious little was said of the Government's statement that this was being done in the interests of the safety of the aid personnel involved.

The Government was very clear in stating that as the UN and INGOs are working in the Vanni at the invitation of the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL), that it has an obligation to ensure the safety and security of all those working there.

In asking them to move out for their own safety the Government also clearly expressed its appreciation of the agencies' contributing and complementing the GoSL in providing assistance to displaced persons in the Wanni.

They were requested to continue with their good work by supporting the GoSL in the provision of humanitarian assistance by relocating their operations to the humanitarian hub established by the Government in Vavuniya.

This was by no means a "Get Out" order, but a shift outside decision. But, it appears that the UN and other INGOs believe that it is their prerogative to decide on where they should carry out their activities, and not that of the duly constituted Government of the sovereign state of Sri Lanka.

New Moon

The new player in this continued performance of crying foul at Sri Lanka, that is carrying on a war against terrorism, the scourge that has led to much tragedy, suffering, disruption of life and economic loss to the people and this country, (comparatively much more than what Bin Laden did to the United States on 9/11, 1991 that led to its own and the Western world's War of Terror) appears to be the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon.

The night of the New Moon is considered the darkest night in the lunar month, in contrast to the Full Moon. It would now seem that the office of the UNSG is groping in such New Moon darkness about the situation in Sri Lanka.

A statement of the Sri Lankan situation, attributed to the spokesperson of the Secretary-General says: "The Secretary-General expresses his deep concern over the increase of hostilities in Northern Sri Lanka, and the grave humanitarian consequences for civilians.

In light of the Government's request for the relocation of UN humanitarian staff in affected areas, he reminds all concerned of their responsibility to take action to ensure the safety and freedom of civilians, allowing humanitarian organizations to do their work in safety, as well as to reach persons affected by the fighting who need humanitarian aid.

"The Secretary-General reminds all concerned of their obligations under international humanitarian law, especially in regard to the principle of proportionality and the selection of targets. "He emphasises strongly the importance of a negotiated settlement to the political problems facing Sri Lanka." (Emphasis mine).

On first reading it would appear the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has as a ghostwriter of his statements must be the same person who has been drafting recent statements for President George W Bush, especially on the issue of Georgia, Russia and South Ossettia.

The favourite theme of the US President in criticising the Russian action was to say that it was disproportionate to the threat faced by South Ossettia.

What exactly is the "proportionality" of action when dealing with an organization that over the years has had a disproportionate number of children in its ranks carrying arms for a cause that they had no understanding of, and were anyway too young to understand and come to an informed decision on what they were being made to do?

What is the level of proportionality that should apply in dealing with an organisation so committed to violence that it snatches children away from families for the purpose of strengthening its fighting cadres, with no attempt at consultation with the parents as to the justice of the cause they are fighting for?

What measure of proportionality does one apply to those who have perfected, if that is the correct description, the terrible skill of carrying out suicide killings of people, with the full knowledge of, and least regard for, the fact that the actual victims of its suicide killers will be children and <u>women</u>, and almost always civilians, who have no part in the battle that is being waged by them or against them?

The Beggar's sore

It is interesting to see the Secretary-General reminding all concerned of their obligations under international humanitarian law, especially in regard to the principle of proportionality and the selection of targets.

Has he, or his spokesman, bothered to send this message of proportionality to the LTTE, even through some of the UN "humanitarian workers" who have been fraternising with that organisation, and in fact have met them without informing the Government of Sri Lanka? Has the UNSG sent such a message to the LTTE through any of the

INGOs that have been supplying tsunami relief and other goods to the LTTE (proportionately?), and have been found out?

It will be an interesting exercise for the office of the UNSG to know what the LTTE, that is a party to this conflict, thinks of international humanitarian law, and any obligation that a combatant has with regard to the observance of conventions governing humanitarian practice in armed conflict.

There is little purpose in preaching to the converted, which happens to be Sri Lanka. It is the Government of Sri Lanka, and its Security Forces that have carried out attacks on the LTTE with the least number of casualties among civilians.

This is a situation much to the annoyance and dislike of aid workers and news hounds who see little evil in the US and NATO's "proportionate air strikes" on Afghan villages, or US/NATO raids into the sovereign territory of Pakistan, in what they describe as hot pursuit of the Taliban and / or the agents of Bin Laden; America's Number One Enemy who has become such a chimera, that one is led to believe the US forces are somehow evading his capture just to keep the War on Terror going on. One is not ignorant of the local aphorism of the "Beggar's Sore".

It is time the Office of the UNSG realised that what the Government did in calling on all UN and INGO staffs to do their relief work from Vavuniya, was exactly trying to protect civilians life - the lives of these aid workers.

It was only too well aware of what happened to those local employees of a French INGO who were killed in Muttur, about which much has been made of in the international media, and among human rights and humanitarian organisations (One senior UN officer on Humanitarian Affairs even called Sri Lanka the most dangerous place for aid workers to be in, after that) and is the subject of an official inquiry in Sri Lanka.

No doubt there would be some in the "International Community": who would be waiting to see some more aid workers being killed in this manner in the Vanni, to readily heap the blame on the Government and its troops. What is necessary to note is that a country has to take its own precautions, proportionate to the danger it perceives.

While on "proportionate targeting" it is interesting to know what the Office of the UNSG said about the proportionate nature of the Israeli targeting of Lebanon in the 30 day war over the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by <u>Hezbollah</u>, when large parts of Beirut and Palestinian Refugee Camps were virtually bombed off the ground, while Israel took very little casualties.

Possibly by coincidence President George W Bush and former Prime Minister Tony Blair, too, did not see anything disproportionate in this bombing, and also did not call for a ceasefire in the conflict.

The UNSG's statement "emphasises strongly the importance of a negotiated settlement to the political problems facing Sri Lanka." Once again this is best directed at the LTTE, and not to the Government of Sri Lanka.

The Office of the UNSG cannot be ignorant of the several attempts made by the present government to negotiate with the LTTE, which were spurned with the least concern for the need for any settlement other than separation through violence.

It is best if such reality is taken into full consideration by such an important office, rather than moving towards kneejerk reactions to that are the Xerox copies of what INGOs with vested interests in the success of the LTTE's separatist efforts have to say about the developments in Sri Lanka that has suffered enough from terrorism for nearly three decades.

Baghdad and Algiers

The UNSG refers to the importance of reaching "persons affected by the fighting who need humanitarian aid." How well said and what a wonderful idea it is. How does his office believe this can be done when the LTTE, according to many independent reports, are said to be forcing the Tamil people to move into areas still held by it?

Is one to believe that an organization that extorts the food, medicine and other essentials that the Government of Sri Lanka sends to the Tamil people, to serve the needs of its fighting cadres, who are also supplied by some INGOs, will allow any UN or other genuine aid or relief workers to come to the aid of the people they have taken hostage by preventing them from moving to safer areas that are now under the control of the armed forces of Sri Lanka?

It was more than curiosity that took me to the web site of the UN Secretary-General. There I found his Remarks to the Solemn Ceremony marking the Fifth Anniversary of the Baghdad Bombing that took place on August 19, 2003. That was the biggest attack suffered by a UN Mission anywhere in the world. It was carried out by terrorists.

The UNSG said: "Five years have passed since the terrorist attack on our UN headquarters in Baghdad, killing twenty-two people, including Sergio Vieira de Mello [the Head of the UN Mission]. We lost some of our best and bravest staff.

"Their children have grown without a parent. Their other loved ones, many who are with us now, feel their absence everyday. We, too, mourn them all."

Recalling the targeting of the UN Office in Algeria more recently he said: "But the risks remain. The attack on our offices in Algiers last December is a reminder."

It is to prevent such calculated violence that can bring about so much tragedy that the Government of Sri Lanka asked the UN and INGO relief workers out of the Vanni, and into manageable and more secure areas, from which can they carry out their outreach of relief and assistance to the people who really need it, and are able to receive it; with no danger to the lives of those who are assisting the Government in its own commitment to bring relief to the Tamil people, who are being held in bondage by the terror of the LTTE.

Deliberate distortion

To even suggest a disproportionate nature of the targets being taken by the Sri Lankan Security Forces in a situation when there have been no reports of even minor scale attacks on civilians, is not only a distortion of the truth, but a deliberate effort to draw the attention of the world from the daily atrocities taking place, where civilians are targets in places where regime change has been carried out and the subjugation of people is being done under a UN mandate; or, separatism is encouraged to suit the needs of the European Union; or where no statements of concern emanate from the highly concerned office of the UNSG about the battle being waged against the terror by the government of the Philippines.

What has the UNSG said about the "proportionality" of what the US is doing today in carrying out raids inside the sovereign territory of Pakistan, which both Barack Obama and John McCain pledge to continue?

Speaking at the memorial to the Baghdad killings the UNSG also said: "Recently, our Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises completed its worldwide review. It found that, and I quote: 'Total security has not been achieved anywhere by anyone in the past and will not be achieved by anyone in the future. But security conditions can and must be constantly improved.' That is the truth. Security conditions can and must be improved.

The first priority in that is to defeat terror in all its forms, and until then make sure that aid workers are safe from the horrors of battle. That is currently the very proportionate targeting by Sri Lanka.

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<u>Letters</u>

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

July 18, 2008 Friday

First Edition

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Body

CLIMATE CHANGE

Earth sacrificed on economic altar

THE carbon pollution reduction scheme is fatally flawed. Federal Labor has concocted a half-baked scheme which seeks to resuscitate the economy, when the ghastly reality of objective science tells us our planet is the patient, under continued relentless attack from the toxic virus of modern growth economics. Climate change is just one of many human-induced impacts that have made the global environment so sick. By putting economic growth, somehow magically decarbonised, as a sacred goal, this scheme seeks to perversely preserve our unsustainable globalised consumer society.

None of the orthodox economic models of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Treasury or Garnaut are rooted in the physical realities of physics, thermodynamics or finite resources. These flawed models will continue to speak with great certainty about leading us to a sustainable future, when the sad reality is that they will lead us to accelerating self-destruction. Our survival depends on jettisoning suicidal neo-liberal economics, in favour of sidelined CSIRO modelling based on firm scientific principles. How bad does life under business-as-usual have to get before we snap out of our group delusion?

Michael Gunter, North Melbourne

The price of consumption

IF DECREASING the emission of greenhouse gases is a laudable policy objective, then we are beginning to see the inevitable impact of increased prices leading to reduced consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions. This will include reductions in discretionary expenditure items including power, transport and food, which are now becoming evident, impacting on rich and poor alike. The inevitable effect of carbon taxes is that everybody, rich and poor, must ultimately reduce their consumption of fossil fuels, and without compensating technological advances, living standards for all will fall as a result.

The stated intention of the Rudd Government now is for the "wealthy" to carry the burden for carbon taxes. Not only will the wealthy have to bear their own costs, but they must bear the costs of the poor as well. If one considers that the objective is to reduce the use of fossil fuels, there are limits to what you can do with compensation. Compensating the poor who will therefore not reduce consumption runs counter to the policy of reducing emissions. Why shouldn't the poor be reducing their consumption as well to save the planet?

Greg Angelo, Balwyn North

Climate politics 101

I THINK I have got a handle on Kevin '07 and this carbon trading thing. Australia is responsible for some 1% of carbon output so nothing we do to reduce this will fix global warming. On the other hand, if the rest of the world does nothing, Australia has had it, because we are on the continent most vulnerable to temperature rises on the planet.

So what we do about carbon has to be credible so that Kevin '07 can go plead with the rest of the world to reduce carbon output and save our bacon. That does not mean killing off the carbon polluters in one fell swoop and thereby wrecking our economy. That could bring the Coalition back to power at the next election and then nothing will be done to save our country from the destruction caused by rising temperatures.

Hans Paas, Castlemaine

More carrots, fewer sticks

THE not-very-green paper proposes a stick to make us cut down on petrol, but also a cushion to cover our backsides. Why don't they appease us with carrots? For instance, by providing more and better public transport. And taking the GST off public transport tickets rather than reducing fuel excise. And revising car registration fees using a sliding scale so hybrids incur zero fees and Hummer owners pay extra.

Colin Smith, St Kilda

Playing the fool

UNDER Kevin Rudd's emission reduction scheme, what incentive is there for the polluters to cut their emissions if they can pass all their extra costs to their customers? The scheme will create a new bloated bureaucracy to establish, monitor and police a law that will not create a single drop of extra rain. It merely proves the old saying that you can fool all the people some of the time.

Gert Silver, Kew

Abuse is a crime

I HAVE never understood why the victims and families of children abused by Catholic priests think they will be satisfied after complaining to the church hierarchy. Being fobbed off with platitudes about healing and receiving apologies from bishops who were eventually cornered into making admissions, is never going to help them get back to normal, if this is possible at all.

Why should any church be exempt from feeling the full weight of the law? These priests did not just sin, they broke the law. There are also laws that apply to aiding and abetting law-breakers. Perverting the course of justice would seem to apply in many cases where abusers have been protected.

Hundreds of millions of dollars of church offerings, collected at Mass from those seeking spiritual comfort, is a grotesque and insufficient redemption for the vile deeds perpetrated. For priests and some bishops to be seen in handcuffs, the same as other alleged criminals, would give the rest of us confidence that we are all equal under the law.

Roger Green, Ferntree Gully

Ripple effects

DOESN'T the church celebrate Jesus' pain and suffering every year? Isn't the ongoing division between Christian and Islamic religions something that has existed for more than a few years? A family that has been destroyed by the consequences of acknowledged sexual abuse by a Catholic priest is not some arbitrary reheating of yesterday's

sins for breakfast. I would challenge any parent in their situation to accept the ignorant and wilfully unkind words of Bishop Fisher (The Age, 17/7). He fails to understand the ripples generated by abuse. Many generations pay the price, not just the abused.

Lisa Dooley, South Melbourne

Scars still fresh

BISHOP Fisher, you say "we are enjoying the goodness of these young people (at the World Youth Day) and the hope for us doing these sorts of things better in the future" and "people are dwelling crankily on old wounds". How will these good things happen in the future if you continue to label survivors of sexual abuse by Catholic priests and brothers in this way?

They are not old wounds - they are new, ever present, being relived - every time survivors hear a priest, cardinal or whoever represents the Catholic Church show no respect for them or acknowledge the effect the abuse has had on their entire lives - in my case 40 years.

Name withheld by request

Alienated by church of man

I AM a woman of strong faith and a committed Catholic. I am impressed and inspired by the faith, commitment and energy of the young people attending World Youth Day (WYD). However, I am moved to write about the deep pain I experienced, as always, when confronted with the sea of men, leaders of the church, at the WYD Mass.

I wonder when these leaders will be moved to recognise and respect the true dignity and equality of <u>women</u> whom they exclude from participation in leadership and decision-making roles. What a different experience it would have been for the young <u>women</u> (and men) pilgrims to see a leadership truly shared by the church's <u>women</u> and men.

Until leaders of all religions offer <u>women</u> the respect of equal status, there will be implicit rationales for unjust treatment of <u>women</u>, including domination, exploitation, abuse and violence.

Marie R. Joyce, Kew

Connex and its cunning plan

WHILE being accosted by a rude and unfriendly ticket inspector this morning, it occurred to me why Connex and the Government employ such adversarial tactics, and it's the same reason we won't see tram conductors returning any time soon. Basically, they don't care if they lose passengers, er, I mean customers. The public transport system has enough passengers (too many in fact) and the operators feel they don't need to provide a reliable, friendly service in order to attract more - because they don't want any more.

More passengers just slow down the running of trains and trams that are already at capacity. Britain's (failed) train privatisation resulted in massive fare increases to drive down demand; Melbourne is choosing to use ticket inspectors to the same end.

Victor Rajewski, West Melbourne

Loopy logic

IT'S a strange world on Planet Connex. Mark Paterson (Letters, 16/7) agrees with the central argument of my report on rail capacity, then says it proves me wrong. The 1969 transport plan proposed building the City Loop, plus a series of suburban rail extensions. In the 1970s, rail managers said the suburban extensions couldn't go ahead until central city rail capacity was expanded by building the loop. When the loop opened in the 1980s, it had cost so much money that the suburban extensions were abandoned.

As the loop has been completed, and we are carrying far fewer trains and passengers than it was designed to handle, we should be building those suburban train lines. But Mr Paterson says we now need to build a second even more expensive city loop before we can have any extensions. As this will take until 2020, we'll have to wait decades before anything happens. By that time, Perth will have a bigger rail system than Melbourne, including a line to the airport.

Paul Mees, senior lecturer in transport planning, RMIT University

On the buses

WE'RE on our annual pilgrimage to Boston, US. Took the 77 bus yesterday from Arlington to Harvard Square - 40 cents each way on seniors' rates. A bus about every 10 minutes. Bus drivers don't handle money. There are three options for fare payment: by correct amount in coin, by ticket into slot, by electronic beep (by far the most favoured means of payment). Simple, uncomplicated. On the return trip the bus loaded quickly and efficiently at Harvard station. We were on our way in no time. Maybe our Transport Minister could include Boston in her next study trip.

Richard J. Stratford, Portarlington

Too much equity

WHEN I read about the call for universities to place less emphasis on the ENTER score (The Age, 17/7) I thought it was a joke. That's exactly what universities are becoming. It's all good and well to believe in equity for all students; to enable anybody the chance to succeed. However, reducing university entry to a matter of vague interviews, subjective judgements by anonymous, unchecked, mediocre administrators and obscure pity-based entry systems is not acceptable as a panacea to all of our social problems.

If you want a system where you give everybody a fair shot at university, then why not get serious about student welfare and youth allowance criteria? There's no point getting a student from a poor background into university if you won't support them to survive.

Beware high-achieving students! Yet another blow to meritocracy and hard work by the red herring factory and their bleeding hearts.

Grant Ross, Highton

Wine not?

RECENTLY Prince Charles had his car converted to run on wine. Why has the Rudd Government overlooked a widespread introduction of this technology to Australia? It could mitigate our petrol woes and tackle the serious issue of binge drinking. Talk about killing two birds with the one stone!

Jake McLaughlan, Malvern

Out of date

GERMAINE Greer (Comment & Debate, 17/7) largely misses the point of the Obama candidacy. Her perspective on the US election is mired in the outdated politics of the baby boom generation, where issues are framed in simplistic black and white terms and political consensus-building is viewed as "flip-flopping". Camelot represents promise for the future, not comparisons to the past. A new generation of US voters, rejecting the alienating "you're either with us or against us" world view, fuelled the Obama campaign's improbable victory over Clinton's divisive baby boomer candidacy.

Greer's take on racial and ethnic issues is equally outdated. With 46 million Hispanics and growing percentages of mixed-race and multi-ethnic citizens, US politics are simply no longer black and white. Obama not only literally embodies this change, his consensus-oriented approach to complex issues springs forth from it. He, therefore, is indeed "his own man", he just does not fit into Dr Greer's old-school categories.

Kevin Luten, Williamstown

Governor Greer?

GREER is invariably not only thought-provoking and infuriating, but also entertaining. I think she should be allotted a spot on telly. America has Judge Judy - how about Gov Greer?

Benjamin Martin, Prahran

Sad commentary

ISRAEL receives the coffins containing its two dead soldiers and despairs over the loss of their lives; in exchange <u>Hezbollah</u> receives a terrorist convicted of grisly murders and the remains of other "successful" militants and rejoices in their valour. What a sad, pointed commentary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Alan Freedman, East St Kilda

Hitler ring any bells?

NIGEL Wheeler (Letters, 17/7) believes Christianity has been a negative force in the world and quotes the example of the Crusades and the Inquisition. These were indeed a corruption of the Christian message. Hopefully the church has repented of this period of history and moved on. Should we wish to examine genocide in contemporary times the secular humanists are a real standout. How about Hitler, Pol Pot, or Stalin, just to scratch the surface of recent history?

Lance Sterling, Burwood

SUBMITTING LETTERS

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Body

INTERNATIONAL

IRAQI FORCES TESTING TRUCE

Are Struck by Three Bombs

A column of Iraqi armor set out to test a new truce in the Sadr City area of Baghdad between the militias and the Iraqi government by venturing north on a major thoroughfare that borders the Shiite enclave. The Iraqi forces had barely started to move before they were struck by three roadside bombs. It was a vivid demonstration that a durable cease-fire in the densely populated neighborhood, where intense fighting has been going on for more than a month, has yet to be achieved. PAGE A11

FIGHTING IN LEBANESE MOUNTAINS

Fierce clashes broke out in the mountains east of Beirut between supporters of the Western-backed government and followers of <u>Hezbollah</u>, the militant group backed by Iran. The fighting followed overnight clashes in the northern city of Tripoli that left at least two people dead. Beirut, where there had been heavy fighting since Wednesday, was calm. Near Beirut, a relative mourned a Druse youth who he said was killed by pro-government fighters. PAGE A11

ON THE REBEL ATTACK IN SUDAN

The day after the Sudanese government quickly dispensed with an attack by Darfurian rebels on the heavily fortified capital, Khartoum, the question many people are asking is, "What were the rebels thinking?" But beyond the fact that the rebels attacked at all, Jeffrey Gettleman writes in a news analysis article, the most surprising aspect of the attack was how far they got. PAGE A6

END NEAR FOR U.S. BASE IN ECUADOR

To the Bush administration, the American air station in Manta, Ecuador, is a critical component in the war on drugs in the Andes. But to Ecuadoreans, Manta is a flash point in a regional debate over the limits of American power in Latin America. If President Rafael Correa, whose father was once imprisoned in the United States on smuggling charges, gets his way, the base will be gone, and, with it, one of the most festering sources of controversy in Washington's long war on drugs. PAGE A7

CHAVEZ MARRIAGE IS POLITICAL FODDER

President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela is faced with problems like rising inflation, a diplomatic crisis with neighboring Colombia and defections of officials from his Socialist Party to the political opposition. But few issues have dogged Mr. Chavez recently as much as his legal battle with the former first lady, Marisabel Rodriguez. The strife is more than a personal legal matter: Ms. Rodriguez has become a political figure as well, making a custody dispute over their daughter fodder for the country's polarized politics. PAGE A6

SEVEN DIE IN KASHMIR ATTACK

A long lull in violence in the Indian-administered province of Kashmir broke as a gun battle between militants and Indian soldiers left seven dead, according to Indian authorities. The clashes began when militants stormed the home of a local politician near the city of Jammu, on the border with Pakistan, killing him and his wife before a gunfight broke out with security forces. It is unclear why the politician would have been a target. PAGE A11

NATIONAL

A GOVERNOR DAMAGED

By Links to a Fund-Raiser

Antoin Rezko, who is the focus of a corruption trial in Illinois, came to national attention after he was linked to Senator Barack Obama. But Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich of Illinois, who also had his eyes set on the White House, has been feeling the fallout from his connection to Mr. Rezko, as his name and administration have come up repeatedly, described as participants in kickback schemes in which Mr. Rezko is accused. PAGE A15

NO BREAKFAST IN BED FOR CLINTON

On Mother's Day, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton did not take the day off, campaigning through rainy West Virginia as her prospects to become the Democratic presidential nominee become more of a long shot. With her daughter, Chelsea, in tow, Mrs. Clinton was hoping to win over mothers who see in her a chance to break through the ultimate glass ceiling. PAGE A16

A HIGH-TECH ANSWER TO HOOKY

Dallas has the seventh-worst graduation rates of the country's large school districts. In trying to keep track of its truant students, Bryan Adams High School, on the city's east side, has begun fitting some of the chronically absent with G.P.S. monitors attached to belts. "We're always yearning for something tangible to use as tools to teach self-efficacy," a staff member said. "Everyone's so overwhelmed. We'll try anything." PAGE A17

A GANG IN LA JOLLA?

Five young men from the affluent beachside community of La Jolla, San Diego, are charged with first-degree murder for beating to death a 24-year-old professional surfer, Emery Kauanui Jr., whose memorial service is pictured above. Because the men belonged to a beach clique called the Bird Rock Bandits, prosecutors are also seeking to apply tough state laws that apply to criminal street gangs. "They weren't gangsters," says one local surfer. "They were gangsta chic." PAGE A13

BUSINESS

RETHINKING PRIMETIME

In the Age of TiVo

Where have all the viewers gone? Six million fewer people tuned in to television during sweeps week in May, and with the exception of Fox, all of the major broadcast networks have watched their ratings dip. But many of those lost

viewers are still out there -- if watching on their own terms thanks to TiVo, cable on demand and streaming online video -- leaving networks struggling to figure out what to do next. PAGE C1

CRAIG LOOKS BEYOND THE WEB

Craigslist, the no-frills Web site that is also a clearinghouse for just about everything and people in search of it, is the seventh-most popular site in the United States. And yes, there is a real Craig -- Craig Newmark, the site's founder. Lately he is looking at life beyond his list, which includes endorsing Barack Obama's presidential campaign and financing investigative journalism. And then there's the little issue of the site's legal fight with eBay. PAGE C1

EVEN SEX IS NOT RECESSION-PROOF

Playboy lost money in its first quarter, which it blamed on the sluggish economy. But the company is also grappling with the fact that what it sells is no longer a scarcity. "Their model worked very well when what they sold was hard to come by," said one consultant. "But now they're living in a world where there are zero distribution costs because of the Web and a tremendous variety of sexual material that is limited only by your ability to search for it." PAGE C4

THE NETWORKS' 52-WEEK SEASON

Now that there are no longer three networks and millions of eyeballs have migrated elsewhere, the upfronts -- the annual events where networks hyped their fall offerings for advertisers -- were in need of an update. They are ordering fewer pilots, and doing away with the lavish parties with series stars. Instead, they will shift to a year-round perspective instead of the traditional September to May season, and put new focus on the Internet and mobile devices. PAGE C6

Obituaries

DIANA BARNATO WALKER, 90

She was the granddaughter of Barney Barnato, a co-founder of the De Beers mining company in Johannesburg, South Africa, but left the debutante's life to become an aviator. She was one of the "Atagirls," a group of <u>women</u> who were pilots that delivered war aircraft to squadrons across Britain during World War II. PAGE A19

JOSEPH R. EGAN, 53

An M.I.T.-trained engineer, he became a lawyer who led Nevada's legal campaign to block a nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain. He wrote an obituary weeks ago that was posted on his law firm's Web site after his death, which said that he had arranged for his ashes to be spread at Yucca Mountain, in southern Nevada, with the words, "radwaste buried hereonly over my dead body." PAGE A19

NEW YORK REPORT

THE THRILL IS GONE,

Handlers of Love Logo Say

In business, as in romance, familiarity often breeds indifference. Consider the Playboy logo, a symbol of a certain kind of male sophistication in the 1950s, yet today, owing to promiscuous licensing, it seems associated mainly with taxicab air fresheners. Now ponder a far more difficult case: the "I NY" logo. The state tourism board has announced a revamped marketing campaign centered on the slogan. Inherent in the campaign is a drive to reclaim the symbol itself, which has become devalued, as marketers term it, through overuse. PAGE A21

A MOST REFINED BARFLY

Show up at the Cafe Des Artistes anytime after 6:30 most evenings, and you might notice a woman nursing a glass of red wine at the bar, her carriage erect, her suit jacket immaculate, her gaze resting nowhere in particular.

She is Claire Oesch, 93, most likely the city's oldest barfly. "I came and I got stuck," she said, still speaking with a strong Swiss-German accent after 60 years in the United States. PAGE A21

Sports

MINI GOLF ENTHUSIASTS

Take Whimsy Very Seriously

Most people may consider miniature golf as a leisurely pursuit with windmills and scary clown faces, but there is a small group of people -- particularly the members of the United States Pro Mini Golf Tour -- who take it very, very seriously. The tour has a 50-page rule book (with an antidoping clause) and a dress code (collared shirts, no sandals). "We get that all the time -- people who don't know that there are professional mini golfers," one tour member said. "I don't get upset. What am I going to do, take umbrage?" PAGE D5

A GRIDIRON CAREER TAKES ITS TOLL

Reggie Williams was a football star at Dartmouth before he spent 14 years in the N.F.L., and all that football took a toll on his knees. Now Williams, whose name was floated as a candidate for the job of league commissioner a few years ago, is having one of his surgically repaired knees replaced, and coming to the grips with the possibility that he may lose a leg. But he says he has no regrets about playing football. Sports of The Times, George Vecsey. PAGE D2

NEW CABLE HOME FOR U.S. OPEN

Beginning next year, ESPN and the Tennis Channel will be the new cable home of the U.S. Open, snatching the Grand Slam event from the USA Network. For the five-year-old Tennis Channel in particular, the event is a major coup. "Two years ago, we had no majors," said Ken Solomon, the chairman of the Tennis Channel. "We're a little punch-drunk, and I feel like the guy who's asked how you feel winning the Super Bowl." PAGE D2

CULTURE

JAMES FREY WRITES A NOVEL

With Facts Thrown In

When the world last saw James Frey, the author was being eviscerated by Oprah Winfrey after it was revealed that his best-selling memoir, "A Million Little Pieces," was largely made up. Mr. Frey is back, with "Bright Shiny Morning," a book that is openly fictitious this time, and full of run-on sentences, unconventional punctuation and an occasional urban fact thrown in for good measure. Janet Maslin says it's also pretty good. PAGE B1

ERYKAH BADU AT RADIO CITY

Between songs at Radio City Music Hall Erykah Badu leaned over a computer and some electronic equipment to set off burbling, swooping noises straight out of sci-fi B movies, as if she were tuning in the concert from another dimension. Maybe she was. Jon Pareles writes that Ms. Badu's Vortex Tour was a visit to her eccentric pop cosmos, which encompasses silliness and hard-nosed realism, idealism and bawdiness, choreography and whim, R & B and hip-hop, funk and jazz. PAGE B1

BRINGING 'ELECTRIC' BACK ONLINE

Hey, You Guyyys! "The Electric Company," the popular PBS children's show that went off the air in 1977, is getting a reboot, with a new series set to make its debut in 2009. The television landscape has changed considerably since then, with a glut of educational programming aimed at young viewers. But the network says it's taken notice. "It's the old one mixed with 'High School Musical' and a Dr Pepper commercial," said a PBS executive. PAGE B1

A MUSICIANS' COMMUNITY CENTER

The Orchestra of St. Luke's has its eye on a permanent home in Hell's Kitchen that would also double as a rehearsal space for other freelance groups. The orchestra is expected to announce its plans to buy half of a building that's part of the Baryshnikov Arts Center. "We want it to be this wonderful hub, almost a community center for the musicians," the orchestra's president said. PAGE B1

A LOOK AT NEW CD'S

T Bone Burnett's "Tooth of Crime" is a moody new release filled with ominous foreboding and black humor, writes Jon Pareles. Plus, reviews of new works from Foxy Brown, Brian Blade & the Fellowship Band, and Vetiver. PAGE B3

Jimmy Fallon to Replace O'Brien B10

EDITORIAL

SOCIAL SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

Some in Congress are pressing to make the E-Verify system mandatory for all employers. But there are serious questions about the costs and collateral damage of such an expansion. PAGE A22

SAYING NO TO EVERYTHING

House prices have collapsed to a point where they are creating a negative spiral: price drops provoke foreclosures, which in turn provoke even lower prices, and so on. The danger now is not too much government intervention but too little. PAGE A22

CRANDALL CANYON'S SHAME

There will be no peace for the victims of last summer's Crandall Canyon mine disaster -- and no deterrence of future disasters -- until there is a criminal investigation. PAGE A22

OP-ED

WILLIAM KRISTOL

Even though the security of Israel is very much at risk, the good news is that, unlike in the 1930s, the Jews are able to defend themselves, and the United States is willing to fight for freedom. PAGE A23

PAUL KRUGMAN

Traditionally, denunciations of speculators come from the left of the political spectrum. In the case of oil prices, however, the most vociferous proponents of the view that it's all the speculators' fault have been conservatives -- people whom you wouldn't normally expect to see warning about the nefarious activities of investment banks and hedge funds. PAGE A23

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Body

INTERNATIONAL

MISSILE FIRED ON U.S. HELICOPTER

Flying Over Sadr City

A surface-to air missile was fired on Saturday at an American Apache helicopter flying over the Sadr City section of Baghdad, American military officials said. The attack, which had not been disclosed previously, represents the first time that a helicopter had come under missile attack in Sadr City since fighting erupted in the Shiite enclave in March. The missile missed the aircraft, but the episode was sufficiently worrisome that the American military changed the route of an aerial tour of Baghdad it had arranged for a group of reporters. PAGE A11

SUDAN BRIEFLY ARRESTS ISLAMIST

Hassan al-Turabi, a flamboyant Islamist leader who was once friends with Osama bin Laden, was arrested on suspicion of fomenting a rebellion. Sudanese officials released Mr. Turabi from jail by the end of the day, but they said he might have helped a rebel force from Darfur that staged a bold attack on Khartoum, the capital, on Saturday. Mr. Turabi's Islamic political party is widely known to have links with the Darfurian rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement. PAGE A11

DALAI LAMA SAYS TALKS TO RESUME

The Dalai Lama said that formal talks between his envoys and their Chinese counterparts were expected to resume next month, even as Chinese officials kept up their public denunciations of the Tibetan spiritual leader. For the last two months, the Dalai Lama has witnessed from his perch in India a historic outburst of protest in his homeland, but he has been accused by officials in Beijing for trying to split the nation and was even derided as a "wolf in monk's clothing." PAGE A8

MEXICO ARRESTS 6 IN OFFICER'S DEATH

Six people with links to a drug kingpin have been arrested and charged in the killing of the acting federal police chief, investigators announced. Investigators said the group that carried out the assassination was led by a federal police officer, who was arrested with several incriminating documents. Among them were lists of cars used by top commanders in the federal police and records of drug shipments. PAGE A8

LEBANESE ARMY PLANS TO USE FORCE

The Lebanese Army announced it would start using force to stop fighting between supporters of the governing coalition and the <u>Hezbollah</u>-led opposition, a step the army had not taken during almost a week of sectarian violence. The announcement was made as violence eased across Lebanon, despite some renewed street battles in the north. Tensions were still high in the Chouf mountains overlooking Beirut, pictured above. PAGE A11

Putin's Cabinet Choices A9

Russian Curator Subpoenaed A9

National

PAYING OUT CASH

To Turn Out the Vote

Unable to keep pace with Senator Barack Obama's grass-roots political organizing efforts, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's election campaign turned to "street money" in Ohio and Texas -- an old-style and controversial political tool in which people are given cash to round up votes for candidates on Election Day. The Obama campaign gave street money in those states as well, but the Clinton camp three times as much. Because street money is most effective on the precinct level, it is hard to tell how much a factor it was in the outcomes. PAGE A18

A SMALL TOWN WITH NEW OPTIONS

The tiny town of Ewing, Ky. (pop. 300) is trying to figure out what to do with a \$12,000 windfall thanks to the vagaries of law and fate. What the town really needs is a sewer system, but that will run about \$6 million. But what about spending the \$12,000 on a new park to replace the social spaces that have been gone since the barbershop and beer hall closed? Or how about sidewalks for the streets near the elementary school? PAGE A13

THE NEW GUY LOOKS FAMILIAR

The day after Jeffrey S. Raikes steps down from his current job, he will take over the reins of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's largest nonprofit agency -- which, incidentally, was created by his former boss. Mr. Raikes joined Microsoft in 1981, as employee No. 105 (his wife, Tricia, was employee No. 75). He will replace Patty Stonesifer, who asked to be paid \$1 a year. Mr. Raikes will be paid more than that, though the foundation would not say how much. PAGE A16

HEARING ON VACCINE-AUTISM LINK

Another hearing at the United States Court of Federal Claims is being held to determine whether the preservative thimerosal, which is added to vaccines, played a role in thousands of children becoming autistic. The court is weighing whether the government should pay millions to the parents of autistic children. Although no major studies have found a link between the vaccine and autism, the parents have persisted in their legal fight. PAGE A14

Obituaries

MURRAY JARVIK, 84

A psychopharmacologist at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, he did not know that his studies on the hallucinogenic drug LSD were being financed by the Central Intelligence Agency, which wanted to know whether the substance could be used as a truth serum. He also played a major part in discovering the role nicotine played in smoking. PAGE B7

IRENA SENDLER, 98

A Polish Catholic woman, she was head of the children's bureau of Zegota, an underground group that smuggled 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw ghetto in World War II. PAGE B7

Business

ONCE A LONG SHOT,

Cablevision Buys Newsday

Cablevision Systems -- the Long Island-based company that owns Madison Square Garden, the New York Knicks and the New York Rangers -- finalized its deal to buy Newsday, the Long Island newspaper, from the Tribune Company. Cablevision paid \$650 million for a 97 percent stake in the paper, and its bid was considered a long shot until the News Corporation withdrew its offer over the weekend. PAGE C1

NISSAN TO MAKE ELECTRIC CARS

Nissan is trying to take the lead in the race to develop environmentally friendly vehicles, and it is expected to announce it will sell an all-electric, zero-emission vehicle in the United States and Japan by 2010. Carlos Ghosn, Nissan's chief executive, said that the company sped up its plans to develop a battery-powered vehicle because of higher gas prices and environmental concerns. PAGE C1

AN UNUSUAL CRITIC OF WALL STREET

Kenneth C. Griffin runs the Citadel Investment Group, a \$20 billion hedge fund -- which makes him an unlikely proponent of regulation on Wall Street. But the usually mild-mannered billionaire has been outspoken in his suggestions on how to fix the financial markets: government oversight of broker dealers and maybe even of hedge funds like his. PAGE C1

HISPANICS LOSE GRIP ON PROSPERITY

The economic downturn has hit Hispanics especially hard, as the demand for American housing, which generated millions of jobs for new immigrants willing to work physically demanding jobs in construction, has dried up. Towns like Dalton, Ga., that drew new immigrants to work in factories have been rocked by home foreclosures -- part of a trend of declining homeownership among Hispanics that experts say is likely to continue. PAGE C1

METRO

WOMAN ACCUSED IN SEX RING

Is Expected to Plead Guilty

Temeka Rachelle Lewis is accused of serving as the booker for the Emperors Club V.I.P., the prostitution ring that had Eliot Spitzer as a client. She is expected later this week to plead guilty to money laundering conspiracy and conspiracy to commit interstate travel in aid of racketeering. Some experts say that the way the prosecution of Ms. Lewis is handled could indicate how the government plans to handle Mr. Spitzer's case, if at all. PAGE B1

NEW YORK'S BLUESTONE BOOM

A demand for bluestone for old-fashioned sidewalks and new rustic patios -- a \$100 million industry -- has spurred the opening of scores of new mines in upstate New York over the last six years. The new quarries prompted New York State to experiment with mining permits to rein in renegade miners from out of state, but also to change the habits of independent-minded quarrymen, who often let their old vehicles rust in the places where they died. PAGE B1

Science

GOING OUT ON A LIMB

To Remove a Child's Tumor

The golf-ball-size tumor in 3-year-old Grace Webster's brain is called a hypothalamic hamartoma, which afflicts only a few thousand people in the world. Though it is benign, it can lead to dozens of seizures, some of which bizarrely mimick laughter or rage. Only five years ago, a child like Grace would not have any recourse, and many children were institutionalized. But a new procedure is giving children like Grace a chance at a normal life. PAGE F1

MAPPING NATURE'S PUNCH LINE

The duck-billed, egg-laying platypus is a mammal, and also, the joke goes, proof that God has a sense of humor. Because of the animal's quirkiness, the announcement by scientists that they had mapped the platypus genome was greeted with much fanfare, but Natalie Angier says that what was more shocking was how ordinary its genome is. Now researchers hope to use the new information as a springboard to understand mammalian evolution. PAGE F1

A SURGEON'S UNLIKELY JOURNEY

Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa is a neurosurgeon and teacher at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine by way of Harvard. Or maybe by way of Mexicali. Twenty years ago, he was an illegal immigrant, toiling in the vegetable fields in California. "Someone asked how I'd come to Harvard," he said. "I hopped the fence," I said. Everyone laughed. They thought I was joking." PAGE F2

Greener Asthma Inhalers F5

Well

GOING ON A GUIDED TOUR

Of the Human Body

Doctors tell us to focus on the basics to stay well as we age: eat right, exercise and keep cholesterol and blood pressure in check. But what else can be done to stay well as we get older? Doctors share the best ways for <u>women</u> to lower their risk for breast cancer and keep skin looking young, and basic tips to care for muscles, bones, and joints. PAGE H1

ARTS

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

A Lot, as It Turns Out

In her book "Girls Like Us," Sheila Weller weaves the biographies of Carole King, Joni Mitchell and Carly Simon into a post-feminist history. Ms. Weller reveals all three <u>women</u> as heavily indebted to traditional pop and its quasi-religious faith in romantic love. But they also belonged to a generation of <u>women</u> for whom the belief in love as the answer coincided with the <u>women</u>'s liberation movement, and an unvoiced question suggested by the book is whether romantic love and promiscuity are compatible. A review by Stephen Holden. PAGE E1

BROADWAY BRACES FOR THE TONYS

The theater season will soon come to a close, and the cocktail parties and back-door politicking to follow will culminate in the Tony ceremony in June. The giants that smashed their way onto Broadway -- the \$16 million-plus Mel Brooks show, the \$15 million-plus Disney show and the joint production by the stagehands' union and producers' league that reportedly cost the city almost \$40 million -- were all met with similar responses: cries of derision, grumbles of annoyance and shrugs of indifference. Plays, meanwhile, flourished. A wrap-up of the year's offerings. PAGE E1

DEBTORS OF 1978 RESONATE IN 2008

"Banks are loaning money right, left and center," a <u>female</u> character says with easy confidence. The words resonate with grim humor in the 30th-anniversary revival of Sam Shepard's "Curse of the Starving Class" at the American Conservatory Theater. The desperate maneuvers of the play's feuding spouses as they try to outwit creditors and lawyers and unload the family property assume a bleak new relevance, Charles Isherwood writes. PAGE E1

Sports

A SEASON IN WAITING LINE

For the N.B.A.

Thanks to an age limit imposed by the N.B.A., O.J. Mayo headed to college, landing at U.S.C. as one of the top high school basketball recruits in the country. Mayo is now in the middle of a scandal that he was paid thousands of dollars and other benefits from an agent. "There should be a dialogue on what the N.C.A.A. can do about financial temptation for future pros biding their time in college because the rules won't allow them to leave, or force them to come," writes Harvey Araton. PAGE D1

SISTERS IN HELMETS AND PADS

Jennifer Blum was not allowed to play football with boys growing up, but she still wanted to play. She was not alone. Decades later, Blum is a stalwart on the New York Sharks of the Independent <u>Women</u>'s Football League."What we'd like is to earn a living at this," the team's president said. "Boys and men have no idea how lucky they are to have this just handed to them. It breaks my heart." PAGE D2

Editorial

THE MYTH OF VOTER FRAUD

There is no evidence that voting by noncitizens is a significant problem. There is ample evidence that a requirement of proof of citizenship will keep many eligible voters from voting. PAGE A20

NOT A TIME FOR RIVALRY

After an auspicious start, the leaders of Pakistan's new coalition government have let political rivalries thwart their efforts to rebuild their battered country. They need to remember that the only one likely to gain is the man they hoped to marginalize: President Pervez Musharraf. PAGE A20

Op-Ed

DAVID BROOKS

My guess is that the atheism debate is going to be a sideshow. The cognitive revolution is not going to end up undermining faith in God, it's going end up challenging faith in the Bible. PAGE A21

BOB HERBERT

No one knows whether voters in the so-called millennial generation can swing this year's presidential election. But they will be a big force in the years to come and may be a big problem for conservatives. PAGE A2

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Graphic

PHOTOS

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Body

MOVIES

Ratings and running times are in parentheses; foreign films have English subtitles. Full reviews of all current releases, movie trailers, showtimes and tickets: nytimes.com/movies.

'ALICE'S HOUSE' (No rating, 1:30, in Portuguese) Chico Teixeira's languid, libidinous film observes a messy Sao Paolo apartment where Alice (the wonderful Carla Ribas) copes with an ailing mother, three teenage sons and an unfaithful husband. Simultaneously delicate and earthy, "Alice's House" anchors its soap opera plotlines -- adultery, avarice and incipient blindness -- in the tired body and vaguely ruined features of its dreamy heroine.

(Jeannette Catsoulis)

'BAB'AZIZ: THE PRINCE WHO CONTEMPLATED HIS SOUL' (No rating, 1:36, in Arabic and Persian) The third feature by the Tunisian filmmaker and poet Nacer Khemir follows the elderly Bab'Aziz (Parviz Shahinkhou) and his young granddaughter (Maryam Hamid) as they travel through the desert en route to a conference of dervishes that takes place every three decades. To take his granddaughter's mind off hardships -- including a fierce sandstorm and treacherous strangers -- Bab'Aziz entertains her with a Narcissus-like legend, about a young prince who becomes obsessed with staring at his reflection in a pool of water and neglects his duties. (Matt Zoller Seitz)

'BEAUFORT' (No rating, 2:05, in Hebrew) Joseph Cedar's tense drama takes place at a fortress in Lebanon captured by Israel in the 1980s. The last group of Israeli soldiers is preparing to withdraw, under attack from <u>Hezbollah</u> and with decided ambivalence. The movie's earnest sobriety helps it through passages of tedium and occasional bouts of combat-picture cliche. (A. O. Scott)

'CARAMEL' (PG, 1:36, in Arabic and French) Set in a Beirut beauty salon, Nicole Labaki's debut feature presents a charming, if somewhat familiar, tableau of *female* friendship and mild melodrama. (Scott)

'CASSANDRA'S DREAM' (PG-13, 1:45) A well-matched Ewan McGregor and Colin Farrell play brothers in blood and deed in Woody Allen's London-based, dark-hearted, effective tragedy. (Manohla Dargis)

'CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR' (PG-13, 1:36) Tom Hanks plays the hard-drinking, skirt-chasing Texas congressman who helped finance the Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation in the 1980s. Julia Roberts and Philip Seymour

Hoffman are terrific as his co-conspirators in this remarkably jaunty excursion into cold war covert operations. (Scott)

'FIRST SUNDAY' (PG-13, 1:36) Ice Cube and Tracy Morgan rob a church and find redemption. Meanwhile Katt Williams, as the flamboyant choir director, steals the movie. (Scott)

'FOOL'S GOLD' (PG-13, 1:52) Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey go swimming. (Scott)

'4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS' (No rating, 1:53, in Romanian) In this ferocious, unsentimental film from the Romanian writer and director Cristian Mungiu the camera doesn't follow the action, it expresses consciousness itself. This consciousness -- alert to the world and insistently alive -- is embodied by a young university student who in the late 1980s helps her roommate with an illegal abortion in Ceausescu's Romania. It's a pitiless, violent story that in its telling becomes a haunting and haunted intellectual and aesthetic achievement. (Dargis)

'HANNAH MONTANA & MILEY CYRUS: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS CONCERT' (G, 1:14) This 3-D concert movie, offering musical highlights of Miley Cyrus's recent sellout tour, offers little in the way of revealing backstage glimpses of the star. But that won't bother your daughter if she's a "Hannah Montana" fan. Good luck getting tickets. (Andy Webster)

'HOW SHE MOVE' (PG-13, 1:34) This feature by the director Ian Iqbal Rashid ("Touch of Pink"), about a disaffected young woman competing in dance contests, is the latest incarnation of the up-by-your-bootstraps musical drama. There's nary a twist you don't see coming. But the film's strong acting, spectacular dance routines and culturally specific details turn cliche into catharsis. It's the sort of film that sends you home with a spring in your step. (Seitz)

'HOW TO ROB A BANK' (No rating, 1:21 minutes) This caper film spoof with a slacker sensibility suggests a clever half-hour sketch extended into feature-length tedium.

(Stephen Holden)

'IN BRUGES' (R, 1:47) An amusing trifle from the potty-mouthed playwright Martin McDonagh about two Irish hitmen (the very fine Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson) and their nuttier boss (an even better Ralph Fiennes). The characters talk a blue streak beautifully, but Mr. McDonagh has yet to find the nuance and poetry that make his red images signify with commensurate sizzle and pop.

(Dargis)

'JUNO' (PG-13, 1:31) A sharply written and acted coming-of-age comedy, starring the remarkable Ellen Page as Juno MacGuff, a teenager who deals with her unanticipated pregnancy in unexpected ways. (Scott)

'LIVE AND BECOME' (No rating, 2:20, in Amharic, Hebrew and French) Fundamental issues of ethnic and religious identity and the agony of exile go to the heart of "Live and Become," an intermittently compelling swatch of recent Israeli history filtered through the experience of an African immigrant. With epic aspirations that are only partly realized, the movie tries to be something like a contemporary "Exodus" from an outsider's point of view. (Holden)

'NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN' (R, 2:02) Mean, violent and impeccable, Joel and Ethan Coen's adaptation of a pulpy, compact novel by Cormac McCarthy lives and breathes in the central performances of Tommy Lee Jones, Josh Brolin and Javier Bardem, who chase one another, \$2 million and metaphysical truth through the Texas back country. (Scott)

'PERSEPOLIS' (PG-13, 1:35, in French) Marjane Satrapi's adaptation of her graphic novel-memoir is a free-spirited coming-of-age story, beautifully drawn and voiced by a formidable trio of French movie stars. (Scott)

'PRAYING WITH LIOR' (No rating, 1:28) Filmed in a close-knit Jewish Reconstructionist community in Philadelphia, "Praying With Lior" documents the extraordinary life of Lior Liebling, a rabbi's son with Down

syndrome and an obsessive love of prayer. But while family and friends marvel over Lior's putative spirituality, the director, Ilana Trachtman, patiently teases out the tricky dynamics of a family dealing with a disabled child. (Catsoulis)

'THE SAVAGES' (R, 1:53) Tamara Jenkins's beautifully nuanced tragicomedy involves two floundering souls -- a middle-aged brother and sister played with force and feeling by Philip Seymour Hoffman and Laura Linney -- who are suddenly left to care for their infirm father (Philip Bosco). There isn't a single moment of emotional guff or sentimentality in "The Savages," a film that periodically caused me to wince, but also left me with a sense of acute pleasure, even joy. (Dargis)

'STILL LIFE' (No rating, 1:48, in Mandarin) A modern master of postmodern discontent, Jia Zhang-ke is among the most strikingly gifted filmmakers working today. In his documentary-inflected fictions he weighs the human cost of China's shift from state-controlled communism to state-sanctioned capitalism, a price paid in the blood and sweat of people who have, paradoxically, inspired him to create works of sublime, soulful art -- works of art like "Still Life." (Dargis)

'SUMMER PALACE' (No rating, 2:20, in Mandarin and German) Lou Ye's sweeping, spirited portrait of Chinese college students before and after Tiananmen Square has the scope of an epic and the rhythms of a pop song. Lei Hao gives a fierce, uninhibited performance as the film's passionate, impulsive heroine, a girl from the provinces who arrives at Beijing University in 1988. (Scott)

'TEETH' (R, 1:27) Clever and crude, this teenage horror movie spoof follows the misadventures of a mutant teen angel unknowingly afflicted with the mythical condition known as vagina dentata (a toothed vagina). (Holden)

'THERE WILL BE BLOOD' (R, 2:38) Paul Thomas Anderson's epic American nightmare tells a story of greed and envy of biblical proportions set against the backdrop of the Southern California oil boom of the late-19th- and early-20th centuries. There is no God but money in this oil-rich desert, and his messenger is Daniel Plainview, a petroleum speculator played by a monstrous and shattering Daniel Day-Lewis. (Dargis)

'UNTRACEABLE' (R, 1:40) Morally duplicitous torture porn: how else to describe this bleak, rain-washed horror thriller, whose predatory villain streams live video of his murders on his own popular Web site, killwithme.com. (Holden)

'U2 3D' (G, 1:25) The musical documentary "U2 3D," which stitches together performances by this Irish rock band during a recent tour of South America, brazenly ignores the usual stipulations about making a 3-D film, to thrilling effect. The movie's co-directors, Mark Pellington and Catherine Owens, layer the screen with multiple planes of information: long shots and medium shots of the musicians; images of the crowd; close-up details of graphics from the big screen that the band performs in front of that make the designs abstract and merge them with the performers. Thanks to the clarity of the movie's format, digital 3-D, the result is not a confusing mishmash of images but a musical/experimental work that visually simulates the sensation of thinking. (Seitz)

'VINCE VAUGHN'S WILD WEST COMEDY SHOW: 30 DAYS AND 30 NIGHTS -- HOLLYWOOD TO THE HEARTLAND' (R, 1:40) This amorphous, mild-mannered tour documentary imagines itself a contemporary equivalent of rootin'- tootin' traveling entertainments like "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" show. That's a tall comparison to draw. (Holden)

'A WALK TO BEAUTIFUL' (No rating, 1:25, in English, Amharic and Oromiffa) This documentary, about the mistreatment of mothers suffering from birth injuries in Ethiopia, starts out quietly furious, detailing how its <u>female</u> subjects were ostracized by their villages, husbands, siblings, even parents. While the narrative of "Beautiful" seems straightforward -- "<u>Women</u> suffer and then get better" -- the film is a complex and quietly devastating indictment of chauvinist societies that see <u>women</u> as lovers, mothers and servants, and treat anyone who can't fulfill those roles as a nonperson. (Seitz) 'WELCOME HOME ROSCOE JENKINS' (PG-13, 1:54) This comedy about a talk show host (Martin Lawrence) revisiting his relatives down south is just a shaggy diversion that gives its energetic star and its populous, accomplished supporting cast (including James Earl Jones as Papa Jenkins, Margaret Avery as Mamma Jenkins, and Cedric the Entertainer and Mo'Nique as the hero's siblings) a chance to

clown around. But it's a cut above other films of its type because every scene is packed with details that suggest that the film's writer and director, Malcolm D. Lee ("The Best Man"), is working overtime to smuggle life into formula. (Seitz)

'THE WITNESSES' (No rating, 1:52, in French) Andre Techine's light-handed ensemble drama looks back to 1984, when the AIDS epidemic forces a group of sexually free-spirited friends -- straight, gay and bisexual -- to examine their relationships. This beautifully acted film takes the long view of people faced with a catastrophe, who have complex responses and eventually move on. (Holden)

Film Series

THE DUCHESS OF LANGEAIS (Friday) Jacques Rivette's newest film is a slow and somber adaptation of a Balzac tale, "Don't Touch the Axe," about an army officer (Guillaume Depardieu) and his slow and somber courtship of a society lady (Jeanne Balibar). Ms. Balibar will introduce the film at its 6 p.m. screening on Friday, which initiates the two-week Film Comment Selects series at Lincoln Center. Walter Reade Theater, 165 West 65th Street, Lincoln Center, (212) 496-3809, filmlinc.com; \$11. (Dave Kehr)

BLESS THEIR LITTLE HEARTS (Friday through Sunday) This 1984 film by Billy Woodberry was written and photographed by Charles Burnett, and makes a fine companion piece to Mr. Burnett's nearly contemporary "Killer of Sheep." The film's story of a day laborer (Nate Herd) caught up in an endless search for work parallels the Italian neo-realist classic "Bicycle Thieves," although Mr. Woodberry direction is more concerned with the minute details of everyday life than with emotional effects. Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Avenue, at Second Street, East Village, (212) 505-5181, anthologyfilmarchives.org; \$7. (Kehr)

JOHN FORD AT FOX (Saturday and Sunday) The continuing series at the Museum of the Moving Image devoted to John Ford's work at the studio that he most often called home makes it up to the 1940s this weekend. Screening both days at 5 p.m. is the recently rediscovered and restored (by the University of California, Los Angeles, and the Film Foundation) "preview" version of Ford's great western of 1946, "My Darling Clementine." This cut appears to reflect Ford's personal vision of the film before it was revised by the studio's chief, Darryl Zanuck. Ford's cut is full of aching silences as figures move through empty, sun-beaten landscapes, while the Zanuck revision inserts musical cues and close-ups, most notoriously the obvious studio retake that offers the audience-satisfying spectacle of Henry Fonda's Wyatt Earp planting a kiss on the cheek of Cathy Downs's Clementine. Ford's version has them simply shaking hands before Fonda rides off into the horizon. Screening Saturday at 2 p.m. is the 1941 "Tobacco Road," an adaptation of Erskine Caldwell's steamy southern novel that seems not to have suited Ford's talents at all (decadent eroticism was decidedly not his thing), though Gene Tierney remains a delight to the camera's eye. Sunday at 2 p.m. brings Ford's Oscar-winning adaptation of John Steinbeck's Depression novel "The Grapes of Wrath," probably the most honored of Ford's films during his lifetime, although it now seems sententious and simple next to the far more personal accomplishments of his westerns. Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Avenue at 36th Street, Astoria, Queens, (718) 784-0077, movingimage.us; \$10. (Kehr)

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Body

KATE Corish unlatched her balcony door with a practised elbow. In one hand, she juggled a short black and a Zippo lighter. In the other were a can of Red Bull (sugar free), two pens and a notebook. She had two tightly wrapped newspapers shoved under each arm and an unopened packet of cigarettes clenched between her teeth.

It was 6am and already Kate's mobile was ringing insistently from deep inside the pocket of her faded grey trackie daks. The pants were so old now that the elastic was brittle. Only the generous curve of Kate's hips kept them from slipping right off. As a result, the phone was vibrating somewhere nearer her knee than her upper thigh.

With both hands fully occupied, Kate was forced to let the caller go through to message bank. Bugger them anyway. People who called this early needed to learn a bit of patience. Plus there was the small matter of conducting a coherent conversation at this hour.

Kate estimated she was still several hundred milligrams of caffeine short of forming a simple sentence.

The phone exhaled a short, hopeful electronic chord as Kate continued to manoeuvre herself and her morning provisions onto the balcony. The next stage was the trickiest.

Pressing her Pilates-honed butt against the reinforced glass, she pushed the sliding door open until the gap was just wide enough for her to squeeze through sideways.

So far so good. Confidence up, she executed a wobbly pirouette.

The move was designed to deposit her neatly and gracefully into her outdoor reading chair. But that was supposing Kate kept her balance.

Which she almost never did. On this occasion, she managed to catch one foot in the hem of her sagging trousers, trip over the metal door runner and catapult herself inelegantly into the outside world.

She cursed as she stubbed her toe on a large terracotta pot.

A pen slipped from her grasp, skittered across the tiles and plunged off the veranda, heading for the street below.

Kate dumped her cargo onto the teak outdoor table and peered over the railing. All clear.

One of these days her clumsiness was going to cost someone an eye.

Twelve floors below, Sydney was yawning awake. An endless conga of headlights streamed over the Bridge and into the CBD.

Ferries plied the shark-grey Harbour while commuters hurried towards Milsons Point station, their chins burrowed doggedly into winter coats. It promised to be a spectacular August day, but until the sun reported for duty, the temperature would remain stubbornly in single figures.

Kate took some comfort in knowing she wasn't the only person awake and working this early. She lit a cigarette and took two long, appreciative drags before moving on to her coffee.

Her ritual had scarcely changed in her 19 years as a television journalist. Up at dawn. A hastily sculled short black. Then a long and careful inspection of the nation's newspapers, usually accompanied by half a dozen cigarettes.

Occasionally, vanity, fear and the pleas of her personal trainer would convince her to trade the fags for nicotine gum. But Kate's resolve only ever lasted until the next big story. Or the next big row with her neanderthal boss.

The Red Bull was a relatively recent addition to her morning drill. As Kate edged into her forties, she found she needed more than a single cup of coffee and a lick of mascara to get out the door. Age was a bitch.

Monitoring the news on ABC radio with one ear, Kate flattened the Daily Mail across the table. On the other side of the world, Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> were busily killing one another and threatening to draw the rest of the Middle East into the madness. British police had thwarted a terrorist plot that might have been the next 9/11.

The ABC led with the fighting in Lebanon. Kate would have gone with the latest terrorist threat, which had a lot more traction with the Australian audience in her opinion. But both stories had been pushed off the Mail's front page.

``F---!" Kate exclaimed as she read the day's lead story. Her right hand reached for the ring hanging on a gold chain around her neck. She sat back and squeezed her eyes hard shut. She felt like she'd just been kicked squarely in the guts.

Hard.

A photograph of Kate took up most of the front page.

It was an unflattering paparazzi shot, taken at the wrong end of an industry awards night. Channel 8's biggest star looked slightly the worse for wear.

She would have liked to blame a dose of antibiotics or headache medication for her dishevelled appearance. But the truth was she'd just let her hair down for once. And she'd been caught.

Naturally, the publicity girls would be furious with her. But that was the least of Kate's troubles. She was far more concerned by the headline:

NOT TONIGHT, KATE!

Kate's shock turned to anger as she scanned the copy. The facts -- if indeed they were facts -- were straightforward enough. She was

going to be dumped as host of her network's flagship current affairs program Australia Tonight.

She might hang on for a few more weeks or months. But she would not be at the helm in 2007. The article went on to quote audience sampling data. *Female* viewers found her intimidating, probably because she was single and childless. Kate surmised.

A decade ago, she was admired for being gutsy and career-minded. Now it seemed that her decision to put work ahead of love and family was viewed with suspicion, especially by other **women**.

But that wasn't the worst of it. According to the data, it wasn't just <u>women</u> who were switching off Kate Corish. Men, the Mail reported, considered her aloof.

They had another way of saying that in the boardroom. In executive speak, Kate wasn't f---able any more. And she knew only too well that was fatal for a woman in commercial television, no matter how impressive her resume. Kate took a generous swig of Red Bull and almost brought it straight back up. She puffed out her cheeks and forced the liquid down with two determined gulps. It tasted bitter. Clearly, taurine and a stomach full of unmetabolised scotch did not mix.

Kate pushed the can aside and opted for another cigarette instead.

Smoking always helped her think anyway. She was sure the research material had been leaked. And by someone who was dangerously well placed. This wasn't the sort of stuff that made its way into a network press release.

Only a handful of executives had access to viewer survey information. And for good reason. The station didn't want the world to know if one of its stars wasn't shining so brightly. And the beancounters certainly didn't need well-performing celebrities realising how much they were really worth.

After two decades in the game, Kate was pretty good at picking fact from fabrication. And this story felt uncomfortably like the truth. That was plain even before she got to the lame assurances of the network's chief executive officer.

The newspaper had collared Billy Simpson on his way to the football. The inset photograph showed him grinning inanely above a Bulldogs scarf. There was a second man in the picture, standing a little behind and away. Kate recognised the figure straightaway.

F---ing boys' club, she thought. Simpson's feeble response filled her with a white-hot anger.

CEO Billy Simpson described Kate as a brilliant journalist and a real team player.

``She's run the hard yards for this network," he said. ``Kate Corish is very much a part of our future vision. There's a job here for Kate as long as she wants one."

Of course, Billy didn't say what job -- probably a forced transfer to Special Projects. Everyone in the business knew what that meant.

Special Projects wasn't nicknamed the departure lounge for nothing. Kate was as good as gone.

First Jessica. Then Jana. And now me, thought Kate. There had been whispers that Naomi was in the line of fire. **Women** were always fair game in television. But in all her years in the industry, she had never witnessed this much blood-letting.

Or perhaps she'd simply chosen not to acknowledge it before.

The truth startled her. Television had always been like this. Of course it had. The only difference was that this time her head was on the chopping block. When Kate started out there had been dozens of <u>women</u> working alongside her, both on the road and behind the scenes.

Some had been her age. Others had been five and 10 years older. Now there was only a handful left across the entire industry.

Those few survivors were being picked off one by one.

Discarding the newspaper, Kate hobbled back inside for another cup of coffee. Her toe was still smarting from its earlier run-in with the potted palm. And her hangover had hunkered down for a lengthy stay.

This was about as bad a start to a day as she could imagine. And not even the slightest warning from her favourite online astrology site. Surely crippling herself and losing her job on the front page of the newspaper were worth a tiny mention.

"Load of bloody rubbish," Kate grumbled as she made a beeline for the coffee machine. The kitchen was sleek, modern and spotless.

Kate didn't mind admitting it was the kind of clean that came from lack of use rather than any strong commitment to hygiene.

The apartment was more a pitstop than a real home anyway, somewhere to change clothes and refuel. Stone, steel and glass.

Kate had seized on minimalism with the same gusto that she'd embraced shabby chic three pay rises earlier. She'd cheerfully handed over a small fortune to an interior designer who minced his way through her apartment and discarded anything that suggested personality. By the time he'd finished there wasn't a whole lot left.

A termite colony and an acid bath would have achieved much the same result. And cost less. Over time, Kate had added some personal touches, guiltily rescuing a few of her favourite souvenirs from storage. A rug from Afghanistan with its confronting patterns of tanks and guns. Black-and-white tapestry pillows from Bosnia. A Saddam Hussein mantel clock from Iraq. A wood carving from the Maldives.

But no matter what she did, the place still felt empty.

The home phone rang as Kate twisted the dial on the coffee machine to the shortest, strongest and blackest option.

She let the answering machine pick up. It was the executive producer of Australia Tonight.

"Look, honey, I don't know where they get off printing that shit. I'll call that fat slut this morning and find out where she's getting her f---ing information. None of it's true of course. But even if it was, you know I've got your back."

Kate shuddered. Words of support from the most treacherous bastard in the business. She was in deep trouble all right. The next call was as brazen as it was predictable.

"Megan Halliday here. I'm keen to follow up on my report in the Mail today. I'd love to hear your side of the story. What are you planning to do next? Are you hoping to stay in television? You can catch me on my mobile."

The woman's gall was breathtaking. Not a scintilla of doubt that Kate was on her way out or that her sources were anything but entirely credible and accurate.

"Fat slut," Kate muttered under her breath, guiltily borrowing the boys' club vernacular. Just as Kate was thinking of yanking the telephone jack from the wall, she heard a familiar and welcome voice.

"Hi, Kate. It's Sandra Cook. I hope you don't mind me ringing. But I know you're an early riser. I just read the newspaper. Is there anything I can do? Or if you just need someone to talk to, call me.

"I can't believe this crap is still going on. Anyway. Don't let them get to you. Bye."

Sandra was a class act.

This was one call Kate would return . . . eventually.

She was too dazed right now. Kate Corish never showed weakness. Not even to her allies.

Kate limped towards the bathroom, careful not to place too much pressure on her bunged-up toe. A couple of Panadeine were in order, as much for her mood as for her variously aching body parts.

She bolted down the tablets and splashed some water on her face. Her stomach lurched menacingly with the sudden movement.

Kate lowered her head and leaned forward, hands firmly gripping either side of the basin. After a few minutes, the nausea passed.

She cautiously lifted her head and gazed wearily into the bathroom mirror. She didn't look like a woman who'd just got back from holidays, even with the tan.

Her blonde hair was matted and dull. It had once been her proudest asset. But nowadays, its lustre owed more to the genius of her colourist than to good genes.

The blue eyes were familiar enough, if a little less piercing for the previous night's excesses. But they were surrounded by crows' feet and heavy dark circles.

Forty years of gravity marked her face, from the single deep frown line that cleaved her forehead to the jowls that dragged at her features like lead weights.

Kate pressed her fingers flat on either side of her face and stretched her skin out and upward.

She looked better. Younger. As she let her skin slide back into place, she could certainly understand the temptation of cosmetic surgery.

Thank God for good lighting technicians and make-up artists, she thought. As a television star, Kate was assigned a team of people whose sole professional responsibility was to make her look gorgeous.

From what she could see in the mirror, they were clearly very skilled at their work.

When exactly had she started looking so old anyway? She didn't feel any different from her 20-year-old self, except maybe in her ability to bounce back from a big night.

Then again, how long had it been since she'd been wolf-whistled passing a building site? Five years.

Maybe more. She was still attractive. Even with a hangover. But she was no longer a young woman. And she'd wed herself to an industry that celebrated and rewarded youth.

"Nineteen f---ing years."

Kate pushed her face closer to the mirror, until her nose and forehead were touching the glass, clouding it with her breath.

Where had the time gone?

* Edited extract from the book Boned by Anonymous, \$32.95rrp. Michael Joseph 2008. Published May 29.

Buy Boned for the special

reader price of only \$24.95 plus \$6 p/h. Phone 1300 306 107 or post a cheque to Book Offers, PO Box 14730, Melbourne, VIC 8001. Available early June.

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Body

Powerful nations must protect Israel from Tehran

MOST TALKED ABOUT

A NUCLEAR-ARMED IRAN

RESPECTED Middle East expert Michael Rubin's assessment of the threat from Iran (``A threat bigger than Wall St", 27-28/9) is pretty depressing but realistic.

After all, Iran is on the way to developing nuclear weapons; its President threatens to eventually use these weapons against Israel and Iran already supports *Hezbollah* and Hamas who are at war with Israel.

Why shouldn't Israel take all these threats against its existence seriously? President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad does not sound like he is bluffing.

Israel is all alone and must take whatever action is necessary to prevent or delay Iran's future nuclear aggression.

Israel over the years has been involved in numerous wars against overwhelming odds and has never used or even threatened to use its alleged nuclear weapons.

If the international community doesn't take Iran's belligerence seriously and act urgently, it will be its responsibility if Israel is forced to act alone.

Michael Burd

Toorak, Vic

RECENT articles on Iran (``A threat bigger than Wall St", 27-28/9, and ``Iran tests candidates", 29/9) try to convince the public that Iran, by developing nuclear technology and consequently nuclear weapons, is a threat to the world.

Such an approach typifies the failed US view of the world particularly of Iran, where until the fall of the Shah, the US was the major supporter and supplier of military weapons.

Even if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, why would it use them? What possible advantage would it obtain by using nuclear weapons?

If it attempted to destroy Israel, the consequence of the first strike would be devastating on Iran. It would suffer an immediate response from the US.

Why would Iranians want to do that?

Just because the Iranian President is full of rhetoric does not mean that the nation would sacrifice itself for it.

Most of the so-called experts on the region and advisers to the US offer no resolution and/or solution to the problem.

They just talk and threaten to go in and take them all out ... show them the beacon of democracy, and they will all fall behind and live happily ever after.

What we need to do is get out of the region, the Middle East, including Afghanistan, and leave these peoples alone.

Let them be what they want to be.

The failure of Western (and Eastern) interference is well documented throughout history.

Emil Sremchevich

Camden, NSW

YOUR support of John McCain's tough approach to Iran regarding its nuclear ambitions (Editorial, 29/9) is irresponsible, as it involves military action instead of direct talks.

Even George W. Bush's refusal to support Israel's recent proposed air strike on Iran's nuclear facilities (``Bush `no' to strike by Israel on Iran", 27-28/9) is an indication that such actions are unlikely to bring the desired outcome.

An attack on Iran would lead to devastating consequences around the world, including severe damage to Australia's economy from increased oil prices.

Israel already has more than 300 nuclear weapons and delivery rockets. It has continually threatened Iran with bombing raids.

If the West wants the Middle East to be a nuclear-free zone, the disarmament must start with Israel.

Bill Mathew

Parkville, Vic

TO say Iran is a bigger threat to the world than Wall St (read US imperial capitalism) is like saying Fiji is a bigger threat to whales than Japan. Iran is a stable, sovereign state which does not kowtow to the US administration.

It is pursuing a civilian nuclear agenda which may or may not develop into a weapons program.

Pakistan is an unstable state, which covertly supports terrorism in both Afghanistan and India but which does kowtow to the US and has an operational and expanding nuclear weapons program which has been financially and militarily propped up the US.

Meanwhile the US, while demanding other states do not develop nuclear weapons, continues to expand and upgrade its nuclear weapons and missile capabilities as well as (if John McCain wins the presidential elections) expanding its civilian nuclear generation capacity by at least 200 more nuclear power stations.

Greg Sheridan does not mention that Israel has had a secret and significant nuclear weapons program and capability for at least 30 years, clandestinely supported by the US.

The US is by far and away the biggest threat to the world on a number of fronts including environmental (the biggest polluter), economic (the biggest mess) and militarily both in terms of nuclear capability, conventional weapons production and military activity.

Greg Jefferys

Woodbridge, Tas

Heritage worth more than cash on gas pipeline route

NOT all West Australians nor all Kimberley Aborigines are mourning the decision of Inpex to pipe its gas from the Browse Basin to the Northern Territory (``Top End snatches \$24bn gas plant from under the West's nose", 27-28/9).

Many are applauding the decision not to bring the gas ashore at the Maret Islands for processing and exporting from the Kimberley coast.

Piping the gas to the NT will, at least for now, ensure that one of the great wilderness areas of the world will be kept intact.

The Kimberley Land Council has been stating that this decision is a huge loss for Kimberley indigenous people.

This is sad and wrong for a number of reasons.

First, that acceptable education and health services for Aboriginal people should depend on mining company royalties to the KLC; second, that the KLC is prepared to allow destruction of the most culturally significant and ancient rock art galleries in the world which are at the core of indigenous heritage and Australian pre-history; and third, that this beautiful Kimberley environment with its unique biodiversity, pristine rivers and coastline, so few people, no towns, virtually no access, can be bought for the airy promise of jobs and wads of money from multinational mining companies.

All Australians should be pressuring the federal and state governments for the Browse Basin gas to be piped from offshore to a southern industrial hub within Western Australia and with minimal environmental damage, and that governments should meet their responsibility of providing health services and education to some of Australia's most deprived people.

These services, taken for granted by other Australians, should not be reliant on the KLC being promised royalties and other hand-outs for selling off their treasured country.

There are some things in this world that should not be measured in dollars; the far northwest Kimberley is one of them.

Susan Bradley

North Kimberley, WA

On law, Bryce is right

CHRISTOPHER Pearson's attack on Quentin Bryce (``Conservatives under siege", Inquirer, 27-28/9) is mistaken and unwarranted. He describes as a ``howler" Bryce's suggestion that the reserve powers entrusted to her to, for example, dismiss the government of the day should be ``written down in the Constitution".

Pearson is wrong to say that this would be ``virtually impossible as well as pointless".

Constitutional lawyers have for many years argued for exactly this reform on the basis that the vague and uncertain nature of the powers vested in the governor-general is a flaw in our system of government.

There are also examples already in Australia of aspects of the reserve powers being codified, such as in the NSW Constitution and the ACT Self-Government Act. Rather than having a "grasp of constitutional law in recent years (that) has left a lot to be desired", our new Governor-General has in fact expressed views that demonstrate a clear understanding of the subject.

George Williams

The University of NSW, Sydney

Base cuts on population

SCIENTISTS who have called on Kevin Rudd to cut carbon emissions by 25 per cent by 2020 also urge the Government to reject Ross Garnaut's call for a 10 per cent reduction in absolute terms. If this is the case, then these scientists may not have understood Professor Garnaut's Targets And Trajectories report.

Two-thirds of emissions come from the energy sector and energy consumption is related to population. So Garnaut's approach of considering emissions reduction per head of population rather than absolute reduction is the only realistic way of measuring.

On current trends, the Australian Bureau of Statistics projects that Australia's population will grow to around 25 million by 2020 from 21 million today, almost a 20 per cent increase. The climate scientists want a 25 per cent emissions reduction by 2020. Garnaut is offering a 30 per cent reduction, taking this population growth into account.

Considering only absolute cuts in emissions without regard to changes in population seems somewhat unscientific when the population is growing largely from migration.

Martin Nicholson

The Pocket, NSW

AFTER an unprecedented economic boom, with high prosperity and low unemployment, after one of the worst droughts in modern history, and after the best efforts of climate change alarmists Al Gore, Tim Flannery and James Lovelock to steer the debate their way, 21 per cent of respondents to the 2008 Lowy Institute Poll are still not prepared to pay anything to slow down climate change.

It is for the alarmists and for those who condemned the Howard government's stance on climate change, not for the so-called denialists or realists such as me, to demonstrate how climate change via consumer restraint rather than via technical fixes can possibly work in democratic states.

Chris Oliver

Bondi Junction, NSW

Parents made bad choices

WALTER Bass (Letters, 29/09) is adamant that Philip Ruddock and the Howard government were primarily responsible for the long-term detention of children as asylum-seekers.

But the parents and guardians of these children elected to keep their family behind wire indefinitely while they fought deportation orders through appeal after appeal.

Greg Jones

Kogarah, NSW

SOMEHOW, Jane Hansen's article "Ruddock gave detainees Bucklies", (27-28/9), doesn't quite tally with Janet Albrechtsen's piece of the previous week, "True reformer rose above the hysteria", (17/9).

The only hysteria Ruddock rose above was that of people driven to it by his own actions.

David Blake

Lake Barrine, Qld

Discretion his better part

PAUL Newman's philanthropy will surely leave a greater legacy than his movies.

From the sale of his range of salad dressings and pasta sauces over the past 25 years he kept not one cent of his royalties or profits, donating more than \$12million in more than 800 individual grants to Australian and New Zealand charities. His donations to charity around the world now exceed \$300 million.

Statistics don't tell the real story. Newman championed the little guy and many charities he chose were little known.

He helped fledgling groups become established. His grants often gave credibility to organisations previously ignored by our governments.

He helped thousands of sick kids by putting on camps and outings and providing mobility equipment.

The charity spectrum is wide: rural fire brigades and emergency services, dance and musical performances for isolated kids, drought relief, aged care, medical research.

Before his death he ensured that his foundation would continue in the spirit which he intended. I have worked for Paul Newman for 25 years and admire him as one of the world's truly remarkable human beings.

Sue Home

Red Hill South, Vic

Unisex at the urinal

LORD Curzon's excursions (Letters, 29/9) reminded me of an occasion when I was caught short in the French countryside. Approaching a urinal, I was amused by noises coming from one of the adjacent cubicles. Amused that is until, standing at the urinal, I was frozen with embarrassment when the lady author of such noises came to wash her hands at the bowl right alongside me, without batting an eyelid.

David Evans

Taree, NSW

Stories bring the past to life

PETER Cochrane is on the right track (``Historians neglecting role as story-tellers", 29/9). Story-telling is how many cultures have preserved vital knowledge.

I was impelled to pursue history and become a teacher through at least one good storyteller at school.

There is a history of everything; let's share in the telling and in as interesting a way as is reasonable.

Phil Pryor

Turramurra, NSW

FIRST BYTE

Anna Bligh wants more money for hospitals (``Bligh to demand federal funding boost for hospitals", 29/9). Perhaps it would help her cause if she abandoned the name of her mission statement -- Q2 -- as we are all aware that Queenslanders have to queue to get a hospital bed and queue to even get into a line to queue to see a specialist. Q2? Come to Queensland and you can Q too.

Judi Cox

Springfield, Qld

The Athenaeum Club should allow <u>women</u> if it is a club for civic and business leaders, because <u>women</u> are civic and business leaders too. But why would any woman actually want to join anyway? It sounds pretty crusty to me.

Shane Beazley

South Yarra, Vic

Now that the US Congress has agreed to a massive welfare handout to Wall Street's truly greedy, when will the conservative commentariat and right wing think tanks re-commence sneering at middle class welfare?

Thos Puckett

Ashgrove, Qld

It's great that the Chinese astronauts have returned safely to Earth. No doubt their mission will have confirmed the accuracy of their costings and they will now be able to build a space station at a tenth of the cost of any international projects. Is it just possible that Chinese ingenuity will see the prefabricated bird's nest dismantled and set aloft to orbit the Earth?

Crispin Walters

Chapel Hill, Qld

If the Government really is concerned about the effect that financing maternity leave will have on the budget, why doesn't it instead stop the baby bonus and spend that money on paid maternity leave?

Ben Williams

Smithfield Plains, SA

letters@theaustralian.com.au

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GPO Box 4162, Sydney, NSW, 2001Fax: 02 9288 3077

Email: letters@theaustralian.com.au (no attachments)

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Body

It has been almost 30 years since the last shah, with a small jar of Iranian soil in his hand and the empress by his side, flew into exile, ending 2,500 years of dynastic rule and a valuable American alliance. The United States vowed to "honor the will" of Iran's people, and its ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, mused that Ayatollah Khomeini might be hailed as "somewhat of a saint, when we get over the panic." Over the next nine months, however, young zealots twice seized the American Embassy and its diplomats, a harbinger of tensions to come. Washington has struggled to figure out what to do about Tehran ever since. Fear still defines policy.

Iran will be perhaps the most daunting strategic challenge for a new American president. There is no shortage of problems elsewhere: America is overextended in Iraq, underdeployed in Afghanistan, constrained on Pakistan and stymied on the Arab-Israeli conflict. But Iran is different. It has become the superpower in the region where the United States has invested the most manpower, money, blood and prestige. Washington can't make enduring progress in the Middle East or South Asia without a denouement in the long showdown with Iran.

But what tools does Washington have? Since 1979, five presidents have failed to influence, engage or outwit Iran. The Carter administration accepted the revolution -- then took in the shah, which led Iranians to suspect that Washington wanted to restore the monarchy, as it had in 1953. When radicals took the embassy, Washington froze Iran's assets and broke off relations. The Reagan administration put Iran on the terrorism list after Lebanese Shiite suicide bombers struck two American diplomatic offices and a Marine barracks in Beirut -- then sent envoys to Tehran to swap arms for hostages abducted in Lebanon. The first Bush administration promised "good will begets good will," then isolated Tehran once it helped free the last hostages in Beirut. When Iran offered a lucrative petroleum deal to an American company, the Clinton administration banned the import of Iranian oil, but it later lifted an embargo on Iranian caviar, carpets and pistachios to signal a potential opening. The current Bush administration worked closely with Iran on Afghanistan after 9/11, then labeled it part of the "axis of evil." It orchestrated four United Nations sanctions resolutions, then offered talks and trade if Tehran stopped enriching uranium that could be used in a nuclear weapon.

In short, each American administration since 1979 has been driven to such distraction by Iran that it has had to continually revise its own policies. Can a new president do better?

He will inherit few effective tools. Diplomacy is, at the moment, going nowhere. Efforts in the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency have done little to prevent Iran from growing ever closer to acquiring the capacity to manufacture nuclear fuel. At the same time, there is very little genuine enthusiasm in Washington today

for a military option in Iran. Other endeavors have had limited impact. Last year, Congress approved an astonishing \$400 million for intelligence operations against Iran, but senior officials acknowledge that covert actions -- primarily aid to ethnic proxies and broadcasts into Iran -- are only an irritant to its security services. American officers have actually had trouble finding effective ways to spend much of the money. In Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. Special Forces have focused on the Quds Force, Iran's covert military wing, and its local agents. Dozens have been detained; truckloads of Iranian arms have been uncovered. Tehran has been forced to adapt its tactics, alter routes, pull back some of its people. But again, U.S. officials concede, the United States is unlikely to fully curb Iran's involvement in its two neighbors, parts of which once belonged to Persia and share either a language or a religion.

What remains, in one form or another, is the idea of sanctions. Over the decades, Washington has embargoed imports from Iran, forbidden visas for officials and even sanctioned the entire Revolutionary Guard Corps -- the first time the United States has ever sanctioned a section of another country's military. But each effort has fallen short. Energy-hungry China now buys Iran's oil in huge quantities. Tehran has found other outlets for trade and travel. And sanctions are slow to take effect.

One new concept, however, has begun to get Tehran's attention. In January 2006, Stuart Levey, the under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the Treasury Department, was having breakfast in Bahrain when he noted a local newspaper article about a big Swiss bank that cut off business with Tehran. He clipped the article. It gave him an idea.

Governments traditionally focus on actions they can enforce themselves. Reading about the Swiss bank, Levey decided it was time to mobilize the private sector, starting with the world's banks, to join the effort to sanction Iran. His idea was to prevent a country reliant on global trade -- as an ancient empire, a station on the Silk Road across Asia and a modern petroleum powerhouse -- from being able to do business outside its borders. "That could spark the right internal debate in Iran," Levey told me when we met in his spacious Washington office, which was painted hunter green and decorated with collections of vintage American currency. Since that breakfast in Bahrain, he has managed to persuade the U.S. government to back his project; he has also made a lot of enemies in Tehran and created a policy legacy that the next president will have to deal with.

The best place to get a feeling for the challenge Iran poses to any sanctions program is Dubai, where Levey spent a great deal of time refining his approach. The cosmopolitan emirate, situated near the mouth of the Persian Gulf, is famed for an indoor ski slope and a man-made island in the shape of a palm tree, with villas for the superrich on each frond. But Dubai has also become the latest battleground for Iran and the United States, so in the late summer heat, I walked the concrete path along Dubai Creek, a grimy inlet that winds through a section of town long predating today's slick skyscrapers. Old wooden dhows, each painted the traditional baby blue and white, were moored four and five abreast for more than a mile along the wharf. Crews using carts were hustling to load televisions and appliances, food and toys, tires and even cars to ferry to Iran.

Dubai's citizens, unlike Iranians, are mostly Sunni and Arab. Yet trade across the gulf has gone on so long that many of Dubai's elite, including members of the emir's inner circle, are of Iranian descent. Each major change in Iran creates a new wave of migrants: merchants left in the 19th century to avoid Persia's new tariffs; traditional families fled in the 1930s after the modernizing monarchy banned the chador; modern-minded Iranians left after the 1979 Islamic revolution forced <u>women</u> back into the chador.

The biggest migration, however, began five years ago, in anticipation of sanctions and other U.S. pressures. Thousands of Iranian businesses simply set up local offices, opened bank accounts and imported goods from abroad to Dubai. When wares arrived, they were turned around and sent to Iran by dhow, container ship or air. "The best place to do business in Iran," an Iranian businessman quipped, "is in Dubai." Dubai now has as many Iranians as it does its own citizens. Trade has steadily grown; according to Nasser Hashempour, vice president of the Iranian Business Council in Dubai, it topped \$14 billion last year.

On my first day in Dubai, I had lunch at the Iranian Club, a compound with a sports facility, stadium, theater and hotel. The stadium is where President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke last year. The hotel's lobby had separate

clocks for Tehran and Dubai, a half-hour apart. A manager's office was decorated with pictures of Ayatollah Khomeini and Hassan Nasrallah, *Hezbollah*'s leader.

I later stopped at the Iranian mosque, now being expanded, across from the Iranian Hospital, which has tended to many of Dubai's royals. I visited the Spice Market and chatted with Iranian merchants. At American University, I was told, Iranians are the second-largest group in the student body. They're also among the biggest buyers and flippers of Dubai real estate. My hotel overlooking Dubai Creek had an Iranian clientele, an Iranian sports channel available in the rooms and an annex with Iranian-run businesses. It was within two blocks of Tehran Restaurant, Iranian shops where Farsi was more common than Arabic and several Iranian banks.

"There are so many Iranians here," Hashempour said with a chuckle, "that we tell a joke: When people in Dubai are asked to pray for rain, it ends up raining in Iran." Since 2003, the number of Iranians in the United Arab Emirates has doubled to more than 450,000, he told me, and the number of Iranian businesses quadrupled to almost 10,000. Most are in Dubai, giving it the world's second-largest concentration of Iranian expatriates (after California).

Because Dubai has no oil, unlike the United Arab Emirates' other sheikdoms, it has survived on trade -- from its old wharf on the creek to the high-tech Jebel Ali, one of the world's largest ports. Most traffic -- including Israeli cargo -- is for re-export elsewhere. At least 20 percent goes to Iran. So, despite sanctions, Iran's shelves are well stocked, even with American goods. Maytag refrigerators, Diesel clothing and Victoria's Secret lingerie are quite popular. Legal American exports to Iran -- from clothing and cigarettes to musical instruments and bull semen, all considered agricultural, educational or humanitarian goods and thus exempt from sanctions -- increased tenfold during the Bush administration.

"The easiest thing to do in the world today is trade," the Iranian foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, told me over the summer when I met him in New York City. "Economic advantages attract partners. Right now, a number of American companies are working with Iran. But because of their conditions, I can't give their names."

Iranians now have an estimated \$300 billion in assets in tiny Dubai alone. Emiratis profit handsomely from these ties: outside Dubai's new free-trade zone, entrepreneurial foreigners need local partners, who must hold 51 percent of any business. Citizens of Dubai can earn up to \$100,000 annually just by putting their names on a license, leaving the work to the Iranians. Iranian money is not alone in driving Dubai's growth, one U.S. official told me, but there's so much Iranian money in property, investment and trade that it's hard to cut off. "Dubai," he said, "is not going to shoot itself in the foot financially" for the sake of sanctions. Dubai and Iran are now so economically interdependent, local analysts told me, that the city-state has become to Iran something like what Hong Kong is to China. Sanctions seem only to strengthen such ties.

Stuart Levey says he thought his new sanctions could succeed where so many had failed. But he knew his idea might be a tough sell. He was not part of the Bush administration's inner circle. Some officials still mispronounce his name. (It rhymes with "Chevy," a Treasury official advised me.) In February 2006, his colleagues in the Treasury Department persuaded Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to let him travel with her to the Middle East, and he hoped to make his pitch at some point along the way. He waited, stop after stop; he spent most flights chatting with his seatmate, Gen. Raymond Odierno, the current commander of U.S. forces in Iraq who was then the Pentagon liaison with the State Department. "I did, often, feel like a fifth wheel," Levey recalled. Finally, on the way home, he was summoned to Rice's private cabin to lay out his seven-point proposal.

Levey's pitch was simple: Banks were only as reputable as their clients' practices. And the reputations of banks that did business with Iran were at risk as long as Iran financed extremists and pursued missile and nuclear technology. More basically, he argued, Iran had bad banking habits, with little oversight to prevent money laundering. It had even begun asking foreign banks to remove traces of a transaction's ties to Iran, a practice known as "stripping."

Levey's idea was to press banks not to do business with Iran until it complied with international standards. Rice bought in. "She was thrilled," Levey wrote in an e-mail message to his staff from the plane. "She especially liked options 1, 2, 6 and, if necessary, 7.... Truly, this one hour made the whole trip worthwhile."

"It gave us a new lever," Rice later told me. "It's not sanctions in the traditional sense." Levey has since made more than 80 foreign visits of his own to talk to more than five dozen banks. Several countries required multiple trips to reassure suspicious (or just annoyed) governments about American intentions -- and then to persuade the banks. Levey offered specifics. U.S. intelligence, he told them, had traced \$50 million transmitted by Iran's Bank Saderat through a London subsidiary to a charity affiliated with <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon. Saderat, which has 3,400 offices worldwide, is Iran's equivalent of Citibank. Its Lebanon branch, Levey said, also supposedly sent millions of dollars to Palestinian extremists.

The Treasury Department then started blacklisting Iran's biggest banks, urging other nations to follow suit. In 2006, Saderat was barred from direct or indirect business with U.S. banks. In early 2007, the department sanctioned Bank Sepah for financing projects to develop missiles that could carry nuclear weapons. (Sepah, meaning "army," was established with money from Iran's military pension fund and is now associated with Revolutionary Guard projects.) The Treasury Department then blacklisted Bank Melli, Iran's largest bank, for supposedly helping to finance defense industries under U.N. sanctions.

Iran has angrily denied illicit activity. Its banks pledged compliance with international practices. Tehran complained to the International Monetary Fund. Some banks even wrote to the Treasury Department to protest. Iran's Central Bank governor spoke of "financial terrorism." Yet the innovative efforts have spread. Actions against Iranian banks became a feature of Security Council sanctions resolutions, beginning in 2006. Last June, the European Union blacklisted Melli and froze its assets. Last month, Australia sanctioned Melli and Saderat, while the U.S. blacklisted the Export Development Bank of Iran, which it claimed had taken over many of Sepah's accounts and provided services for missile programs. The Treasury Department is also scrutinizing Iran's Central Bank and considering blacklisting it too, which could undermine not only the country's banking system but also international support for the U.S. campaign.

The momentum has surprised even Levey, a Harvard-educated lawyer who once specialized in white-collar criminal defense. Big banks in Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Italy curbed business with Iran, even with longstanding clients. Only a few would admit it; most prefer to silently go along and keep their options open. "They're not happy with what's happening," a European diplomat told me. "They complain about U.S. pressure, but accept it. They hope it will pass soon."

Even banks in Muslim countries, from Bahrain to Malaysia, have cut back their Iran business, bankers told me. Most surprising has been the shift by several Chinese banks. "We haven't had Chinese banks tell me that they won't do deals with Iran," Levey told me. "They just stop."

So far, more than 80 banks have curtailed business with Iran. A European bank official told me its business dropped from hundreds of millions of dollars annually to zero. A Middle East banker said his institution no longer did business with the sanctioned banks. Gulf bankers said medium- and long-term credit for development and trade was drying up. Banks Saderat, Melli and Sepah -- which together serviced 80 percent of Iran's international trade -- were losing customers and struggling to find new banking relationships, despite many offices abroad. (None of these sources wanted to be identified as cooperating with the U.S. Treasury Department.) The private sector has proved "quicker to respond" than governments, Rice said. "This really relies on the kind of self-interest -- to protect their reputation and protect their investment."

"Stuart Levey's war is like 'Charlie Wilson's War,' " a U.S. official said over coffee in the State Department cafeteria, referring to a former Texas congressman's campaign to change policy on Afghanistan, a saga made into a movie. "It's the most direct and aggressive stuff we've got going. It delivers."

The Treasury Department also galvanized global groups. The Financial Action Task Force -- the world's financial watchdog representing the 34 biggest economies -- warned that Iran poses a "significant vulnerability" for the world's financial system. And the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, including 30 of the world's richest nations, has twice lowered Iran's credit risk -- to a 6 on a 7-point scale.

Iran has noticed. On his final day in office, last April, the ousted finance minister, Davoud Danesh Jaffari, complained bitterly about Levey. "We had embarked on a serious and breathtaking game of chess with America's

Treasury Department," he told his staff. "They had assigned one of their Zionist deputies to halt the Iranian economy. This person would personally travel to many countries around the world. He would use incentives and encouragement to request cooperation against Iran, and if he failed to get any results he would use threats to pursue his goal."

Treasury officials deny foreign banks were warned that their access to the U.S. financial system was in peril if they didn't cooperate on Iran. "We never threaten," Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. told me. "We talk about how important it is not to violate the rules and engage in illicit transactions." Foreign bankers, however, insisted that threats were always implicit.

The financial squeeze on Iran has had a ripple effect. Iran has the world's second-largest natural-gas reserves, after Russia. The world's largest natural-gas field is shared by Iran and Qatar. Development of Iran's share has been dragging on for years. "Qatar cut a deal quickly and was on its merry way," said Fareed Mohamedi, an executive in the Washington offices of PFC Energy. "But Tehran never had the funding or technology to develop the gas field independently." Iran played hardball with foreign firms over development contracts. It wanted to pay them in oil rather than cash. Then came banking pullouts. "We've been extremely effective at dissuading multinational oil companies from going into Iran," said Cliff Kupchan, a former State Department official now at the Eurasia Group who has visited Iran. "Like with the international banks, we've invoked reputation risks. That really cramped the Iranian energy sector and could, more or less, impair the gas sector for the foreseeable future. They say they will do a lot of it themselves, but their technological capabilities are uncertain, at best.'

Ordinary businesses have been hard hit, too, according to Western officials and Iranians. Big companies and small bazaaris -- as traditional merchants are called in Iran -- are increasingly forced to pay for imports in advance, in cash. Exporters are losing clients; raw materials for nonoil industries are harder to pay for. Boutique banks in Europe and Asia have filled some of the vacuum, at hefty costs, although U.S. officials suggest the global economic crisis may scare them away from Iran, too.

Levey's campaign has coincided with Iran's own crisis. In his 2005 presidential campaign, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed to put Iran's oil wealth on every dinner table. But his populist policies have flopped. Calling interest rates "the root cause of injustice," Ahmadinejad twice ordered banks to lower them, first to 12 percent and then to 10 percent - while inflation has gone as high as 30 percent. The dollar, worth 70 rials at the revolution, is today worth 9,600. Iranians gripe that produce prices have tripled over the past two years while housing prices have doubled.

Ahmadinejad has faced unusual public criticism from senior clerics, former chief nuclear negotiators, former speakers of Parliament and several economists. The finance minister who called Levey a Zionist deputy chastised his own leadership in the same speech for having "no plan for the future." The president retorted that Iran needed a "culture of martyrdom" to solve its economic problems. He has fired six cabinet ministers with economic portfolios and two Central Bank governors. Since June, his government has temporarily banned two newspapers for publishing articles "harmful to the economy." And last month, Iran's bazaaris shuttered their shops to protest against new tariffs, forcing the regime to back down.

For the first time in 30 years, U.S. officials contend, Washington has found a tangible way to pressure Iran. Whatever happens with the Bush administration's diplomatic or intelligence efforts, this is the program most likely to be continued by the next administration because it has bipartisan support.

And Levey is continuing to pick new battlefronts. In September, the Treasury Department sanctioned Iran's national shipping company and affiliates in 10 countries for falsifying documents and for transporting cargo on behalf of entities tied to weapons of mass destruction by the United Nations. Treasury officials say the insurance industry is next. "This is one of the most powerful actions that can be taken, short of military action," Paulson told me. "It's not a knockout punch, but it is effective."

It's no coincidence that Levey has visited Dubai eight times, or that President Bush and Vice President Cheney have both stopped there over the past 18 months, or that Bush hosted Dubai's emir, Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, at Camp David this summer. The ultimate success of Levey's scheme -- and the precedent it could set -- depend heavily on Dubai.

In its quest to be a global financial center, Dubai has pledged to honor U.N. sanctions. It's trying to shed the image of a way station for arms merchants and extremists. A. Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear program, ran a black market through Dubai, funneling sensitive technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya. Dubai was a money-transfer center for Al Qaeda, and 11 of the 19 Sept. 11 hijackers traveled via Dubai.

Despite the strong Iranian presence in Dubai, new restrictions are taking a toll. Of the 48 international, local and family banks in Dubai, all but a handful have cut off new business with Iranian banks cited in U.N. resolutions, said Hamad Buamim, director general of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce. Potential risks are too high. "It's psychological," he told me. The emirates have also set up a joint task force with the United States to sift through Iranian-run businesses in Dubai to uncover front companies for Iranian military, government or business entities sanctioned in U.N. resolutions, officials said. At least 30 have been shut down and dozens put on a watch list.

Visas and work permits for Iranians have dried up. "Registering a new company with an Iranian partnership is almost impossible," said Hashempour, the Iranian Business Council vice president. When Iranian-run companies import goods, the wait in customs has gone from hours to days, even weeks. Passengers on hundreds of weekly flights between Iran and Dubai go through Terminal 2, where iris scans are taken -- a practice not used at Terminal 1 for flights from Europe and the United States. Iran formally complained recently that its citizens were being mistreated, "obstructed" and detained in Dubai.

The emirates do not, however, want to be the pioneer in a new "sanctions of the willing," I was often told. They have not adopted Washington's blacklist. Several officials expressed frustration with American strong-arming. "Sometimes, yes, we feel that the United States is asking too much," said Sultan bin Nasser al-Suwaidi, governor of the Central Bank. "They want results to happen immediately, yesterday instead of today or tomorrow. They are demanding. This is what I said to Stuart Levey: 'You shouldn't expect it can produce miracles in a short time.' "

The Achilles' heel of U.S. strategy, of course, is oil. It has provided Iran with a huge cushion to absorb financial shocks. Iran's budget is pegged to a per-barrel oil price of about \$60 (though actual spending is somewhat higher), at a time when oil has gone as high as \$147. Gary Hufbauer, co-author of "Economic Sanctions Reconsidered" and a fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, told me that banking sanctions are effective, but the odds are still against current sanctions convincing Tehran to change its behavior or cooperate on its nuclear program. The Peterson report concluded: "It is hard to bully a bully with economic measures," especially against "large targets that are strong, stable, hostile and autocratic."

It is also possible that the Levey strategy could backfire. Iranians carp at their government over the economy, but such is the Iranian way. "If the Prophet Muhammad were to govern Iran, people would be critical," said an Iranian businessman who commutes to Dubai. "We are a very demanding people." The clampdown is uniting many disaffected Iranians around their government, just as they rallied when Saddam Hussein invaded in 1980, said Hashempour. Small-businesses owners have been hit hardest. Meanwhile the state, the Revolutionary Guard's growing business empire and quasi-government foundations dominate up to 80 percent of business in Iran and are most able to weather the financial storm.

"Yes, they can stop a guy in the Spice Market from getting a letter of credit," said an Iranian-American investment banker in Dubai who met with Levey. "That's not fomenting opposition. The guys who are hurting are in the business community. Yes, they hate Ahmadinejad, but they hated him from the beginning. The basic flaw is [the idea] that people who are unhappy with the government can do anything. If the goal is to stop Iran from developing a nuclear capability, nothing that has happened here will achieve that objective."

Tradition also provides alternatives for those pressed by the lack of access to international credit. Hawala, Arabic for "transfer," is an informal version of Western Union dating back to the eighth century; it was used initially to avoid bandits. The system is based on trust. To get money to a relative in another city or country, one person gives money to a local hawala. For a small fee, he gets a code word or password to give the relative. The hawala then contacts a trusted friend or agent in the other city. The relative picks up the money upon providing the correct code word. At year's end, hawalas settle their own accounts. Hawalas are making a big comeback among traders doing business with Iran.

On two scorched mornings in August, I wandered Dubai Creek to talk to dhow crews and check their cargo to Iran. I was on the creek in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq war, when the world was trying to squeeze Iran into a cease-fire. Dhows then carried vast amounts of American goods. Many still do, but the biggest share of cargo now is Chinese. Economists and dhow captains told me Iranian trade is increasingly looking East.

Dhows thrive off sanctions. But the sun-wizened seafarers thought Washington was making a political mistake. "I may look dirty, but I watch TV and read," said an engineer on the Ramseh Shams. He was a burly man with disheveled hair, a sweat-stained T-shirt and shorts with an image of Bozo the Clown on them. "The Yankees don't know who we are," he declared, as crewmates listened. "Ahmadinejad is not Iran. We are people who love our country even if we're against our government. It's the soil we love. Ahmadinejad will be gone in four years. We will not. The United States has lost its sanity in the Middle East. The bully who strong-arms in this region does not last."

Levey's campaign may have had a broader punitive impact than any other action against Iran. But sanctions take time. International sanctions on the illegal white-minority government in Rhodesia took 15 years to really bite; and only when South Africa cut Rhodesia off, in its own political self-interest, did the regime begin to collapse.

There is probably not that much time in the case of Iran. The clock on Iran's nuclear program is ticking faster. Rival projections suggest Tehran might be able to develop a nuclear capacity between 2010 and 2015. The clock on sanctions is moving much more slowly. Levey acknowledged huge hurdles. "But sitting in my place, we have an obligation to use every tool available to us to solve this problem peacefully, and that's what we're doing," he told me.

A senior U.S. official acknowledged as much. "This is not a two- or three- or four-year plan," he said. "If people are realistic, it's a 10- or 15-year plan. Of all available options, it seems to me the most sensible thing to do. In the meantime you try to do other things and just hope you can head them off at the pass."

The ultimate glitch in Levey's campaign, however, may be that the hard-liners now in power flourish under siege. "I call them weeds who grow in the dark because they thrive in isolation," reflected Karim Sadjadpour of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "You want to send a signal to the Iranians that belligerence only isolates them and reaps no rewards. But they're like Fidel Castro; they don't want a U.S. presence or to open up to the world. It would open up the floodgates against them."

Because Stuart Levey's war may result in only limited victories, a growing array of voices -- from a former general in the U.S. military's Central Command to former Bush administration staff members -- is calling on the next president to reach out to Iran in direct dialogue. Some support the so-called "grand bargain": negotiating over all diplomatic, economic and security issues and eventually re-establishing U.S.-Iran ties. A robust rapprochement with Iran still seems unlikely any time soon. But to advance American interests in the region, the next president will have to think more imaginatively than the five presidents whose policies have fallen short for three decades.

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Graphic

PHOTOS: Stuart Levy, undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, with Assistant Secretary Pat O'Brien and Christy Clark, the chief of staff. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY FINK) (pg.MM28)

TRADING AROUND SANCTIONS: Dhows moored in Dubai Creek, across the Persian Gulf from Iran. Goods from all over from the United States, Europe, China arrive in the port and are then ferried to Iran. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN CARTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (pg.MM31)

EXPAT DUBAI (from left): The Iranian Club in Dubai serves the large Iranian population in Dubai

Ahmed Zaer, 65, of Shiraz, Iran, in a stall in a Dubai spice souk, where most of the businesses are run by Iranians

a Dubai branch of Bank Saderat, one of several Iranian banks hit by the Treasury Department's sanctions. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN CARTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (pg.MM32)

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Islamic Democrats? - Correction Appended

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James Traub is a contributing writer for the magazine. He is working on a book about democracy promotion.

Body

At 2 in the morning, a few days after I arrived in Cairo last month, a text message beeped into my cellphone: "Mahmoud Ghozlan, MB Guide Bureau, is being arrested NOW." Ghozlan was only the latest prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization that commands deep loyalty in Egypt, to be hauled off by the dawn visitors of President Hosni Mubarak's security apparatus. In recent months, leaders of the organization, businessmen thought to be financial backers and other members of the brotherhood's Guidance Bureau have been arrested on a variety of charges. Forty members of the group have been indicted under Egypt's emergency laws and put under the jurisdiction of a military tribunal, which is likely to give them long jail sentences.

The arrest and imprisonment of political opponents is nothing new in Egypt, which has been ruled by a succession of authoritarian leaders since 1952; secular democrats are in jail along with the Islamists. Egypt is generally rated as one of the more repressive countries in the world's most repressive region. But two years ago, responding in part to White House pressure, the regime of President Hosni Mubarak allowed parliamentary elections to take place under conditions of unprecedented political freedom -- at least initially. And the brotherhood, though a banned organization that had to run candidates as independents, dominated the contest until the government cracked down in later rounds of voting. The organization still took 88 of the 454 seats in Egypt's lower house, the People's Assembly, becoming, in effect, the first opposition party of Egypt's modern era.

But it is not simply numbers that make the brotherhood a threat from the regime's point of view. While Mubarak and his allies regularly denounce the brothers as fundamentalists bent on turning Egypt into a theocracy, the new legislators have made common cause with judges, liberal intellectuals and secular activists in calling for increased political freedom. They have steered clear of cultural or religious issues. Abdel Monem Abou el-Fotouh, one of Ghozlan's colleagues on the Guidance Bureau, said to me flatly, "We are not a religious body." Only one of his 15 fellow guides, he said, is a sheik, or religious authority -- "and even he is political." While many secular critics fear that the brotherhood harbors a hidden Islamist agenda, so far the organization has posed a democratic political challenge to the regime, not a theological one; and that makes it all the more dangerous.

In his 2005 Inaugural Address, President Bush traced out the logic of a new, post-9/11 American foreign policy. "For as long as whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny," he declared, violence "will gather . .

. and cross the most defended borders" -- i.e., our own. Therefore, he announced, "it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." Thus was born the Freedom Agenda; and Egypt occupied the bull's-eye on this new target. Egypt was an authoritarian state that had supplied much of the leadership of Al Qaeda. It is also the largest nation in the Arab world and, historically, the center of the region's political and cultural life. Progress in Egypt's sclerotic political system would resonate all over the Islamic world. The nearly \$2 billion a year in military and economic aid that the U.S. had been providing since the Camp David accords in 1979 offered real leverage. And Egypt's early experience of democratic government (from 1922 to 1952), mostly under British occupation, and its lively community of democratic and human rights activists gave political reform a firmer foundation than it had elsewhere in the Arab world.

As it happened, presidential and parliamentary elections were scheduled for 2005. Not long after his inaugural address, President Bush called Mubarak to urge him to allow independent monitors to oversee the elections and to loose the asphyxiating controls on political activity and the press. For his part, Mubarak needed to respond not only to Washington but also to a rising tide of domestic dissent -- and to the continued enfeeblement of his own National Democratic Party, which performed badly in legislative elections five years earlier. He agreed to hold Egypt's first contested presidential elections and to permit unprecedented, if carefully circumscribed, political freedom. The U.S. Agency for International Development, which in years past had allowed the regime to control the hundreds of millions of dollars it spent in Egypt, earmarked \$50 million for democracy and governance; much of the money went to the training of political party activists and election monitors.

The Muslim Brotherhood was not at that time a major force in national electoral politics. Since its founding in 1928, the brotherhood had sunk deep roots in the country's urban working and middle classes, and especially among the professions, establishing a powerful base in the "syndicates" that represent doctors, lawyers, journalists and others. The organization began dipping its toes in the water of parliamentary electioneering in the mid-'80s; in 2000 it gained 17 seats. But the group responded to the new climate of openness by fielding a much larger slate of candidates for the 2005 elections -- 160 in all. Candidates from old-line Nasserist and left-wing parties ran as well.

After decades of quiet organizing, the Islamists proved to be far more popular, and more disciplined, than the isolated leaders of Mubarak's ruling party expected. In the first of three rounds of voting, the brothers won so many seats that the regime grew alarmed. In the second round, the police restricted access to polling areas in brotherhood strongholds; the Islamists still won most of the seats they sought. In the third round, the regime pulled out all the stops: despite the presence of hundreds of American-trained election monitors, security forces beat up and arrested opposition activists and shut down voting booths. In the end, election violence would claim 14 lives. Video footage showed old <u>women</u> in head scarves and veils scaling ladders to reach polling places -- this in a country notorious for dismal turnout. The regime had feared a surge of support for secular opposition forces like Ghad, a new party founded by Ayman Nour, a charismatic figure who also opposed Mubarak in the presidential race, or Tagammu, the traditional party of the left. These were the groups that the Bush administration's democracy agenda was designed to promote. But they proved to have relatively little national following; few voters risked arrest to cast a ballot in their behalf.

The brotherhood quickly proved that it was not only popular, but savvy. The leaders understood that it was not in their interests to provoke a confrontation with the regime and its hair-trigger security forces. They fielded candidates in only a fraction of the districts they could have won. According to Joshua Stacher, an American scholar of Egyptian politics who lives in Cairo, a brotherhood politician who projected winning 17 seats in his governorate was instructed by his superior to come back with a smaller number. Only when he whittled the figure to seven was he told to go ahead. The brotherhood won six of the seats. Stacher also notes that when the brotherhood held a press conference (which he attended) four days after the election to introduce their new legislators, a reporter asked Muhammad Akef, the "supreme guide," if they would be prepared to talk to the Americans. And Akef answered, "Yes, but they should forward the request to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry." He was saying both that the brotherhood was open to dialogue and that it had nothing to hide from the regime.

The brotherhood bloc took Parliament a great deal more seriously than the ruling party did. The entire 88-person contingent moved into a hotel in Cairo in order to be able to work and live together while the People's Assembly

was in session. Merely showing up changed the dynamic of this torpid body, since N.D.P. lawmakers had to attend as well lest they be outvoted. The brothers formed a "parliamentary kitchen" with committees on various subjects; the committees, in turn, organized seminars to which outside experts were regularly invited. The Islamists formed a coalition with other opposition legislators, and with sympathetic members of the N.D.P., to protest the extension of emergency rule. They stood in solidarity with judges who were protesting growing infringements on their autonomy; hundreds of protesters, including some of the brotherhood's major figures, were arrested during several weeks of demonstrations in central Cairo. In an article in the journal Middle East Report, Joshua Stacher and Samer Shehata, a professor at Georgetown, concluded, "Brotherhood M.P.'s are attempting to transform the Egyptian parliament into a real legislative body, as well as an institution that represents citizens and a mechanism that keeps government accountable."

Many members of Egypt's secular opposition remain deeply skeptical of the brotherhood, which they see as the regime's silent ally in blocking their hopes for an open, pluralist society. Egypt's ruling elite has, in turn, traditionally worried far more about the secular opposition than about the Islamists. Anwar el-Sadat, the president from 1970 to his assassination in 1981, made peace with religious forces by initiating a thoroughgoing Islamization of Egyptian society. Sadat rewrote the educational curriculum along religious lines and amended Article 2 of Egypt's extremely progressive constitution to stipulate that Shariah -- Islamic law -- was the "main source" of the nation's laws. Mubarak, who was Sadat's vice president, continued this practice. Some secularists fear that the brotherhood, perhaps in collaboration with the military, would establish an authoritarian theocracy. "I have no doubt that they would implement Shariah if they ever came to power," says Hisham Kassem, a leading publisher in the progressive media. "I see them as a menace."

But opinions are shifting. After holding a symposium on free speech, Negad al-Borai, a democracy activist and human rights lawyer, says that he received an emissary from the supreme guide. "He came and said: "We accept everything in your initiative as a beginning to the democratic process. The only thing we ask is that if issues arise where we wish to state our opposition according to our own views, we can have our own voice.' " Al-Borai readily agreed, and the brotherhood endorsed untrammeled free speech. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, the Egyptian dissident most widely known in the West, says that the performance of the brotherhood's parliamentary bloc over the last year has allayed his own concerns. The regime, he says, is brandishing the Islamist threat in order "to scare the foreigners and the middle class and the Copts" Egypt's ancient Christian minority, who fear being treated as "nonbelievers."

Indeed, since the 2005 election and the brotherhood's subsequent performance, the regime has turned the full force of its repressive energies on it. Last April and May, when brotherhood members demonstrated in solidarity with Egypt's judges, who had been seeking greater autonomy, security forces waded in, arresting hundreds of the brothers. The campaign of arrests resumed earlier this year, aiming at leading figures like Mahmoud Ghozlan, the Guidance Bureau member, as well as financiers; the government has frozen assets of brotherhood supporters said to amount to \$2 billion. And there could be no mistaking the intent of the constitutional "reforms" submitted last December. Article 5, which lays the basis for the regulation of political parties, was rewritten to stipulate that "political activity or political parties shall not be based on any religious background or foundation." This prohibition seemed to directly contradict the language of Article 2, which made Shariah the foundation of Egyptian law. How can a self-professed religious state prohibit political activity with a "religious background"? When I posed this question to Hossam Badrawi, a leading member of a group of young politicians who profess to be reforming the N.D.P. from within, he asked me in return, "If I go to Germany and I want to start a Nazi Party, would I be allowed to do that?"

"Is that a fair analogy?"

"Yes, because they don't respect the constitution, which lays out a separate role for politics and religion." Except that it doesn't or didn't, until just now.

This is the kind of language that, as Saad Eddin Ibrahim put it, is bound to scare foreigners and the middle class. President Mubarak has called the group a threat to national security. Mohamed Kamal, a political scientist who is close to Gamal Mubarak, the president's son and heir apparent, and who now serves as the N.D.P.'s semiofficial spokesman to the Western media, says of the brotherhood: "They're fundamentalist in their ideology. I'm not saying

necessarily that they're terrorists; they want to establish a religious state based on their interpretation of the Koran and the Shariah." While some of their leaders "pay lip service to democracy, **women**'s rights and so on," Kamal says, the grass roots are deeply reactionary.

Is that so? One night I drove out to the far northeastern edge of Cairo -- a trip that took an hour and a half through the city's insane traffic -- to meet with Magdy Ashour, a member of the brotherhood's parliamentary bloc. The caucus is heavy with lawyers, doctors and professors, but Ashour is an electrician with a technical diploma. The neighborhood he represents, al-Nozha, is a squalid quarter of shattered buildings and dusty lanes. Ashour had established himself in what seemed to be the only substantial structure in the area, a half-completed apartment building; I walked through plaster dust and exposed wiring to reach his office. Ashour hurried in from the evening prayer. He was a solemn, square-jawed 41-year-old with short hair and unfashionable glasses, a brown suit and a brown tie. He grew up, he said, in the neighborhood, and as a young man often gave the Friday sermon at the local mosque. He joined the brotherhood when he was 23. Why? "From my reading and my earliest meetings with brotherhood members," he said through a translator, "I could see that they were moderate, that they don't impose their religion on people, but at the same time they're not loose with their religious principles."

I asked Ashour if the spate of arrests had him worried, and he said that he indeed feared that the state might be seeking an "open confrontation" with the brotherhood. Might not that provoke the group's supporters to violence? Ashour answered by citing an aphorism he attributed to the brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna: "Be like trees among the people: They strike you with stones, and you shower them with blessings." Ashour then embarked on a brief oration: "We would like to change the idea people have of us in the West," he said, "because when people hear the name Muslim Brotherhood, they think of terrorism and suicide bombings. We want to establish the perception of an Islamic group cooperating with other groups, concerned about human rights. We do not want a country like Iran, which thinks that it is ruling with a divine mandate. We want a government based on civil law with an Islamic source of lawmaking." If Magdy Ashour was a theocrat -- or a terrorist -- he was a very crafty one.

s it has fully entered the political arena, the brotherhood has been forced to come up with clear answers on issues about which it has been notably ambiguous in the past. Some are easy enough: There seems to be little appetite among them for stoning adulterers or lopping off the hands of thieves; and all deprecate the jizya, or tax on nonbelievers, as a relic of an era when only Muslims served in the military. Some are not so easy. I asked Magdy Ashour about the drinking of alcohol, which is prohibited in Saudi Arabia, Iran and other Islamic states. He was quite unfazed. "There is a concept in Shariah that if you commit the sin in private it's different from committing it in public," he explained. You can drink in a hotel, but not in the street. This was flexibility verging on pragmatism. I wondered if Ashour, and the other brotherhood candidates, had offered such nuanced judgments on the stump; a number of detractors insist that the group's campaign rhetoric was much more unabashedly Islamist.

There are, of course, more fundamental questions. In the course of a three-hour conversation in the brotherhood's extremely modest office in an apartment building in one of Cairo's residential neighborhoods, I asked Muhammad Habib, the deputy supreme guide, how the brotherhood would react if the Legislature passed a law that violated Shariah. "The People's Assembly has the absolute right in that situation," he said, "as long as it is elected in a free and fair election which manifests the people's will. The Parliament could go to religious scholars and hear their opinion" -- as it could seek the advice of economists on economic matters -- "but it is not obliged to listen to these opinions." Some consider grave moral issues, like homosexual marriage, beyond the pale of majoritarianism; others make no such exception. Hassan al-Banna famously wrote that people are the source of authority. This can be understood, if you wish to, as the Islamic version of the democratic credo.

The acceptance of democracy is itself a proxy for something else -- the repudiation of violence and terrorism. Here the brotherhood has a fair amount of history to answer for. The organization was established in 1928 in the wake of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's secularization of Turkey and his abolition of the caliphate, the line of religious rulers that stretched back to the Prophet Muhammad. Hassan al-Banna, the charismatic founder, aspired to revitalize the spirit of Islam among the umma, the worldwide body of believers, and ultimately to restore the caliphate and Shariah. But for all al-Banna's emphasis on peaceful evangelizing, he also created a paramilitary wing, like Mussolini's brown shirts, known as al-nizam al-khas -- the Special Apparatus. During the '40s, when Egyptians fought to free themselves from British rule, brotherhood operatives engaged in a campaign of bombings and assassinations. The

organization was banned in 1948; soon afterward, a member of the group assassinated Egypt's prime minister. Al-Banna denounced the deed, but he was himself murdered by government security forces. And when a brotherhood plot to assassinate Gamal Abdel Nasser miscarried, most of the leading figures were jailed and tortured.

In 1964, the most prominent of the jailed leaders, Sayyid Qutb, produced a tract, "Milestones," which magnified the militant side of the brotherhood and rejected al-Banna's faith in the merits of instruction and moral example. Islamic regimes that failed to establish Shariah were apostates, he declared no better than the infidels themselves. Egypt was, of course, just such a state. "Milestones" was read as a call to revolution. Qutb was sentenced to death and hanged in 1966, making him a martyr throughout the Middle East. Among his disciples were the radical Islamists who conspired to murder Sadat in 1981 including Ayman al-Zawahiri, now Al Qaeda's second in command. Osama bin Laden was deeply influenced by Qutb's works and regularly attended lectures given by Qutb's younger brother, Muhammad. "Milestones" is now considered the founding manifesto of jihadism.

Qutb remains a heroic figure for many Egyptians. But Ibrahim Hudaybi, the young activist who sent me the text message about the arrest, pointed out to me when we met the next day that his own grandfather, Hasan Hudaybi, who replaced al-Banna as supreme guide and was jailed along with Qutb, wrote a book from prison, "Preachers, Not Judges," designed to reassert the brotherhood's commitment to peace and to open debate. Hudaybi was a thoroughly modern figure; we met in a coffee shop near the American University in Cairo, where he recently received his master's in political science. He was now working as a business consultant. Hudaybi wanted to see the brotherhood deal explicitly with the legacy of Qutb, even if doing so might not play well in the hustings. Other, more senior figures I spoke to insisted rather implausibly that Qutb had been misunderstood; but all swore by the philosophy of tolerance and the program of gradual reform laid out in "Preachers, Not Judges."

The brotherhood is an international organization. It has, however, no Comintern, no central apparatus. In Sudan, brotherhood members have formed an alliance with a deeply authoritarian ruling party. The brotherhood in Jordan and Morocco is considered relatively moderate. But in the Palestinian territories, the organization mutated into Hamas. Policy makers and academics in the West tend to be more concerned with the brotherhood's views of Hamas than with its understanding of Shariah. And here there is little satisfaction to be had. When I asked Muhammad Habib about Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians, he said, "With the continuous crackdown and ongoing war launched by the Israeli Army, which does not distinguish between civilians and noncivilians, you cannot speak about the Palestinians disregarding Israeli citizens." Brotherhood figures do not, at bottom, accept Israel's right to exist. Seif al-Islam, the son of Hassan al-Banna and a venerated elder of the group, said to me, in his stylized version of English: "Not any Palestine man or Egypt man feels that Jews who come from the outside have the right to stay in Palestine. At the same time, the Palestinian people on the outside cannot have a grave to bury in. This is not religion."

The more worldly among the brotherhood's legislators and thinkers understand that Israel is a test just as Qutb is a test, and that the Western audience matters even if it doesn't vote. Hazem Farouk Mansour, a dentist who is the head of the foreign-policy committee of the parliamentary bloc, says of Camp David, "We accept it as an agreement, whether we like it or not." Essam el-Erian, a clinical pathologist who is head of the brotherhood's political committee and perhaps its most sophisticated thinker, said to me: "Look, this is a historical and ideological and religious crisis. It cannot be solved in a few years. Every part in this conflict can be put forth for dialogue." Like virtually all of his colleagues, el-Erian urged me not to get too hung up on this or any other question of what the brotherhood might do in some unimaginably remote future in which the regime had somehow relinquished its grip on power. "We can solve the problem of our society," he said, "to have democratic reform respected by Europeans and Americans, whatever happens to the Palestinians."

From what I could tell, in fact, the brotherhood in its public oratory sticks to issues of political process, while voters worry about the kind of mundane issues that preoccupy people everywhere. Magdy Ashour said that few voters knew or cared anything about issues like constitutional reform. He agreed to let me sit by his side one evening as he met with constituents. None of the dozen or so petitioners who were ushered into the tiny, bare cell of his office asked about the political situation, and none had any complaints about cultural or moral issues. Rather, there were heart-rending stories of abuse by the powerful, like the profoundly palsied young man confined to a wheelchair who sold odds and ends from a kiosk under a bridge, and who was ejected, along with his meager goods, when a road-

improvement project came through. (Ashour promised to go with him to the police station the following morning.) Mostly, though, people wanted help getting a job. One ancient gentleman with a white turban and walking stick wandered in as if from the Old Testament. He was accompanied by his daughter and 3-year-old granddaughter. His daughter's husband had abandoned her, and she needed a job. Ashour explained that since the woman had a business degree, she might find work in a private school.

The old man shook his head. "She must have a government job," he said. "She has three girls. I am too old to take care of her. She needs security." Ashour later explained to me that while a private job might pay \$90 a month and a public one only \$35, the government job would carry a guaranteed \$15 pension, which felt like insurance against destitution. Only a government job was considered real; Ashour himself had worked as the superintendent for lighting infrastructure for a portion of Cairo. Nasser caught the bug of socialism half a century earlier, and the government continued to dominate the economy and to sap the energies needed for private initiative. Egypt's arthritic economy and its deeply corrupt public administration were much more salient problems for Ashour than was, say, debauchery on TV.

arrived in Cairo in the middle of a heated national debate over Mubarak's proposed reform of the constitution. During the presidential campaign, Mubarak promised to reduce his own powers in favor of the Legislature and the cabinet and to loosen restrictions on political parties. Only trace elements of those vows remained; in fact, the reforms seemed designed to consolidate, rather than dissipate, the regime's authority. Article 88, which had stipulated that elections be held "under the supervision of members of the judiciary authority," now granted that control to "a higher commission marked by independence and impartiality." Since no such bodies had been known to exist in Egypt, few figures outside the ruling party were willing to take the proposal at face value. And a new antiterrorism provision allowed the state to set aside civil liberties enumerated elsewhere in the constitution in the pursuit of suspected terrorists. Mohamed Kamal described this measure to me as the equivalent of the USA Patriot Act, but political activists are convinced that it will be used to snuff out opposition. (The brotherhood may be the chief target, since the regime regards it as a quasi-terrorist body.) Amnesty International described the package as the gravest threat to human rights in Egypt since Mubarak took power.

In mid-March, on the day the proposed amendments were presented to the People's Assembly, the brotherhood legislators and the dozen or so members of the secular opposition staged a joint protest. The entire group stood silently inside the gates of Parliament wearing black sashes that read, "No to the Constitutional Amendments," and carrying signs that read, "No to Electoral Fraud," "No to Dawn Visitors" and so on. The muezzin's call led to an interval of prayer, and then legislators squeezed one by one through the gates, backing the scrum of reporters and photographers into a busy two-way street. Drivers honked furiously while legislators struggled to be heard over the din. I had the impression that the brotherhood hadn't yet gotten the hang of press relations.

The entire opposition boycotted the debate; the regime, unimpressed, carried the day with the near-unanimous support of the N.D.P. and then scheduled the mandatory national referendum for the following week, presumably to prevent the opposition from mobilizing. But the tactic failed; opposition legislators urged supporters to boycott the ballot. All of the brotherhood legislators I spoke to that day said that the polling places in their constituency were literally empty. Civic groups canvassing Cairo and other major cities came to the same conclusion. Estimates of turnout varied from 2 to 8 percent. When it was over, government officials pegged turnout at 27 percent -- a figure so improbable that it scarcely seemed intended to be believed. Perhaps the implicit message was that the regime didn't care if it was believed or not.

In June 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice delivered a landmark address at the American University in Cairo in which she bluntly declared, "The day must come when the rule of law replaces emergency decrees and when the independent judiciary replaces arbitrary justice." Egypt's democracy activists were enthralled -- though they were to become increasingly disappointed, and then embittered, as the administration offered no public response to Mubarak's crackdown. But Rice's call to the political barricades was carefully modulated, perhaps in order to limit the offense to the regime. Asked after the speech about the Muslim Brotherhood, Rice said flatly, "We have not engaged the Muslim Brotherhood and . . . we won't." In fact, American diplomats had been in regular contact with brotherhood officials over the years; Rice was declaring -- in fact, making -- a new policy. And that policy still largely obtains. Rice's spokesman, Sean McCormack, told me, "We do not meet with the Muslim

Brotherhood per se, as we don't want to get entangled in complexities surrounding its legality as a political party." He added, however, "Consistent with our practice elsewhere, we will nonetheless meet with any duly elected member of the parliamentary opposition." In fact, American officials in Cairo included leading brotherhood parliamentarians in a group of legislators who met recently with Representative Steny Hoyer, the Democratic majority leader of the House.

But why not engage the brotherhood openly? Is what is gained by mollifying the Mubarak regime worth what is lost by forgoing contact with the brotherhood? "Americans," Essam el-Erian said to me, "must have channels with all the people, not only in politics, but in economics, in social, in everything, if they want to change the image of America in the region." Of course, that principle applies only up to a point. The administration has, understandably, refused to recognize the democratic bona fides either of Hamas or of <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon. But the Muslim Brotherhood, for all its rhetorical support of Hamas, could well be precisely the kind of moderate Islamic body that the administration says it seeks. And as with Islamist parties in Turkey and Morocco, the experience of practical politics has made the brotherhood more pragmatic, less doctrinaire. Finally, foreign policy is no longer a rarefied game of elites: public opinion shapes the world within which policy makers operate, and the refusal to deal with Hamas or <u>Hezbollah</u> has made publics in the Islamic world dismiss the whole idea of democracy promotion. Even a wary acceptance of the brotherhood, by contrast, would demonstrate that we take seriously the democratic preferences of Arab voters.

In general, I found the brothers deeply suspicious of American designs in the world but also curious about America itself. When I took my leave of Magdy Ashour once the crowd of petitioners thinned out, he asked if he could pose some questions of his own. "I've heard," he said, "that even George Bush's mother thinks he's an idiot; is that true?" And, "Why did George Bush say that America is going on a Christian crusade against the Muslim people?" And finally, "Is it true that the Jews control and manipulate the U.S. economy?" These are, alas, the kinds of questions -- with the possible exception of the first -- that people all over the Middle East ask.

Then Ashour said that he was thinking about visiting America. I asked how he could afford such an expensive journey, and he explained that the brotherhood has offered each legislator one free trip anywhere in the world -- a remarkable program for an organization said to be bent on returning Egypt to the Middle Ages. "I would," Ashour said, "like to see for myself."

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Correction

A picture caption with an article on Page 44 of The Times Magazine today about the Muslim Brotherhood misstates the dates of the photographs. The protest with brandishing of the Koran, in the first and fourth pictures, was in March of this year, not the fall of 2006. The other two photographs were taken in February of this year (the protester surrounded by the police) and in November 2006 (the protesters holding signs), not the in the spring of this year.

Correction-Date: April 29, 2007

Graphic

Photos: Nay Sayed Askar, a Muslim Brotherhood member of the Egyptian Parliament, voices dissent.

Raising Their Voices Brotherhood members brandishing the Koran (fall 2006) and protesting what they consider repressive measures in Cairo (spring 2007). (Photographs by Nasser Nuri/Reuters/Newscom. Second From Left: Amr Dalsh/Reuters)

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Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Steven Erlanger is the Jerusalem bureau chief for The New York Times. Taghreed El-Khodary contributed

additional reporting from Gaza.

Body

Palestinians never used to do these things to one another. Putting bullets in the back of the heads of men on their knees. Shooting up hospitals. Killing patients. Knee-capping doctors. Executing clerics. Throwing handcuffed prisoners to their deaths from Gaza's highest (and most expensive) apartment buildings. There is a madness in Gaza now. Hamas -- a religious political-military organization that dominated the last Palestinian elections -- claimed it was fighting infidels, with a holy sanction to kill. Fatah -- the largest group in the Palestine Liberation Organization -- was nearly as brutal as Hamas and claimed it was fighting the Nazis. Poor young men from the squalid, stinking refugee camps of Gaza, their heads filled with religious slogans and revolutionary cant, took off their knitted black masks to pose in front of the gilded bathrooms of the once-powerful and rich men of Fatah. Then they stole the sinks, toilets, tiles and pipes, leaving the wiring and the metal scraps for the ordinary, unarmed poor.

Gaza today is so far from the hopes of people like James Wolfensohn -- the former World Bank president who tried to coordinate economic redevelopment in the 140-square-mile territory between Israel and Egypt after the Israelis withdrew nearly two years ago -- as to seem like the other side of the earth. Rather than a model for a future Palestinian state, Gaza looks like Somalia: broken and ravenous. The civil war that Palestinians insisted could never happen just has, a civil war abetted by Israel and the United States in the name of antiterrorism and stability - another policy that has failed, at least here, where a burning smell still fills the nostrils and where a masked Hamas gunman with an AK-47 recently sat at the abandoned desk of the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, lifted up the phone and said: "Hello, Condoleezza Rice? You have me to deal with now." But the military victory of Hamas may also bring a welcome measure of quiet and security to the 1.5 million people of Gaza, nearly 70 percent of them refugees, who have been living a nightmare of criminal gangs, street-corner vendettas, clan warfare, absent police, corrupt officials, religious incitement and unremitting poverty.

Khaled Abu Hilal, a thin, grizzled chain-smoker who sucks in tobacco smoke the way an emphysema patient sucks in oxygen, is at the center of the revolution. He is a hated figure among many in the secular, nationalist Fatah; they think he is a heretic who helped set off the Gaza implosion. But his journey is Gaza's journey, from Fatah fighter and Israeli prisoner to disgusted ex-Fatah man, now associated with Hamas. His anger with Mahmoud Abbas -- Yasir Arafat's successor as chairman of the P.L.O. and now president of the Palestinian Authority -- and with what he considers the endless, futile and demeaning effort of a corrupt Fatah to please the Israelis, is shared among an increasing number of Palestinians.

Standing early last month amid the Israeli-bombed ruins of the buildings of the Executive Force, which he helped Hamas build as a parallel police and protection force, Hilal, now 39, was quietly triumphant. He had been serving as a close aide to, and spokesman for, the tough Hamas interior minister, Said Siam, who left office in opposition to the national-unity government with Fatah. Both he and Siam were central to the campaign by the Executive Force and by Hamas's military wing, the Qassam Brigades, that pulled Fatah down in six days in early June. "I feel proud, no question," he said as aides urgently shoved cellphones into his hand. "I feel I did my national duty, and that makes me very comfortable, psychologically speaking." Two weeks later, at a packed and sweaty rally in Gaza City, Hilal announced that he would lead a new Fatah movement and military force in Gaza, allied with Hamas, called Fatah al-Yasir/Higher Military Command, named after Yasir Arafat.

"This is pure Fatah, Fatah before Oslo," Hilal shouted hoarsely, referring to the 1993 peace accords with Israel that created the Palestinian Authority. Hilal sees Oslo as a betrayal of the Palestinian struggle for real statehood, and he called his new movement "a true Palestinian national liberation movement." Surrounded by large, bearded gunmen in black uniforms, Hilal wore a loose, untucked shirt and looked as tiny as Arafat. "The good and honorable people of the Fatah movement have rejected the collaborators!" he shouted. At the end, he was mobbed by hundreds of young men, both acolytes and job seekers.

Whether or not he succeeds with the new movement, Hilal (if he lives) presents the first major internal challenge to the Fatah establishment, represented by Abbas, calling Fatah back to its roots as a resistance movement of revolutionary fighters. Establishment Fatah has excommunicated Hilal, and some would surely like to see him dead. But if Palestine is now divided between the West Bank and Gaza, Fatah in Gaza is divided, too.

In a conversation after the Hamas victory, Hilal, speaking through an interpreter, said he felt "bitterness about the spilling of Palestinian blood," but the spilling of blood for the cause of Palestinian independence and dignity, as he sees it, is an inevitable, even necessary sacrifice. At least 160 Palestinians, most of them Fatah, died in that week of war last month, including 45 civilians, and some 800 were wounded, according to the Mezan Center for Human Rights in Gaza. Another 50 were killed in an earlier round of fighting, in May. No matter what happens now, Hilal said, "it will not be worse than the previous period of chaos, nothing worse can come. And maybe now we have the chance to move very seriously to encourage the local economy, small business, agriculture. The most important thing is that we have got rid of the mafia that exists in the security apparatuses and that paralyzed our daily life."

By "mafia" he means Fatah -- or at least the leadership of Fatah that he believes betrayed its duty to its own people. For Hilal, the recent battle was for the purity of Fatah, which he maintains he represents against what he calls "the polluted stream" of Fatah, "the diverted ones," who betrayed Palestinian aspirations for independence at Oslo and became entranced by Israeli and American approval and gold. The major mistake of Arafat and Fatah was to accept the Oslo accords, Hilal says, and those who opposed the accords then -- Hamas and Islamic Jihad -- were correct. "I am pro-peace and anti-Oslo," Hilal told me. "Oslo is a project for treason, not for peace."

The Palestinian Authority, an outgrowth of the accords, was not a government, in Hilal's view, but a welfare agency that has served Israeli interests. By keeping Palestinians focused on getting their monthly checks, it has enslaved them and prolonged the Israeli occupation of Palestine, instead of enabling Palestinians to build a real economy and nation. "Negotiations have become a good in themselves after Oslo, and that's a complete failure," he said. "The Palestinians only talk, and the Israelis are happy. They can negotiate forever and seduce these collaborators with money, V.I.P. treatment, exit visas, cars, businesses and monopolies.

"It's a form of control, of colonialism," Hilal went on. "When the Palestinian Authority employs 180,000 people, you drive them away from the real issue, you hold them by their neck and you make them dependent on the system. If you agree with Oslo, you get benefits and jobs. For those who resist, nothing; the price is sometimes to be killed." There is no real economy in the Palestinian territories, he said, noting that the authority has to rely on foreign aid even to pay its swollen wage bill for employees who do little work. "Instead of decent jobs, we have these colonial handouts, and the corrupted ones take their cut of everything," he said. He paused a moment, then added, "You can control an animal by feeding it, but a human being will start to think."

Born in southern Gaza a year after the 1967 war, Hilal came of age in the refugee camps of Khan Yunis. His family fled from Bashit, a village in what is now central Israel, during the 1948 war. The village was destroyed, he notes coldly, replaced by what he calls "the Jewish settlements" of Benaya and Aseret.

He grew up under Israeli occupation in the twisting, fetid alleys of Khan Yunis, only a few yards from the home of Muhammad Dahlan. Dahlan, seven years older than Hilal, would become Fatah's security chief in Gaza. Hilal once worked for him, then came to despise him.

Hilal was radicalized early. "I was no observer," he says now. "I was arrested two days before I turned 16, because I threw a hand-made bomb toward an Israeli military jeep in Khan Yunis." He spent the next 11 years, from 1984 to 1995, in six different Israeli prisons, from the most secure, in Ashkelon, to the most difficult, in the Negev tent prison of Ketziot, which was shut down for a time after international protests. "I paid the price," Hilal says flatly. "Many like me paid the price. Though our economic situation then was better than in any Arab country, we cared more about fighting the occupation than about bread or school. The occupation arrested us to put an end to all these emotions in us. But it backfired."

Like Maxim Gorky, he said that "prison was my university," and then he laughed. A year in Israeli prison, he says, "is like 10 years outside in terms of educational consciousness and commitment to your country, transferring it to a faith inside yourself. That's the most powerful incentive, to sacrifice for your country with consciousness. It's not about passion." Every Palestinian entering prison chose a faction; he chose Fatah, he says, because of Arafat. Most prisoners belonged to Fatah, and they met three times a day, for 90 minutes a session, to learn about the history of Palestine, the Arab world and the Fatah program. They also studied what Hilal calls "political science and military science." They studied languages; he chose to learn Hebrew, which he speaks and reads easily.

After the Oslo accords, which brought Arafat and the P.L.O. back from exile in Tunis, thousands of Palestinian prisoners were released, but not Hilal. "I opposed Oslo from the beginning," he says. "I was the representative of all the factions in Ketziot then, and the Israelis knew I opposed Oslo. Not because I oppose peace, but because I didn't trust the Israelis and military occupation."

Fatah split bitterly over Oslo, with Farouk Kaddoumi, Arafat's No. 2 in the faction, remaining in exile. When Hilal was finally released in 1995, Arafat persuaded him to "give Oslo a try" and work in the Palestinian Authority. He served in the presidential-security detail from 1996 until 2002, the second year of the second intifada. He then became a leader of Fatah's Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades -- set up by Arafat to compete with Hamas's military wing, and using many of the same tactics, including killing Israeli civilians -- and was a close aide to Samir al-Masharawi, who was Muhammad Dahlan's right-hand man.

Then, following Hamas's victory in January 2006, Hilal left Fatah, soon becoming spokesman for the minister of the interior in the new Hamas government. Why? "I discovered there were traitors in conspiracy against our Palestinian cause," Hilal told me. "Even Arafat understood by 2002 that Israel and America were looking for collaborators, not partners for peace." For Hilal, the symbol of the rot in Fatah was the dapper Dahlan, the boy who grew up near him in Khan Yunis and who became a favorite of the Israelis and the Americans. "Dahlan is an American employee," Hilal said. "I heard Arafat say that myself."

Ahmed Hillis, a critic of Dahlan who nonetheless remained in Gaza as a leader of Fatah after last month's fighting, dismisses Hilal's claim to hold true to the ideals of the organization. "He's Hamas now," Hillis says. "He was kicked out of Fatah a long time ago."

Ziad Abu Ein, a Fatah leader in Ramallah, knew Hilal in Ashkelon prison and respected him. He says he believes that Hilal left Fatah over a difference about money and sponsorship. "For the sake of dollars he left the official channels and went to Hamas seeking funding," Ein said. "He doesn't represent Fatah anymore; he was fired when he joined the Hamas government. Fatah doesn't need mercenaries. He sold himself to Hamas, even though he claims he is Fatah."

Hilal scoffs at the charge. And in fact he seems sincere in his anger with Fatah and in his belief that those who supported Oslo and negotiations with Israel, led by Abbas, have lost their way and lost touch with the real life of Gaza's people.

Hamas won the January 2006 elections for many reasons, but prime among them was a general disgust that had built among Palestinians, and among many members of Fatah like Hilal, at the corruption of Fatah's men at the top. They may have begun as revolutionaries, but they ended up as padded bureaucrats, benefiting from the privileges that their supposed adversary, Israel, was eager to provide them. One Israeli negotiator in the days of Camp David, Gidi Grinstein, recently described how Fatah's leaders would travel only first class, with junior staff traveling in business. Only Israeli cabinet ministers could travel business class, Grinstein noted. "We used to joke that they were the 'full-belly revolutionaries,' "he said. "Dahlan was a kid from a refugee camp who lived in a palace."

Dahlan, who has always denied corruption charges, used to control monopolies on oil supplies into Gaza and on exit permits. Fatah took a big cut of the import and export business at the Karni crossing on the Israeli border. But there was also Ahmed Qurei, the former prime minister known as Abu Ala, who was famous for his factory in Abu Dis, which was widely reported to supply cement for the building of some Israeli settlements and even for the separation wall.

Fatah lost touch not only with the grass roots but also with its soul, and when it largely traded armed resistance against Israel for negotiations that failed to produce either peace or a better life for Palestinians, it seemed to lose a certain amount of self-respect. When Arafat died, it lost its defining symbol, the one charismatic man who combined the idea of war and politics in his tiny, uniformed self, his kaffiyeh carefully tied in the shape of British Mandate Palestine, and who could gather together the many strands of Palestinian politics.

Even the gunmen of Fatah's Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades began to lose faith in their leaders, especially in Abbas. He had trouble paying them, but more important, his sincere, open and brave commitment to nonviolence seemed to them a surrender to Israeli occupation.

Hamas, working to Islamicize Palestinians and recruit them, combined religious fervor, well-financed charitable and social work and an effective strategy of military confrontation and terrorism. It is classified as a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union, and both try to disrupt its financing through charitable contributions and bank transfers. Its choice to enter electoral politics was much discussed inside the movement and presented a profound change. It also meant that Fatah had a competitor for the first time, and one as well-financed as itself.

Hamas has a religious foundation, but it is also an intensely nationalist movement, with Palestine as its focus. Hamas continues to refuse to recognize the existence of Israel. But it has none of the grand ambitions of Osama Bin Laden or Al Qaeda to drive the "U.S. crusaders" out of the Middle East, nor does it aim at Americans; instead, Hamas sees Washington as a reality and wants the Americans to push Israel to leave lands it occupied after the 1967 war, although Hamas refuses to endorse a permanent two-state solution. Hamas is secretive and severe but also, in its way, pragmatic. (For example, it stopped carrying out suicide bombings inside pre-1967 Israel as of September 2004, judging them to be counterproductive.)

It was Muhammad Dahlan who organized the Gaza crackdown on Hamas in 1996, when on Arafat's orders, Hamas men were arrested and their beards shaved. Many were taken to the headquarters of the Preventive Security, which Dahlan headed, where, it was reported at the time, they were tortured. Sometimes, according to Hamas officials, men were made to sit on bottles and thus sodomize themselves. Ten years later, during one postelection round of fighting between Hamas and Fatah, men of the Preventive Security marched through the streets, chanting a slogan referencing that time, with particular messages for Ismail Haniya, the Hamas prime minister, and Mahmoud Zahar, then the Hamas foreign minister. "Zahar!" they chanted. "Tell Haniya! The time of the bottle is returning!"

When Hamas took over Gaza, its fighters wept as they raised their green flag over the Preventive Security building, then turned to Mecca and prayed. Then they looted the building and Dahlan's luxurious villa. Dahlan, who was in Cairo, did not return to Gaza but fled to the West Bank.

The fight between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza has been brutal ever since last year's elections brought Hamas to power. Fatah refused Hamas's invitation to join in a coalition government. And, together with the security forces it had controlled since the Palestinian Authority was established after the 1993 Oslo accords, Fatah simply refused to recognize the legitimacy of Hamas, elected or not.

Even more, there were organized campaigns of crime and disruption from Fatah-run security forces, intended to make Hamas's government untenable. Many Palestinians spoke of recognizing Fatah men as they hijacked cars or forced their way to the head of lines in hospitals and ministries. One family I met spoke of Fatah officers, called to stop a riot in Khan Yunis over a new delivery of cooking gas, forcing their way to the front of the line and taking the remaining gas canisters for themselves. Then there were the criminal gangs that, as Hilal put it, "hid under the umbrella of resistance and invented a slogan and bought the T-shirt and pretended to belong to the Brigades of Whatever."

Hilal, like the leaders of Hamas, says that Fatah security forces deliberately set out to undermine the new Hamas government. But in any case, the Fatah-dominated police were doing little to enforce the law or to confront armed gangs, some of whom also contained policemen. Nor were the courts in Gaza providing any form of justice, meaning Gazans who wanted retribution or protection found their own armed men, usually from their own clan, or hamulla.

To defend Hamas and to try to provide security on the streets, in April 2006, the Palestinian Authority's new interior minister, Hamas's Said Siam, created the Executive Force, the parallel police force of volunteers, which President Abbas soon banned. No one in Gaza paid any attention to the ban. Hilal went to work for Siam and Hamas, agreeing with their attempt to bring security to Gazans, as Hamas had promised during its campaign. Hilal brought with him, he told me, 1,000 members of the Fatah-affiliated Aksa and Abu Rish Brigades, as well as representatives from other factional militias who were committed to fighting Israel, like the Popular Resistance Committees, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. (The Israeli security agency, Shin Bet, confirmed this information to me.)

"We can do more to provide security with 3,500 volunteers than the Palestinian security forces with their 70,000," Hilal said at the time, in one of a series of conversations we've had since Hamas took over. "We hold the gun out of faith and commitment to the national project, not for a salary. The main reason for the chaos is not the society, but the paralysis, weakness and corruption of the Palestinian Authority and its security forces, who just incite and do not do their jobs."

Hilal, who lives modestly with his wife and five children in the center of Gaza, is revered by many in the Executive Force, who regard him as clean, committed and logical. Akhaim al-Khalidi is one of them, a 23-year-old Fatah member from a Fatah family. He joined the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades in 2001 to fight the Israeli occupation, he told me recently. "But instead, many of them became corrupted, trying to find money," he said, especially as Arafat was being squeezed by Washington and Israel to stop paying so many gunmen. "Abu Hilal is an honorable man, and he is doing important work." Another Gazan fighter who supports Hilal, Muhammad Saqqa, is also Fatah but told me he admires Hamas. "Though we in Fatah were the fathers, I feel jealous of Hamas and their inspiration," he said. "They respect the young and the old, they're very secretive and disciplined, unlike Fatah. Don't consider them a stupid terrorist group. They're educated, organized, and they were elected. They distinguish between military and political and social work, and they are very honest with themselves."

Saqqa said that his father and one brother worked for Abbas's Presidential Guard; another brother worked for Fatah General Intelligence. But another brother joined Hamas's military, the Qassam Brigades, while Saqqa himself joined the Executive Force. "My family criticizes me for dealing with Hamas, but Hamas are our brothers," he said, adding later, "Abu Hilal knows Fatah very well and understands its shortcomings."

By the time the fighting in Gaza began last month, the Executive Force had grown to nearly 6,000 well-trained men and had been made a part of the Palestinian Authority's security forces, and they were being paid. The Shin Bet says the force shared a military headquarters with the Qassam Brigades, and while retaliating for rocket fire into Israel, Israeli forces aimed at and destroyed nearly every facility of the Executive Force. Shin Bet officials refused to

discuss Hilal, despite his prominence and his years in Israeli prisons, but Israel clearly regards him as a danger. On May 17, an Israeli missile was fired at the bodyguards around Hilal's house. One of them, Talat Abed Haniya, 30, was killed, and four others were wounded.

Israel is now confronted with an excruciating if not quite existential dilemma. There is a hostile entity on its southern border, run by an armed group that is committed to fighting Israel and is opposed to its existence. Gaza has become comparable to southern Lebanon, which is run by <u>Hezbollah</u>. Israel let <u>Hezbollah</u> grow, feeling restrained by an international border and its own nightmares about its 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon. Many in Israel consider that policy of restraint to have been a considerable mistake. Should Israel now let a Gazan Hamastan grow, or try to take it out, hoping that Fatah can restore some semblance of authority there? Even before last month's rout of Fatah, there was already pressure from the Israeli Southern Command for a major incursion into Gaza to try to whack back growing Hamas power -- "to cut the grass," as the Israeli military chief of staff, Dan Halutz, told me when he was still in office.

The problem of Gaza will be the first to confront Ehud Barak, the new Israeli defense minister. Barak, who as prime minister tried and failed, with Bill Clinton, to cut the clotted mess with the Palestinians in one go, is also the most decorated soldier in Israel's history. A former army commando, Barak is likely to favor operations neater than massed-armor invasions of crowded refugee camps. But ambitious to be prime minister again, he is also unlikely to sit on his hands.

Hamas is likely to try to ensure that it gives Israel no provocation for such an incursion, needing the time to try to consolidate daily life in Gaza, which means working functionally with Israel on imports of fuel oil, electricity, milk, drugs and most everything else. Fighting Israel now will do nothing for Hamas or for Gazans who want Hamas to deliver on its promise of "change and reform," the slogan under which it won power.

Hilal says that he still believes, like Abbas and unlike Hamas, in a negotiated two-state solution. "But more and more," he explained, "Palestinians understand that a real peace is built on struggle, and it is made between enemies, not friends. The government that is an enemy to Israel but chosen by the people is the one able to make peace."

As you move around Gaza, along with the poverty and shoddy construction of everything except public buildings, a few lavish apartment houses and the mosques, what strikes you hardest is the increasing religious conservatism. Most of the people in the streets are men, and the <u>women</u> you see are almost invariably covered -- not just with a head scarf that surrounds the face and hides the hair, but with long, heavy dresses, usually black, that fall to the ankles. You notice the radical fervor of the martyr posters and the fierceness of the gunmen, but perhaps the biggest shock is how young everyone is. According to official figures from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 49 percent of the population of Gaza is 14 or younger; 60 percent are 19 or younger. Nearly 76 percent are under 30. So there is a lot of testosterone, not much sexual mingling and very few jobs.

For Hilal, this pressure cooker of youth, anger and lack of opportunity is necessary for the revolution in consciousness he maintains is happening. According to the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 58 percent of those under 30 expect a more violent struggle with Israel over the next 5 to 10 years, and only 22 percent say that there will be a peaceful negotiated solution between Israel and the Palestinians. Forty-eight percent say they believe such an agreement is impossible; 20 percent more say that it will come only "in a few generations."

Nasreen al-Howh is a 26-year-old psychiatric social worker in Gaza, and she says that the constituency for peace is shrinking, especially among the young. "I'm very worried about this generation," she said recently, pulling at her white head covering. "They are very pessimistic and very vulnerable to appeals for mastery, for meaning." What they want, she says, is a sense that they can control their lives, and that their lives will have meaning. So they are susceptible to appeals from religious groups and armed groups that claim to be fighting Israel. She conceded that she, too, cannot imagine a final peace with Israel or a two-state solution. "The resistance camp is crowding out the peace camp," she told me. "So long as there's no peace, there's resistance."

Under pressure and without work, many young men "will try to avoid all that responsibility and go to the tanzim," she went on to say, referring to the militias. "The tanzim also gives them self-confidence; it alleviates the fear inside of them." Mkhaimer Abusada, who teaches at Al Azhar University, told me: "They can get \$100 working for the tanzim. They've lost perspective. They've lost the belief in peace. And they've lost faith in education -- in their future here."

It's not hard to find young people at loose ends, jobless and bored, admiring of the gunmen, ready to be inspired or recruited or manipulated or brainwashed into fighting for -- or against -- something larger than their own lives. Some want a job, but many believe that their only honorable future is in "struggle" or "resistance" against an Israel that they, like Hilal, believe does not keep its promises and is insincere about its willingness to leave Palestinian lands in return for peace.

Fadel Bsiso, a skinny and jobless teenager, sat with two friends in the smoky A-Shiraa coffee shop in Gaza City not long ago, nursing a single coffee and sharing a water-pipe. (Each pipe costs \$1.20 to rent with one bowl of tobacco.) His father "confronted the Israelis many times in the first intifada," he said proudly.

And Bsiso himself? "I've just got into one military faction," he said. Why join? "I feel I'm looking for protection," he said. "This is how I find it." Protection from whom? He looked stunned. "From Israel," he said. "It's a war, an endless war with them, mentioned even in the Koran. Our religion does not allow us to live with them."

But his father is Fatah, which recognizes a two-state solution, right? Bsiso shrugged: "The Jews are imposed on us. They have no roots here. They came and took our land and built a state, but we don't accept it."

One of the friends, Sakher Hillis, who is 19, broke in. "They chose a weak country, but they were surprised to find out we're strong," he said.

Bsiso said his father wants him to be a teacher. "But then he jokes and says, 'Even if you go as a martyr, I have seven others.' "

Hillis's own father is in Hamas. "I'm very pessimistic," he said. "But I feel I can give my life to the cause. I'm very bored with this life, honestly. This life has no meaning for me. If I can find a goal and achieve it, I can be optimistic. But this depression is inside of us."

Is religion part of the answer? "Religion plays a role because it encourages struggle," Hillis said. "It says fight in the name of God. I'm not extreme, I promise you -- this is normal."

The Palestinian poet Ahmed Dahbour is troubled by the turn to Hamas and religious and political extremism and has tried to understand it as an expression of frustration, especially generational frustration. Dahbour was 2 when his family fled Haifa into exile in 1948. "I'm the generation of the nakba," he told me recently -- the "catastrophe," as Palestinians refer to the establishment of Israel and their own flight or expulsion. "We fled with nothing, and my mother used to create for me an imaginary city, a paradise called 'Haifa.' The enemy was an idea. But this generation is different. This generation saw the Israeli soldier, and it is full of bitterness and envy."

He emphasized the patriarchal nature of Palestinian society, and the deep humiliation suffered by a father who cannot protect his family from invasion, incursion, poverty, unemployment and fear. "The fathers feel shame, but so do the sons," Dahbour said. "The sons become martyrs, not the fathers."

Then he added, "The revolution of the sons is to protect the dignity of the fathers."

"This suffering and these deaths are the tax imposed on us by the occupation," Hilal told me. "We suffer and burn, but what causes revolution? Poverty, injustice and anger -- this is what leads to revolution, even in free countries. This is what gives us fuel to resist the occupation and create a revolution in our thinking."

Two phenomena are merging, he went on to say: "personal revenge and the national project." Israeli policies in Gaza and the West Bank, he's convinced, are stoking a third intifada, "more bloody and violent." Hilal is stoking it too, in his own way. The young generation now, with all its anger and hopelessness, is a necessary part of the

victory Hilal is sure will come -- when Israel, he believes, will come to terms with Palestinian nationalism and negotiate a future with an enemy it has been forced to respect.

"I think this generation will be the liberation generation," he said. "If in the past, 1 percent of the people went into resistance, from this generation, 20 percent or more will do it. This generation will be the one most ready to resist. This generation will be our liberation army."

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Graphic

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Body

AMMAN, Jordan -- Muhammad Fawaz is a very serious college junior with a stern gaze and a reluctant smile that barely cloaks suppressed anger. He never wanted to attend Jordan University. He hates spending hours each day commuting.

As a high school student, Mr. Fawaz, 20, had dreamed of earning a scholarship to study abroad. But that was impossible, he said, because he did not have a "wasta," or connection. In Jordan, connections are seen as essential for advancement and the wasta system is routinely cited by young people as their primary grievance with their country.

So Mr. Fawaz decided to rebel. He adopted the serene, disciplined demeanor of an Islamic activist. In his sophomore year he was accepted into the student group affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, Jordan's largest, most influential religious, social and political movement, one that would ultimately like to see the state governed by Islamic law, or Shariah. Now he works to recruit other students to the cause.

"I find there is justice in the Islamic movement," Mr. Fawaz said one day as he walked beneath the towering cypress trees at Jordan University. "I can express myself. There is no wasta needed."

Across the Middle East, young people like Mr. Fawaz, angry, alienated and deprived of opportunity, have accepted Islam as an agent of change and rebellion. It is their rock 'n' roll, their long hair and love beads. Through Islam, they defy the status quo and challenge governments seen as corrupt and incompetent.

These young people -- 60 percent of those in the region are under 25 -- are propelling a worldwide Islamic revival, driven by a thirst for political change and social justice. That fervor has popularized a more conservative interpretation of the faith.

"Islamism for us is what pan-Arabism was for our parents," said Naseem Tarawnah, 25, a business writer and blogger, who is not part of the movement.

The long-term implications of this are likely to complicate American foreign policy calculations, making it more costly to continue supporting governments that do not let secular or moderate religious political movements take root.

Washington will also be likely to find it harder to maintain the policy of shunning leaders of groups like the Brotherhood in Egypt, or Hamas in Gaza, or *Hezbollah* in Lebanon, which command tremendous public sympathy.

Leaders of Muslim countries have tried to appease public sentiment while doing all they can to discourage the West from engaging religious movements directly. They see the prospect of a thaw in relations with the West, and see these groups as a threat to their monopoly on power.

Authoritarian governments view relative moderation as more of a political challenge than extremism, which is a security problem that can be contained through harsh methods.

"What happens if Islamists accepted the peace process and became more pragmatic?" said Muhammad Abu Rumman, research editor at the newspaper Al Ghad in Amman. "People see them as less corrupt and as the only real opposition. Israel and the U.S. might look at them differently. The regime is afraid of the Brotherhood when it becomes more pragmatic."

The financial crisis only adds to the anxiety of governments in the Middle East that had hoped economic development could appease their citizens, create jobs for legions of unemployed and underemployed young people and dilute the appeal of Islamic movements. But the crisis and the drop in oil prices have hit hard, throwing the brakes on once-booming economies in the Persian Gulf region, and modest economic growth elsewhere in the region.

In this environment, governments are forced to confront a reality of their own creation. By choking off democracy and free speech, the only space where groups could gather and discuss critical ideas became the mosque, and the only movements that had room to prosper were religion-based.

Today, the search for identity in the Middle East no longer involves tension between the secular and religious. Religion has won.

The struggle, instead, is over how to define an Islamic society and government. Zeinah Hamdan, 24, has traveled a typical journey in Jordan. She says she wants a more religious government guided by Shariah law, and she took the head scarf at a younger age than anyone else in her family.

But when she was in college, she was offended when an Islamist student activist chastised her for shaking a young man's hand. She wants to be a modern religious woman, and she defines that as working and socializing in a coed environment.

"If we implement Shariah law, we will be more comfortable," she said. "But what happens is, the people who come to power are extremists."

Like others here, she is torn between her discomfort with what she sees as the extreme attitudes of the Muslim Brotherhood and her alienation from a government she does not consider to be Islamic enough. "The middle is very difficult," she said.

Focus on Popular Causes

Under a bright midday sun one recent day, Mr. Fawaz and his allies in the Islamic student movement put on green baseball caps that read, in Arabic, "Islamic Current of Jordan University" and prepared to demonstrate. Mr. Fawaz carried a large poster board reading, "We are with you Gaza."

The university protest reflected the tactics of the Muslim Brotherhood in the country as a whole: precisely organized, deliberately nonthreatening and focused on popular causes here such as the Palestinians. The Brotherhood says it supports democracy and moderation, but its commitment to pluralism, tolerance and compromise has never been tested in Jordan.

Mr. Fawaz and about 200 other students stood in a straight line, extending nearly two city blocks, parallel to the traffic on the major roadway in front of the university. More than half of the students were <u>women</u>, many with their faces veiled.

State security men in plain clothes hurried up and down the line. "Brother, for God's sake, when will you be angry?" one security agent screamed into his phone, recording for headquarters the slogan on a student's placard.

At 12:30 p.m., the male students stepped into the road, blocking traffic, while the <u>women</u> rushed off to the sidewalk and melted back into the campus. One minute later, they walked out of traffic, took off their caps and folded up their signs, tucked them into computer bags and went back to school.

"I want to be able to express what I want; I want freedom," Mr. Fawaz said, after returning to the campus. His glasses always rest crooked on his face, making him look younger, and a bit out of sorts. "I don't want to be afraid to express my opinion."

Mr. Fawaz grew up in a small village called Anjara, near Ajloun, about 50 miles from Amman. His father grew up in the Jordan Valley and worked as a nurse in Irbid. Mr. Fawaz said he was 8 years old he was first invited to "leadership retreats" with a youth organization of the Brotherhood.

When he was 13, the youth group took him on a minor pilgrimage to Mecca. So, he said, he had been enticed by religion at an early age. But he only decided to become politically active -- and to join the Brotherhood -- when he was denied a scholarship to study abroad.

While there are no official statistics on student membership in the Brotherhood, only a fraction of Jordan University students are formally affiliated. Yet many others say they share the same vague sense of discontent and yearning, the same embrace of the Brotherhood's slogan, "Islam Is the Solution," a resonant catchall in the face of many problems.

The university, with about 30,000 students from across the country, has long served as a proxy battlefield for Jordan's competing interests.

Competing Loyalties

In Jordan, unlike Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood is legal, with a political party and a vast network of social services. It also has a political party, called the Islamic Action Front. While some fear it as too extreme, others argue that it has sold out by working within a political system they see as corrupt and un-Islamic. On campus, the Islamists try to build sympathy, handing out study sheets or copying notes for students.

Mr. Fawaz decided this year to run as an Islamist candidate for the student council, an influential organization with its own budget and the right to put up posters, distribute fliers and hold on-campus events.

The Islamic students' movement had boycotted the elections for years to protest a change of election rules that called for appointing -- not electing -- half of the council's 80 members. The rule change, decreed by the former university president, was made in order to block the Islamists, who were the most organized group on campus, from controlling the council.

That is a direct echo of how the state has long tried to contain the Islamist movement in Jordan. The Brotherhood is allowed to operate, but the government and the security services broadly control the outcome of elections.

Indeed, as Islamist movements have swelled, governments across the Middle East have chosen both to contain and to embrace them. Many governments have aggressively moved to roll back the few democratic practices that had started to take root in their societies, and to prevent Islamists from winning power through the voting booth. That risks driving the leaders and the followers of Islamic organizations toward extremism.

At the same time, many governments have tried to appease popular Islamist fervor. Jordan recently granted a Muslim Brotherhood-aligned newspaper the right to publish daily instead of weekly; held private talks with Hamas leaders; arrested a poet, saying he had insulted Islam by using verses of the Koran in love poems; and shut down restaurants that had served alcohol during Ramadan, though they had been licensed by the state to do so.

This year, the new president of Jordan University permitted all student council seats to be elected, but with rules in place that would, again, make it nearly impossible for the Islamist bloc to have control.

Two days before the voting took place, Mr. Fawaz was campaigning on the steps of the education building, dressed in his best suit and tie. His campaign message to the students was simply, "For your sake."

Running as an Islamist risks consequences: Mr. Fawaz said that he was approached by a student in his class who he believed was delivering a message from the security services. "He told me that they will write about me; I will never get a job," Mr. Fawaz said.

But even when the police ordered him to take down his posters on election day, he remained resolute and confident.

"Everybody knows that I am going to win," Mr. Fawaz said, without sounding boastful. "Because I represent the Islamic movement."

But he did not win. Instead, a candidate representing a large tribe from the city of Salt won, reflecting the loyalty to bonds of kinship and family heritage even as tribal culture has begun to absorb more conservative Islamic practices and beliefs.

Yet Mr. Fawaz was untroubled. "What is important for me," he said, "is to serve the movement by spreading the word among the students."

Amjad al-Absy, 28, remembers the moment when he pledged to join the Muslim Brotherhood. He was 15 and he was identified by Brotherhood recruiters when he was playing soccer in a Palestinian refugee camp. He described how the Brotherhood monitors young men -- when they play soccer, go to school, to mosque, to work, as well as in the street and singles out those who appear receptive.

"Once you say yes, they put you in a ring, in a family," said Mr. Absy. "Outside of the Brotherhood, there is no concern for young men, there is no respect. You are alone."

Mr. Absy and his friend Tarak Naimat, 24, said that while they were students at the university, they had helped to recruit other young men.

"In the computer lab, in the mosque, you buddy up," Mr. Naimat said. "Then you participate in events together. Then he becomes a member. If he's advanced, it can take six months. If less, maybe two years."

The appeal, Mr. Naimat said, was simple: "It gives you the feeling you can change things, you can act, you can be a leader. You feel like you are part of something important."

Recruiters to the movement operate in a social atmosphere far more receptive than in the past. Every one of five young men talking near the cafeteria of the university recently insisted that the only way Jordan would have democracy was under an Islamic government, which is what the Brotherhood says it wants to achieve.

Muhammad Safi is a 23-year-old with neatly gelled hair and a television-white smile who described himself as the least religious student at the table. He said he had lived in the United States for five years and was eager to marry an American so he could return. Yet he declared: "An Islamic state would be better. At least it would take care of people."

A Political Crossroads

The task facing Middle East governments and Islamic leaders is to figure out how to harness the energy of the Islamic revival. The young -- the demographic bulge that is defining the future of the Islamic world and the way the West will have to engage it -- have embraced Islam with all the fervor of the counterculture.

But the movement is still up for grabs -- whether it will lead to greater extremism, even terrorism in some cases, and whether the vague dissatisfaction of young people will translate into political engagement or disaffection.

So the cycle is likely to continue, with religious identification fueled not only by the Islamic movements, but also by governments eager to use religion to enhance legitimacy and to satisfy demands of their citizens. That, in turn, broadens support for groups like the Brotherhood, while undermining support for the government, said many researchers, intellectuals and political scientists in Jordan.

The battle lines are clear on the campus of Jordan University. Bilal Abu Sulaih, 24, is a leader in the Islamic student movement. He returned to school this year to study Islamic law after being suspended for one year for organizing protests, he said. During the year off, he said, he worked as a student organizer for the political party office of the Brotherhood. "We are trying to participate," he said of the movement's role on campus. "We do not want to overpower everyone else."

But his reassurances were brushed aside as another student confronted him. "It's not true," shouted Ahmed Qabai, 28, who was seated on a nearby bench. He thrust a finger in Mr. Sulaih's direction.

"You want to try to control everything," Mr. Qabai said. "I've seen it before, your people talking to <u>women</u> and asking them why they're not veiled."

Mr. Sulaih, embarrassed by the challenge, said, "It's not true."

Mr. Qabai made it clear that he detested the Muslim Brotherhood, getting more and more worked up, until finally he was screaming. But what he said summed up the challenge ahead for Jordan, and for so many governments in the region: "We all know Islam is the solution. That we agree on."

GENERATION FAITHFUL: This is the 10th in a series of articles examining the lives of the young across the Muslim world at a time of religious revival.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTOS: Muhammad Fawaz is an Islamic activist on the Jordan University campus in Amman.(PHOTOGRAPH BY SHAWN BALDWIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

SEEKING SUPPORT: <u>Women</u> voted, top, in a student council election at Jordan University in Amman. Above, Muhammad Fawaz, in suit, campaigned.

DIVERSE APPEALS: Student council campaign posters competed for the attention of passers-by recently at Jordan University.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHAWN BALDWIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)(pg. A10)

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Length: 2499 words **Byline:** Hala Jaber

Body

As the first UK journalist to be embedded with the rebel Mahdi Army, Hala Jaber reports on its battle with American and Iraqi forces in Baghdad's sprawling slum of 2m people

ON A bare patch of ground outside the entrance to Sadr general hospital, 15 <u>women</u> clad from head to foot in black squatted in a sandstorm, wailing and waiting for their dead.

Lightning flashed, thunder rolled and the <u>women</u>'s robes were spattered with mud falling from a sky filled with rain and sand, but they did not notice.

"Ya'mma, Ya'ba" ("Oh mother, oh father"), cried Amira Zaydan, a 45-year-old spinster, slapping her face and chest as she grieved for her parents Jaleel, 65, and Hanounah, 60, whose house had exploded after apparently being hit by an American rocket.

"Where are you, my brothers?" she sobbed, lamenting Samir, 32, and Amir, 29, who had also perished along with their wives, one of whom was nine months pregnant.

"What wrong have you done, my children?" she howled to the spirits of four nephews and nieces who completed a toll of 10 family members in the disaster that struck last Tuesday. "Mothers, children, babies; all obliterated for nothing."

The keening of Zaydan and her distraught circle of friends was drowned out briefly by sirens shrieking as ambulances sped through the hospital gateway with the latest consignment of casualties from a brutal battle that has been raging for the past month in Sadr City, a slum of more than 2m souls on the eastern side of Baghdad.

Doctors and nurses with pinched faces darted out of the dilapidated hospital to greet the wounded and dying, while administrators stared at the weeping **women** and saw that they were beyond comforting.

Zaydan had hardly moved from the hospital for 24 hours since her family's home was demolished as she and her sister Samira, 43, prepared lunch. Neighbours were trying to dig bodies out of the debris when another rocket landed, killing at least six rescuers.

Apart from the two sisters, the family's only survivor was their brother Ahmad, 25, who arrived at the hospital with leg injuries and shock. "I lost everybody," was all he could say.

On Wednesday afternoon, Zaydan was still waiting for seven family members to be disinterred from the rubble and delivered to Sadr general. The other three were in the morgue, among them a nephew, aged three, lying on a trolley in a puddle of blood from a head wound.

The child was another helpless victim of a clash between titanic powers which has killed 935 people and wounded 2,605. Even by the callous standards of Iraq's cruel war, this is a ruthless struggle. Most of the dead and injured have been civilians.

On one side is the Iranian-backed Mahdi Army of the radical Shi'ite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr, which is defending Sadr City, its biggest stronghold, with a resilience it failed to show when it ceded parts of the southern port of Basra last month.

On the other is the American-backed Iraqi army of the prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, which launched an offensive on March 30 with the aim of seizing control of the city but which took only one southern district before its advance was halted.

The fight between Sadr and Maliki, between the dirt-poor who look to the firebrand cleric for inspiration and the relatively secure who support the prime minister, is one that neither side can afford to lose.

Last week the Mahdi fighters took advantage of the sandstorms, which grounded US helicopters, to blast the Iraqi army's front line positions with roadside bombs, mortar rounds, rocket-propelled grenades and machinegun fire.

Embedded with them for four days and three nights, I witnessed the fighting at close quarters, learnt of preparations being made by Mahdi special forces to spread the violence to other parts of Baghdad and heard their commanders swear to paralyse the government and destroy Maliki if their own leader authorises all-out war.

The battle of Sadr City, with all the human misery it entails, is in danger of spilling out across the capital, reversing the security gains that followed last summer's American troop surge.

It is little wonder that US commanders say the Shi'ite militias backed by Iran now pose a greater threat than the Sunni insurgents who were their deadliest enemies when Al-Qaeda in Iraq was at its peak.

"We can bring Baghdad to a standstill," boasted one Mahdi commander. "Be assured that when all-out war is eventually declared, we will be able to take over the city."

NO sooner had I arrived in Sadr City than my escorts received word that an attack was about to be launched on Al-Quds Road, the dividing line between the Mahdi forces to the north and the Iraqi army to the south.

Sand was swirling through the air as a fresh storm stirred and the men knew this presented them with an opportunity.

"Allah is on our side," said one. "They bombard us with artillery, war planes and helicopters at will. Maliki has the entire US air force behind his army and all we need is a bit of sand to bring it to a standstill."

As we reached the narrow streets that ran down to Al-Quds Road, nothing appeared to be out of the ordinary at first. But one by one, young men in western jeans and T-shirts appeared from the alleyways with machineguns or rifles slung across their shoulders. They grinned, patted each other's backs and uttered the greeting "Peace be with you", before getting down to the business of war.

Two snipers had already entered shattered buildings overlooking the highway beyond which the Iraqi army was hunkered down. The dozen or so gunmen who had congregated in front of me ran forwards 50 yards to take up their positions. Then one of them briefly broke cover to open fire with his AK-47 assault rifle. Another stepped round a corner and unleashed a volley of bullets from a heavy-calibre machinegun, followed by another and another.

As the Mahdi positions came under equally heavy machinegun fire in turn, the noise reached a crescendo with an exchange of mortar rounds that smashed shops on either side of Al-Quds Road, showering the whole area with shards of debris. The cacophony faded, only to be replaced by the whizz of snipers' bullets shooting up the street. It was time to take cover.

My escort hammered on the gates of the nearest house and a woman ushered me into her courtyard, introducing herself as Salma Jamila, an unmarried teacher aged 40 who lived with her elderly parents. When she heard that I had come to report on the fighting, she fetched a small plastic chair and propped it against the yard wall so that I could peep over it to see what was happening.

Evidently a cool hostess in a crisis, she disappeared into her kitchen and returned beaming with bottles of orange juice on a tray as mortar rounds crashed on to the road less than 100 yards away.

Stranger still, another guest arrived, a cousin and Mahdi Army commander named Abu Ali who was enjoying a day off. He hugged Jamila, explained that he had come to visit her father and chatted away about how he had been arrested a few days earlier.

"One of the officers with the Iraqi army is a Mahdi sympathiser and he arranged for me to be released within two hours," he said with a smile. "We have quite a number of Mahdi people in the army and they tip us off about certain movements."

The violence died down as suddenly as it had flared up and some of the fighters shouted that it was all over. A man with a relaxed manner and a Russian rifle on his back sauntered past. I asked him how old he was.

"Twenty-three," he answered.

"Young for a sniper," I said. He shrugged.

"I killed two Iragi soldiers," he replied, and strolled away.

Another passing fighter, a well-built man with fair skin, said he had set fire to an Iraqi tank with a rocket. There was no way to verify either account.

The men exchanged information for a few moments before walking off in different directions. Some were collected by cars as they approached neighbouring streets incongruously thronged with shoppers inured to shooting and buying food for the evening meal.

It was around 6pm, as we were driving towards the centre of Sadr City, that another call came through and we headed back to the front line. This time Mahdi fighters were trying to push back Iraqi army and American forces.

Several people were said to be buried under collapsed buildings and the Mahdi Army - which, like <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon, has made itself popular by providing welfare services to local people - had decided to take responsibility for rescuing them, even if that meant fighting its way to the scene.

Driving along roads lined with open sewers, past children playing football in winding alleys and old <u>women</u> peering out from their doorways, we reached a point where men on street corners were handing cold water to fighters taking a break from the front line.

We parked and moved forwards through ranks of Mahdi Army fighters who had lined an alleyway with rocketlaunchers, rifles and machineguns. The sound of sniper fire intensified but the hardened militiamen who were accompanying me paid no attention.

The regular thud of mortars and the relentless clatter of machineguns indicated that the fighting here was far more intense than it had been earlier on Al-Quds Road.

As we rounded a corner, I noticed a school 100 yards ahead on the right-hand side. I was wondering how long it would be before the pupils could return when an explosion almost knocked us off our feet. An artillery shell had landed in the playground and the classrooms were shattered by shrapnel.

I froze with fear. For the second time that day, a fighter rapped on the nearest house gate and I was beckoned into a secluded courtyard. So shaken was I that my legs barely carried me into the house. I squatted on the floor to catch my breath.

Three spinsters produced a large bottle of fizzy drink from a shop they ran from their house. As before, the fighting subsided after about half an hour and we returned to our vehicle.

The inconclusive nature of both confrontations witnessed suggested that neither side could be confident of gaining the upper hand.

The Iraqi army may have the superior fire-power but Mahdi commanders were eager to show off their own arsenal. Seven of them gathered in a single-storey concrete house to display weapons ranging from mainly American-made guns, including M16 and M18 rifles, to home-made roadside bombs known as raaed, or thunder.

"Our bombs are not Iranian-made - they are produced locally," said one commander. "Any Mahdi fighter can put one together."

The plastic cylinders packed with gunpowder, TNT and C4 explosives came in four sizes, he explained: 5kg and 15kg for use against small military vehicles, and 25kg and 50kg against armoured personnel carriers.

Another commander, who gave his name as Abu Ahmad, was limping from an injury sustained one week into the battle when his unit set an American tank on fire, only to be wiped out by a helicopter gunship.

He spoke softly as he described seeing his best friend, Uday al-Dulemi, killed in front of him. Dulemi's father refused to accept condolences and insisted that his "martyred" son's burial be treated as his wedding day. He said that if his three other sons in the Mahdi Army were killed too, he would volunteer himself.

THE Mahdi Army also claims to have a secret weapon at its disposal. Its elite special forces, called "The Nerves of the Righteous - the Islamic Resistance in Iraq", are said to be lying in wait in sleeper cells across the country, ready to carry out unspecified "spectacular" attacks against coalition forces.

Many of the members, known as "shadows", have been trained in Iran.

According to a senior aide to Moqtada al-Sadr, they are capable of raining down missiles on the heavily protected Green Zone where the Iraqi government and US military are based, causing disarray among Iraq's security forces and halting the work of ministries.

They have also created a potential "ring of fire" around Sadr City that could be ignited in the event of a full-scale offensive by Maliki.

Whether Sadr or Maliki will order an escalation of the conflict in the days ahead depends on efforts to secure a resolution.

Sadr is understood to believe that his rival has set out to destroy his power bases in Baghdad and Basra to ensure that he is a spent force before local elections in the autumn. He is resisting demands by Maliki for 500 named Mahdi "criminals" to be handed over. In turn, Sadr is demanding that the Iraqi army stay out of Sadr City indefinitely.

The negotiations hang in the balance but one thing is certain: if the two Shi'ite leaders fail to resolve their differences, it is the civilians of Sadr City who will suffer for it.

At Sadr general hospital last week, Amira Zaydan was by no means the only woman mourning her family. Beside her sat her neighbour Um Aseel Ali, who had lost her husband and three boys, aged six, four and two, when their house was blown up by a rocket.

"As I ran to them, the second rocket dropped," she cried. "I started shouting their names. I looked for them and tried to dig through the rubble. What fault did we commit for this? What wrong have we done to Maliki?"

While she spoke, another woman, Um Marwa Muntasser, wept softly. Her pregnant daughter Marwa survived the same attack but was being kept under sedation, unaware that her husband Samir, her four-year-old boy, Sajad, and her two year-old girl, Ayat, had all been killed.

"Was my daughter a fighter?" asked Muntasser. "My daughter was not a fighter. She and her family were innocent civilians minding their own business and now they are dead." The toll in the row of six houses inhabited by these families climbed to 25.

A spokesman for the US military, which has lost at least nine men in Sadr City, said a vehicle carrying an injured soldier had been hit by two roadside bombs, gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades, and at least 28 "extremists" had died in subsequent fighting. He said there had been no American air strikes that day but US ground forces had fired rockets at "militants firing from buildings, alleyways and roof-tops". "We have every right to defend ourselves," he added.

Witnesses in Sadr City, however, told of a second multiple rocket attack on four houses on the same afternoon in which at least five civilians died.

I found Lina Mohsen, 24, walking in a daze at the hospital, her face covered in brown dust. One minute she had been watching her 18-month-old toddler Ali play in the courtyard of their home, she said; the next, a rocket had struck.

"I began screaming for him, shouting his name, trying to find him, but I couldn't see him for dust and smoke," she said. Eventually, she saw that he was dead.

"I blame Maliki and his government and all those who are sitting in power and letting this happen," she said. Then she burst into tears and walked away.

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<u>Faith, hope and hard work; Ali Cheaib and Lorne Finkelstein have forged a</u> friendship that may help bridge centuries of animosity

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Body

If it is going to happen at all, perhaps this is how it has to start. Haltingly. One textured friendship at a time. Small increments, a beachhead here, a beachhead there, one hope back, two hopes forward. All Cheaib and Lorne Finkelstein share such a friendship and it has put ripples on the waters, starting here, but with the momentum possibly to push beyond.

Cheaib and Finkelstein are not going to solve the problems of the Middle East in a restaurant booth in Hamilton, obviously. But they may have already blazed the beginnings of a path to peace for local Muslims (as well as non-Muslim Arabs, Lebanese and Palestinians) and Jews. In the fall of 2005 they began something called the Committee for Hamilton Arab, Muslim and Jewish Dialogue. How those communities, often divided even among themselves, choose to follow that path remains to be seen, but there are encouragements.

Recently McMaster University approached the Dialogue Committee (see inset box on D9 for current membership) to provide leadership in dealing with conflict on campus and in bringing together Muslim and Jewish student groups, as well as others.

The invitation came after vandals defaced the McMaster office door of Muriel Walker with an anti-Muslim obscenity. Walker is the French professor who organized the Wear A Hijab Day in Hamilton to help sensitize people about Islam. That was April.

There is a meeting scheduled for June with a student council executive and members of various campus groups, and on May 14 the Dialogue Committee met with McMaster University president Peter George.

"We feel honoured to be consulted," says Finkelstein.

Even more recently the Dialogue Committee was contacted by Muslim and Jewish leaders in Quebec for their advice on how to address the publication by a satirical magazine in that province of cartoons playing on the crudest stereotypes of Jews, Muslims and other groups.

Clearly, the committee is a player.

Last November, Finkelstein, Cheaib, and the committee brought to Hamilton the famous Muslim-Jewish dialogue tour featuring Judea Pearl, father of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, who was captured and beheaded in

Pakistan, and Akbar Ahmed, a Muslim scholar. That was no small achievement. The video of the event was carried on Yahoo.com internationally.

On the subject of encouragements, it's an encouragement of no small magnitude that their friendship itself survived its first year, let alone got started in the first place. Regardless of the considerable external pressures on it (more on that soon), the two men in and of themselves are so different.

Cheaib and Finkelstein do not walk with the linked arms of political solidarity. They may not even be kindred spirits. They come from very separate worlds.

Cheaib, a Lebanese who came to Canada in his mid-20s, is outspokenly critical of Israeli policy and practice in the troubled region, to the point of sympathizing, if not with the methods of the Palestinian insurgency then with some of their goals and grievances. The things he says sometimes make Finkelstein shake his head.

Cheaib is a big man, 41, solidly built, charismatic, affable, with a ready laughter. He grew up in Beirut, his formative years coinciding with the monstrously violent civil war that tore the city asunder.

"After a while, in the midst of a civil war, somehow you get used to bombs," says Cheaib. Born the son of a Lebanese colonel and into the Shiite Muslim faith, his parents sent him to Catholic schools in Beirut and later to study at the American University of Athens when he was 18. He teaches computer science at Mohawk College.

He is missing most of three fingers, shot off when he was caught in the crossfire of two factions as he sat in a car waiting for a friend.

Finkelstein is a cardiologist at St. Joseph's Hospital, average height, trim build, charismatic, but in a different way from Cheaib, a bit more guarded, with a wryer since of humour. He grew up in Westdale, son of a physician, in what he calls a "sheltered background."

He says he experienced little overt anti-Semitism.

He never thought a great deal about the state of Israel until he studied at the University of Western Ontario at the time of the 1967 war.

"That's when I first developed a passion for Israel," says Finkelstein. "There were so many small-town kids at the university who had never met a Jew. And I found there was a lot of ignorance about what was happening."

He calls himself a pro-Israeli centrist, but one who speaks bluntly about his disgust with violence and terrorism, especially as practised by Muslim extremists. He puts the blame for last summer's conflict involving Hezbolla and Lebanon on what he describes as <u>Hezbollah</u>'s deliberate provocations. Finkelstein feels Israel had no choice but to strike. The things he says sometimes make Cheaib shake his head.

But while they can hardly resist hashing out the latest current events when they meet privately, the Arab-Israeli conflict and its rhetoric are out-of-bounds when it comes to formal meetings of the Dialogue Committee.

There the focus is not on the insolubles of far-off places but what can be done, here and now, to smooth relations between people in Hamilton, whose views and emotions are unavoidably affected by the larger geo-politic.

For all they have differences, Finkelstein and Cheaib share some common traits. They both describe themselves as secular. They are both committed to peace and mutual respect -- and they love the vigorous art of verbal sparring, even though there's little hope either will change the other's mind.

They are both very well-read, and, yes, at least a little opinionated.

They also relish each other's company, even though they can be testy and indignant with each other at times, with Cheaib sometimes growing challenging and Finkelstein sometimes adopting a kind of lecturing tone. But they hold it

together. They have to -- passionate but respectful debate is the fulcrum of their vision of an exit out of perpetual hatred between peoples.

As is so often the way with these things, their friendship arose from what was perhaps a low point in relations between Hamilton's Muslim and Arab communities and its Jewish community.

THE LOW POINT

In September 2005, the Hamilton Police Services Board called an open forum to help air citizens' views on police Chief Brian Mullan's controversial trip to Israel to learn anti-terror techniques from Israeli police.

The meeting was disastrous, with yelling, name-calling, confrontation and obstruction. The conflict centred on the Arab-Israeli question.

At the meeting, Cheaib and Finkelstein witnessed the breakdown of civility with disgust. They were both shaking their heads. And it was at this point that they caught each other's eyes.

They knew each other a little through their membership in the Strengthening Hamilton Communities Initiative, a committee formed by the mayor after a Hindu temple was burned shortly after 9/11 to draw the city's various ethnic, religious and identity groups into conversations of understanding and outreach.

Cheaib was part of SHCI as president of Hamilton Council of Canadian Arabs.

Finkelstein represented the Hamilton Jewish Federation.

That look that passed between them became the seed of a whole new initiative.

"Lorne called me and the next day we met at his office (along with several other community leaders)," says Cheaib.

That meeting laid the groundwork for the Dialogue Committee.

"The rules are -- no intimidation, no rhetoric from either side," says Finkelstein. "It's about sharing perspectives, not yelling at each other. It's OK to have different views and still be friends."

Says Cheaib, "The beauty is that we can disagree on almost all that relates to the Middle East but there is respect, and that is the basis of our work."

Aside from their meetings with the Dialogue Committee, Finkelstein and Cheaib took to having regular breakfasts together on Sundays, during which their common interest in the committee developed into something stronger. Friendship.

Now they take other meals together, other opportunities for fellowship and talk about everything from their families to their personal lives.

A NEW HIGH?

You might think that this was the beginning of a happy ending, but it's not that simple.

Right from the start, there were those who viewed the work of the committee, the very idea of it, with suspicion, in some cases, with outright antipathy. Prejudices die hard and can survive on the flimsiest diets of unfounded paranoia, complacency and willed ignorance.

Both Finkelstein and Cheaib faced -- still do -- opposition from within their own communities. But mostly there has been support or at least a wait-and-see attitude.

And so the committee pressed ahead patiently, bearing down on its work, the positives, the practical things it could do to further its cause.

And the shape this took over the course of the first year was the organization of what promised to be a milestone event for the young committee, bringing to the city the Pearl-Ahmed Muslim-Jewish dialogue tour.

As a musical garnish, the committee also arranged for the formation of an inter-faith children's choir, mostly young Hamilton Muslims, Arabs, Christians and Jews, under the direction of Laura Wolfson, to sing at the Pearl-Ahmed event.

Then, as the machinery of the event began to mesh, something happened that profoundly threatened not only the cohesion of the committee but the very survival of the Cheaib- Finkelstein's friendship -- last summer's conflict between Hezbolla and Israel, resulting in the bombardment of Beirut.

Bad enough a strain in and of itself. But as it happened Cheaib was visiting Beirut at the time, and was caught in the thick of it. He divided his days between runs, for his very life, to underground shelters and organizing relief and outside communication, including constant attempts to e-mail people in Canada. Among those who were feverishly e-mailing back was Lorne Finkelstein, worried for his friend.

When Cheaib returned safely to Canada, he was consumed with anger and outrage over what had happened in Lebanon over the summer. Finkelstein was also concerned that Cheaib might be filled with hate, and that events in the outside world, over which they had no control, would once again undo the progress that Jews, Muslims and Arabs had achieved locally.

But Cheaib channelled his anger into forward motion, working on relief for the Lebanese and also reaffirming, redoubling his commitment to dialogue locally -- and to friendship.

Finally, on Nov. 12, 2006, after an enormous amount of work, Finkelstein, Cheaib and the dialogue committee welcomed Pearl and Ahmed to Hamilton, where they were the centrepiece of a gala event at Hamilton Place, devoted to breaking through the impasse of hatred and historical fatalism that too often characterizes our perception of Muslim-Jewish relations.

Pearl and Ahmed exchanged views on a number of issues pertaining to those relations and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and then invited questions from the audience. There were about 800 people in attendance, which represented a huge success for the planners, and a large media presence. But still, and it's beginning to look like a pattern, perhaps a necessary one designed to keep them always sharply turned away from complacency, the night was not a smooth one for Cheaib and Finkelstein, not totally.

Cheaib says now that he and many Muslims and Arabs in the audience were shocked and insulted by what Cheaib describes as the pro-Israeli rhetoric that found its way into Pearl's comments at the event. Cheaib calls some of his remarks "near propaganda" and feels they were not in keeping with the spirit of the dialogue.

Finkelstein acknowledges that Pearl is avowedly pro-Israel but argues that his views were consistent with the goal of respectful yet still open expression of opinions, even ones that may be polarizing.

But Finkelstein says he was disappointed that the "dialogue" between Pearl and Ahmed seemed scripted, somewhat too rehearsed. They seemed to speak almost with the same voice, not really sparring or disagreeing. And the question and answer period was flat, with the answers going on too long and not enough people getting to the mics.

Still, Cheaib graciously thanked Pearl, which was his assignment to do. He says he felt conflicted. "This man (Pearl) is like a god of forgiveness to me. But politically I could not be more opposed to what he said."

In the lobby after the event, Cheaib was confronted by eight people from his community. They were extremely upset and let Cheaib know. They felt blindsided by Pearl's remarks. And these, says Cheaib, were moderates.

Later Finkelstein himself addressed the angry eight. He stood as Cheaib had earlier, surrounded by them in a circle. He listened to them and asked why they were talking with such anger at him and they told him that was how they express their passion in their culture.

"Yes," Finkelstein says he told them, "but now you are in Canada, and I ask you -- I have listened to all of you, but which of you has asked my opinion?" And then they listened.

By the time the dust had cleared, a détente had been reached. The eight men, Finkelstein and Cheaib were talking calmly among themselves.

Cheaib says now, "I'm not quite sure how Lorne did it. It was masterful." Finkelstein came to the aid of a friend. And Cheaib, once again stung, after a horrible summer, is putting the best face on things, redoubling yet again his commitment to the dialogue and friendship. That too is what friends do.

What everyone agreed on was -- the choir sounded magnificent and it was inspirational to see the children -- Jews, Muslims, Christians, Arabs alike -- singing as one, separated at least for that moment and one hopes in a more permanent and profound way from the pain and the bitterness of their parents' conflicts.

Cheaib and Finkelstein continue their sparring, their friendly though sometimes heated goading of each other. In Finkelstein's office, Finkelstein asks where the moderate, self-correcting voices are in the international Muslim community. Cheaib says that the post 9/11 backlash against Muslims and Arabs in the west -- stories of <u>women</u> being spat on for wearing hijabs -- has discouraged moderate voices and left them caught in the middle, between extremism in their own community and prejudice outside it.

Cheaib asks where the moderate voices in Israel are, with a succession of recent right wing governments. Finkelstein parries that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and Israelis are their own harshest critics. They talk about cultures of violence, tribalism, the lingering effects of colonialism, books they've read.

The dialogue committee effort seems to have bounced back from the feeling that the Pearl-Ahmed evening may have left with the Muslim/Arab community in Hamilton. No one can predict these things, but no one, it seems, would doubt the sincerity and good intentions behind the committee and events like the Pearl-Ahmed visit.

And really, where else is there to go? What other path? The ones of violence and anger have been tried. They are worn thin. A new one beckons. Lorne Finkelstein and Ali Cheaib, friends, are standing at the mouth of it, waiting to greet others.

The membership of the Committee for Hamilton Arab, Muslim and Jewish Dialogue (Dialogue Committee)

Lorne Finkelstein -- representative of Hamilton Jewish Federation

Ali Cheaib -- president of the Hamilton Council of Canadian Arabs

Javid Mirza -- past-president, Muslim Association of Hamilton

Hussein Hamdani -- vice-chair, North American Spiritual Revival

Harold Pomerantz -- board member and Public Affairs Committee chair, Hamilton Jewish Federation

Morteza Jafarpour -- executive director, SISO (Settlement and Integration Services Organization)

jmahoney@thespec.com

905-526-3306

Graphic

Photo: Michael Dismatsek, Special to the Hamilton Spectator , Friends Ali Cheaib, left, and Lorne Finkelstein are founders of the Committee for Hamilton Arab, Muslim and Jewish Dialogue.

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Section: MAGAZINE; Pg. 9

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Body

It's the book that has the television industry wincing, because it's a little too close to the bone. In a story thought to be a thinly veiled fictional account of the "boning" of Jessica Rowe from Channel 9, the anonymous author, whose identity is the subject of much speculation, lifts the lid on a ruthless culture. Now read on.

KATE Corish unlatched her balcony door with a practised elbow. In one hand she juggled a short black and a Zippo lighter. In the other was a can of Red Bull (sugar free), two pens and a notebook. She had two tightly wrapped newspapers shoved under each arm and an unopened packet of cigarettes clenched between her teeth.

It was 6am and already Kate's mobile was ringing insistently from deep inside the pocket of her faded grey trackie daks. The pants were so old now that the elastic was brittle. Only the generous curve of Kate's hips kept them from slipping right off. As a result, the phone was vibrating somewhere nearer her knee than her upper thigh.

With both hands fully occupied, Kate was forced to let the caller go through to message bank. Bugger them anyway. People who called this early needed to learn a bit of patience. Plus, there was the small matter of conducting a coherent conversation at this hour. Kate estimated she was still several hundred milligrams of caffeine short of forming a simple sentence.

The phone exhaled a short, hopeful electronic chord as Kate continued to manoeuvre herself and her morning provisions onto the balcony. The next stage was the trickiest. Pressing her Pilates-honed butt against the reinforced glass, she pushed the sliding door open until the gap was just wide enough for her to squeeze through sideways.

So far so good. Confidence up, she executed a wobbly pirouette.

The move was designed to deposit her neatly and gracefully into her outdoor reading chair. But that was supposing Kate kept her balance. Which she almost never did.

On this occasion, she managed to catch one foot in the hem of her sagging trousers, trip over the metal door runner and catapult herself inelegantly into the outside world.

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A pen slipped from her grasp, skittered across the tiles and plunged off the veranda, heading for the street below. Kate dumped her cargo onto the teak outdoor table and peered over the railing.

Continued 10

From 9

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Ferries plied the shark-grey harbour while commuters hurried towards Milsons Point station, their chins burrowed doggedly into winter coats. It promised to be a spectacular August day, but until the sun reported for duty the temperature would remain stubbornly in single figures.

Kate took some comfort in knowing she wasn't the only person awake and working this early. She lit a cigarette and took two long, appreciative drags before moving on to her coffee. Her ritual had scarcely changed in her 19 years as a television journalist. Up at dawn. A hastily sculled short black. Then a long and careful inspection of the nation's newspapers, usually accompanied by half a dozen cigarettes. Occasionally, vanity, fear and the pleas of her personal trainer would convince her to trade the fags for nicotine gum. But Kate's resolve only ever lasted until the next big story. Or the next big row with her Neanderthal boss.

The Red Bull was a relatively recent addition to her morning drill. As Kate edged into her 40s, she found she needed more than a single cup of coffee and a lick of mascara to get out the door. Age was a bitch.

She worked the cling wrap off the first newspaper, opting to go tabloid first. For no good reason, except perhaps an unaccustomed bout of loneliness, she'd shared the previous evening with a bottle of 16-year-old Lagavulin Scotch. As a result, she was feeling slightly queasy. And, at more than a hundred dollars a throw, a little guilty too. The Financial Review would have to wait until her brain kicked into gear.

Monitoring the news on ABC radio with one ear, Kate flattened the Daily Mail across the table. On the other side of the world, Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> were busily killing one another and threatening to draw the rest of the Middle East into the madness. British police had thwarted a terrorist plot that might have been the next 9/11.

The ABC led with the fighting in Lebanon. Kate would have gone with the latest terrorist threat, which had a lot more traction with the Australian audience in her opinion. But both stories had been pushed off the Mail's front page.

F...! Kate exclaimed as she read the day's lead story. Her right hand reached for the ring hanging on a gold chain around her neck.

She sat back and squeezed her eyes hard shut. She felt like she'd just been kicked squarely in the guts. Hard.

A photograph of Kate took up most of the front page. It was an unflattering paparazzi shot, taken at the wrong end of an industry awards night.

Channel Eight's biggest star looked slightly the worse for wear. She would have liked to blame a dose of antibiotics or headache medication for her dishevelled appearance. But the truth was she'd just let her hair down for once. And she'd been caught.

Naturally, the publicity girls would be furious with her. But that was the least of Kate's troubles. She was far more concerned by the headline: NOT TONIGHT, KATE!

Kate's shock turned to anger as she scanned the copy. The facts - if indeed they were facts - were straightforward enough. She was going to be dumped as host of her network's flagship current affairs program, Australia Tonight. She might hang on for a few more weeks or months. But she would not be at the helm in 2007.

The article went on to quote audience sampling data. <u>Female</u> viewers found her intimidating, probably because she was single and childless, Kate surmised. A decade ago, she was admired for being gutsy and career minded. Now

it seemed that her decision to put work ahead of love and family was viewed with suspicion, especially by other **women**.

But that wasn't the worst of it. According to the data, it wasn't just <u>women</u> who were switching off Kate Corish. Men, the Mail reported, considered her aloof. They had another way of saying that in the boardroom. In executive speak, Kate wasn't f...able any more. And she knew only too well that was fatal for a woman in commercial television, no matter how impressive her resume.

Kate took a generous swig of Red Bull and almost brought it straight back up. She puffed out her cheeks and forced the liquid down with two determined gulps. It tasted bitter. Clearly, taurine and a stomach full of unmetabolised scotch did not mix. Kate pushed the can aside and opted for another cigarette instead. Smoking always helped her think anyway.

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CEO Billy Simpson described Kate as a brilliant journalist and a real team player. "She's run the hard yards for this network," he said. "Kate Corish is very much a part of our future vision. There's a job here for Kate as long as she wants one."

Of course, Billy didn't say what job - probably a forced transfer to Special Projects. Everyone in the business knew what that meant. Special Projects wasn't nicknamed the departure lounge for nothing. Kate was as good as gone.

First Jessica. Then Jana. And now me, thought Kate. There had been whispers that Naomi was in the line of fire. <u>Women</u> were always fair game in television. But in all her years in the industry, she had never witnessed this much blood-letting. Or perhaps she'd simply chosen not to acknowledge it before.

The truth startled her. Television had always been like this. Of course it had. The only difference was that this time her head was on the chopping block. When Kate started out, there had been dozens of <u>women</u> working alongside her, both on the road and behind the scenes. Some had been her age. Others had been five and 10 years older. Now there was only a handful left across the entire industry. Those few survivors were being picked off one by one.

Discarding the newspaper, Kate hobbled back inside for another cup of coffee. Her toe was still smarting from its earlier run-in with the potted palm. And her hangover had hunkered down for a lengthy stay. This was about as bad a start to a day as she could imagine. And not even the slightest warning from her favourite online astrology site. Surely crippling herself and losing her job on the front page of the newspaper was worth a tiny mention.

Load of bloody rubbish, Kate grumbled as she made a beeline for the coffee machine.

The kitchen was sleek, modern and spotless. Kate didn't mind admitting it was the kind of clean that came from lack of use rather than any strong commitment to hygiene. The apartment was more a pit stop than a real home anyway, somewhere to change clothes and refuel. Stone, steel and glass. Kate had seized on minimalism with the same gusto that she'd embraced shabby chic three pay rises earlier.

She'd cheerfully handed over a small fortune to an interior designer who minced his way through her apartment and discarded anything that suggested personality.

By the time he'd finished, there wasn't a whole lot left. A termite colony and an acid bath would have achieved much the same result. And cost less. Over time, Kate had added some personal touches, guiltily rescuing a few of her favourite souvenirs from storage. A rug from Afghanistan with its confronting patterns of tanks and guns. Black-and-white tapestry pillows from Bosnia. A Saddam Hussein mantel clock from Iraq. A woodcarving from the Maldives. But no matter what she did, the place still felt empty.

The home phone rang as Kate twisted the dial on the coffee machine to the shortest, strongest and blackest option. She let the answering machine pick up. It was the executive producer of Australia Tonight.

"Look, honey, I don't know where they get off printing that s.... I'll call that fat slut television writer this morning and find out where she's getting her f...ing information. None of it's true of course. But even if it was, you know I've got your back."

Kate shuddered. Words of support from the most treacherous bastard in the business.

She was in deep trouble all right. The next call was as brazen as it was predictable. "Megan Halliday here. I'm keen to follow up on my report in the Mail today. I'd love to hear your side of the story. What are you planning to do next?

"Are you hoping to stay in television? You can catch me on my mobile."

The woman's gall was breathtaking. Not a scintilla of doubt that Kate was on her way out or that her sources were anything but entirely credible and accurate.

Fat slut, Kate muttered under her breath, guiltily borrowing the boys club vernacular.

She wondered if Megan would be quite so pliable if she knew what the network suits called her behind her back.

Just as Kate was thinking of yanking the telephone jack from the wall, she heard a familiar and welcome voice.

"Hi, Kate. It's Sandra Cook. I hope you don't mind me ringing. But I know you're an early riser. I just read the newspaper.

"Is there anything I can do? Or if you just need someone to talk to, call me. I can't believe this crap is still going on. Anyway. Don't let them get to you. Bye."

Sandra was a class act. This was one call Kate would return ... eventually. She was too dazed right now. Kate Corish never showed weakness. Not even to her allies.

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She bolted down the tablets and splashed some water on her face. Her stomach lurched menacingly with the sudden movement.

Kate lowered her head and leaned forward, hands firmly gripping either side of the basin. After a few minutes, the nausea passed. She cautiously lifted her head and gazed wearily into the bathroom mirror. She didn't look like a woman who'd just got back from holidays, even with the tan.

Her blonde hair was matted and dull. It had once been her proudest asset. But nowadays, its lustre owed more to the genius of her colourist than to good genes.

The blue eyes were familiar enough, if a little less piercing for the previous night's excesses. But they were surrounded by crow's-feet and heavy dark circles. Forty years of gravity marked her face, from the single deep frown line that cleaved her forehead to the jowls that dragged at her features like lead weights. Kate pressed her

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Thank God for good lighting technicians and makeup artists, she thought. As a television star, Kate was assigned a team of people whose sole professional responsibility was to make her look gorgeous.

From what she could see in the mirror, they were clearly very skilled at their work.

When exactly had she started looking so old anyway? She didn't feel any different from her 20-year-old self, except maybe in her ability to bounce back from a big night. Then again, how long had it been since she'd been wolf-whistled passing a building site?

Five years. Maybe more.

She was still attractive. Even with a hangover. But she was no longer a young woman. And she'd wed herself to an industry that celebrated and rewarded youth.

Nineteen f...ing years.

Kate pushed her face closer to the mirror, until her nose and forehead were touching the glass, clouding it with her breath.

Where had the time gone?

Edited extract from Boned by Anonymous, \$32.95, Michael Joseph.

Published May 29.

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The Courier Mail (Australia)

May 24, 2008 Saturday

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Section: ETC; Pg. 20 Length: 2497 words

Body

A <u>female</u> television personality finds her imminent sacking being played out publicly in the media. In this extract from the controversial novel Boned, the drama flickers to life

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Thank God for good lighting technicians and make-up artists, she thought. As a television star, Kate was assigned a team of people whose sole professional responsibility was to make her look gorgeous.

From what she could see in the mirror, they were clearly very skilled at their work.

When exactly had she started looking so old anyway? She didn't feel any different from her 20-year-old self, except maybe in her ability to bounce back from a big night. Then again, how long had it been since she'd been wolf-whistled passing a building site? Five years. Maybe more.

She was still attractive. Even with a hangover. But she was no longer a young woman. And she'd wed herself to an industry that celebrated and rewarded youth. ``Nineteen f----- years." Kate pushed her face closer to the mirror, until her nose and forehead were touching the glass, clouding it with her breath.

Where had the time gone?

This is an edited extract from Boned, by Anonymous, (Michael Joseph, \$32.95).

Buy Boned for the special Courier-Mail reader price of only \$24.95 + \$6 p/h. Ph: 1300 306 107 or post a cheque to Book Offers: PO Box 14730 Melbourne Victoria 8001. Published May 28.

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The Evening Standard (London)

November 19, 2007 Monday

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Section: A; Pg. 40 Length: 2520 words

Body

SEBASTIAN SHAKESPEARE The most delightful novel I read this year was Measuring the World (Quercus, £12.99) by German wunderkind Daniel Kehlmann.

It tells the story of two scientists naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt and mathematician and astronomer Carl Friedrich Gauss. The schematic nature of the book should count against it but oddly works in its favour. One travels the world, the other stays at home.

As a Costa First Novel judge I haven't had much time to read anything other than first novels.

Catherine O'Flynn's What Was Lost (Tindall Street Press, £8.99) stood out.

NORMAN LEBRECHT The voice of Graham Greene is heard once more exactly as I remember it furry consonants, precise phrases, wise and witty and warm in A Life in Letters, edited by Richard Greene (no relation) and treasurably published by Little, Brown (£20).

Few epistolary collections so vividly bring to life a great writer's early indigence, his desperation in love, his literary allies (Waugh) and foes (Priestley, Powell), his restless travels, his generosity to lesser writers and needy relatives.

JOHN SUTHERLAND I've read fewer books than usual this year. Having spent the last month cooped up alongside a godforsaken American mall, with only the Fox News family for company, I took particular pleasure in Douglas Coupland's wry depiction of Mallopoly, The Gum Thief (Bloomsbury, £10.99). A witty dystopia.

And, having flown that coop for brief luxury in the Sunset Boulevard hotel, commemorated in the prelude to William Gibson's Spook Country, (Viking, £18.99), I couldn't but love that novel (almost as much as Gibson clearly loves the Standard Hotel).

Five-star cyberpunk, with some persuasive optimisms about wikiculture.

ROSEMARY HILL Jenna Bailey's Can Any Mother Help Me? (Faber, £16.99), tells the story of the 20th century on the home front through the letters of the Co-operative Correspondence Club, a group of <u>women</u> who wrote to each other over more than 50 years, weaving their stories into a moving narrative full of compelling detail.

The Druids: A History, by Ronald Hutton (Hambledon Continuum, £19.99), an exploration of the wilder shores of British myth and history, is scholarly and very funny.

GEORGE WALDEN Von Braun, Dreamer of Space, Engineer of War, by Michael J Neufeld, Knopf (Clarkson Potter, £16.61). Space pioneer who lied about his Nazi past.

He didn't see the problem. Von Braun as genius and moral moron. Nixon and Kissinger, Partners in Power (Allen Lane, £30), by Robert Dallek. Forget other accounts of this pungent pair who nevertheless got things done.

Dallek had perfect pitch..

PHILIPPA STOCKLEY Wartime Lies by Louis Begley (Penguin Modern Classics, £8.99). Lawyer Louis Begley's fictionalised account of his childhood spent running and hiding from the Nazis in Poland, in the company of his resourceful aunt Tania, reads as sharp and clear as walking through a flame.

Hubbub: Filth, Noise & Stench in England by Emily Cockayne (Yale, £25).

A putrid, squelching, stinking and statistically satisfying grope through the back-passages and byways of England between 1600 and 1770 that makes modern-day problems like MRSA look pretty sortable.

DOMINIC SANDBROOK For me, the most evocative and memorable book of the year was Robert MacFarlane's The Wild Places (Granta, £18.99), a wonderful journey through our forgotten landscape, written with rare beauty and power.

I loved Judith Herrin's stirring Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire (Allen Lane, £20), a welcome new look at one of history's most colourful empires. But my guilty pleasure was Conrad Black's The Invincible Quest: The Life of Richard Milhous Nixon (Quercus, £30), gargantuan and grandiloquent, but deliciously compelling all the same.

KATIE LAW The best books I read this year were all short. I bought at least six copies to give to other people of lan McEwan's On Chesil Beach (Cape, £12.99), a magnificently concentrated dose of our best living novelist, to be savoured slowly.

Stefan Zweig's Amok and Other Stories, translated by Anthea Bell (Pushkin Press, £7.99) is yet another collection of stories teeming with overwrought and frenzied passion.

And about a queen, Alan Bennett's The Uncommon Reader (Profile, £10.99) is a laugh, from beginning to end.

VICTOR SEBESTYEN Legacy of Ashes (Allen Lane, £25) by Tim Weiner a devastating, well documented and stylishly written history of the CIA which reveals, occasionally in hilarious detail, the serial bungling of the USA's "intelligence" agency over half a century.

Young Stalin (Weidenfeld, £25), Simon Sebag Montefiore's enthralling, magisterial, chilling study of the Making of a Monster..

Absurdistan (Granta, £10.99) by Gary Shteyngart an uproarious, post- Soviet satire of oil-rich oligarchs and gangsters' molls by America's best comic novelist.

JANE SHILLING I love the rage and energy that animate Alan Bennett's little satirical firework, The Uncommon Reader (Profile, £10.99) a trenchant denunciation of official Philistinism, artfully masquerading as a bit of delightful comic whimsy.

Less furious but equally passionate and engaging, Robert Macfarlane's The Wild Places (Granta, £18.99) is an elegant personal essay in a long tradition of interestingly maverick British writing on the geographical and philosophical landscapes of wildness.

JULIET NICOLSON I was wholly absorbed by the huge and profoundly moving collection of The Mitfords: Letters Between Six Sisters (Fourth Estate, £25), edited by Charlotte Mosley. This luminous correspondence reveals an astonishing and complex story of a family brimming with rivalry and affection, and is packed with the best of the Mitford jokes and shrieks.

I was terrifically entertained by Lindy Woodhead's Shopping, Seduction and Mr Selfridge (Profile, £17.99), not only a biography of the man who invented the glamour of the department store and was probably responsible for our national shopping addiction, but also a fascinating look at the cultural and social background of the early 20th century.

CHRIS BLACKHURST The Ghost (Hutchinson, £18.99) by Robert Harris. Undoubtedly rushed in the writing but still a compelling thriller that casts a satirical eye over the darker aspect of the Blair years. Full of delicious vignettes that have the ring of authenticity from a close, well-connected observer.

The Last Tycoons by William D Cohan (Doubleday, £14.21). As a former employee of Lazards, Cohan had unparalleled entry into the inner sanctum of one of the world's leading investment banks. The result is confirmation of everything you ever suspected about financial excess and more..

ANDREW ROBERTS Victoria's Wars: The Rise of Empire (Penguin, £9.99) was peopled with such extraordinary characters that you were always wondering who Saul David could find to put on the next page.

Niccolo Capponi's Victory of the West (Pan, £9.99) was a gripping account of the Battle of Lepanto on 7 October 1571, which was an even larger naval engagement than Trafalgar and where the Holy Christian League defeated the previously unstoppable Ottomans.

RICHARD GODWIN American author Nell Freudenberger made a most impressive debut with The Dissident (Picador, £14.99), in which a mysterious Chinese artist is placed in the hub of a prosperous, dysfunctional Beverly Hills family. Nothing flash, just elegantly organised, truthfully characterised and written in prose as warm and refreshing as a Californian morning.

In a year dominated by Americans, a minor triumph was sounded in the north of our island by young Richard Milward. Apples (Faber, £9.99) is a brash but moving tale of growing up too fast on Middlesbrough council estates that perfectly encapsulates the tawdry joys, sad longings and gut-felt fear of teenagehood.

JONATHAN MEADES Gaza, Kabul, Kosovo, Tirana & Andrew Mueller is a gung-ho Candide with a taste for places that it is wiser to avoid, for <u>Hezbollah</u> souvenir key fobs and for God's own suicide bombers. The reports collected in I Wouldn't Start From Here (Picador) are graphic, comic, bemused and properly contemptuous of faith and ideology.

Denis Johnson's Tree of Smoke (Picador, £12.99) is a tireless, engrossing epic of covert operations, squalid R&R and casual madness in South-East Asia in the Sixties and Seventies. The detail is hyper-real, intense; the focus is persistently shifting. This is on a par with Terence Malick's cinema.

DANIEL JOHNSON Victory of the West (Pan, £9.99) by Niccolo Capponi is a grand narrative of the decisive moment in an earlier phase in the present clash of civilisations. Cervantes (who was badly wounded in it) called Lepanto "the most noble and memorable event that past centuries have seen or future generations can ever hope to witness".

Daniel Kehlmann's Measuring the World (Quercus, £12.99) announced the arrival of the great German novelist that the world had given up waiting for.

Meanwhile the greatest living poet in English, Geoffrey Hill, followed last year's Without Title with A Treatise of Civil Power (both Penguin, £9.99). The late flowering of Hill's genius is a marvel to behold.

IAN THOMSON Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters (HarperPress, £25) shed fascinating light on the writer's various love affairs and Spiritualist crises, as well as the enduring popularity of the occupant of 221b Baker Street Sherlock Holmes.

I also enjoyed Michael Bracewell's history of Roxy Music, Re-make/Remodel (Faber, £20) and the British art, pop and fashion scene that went behind the stacked heels and silver boots on which we tottered in the 1970s.

A.N. WILSON The squabbles of New Labour will soon vanish like cigarette smoke. Who now remembers the last couple of leaders either of the Conservative or Liberal parties? Ian Paisley, however, like Fidel Castro, defies history as a survivor.

Whereas Castro is a survivor from the short-lived days of communism, Paisley is a working-class Oliver Cromwell who is the only living European to have founded both a church and a political party, both of which are going strong.

Steve Bruce's Paisley: Religion and Politics in Northern Ireland (OUP, £25) is a learned, funny and absolutely riveting account of "the big man", as Paisley's friends and followers call him. It is the best account of The Troubles which I have ever read.

JUSTIN MAROZZI John Adamson's magisterial and monumental tome The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I (Weidenfeld, £25), apart from turning Civil War scholarship on its head, is an elegant read and an awesome achievement.

Turning to a more recent war, Rajiv Chandresakran's Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Baghdad's Green Zone (Bloomsbury, £12.99) is one of the most cogent and horrifying exposés of America's disastrous adventure in Iraq.

CLAIRE HARMAN Tessa Hadley's subtle and unpretentious short stories are highlights of the New Yorker and this year saw the publication of her first collection, Sunstroke and Other Stories (Cape, £11.99), definitely my book of the year. The most inventive and entertaining non-fiction I've read this year has been Charles Nicholl's The Lodger (Allen Lane, £20), an ingenious reconstruction of the Bard's London milieu, with lots of sex.

CATHERINE SHOARD Imagine Posh and Becks were sent to sort out Iraq. That's pretty much what happened 60 years ago, when socialite couple Dickie and Edwina Mountbatten were dispatched to negotiate the handover of power in India. Indian Summer by Alex von Tunzelmann (Simon & Schuster, £20) is a riveting account of those years: highly researched, sharp and funny.

Also now a bit of history, Craig Brown's The Tony Years (Ebury Press, £7.99), is an essential selection of satire, out in paperback as are some lovely reissues by Gerald Durrell. The chapter on monkeys in Menagerie Manor (Summersdale, £7.99) is an anthropomorphic classic.

NIRPAL DHALIWAL The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries (Hutchinson, £25) is a compelling insight into male love and the banality of power, showing how the Blair-Campbell bond withstood bitter disapproval and changed history. If Brokeback Mountain was set in Westminster and starred Rock Hudson and Judy Garland, it still wouldn't be gayer than this.

MARK SANDERSON Richard Flanagan's The Unknown Terrorist (Atlantic, £14.99) has been impossible to forget. A disturbing portrait of modern Australia, a nation of unhappy, shiny people, it shows what happens when an appetite for news and the need for a scapegoat in these days of calculated atrocity runs out of control.

The Steep Approach To Garbadale by Iain Banks (Little, Brown, £17.99) is a great big family saga, not without trauma, of course, but written with exuberance and wit. As for non-fiction, Umberto Eco's On Ugliness (Harvill Secker, £30) is a sumptuously illustrated companion to his On Beauty.

COLIN BURROW The Lodger: Shakespeare on Silver Street by Charles Nicholl (Allen Lane, £20).

Nicholl works in miniature on just a tiny period of Shakespeare's biography, but catches its texture beautifully.

On Chesil Beach by Ian McEwan (Cape, £12.99). I always thought that Ian McEwan had a problem with climaxes (Saturday and Enduring Love both slip out of gear when the plot should really get moving). Here, in a rather different sense, he deals with climaxes brilliantly, confirming my suspicion that he's more a novella-ist than a novelist.

WILL SELF Robert MacFarlane's The Wild Places (Granta, £18.99) is an essential corrective to the sheer weight of bricks and mortar: a lyrically written account of the last corners of the British Isles that are remotely farouche.

John Gray's Black Mass (Penguin, £18.99), the entire Enlightenment replayed through the aperture of the Iraq War, in the process exposing Blair for the body-snatched neocon he truly is. John Lanchester's fine and restrained memoir Family Romance (Faber, £16.99), a perfect antidote to Peltzer-pap that passes for troubled lives nowadays.

PETE CLARK The Life of Kingsley Amis by Zachary Leader (Vintage, £11.99). There has been much kerfuffle of late about the subject of this book.

Accusations of homophobia and anti-Semitism abound. This painstaking but never painful biography gives us the difficult man in the round, as well as offering a timely reminder of the scope of his oeuvre.

BRIAN SEWELL Among all the heavyweights, two slim, privately printed paperbacks have touched me most. In Forgotten Conscripts (Trafford Publishing, £13.50), Eric Lowe has compiled an astonishing record of Britain's humiliating withdrawal from what is now Israel in 1945-48 mandatory reading for every member of the House of Commons. And with In the Mob (obtainable from J Pearson, 4 St Margaret's Terrace, Topsham, Exeter EX3 OHN) Tony Pearson evokes memories of National Service vivid, funny, pathetic and rewarding.

ANNE McELVOY War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Vintage Classics, £20). Here's the outstanding new translation of War and Peace which brings the language carefully up to date while paying minute attention to the structure of the prose and Tolstoy's eye for tiny detail in the midst of the great panoramic sweep. It has a beautiful cover so looks good in the Christmas pile, too..

Graphic

Street life: Roxy Music's glories are recounted in Michael Bracewell's Re-make/Re-model Poolside with Slim Aarons (Abrams, £40), is a collection of lurid images taken by Aarons of the privileged, rapturously sunning themselves in minimal kit, all round the world, from the Sixties through to the Eighties. Just the thing as the frost bites. Pungent pair: Robert Dallek's account of how Nixon and Kissinger got things done is second to none

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Body

MOST TALKED ABOUT

THE JEWISH STATE

Israel fighting a war for peace, and for its survival

DANIEL Finkelstein encapsulates the dilemma faced by Israel, the tiny sliver of land wedged between the Mediterranean Sea and neighbours wishing to destroy it, quite succinctly (``Israel just wants to live in peace'', 10/1).

There is a joke about a Jewish man who regularly attends anti-Semitic meetings. His puzzled friends ask him: "Why do you do it, Moshe?" He replies: "Well, at these meetings I feel powerful and significant. I am told that I rule the world, trigger financial meltdowns, and make governments of the biggest nations to do my bidding. It makes me forget that I am a poor tailor."

Not so long ago the Jewish history almost came to an end. The present war in Gaza is the result of a Jewish desire to stay alive.

Hamas undertook to destroy Israel and does everything in its power to do just that. It has the backing of a Jewhating Iranian Government. It shoots rockets at Israel with the expressed aim of killing as many Jews as possible and kidnaps Israeli citizens.

With so much history to learn from, the value of the world opinion, fleeting and fickle as it is, is not a determining factor in the Jewish behaviour and responses. Survival is.

Jewish survival is up to Jews and not up to a hand-wringing world opinion.

Michael Galak

Goondiwindi, Qld

DANIEL Finkelstein's piece exemplifies the delusional world occupied by many supporters of the bellicose regime in Israel. He writes: ``The Palestinians need only say that they will allow Israel to exist in peace ... and there is pretty much nothing they cannot have." Well now, Daniel, why not offer the Palestinians Israel's compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 242 (passed in November 1967) requiring withdrawal from the occupied territories?

A bit overdue, but that might bring peace. Maybe also educate Israeli soldiers, who (according to the Red Cross) `taunted and threatened" the Red Cross team rescuing children of murdered parents, and who stood by and let the children die one by one. Shades of the 1968 My Lai massacre, and the behaviour of other troops circa 1936 et al?

Peter Dowding

Fremantle, WA

I WONDER if Israel misses the inescapable irony in Daniel Finkelstein's impassioned article. His account of Israel's painful history is also the blueprint now being applied to Palestinians. As the Jews suffered persecution by a dominant force, so do Palestinians. I urge Finkelstein et al to ask themselves: What would you have done to prevent the persecution of Jews had you the power? Israel has the power to effect a change.

Not the change offered by Camp David, which like other negotiations was unacceptable. Israel's proposal would have divided Palestine into four separate cantons, so that Palestinians' movement would always be governed and controlled by Israelis. This is not an independent state.

So if Israel just wants to live in peace it needs to use its imagination. In the words of Paul Keating: ``It was our ignorance and our prejudice, and our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask: how would I feel if this were done to me?"

Andrew Dib

Lyneham, ACT

YOUR headline ``Israeli shelling blunder killed 30: UN" (10/1) prompts the question: what is a massacre? Can we speak of the Bali Blunder? At least in the Bali case the patrons of the establishments hit were not told to go there for safety.

We are watching this war with horror. We cannot sleep with the images of children dead in their parents' arms, or crying in a daze, not believing it is their parents' bloodied remains in front of them.

We must understand that killing has never worked as a tool of submission.

A. Young

Whitfield, Qld

SEEMINGLY eyeless to the blighted rule of Hamas in Gaza, European critics would deny Israel the right to defend its own territory -- thus giving a most incongruous preference to terrorists who openly scorn all that 2000 years of European thought have wrought in human affairs.

It's time once again for Europe's critics of Israel to find their souls.

Ron Goodden

Atlanta, Georgia, US

THE leadership of Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u> should seriously reflect on the history of Israel since its formation in 1948. Neither organisation has the military ability to destroy it. The combined forces of Arab nations bordering Israel have tried several times and failed.

The Palestinian people have it in their power to bring peace to their communities, but it means a rethink of their objectives. If they again conclude that Israel must be destroyed, their pain will continue and they will only have themselves to blame.

Allen Arthur

Middleton, SA

THE only thing more useless than a Hamas rocket is a journalist trying to cover Gaza. Israel knows that excluding journalists enables the slaughter to go on longer. Israel has targeted ambulances, UN schools, relief convoys, and refuges as well as many public buildings and private houses. Surgical strikes indeed. The massacre of innocents suggests Israel is either remarkably incompetent or lying. Without journalists, we can't be sure.

Frank Campbell

Anglesea, Vic

Same church medicine

in a different coating

THERE was a time when, if your priest told you something was sinful, you believed it. You might even have stopped doing it, whether it was sex outside marriage or the use of artificial contraception. Alas for many of the world's religions, those days are largely over. The Catholic Church seems to have refined a policy to cover this dilemma: systematic intellectual dishonesty. Thus the poor in Africa are told not that condom use is a sin but that condoms are ineffective in preventing HIV/AIDS. Not true, but at least it decreases the sin rate, even at the expense of increasing the death rate.

In line with the same policy is the advice that the oral contraceptive pill and abortions lead to breast cancer, and most recently that the pill decreases male fertility, as addressed by Angela Shanahan (``It's wise to be wary of the pill", 10/1).

There are many reasons for doubting that hypothesis, but the most obvious is the following. Oestrogens are made naturally and excreted by all mammals. Extra can be absorbed into the body and acts as an extremely effective and safe contraceptive. The body uses these hormones then metabolises them, so they pass into urine in a form that has virtually no biological activity.

The amount of urinary oestrogen metabolites excreted naturally in urine worldwide must be several orders of magnitude greater than that originating in the pill.

All this does not mean we do not have a problem, we just don't have the one the Vatican would like us to have.

There are two incontestable truths in Shanahan's article: that male fertility appears to be undergoing a mysterious global decline, and that the abortion rate, especially in Australia, is unacceptably high. If a significant number of <u>women</u> stop taking the pill it will make no difference to the first problem, while sending the second one through the roof.

Michael Carrette (gynaecologist)

Cairns, Qld

ANGELA Shanahan seems to have missed the point about why some people are upset with the Catholic Church's trumpeting of ``evidence" of oestrogen from the pill finding its way into the environment and supposedly causing a rise in male infertility. It is not the science of the matter that is raising ire, but the fact that the Catholic Church is using the issue to lend weight to its medieval views on birth control and family planning.

If the Church really was concerned about the environment and its effects on us, then it would surely realise that one of our most significant environmental problems is an uncontrolled increase in human population. This is to say nothing of the associated damage of increased risk of human disease, which Catholic doctrine tacitly allows by

discouraging birth control in countries where HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases cause tragic human hardship.

Make no mistake, Ms Shanahan -- nothing in this story is about the environment.

Peter Miller

Ringwood East, Vic

Tasmania. Any takers?

IF ever there were a case for abolishing the statehood of Tasmania, the long-running fiasco of the Gunns pulp mill is it (``No end to pulp friction", 10/1). Majority state governments of Labor and Liberal persuasion in tiny Tasmania, both mad keen on rubber-stamping big polluting industries, have proved themselves incapable of thinking for themselves, unable or unwilling to come to grips with the idea of environmental sustainability and what it should mean for their policies.

Tasmanians would be better off being absorbed into one of the more civilised mainland Australian states, or becoming a branch of New Zealand. At least those colonies appreciate their native forests alive, in all their magnificent diversity, standing up.

Dr John R. Wilson

Daisy Dell, Tas

THE Government and the Liberal Opposition realise that the pulp mill approval process was a disaster, but are committed to support a flawed process. Both leaders should show the courage that Tasmanians expect and deserve, and give consideration to the many diverse small and large businesses in the region, by allowing them the opportunity to invest and expand with confidence. It's time for Premier David Bartlett to concede that the Tamar Valley is not the right location for a pulp mill.

Ernie C. Verbraeken

Launceston, Tas

THE anti-mill groups have well organised stunts and brilliant publicity but the vast majority of Tasmanians voted for candidates in favour of the Tamar pulp mill at the most recent federal and state elections. They accept the science, as has Peter Garrett, and support the mill as their interest is in value-adding and jobs rather than politics.

Robin Claxton

Tamar Valley, Tas

Let's cool down on climate

MY opinion piece (``Let's not waste energy on the warmaholics' fantasy", 6/1) was perhaps too strongly worded and for this I apologise. However, I too am fed up with being associated with deniers of the Nazi genocide of Jews and with being accused of being ``bought" by Exxon. But most devastating of all, as a virologist, with being accused of refusing to accept the scientific link between the HIV virus and AIDS.

So I should not have stooped down to the level of name-calling -- it was unprofessional and I will refrain from doing so in future.

However, here is a challenge to all the critics: El Nino is the biggest energy event on earth, it transfers about 5PW of energy from one side of the planet to another and affects climate and weather across the globe. I challenge the computer modellers to nominate when the next El Nino event will occur and its relative strength. If they get it even

roughly right I will take out the biggest advertisement in The Australian I can afford and withdraw everything I have said.

Dr Jon Jenkins

Bogangar, NSW

Hope in housing

IT is great to see from Paul Toohey's article (``A New Lease on Life", Magazine, 10/1) that Aboriginal Australians will have the opportunity to own their own homes. Now let's get rid of those two anachronistic, divisive, discriminatory and second-rate policies, Aboriginal education and Aboriginal health. We would not accept for our children, the services and programs they deliver, so why should Aboriginal people? They are entitled to the same health and education services enjoyed by all Australians. Let's get cracking, Jenny.

Tony Neale

Eastwood, SA

Some Lefts are all right

LARRY Buttrose's discussion of the historic opportunity facing the Left (``As capitalism falters, can the Left finally get it right?" 10/1) raises the question of which Left.

If it is the rent-a-crowd Left that marches through the streets chanting Whaddawewant slogans; the street theatre Left with its HoWARd signs and its swastikas inserted in Bush; the artiste Left with its demands for taxpayer subsidies for boring cliche-ridden plays and grunge films that no one wants to see; the ``Cuba is cool because it teaches its people to read and write (don't mention the one-party state)" Left; the ``Australians are racist rednecks" Left; or the soppy Left with its denials of personal responsibility that has undermined academic and discipline standards in out schools -- we can hope that it remains forever impotent.

On the other hand, if it is the social democratic Left that has focused on improving the life chances for ordinary people for more than a century (with its support for the conciliation and arbitration system, the rights of workers to bargain through their unions, the provision of decent social security payments and high-standard education for everyone), that was never conned by communism, that sees the US as on balance a force for good in the world, that understands how Israel lives in the shadow of the Holocaust and that is committed to parliamentary democracy and the rule of law -- we can hope that its current ascendancy in Australia remains the natural order of things.

The big advantage that the social democratic Left has is that is electable; the other Lefts are not.

Chris Curtis

Hurstbridge, Vic

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

One cannot help but be impressed with the power of voodoo priestess Mama Allah (``The voodoo healers", 9/1). We're told that among the items in her shrine is a photograph of the Virgin Mary. That's real power. But one does have to wonder whether the photographer was Hebrew, Samaritan, or Roman.

WJ O'Malley

Garran, ACT

Kevin Rudd, our Man of Butter. As soon as there's any heat in the kitchen he melts away.

Paul Drakeford

Kew, Vic

Hail, Peter Siddle, our man in the middle,

The crowds jumping over the moon,

And with Mitch at the pitch hurling bombs at the Poms,

Well be back, yeah, on track pretty soon!

P. Crowley

Adelaide, SA

Following advice from US and Australian intelligence, no journalists will be allowed to wear shoes at the ``Medal of Freedom" ceremony for the Honourable John Winston Howard.

Peter Thai

Bulleen, Vic

Who does John Howard think he is? First, he causes US President-elect Barack Obama to move house and now he wants Nationals senator Barnaby Joyce to do the same (``Howard tells Joyce to move house", 10/1)!

Ray Sanderson

Wynnum, Qld

I was sorry to hear that a hunting trip has ended in a tragic death. Still, I thought most of them did -- depends on whether you're the hunter or the hunted, I guess.

Mike O'Shaughnessy

Spence, ACT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GPO Box 4162, Sydney, NSW, 2001Fax: 02 9288 3077

Email: letters@theaustralian.com.au (no attachments)

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Escape: Travel Guides: Journey's end for the guidebook gurus?: It's the end of an era - Lonely Planet has been sold and the creator of Rough Guides has stepped down. Carole Cadwalladr looks at how their growth from humble beginnings into publishing leviathans has transformed our guidebooks... for better or worse

The Observer (London)
October 7, 2007

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The Observer

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Byline: Carole Cadwalladr

Body

Reading Across Asia on the Cheap, the first guidebook that Tony and Maureen Wheeler wrote and the beginning of the empire that was to become Lonely Planet, I realise that there's only one place they write about that I'd really like to see. And that's 1973.

Forget the emerald Buddha in Bangkok, it's the 'freak bus services' I want (operating from London to Istanbul for around \$30), Kabul - that 'fly-in, fly-out tourist trap' - and a Singapore that is 'a groovy place', where Tony - and it's worth bearing in mind that this is a hard-working young man fresh out of business school - advises passing through immigration wearing a 'short-hair wig' and notes that as a modern city, it owes its existence to Sir Stamford Raffles 'who was quite a cat'.

It's a delightful read, in all sorts of ways. There are some ropey hand-drawn cartoons on the front and, at 94 pages, its coverage of half the world - everything that lies between London and Sydney - is perhaps best described as 'concise'.

Still, in Iran, we learn 'the Amir Kabir is the freak bottleneck and has been for some years', Iraq is simply 'a very hard-line socialist Arab country so watch what you say and never mention arch enemies, Iran or Israel' and, comforting this for anyone who's ever been told they arrived too late, in 1973 Bali is already described as over: it 'shows every indication of being rapidly eroded by tourism', the guide says. 'Go soon.'

They simply don't make guidebooks like this any more: the sketchiest of practical information, some of it excitingly criminal - where to score drugs, how to obtain forged ID - artfully combined with frank admissions of total ignorance: 'I'm not too hot on hotels in Iran'. Plus an ever-ready willingness to air personal politics, 'due to the continuing effect of the American charade in South East Asia, travel to other south east Asian countries is either difficult, not recommended or impossible'.

But its canonical status is not because it was a helpful primer on the practicalities of overland travel, but as a generational call to arms. 'All you've got to do is decide to go and the hardest part is over,' said Tony Wheeler in his introduction. 'So go.' And then, well, basically, everybody did, all of us, at one time or another, if not for six months on a hippy bus, then two weeks of island-hopping in Greece, as often as not with a Lonely Planet guidebook tucked into our rucksack.

The Wheelers made the overland trip in 1972, arrived in Australia with less than a dollar, and so the story goes, banged out the book 'at their kitchen table'. Last week, it bore ultimate fruition, when they sold a majority stake in the company to the BBC, netting them a reported £ 63m.

It's big money, but more than that, it's almost certainly the end of one era, and the beginning of another quite different one, although exactly what that might be, nobody's as yet quite sure. Just a few days before the Wheelers' announcement, Mark Ellingham, the founder of Rough Guides, decided to step down from the company that he'd created 25 years ago and subsequently sold to Penguin. And earlier this year, Hilary Bradt, of Bradt guides, retired, as did Charles James, of Vacation Work, both veteran independent publishers who also started out in the early Seventies.

Year on year sales are down: by two per cent last year and a worsening plunge is feared this year. The coming age is of the downloadable pdf; the hand-held device; the guidebook that is tailor-made to fit your trip. The BBC deal is meant to provide the cash to facilitate this for Lonely Planet. It's just hard, looking at my copy of Across Asia on the Cheap, to think that this is where it all began: the ur-text of LP 3.0.

Studying it, there are things that have changed beyond all imagining (RIP dear old poste restante) and yet there's also so much that's familiar here. The basic guidebook structure, the exhortations to watch for dodgy, foreign food, and, when visiting embassies, to look smart and behave yourself ('Just why are these countries so uptight?... Do yourself and everyone else a favour and stay cool.')

It's a legacy of Baedeker's improving Victorian stance, this tendency of guidebook writers to order you about. Oh, they can be such pompous know-it-alls! 'Before you even think about heading out into the hills alone, take advice. . . ignore the counsel of well-meaning Beirutis and ask in the villages.' Who wrote that? Oh, yes, that's right, it was me (Travellers' Survival Kit Lebanon 1996, co-authored with my friend, Anna Sutton). '

It's so easy to be pompous. And so enjoyable. Particularly in a travelling context. In a nutshell: the past was better, you should have got there sooner, and you paid how much for it, you fool? If there's any area of modern life that has benefited from new technology and yet in which we resist the notion that it might possibly just be progress, it's travel. It's the prelapsarian ideal we want. No gift shops or touts. Just unsullied nature, and, now you mention it, a charming small hotel with crisp cotton sheets and maybe a nice glass of something chilled.

It's an inconvenient fact that the good old days weren't always. My experience of backpacking in former Soviet hellholes would have been immeasur ably transformed with the invention of Couchsurfing, and in the age of Google, Anna and I wouldn't have got away with our more creative touches. At work on a guidebook to Russia & the Republics and at a loss as to how enliven a section on Minsk nightlife, we endowed our friend Isabel Henton with a set of pink performing poodles and made her the star of the Belarusian State Circus.

There's not many jolly japes these days. But then there's also no detracting from Lonely Planet's extraordinary success: it publishes more than 500 titles, has sold 80 million guidebooks, translated into eight or more languages. On the wall of their London office is a framed certificate noting that they have been judged to be a 'Superbrand' and so the story goes, when Bill Clinton went to visit Australia, he requested an audience with the Prime Minister, and 'someone from Lonely Planet'.

I haven't met Maureen but Tony is as mild-mannered and unassuming a multi-millionaire as you could hope to find. Everyone admires them and applauds their achievement. And yet I talk to Hilary Bradt and Mark Ellingham and Charles James, and Bryn Thomas from another small independent, Trailblazer, and James Daunt, of Daunt Books,

a specialist travel bookshop, and nobody can resist putting the boot into Lonely Planet just a touch: it's travel publishing's Microsoft.

When I ring Charles James, he tells me that, funnily enough, he's currently reading a book by Pete McCarthy, 'and every few pages, he goes and slags off Lonely Planet and all the sad Lonely Planeters hanging around the hostels, and of course, that delights me no end'.

'I mean have you seen their first book? And ours too. . . If you compare what they're doing now with the first books, there's no comparison. They're tremendously good these days whereas back then we had, what? 220 pages and a few scrappy hand-drawn maps? We sold them for £ 5 which, bearing in mind, this was 30 years ago, was good money, and they just sold terrifically well because there was nothing else out there. For a while, it was absolutely brilliant.'

It was absolutely brilliant, I agree. He gave us a commissioning letter, a very small amount of cash, and off we went to Lebanon with carte blanche. On the telephone, Bryn Thomas tells me of his hell updating Lonely Planet India ('up at dawn, five hotels before breakfast. . .') and how curtailed the format was ('it just wasn't much fun writing for them in the end, it was so controlled') whereas Anna and I swanned around with a Blue Guide from 1969, spending weeks tracking down lost temples on the sides of the Bekaa Valley, establishing exactly which was our favourite Beiruti felafel seller, turning up for coffee with Walid Jumblatt, the former warlord, and composing disquisitions on, among other things, the appearance of *female* newscasters on *Hezbollah* TV.

It barely sold a copy, of course, what with some slightly bad timing with some rockets and the Israeli army. But still, as I always told Charles, minor quibbles, minor quibbles.

Hilary Bradt, whose company con centrates on the more obscure destinations, published her first book in 1974, a year after the Wheelers did, although she wasn't even aware of the existence of their books at the time. There's no ignoring them now though.

'Everyone asks why we don't do a book on Thailand,' she says. 'In order to have something concrete to say, I counted up the number of Thailand guides in Stanfords the other day, and do you know how many there were? Forty-two. And the world doesn't need 43 guides to Thailand, that's for sure.'

They're still finding destinations, she says, 'but if Lonely Planet comes along and does it, well, it doesn't matter that we have the better book, people just look at the brand. I think they've done terrifically well, it's just hard as a small publisher not to resent it.'

Everybody has a tale to tell about Lonely Planet's quasi-mythical power. There's the apocryphal story, for example, about the Rainbow Lodge. Recom mended by Lonely Planet, it boomed. The other guesthouse owners grew jealous. So one hotelier changed his name to Rainbow Lodge. Then another. Until there was a whole street of Rainbow Lodges and busloads of confused backpackers not knowing which way to turn.

'That's not apocryphal,' Tony Wheeler says, when I ask him. 'That happens all the time. All over the place. They're always at it. There was one place in Hanoi where we recommended the Globetrekker agency, and then a Globaltrekker agency appeared, and a Globe Treks agency, and Globetrekker 2.'

He's not an it-was-so-much-better-back-then sort, Tony. Part of this, of course, is that Lonely Planet must be seen to be striding boldly into an age of digital guides but more it seems that he still loves travelling, is a self-described 'obsessive' about it, and still gets a kick out of going somewhere new (he's on 130 countries now 'although Maureen tells me it's absurd to count').

Hilary Bradt, on the other hand, says she misses the 'serendipity' of the old days and, now in her 60s, she thinks 'us older ones' are more adventurous than young people who all use the same guidebook and go to same places 'they follow the pack because they don't feel secure enough although of course when I was 20 I was exactly the same'.

Of course, it's not just that guidebooks have changed in the last three and a half decades, it's that everything has: cheap flights, mobile phones, emails, the internet, nice boutique hotels with quaint original features but tip-top Western plumbing. James Daunt tells me that the latest hot potato to fly off the shelves are the 'Luxe' guides.

'What?' I say. 'Those crappy little things on a concertina-ed bit of paper?' But yes, apparently we've come over a bit Russian and want our luxury above all else. I idly think of setting up Super Sexxxxxy VIP Guides and really cleaning up. The only real link between now and the ideology of Across Asia on the Cheap is in the Sixties' notions of freedom and self-fulfilment that are still the vital ingredient of all travel narratives - both literary and personal - and that these guides were the first to harness, repackage and sell right back to us. And if a book remains a book or becomes a pdf, that's unlikely to change.

It's time, though, perhaps, for the counterculture to move on. Lonely Planet-meets-the-BBC is now the establishment. It's a nationalised industry. It's practically the Queen! Where are the Sex Pistols when you need them? What everyone complains about up to and including Tony Wheeler, is how bland, formulaic, PC, corporate, the books have become. The very first Lonely Planet guide I used was the one to India. 'It's still the one I'm proudest of,' Tony says, a best-seller when it came out in 1980 and it was still the only one to the country by the time that I picked it up in 1989, and slavishly read its every word. What I remember most about it, though, is 'Geoff', or Geoff Crowther, one of the original authors not just of the India guide but the Africa and South American one too, whose author bio showed to have a full beard and a vegetable garden in Australia devoted to exotic herbs.

Whole evenings passed doing Geoff impressions (it was a variation, basically, of Neil, the hippy off the Young Ones): on where to score dope, or get the best view of a certain temple. His opinions were forever butting into the text. So annoying! Yet, somehow, so memorable.

He's gone now. A broken man living in Goa, Tony Wheeler tells me, and it's hard not to feel a pang. Is it a parable, I wonder? Although in the end, I decide it's probably not. The latest edition of Lonely Planet India is a monumental 1,236 pages, produced by 12 writers, and it's, without a doubt, a terrifically useful book if you need to navigate your way from Calcutta to Bangalore; probably even more so when it's a couple of megabytes rather than several kilos of dense matter weighing like a stone at the bottom of your bag. But, well, there's a certain something that's been lost; a Geoffness, I think I'll call it, that joins the scrapheap of travellers' hand-me-downs waiting to be collected at a dusty poste restante, in a land far, far away.

FROM HIPPIES TO HIP HOTELS

The original Seventies backpacker guides used to revel in their countercultural status, sneering at smart hotels and posh restaurants wherever possible. Now, however, 'style guides' are the fastest growing sector of the market.

'Young couples with money buy these cool guides because they are the ones to be seen with,' says Brett Wolstencroft manager of Daunt Books, a specialist travel bookshop in Marylebone.

These are the front-runners:

Hip Hotels: Started the trend of style-focused travel guides; now has more than 15 titles.

Luxe Guides: Pocket-sized and written with acerbic wit.

Hedonist's Guides: Sleek but comprehensive, photo-heavy, quirky destinations.

Nota Bene: A subscription service, costing £ 235 per year. Wallpaper City Guides: Smart, snobby and full of travel porn.

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Roger Cohen is a columnist for The International Herald Tribune and a guest columnist for The New York Times.

Body

Soon after our first meeting in her Spartan office in Jerusalem, Tzipi Livni, the Israeli foreign minister, called me. Something was on her mind. A lawyer by training, she does not like to leave loose ends. I had asked her if the four years she spent in Mossad, the intelligence service, made her a disciplined person. Livni had seemed taken aback by the question, which interrupted the cascade of her pronouncements on Israel and its Palestinian nemesis. After a long hesitation, she said: "I don't like this phrase, a disciplined person. I don't know."

Now, an hour later, she wanted to set the record straight. "I was thinking about this idea of me as a disciplined person," she began. I perched myself on a stone wall near the King David Hotel and listened through a blustery desert wind. "There are other parts of me that are different. I prefer jeans to a suit, sneakers to high heels, markets to malls. You've just returned from Paris: I prefer the Quartier Latin to the Champs Alysees. In general, I don't like formality at all. It is just part of what I do. You know, when I was young, I went to the Sinai and worked as a waitress."

I had not known this detail about a woman who entered Israeli politics only 11 years ago, the first to serve as foreign minister since Golda Meir and a potential prime minister. Nor was it easy to imagine the tall, well-groomed 48-year-old I had just met, in her gold-belted black pants, her crocodile-skin shoes and her snug black jacket, donning denims and sneakers and hitting a flea market.

But Livni's phone call was telling. Israelis these days fret about how they are seen. They like to convey the spirit of the underdog -- that of Israel's heroic beginnings -- as if discomfited by the adornments of an increasingly moneyed, Americanized and postheroic society. More powerful than ever, Israelis are also more anxious than ever, a paradox with U.S. parallels that they find maddening. Israel's strength and wealth grow, but the country's long-term security does not grow with them. The shekel rises; so does the billowing smoke just over the border in Gaza. Two Israeli withdrawals, from Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005, have ended up bolstering two groups that the West and Israel brand as terrorists -- <u>Hezbollah</u> and Hamas. Some Israelis, watching the black-masked militia of Hamas take over Gaza, have taken to calling the benighted sliver of territory "Hamastan."

The mother of all conflicts -- the 59-year-old battle for the same land of Zionist and Palestinian national movements -- has become even more tangled. It has been dragged into the wider crisis of Islamic civilization that daily spawns fervid death-to-the-West jihadists. To a Palestinian national struggle for a homeland, there is an

answer, at least in theory. To a religious and annihilationist campaign against Israel, there is none. One of Livni's catchphrases is, "There is a process of delegitimization of Israel as a Jewish state." She sees herself in a race against time.

To manage that race, she wants to lead. Her diplomatic energy, not least in helping put together the multinational United Nations force now in Lebanon, has impressed in capitals from Washington to Europe. Her restiveness is clear. After the spring publication of the Winograd Commission's interim report on the 2006 Lebanon war, which lambasted Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for lacking "judgment, responsibility and prudence," Livni told him he should quit but did not resign herself. She also said she would one day stand for leadership of their centrist Kadima Party. This unusual act of defiance toward her boss, widely criticized as only half an insurrection, was a measure of Livni's ambition, impatience and lingering uncertainties.

"Stagnation works against those who believe in a two-state solution," Livni said in our first conversation. The West, she suggested, needs to tell Hamas, the Islamist movement battling Fatah for control of a Palestinian movement now split between Gaza and the West Bank, that it must not only recognize Israel's right to exist but also "the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, which is not that obvious anymore."

The Jewish state has been tied to the Livni family with a special bond since zero hour. For Livni, personal history is national history. Her parents were among the first couples to marry in the newborn state, the day after its foundation, on May 15, 1948. Her father, Eitan, served as operations chief for the Irgun, the Zionist guerrillas who used what would today be called terrorist methods to blast the British out of Mandate Palestine. Her mother, Sarah, was also an Irgun fighter; she suckled her daughter on visions of Eretz Israel, the biblical "Land of Israel," including Judea and Samaria on the West Bank. Territorial compromise for peace had no place in the family lexicon. It was the weak talk of the peaceniks.

Yet here is Livni wanting to follow Meir and become the second woman to serve as Israeli prime minister, precisely in the name of a peace that would involve the surrender of West Bank land. On the face of it, she has moved a long way from her political starting point. "I want things to happen," she said, "especially when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's values, the way I believe is the right way." And to achieve that, you want the top job? "Only for this," she replied. "I don't like the exposure, the respect and so on."

Her voice trailed away. Livni's ambition is matched by only her bouts of self-effacement. You feel her presence in a room. She is striking, in a raw rather than a refined way, broad-faced, pale-eyed and slender. She is also strikingly confident in her lucid expositions of what she believes the Middle East needs. Stretched tight, like the membrane of the drums she recently took up playing, she exudes a tense energy. But when the conversation turns to her personal feelings, she shrinks, the "eehhhs" and "ummms" drawn out as she gathers her thoughts.

What she has, at a time of disorientation and seeping corruption in Israeli politics, is an image of absolute integrity, the distinction of being a woman on a male-dominated political scene and a wholesome quality that stands in contrast to the slick, wheeler-dealer style of Olmert, whose approval ratings have plunged into the single-digit zone.

Genuineness is her thing. At Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial museum, Livni, who is married with two sons, had this to say two years ago: "Being a Jewish mother is to understand with the birth of the second son how impossible and inhumane is the choice between the two." And this: "Being an Israeli is to know that you have risen from the ashes of those who were killed and knowing you have a responsibility for the coming generations."

Gil Samsonov, an advertising executive who has known her for many years, put it this way: "Her brand is clean. She's not looking left and right to see whom to please." But Israelis are looking desperately for someone who can please them. The report on the Lebanon war crystallized the country's disorientation. How could <u>Hezbollah</u> have repulsed the Israeli Defense Forces? How could the country's defense minister at the time, Amir Peretz, have had, as the report put it, no "knowledge or experience in military, political or governmental matters?" How can Olmert and his finance minister be facing investigations for corruption? How is it that the former justice minister got himself in trouble over sexual-harassment charges, the same issue that just brought down the president, Moshe Katsav? Is Israel -- far from David Ben-Gurion's model state of "working people, at home on the soil" -- becoming just another tawdry commercial country with an oversize army?

To all these interrogations, Livni, competent and decent, seems to provide a possible answer. "She comes from a different place with a special, strong love of Israel," says Dita Kohl-Roman, a friend. Shlomo Avineri, a political scientist, agrees: "There is an Israeli authenticity about her."

Authenticity was a core quality of Ariel Sharon, Livni's political mentor, the last of the heroic breed of warrior-politicians. He liked her industry and loyalty. His imprimatur bolsters her because at a time of national self-questioning, his loss is keenly felt. It was with Sharon that Livni made her fundamental ideological break: from a defender in the right-wing Likud Party of an Israeli state on all its biblical land to the idea of land for peace, embodied in the evacuation of Gaza in 2005 and the promise of a further withdrawal from the West Bank.

This shift -- the reason for Sharon's, Livni's and Olmert's centrist Kadima Party, created in late 2005 -- was rooted in a simple calculation: an Israel that wants to remain Jewish and democratic cannot also be despotic on occupied territories where Palestinian demography is against it. "There were three ideological goals for families like Livni's and mine: Greater Israel, a Jewish state and democracy," says Arye Naor, a political scientist whose father also fought in the Irgun. "Well, it became clear you could have any two of them, but adding a third condemned the enterprise."

That is logical. A Greater Israeli democracy will end up not being Jewish because there will be more Arabs in it than Jews. Livni likes logic. As her adviser Tal Becker put it to me, "She believes constructive ambiguity can become destructive ambiguity." So it was she who, working for Sharon, wrote the program of the now-governing Kadima. And it is she who pushes hardest to spell out to Palestinians the concessions they must make.

"Just as Israel was established for the Jewish people and gave refuge to them from European and Arab states, so a Palestinian state is the homeland of the Palestinian people, those who live in the territories and those who left in 1948 and are being kept as political cards in refugee camps," she told me. "This is the national answer. The solution for Palestinians is the Palestinian state. Israel is not part of the solution."

Or, put another way, there can be no "right of return," a central canon for Palestinians since the war of Israel's foundation in 1948. That year, the United Nations declared in Resolution 194: "Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date."

History moves on, of course. About 1 in 10 Palestinians alive today and registered as refugees with the United Nations was born in Mandate Palestine. A Palestinian return en masse would condemn the Jewish state. In that sense, Livni is only stating the obvious. Whether such bluntness is helpful is another question. Palestinians are not about to trade one of their biggest chips up front. "What Livni wants us to do is give up before we start negotiations," says Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. "I feel sorry for her. She wants to remove all risk, all fears, before engaging in discussion."

But Livni can be relentless-- a "nudnik," or nagger, in the words of Igal Galai, a friend of Sharon's. When Livni called me back after our first meeting, something else was eating at her: "I was minister of immigrant absorption in 2004, and I convinced Sharon that it was important that I go see Condoleezza Rice in Washington. So I went, and I saw how she was interested in the depth of the conflict, in finding a real process and doing what was right and just. I had the opportunity to convince Rice, then national security adviser, and so make a contribution to the statement President Bush made soon after."

In that groundbreaking statement of April 14, 2004, George W. Bush declared: "It seems clear that an agreed, just, fair and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel." No American leader had ever so explicitly trashed the "right of return" of the Palestinians. "That was my contribution," Livni revealed to me. "I did the right thing -- and so did Bush."

Livni seems to share many things with Rice, who calls the foreign minister a "friend" and a woman of peace. They have the same intensity and work ethic, the same difficulty in thinking beyond a doctrine once it has been formed, the same disciplined intelligence that sometimes appears to lack the subtlety of wisdom and the same penchant for talking about "values" and what is "right."

But I found myself thinking, What good was the "right thing" or plans for Palestinian refugees festering in camps or Bush's two-state road map or Rice's principles or Livni's good intentions, when the whole area -- spiraling downward with a devilish energy, developing ever-more-divergent Israeli and Palestinian narratives, splintering and radicalizing in the image of Iraq, threatened by a resurgent Iran, permeated by jihadists without borders -- was going up in recrimination-clogged smoke? I believed in Livni's good faith, her energy, her honesty, her determination. What I was not sure about after our first meeting was her grasp on reality. The fact is, Israelis and Palestinians have parted company. I could see little evidence that Livni, for all her lucidity, was any exception to this.

When you drive from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv on Route 443, which cuts through Israeli-occupied West Bank territory, walls accompany you. Not merely the "security barrier," as Israel calls the 430-mile-plus high-tech fence it is building to keep out Palestinians (who call it "the racist, separating wall"), but a variety of other bulwarks, of wire and concrete and brick. The barriers exist in the name of security, security, security -- no escaping the Israeli mantra. To some degree, they have delivered. Palestinian suicide bombings have all but ceased. But of course they betray insecurity, a gnawing condition Israelis once thought they might overcome but now tend to view as inescapable.

Also accompanying you along the route is a procession of concrete pillars holding aloft the high-speed-train track that will one day connect the two cities in a half-hour or so and perhaps relieve the clogged traffic and swearing drivers inching across the country. Israel, as this megaproject and national bottleneck suggest, is booming. Its stock market keeps climbing. Areas north and south of Tel Aviv amount to the Middle East's Palo Alto. An emblematic act of the new Israel was the decision of Dan Halutz, then the armed-forces chief, to offload his stock on the eve of the Lebanon war. Materialism now does battle with Zionism for the Israeli soul -- Moshe Dayan requiescat in pace.

I suppose this is natural enough. After double-whammy intifadas, Oslo's aborted peace process, Camp David's near thing in 2000 and repeated illustration of the prodigious Palestinian penchant for self-destruction, the temptation to imagine you are in California-with-fences is understandable. Israelis once conducted a daily argument of Talmudic intensity about how to settle with the Palestinians. Now many just say, To heck with them and their festering stew of a failed and now bifurcated Hamas-Fatah prestate!

"The left saw that its outstretched hand had failed, and the right saw that its iron fist has failed, and they have both veered toward a center that now says: 'Go away. Let's build a bunker and wait and see,' " Shlomo Avineri told me. "The fact is, Yasir Arafat did not set up a state; he set up a means to continue the struggle. And Israel did not prepare for Palestinian statehood; it went on building settlements. Each believes only the language of force works in the end."

This ultimately futile belief is part of what makes Israel such a jangled place these days, its "fantastic economic bubble," in the words of the former diplomat Itamar Rabinovich, hovering over unease. "The country is in good shape, and the mood is in bad shape," Shimon Peres told me. Peres, who joined Kadima from the left rather than Livni's right, says he believes the mood is sour "because we have failed to bring Israel and the Middle East into a new age." No kidding. Islamist fanatics rave about restoring the Caliphate, and Hamas talks of seeing off Israel the way Crusaders were once seen off: you can hardly get more "Old World" than that. But a "new age" Israel is equally vigorous, if less often in the news.

After meeting Peres, I found myself at a dinner party with Yossi Vardi, a dot-com millionaire who made a bundle from one of the first Internetwide instant-messaging services. "Israel became very fertile ground for young people with ideas," Vardi told me. "More than \$1.4 billion in venture capital came in recently. The place is crazy -- a technology boom alongside a very unacceptable political situation and chaos in Gaza, where most of the population is living on under \$2 a day. It's not right or sustainable." He took a sip of a respectable cabernet sauvignon -- Israeli winemaking is on the rise (from a low base) -- before adding: "You know, power corrupts, and occupation is the ultimate manifestation of power. There are no checks, no balances. Occupation, after 40 years, corrupts absolutely."

Livni has a different view. "I don't think the way Israel behaves is against Israeli values," she insists. In a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in March, she said, "I believe that we are defined -- as individuals, as leaders and as nations -- by our values and by the choices we make to defend them." She sees Israel side by side with the United States in "a struggle for the future of the free world."

As this language suggests, a lot of her intellectual energy goes into placing Israel within the Bush administration's post-9/11, us-and-them Weltanschauung, as an integral actor in the war on terror, battling on the side of liberty against a Palestinian threat that gets agglomerated with Al Qaeda and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran --regardless of the differences between seeking Palestine and seeking the annihilation of the West. Livni sometimes seems to pursue the development of a Pavlovian response to the Middle Eastern conundrum. Say "Israel." Ping! American values. Say "Palestine." Ping! Terror. "I would like to remind the world that they entered our restaurants, our discotheques; they killed children in their beds," Livni told me. "I can understand, and I can feel, the grief of a Palestinian mother. The loss of a child or a family member is awful. It is the same pain. But in any legal system, there is a difference between premeditated murder and somebody who kills by mistake."

She continued: "These terrorists are looking for children to kill while we are trying to avoid it. It is unfair to pitch together in the same package, to say there are victims on both sides, circles of violence and so on. That does not contribute to a solution. When the Palestinians think that the world's judgment is 'O.K., this can happen,' they will never stop. They need to know that the world cannot accept it, that terror is terror."

It is precisely to stop terror, Livni emphasized, that the wall has been built against the wishes of the Israeli far right, who saw in it a division of Zion: "Yet when I am in Europe, I hear Palestinians saying this is ghettoization, this is the Berlin Wall. And I say, at the end of the day, when you are talking about a two-state solution, what do you think? There is going to be a border, a fence, something."

But where? Livni brought out a map to make her point that a return to the precise 1967 lines -- as U.N. resolutions and the Arab peace plan reiterated this year in Riyadh demand -- was impractical. Given certain Israeli settlements, what Bush in 2004 called "already existing major Israeli population centers," and the eventual need to somehow link Gaza and the West Bank (Livni favors a tunnel), the border would have to shift some. So, she said, perhaps the barrier, which often zigzags inside the West Bank to separate Jewish settlers and Palestinians, could even be helpful.

"Palestinians oppose this even before they know where the line would be," she mused. "There sometimes seems to be a contradiction between what Palestinians demand, what they claim and the way they act." Palestinians, however, have no monopoly on self-contradiction. Israelis -- Americanized but still in an existential struggle, terrified of annihilation but now the region's overwhelming superpower, often blinded by the wall to what is perpetrated behind it -- can sometimes resemble studies in unreason garbed in the practiced language of Western reasonableness. At times I wondered to what degree Livni had really moved from her hard-line, Likudnik beginnings.

t the Nahalat Yitzhak Cemetery in Tel Aviv, lilac petals lie scattered on the dusty earth, and old cypresses form a solemn cortege. It is a beautiful oasis in an unlovely city. At one corner is a gravestone with an unusual engraving -- that of the whole biblical Land of Israel with a gun and bayonet cutting through the center and the words "Only Thus!" This is where Livni's father, Eitan, who died in 1991, is buried. He insisted in his will on this Irgun symbol.

He was a tough purist, and his only son, Eli Livni, the foreign minister's brother, appears to have inherited some of his no-nonsense directness. "In the Livni family," Eli says breezily, "your father and mother never hug you. What they give you is a good, formal education." This upbringing involved occasional beatings with a belt (for him) and rigorous instruction in honoring principles. The Livnis were outsiders, a test of their moral fiber. Throughout the children's education, the Labor Party was dominant. The left-wing Palmach, whose commanders included Yitzhak Rabin and Dayan, held places of honor in accounts of the state's creation. The rightist Irgun, by contrast, was marginalized. Its political successor, the right-wing Herut Party, founded by Menachem Begin and others in 1948 and destined to evolve into Likud, was also sidelined. As an Irgun hero, Herut militant and close friend of Begin, Eitan Livni long stood on Israel's political margins.

"Tzipi got into trouble at school at the age of 12 when a teacher was talking about the glorious role of the Haganah and Palmach, and she stood up and said, 'What about the Irgun and the Stern Group?' " Eli says. "Her teacher contacted my mother and said Tzipi should not argue about facts."

Most Saturdays, the Livnis would go to Begin's tiny Tel Aviv apartment. Tzipi (short for the biblical name Tziporah) recalls conversations centering on "stories from the past, frustration from the present and hopes for the future." The frustration was about exclusion: the way promotions in the army depended on being in the Labor Party and getting ahead meant praising the Labor prime minister, Ben-Gurion, rather than Vladimir Jabotinsky, the spiritual father of Likud and a Livni family hero.

"In the history books, they were not there; they were the enemy in a way, being rightists," she told me. "On May 1, which is Labor Day, everyone was out with their red flags, and I was the one walking with the Israeli flag."

From an early age, in other words, Tzipi Livni lived with the sense of being distinct, the need to be willful if she was to be heard and the example of a hero-father not about to hug her. Mirla Gal, who would reach the top of the Mossad during a 20-year career, met Livni in first grade. She recalls the curiosity of other kids at Livni's membership in the Betar scouts, a group founded by Jabotinsky. Gal, like most Israeli children, was in the mainstream scouts movement, called Tzofim, where the songs and heroes were different.

"We were curious because her world wasn't ours," Gal said over lunch at a beachfront Tel Aviv restaurant. "Even then she was principled. When I was 12, she turned vegetarian and has been ever since." Gal gazed out across the broad beach to a glittering Mediterranean -- hard to believe it was the same tranquil sea a few miles away in seething Gaza -- before adding, "You know, she drives herself very hard and always demands a lot of herself."

"Too much?" I asked.

Gal paused. Prudence gets ingrained during two decades in Israeli intelligence. "What Tzipi asks of herself, she asks of others," she said finally. "She has a very high threshold for trust, but once it's there, you're O.K. I understand because I am the same way. You have to be straight. She was raised in a house where these things were fundamental. She grew up in a very Zionist home. She loves this country so much. That is what drives her."

The driven quality was quickly apparent. Livni was a very good soccer player, a very good basketball player, a tomboy who would go nuts when her brother hung her beloved cat out the window. Her father was rarely around, working nonstop in a glucose business, trying to raise money after work for the widows and war-injured of the Irgun. He was a dreamer -- a quality Eli also sees in his sister, who has hung a photograph of their father, in pensive profile, as the only adornment of her foreign minister's office.

"My father expressed a combination of values," she told me, sitting in that office. "There was the understanding that the whole land of Israel was our heritage, but the other part was the need to respect others, not to control others' lives. And because of the need to make a combination of these values, not to bring them into contradiction, I got to my own conclusion, that there is a need to divide the land." That step was a long time coming. After the 1973 war, as a teenager, she took part in demonstrations against Henry Kissinger's peace plans. Giving up land, any land from Sinai to the Golan Heights, was unacceptable.

In the army, Livni excelled, and at training school she was twice elected most-outstanding officer. Gal took part in the same training; she observed a toughness that impressed everyone. This, combined with impeccable nationalist credentials, made Livni an ideal candidate for the Mossad, which she joined in 1980 at the age of 22. "I brought her to Mossad," Gal says. "She was very good at everything she did and only left by her own choice. She could have had a 20-year career there too. The smartness, the coolness, the speed of analysis, the straightness -- these are prized qualities in Mossad."

Livni will acknowledge only that she served in Paris. Did the Mossad experience influence her? "No, no, no," she said, laughing uneasily. Nothing? Nothing, she insisted.

Her brother once visited her in the French capital and found her enrolled as a student in the Sorbonne, behaving in the strangest ways. "I came all the way from Lagos, where I was working in construction, and stayed for two days, and I think I saw her for one hour," he recalls. "She would get these phone calls and say, I have to go, I have to go, and she'd rush off, and so in the end I said, O.K, I'm out of here."

Livni wanted a more normal life. She left Mossad in 1984 and settled down in Israel. She completed a law degree and married Naftali Shpitzer, who now owns an advertising agency. They took up residence in a small apartment in Tel Aviv, not far from where she grew up. A first son, Omri, now in the army, was born soon after; a second, Yuval, followed. When I saw Livni a second time, in Tel Aviv, she said the seashore was where she felt at home. "But," she added, "my existence here comes out of the connection between me and Temple Mount. This is the umbilical cord. It comes from Jerusalem."

The biblical Jewish heritage again: you cannot take it out of Livni; it is part of her Likud inheritance. As she says, "Likud was my home, almost literally." Her father had an office in the Likud building; her own law office was also there. Just before Begin's rise to power in 1977, ending three decades of Labor hegemony, her father was elected to the Knesset, but politics did not grab Livni until the Oslo peace accords of 1993 cast her into inner turmoil. Once again, as in childhood, she felt alienated.

"Society was split and full of hatred, and I found myself in between two camps," she told me. "One was the historical right of the Jews on the whole land of Israel and keeping the entire land." Livni touched her heart. "This was my history, my heritage. On the other, I saw the left wing thinking we could live in a new Middle East, happily ever after. But I thought they were unrealistic, even if I saw we would have to give up some land to preserve the dream of Israel."

On balance, she could not support Rabin's push for peace. Oslo, even before Rabin's assassination in 1995, was an illusion to her because it involved signing a memorandum while leaving the tough issues -- Jerusalem, land and refugees -- to last. The lawyer in her bridled. "The advice can never be just to sign and leave the most difficult parts to the end," she said.

Livni's first campaign for the Knesset, in 1996, failed narrowly, but she caught the eye of the Likud prime minister, Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu, and served as the head of a privatization program that helped stir Israel's current economic boom. Netanyahu ceded to Sharon as mentor after Livni was elected to the Knesset in 1999. At various ministries -- Regional Cooperation, Agriculture, Housing and Construction, Justice and Immigrant Absorption -- she acquired a broad political education. Her efficiency and energy paid dividends. A vicious clash as justice minister over Supreme Court appointments -- she delayed the naming of anyone after her own choice was resisted and so drove some judges crazy -- amounted to one of few ripples.

"She was a Likud princess, coming from the family she did, and Bibi pushed her, and then Sharon pushed her, and here we are," says Zalman Shoval, a prominent Likud member and former ambassador to the United States. "I don't know whether Sharon ever thought of her as a future prime minister. I doubt it, because he only thought about succeeding himself. But she was good for him."

As the collapse of Oslo and Camp David ended the left's dreams of a warm peace and the second intifada hardened views across the country and 9/11 cemented Israel's antiterror alliance with the United States, Livni came to represent a realist, rightward-shifting center. Disengagement from Gaza became the new face of firmness, a "test case" on the road to possible statehood for the Palestinians. She glided upward, spared most of the rough and tumble of politics.

As a result, doubts have lingered about whether she has what it takes to prevail. "There's nothing Clintonian about her, no familiarity or touch with crowds," says Majalli Whbee, a Druze Knesset member who served as her directorgeneral at the Ministry of Regional Cooperation. "I've talked to her about this, told her not to put herself behind glass, and she agrees." Shuval also wonders if she has the needed "fire in her belly." Still, looking ahead to an election that is most likely to come within a year, given the government's weakness, he acknowledged, "A Kadima Party led by Livni is much more formidable opposition for Likud than one led by Olmert."

That Livni will realize her ambition is possible. She could be chosen to lead Kadima into the next election and triumph. Israeli politics are unpredictable. But her motivational dream of a two-state peace -- one at odds with the Greater Israel map on her father's grave -- still seems far-fetched. Putative Palestine is remote and riven and receding. Whether Palestinians, even the moderates now gathered in an emergency West Bank government, will prove susceptible to her ideas is far from clear.

You don't so much drive into the Palestinian territories these days as sink into them. Everything, except the Jewish settlers' cars on fenced settlers-only highways, slows down. Donkeys, carts and idle people replace Israel's first-world hustle-bustle. The buzz of business gives way to the clunking of hammers. The whole desolate West Bank scene, described recently by the World Bank as "a shattered economic space," is punctuated with shining garrisonlike settlements on hilltops and checkpoints where Palestinians see themselves reflected in the stylish shades of Russian-immigrant Israeli soldiers. If you are looking for a primer on colonialism, this is not a bad place to start.

In Jericho, where thousands of foreign tourists would arrive daily when the "peace of the brave" of Rabin and Yasir Arafat still held, a luxury hotel is almost empty; Palestine-in-embryo is a hard sell for tour operators. On a windblown street stands a rundown building with the Orwellian name of Negotiations Affairs Department. In it sits Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator.

He looks brisk in his yellow tie. When the phone rings, it is the Jordanian foreign minister; they discuss Rice's postponing another trip. Erekat, a senior Fatah member, has an acerbic wit. "I try my best to understand the Israelis' fears and aspirations, but they can get too complicated for me," he said. "Every day there's something going on, like the cats outside my window at night, and I never know if they're making love or fighting or both!"

Erekat laughed. There was desperation in his hilarity, a trace of the hysterical. "But the Palestinians are worse!" he continued. "All you hear is shouting; all you see is chaos and lawlessness, the mess in Gaza." He paused, eyes flitting to the Yahoo e-mail account on his computer screen. "But amidst all this, something else is developing. There are 70-percent-plus of Palestinians who go with the two-state solution, even if nearly 50 percent of Palestinians voted for Hamas. Those same people condemn suicide bombing. Look, negotiations are over. It's time for decisions!"

He has a point. One odd thing about the Middle Eastern impasse is that a clear majority of people on both sides agree more or less on the outcome: two states, Israel and Palestine, divided along the 1967 borders adjusted to conform with agreed territorial swaps; an inventive deal on Jerusalem allowing both sides their measure of the sacred; massive compensation for Palestinian refugees not wishing to return to nascent Palestine; and perhaps a stabilizing role for a third-party force.

Unlike in Ireland, where peace has broken out without agreement on whether Ulster should ultimately be Irish or remain British, the bedrock lineaments of an accord exist. In that sense, Israel-Palestine is easier than Ireland. But the loud, absolutist, ruthless minority always prevails, and Bush's with-us-or-against-us school in Washington does not believe in probing absolutism, as currently embodied by democratically elected Hamas, to find where it might cede to compromise.

Erekat calls himself the "most disadvantaged negotiator since Adam negotiated Eve." He has no army, navy or economy. His society is split. "I don't stand a chance with a U.S. senator," he noted. The impact of Israel-loving evangelicals, the Jewish lobbyists of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the post-9/11 conflation of global and Palestinian terror has made selling Palestine in Washington about as easy as selling the North Korean economic model. That has simplified life for Olmert and Livni.

Any real U.S. pressure on Israelis to reach out to Palestinians has been intermittent at best. This, along with finding viable Palestinian representatives, is a core problem that Tony Blair will confront in his new post as special Middle East envoy for the U.S., Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. The cause of peace has paled. After "Gaza first," at the time of Israel's disengagement in 2005, has come the new cry of "West Bank first." It has the ring of desperation.

"Palestinians are tired of the no-partner-for-talks symphony," Erekat said. "Livni has an interlocutor in me and Abbas. We don't ask why Israelis choose Labor or Kadima; she doesn't need to ask about Hamas. With a decent peace accord, we can go to a referendum. Moderates would win. That would be Hamas's fig leaf. But Livni has to learn that peace and settlements don't go together, walls and peace don't go together and nothing is solved until everything is solved."

Livni says it is the Palestinians, especially those in Hamas, who must do the learning. They need to learn to side with moderates against jihadists. They need to accept the West's basic demands: renunciation of terror, recognition of Israel and respect of previous Palestinian-Israeli accords. They need to learn that pushing for refugees to return to Israel amounts to questioning Israel's existence: a 1948 rather than a 1967 issue.

Arab states, unlike at Camp David in 2000, can help the Palestinians to make these compromises "by saying publicly what they say behind closed doors." They can contribute to a "political horizon" -- a favorite Livni-Rice phrase -- by "opening bureaus of interest in Israel." If they fear a nuclear Iran, as Sunni states from Jordan to the gulf do, they should support Israel as a bulwark of moderation.

Since the collapse of the Palestinian national unity government, Livni says she is more hopeful. She welcomes Blair's arrival. The new emergency government in the West Bank, headed by a Palestinian she admires, Salam Fayyad, "offers a clear distinction between moderates and the extremists of Hamas in Gaza." As a result, she says, "we can negotiate, starting with short-term issues, like freeing up money and easing life for Palestinians in ways that do not affect our security."

At the same time, she continues, "we can start looking at long-term issues, the nature of a future Palestinian state, our common denominators." But can Abbas and Fayyad deliver when Hamas controls Gaza, where 1.5 million Palestinians live? "As usual, we are choosing between bad options," she says. "But we must grab this chance if we don't want to lose the West Bank to Hamas. The Arab League, the world, must work with the moderates and strengthen them right now."

Livni's ideas are clear. But, I asked her in our first meeting, are you good at persuading people? "Eehhh, ummmm, yes, I am good at persuading people," she managed in that quieter voice, before declaring that she does not like to speak about herself and finally mustering, "In convincing the other, I try to start from their point of view, so it's easier for me to find a common denominator."

Their point of view: this is the key. I tried to imagine Livni donning her jeans and sneakers and, instead of hitting a market, taking a look at the scene outside Erekat's place: the dry riverbed with its pile of plastic bottles and discarded tires, and beyond that a brick factory going to seed, and beyond that the sleepy sprawl of Jericho, and beyond that the checkpoints with their daily humiliations, and still farther the snaking path of the wall-cum-fence cutting the beauty of the ancient hills like a blade. What, I wondered, would she feel and how might all this impact her formulas?

Palestinians have failed themselves. Their hand in their misery is decisive. They could have had about half of the land back in 1948. At various points since then, they could have had more than the roughly 22 percent now up for negotiation. But Israelis, justifiably proud of their open society, need to scrutinize the closed autocracy just over the wall. If they will not look at the devastating physical evidence of 40 years of occupation, it is unclear how they can grasp, and so perhaps begin to turn back, the rise of Hamas and Islamic extremism.

"Hamas is ready for a two-state solution," says Barghouti, who served as information minister in the Hamas-Fatah unity government. "They will say so when Israel recognizes Palestinians' rights as equal human beings. But the Palestinian government that Israel wants is a government of collaborators working as subagents for Israeli security. And I can promise you they will never get that."

Sitting in his Bethlehem office, he continued, "No walls are ever permanent, and this one destroys the idea of a two-state solution because it kills the option of a viable Palestinian state. In fact it leads to only one alternative: a binational state in which we are a majority because our population grows at 4.2 percent a year and theirs at 1.7 percent." It won't happen, of course, but the insidious one-state talk is a measure of the conflict's dangerous drift.

In May, the month before the violent Hamas takeover of Gaza from Fatah, Livni gathered international ambassadors to Israel for a briefing at a Tel Aviv hotel. Hamas rockets launched from Gaza were raining down on the Israeli town of Sderot; Livni's message was that the situation had become unbearable. "Enough is enough," she declared, appealing for determined pressure on terrorists "so that the Palestinian people will understand that this is something which is not tolerable."

She also gave expression to a particular Israeli disquiet: "Israelis must know that the international community does understand we are under attack. It is so important to Israel to know that our right to defend ourselves is supported and that you understand that there is suffering here, and not just among Palestinians."

Israel -- built on the Zionist dream of gathering in the Jews and so normalizing their status through the attainment of sovereignty -- was supposed, as Avineri has written, not only to take the Jewish people out of exile but also ensure that exile was "taken out of the Jewish people." After the millennia of marginalization and Auschwitz, it was supposed to create what Ben-Gurion called "a self-sufficient people, master of its own fate," rather than one "hung up in midair." In some measure, it has.

But as Livni's appeal for sympathy suggested, all the great achievements of Israel have not yet ended Jewish precariousness, Jewish annihilation angst -- the inner "exile" of the Jew. Israel remains, in Livni's words, "a nation struggling to realize our basic right to a peaceful coexistence." She told me that "in a Europe without borders, people are questioning what the meaning is of a Jewish state."

Its moral authority compromised by a 40-year occupation, its kibbutznik uniqueness compromised by a globalized consumer culture, its future compromised by the gathering appeal of jihadist dogma, Israel stands at a crossroads. "Something deep has to change," says Dahlia Scheindlin, a pollster. "We can't any longer be the victims rushing to proclaim we're being obliterated and ending up obliterating others." The Diaspora Jew did not go to Zion to build the Jew among nations.

Livni, with her umbilical attachment to the Zionist idea, gets this. She gets the need to hurry to some resolution with the Palestinians in order to stop the erosion of the Israeli raison d'etre. Watching her in that hotel conference room, beneath the attentive gaze of dozens of ambassadors, I had to admire her. Each point was made with punch, not least that Hamas was rearming in Gaza with <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon as a model. "She is very professional, in good standing and taken very seriously," Jakken Biorn Lian, the Norwegian ambassador, told me.

My admiration was redoubled because May had been a bad month for her. Her high-wire act after the Winograd Commission report, telling Olmert he should go without going herself, had brought a wave of media criticism, much of it sexist. She was described as being fit only to run a <u>women</u>'s volunteer group. The onslaught was a fair reflection of the sexism she also encountered within the heavily male cabinet as she tried to resist another bombing raid on Lebanon.

A few days after her not-quite-oust-Olmert push, Yariv Reicher, a consultant, told me: "I'll take her as my lawyer or friend, but to lead here you have to have something hard to describe, something Sharon and Begin and Rabin had, something from the innermost person that gives you hope, an answer to your pain. She needs to speak from her guts."

But it did take guts for Livni to tell her boss he should quit. Rows between Israeli prime ministers and foreign ministers are nothing new: each vies to control the Washington relationship, the one that counts. But Olmert-Livni represents a new level of poison. When Sharon had his crippling stroke last year, both she and Olmert were in position to take over the Kadima leadership. Livni stepped aside -- and was rewarded, she feels, with contempt. Livni's testimony to the Winograd Commission amounts to a portrait of humiliation. Requests for meetings with Olmert at critical moments in the war are refused; she is told to "calm down" when she does see him; she is forced to watch the prime minister chat to the chief of staff as she is talking; and she is long frustrated in her quest for a diplomatic outcome.

"The situation is very sensitive," she told me when I asked about Olmert during our first meeting, adding that in the end "it is not about me and the prime minister but the crisis in our society." What she had said "was exactly what I wanted to say, no regrets. I chose the words. I know that people want blood. That's nice, but. . . . "

Resilience tends to pay in Israeli politics. Netanyahu has bounced back at the head of Likud, and even Ehud Barak, the former prime minister who fell from grace after his peace efforts collapsed, has returned as Labor leader and defense minister. Many saw a rite of passage in Livni's grilling by the media. Her rise had been too smooth; this painful episode would toughen her. "Of course she will come back," says Igal Galai, the friend of Sharon's who watched her emergence. "Right now in Israel, I don't see anyone better."

Doubts persist over the future of Kadima, bereft of its creator, Sharon, and beset by corruption. But Livni says that she still believes in the neophyte party. She did not leave Likud to follow Sharon, she insists. She left "because there is a need to promote a peace process" and Likud is a party "whose ideology starts with the word 'no.' " Israelis are questing for new hope. Whether Netanyahu's Likud or Barak's Labor can provide that is open to question: both speak of yesterday.

Dita Kohl-Roman has watched her friend's evolution closely. Livni used to shut off any conversation about becoming prime minister, but the Lebanon war was a turning point. Such crises pose the question, Can you take this -- do you want the job enough? "And a few months later we sat in a Tel Aviv coffee shop," Kohl-Roman told me, "and she said she was ready to run for prime minister and that she had gone through an inner process and was prepared." She says she believes that to win Livni "must get over her uptightness, go through a process of loosening. And then I hope our society can encompass someone who represents something so good and decent as our leader."

Livni can rise above her inner constraints. In a speech in 2005 that riveted the nation on the 10th anniversary of Rabin's death, she declared: "I did not elect or choose Rabin, but he was elected to be the Israeli prime minister, the prime minister of my country. . . . Law, ladies and gentlemen, is not a technical issue. It is the full expression of a precious system. Specifically, in a time when Israel is fighting for its existence, we cannot allow ourselves to forget the aim, the common denominator and the shared values that are all the meaning of the existence of Israel: a national homeland for the Jewish people, a Jewish and democratic state. These two values are connected to each other. This is the thing that connects us with each other."

Those words in my head, I strolled through Rabin Square, which has all the beauty of Warsaw at the height of Communism. In one corner is a small shrine to Rabin at the spot where he was murdered on Nov. 4, 1995. An inscription says that here Yitzhak Rabin was murdered "in the struggle for peace." Another says, "Peace shall be his legacy."

Alongside these words is a photograph, seemingly from a faraway era, of Rabin shaking Arafat's hand beneath the sunny gaze of President Bill Clinton. I found myself fighting back tears: how much had been lost since then and how close Israelis and Palestinians had come. A peace of the brave it was; it is brave to see beyond grievance, hurt and history to the innocence in every child's eye.

Might Livni and Israel rise to bravery again and might Palestine find a leader to accompany such courage? There are few encouraging signs, but Livni has not given up hope. "Each of us can live with our narrative, so long as we are pragmatic when it comes to the land," she says. "I still believe in our right to the whole land, but felt it was more important to make a compromise. We cannot solve who was right or wrong in 1948 or decide who is more just. The Palestinians can feel justice is on their side, and I can feel it is on my side. What we have to decide about is not history but the future."

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Graphic

Photo: Security, Security: The Kalandia checkpoint between Ramallah, on the West Bank, and Jerusalem.. (Photograph By Taryn Simon For The New York Times)

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Body

JERUSALEM - Facing burgeoning corruption allegations and plummeting popularity, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Wednesday he will resign in September, throwing Israel into political turmoil and heightening doubts about the prospects for peace with the Palestinians and Syria.

Olmert said he would not run in his party's primary election Sept. 17 and would step down afterward to allow his successor to form a government. But because of Israel's political system, he could serve until well into next year.

His decision will end a long public career that has been clouded by allegations of corruption that have battered him in recent months.

Olmert's popularity dropped below 20 percent at one point after his bloody but inconclusive war in Lebanon in 2006.

Political analysts had been predicting his resignation for weeks as details of the latest allegations against him dominated the news.

The most damaging inquiry focuses on Morris Talansky, a 76-year-old American Jewish businessman who testified that he handed envelopes stuffed with tens of thousands of dollars to Olmert before he became prime minister, in part financing a luxurious lifestyle of expensive hotels and fat cigars.

Talansky gave lengthy public testimony for days in a Jerusalem courtroom, defending his allegations under cross-examination by Olmert's attorneys - although Olmert has never been formally charged with a crime.

The latest allegation was that Olmert double- and triple-billed trips abroad to Jewish institutions, pocketing the difference or financing trips for relatives. Other allegations include a shady real estate deal and questionable political appointments - all before he became premier.

Olmert's brief address from his official Jerusalem residence included harsh criticism of the police investigations. He said he was choosing the public good over personal justice. Although he has consistently denied wrongdoing, he had pledged to resign if indicted.

"I was forced to defend myself against relentless attacks from self-appointed 'fighters for justice' who sought to depose me from my position, when the ends sanctified all the means," Olmert said, appearing angry and reading from a text.

He did not answer questions from reporters gathered in his courtyard.

His decision not to run in the Kadima primary sets in motion a process to choose a new prime minister. Main candidates in his party are Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz, a former defense minister and military chief of staff.

Polls show Livni with an advantage in the primary. If she were to replace Olmert, she would be the second *female* prime minister in Israeli history, after Golda Meir.

If Olmert's successor as party leader can form a coalition, Israel could have a new government in October. If not, an election campaign could extend into 2009. Olmert would remain in office until a new premier is chosen, heading a caretaker government after he submits his resignation to President Shimon Peres.

Israel's labyrinthine political system is weighted against a quick internal Kadima resolution to the crisis - with hard-line ex-premier Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud waiting to take advantage. Netanyahu opposes most concessions to the Palestinians and Syrians suggested by Olmert.

Olmert's Kadima Party has only 29 seats in the 120-member parliament, and his successor must patch together a coalition with a majority. Olmert's main partner, Labor, is headed by another ex-premier, Ehud Barak, who would like his old job back and may be more comfortable forcing an election than playing second fiddle to Livni.

Barak, currently Israel's defense minister, supported Olmert's decision and left open the possibility that he might seek to replace him.

"We will assist every opportunity to move forward," Barack said during a visit to the United Nations.

The ultra-Orthodox Shas, another member of Olmert's coalition, traditionally exacts a huge price in budgets for its constituency, as well as pledges of legislation, before it joins a government. Its participation in a new Kadima team is not guaranteed.

Possibly hinting at his expectation of being in power for some time, Olmert pledged to work for peace "as long as I am in my position," and said talks with Palestinians and Syria are "closer than ever" to achieving understandings.

But the internal turmoil could make it difficult for Olmert to close deals with either the Palestinians or Syria, agreements that long have eluded Israeli leaders.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said Olmert's decision would not change much. "It's true that Olmert was enthusiastic about the peace process, and he spoke about this process with great attention, but this process has not achieved any progress or breakthrough," Malki said. He said the Palestinians would deal with any Israeli government.

Olmert spoke as his delegation to indirect talks with Syria returned from a fourth round in Turkey. The two sides set another round for August.

Israeli political analyst Yossi Alpher said Olmert's resignation would at least slow the process. "The Arabs are asking themselves how useful an agreement with Olmert would be, because he is a self-proclaimed lame duck and he will have a hard time to get his deals approved," Alpher said.

While neither the Palestinians nor Syria would be eager to close a deal with a lame-duck leader, the prospect of Netanyahu lurking in the wings could propel them forward despite the fluid political situation.

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said President Bush called Olmert to pledge continued cooperation.

"Relations between the United States and Israel during Prime Minister Olmert's tenure have been exceptionally close and cooperative, and the president has appreciated his friendship, his leadership, and his work for peace," Johndroe said. "We're confident that the close United States-Israel relationship will continue in the future."

Israeli political analyst Dan Margalit, a longtime friend of Olmert who recently fell from his favor, called the decision to step down "a sad end to a miserable career."

Olmert took over as premier after Ariel Sharon suffered a massive stroke in January 2006. Olmert was a relatively obscure politician who had been named vice premier as a move of political expediency when it appeared that Sharon would serve indefinitely.

Instead, Olmert, known as a backslapping political operator with charm and fluent English, suddenly became prime minister.

His first initiative was to go where even the popular Sharon never dared - following up Sharon's unilateral 2005 withdrawal from Gaza with a plan for a similar pullback in the West Bank.

But events soon overtook him. <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas in Lebanon staged a cross-border raid, killing three Israeli soldiers and capturing two. Olmert hastily ordered his military into battle, pledging to smash <u>Hezbollah</u> and bring back the soldiers, but accomplishing neither goal.

Instead, <u>Hezbollah</u> rained nearly 4,000 rockets on Israel, and Israeli forces ran an operation, later roundly criticized, that depended on airstrikes and bombing and only later on sweeps by ground forces.

The war ended with a U.N. Security Council resolution that allowed both sides, equally battered, to declare victory, but an Israeli commission of inquiry excoriated Olmert and his team for the handling of the war.

Olmert's proposed West Bank pullback dropped off the table as his popularity plunged.

Like Sharon, Olmert underwent a political transformation from hawk to moderate, from backing Israeli control of all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with constant settlement expansion to helping Sharon lead Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza.

Olmert, 62, gained governing experience in a decade as mayor of Jerusalem, balancing Jewish and Palestinian interests and wrestling with constant budget shortfalls by raising money abroad.

Bitterly summing up during his 10-minute address Wednesday, Olmert said, "Did I make mistakes over my political career? Without a doubt, yes, and I regret them and I am sorry. But is the real picture that which is presented to the public? Absolutely not."

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The Bismarck Tribune March 7, 2008 Friday

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Section: WIRE

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Byline: ARON HELLER and STEVEN GUTKIN Associated Press Writers

Body

JERUSALEM - A gunman entered the library of a rabbinical seminary and opened fire on a crowded nighttime study session Thursday, killing eight people and wounding nine before he was slain, police and rescue workers said. It was the first major militant attack in Jerusalem in more than four years.

Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip praised the operation in a statement, and thousands of Palestinians took to the streets of Gaza to celebrate.

The day's violence, which also included a deadly ambush of an army patrol near Israel's border with Gaza, was likely to complicate attempts by Egypt to arrange a truce between Israel and Palestinian militants. The U.S. is backing the Egyptian effort.

Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev and moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the shooting. But Regev said the Palestinian government must take steps against the extremists - not just denounce their attacks.

"Tonight's massacre in Jerusalem is a defining moment," he told The Associated Press. "It is clear that those people celebrating this bloodshed have shown themselves to be not only the enemies of Israel but of all of humanity."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who only on Wednesday persuaded Abbas to return to peace talks with Israel, called the attack an "act of terror and depravity."

Israeli defense officials said the attacker came from east Jerusalem, the predominantly Palestinian section of the city. Jerusalem's Palestinians have Israeli ID cards that give them freedom of movement in Israel, unlike Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said the attacker walked through the seminary's main gate and entered the library, where witnesses said some 80 people were gathered. He carried an assault rifle and pistol, and used both weapons in the attack. Rosenfeld said at least six empty bullet clips were found on the floor.

Two hours after the shooting, police found the body of the eighth victim. Rescue workers said nine people were wounded, three seriously.

David Simchon, head of the seminary, said the students had been preparing a celebration for the new month on the Jewish calendar, which includes the holiday of Purim. "We were planning to have a Purim party here tonight and instead we had a massacre." he told Channel 2 TV.

Yehuda Meshi Zahav, head of the Zaka rescue service, entered the library after the attack. "The whole building looked like a slaughterhouse. The floor was covered in blood. The students were in class at the time of the attack," he said. "The floors are littered with holy books covered in blood."

Witnesses described a terrifying scene during the shooting, with students jumping out windows to escape.

One of the students, Yitzhak Dadon, said he shot the attacker twice in the head. "I laid on the roof of the study hall, cocked my gun and waited for him. He came out of the library spraying automatic fire," he said.

Police said an Israeli soldier in the area then shot the man dead. After the shooting, hundreds of seminary students demonstrated outside the building, screaming for revenge and chanting, "Death to Arabs."

The seminary is the Mercaz Harav yeshiva in the Kiryat Moshe quarter at the entrance to Jerusalem, a prestigious center of Jewish studies identified with the leadership of the Jewish settlement movement in the West Bank.

It was founded by the late Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook, the movement's spiritual founder, and serves some 400 high school students and young Israeli soldiers, and many of them carry arms.

"It's very sad tonight in Jerusalem," Mayor Uri Lupolianski told Channel 2 TV. "Many people were killed in the heart of Jerusalem."

Rabbi Shlomo Amar, one of Israel's two chief rabbis, led a prayer session at the seminary after the shooting. Students huddled together, and many sobbed uncontrollably.

In Lebanon, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al-Manar satellite TV station said a previously unknown group called the Martyrs of Imad Mughniyeh and Gaza was responsible for the attack. The claim could not immediately be verified. Mughniyeh, a <u>Hezbollah</u> commander, was killed in a car bomb in Syria last month. <u>Hezbollah</u> has blamed Israel for the assassination.

Hamas stopped just short of claiming responsibility for the Jerusalem shootings. "We bless the operation. It will not be the last," Hamas said in a statement sent to reporters by text message.

At mosques in Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip, many residents performed prayers of thanksgiving - only performed in cases of great victory to thank God.

About 7,000 Gazans marched in the streets of Jebaliya, firing in the air in celebration, and visited homes of those killed and wounded in the last Israeli incursion. In the southern town of Rafah, residents distributed sweets to moving cars, and militants fired mortars in celebration.

Rice said she spoke with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni to express U.S. condolences to the people of Israel and the families of the victims.

"This barbarous act has no place among civilized peoples and shocks the conscience of all peace loving nations. There is no cause that could ever justify this action," she said.

Israel's Foreign Ministry condemned the "abominable" attack and urged the world to rally with it against terrorism. "Israel expects the nations of the world to support it in its war against those who murder students, <u>women</u> and children, by any means and with respect for neither place nor target," it said.

At his West Bank headquarters, Abbas condemned the attack. "The president condemned all attacks that target civilians, whether they are Palestinian or Israeli," a statement said.

Abbas had briefly suspended talks to protest an Israeli offensive in Gaza that killed more than 120 Palestinians.

The attack came on the same day Egyptian officials were trying to mediate a truce between Palestinian militants and Israel. The proposal, backed by the U.S., would stop rocket fire on Israel in exchange for an end to Israeli attacks on militants and the resumption of trade and travel from Gaza.

An Israeli official confirmed that Israel is open to the idea of letting guards from Abbas' moderate Fatah movement oversee Gaza's borders - one of the main tenets of the truce idea. But the Israeli spoke before the shooting, and it was not immediately known whether his country's position would change.

The Egyptian proposal reflected a growing realization that Israel's current policy of blockade and military action has failed to weaken Hamas, which has proven its ability to disrupt a U.S.-sponsored drive to forge an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal by the end of the year.

Still, a deal between Hamas and Israel was far from certain, with Israel fearing the militants will use any lull to rearm and Hamas raising tough conditions, such as a demand for Israel to stop targeting militants in the West Bank as well as Gaza.

Other militant groups are also likely to disrupt any attempts to restore calm. Early Thursday, Palestinian militants set off a bomb on the Gaza border, blowing up an Israeli army jeep and killing a soldier. Late Thursday, Israel said it shot a group of militants trying to plant a bomb in the same area. Palestinian officials said three militants were killed.

The seminary shooting was the first major attack by Palestinian militants in Jerusalem since a suicide bomber killed eight people on Feb. 22, 2004. There have been several attacks since then, and police and the military say they have foiled many other attempts. Militants have also hit other targets in Israel. Thursday's shooting was the deadliest incident in Israel since a suicide bomber killed 11 people in Tel Aviv on April 17, 2006.

Between 2001 and 2004, at the height of Palestinian-Israeli fighting, Jerusalem was a frequent target of Palestinian attacks, including suicide bombings on buses.

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The Jerusalem Post March 7, 2008 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 22

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Byline: RUTHIE BLUM

Highlight: One on One. In an exclusive interview with the 'Post,' renowned Arabist Bernard Lewis likens what he calls the 'monstrous perversion of Islam' to the evils of Nazism and Bolshevism - and says that where it leads will

depend on how the West responds to it

Body

Bernard Lewis is more than slightly amused when asked why many people are surprised to discover that he is a Jew.

"I didn't realize there was any secret about it," he chuckles - something he does often throughout our hour-long interview at his pied-a-terre in Tel Aviv, where he and significant other Buntzie Churchill spend three months of every year. During the other nine, he divides his time between Princeton, New Jersey (where the British-born professor taught from 1974 to 1986) and work-related jaunts to other parts of the globe, including places the 92-year- old historian of the Middle East and Islam would rather not name. Which is no wonder, really, considering the complexity of his relation to the subject on which he has written, lectured and advised on extensively throughout his career, first in his native London and subsequently in the US, where he settled. Indeed, Lewis's passion for medieval Arabic texts and respect for what he calls "one of the great religions" has not prevented him from being a caustic critic of radicalization among modern Muslims. On the contrary, if anything, his erudition has led him to assert unequivocally that the extremists have perverted their own traditions beyond recognition.

Still, says Lewis, "there are hopeful signs" indicating movement toward change. He cites, for example, his Jordanian friends' reaction to watching Israeli television and seeing Arab Knesset members openly attack the government with impunity. They are at once shocked and envious. Freedom tends to have that effect on those who do not enjoy it. Which is why, Lewis explains, "one of the things that even the most oppressive regimes cannot cope with today is modern communications - the Internet and so on. People know things now in a way and to an extent that were inconceivable in earlier times. They know, for example, how bad things are in their societies, because they see the contrast with the West. And there are more and more people interested in creating open societies."

As the prolific author of dozens of books - most recently What Went Wrong?: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East (2002), The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror (2003) and From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East (2004) - Lewis was widely acclaimed in academia. But following the 9/11 attacks, the focus - and prescience - of his life's work (it was actually his use of the phrase "clash of civilizations" in 1957 that was first recorded in print) catapulted him into the laymen's limelight, turning him into a household name. But Lewis doesn't consider himself clairvoyant.

"If you study the history and culture of a region," he says, shrugging. "You get an idea of what's going on."

Growing up in England and serving in the British military, was an issue made of your being Jewish? Was it ever an obstacle?

No. When I joined the British army in 1940, I was interviewed by a sergeant who, while taking down all the relevant particulars, asked, "What is your race?"

Well, nowadays, I would say "white" or "Caucasian," but at the time, that wouldn't have occurred to me. In England, we never spoke about race. I knew what the Germans meant by it, however. So I asked the sergeant whether I should put "Jewish" in that category.

"Nah," he dismissed. "That's your religion, and we've already got that on another line."

At that point, I was completely mystified. "What, then," I asked, "am I supposed to put?"

"As far as the British army is concerned," he replied, "there are four races: English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. You are clearly English."

So, I went to war with documents that said that I was British by nationality, English by race and Jewish by religion.

Is it true that you coined the phrase - and title of Samuel Huntington's book - "clash of civilizations"?

I'm not sure. I did use it at a meeting in Washington in 1957, and it is on record, because the transcript of that meeting was published the following year. At the time, I was not aware of coining a phrase, and it's very likely that I had heard it used somewhere. But apparently, mine is the first usage that was recorded in print. And until it became an issue, I wasn't aware that there was anything extraordinary about it.

Were you being clairvoyant?

I don't think "clairvoyant" is the right word. If you study the history and culture of a region - in the languages of that region - you get an idea of what's going on.

You became a feminist before it was fashionable, certainly for men. How did you come to "get an idea of what's going on" in the realm of **women**'s issues?

That arose from a specific incident that occurred when I was teaching at the University of London, soon after World War II. One of my honors students, a young woman who must have been around 19 or 20, asked for an appointment to talk to me. Prior to our meeting, I looked up her record and saw she was one of our best students. When she arrived at the meeting, she said she had come to inform me that she would be leaving the university, and didn't think it appropriate to disappear without letting me know. Thinking that perhaps this was due to financial concerns, I delicately indicated that if this were the case, there were ways in which we could help her.

"No, no, it's nothing like that," she said, explaining that she was engaged to be married. The man whom she was going to marry had a very poor high-school record, and therefore wasn't able to get a place in any university. So, at 18 or so, he went straight out to get a job. And this young lady said very primly - I remember it vividly, as though it were yesterday - "I don't think it would make for a happy marriage if the wife is educated to a higher degree than the husband."

I was appalled! The question that came into my mind was, "If you happened to fall in love with a man with one eye, would you feel obliged to poke out one of your own?"

I didn't say this, of course. I said what I could, but it had no effect. She disappeared, and I've not heard of her since.

Why were you appalled? Wasn't that common wisdom at the time?

Well, it wasn't as far as I was concerned. Don't forget that at that time, <u>women</u> had already made fairly good progress in Britain. We had **women** professors holding major chairs in illustrious universities. In fact, my own first

published article was thanks to a woman, the famous Eileen Power, a professor of medieval history at Cambridge - and that was in the 1930s.

<u>Women</u> in Britain were far better off than <u>women</u> in the United States in those days. So I hadn't confronted the question in that form until I met that young student who, I thought, was committing intellectual suicide - and for such a reason. That encounter made me much more conscious of the issue than I otherwise would have been.

Then, when I went from England to America [in 1974], I became still more aware of this phenomenon, because the position of <u>women</u> in the American academic community was much worse than that of <u>women</u> in Britain. I found that <u>women</u> students had to confront all kinds of problems in terms of academic advancement. They had to be better than their male counterparts. It gave me a feeling of unease. The effect this had was that I was able to listen more sympathetically to <u>women</u> students - which is probably why I had a vast number of them [he laughs]. The word got around. And I had some really excellent ones, whom I was able afterwards to help get fellowships and jobs and so on.

What is the place of women in the Muslim-Arab world?

Another aspect of the same question is the place of <u>women</u> in society. Still today, the place of <u>women</u> in the Western world is very far from one of equality, and in the past it was even worse. But even at its worst, it was incomparably better than the position of <u>women</u> in the Muslim world.

As far as I know, Christianity is the only religion which totally prohibits polygamy and concubinage. Even Jewish law has been somewhat equivocal on both these subjects at different times and in different places. This has an effect. In Christendom, you have <u>women</u> playing a major role - like Queen Elizabeth of England, Queen Isabella of Spain, Queen Catherine of Russia, Maria Theresa of Austria - something which would have been inconceivable in other societies. It also makes a difference to what we know about rulers. For example, if you look at the history of the Western world, you see we have biographies of major figures. If you look at the Islamic world, on the other hand, although there are many major figures, you will see that there are very few book-length biographies.

Why is that?

Because <u>women</u> can't appear in them. And a biography without mothers or wives or mistresses lacks all context. I mean, if you write the history of Louis XIV of France, the ladies in his life, starting with his mother, are very important. You have this to some extent in the very early Islamic period. We know, for example, something about the wives and mothers of the very earliest caliphs; they were free Arab ladies. But the later ones were slaves in the harem.

What effect has this had on Muslim countries?

It's a great source of weakness. The mid-19th-century Turkish writer Namik Kemal, as far as I know, was the first to raise this point. By that time in history, the Muslims were becoming keenly aware that they were falling behind the previously despised West. And not only were they falling behind, but they were falling increasingly under Western domination, because they were no longer capable of resisting. There was a long argument, which had been going on for more than a century, on why these "infidels" were succeeding, while "we inheritors of the true faith" were failing. They came up with all sorts of answers and tried all kinds of military, economic and political reforms, none of which worked very well. Kemal said that the reason "we have fallen behind is the way we treat our women."

He used two very striking metaphors about <u>women</u> and society. "We treat our <u>women</u>, at best, as jewels or musical instruments," he said, indicating something pretty and entertaining, but with no independent existence. The result, he said, using a second metaphor, is that "compared with the West, our society is like a human body that is paralyzed on one side."

He said that <u>women</u> are not less capable than men, and by depriving ourselves of the services and talents of half the population, we are committing a double error. Not only are we losing the <u>women</u>, but we are subjecting the men, for their first years, to be brought up by ignorant and downtrodden mothers.

A little later, there was an Egyptian - Qasim Amin - who came up with a similar argument. Amin had studied in Paris and acquired a French girlfriend. And he was passionately concerned about the position of <u>women</u> in the Muslim and Arab world. He wrote and argued about it. And there was some response. He was really the one who began the movement. Kemal had been a mere voice in the wilderness.

Aren't such reformers only heard when they move to the West?

Don't forget that most of the Muslim world is under more or less authoritarian regimes, in which one has to be very careful about what one says in public. In the West, one can speak out freely.

What effect can such movements have, then, if they only come from outside?

This is precisely the difficulty. But there are some Muslim countries where there has been real change. This may come as a surprise to you, but among the Muslim countries, Iraq is one of the best in this respect - where <u>women</u> have made the most progress. I'm not talking about rights, which has no meaning in that context. I'm talking about opportunity and access. <u>Women</u> in Iraq, even under the dictatorship, had access to professions like law and medicine. This meant that their children had a better start in life.

Do you make a distinction between Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries in this regard? What is the status of **women** in Iran, for example, which is not an Arab country?

The status of <u>women</u> in Iran had been improving steadily until the revolution, and then it got set back. The Ayatollah Khomeini was very explicit on this. He thought that the emancipation of <u>women</u> was one of the great crimes of the shah and his regime.

As for the distinction between Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries, it varies from country to country.

Are there as many dissidents in the Arab and Muslim world as there were in the Soviet Union?

There is certainly a movement, but it's difficult to answer how many dissidents there are. In the Soviet Union, we know where it led. In the Islamic world, it hasn't led there yet. Still, there are many indications that it is moving in that direction. One of the things that even the most oppressive regimes cannot cope with today is modern communications - the Internet and so on. People know things now in a way and to an extent that were inconceivable in earlier times. They know, for example, how bad things are in their societies, because they see the contrast with the West. And there are more and more people interested in creating open societies. Naturally, this worries the existing rulers. This is where Israel comes in so handy - as an outward-directed grievance, serving as a safety valve for internal dissatisfaction.

One great irony, in terms of attitudes toward the West, is that there are Muslim countries with pro-American regimes and therefore anti-American populations - because they regard America as responsible for supporting and maintaining these oppressive regimes; and countries with anti-American regimes and therefore, for the same reasons, pro-American populations.

Like Iran?

Indeed. I was told by someone still living in Iran that "there is no country in the world where pro-American feeling is stronger, deeper and more widespread than Iran."

Yet, you oppose a military invasion of Iran by the US, on the grounds that it would arouse patriotic sentiment among the Iranian people. Does this not contradict what you are saying here?

Not necessarily. One has to distinguish between nationalism and patriotism.

If you look at the map of the Middle East and North Africa, with very few exceptions, the countries are all modern creations, delineated for the most part by British and French diplomats with pencils and rulers. That's why their frontiers are straight lines.

But Iran is one of the few that could be described as a real nation, with a history going back thousands of years, and with a strong sense of national awareness and identity. Though there's great ethnic diversity in Iran - a significant proportion of the country consists of different ethnic groups speaking different languages - the people are united by a sense of Iranian identity that I think can genuinely be called patriotism, as distinct from nationalism. Now, the Iranian regime at the present time has not enjoyed the support of Iranian patriotism, and I don't think it would be wise for us to give it that support as a free gift. I'm not saying that one must totally exclude the possibility of military action, and I can imagine a situation in which that may be the only option. But if it can be avoided, I think one should aim at change within the country and at helping the very strong and widespread opposition to the regime among Iranians.

Furthermore, what you are beginning to see in the Middle East that wasn't there before are people who actually see some advantage in having dealings with Israel - people who see the existence of a vibrant, noisy, modern democracy in the Middle East as something positive - and even some people who are willing to say so.

I have sat with friends in Jordan watching Israeli television, and they see something they wouldn't see in any Arab country: an Arab member of parliament attacking the government and its policies on national television, and then going home safely. No member of parliament in an Arab country could denounce his government the way Arab members of the Knesset do in Israel.

Do they acknowledge this about Israel?

They're not stupid. They realize the significance of it, and it has an effect. Notice that whenever there's any suggestion of ceding even an Arab-inhabited part of Israel to a Palestinian state, it brings howls of indignation among Israeli Arabs. They know they're much better off under Israeli rule.

Yet they also see the "downside" of Israeli and other Western societies - such as sexual freedom, pornography on the Internet and general decadence. Doesn't this give them the sense that their radical political and religious leaders are right to call for the destruction of the "great Satan" and "small Satan"?

It does. And the leaders use that, of course.

Look, imperialism, sexism and racism are all Western words, not because they're uniquely Western, but because Western societies name them and identify them as evil, in order to eradicate them. In other societies, they are so much an integral part that they don't even have names.

The Arab leaders have adopted those words to use them against the West, though, haven't they?

They have.

So, too, do radical Western intellectuals, who accuse America of being afflicted by these evils, while defending Islamic countries. Why is that?

It's the application of different standards.

Is it a form of multiculturalism?

Yes, and multiculturalism is a superiority complex. Multiculturalists never express this openly, but their attitude is that Arabs are a bunch of hopeless barbarians anyway, so Western moral standards cannot be applied to them.

As a scholar of Islam and Arabia, are you not a multiculturalist yourself? Would you really have the West impose itself on ancient cultures?

There are things you can't impose. Freedom, for example. Or democracy. Democracy is a very strong medicine which has to be administered to the patient in small, gradually increasing doses. Otherwise, you risk killing the patient [he laughs]. In the main, the Muslims have to do it themselves.

Will their doing so require reforming Islam?

Let me tell you something. We use the word "Islam" in too many different senses. When we talk about the Christian world, we say "Christianity," which means a religion, and "Christendom," which means a civilization. For example, nobody could seriously maintain that Hitler and the Nazis came from Christianity, but nobody could deny that they came out of Christendom. Unfortunately, we use the word "Islam" in both senses. We use it to mean a religion, and we use it to mean the civilization which grew up under the aegis of that religion.

What word would you use to make this distinction?

There was a suggestion to call it "Islamdom," but that never caught on. Still, it's a very important distinction to bear in mind.

What we are seeing now in much of the Islamic world could only be described as a monstrous perversion of Islam. The things that are now being done in the name of Islam are totally anti-Islamic. Take suicide, for example. The whole Islamic theology and law is totally opposed to suicide. Even if one has led a totally virtuous life, if he dies by his own hand he forfeits paradise and is condemned to eternal damnation. The eternal punishment for suicide is the endless repetition of the act of suicide. That's what it says in the books. So these people who blow themselves up, according to their own religion - which they don't seem to be well-acquainted with - are condemning themselves to an eternity of exploding bombs.

Another example is jihad. Jihad has a number of meanings. Jihad, in the sense of war, is a religious obligation, which means that it is elaborately regulated. Indeed, the laws relating to jihad are quite specific. One should not attack <u>women</u>, children or the elderly, for instance, unless they attack you first. Weapons of mass destruction are also generally disapproved. This is discussed in medieval texts. For instance, poisoning the water supply of an enemy under siege was disapproved, as was the mistreatment of prisoners. In other words, these people are totally disregarding their own tradition.

Don't all religions become perverted by certain people?

I'm not saying that this kind of perversion is exclusive to Islam - just that it is what we happen to be confronting at the present moment.

Do you see a chance for an Islamic reformation?

I do. There are Muslims who do not go along with this perversion, but they have to be careful.

The time is not ripe, then?

No, the time is not ripe. But there are hopeful signs, as I've said. There is also something quite different going on, for example, that I call the "Sadat Syndrome."

The late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat didn't make peace with Israel because he was suddenly convinced of the case for Zionism. He did it because in the late 1960s and early '70s, Egypt was becoming a Soviet colony. And Soviet domination was more oppressive than British domination had ever been. Sadat was keenly aware of this, which is why he took the very courageous step of ordering the Russians out. And they went. He tried to get American help. What he got instead was the [1977] Vance-Gromyko agreement, effectively handing Egypt back to the Soviets. In desperation, he turned to Israel, on the perfectly correct assumption that on the worst assessment of Israel's intentions, and on the best assessment of Israel's power, Israel was less dangerous than the Soviet Union. That was what led to the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab state - and what led others with similar calculations to follow. What we see now is a similar process in a number of Arab governments. You will have noticed that in 2006, when Israel was fighting *Hizbullah* in Lebanon, the Arab governments did not break out in the usual chorus of indignation. On the contrary, they seemed to be waiting hopefully for Israel to finish the job, and they seemed to be rather disappointed when that didn't happen. I think that now, particularly due to the Iranian radical movement and its increasing Shi'ite network all over the Arab world, many Arab leaders consider it to be much more of a menace than Israel could ever be.

What about the Muslims in the West? In free countries, there are networks spreading radicalism throughout Europe and America, after all.

Yes, if you are a Muslim in America or Europe, of course, you would want to give your children some kind of education in their own religion and culture - the way Jews do. And you look around to see what there is, and you find after-school classes and camps, etc. The difference is that these now are overwhelmingly Wahhabi - Saudifunded - and the version of Islam that they teach is the most fanatical and uncompromising. This has had more of an impact on the immigrant populations in the West than within Muslim countries, because Arab governments have some experience in controlling these things. The European governments have no experience in controlling them, and in any case are far too politically correct and multiculturalist to make the effort.

Is this not cause for despair? On the one hand, there is an attempt to moderate the Arab world, while within free societies radical Islam is allowed to flourish and spread.

This is an ongoing struggle. In the West, there are also many Muslims who take the other view, and who work for democracy, peace and understanding.

Isn't the attempt to eradicate the radical elements while encouraging the moderates like finding a needle in a haystack in a country like the US?

It is difficult, yes.

Then how is it that you seem and speak like an optimist?

I describe my optimism as very cautious and very limited. There is much to worry about, and I don't know where it's going. What I'm trying to say is that the picture is not entirely bad. There are some glimmers of hope within the Muslim and Arab world. A lot will depend on what the Western governments do about it. To quote the wonderful phrase of retired University of Wisconsin professor J.B. Kelly, a great authority on the Arabian Peninsula and a strong critic of the diplomatic approach to Middle Eastern issues, the "diplomacy of the preemptive cringe" is not the way to go.

People of my generation have not forgotten Neville Chamberlain's Munich Agreement with Hitler. That was a perfect example of "preemptive cringe" diplomacy. It was the sort of thing which gave the previously innocent word "appeasement" a bad name.

What we are facing now is the third major threat to the world. The first was Nazism, the second Bolshevism and now this. There are parallels. Germany is a great nation, and German patriotism is a perfectly legitimate expression of the pride and loyalty Germans have for their country. But Nazism was a monstrous perversion of that and a curse to the Germans, as well as a threat to the rest of the world.

The aspiration for social betterment and social justice is very noble. But Bolshevism was a monstrous perversion of that, as well as a curse to Russia and a threat to the rest of the world.

Now we have a third similar situation. Islam is one of the great religions that sponsored one of the greatest civilizations in human history. But it has fallen into the hands of a group of people who are the equivalent of the Nazis and the Bolsheviks. They are a curse to their own people, as well as a threat to the rest of the world.

In all three cases, defeat means liberation.

Graphic

3 photos: Bernard Lewis. 'Democracy is a very strong medicine which has to be administered to the patient in small, gradually increasing doses.' 'One has to distinguish between nationalism and patriotism,' says the 92-year-old historian. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

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Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Reporting was contributed by Taghreed El-Khodary from Gaza and Sabrina Tavernise from Jerusalem.

*

Your unit, on the edges of Jabaliya, has taken mortar fire from the crowded refugee camp nearby. You plot the launch and go to return fire, and perhaps you notice - or perhaps you don't, even though it's on your map - that there is a United Nations school just there, full of internally displaced Gazans. You know that international law allows you to protect your soldiers and return fire, but also demands that you ensure that there is no excessive harm to civilians. Do you remember all that in the panic?

You pick GPS-guided mortars, which are supposed to be accurate and of a specific explosive force, and fire back. In the end, you kill some of the Hamas fighters, but also, the United Nations says, more than 40 civilians, some of them children. Have you committed a war crime?

Whatever the military and political results of Israel's three-week-old war against Hamas in Gaza, Israel is again facing serious accusations and anguished questioning over the legality of its military conduct. As in Israel's 2006 war against <u>Hezbollah</u>, the perception abroad of how Israel fights, and hence of Israelis, may prove to be more lasting than any strategic gains or losses.

The photographs of devastation in crowded Gaza and the large asymmetry in deaths, especially of civilians, have created an uproar in the Arab world and the West reminiscent of 2006.

A plethora of Western foreign ministers, United Nations officials and human rights groups, both Israeli and foreign, have expressed shock and disgust. Human Rights Watch and Israel's B'Tselem have called for investigations into possible war crimes. Such groups also say Hamas is clearly violating the rules of war.

More than 1,100 Palestinians have died in Gaza, the Hamas-run Ministry of Health says, which estimates that 40 percent were <u>women</u> and children under 18. Israel contends that only a quarter of the dead were civilians. Israel, which has suffered 13 dead, 3 of them civilians, has been accused of a disproportionate use of force.

Death tolls in warfare may carry a moral weight, but not a legal one.

Under international law, proportionality is defined as a question of judgment, not of numbers: Is the potential risk to civilians excessive in relationship to the anticipated military advantage? That puts the weight on military advantage, since civilian risk is a given and must only not be "excessive." Even if the target is legitimate, was the right weapon used to try to minimize civilian damage? The key is the expected damage the commander anticipated from the use of a certain weapon, and not what actually happened when it was fired.

The other key legal principle is "discrimination" - has a military struggled hard enough to hit only military targets and combatants, while trying to avoid purely civilian targets and noncombatants?

Deciding requires an investigation into battlefield circumstances that cannot be carried out while the fighting rages, and such judgments are especially difficult in urban guerrilla warfare, when fighters like Hamas live among the civilian population and take shelter there. While Israel is the focus of most criticism, legal experts agree that Hamas, a semi-state, radical Islamic group, is guilty.

Shooting rockets out of Gaza aimed at Israeli cities and civilians is an obvious violation of the principle of discrimination and fits the classic definition of terrorism. Hamas fighters are also putting civilians at undue risk by storing weapons among them, in mosques, schools and, the Israelis say, hospitals, making them potential military targets. While urban and guerrilla warfare is not illegal, by fighting in the midst of civilians, often in civilian clothing, Hamas may also bring unnecessary risk to noncombatants.

But Hamas's violations tend to be treated as a given and criticized as an afterthought, Israeli spokesmen and officials assert. They insist that Israel has never targeted civilians, medical workers or United Nations facilities or personnel.

"The rules of engagement are very clear," said Mark Regev, the spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. "Not to target civilians, not to target UN people, not to target medical staff. All this is very clear in Israeli military doctrine."

Asa Kasher, 69, has a chair in professional ethics at Tel Aviv University and helped write the Israeli military's ethical code. He still teaches in the army's College of Command and General Staff.

He said that he believes the Israeli Army's ethical and legal standards are high and that they are conscientiously taught to its military. But as for what happens on the ground, he said, "I have a general confidence in their attitudes and decency, but who knows?"

A senior lawyer for the United Nations, who was authorized to speak only if he remained anonymous, agreed that the Israeli code was excellent, but said that the military was not doing enough to protect neutrals or to provide safe havens for civilians. "A proper weighing of proportionality on the battlefield is just not happening as it should," the lawyer said.

Israel's chief army legal officer, whose name cannot be published under censorship rules, called the charges "deeply unfair and unjust," spoke of the horrible realities of war, and compared Israel's behavior favorably with that of the U.S. military in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo.

The most intense criticism of Israel's behavior has centered on how it has conducted the war, access of medical personnel to the wounded and access of vital supplies to civilians in Gaza who cannot escape the sealed territory. A few incidents encapsulate the arguments and are fiercely disputed.

Al Fakhura School

One of the touchstones of the war so far has been the fate of Palestinian civilians fleeing the fighting who were lining up to enter a UN school. They were killed by Israeli mortar fire. The Israelis said militants had fired mortars at Israeli soldiers from near the school.

But John Ging, director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, said that 43 people died and that no militants fired from inside the school grounds or were harbored there. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, www.pchrgaza.org, called the shelling of the Fakhura school "another horrible crime" of many committed by the Israeli Army acting "with total disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians."

The Israeli Army first said that it had returned fire at a Hamas mortar team inside the school and killed two fighters. Then the army briefed diplomats to say that the Hamas men were firing next to the school, and that one mortar, equipped with a guidance system, had gone off target. But after completing an initial inquiry, the army now has returned to its first version - Hamas militants fired from inside the school compound. The army has also questioned the figure of 43 dead, saying that it was manipulated by Hamas and is too high, given the explosive power of a mortar.

The director of the Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq, <u>www.alhaq.org</u>, Shawan Jabarin, said in an interview that the Israelis knew that the school was sheltering civilians.

"While they did not attack the school directly, they have to take into account civilians there. Because they didn't take that into account, and they knew the shells would fragment, they didn't take care with civilian lives. They bear the responsibility. Under international law, if you don't take all measures to respect civilians, you bear responsibility."

Witnesses who spoke to The New York Times, including Hanan Abu Khajib, 39, said that Hamas fired from just outside the school compound, probably from a secluded courtyard of a house across the street, 25 meters from the school. Israeli return-fire, some minutes later, landed outside the school, along the southwest wall, killing two Hamas fighters. Nearly all the casualties were in the street outside the compound, with only three people wounded from shrapnel inside the walls.

The United Nations relief agency takes great care not to harbor militants in its buildings to protect civilians and their children, said its spokesman, Christopher Gunness. The agency normally deals with as much as half of Gaza's population of 1.5 million, and it is eager to make clear that its workers are neutral and not to be fired upon.

Gunness and other agency officials say they do not want to get into a fight with Israel over allegations of war crimes, though they stress that they had provided the map coordinates of all agency schools, shelters and buildings to the Israeli military. But they are troubled by regular Israeli allegations, mostly recently by the Foreign Ministry and by Avi Dichter, Israel's minister of public security and former head of the Shin Bet counterterrorism agency, that the agency is "infected" with Hamas partisans and fighters, which may, Gunness said, lead young Israeli soldiers to believe that the agency is a justifiable target.

Israel, too, has tried to avoid a public fight with the agency, sending a senior Defense Ministry official to express his regrets for the death of an agency driver - whose killing the United Nations blames on Israel but Israel denies - and to say that Israel appreciates the work the agency does in Gaza, diplomats and Israeli officials said.

But the legal question of war crimes is different. First, if Hamas fired from inside or even next to the school, knowing that it was an agency building and thus trying to use its neutrality for protection, endangering civilians, then the Hamas fighters are potentially guilty of a crime, said Fred Abrahams, senior researcher for Human Rights Watch. They also, by firing, turned the place from which they fired into a legitimate military target - as mosques became legitimate targets if Hamas stored large caches of rockets and weaponry inside.

Investigators would then have to decide whether Israeli troops fired back with appropriate weapons, and with the appropriate balancing of military benefit for the entire operation against potential civilian harm.

"The important issue is how the Israeli forces balanced the military benefit of hitting the target with the expected collateral damage to civilians," said the Israeli chief legal officer. "As I understand it, I don't think they expected this number of casualties. When you look at mortar fire, you don't expect 43 casualties - if in fact there were 43 casualties. We think a wall collapsed or there was another explosion. It's not clear."

The Israeli mortars had GPS guidance, the army said. But a commander must also consider the probability that one might miss.

"If it is rare to go off-target, then it's not something you have to take into account," the officer said. "But I don't know how much the soldiers were aware of who was inside the building. Maybe they should have known better, but getting information to forces in a firefight on the ground is a problem. But if the firing was from outside and they didn't expect the building to be hit, then that affects the judgment."

There is a "field debriefing" going on, the officer said. But it is not clear when the investigation will be completed or whether it will be made public. Usually field investigations are internal, with only conclusions revealed, unlike criminal investigations and courts-martial.

The Samouni Family

The Israeli ground invasion began Jan. 3 and in the early hours of Jan. 4, the International Committee of the Red Cross began hearing of a large clan, the Samounis, who were wounded and trapped by the fierce fighting around Zeitoun, in eastern Gaza City. The Red Cross began asking the Israeli Army for access to the wounded.

The Samouni clan said that it was moved by Israeli soldiers from house to house for protection. The last house was shelled and about 30 members of the family died, raising the question of whether the Israeli Army targeted a house where it knew refugees were sheltering. The Red Cross was not granted access to the area to reach the Samounis and others until Jan. 7, when four children were found, emaciated, next to their dead mothers.

It was not clear why the house was shelled, but Major Jacob Dallal of the Israeli Army said an investigation showed that no specific buildings had been targeted in Zeitoun that day, and that the army heard only later about the family's plight. He said that an inquiry showed that the army had not moved the Samouni family from house to house, though they may have done so themselves in response to Israeli calls to leave the battlefield.

The Red Cross, which normally works quietly, issued a rare public statement rebuking Israel, charging that the military had failed to meet its obligation under international humanitarian law to care for and evacuate the wounded in a timely way.

Anne-Sophie Bonefeld, a Red Cross spokeswoman, said that "we were really, really shocked by the delay." The aim of going public, she said, "was to try to ensure that we never have such a situation again."

The statement also shocked the Israelis, who work well with the Red Cross and trust it, said Regev, the government spokesman. "We found it very troubling, because we take them very seriously," he said. "It is incumbent on us in difficult situations to help the ICRC to do its job."

Major Peter Lerner, spokesman for the Defense Ministry's coordination office for Gaza, said that access to the battlefield "is severely influenced by the combat going on," adding that "tactical coordination was there from the start and worked in many cases, and sometimes due to intense fighting it didn't work as well."

But Israel then moved to set up an additional special joint-operations room with the main humanitarian agencies near Tel Aviv.

Israel says Hamas has misused ambulances and Red Crescent and UN symbols in the past and is doing so during this conflict, Lerner charged.

"We've had gunmen coming out of ambulances and taking up positions here in the last week - my people saw it," he said. "So of course this makes the troops in the field very wary about any vehicles approaching them, and why coordination has to be from the top to the very bottom, all the way down the line to the unit in the field."

The army's chief lawyer said about the Samounis: "There was at no stage a policy to not take care of the wounded. We're trying to improve coordination. But there can be no high-intensity fighting in such a densely populated place without mistakes. I'm sure there are mistakes."

Since then, the Red Cross has noted improvement, even praising Israel for trying to avoid civilian casualties and provide humanitarian assistance in a briefing for Europeans in Tel Aviv, according to a European diplomat who attended the briefing.

Pierre Wettach, head of the organization in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, said in an interview: "I believe there is a true concern on the part of the IDF to address these things, which are extremely complicated to organize."

Human rights groups are also troubled by Israel's targeting of buildings they believe should be classified as civilian, such as the Parliament, police stations and the presidential palace.

"Some of the targets are government offices of Hamas and the civilian authorities," said Jessica Montell of B'Tselem. Unless used for military purposes, she said, "these are not legitimate targets," and added, "We have suspicions that the IDF does not respect these regulations."

The army attacked "both aspects of Hamas - its resistance or military wing and its dawa, or social wing," a senior intelligence officer said. He argued that Hamas is all of a piece and that in a war its instruments of political and social control were as legitimate a target as its rocket caches.

The Closure

Since June 2007 and the Hamas takeover of Gaza in a brief war with Fatah, both Israel and Egypt have tried to seal the territory. There has been an active smuggling trade through tunnels from Egypt, and a year ago Hamas blew open the Egyptian border, letting Gazans go to Egypt and shop for food, cooking oil, medicines, refrigerators and the like. But Hamas also used the open border to smuggle in large rockets and other weapons, Israeli officials say.

To try to stop rocket-firing from Gaza, Israel halted normal trade with Gaza and kept it on a much-reduced diet for electricity, gasoline, diesel oil, cooking oil, wheat flour and many other items. The idea was a form of economic sanction, Regev said, a reminder that Israel would not let life be normal under Hamas.

But many human rights groups banded together to sue the army in the Supreme Court, alleging violation of international law and "collective punishment of civilians."

The government argued that there was no humanitarian crisis in Gaza, that basic necessities were provided - the United Nations' figure for the minimum calories required daily for subsistence - and the court generally agreed. But the rockets did not stop.

The effective closure continued through the six-month cease-fire with Hamas that ended last month, and the shortage of diesel oil for Gaza's only power generator, for example, meant many hours a day without power.

That put a strain on hospitals and generators and on the water supply and sewage systems, which depend on electric pumps.

Nine Israeli human-rights groups charged that the fighting had caused a crisis in the health and sanitation systems and have petitioned the Supreme Court again.

Now, said Sari Bashi of the human rights group Gisha, with so little electricity, more than 500,000 people have no access to potable water, there is sewage in the streets and hospitals are running on generators, missing spare parts.

Montell of B'Tselem said that even though Israel has withdrawn from Gaza, "there is no legal vacuum" and it retains responsibility for basic needs and trade.

"The argument that it's collective punishment of civilians I find very compelling," she said.

But since the war began, fighting has replaced sanctions as a means of stopping the rockets, Regev said.

Dallal, the army major, said that "people lose sight of the context of a war zone in a densely populated area, where every time a door is pulled open, a soldier wonders who is behind it."

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, <u>www.pchrgaza.org</u>, said the Israeli military has acted with "total disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians, considering them a form of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population."

But Dallal, the army major, said the fundamental question, and not just for Israel, was "how does an army fight a terrorist group?"

"If we," he added, meaning the world, "just see the pictures and don't use our heads, then the terrorists will always win these public opinion battles."

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Length: 3194 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER; Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza, and Sabrina Tavernise

from Jerusalem.

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Your unit, on the edges of the northern Gaza town of Jabaliya, has taken mortar fire from the crowded refugee camp nearby. You prepare to return fire, and perhaps you notice -- or perhaps you don't, even though it's on your map -- that there is a United Nations school just there, full of displaced Gazans. You know that international law allows you to protect your soldiers and return fire, but also demands that you ensure that there is no excessive harm to civilians. Do you remember all that in the chaos?

You pick GPS-guided mortars, which are supposed to be accurate and of a specific explosive force, and fire back. In the end, you kill some Hamas fighters but also, the United Nations says, more than 40 civilians, some of them children.

Have you committed a war crime?

Whatever the military and political results of Israel's 21-day war against Hamas in Gaza, Israel is again facing serious accusations and anguished questioning over the legality of its military conduct. As in Israel's 2006 war against <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon, the popular perception abroad of how Israel fights, and hence of Israelis, may prove to be more lasting than any strategic gains or losses.

The televised images of devastation in the crowded Gaza Strip and the large asymmetry in deaths, especially of civilians, have created an uproar in the Arab world and the West reminiscent of 2006.

A plethora of Western foreign ministers, United Nations officials and human rights groups, both Israeli and foreign, have expressed shock and disgust; some have called for investigations into possible war crimes. Such groups also say Hamas is clearly violating the rules of war.

More than 1,100 Palestinians have died in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run Ministry of Health, which estimates that 40 percent are <u>women</u> and children under 18. Israel estimates that only a quarter of the dead are civilians. Israel, which has suffered 13 dead, 3 of them civilian, is being accused of a disproportionate use of force. Death tolls in warfare may carry a moral weight, but not a legal one.

Question of Proportionality

Under international law, proportionality is defined as a question of judgment, not of numbers: Is the potential risk to civilians excessive in relationship to the anticipated military advantage? That puts the weight on military advantage, since civilian risk is a given and must only not be "excessive." Even if the target is legitimate, was the right weapon used to try to minimize civilian damage? The key is the expected damage the commander anticipated from the use of a certain weapon, and not what actually happened when it was fired.

The other key legal principle is discrimination: has a military struggled hard enough to hit only military targets and combatants, while trying to avoid purely civilian targets and noncombatants?

Deciding requires an investigation into battlefield circumstances that cannot be carried out while the fighting rages, and such judgments are especially difficult in urban guerrilla warfare, when fighters like Hamas live among the civilian population and take shelter there. While Israel is the focus of most criticism, legal experts agree that Hamas, a radical Islamic group classified by the United States and Europe as terrorist, violates international law.

Shooting rockets out of Gaza aimed at Israeli cities and civilians is an obvious violation of the principle of discrimination and fits the classic definition of terrorism. Hamas fighters are also putting civilians at undue risk by storing weapons among them, including in mosques, schools and allegedly hospitals, too, making them potential military targets. While urban and guerrilla warfare is not illegal, by fighting in the midst of civilians, often in civilian clothing, Hamas may also bring risk to noncombatants.

But Hamas's violations tend to be treated as a given and criticized as an afterthought, Israeli spokesmen and officials say. They say that Israel has never sought to hit civilians, medical workers or United Nations facilities or personnel. "The rules of engagement are very clear," said Mark Regev, the government spokesman. "Not to target civilians, not to target U.N. people, not to target medical staff. All this is very clear in Israeli military doctrine."

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The Fakhura School

One of the touchstones of the war so far has been the fate of a group of Palestinian civilians fleeing the fighting who were lining up to enter a United Nations school. They were killed on Jan. 6 in an exchange of mortar fire between Hamas fighters and Israeli troops. The facts are disputed; John Ging, the Gaza director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, said that 43 people died and that no militants fired from inside the school grounds or were harbored there. The Israeli military first said that it had returned fire at a Hamas mortar team inside the school and killed two fighters. Then the army briefed diplomats to say that the Hamas men were firing next to the school, and that one mortar shell, equipped with a guidance system, had gone off target. But after completing its initial inquiry, the army now has returned to its first version -- that Hamas militants fired from inside the school

compound. The army has also questioned the figure of 43 dead, saying that it was manipulated by Hamas and is too high, given the limited explosive power of a mortar shell.

The director of the Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq, Shawan Jabarin, said in an interview that the Israelis knew that the school was sheltering civilians.

"While they did not attack the school directly, they have to take into account civilians there. Because they didn't take that into account, and they knew the shells would fragment, they didn't take care with civilian lives," he said. "They bear the responsibility. Under international law, if you don't take all measures to respect civilians, you bear responsibility."

Witnesses, including Hanan Abu Khajib, 39, said that Hamas fired just outside the school compound, probably from the secluded courtyard of a house across the street, 25 yards from the school. Israeli return fire, some minutes later, also landed outside the school, along the southwest wall, killing two Hamas fighters. Nearly all the casualties were in the street outside the compound, with only three people wounded from shrapnel inside the walls.

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The Samouni clan said it was moved by Israeli soldiers from house to house, but the Israeli military denies it. The last house was shelled, and some 30 members of the extended family died, raising the question of whether the Israeli Army targeted a house where it knew refugees were sheltering. The Red Cross was not granted access to the area to reach the Samounis and others until Jan. 7, when four children were found emaciated, next to their dead mothers.

It was not clear why the house was shelled, but Maj. Jacob Dallal of the Israeli Army said an investigation showed that no specific buildings in Zeitoun had been chosen as targets that day, and that the army only heard later about the family's plight. He said that an inquiry showed that the army had not moved the Samouni family from house to house, though they may have done so themselves in response to Israeli calls to leave the battlefield.

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Targets Challenged

Human rights groups are also troubled by Israel's strikes on buildings they believe should be classified as civilian, like the parliament, police stations and the presidential palace.

"Some of the targets are government offices of Hamas and the civilian authorities," said Jessica Montell of B'Tselem. Unless used for military purposes, she said, "these are not legitimate targets," and added, "we have suspicions that the I.D.F. does not respect these regulations."

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The effective closure continued through a six-month cease-fire with Hamas that ended last month, and the shortage of diesel oil for Gaza's only power generator, for example, meant many hours a day without electricity. That put a strain on hospitals, generators and on the water supply and sewage system, which depend on electric pumps.

Nine Israeli human rights groups charged that the fighting had caused a crisis in the health and sanitation systems and have petitioned the Supreme Court again.

Sari Bashi, of the human rights group Gisha, said the current lack of electricity had limited the access to potable water to more than 500,000 people; she said that there was sewage in the streets and that hospitals were running on generators missing spare parts. Ms. Montell of B'Tselem said that even though Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005, "there is no legal vacuum" and it retains responsibility for basic needs and trade. "The argument that it's collective punishment of civilians I find very compelling," she said.

Replacement for Sanctions

But since the war began, fighting has replaced sanctions as a means for stopping the rockets, Mr. Regev said.

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said that since the war started, "The number of trucks Israel has allowed into Gaza is much higher than during the blockade." But he laughed and said, "Anything seems like a big increase when you compare it to practically nothing." Major Dallal said that "people lose sight of the context of a war zone in a densely populated area, where every time a door is pulled open, a soldier wonders who is behind it."

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Weighing Crimes and Ethics In the Fog of Urban Warfare

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights said the Israeli military had acted with "total disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians."

Major Dallal, however, said the fundamental question, and not just for Israel, was, "How does an army fight a terrorist group?"

"If we," he added, meaning the world, "just see the pictures and don't use our heads, then the terrorists will always win these public opinion battles."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTOS: AFTER THE STRIKE: <u>Women</u> inspected a house damaged Jan. 6 by an Israeli bombing near a United Nations school.

(PHOTOGRAPH BY ABID KATIB/GETTY IMAGES)

SHOW OF GRIEF: Men carried the bodies of three toddlers on Jan. 5. They had been killed in an airstrike, Palestinian medical officials said.

(PHOTOGRAPH BY HATEM MOUSSA/ASSOCIATED PRESS)(pg. A8)

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Scouting the future

The Sunday Times (London)
July 29, 2007

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Section: FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 1

Length: 3020 words **Byline:** Roland White

Body

Hal Iggulden, co-author of The Dangerous Book for Boys, believes the Scouts - 100 years after they were founded - can solve the crisis in 21st century manhood. Roland White reports

In a school playground way back in the 1960s I made the first significant moral choice of my life. My best friend had asked me if I'd come to a meeting of his Cub Scout pack: just to see what it was like. On the other hand, a girl in our class also wanted to know whether I'd be at all interested in seeing her knickers. There was no time to do both. I'm afraid I chose the knickers.

It's not that I was all that interested in knickers at the age of nine. I could just tell that Cubs and Scouts did not somehow fit the freewheeling spirit of the Sixties, or at least the faint whiff of the Sixties that had reached the playground at Wookey Hole school, an establishment so conservative that the head teacher once gave us a day's holiday to mark a local landowner's birthday.

Here's what bothered me. The Cubs and Scouts were obviously run by a strict hierarchy, some of whom -Akela in particular -seemed to have peculiar names.

They seemed a little too keen on uniforms and tradition, and a Scout's idea of a solid night's entertainment was a song that started with the words "ging gang gooli", which baffles me to this very day. As I saw it back then, all this would soon be swept away by the unstoppable tide of progress: woggles, scarves, ging gang gooli and all.

Somehow the Scouts survived my childish disfavour and thrived into the 1980s. But they became distinctly unfashionable in the 1990s, when no parent would dare let children roam free in the woods.

The movement's promise of a rugged outdoor life gradually lost out to the allure of television and computer games. And in the fevered child protection atmosphere that was just getting a grip, it also became more difficult to find adults prepared to work with children and young people.

Yet numbers have risen again over the past two years -there are 446,000 Scouts in the UK -and there is evidence that Scouting's time might once again have arrived.

This weekend 40,000 young people from all over the world have been setting up camp near Chelmsford in Essex for the 21st World Scout Jamboree, which celebrates Scouting's centenary. Dotted with tents, the site looks likes the Glastonbury festival in uniform, although obviously a lot tidier.

Scouting the future

It's the first time the event has been held in Britain since 1957, and it has pitched up here to mark 100 years since Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouts, first took 21 boys on a modest camping trip to Brownsea Island, just off the coast of Dorset.

Scouting has changed a lot over the past 100 years, and for the new modern compassionate multicultural Scouts it's a big week: their best chance in years to attract a lot of new recruits.

One cause for optimism is the popularity of The Dangerous Book for Boys, which has sold nearly 1m copies since it was first published last year with the following message: "In this age of video games and mobile phones, there must still be a place for knots, tree houses and stories of incredible courage."

Baden-Powell would have approved. The book not only teaches the five knots that every boy should know, but gives instructions on building tree houses, assembling a go-kart, and making a bow and arrow.

"I walk my dogs in woods and parks all the time and this summer I have seen more tree camps, more bases, more gangs of little boys hiding away in the woods than I can remember," says Hal Iggulden, co-author with his brother Conn of The Dangerous Book for Boys.

"The feminist onslaught of the past 30 years was good for <u>women</u> but bad for us. I think it had an unseen knock-on effect on men and boys, who became timid. We have a need to do that kind of rough and tumble stuff."

Iggulden, 35, joined the Scouts after getting into a fight with a local Scout troop in Ruislip, northwest London.

"They were doing tree surgery," he recalls. "We buzzed them on our BMXs, and they chased us away. A week later we joined that Scout troop. I think we were jealous.

They were climbing trees, and we couldn't."

With the Scouts he found he could lead the sort of boisterous life that was completely out of the question at school.

"We went off into the countryside. It was probably just outside London but it seemed like the back of nowhere. A farmer turned up on a quad bike and on the back he had two dead hares, which he'd shot. We got to hold and look at the rifle.

"We skinned them, which was the first time I'd ever skinned an animal. We skinned it and we ate it. Just learning those basic things was good.

"We got to push all our testosterone and aggression into other things. The night games were probably the greatest thing. They were very rough.

"We divided into two teams. You had to hide a bright light in the darkness which of course you couldn't -and you had to capture the opposition light. The Scout leaders would be one team, and we would be the other team. I remember charging in and they would just pick us up and throw us into thorn bushes. I was straddled across a bush, screaming. Because to move at all was to make things worse.

"It made me tougher to a large degree. I was very proud when I was in the Scouts because I was the patrol leader. You almost had a gang that you could rely on."

And as for the canard that Scouting attracts paedophiles, Iggulden remembers: "A deacon who was leader for the whole district of London turned out to live three doors down the road from us. It was the first time I got to know an older man on equal terms. I could talk to him in ways I couldn't talk to my parents. He was the most gentle, lovely man you've ever met."

Scouting's emphasis on individual responsibility and the outdoor life makes it perfectly poised to take advantage of a backlash against the nanny state and the culture of overweening health and safety.

Certainly the philosophy of Scouting is being taken seriously at the top of government for the first time in many years. Gordon Brown has apparently been impressed by research that shows how group activities with a clear structure and well-defined aims help children to develop social and emotional skills. They do even better if members wear a uniform, which emphasises order and discipline.

Many well known figures learnt helpful skills with the Scouts. "My Scouting days helped me to cope with adversity," says Sir Richard Branson. "I've been pulled out of the sea six times by helicopters, when my balloons and boats either sank or crashed. I once ended up in the Arctic when it was -60C and had to worry about building an igloo. I suspect that without my Scouting background it would have been that much more difficult to survive these adventures."

Former US president Bill Clinton was a Scout. Survival specialist Ray Mears, it goes without saying, was a Scout. Yet so were Fat Boy Slim and Jason Donovan. Even Russell Grant and Boy George were Scouts.

"I really loved being a Boy Scout," says the Newsnight presenter Jeremy Paxman. "I loved the knots, I loved the camping, I loved making things, I loved getting badges.

"The thing about the Scouts which I thought was so exciting is this opportunity to do things, to make things, to discover things, to explore the natural world and the built world with a sense of social purpose.

"People might say it is a rather old fashioned idiom and I suppose it is old fashioned. That doesn't mean it's not rather attractive and rather worthwhile."

The events of the past few days have also shown Scouts at their best. The 3rd Tewkesbury Scout hut was open at 5.30am at the height of the flooding in Gloucestershire, ready to provide hot drinks, food and shelter.

"Scouts have been out in their communities, helping with tasks such as sandbagging properties and supporting refuge shelters for stranded residents," says a Scout Association spokesman.

It certainly brings a woggle-sized lump to your throat, but will it be enough to overcome Scouting's long-term image problem?

It has always struggled with its image. Like vicars, there is something intrinsically amusing about Scouts. PG Wodehouse certainly thought so. One of the characters in his first Jeeves and Wooster novel, written in 1923, is an overzealous Scout called Edwin who infuriates Bertie Wooster in his drive to do good deeds.

That image certainly put off potential recruits like Ian Hislop, editor of Private Eye. "I never joined the Scouts," said Hislop after making a BBC programme on the origins of Scouting. "I think at that age I was probably too busy making jokes like 'Baden-Powell's scouting for boys, is he? Naughty old Baden-Powell'.

"But I found, rereading Scouting for Boys, it is an extraordinary book. It's very radical and it addresses all sort of issues that we think of as modern: citizenship, what to do with disaffected youth, social responsibility. I talked to some Scouts and felt mildly embarrassed that I'd been snotty about it. There were some quite tough lads saying, 'This is a brilliant thing and it's kept me on the straight and narrow, and we're very grateful about it'."

To be honest, the founder of the Scout movement has not helped its image. He was a free thinker: today we might think him an oddball. He was married late in life, to a much younger woman, and then chose to sleep out in all weathers on his balcony.

Yet back in the early 1900s he was this country's greatest military hero since the Duke of Wellington.

He made his name in the Boer war when he successfully defended against a 217 day siege of the town of Mafeking. His tactics were a masterpiece of original thinking. To deter the Boers from attacking, he ordered his men to pretend to set out barbed wire and to pretend to dig in mines. To add authenticity, he exploded fireworks from time to time.

Short of manpower, he also recruited a cadet force of teenage boys to act as messengers and look-outs: an early version of the Scouts.

Baden-Powell returned to England in triumph. Popular songs were written in his honour and his face peered out from china plates and cigarette cards. More important, a military training manual he had written, Aids to Scouting, was a bestseller.

It was the success of this book that encouraged him to gather 20 boys from different classes and backgrounds on Brownsea Island. He taught them about animal tracks, first aid, knots, and camping skills. In the evenings they gathered around a camp fire to hear Baden-Powell talk about his adventures in the army. The event was a roaring success and was followed shortly after by the publication of the book that so tickled Ian Hislop, Scouting for Boys.

Certainly the book is often comic to the modern reader. Here, for example, is Baden-Powell on the importance of wearing your hat correctly: "It is said that you can tell a man's character from the way he wears his hat. If it is slightly on one side, the wearer is supposed to be good natured. If on the back of his head, he is bad at paying his debts. If worn straight on the top, he is probably honest but very dull."

Early Scouts had a lot to remember. While keeping a look-out for badly worn hats, they were also under instructions to breathe through their noses, not their mouths, to smile at all times, and never to offer tips in return for service.

Yet the central core of Scouting for Boys has a surprisingly modern ring. The importance of equality -especially racial and religious equality -is written into Scout law. According to the fourth rule of Scouting: "A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what country, class or creed the other may belong."

Baden-Powell was particularly hard on snobbery. "A Scout must never be a snob," he wrote. "A snob is one who looks down upon another because he is poorer, or who is poor and resents another man because he is rich. A Scout accepts the other man as he finds him, and makes the best of him."

The environment was also important to early Scouts. "As a Scout, you are the guardian of the woods," says the book. "A Scout never damages a tree by hacking it with his knife or axe. A Scout cuts down a tree for a good reason only. For every tree felled, two should be planted."

The problems Baden-Powell was trying to address have a very contemporary ring: he worried that the young people of his day were a wasted generation. He wanted to unite different classes, and to give young people a purpose.

Unfortunately, his military style did not always find favour. There was a breakaway Scouting movement in the early 1920s led by a charismatic pacifist, John Hargrave, who had risen to become the movement's commissioner for woodcraft and camping and was the Ray Mears of his day.

Hargrave was a former soldier, but he had become a pacifist after his experience of the first world war. His new group, the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift, was created as a peace movement, but later became known as the Green Shirts -uniformed opposition to the fascist Blackshirts.

Some members of Kibbo Kift found Hargrave too authoritarian and formed the Woodcraft Folk in 1924. This was Scouting for socialists, and is still going strong today.

Judging by its website, the Woodcraft Folk is also struggling under something of an image problem. "We do not under normal circumstances hug trees or craft wood," it says.

Despite these early divisions, Scouting grew into a worldwide movement, and remains one.

During the Lebanese civil war of the 1980s, Scouts drove ambulances. They are now helping to rebuild the country after last year's war between *Hezbollah* and Israel.

Scouts in Madagascar are doing their best to raise awareness of Aids, while in the troubled African states of Congo and Rwanda Scouts have been trained as community mediators.

This week's jamboree in Essex is the United Nations general assembly of the Scouting world, where Israeli Scouts set up camp next to Lebanese Scouts, and Greek Cypriots pitch their tents alongside Turkish Cypriots.

Today's campers will spend their time doing the usual Scout things: canoeing, building rafts, climbing, doing good deeds, and being prepared. In keeping with modern times, they will also be learning how to reduce their carbon footprint.

But perhaps the highlight of the 10 days will be a ceremony at sunrise on Wednesday morning at which the campers will renew their Scouting promise. Holding up their hands in the traditional three-fingered salute, they will pipe up together in clear confident voices: "On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to God and the Queen, to help other people and to keep the Scout law."

At least, that's what most of them will say. If they are Muslim or Hindu they can now pledge themselves to Allah and Dharma. Scouts from republics will promise to do their best for their countries. These days you can even be an atheist Scout, promising to live life in "good moral standing".

As you might expect from an organisation whose motto is Be Prepared, the Scouts and Guides have been modernising ruthlessly to be ready for their moment. Just last week the Guides set out the skills needed by a modern young woman.

No longer need they bother with lighting fires, making jam and keeping a scrapbook about a former colony. Instead the modern Brownie (aged 7-10) should be able to name the prime minister, swim 100 metres, care for a pet, and surf the web safely.

Meanwhile, Senior Guides should know how to manage their money, produce a "first-rate" CV, assemble flat-pack furniture, practise safe sex, and perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (very possibly after safe sex). The only hint of the old fashioned Guide movement were the words "first rate".

Life isn't always so serious, though. My neighbour, who is a district commissioner for Explorer Scouts, has been involved in Scouting for the past 43 years. "I dated a Cub mistress for 18 months," he tells me wistfully. "I found the <u>women</u> involved in Cubs and Scouts had a lot more about them than anybody I met in nightclubs."

He will never speak a truer word. As for that stark choice I was forced to make at the age of nine, I should have gone with my friend to the Cubs -because I never saw that girl's knickers. To my secret relief, she decided to show them to somebody else instead.

A MOVEMENT BORN OUT OF BRITISH GRIT AGAINST 'THE CRAFTY AFGHAN'

The very name "scout" carries with it, even among civilians, a romantic idea of a man of exceptional courage and resource, while among soldiers the title is so much sought after that small bodies of mounted Volunteers and companies of Light Infantry skirmishers have within recent years demanded to be called "scouts". A scout is, nevertheless, a special man, selected for his "grit", and trained for one class of work only, and that is reconnaissance. His work is not fighting, but getting information about the country and the enemy.

The British scout has, too, to be good beyond all nationalities in every branch of his art, because he is called upon to act not only against civilised enemies in civilised countries, like France and Germany, but he has to take on the crafty Afghan in the mountains, or the fierce Zulu in the open South African downs, the Burmese in his forests, the Soudanese on the Egyptian desert -all requiring different methods of working, but their efficiency depending in every case on the same factor, the pluck and ability of the scout himself ...

Many people will tell you that pluck is not a thing that can be taught a man; it is either born in him or he has not got it at all. But I think that, like many other things, it is almost always in a man, though it wants developing and bringing out. The pluck required of a scout is of a very high order. A man who takes part in a Balaclava Charge is talked of as a hero, but he goes in with his comrades all around him and officers directing; he cannot well turn back.

How much higher then is the pluck of a single scout who goes on some risky enterprise, alone, on his own account, taking his life in his hands, when it is quite possible for him to turn back without anyone being the wiser.

From Baden-Powell's military manual Aids to Scouting, which inspired him to start the Boy Scouts

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The Jerusalem Post September 5, 2008 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 16

Length: 4229 words **Byline:** Carl Hoffman

Highlight: New Profile believes Israel is an overly militarized society, and will help anyone, no matter what their

reason, to avoid getting drafted. Box at end of text.

Body

You are either going to love this group or hate it, depending on where you stand in Israel's contemporary political spectrum. There is virtually no middle ground. Looking through the lenses of our politically hyper- polarized society, you will either admire this organization as a beacon of light pointing the way toward a better Israel, or abhor it as a dangerous threat to the country's very existence.

The organization is called New Profile - A Movement for the Civil-ization of Israeli Society. Founded as a feminist organization 10 years ago to combat what it sees as the "over-militarization" of Israel, New Profile's primary objectives are to put an end to compulsory military service, provide aid and support to imprisoned refuseniks and conscientious objectors, offer counseling on "all forms of draft resistance and conscientious objection" to high-school graduates prior to their enlistment, advocate resistance to Israel's "occupation" of the West Bank, and conduct educational programs aimed toward raising public awareness of what the group believes is the over-emphasis of military themes in Israeli society and culture. One such program is a portable, traveling exhibit of photographs entitled, "Neither Shall They Study War Anymore."

The group's charter states: "We, a group of feminist <u>women</u> and men, are convinced that we need not live in a soldiers' state. Today, Israel is capable of a determined peace politics. It need not be a militarized society. We are convinced that we ourselves, our children, our partners, need not go on being endlessly mobilized, need not go on living as warriorsÉ We will not go on being mobilized, raising children for mobilization, supporting mobilized partners, brothers, fathers, while those in charge of the country go on deploying the army easily, rather than building other solutions... We oppose the use of military means to enforce Israeli sovereignty beyond the Green Line. We oppose the use of the army, police, security forces in the ongoing oppression and discrimination of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, while demolishing their homes, denying them building and development rights, using violence to disperse their demonstrations."

Unlike most other Israeli non-profit organizations, New Profile receives little of its income from private donations. New Profile's funding comes principally from international Christian organizations like the Quakers (United Kingdom) and Bread for the World (United States). New Profile has worked in tandem with groups like <u>Women</u> in Black, and in conjunction with the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions to rebuild houses of West Bank Palestinians demolished by the IDF.

But it is programs like "Think Before Enlisting" and other draft resistance campaigns that have placed the group at the opposite end of the spectrum from such organizations as Shivyon - The Israeli Forum for the Promotion of an

Equal Share of the [military] Burden, with whom New Profile is often at bitter odds. The latest flashpoint has been the recent imprisonment of Udi Nir, 18, of Herzliya, who was ordered jailed on August 21 for refusing to serve in the IDF. Nir is one of a group of high-school seniors who recently signed a collective declaration of refusal to serve. The group, who call themselves "Shministim Letter 2008 - Refusing the Occupation," have a page on Facebook.com and are featured as heroes of conscience on New Profile's website. Nir and his group, however, provoked the following angry comments from Shivyon spokesperson Zohara Berger-Tzur, published in The Jerusalem Post on August 22: "The situation is absurd. Suddenly everyone has a reason not to serve - the haredim have their reasons why they can't serve, and the pacifists have their reasons why they can't serve. It's demagoguery, that's what it isÉThere are still some who serve with pride, but there are others who simply worry about themselves. If we keep it up, we won't have anything left to defend."

Claiming some 2,000 supporters and run by "40-60" active volunteers, New Profile operates with a "feminist, non-hierarchical" system of organization. Accordingly, the group prides itself in having no leaders, no one occupying any official positions, no fixed division of labor, or even an office. New Profile members run the group from their own homes.

The organization also lacks an official spokesperson, but Dr. Diana Dolev, a founder and prominent figure within the group, agreed to talk with Metro about New Profile's general ideology and activities. Dolev, a fifth-generation Israeli - "Fifth or more, I'm not sure," she says - holds a Ph.D. in the History and Theory of Architecture and teaches at the Holon Institute of Technology. She is involved primarily with New Profile's outreach educational programs.

If I understand you correctly, New Profile's basic position is that Israel is an "over-militarized society." I have lived in some highly militarized countries, like Indonesia under General Suharto, when the army ran the country and anyone of any importance was an actively- serving army general. Few people look at Israel and see anything like that here.

If people don't see it, it's because they don't want to see it. There's this trick here of melting down the border between what is civil and what is military. So you don't see soldiers marching in good form. We don't have all that. We ridicule this kind of militarism. Our soldiers aren't tidy soldiers. They're very schlumperich [unkempt], which creates this image of a soldier that is half civilian. One of the hevre. Not a "soldierly" soldier. But I think this is a sort of cover. I think that actually, in a more concealed way, this image contributes to militaristic ideas filtering into civil society without our noticing it.

Such as?

Such as lots of advertising, based on [images] of a soldier and his mother, or a soldier and his girlfriend. We show examples of this in our exhibitions. Or, for instance, show business people posing on the covers of magazines, saluting. They're civilians - why should they be saluting? What's the idea there? And you can see today with all the political crises [about] how Tzipi Livni is being attacked as being unsuitable to be prime minister because she hasn't got experience leading the nation into war. People don't even question this idea. If you're not a general or an exgeneral, you're not suitable to become prime minister.

But isn't the military's cultural importance due to the obvious fact that we're in a bad neighborhood, with dangerous enemies, under threat?

That's a very common idea. But we quote a book by Motti Golani, a professor at the University of Haifa, called Wars Do Not Just Happen. Although he comes from a very militaristic family, he has analyzed all our wars and says it's not true that the wars were all caused by our neighbors. We [took] an active part. We don't have to automatically believe everything we are told by our leaders. We have to look into things a bit deeper, and we will find out that, for different reasons, our leaders wanted the war, or they were never able to think about conflicts other than war and the force of our army.

Are you saying, then, that some of our wars were unnecessary?

The last wars, of course. This is without any question. All of the wars against Lebanon should have been avoided. But we can go back even to other wars - wars that there's a positive consensus about, and Dr. Golani says that

they could have been avoided, as well. But from reading the newspapers, including yours I suppose, you can see that the discourse is always in militaristic terms. We think that if we change people's mind-sets, the discourse will change also. And then people will be searching for other solutions.

Do you really believe that whether we have war or peace is up to us?

People keep saying, "Well, it's not up to us. We have bad neighbors." But we have peace with Egypt, we have peace with Jordan. Lebanon never started a war against Israel, and Syria is [doing] its best not to attack Israel. So what are we talking about? Iran? [Laughs].

In your opinion, what is our best alternative?

The alternative is diplomacy, of course, but the problem is very complicated because the militarism here is so deeply rooted. It would take a new way of looking at our neighbors. If one of our leaders failed to speak of Arab leaders in a degrading way, he would not be considered the kind of strong leader that we want for Israel. People would think that he was weak. It's all about being strong. But in my opinion it's not about showing your muscle. Being strong is also being polite, compassionate, talking about another leader as your equal or someone you can learn from and have a dialogue with. Israeli leaders have not done that at all.

Never? Not at all?

Not at all.

Why do you think our leaders have not tried your approach?

I think it's a combination... of always seeing ourselves as the victim, thinking that the whole world is against us and that we are under constant threats to our existence. All that has been overused and has been one part of creating our militarization.

But what about the threats to our existence? What about *Hizbullah*, or Hamas?

Well, Hamas is a difficult question, because we've probably gone too far in undermining Palestinian society in the territories. Israel created Hamas. We created Hamas because of this idea that if we get the Palestinians to fight each other, we win. If they destroy each other, we win. This strategy has failed completely. It failed in Lebanon, and we've paid a high cost for this. Same with the Palestinians. I think Israel should simply leave them alone. We should leave them alone, pay them compensation for what we owe them for so many years of occupation, and let them go on with their lives.

We can leave the Palestinians alone, but will the Palestinians leave us alone?

It's worth trying. Up to now, the military force that we've been using against them hasn't brought us any peace and quiet, any end of danger. So maybe we should try. Maybe they will be so busy organizing their lives, maybe they'll be so overwhelmed [by] children going freely to school, being able to do business, to travel around freely without the humiliation and suffering of going through checkpoints - who knows?

So, in your opinion, how large an army does Israel actually need?

I don't often quote Ehud Barak, but I will now. He has said that Israel needs a small and smart army. When we call ourselves "New Profile for Israel" we are referring both to the centrality of the military induction "profile" that every kid gets when he goes into the army, and to changing Israel's civil profile. We think that this has to change so that the military profile will not be central at all, but will instead be marginalized in Israeli society, in our civil profile.

If military service is no longer compulsory for all young Israelis, is it not possible that only the poor and disadvantaged will actually serve, while children from better-off families will find ways of avoiding military service?

First of all, it's only a myth that everyone goes into the army. This is an idea that has been created to [make] people feel that this is something very "Israeli," and unless you go into the army you're not a true Israeli, and all that crap. The truth is that 56% of those eligible do not serve in the army. This includes the haredim and the Arabs. It includes people who started to serve, but whom the army decided it didn't want - perhaps because they didn't contribute anything, or were beyond the army's manpower needs. And also people the army has deemed "unfit." Also people in national service. Secondly, the army is one of the tools for creating a class system in Israel. In addition to the physical "profile" kids receive when they're going into the army, they receive another classification based on family status - income, education and so on. Kids from elite families - if they want to go into the army - go to elite units. They become things like pilots very easily. This is very prestigious, both in the army and afterwards... On the other hand, Ethiopians for instance, go to the checkpoints. The myth is that the army is all colors and backgrounds working together, but it's not true. Especially regarding <u>women</u>. The army is one of the major tools in Israel for marginalizing <u>women</u>, putting them in danger of being harassed and sexually abused. The men then take this attitude toward <u>women</u> into civil life. So the army is a very bad place for <u>women</u>, and <u>women</u> are 51% of Israeli society.

Women continue to compose the majority of New Profile's support base. Is that by design?

No, it just so happens. We are a feminist organization, but we have male members, and youth groups of boys and girls. Maybe the fact that we're feminist brings in more <u>women</u>, but from my long experience in peace activism in Israel, it's mostly <u>women</u> who are active in peace organizations.

What is New Profile's attitude toward Israel's non- military compulsory national service?

We don't have a unanimous opinion about this, or anything we could declare as New Profile's "position" on the subject. It's a complex issue for us. Some of our members did do civil service. Some did service with political organizations like Physicians for Human Rights, and that seemed right to them. On the whole, we think people ought to be educated to contribute to society for many years - not just one or two or three. Also, we feel that [in the case of] national service, the state interferes with people's lives. And in a state where people have so much difficulty finding jobs, it's not right for the state to fund "volunteer" work that isn't volunteer at all by young people just out of school taking the place of someone who really needs the job. And also, we feel that [national service also] becomes a tool to separate people into first- and second-class citizens, depending on whether they did their service or not. We resent that.

Are there any circumstances under which you think that war is justified or necessary?

Oh, yes. I'm not a pacifist. A lot of people in New Profile are not. I guess there are such circumstances. I recall meeting a delegate to an international conference of <u>Women</u> in Black. I think she came from the United States. We told her how we use a tank as a visual image of war to show how militarized we are. But she said, "You know, my image of a tank is one of rescue." She was a child in Germany during the Second World War, and they were hiding in a cellar. They hid until they realized they were surrounded by US army tanks. So for her, the tank was an image of rescue, of life. So yes, I'm sure there are - there must be - circumstances in which war is justified. But what we're trying to say is that our leaders do not explore all of the other possibilities before deciding to go to war.

What kind of Israel are you trying to create?

Paradise. A country with friendlier relations with its neighbors. A more just state for all its citizens. A genuinely pluralistic society. A country that knows you don't have to be strong all the time, where real "strength" is about defending people who have been weakened. We are a very violent societyÉ New Profile is about looking at society critically - not through nationalist lenses, but about ourselves as people in a highly militarized society - to find out how our mind-sets have been influenced. We want to open people's eyes.

ALTHOUGH A lot of New Profile's energy and resources are directed toward "educational programs" like training workshops and travelling exhibitions, the group's major focus is helping young people avoid service in the IDF. New Profile goes about this in two ways: by organizing youth groups where options and alternatives to army service are

presented and discussed, and by maintaining a network of counselors who assist individual boys and girls who have decided not to serve.

Lotahn Raz, 27, is a co-founder and co-coordinator of New Profile's youth groups program. Despite having inherited a flawless American drawl from his parents, Raz was born and has spent all his life here in Israel. He was himself a conscientious objector and was imprisoned for two months in 1999 for refusing to enter the army.

What happens in a New Profile youth group?

The goal is to create a space for young people to openly think, talk and discuss issues related to military service. It's about creating a space to ask questions and think thoughts that don't have space to be thought or discussed otherwise. Our principle is that in Israeli society there is no space for young people to talk about military service. It's considered to be a non-question. But in our perspective, it's a political issue, a political question. And the fact that military service is shoved down people's throats without having the space to ask questions is undemocratic and very problematic. Space needs to be made for people to ask questions and think. And that's the idea. It's not our perspective to say what people should do; it's just to create the space to talk about things.

Do these people come to you or do you go to them?

Mostly people come to us. We get a a lot of e-mail from young people from around the country, asking for a place to talk. When we open a youth group, we go around and look for young people who we know are interested in these questions. Like any other youth group would do, we look for places where people would be interested in what we have to offer. At this point, we have groups in Jerusalem, Beersheba, Haifa, Tel AvivÉ we're opening one in the Sharon, we had one last year in Rehovot and another in Pardess Hanna. And we're looking to open one in the Galilee.

Do you provide draft counseling at these youth group meetings?

No. That's done within our counseling network. Our youth groups are there to provide young people with space to think, ask questions, and make decisions. The purpose of the counseling networks is to follow individuals through the process of draft resistance. We give people information that does not exist elsewhere - what are the different possibilities, how does one go about refusing?

So what are the different possibilities?

The main one, the political one, is to go the conscientious objector route, to go before the government's conscientious objectors committee and end up being imprisoned like me, and then eventually receiving 'unfit for military service' status. And then there are the exemptions for medical reasons, mental health reasons, or other issues.

How far does New Profile actually go in counseling people about, say, medical exemptions? Would you advise a sane person to act 'crazy' or a healthy person to pretend to be sick?

We would never tell anybody to lie. That would be immoral and wrong. What we do is give information about how the system works - about how a psychiatric release from the army is decided upon, for example.

So are you saying that you inform people about how the army decides that someone is psychologically unfit for service and then tell them to take it from there?

Well, yeah. Our job is to give people information and help them through the process. People need to do the work and basically it's their decision. But remember, the ones who decide to release people from the military are the military itself. New Profile has no impact on that. It's the military's decision to decide who they want and who they don't want.

Less nuanced and far more direct are the responses of Sergei Sandler, self-described "activist" and very active member of New Profile's counseling network. Now 33, Sandler was brought to Israel by his family at age six from

the former Soviet Union. Also a conscientious objector, Sandler was imprisoned for brief periods in 1994-1995 for refusing to serve in the IDF.

Do you help everyone who wants to avoid army service, regardless of their reasons for not wanting to serve?

Basically, yes.

Does it bother you that perhaps not everyone you help is a genuine conscientious objector, and that people with less "noble" motives might simply be using you to avoid service?

You're defining "conscientious objector" in the narrow sense if you take the nature of Israeli society into account. You're not living in a society where someone can freely decide whether or not he or she wants to go into the army. You're living in a society where there is tremendous social pressure on young people to enlist. And if you get someone who actually gets to a point where they resist that pressure, to the point where they say they won't enlist, that's not just any odd decision that someone is making. We speak with people and we can tell that people who have been deliberating this know it's a very big decision. And while not all people say that their reasons are ideological, all know that they're going to disappoint their families and have all sorts of other problems. Some people don't cite any reasons in particular - they just show that they are rejecting the overall brainwashing. In any case, it's not a simple process. So in that sense, you can say that anyone deciding not to enlist is a conscientious objector, in every sense of the word.

In addition to conscientious objector status, there are also exemptions from service for medical and mental health problems. Do you simply make people aware of how these exemptions are granted or take it a step further and advise people to pretend?

We don't advise people to pretend. We really don't need to. Pyschiatric exemptions are the major gateway out of the military. If someone is serious and persistent about pursuing a psychiatric exemption - despite all of the stigma against people with mental conditions, and despite the stories the military itself is spreading around about those exemptions, which are meant to scare people off - if in spite of all this someone is really serious about getting this kind of exemption, the military reckons that this person really doesn't want to serve in the military, and the military doesn't want that person to serve. It's sort of an informal deal that the military has, actually. Attacking New Profile on this point is utter hypocrisy.

But your critics charge that you are getting people to model their behavior after the military's medical and psychiatric exemption criteria - in effect, to pretend.

I'll tell you something. It's true that we will counsel anyone who decides not to serve in the military. And that's because they have the right not to serve in the military. That's a basic right - the right to refuse to kill is a basic human right. And we don't really feel that we have to dig into people's motives. But apart from that, many people who appeal to us are soldiers already. That's a very important group of people who actually ask for our help. And many, many of those soldiers are in a serious state of trauma or depression. We counsel soldiers who, if the system had been working well, would have been exempted long ago. But the system doesn't work well. The military health care system and mental health care system are there to serve the interests of the military, not the interests of the person. When you're there as a patient, you're not treated as someone who needs help, but as someone who is there to get something. Part of our work - and in many cases it has been part of our work - is to speak to people who are obviously and evidently in a state of trauma and in a state of depression, and who obviously and evidently should have been out of the military by the military's own criteria. We try to explain to them how to make those things evident enough to the people around them - in the military at large, and to military healthcare professionals.

One final question. The State of Israel indisputably has real enemies -

Yes, and it's been working very hard to make them.

Don't we need a strong, standing military force to protect us?

Well, you're actually talking about something that goes beyond the common line in New Profile. New Profile is composed of different people thinking different things, united in a common belief that the military is bloated and that the country is over-militarized. But right now, you happen to be talking to a pacifist. And as a pacifist I would say quite clearly that nobody needs an army. And I don't see how the Israeli military offers me protection. I personally am not willing to differentiate the Israeli military from that of Syria or Iran. They're all on the same team - the team that kills people - playing over the heads of the civilians. And no one is offering us protection.

(BOX) IDF: Soldiers are role models

In a written response to Metro's inquiry about New Profile, The IDF refused to directly acknowledge the group or its activities:

"Even after 60 years of independence, Israeli society is forced to defend itself militarily and politically against terror organizations that have not accepted our existence in this region.

The present generation, like those before it, must bear its part of the security burden, in accordance with the Military Service Law.

IDF service is compulsory, but is also a great privilege. Every young man and woman can take part in protecting their family, their friends, and the country.

Everyone who serves in the IDF is a role model, and deserves to be honored and appreciated.

The Israeli society as a whole has made IDF service its goal - the government, the school system, and the young people themselves."

Graphic

5 photos: 'IT'S TRUE that we will counsel anyone who decides not to serve in the military,' says New Profile activist Sergei Sandler. 'And that's because they have the right not to serve in the military. That's a basic right - the right to refuse to kill is a basic human right.' A NEW recruit bids farewell to her mother before getting on the bus that will take her to her first day in the army. Dr. Dolev: 'I don't often quote Ehud Barak, but I will now. He has said that Israel needs a small and smart army.' According to Lotahn Raz, 'The fact that military service is shoved down people's throats without having the space to ask questions is undemocratic and very problematic. Space needs to be made for people to ask questions and think.' (Credit: Illustrative photo; IDF spokesperson's office; Courtesy)

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The Bismarck Tribune
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Section: WIRE

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Byline: SCHEHEREZADE FARAMARZI Associated Press Writer

Body

TRIPOLI, Lebanon - People flooded out of a besieged Palestinian refugee camp Tuesday night, waving white flags and telling of bodies lying in the streets and inside wrecked houses after three days of fighting between Lebanese troops and Islamic militants.

Earlier in the day, a relief convoy came under fire when a cease-fire abruptly shattered as U.N. workers tried to deliver food and water to residents. A U.N. official said some who approached the convoy seeking supplies were wounded or killed, but he did not have exact figures.

The nighttime lull that allowed the escape did not appear to be part of an organized truce - and there was no sign the battle was over. The government of Prime Minister Fuad Saniora said it was determined to uproot Fatah Islam, which took up residence in the camp late last year.

There was no immediate indication of whether the flight of civilians would give the government a freer hand in bombarding militants holed up in the camp. The army has said its troops were trying to target only militant positions.

Twenty-nine soldiers and at least 20 militants had been killed since the battle began Sunday in the heaviest internal fighting in Lebanon since the 1975-90 civil war. But the number of civilian casualties remained unknown because relief workers were not able to get inside the camp.

When fighting quieted after sunset, thousands of people took the chance to escape. They streamed out of Nahr el-Bared's western gate on foot and in cars, pickups and minivans jammed with men, <u>women</u> and children. Many waved white towels or white plastic bags from the windows as they passed Lebanese soldiers encircling the camp.

"The smell of corpses was everywhere. There was no food, water or electricity and they were shooting at us," Dania Mahmoud Kassem, a 21-year-old university student, said of the past three days in the camp, which is on the outskirts of the northern port city of Tripoli.

Another refugee, Ibrahim Issa Dawoud, said he, his wife and six children - ages 3 to 13 - had taken refuge in a mosque for three days, living off potato chips while Lebanese army tanks and artillery fired at militants armed with mortars and automatic weapons.

"Even the cemetery was bombarded and the skeletons were uprooted," the 42-year-old said as the left with his family. "We thought this was our last chance because they will bulldoze the camp."

The camp is home to some 31,000 Palestinians who live crowded along narrow streets. AP Television News video taken in the camp showed streets littered with damaged vehicles, shards of glass and rubble from wrecked buildings, some in flames from shelling.

Despite broadcast images of Arab troops battering a Palestinian community, Lebanon's government has received widespread support at home and from Arab countries, some of which have even provided weapons to help the siege.

The backing underlined Arab leaders' desire to break what they see as a nascent terror group. Fatah Islam's leader, Palestinian Shaker al-Absi, has been linked to the former head of al-Qaida in Iraq and is believed to have recruited about 100 fighters, including militants from Saudi Arabia, Yemen and other Arab countries.

Angry Palestinians elsewhere in Lebanon burned tires to protest the military assault, raising the threat of wider unrest in the country's volatile refugee camps. Some 215,000 people live in the 11 camps, which are rife with armed groups and Islamic extremists.

Reports from fleeing residents raised fears of a high civilian toll.

"There's been a massacre. I witnessed it. In one room alone there are 10 dead. Six shells fell on us, the bodies were cut to pieces," one man shouted angrily as he and a few others managed to get out of the camp during the brief afternoon truce. He continued his flight before identifying himself or giving further details.

During an early afternoon truce, the U.N. relief agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, tried to get a convoy of water and other supplies into the camp. But as workers distributed supplies, shooting broke out. It wasn't clear who was firing.

"We were hit, initially by light arms fire, then by heavier fire," Richard Cook, the UNWRA chief in Lebanon, told APTN. "We've not had any staff hurt, but there were injuries and possibly deaths among those coming to collect the food."

Cook did not have exact numbers. Another UNWRA official said 15 civilians were killed or wounded but did not give a breakdown. The official, who witnessed the incident, spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to journalists.

During the day's fighting, Lebanese troops tried to capture militant positions just outside the camp, which they are not allowed to enter under a 1969 agreement with Palestinian groups.

Fatah Islam spokesman Abu Salim Taha told The Associated Press the group fought off the soldiers. But APTN video showed at least one captured militant position, where a dead fighter lay in the debris.

Lebanese troops also tried to flush out Fatah Islam fighters in nearby Tripoli.

Soldiers raided an apartment building on Mitein Street, blasting a flat with grenades, gunfire and tear gas. They found no one inside, but a few hours later they pursued a militant in the building who blew himself up rather than surrender. No soldiers were injured by the blast.

The military's attack at the camp also has raised fears the fighting could destabilize Lebanon's uneasy balance among its many religious sects and factions. Saniora's Western-backed government already faces a domestic political crisis, with the Iranian- and Syrian-backed <u>Hezbollah</u> militant group campaigning for its removal.

But so far, Saniora's rivals have supported the assault. The Shiite Muslims of <u>Hezbollah</u> deeply opposes Sunni militant groups like Fatah Islam, and the movement issued a statement stressing the military's duty to safeguard the country.

Saniora's top rival, pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud, also said Tuesday that Fatah Islam must be neutralized. He called on other Palestinian factions to hand over Fatah Islam militants.

The Bush administration repeated its support for Saniora, a close U.S. ally. It also hinted that it suspected a Syrian role in the turmoil.

White House press secretary Tony Snow said the militants wanted to distract international attention from an effort at the United Nations to establish a special tribunal to try suspects in the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

He said the U.S. "will not tolerate attempts by Syria, terrorist groups or any others to delay or derail Lebanon's efforts to solidify its sovereignty or seek justice in the Hariri case."

Lebanese security officials accuse Syria of using Fatah Islam to destabilize Lebanon, a charge Damascus denies. Syria controlled Lebanon for decades until growing street demonstrations by Lebanese and international pressure forced it to withdraw its troops after Hariri's assassination.

The refugees fleeing Nahr el-Bared moved into the nearby Beddawi refugee camp. UNWRA officials registered them and distributed mattresses, food and water. Hundreds bunked at a school, while others moved in with relatives at the camp, already home to 15,000 people.

Kassem, the university student, was furious over the assault, saying Fatah Islam was just an excuse for the Lebanese army to strike. "We were not afraid of death. But to die by the weapons of Arabs, this is what makes us angry," she said.

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Section: NEWS

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Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK and KARIN LAUB Associated Press Writers

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israel widened its deadliest-ever air offensive against Gaza's Hamas rulers Sunday, pounding smuggling tunnels and a central prison, sending more tanks and artillery toward the Gaza border and approving a reserves callup for a possible ground invasion.

Israeli leaders said they would press ahead with the Gaza campaign, despite enraged protests across the Arab world and Syria's decision to break off indirect peace talks with the Jewish state. Israel's foreign minister said the goal was to halt Gaza rocket fire on Israel for good, but not to reoccupy the territory.

With the two-day death toll nearing 300 Sunday, crowds of Gazans breached the border wall with Egypt to escape the chaos. Egyptian forces, some firing in the air, tried to push them back into Gaza and an official said one border guard was killed.

Hamas, in turn, fired rockets deeper than ever into Israel, near the Israeli port city of Ashdod.

Yet Hamas leaders were forced into hiding, most of the dead were from the Hamas security forces, and Israel's military intelligence chief said Hamas' ability to fire rockets had been reduced by 50 percent. Indeed, Hamas rockets fire dropped off sharply, from more than 130 on Saturday to just over 20 on Sunday. Still, Hamas continues to command some 20,000 fighters.

Israel's intense bombings - some 300 air strikes since midday Saturday - wreaked unprecedented destruction in Gaza, reducing entire buildings to rubble.

After nightfall, Israeli aircraft attacked a building in the Jebaliya refugee camp next to Gaza City, killing a 14-monthold baby, a man and two <u>women</u>, Gaza Health Ministry official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said. In the southern town of Rafah, Palestinian residents said a toddler and his two teenage brothers were killed in an airstrike aimed at a Hamas commander.

Israeli aircraft also bombed the Islamic University and government compound in Gaza City, centers of Hamas power, and the house next to the residence of Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh in a Gaza City refugee camp. Haniyeh, in hiding, was not home.

Shlomo Brom, a former senior Israeli military official, said it was the deadliest force ever used in decades of Israeli-Palestinian fighting. "Since Hamas took over Gaza (in June 2007), it has become a war between two states, and in war between states, more force is used," he said.

European leaders called on both Israel and Hamas to end the bloodshed.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy spoke Sunday with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who leads a rival government to Hamas in the West Bank, and condemned "the provocations that led to this situation as well as the disproportionate use of force."

The White House was mum about the situation in Gaza on Sunday after speaking out expansively on Saturday, blaming Hamas for provoking Israel's retaliatory strikes.

In the most dramatic attacks Sunday, warplanes struck dozens of smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, cutting off a lifeline that had supplied Hamas with weapons and Gaza with commercial goods. The influx of goods had helped Hamas defy an 18-month blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt, and was key to propping up its rule.

Sunday's blasts shook the ground several miles away and sent black smoke high into the sky. Earlier, war planes dropped three bombs on one of Hamas' main security compounds in Gaza City, including a prison. Moments after the blasts, frantic inmates, their faces dusty and bloodied, scrambled down the rubble. One man, still half buried, raised a hand to alert rescuers.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said more than 290 people were killed over two days and more than 800 wounded.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, which keeps researchers at all hospitals, said it had counted 251 dead by midday Sunday, and that among them were 20 children under the age of 16 and nine **women**.

Across Gaza, families pitched traditional mourning tents of green tarp outside homes. Yet the rows of chairs inside these tents remained largely empty, as residents cowered indoors for fear of new Israeli strikes.

Israeli leaders gave interviews to foreign television networks to try win international support.

Public Security Minister Avi Dichter, speaking Arabic, spoke on Arab satellite TV stations, denouncing Hamas rule in Gaza. And Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told NBC that the assault came because Hamas, an Islamic group backed by Syria and Iran, is smuggling weapons and building a "small army."

In Jerusalem, Israel's Cabinet approved a callup of 6,500 reserve soldiers, raising fears of an impending ground offensive. Israel has doubled the number of troops on the Gaza border since Saturday and also deployed an artillery battery. It was not clear, though, whether the deployment was meant to pressure Hamas or whether Israel is determined to send ground troops.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said it was unclear when the operation would end but told his Cabinet was "liable to last longer than we are able to foresee at this time."

Since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, after 38 years of full military occupation, Israeli forces have repeatedly returned to the territory to hunt militants. However, Israel has shied away from retaking the entire strip, for fear of getting bogged down in urban warfare.

The diplomatic fallout, meanwhile, was swift.

Syria decided to suspend indirect peace talks with Israel, begun earlier this year, and the U.N. Security Council called on both sides to halt the fighting and asked Israel to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza; 30 trucks were let in Sunday.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on Israel to open its crossings "for the continuous provision of humanitarian supplies." In a statement, he said one Palestinian U.N. employee, and eight trainees, were among the dead.

The prime minister of Turkey, one of the few Muslim countries to have relations with Israel, called the air assault a "crime against humanity."

The carnage inflamed Arab and Muslim public opinion, setting off street protests across the West Bank, in an Arab community in Israel, in several Middle Eastern cities and in Paris.

Some of the protests turned violent. Israeli troops quelling a West Bank march killed one Palestinian and seriously wounded another. A crowd of anti-Israel protesters in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul became a target for a suicide bomber on a bicycle. In Lebanon, police fired tear gas to stop demonstrators from reaching the Egyptian Embassy.

Egypt, which has served as a mediator between Israel and the Palestinians as well as between Hamas and its rival Fatah, has been criticized for joining Israel in closing its borders with Gaza. The blockade was imposed after the Hamas takeover in June 2007.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit called on Hamas to renew its truce with Israel. The cease-fire began unraveling last month, and formally ended more than a week ago. Since then, Gaza militants had stepped up rocket fire on Israel.

A Hamas leader in exile, Osama Hamdan, said the movement would not relent. "We have one alternative, which is to be steadfast and resist and then we will be victorious," Hamdan said in Beirut.

Also in Beirut, Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the <u>Hezbollah</u> militia, said he would not abandon Hamas, but did not threaten to attack Israel. During the Israel-<u>Hezbollah</u> war of 2006, the militia fired thousands of rockets into Israel.

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis live in cities and towns in Gaza rocket range, and life slowed in some of the communities. Schools in communities in a 12-mile radius from Gaza were ordered to remain closed beyond the weeklong Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, which ends Monday.

In the southern city of Ashkelon, home to some 120,000 people, streets were relatively busy, despite the military's recommendations against being out in the open.

Several times throughout the day, however, that routine was briefly interrupted by the sounds of wailing sirens warning of an imminent attack. Pedestrians scurried for cover in buildings. After a number of rocket landed in the distance, a woman taking cover nearby briefly fainted. She refused water and food from bystanders, instead shivering in a corner, apparently in shock.

Additional reporting by Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Israel. Karin Laub reported from Jerusalem.

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Byline: By TOM DOWNEY

TOM DOWNEY is the author of "The Last Men Out: Life on the Edge at Rescue 2 Firehouse" (Henry Holt).

Body

ON my first morning in Sana, the capital of Yemen, the call to prayer didn't just rouse me from sleep, it rattled the window panes, seemed to shake the foundation of my hotel, and spread from minaret to minaret as if the entire Old City was an enormous echo chamber. The scratchy invocations thundered on for so long I wondered whether it was even worth attempting to sleep again.

Out my window, I glimpsed a stream of worshipers scurrying toward the nearest minaret, scarves wrapped around their heads to ward off the morning chill. After trying every possible pillow-as-earplug configuration, I decided that resistance was futile. Of course, just after I'd showered and finished dressing, the calls to prayer abruptly ceased, as if someone had slapped a giant snooze button.

As I sipped strong coffee on the rooftop of my hotel, the Old City came alive seven stories below. There were satellite dishes in view, a lone taxi winding down an alley, and a few stray electric lights. But despite these technological advances, Sana's Old City is a remarkably well-preserved medieval metropolis.

The city's boundary walls, a few of them still standing, many just rubble or remembrance, enclose labyrinthine souks, corrals to store livestock brought to market, lush green gardens planted next to mosques, and ancient high-rise homes built of stone and brick (six or so stories tall, many of them dating back to the 11th century). The houses are lavishly decorated with white gypsum detailing that registers like a rhetorical flourish. Top-floor windows are made of alabaster or stained glass to tint the magnificent vistas of both the cityscape of early skyscrapers and the mountains that envelop the city.

Despite its superb architecture, intact traditional culture, stunning vistas and passable tourist infrastructure, Yemen sees only a trickle of visitors, mostly from Europe. Most travelers are understandably frightened off by the shadow of civil war, reports of terrorist attacks like the bombing of the American destroyer Cole in 2000, and stern State Department travel warnings. But for people willing to accept those potential dangers and explore this beguiling country, Yemen offers a pleasure that comes from getting lost in the flow of life, not from visiting long-dead or just-hatched places peopled only by touts and tourists.

On the main street of Sana's souk, black-clad shadows -- local <u>women</u> -- duck into fabric stores to buy colorful garments I'll never see them wear. Working teenagers huddle next to food vendors, eating boiled potatoes and eggs dipped in coarse salt and bright red pepper. A fruit vendor wearing one thick rubber glove carefully selects a

prickly pear from a wheelbarrow and strips off the spiky outer skin. Men and boys wear the curious costume of northern Yemen -- a Western suit jacket over a one-piece jalabiya. The crowning accessory is a curved dagger called the jambiya that's sheathed in a fanciful scabbard belted across the belly.

Yemen was long ago crowned Arabia Felix (Fortunate Arabia) because it was covered in fertile fields that made it the richest place in the land. Market cities like Sana grew fat from trade in incense, coffee and foodstuffs. But black gold and natural gas now trump frankincense and myrrh, so Arabia Felix has become the pauper of the peninsula -- a stark contrast to the bling of Dubai and the luxurious beach resorts of Oman.

Yet it is a country that retains a strong sense of its own rich past.

Surprisingly, one of the figures who can take credit for preserving the atmosphere of Yemen's past is the Italian filmmaker and poet Pier Paolo Pasolini, who visited Sana back in 1970 to shoot a sequence for his adaptation of Boccaccio's "Decameron." Having seen so many wondrous parts of Italy ruined by modernization, Pasolini worried that long-cloistered Sana, then just opening to the world, would be destroyed by those same forces. He took up his camera and created a passionate plea to Unesco to grant Sana's old guarter World Heritage status.

Watching Pasolini's short film "Le Mura di Sana" 37 years later is the ultimate testament to his success. The city he brought to life in his documentary looks virtually indistinguishable from the Old Sana of today, though the city outside the walls is everything he feared, with many neighborhoods razed or transformed.

Pasolini is long gone, but in Sana I met Marco Livadiotti, Pasolini's heir apparent in the fight to safeguard Sana from the ravages of the modern world. Mr. Livadiotti arrived in Yemen at age 5, when his father became the personal physician to Yemen's last king, Imam Ahmed bin Yahya. Raised in this storybook city at a time when foreigners were nearly unknown to its inhabitants, Mr. Livadiotti went on to create Yemen's leading travel company, the Universal Touring Company, and lives in a finely restored ancient residence in the old Ottoman quarter of Sana.

He led me on a walk into the Old City, starting at a vantage point by the Sa'ila, a modern road (courtesy of United States aid) that bisects the Old City and floods when it rains. From this angle, there were only ancient high-rises, minarets and mosques in view; there was nothing of the new city, with its concrete horrors and too-tall buildings.

We wandered past stalls filled with trays of sticky dates, bore past spice vendors dwarfed by giant mounds of pungent powders and leaves, and then found a small plaza in the heart of the Suq al-Milhi (the Salt Souk). Men roared up on motorcycles and quickly dismounted to snarf down a snack of preserved persimmons, dipping their licked spoons into the communal tray to gather more sugar syrup.

Mr. Livadiotti led me through a doorway into one of the last remaining caravansaries in town. It was in ruins, but a few traders still inhabited second-floor rooms that looked over the central courtyard, where once the guests' animals would have been stored while they conducted business.

We exited and peeked into some of the mosques along our route, structures built in a style that seems spare and serious compared with the architectural excess of the homes. Unfortunately, nonbelievers are barred from entering mosques in Yemen, so I could only gaze at these holy places from outside.

The first-time visitor to Yemen will likely be confronted by three iconic images that will no doubt reinforce whatever initial qualms they had about going there, photographs that they will see everywhere, from motorcycle windshields to teahouse walls. The most prevalent is of Yemen's long-serving leader, President Ali Abdullah Saleh, whose bushy mustache and fashion ensembles (military, stately, of the people) make him look like Saddam Hussein's mini-me.

The second most popular photo is of Hussein himself, who became a folk hero here after his defiance in the first Gulf War. Third place goes to Lebanon's <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, whose call to arms against Israel made him a superstar even in Yemen, despite his being a "twelver" Shiite and most Yemenis belonging to a different sect.

There's also a virtually unreported war going on in the Sada region of northern Yemen, and the country is certainly not immune to miscellaneous outbursts of chaos. On a previous visit two and a half years ago, I went for a jog one morning and heard a taxi driver complain that gas prices had nearly doubled overnight. A few hours later, I watched thousands of rioters storm through the streets and heard shots ring out.

Add to this political instability a long history of tourists being kidnapped and a recent suicide bombing that killed seven Spanish tourists, and it's a wonder that any travelers come here at all, despite Yemen's considerable charms.

SO why visit a place this volatile? I came to find a complete and ancient way of life that is still largely intact. Moreover, despite the country's problems (and a need for tourists to be both alert and cautious), the place feels surprisingly safe. Indeed, few attacks on tourists have taken place in what I consider Yemen's two most spectacular draws: the Old City of Sana and the eastern oasis of Wadi Hadhramaut.

Most of the trouble comes from the restive region between Sana and Hadhramaut, an area that is home to the ruins of Marib and to a patchwork of tribes who often oppose the central government. On this trip, in April, I decided to fly from Sana to Hadhramaut and avoid the Marib region entirely.

But before that flight east, I drove west to the Haraz Mountains that surround Sana, perhaps best known for the gloriously intact 11th-century village Al-Hajjara carved into the rocky landscape. The lush green fields we passed through outside of the city were about as far as you can get from the popular image of a barren, desertified Arabia. The fields sprouted khat, a leafy green drug that is virtually omnipresent in Yemen and is chewed daily by everyone from taxi drivers to sheiks.

Our driver insisted we stop at a market town to stock up on khat. I followed him into the dark interior of a tinroofed shack, where a man with a rounded cheekful of khat presided over bushels that covered every inch of floor. Our driver moved from stall to stall, fingering leaves, dismissing out of hand what he was first offered, haggling over prices, and finally selecting a rubta, the standard measure. That bunch of long, wet branches was wrapped in cellophane and handed over for the equivalent of about \$8, a considerable expense in a country as poor as Yemen.

On the outskirts of the market town, the driver pulled over to a lone bunker filled with illicit Scotch whiskey, smuggled cans of Heineken and dangerous looking off-brand liquors. I guess a country that tolerates almost everyone getting high on khat is bound to be somewhat forgiving when it comes to other indulgences.

After staying at a raucous lodge in Manakhah where Yemeni men danced traditional dagger steps into the wee hours of the night (more to lure French *female* tourists to the dance floor than to celebrate their culture, I think), we drove a few miles to Al-Khutayb. It's the spiffiest village I saw in Yemen, with newly renovated mosques, swanky pilgrims' lodging, a fast-flowing fountain and a landscaped park. It turns out that a tomb built for a 12th-century cleric is now a requisite stop for Ismaili pilgrims from India and Pakistan. (The Ismailis are the Muslim denomination led by the Aga Khan.)

The mountains surrounding the town are extraordinary -- rolling fertile fields punctuated by mountaintop fortress towns that look as though they're still ready to resist a years-long siege. The sun started to burn off the morning chill, though fog loomed in the distance. We hiked past acacia trees, waved to men plowing fields, and finally followed an almost-blind old man into town.

In nearby Al-Hajjara I spotted a Williams College T-shirt and met an American tourist, Leo Murray, a semi-retired Hong Kong resident who treks all over the world. When it started to pour and we went inside a hotel for tea and shelter, I ran into a fellow Long Islander desperate to speak English with a compatriot. She said she had tacked on a solo trip to Yemen after a group tour of Saudi Arabia. These were the only two American tourists I met the whole trip.

A day later, I was on a plane to Hadhramaut, surrounded by a few fellow tourists and scores of Hadhramautis returning home, probably from working abroad. (Hadhramaut has traditionally sent its sons abroad to make their fortunes; the most famous of these is Osama bin Laden's father, Mohammed.)

The crown jewel of Hadhramaut, the longest wadi, or fertile valley, in the Arabian Peninsula, is supposed to be the town of Shibam. But at first sight, Shibam looked like a dead city. The only living creatures in evidence were a few nosy European tourists peeking into people's homes, some mangy goats chewing on garbage, and a few adventurous children chasing both the goats and the tourists. It was simply too hot -- about 100 degrees -- for any sensible adult to venture out.

But, I reasoned, the residents can't live indoors their entire lives, so back at my hotel, I decided to rent a bike and return at dusk. An hour or so before sunset, when it had cooled down enough to go outside, I cycled toward Shibam, about four miles west.

At the town of Al-Hawta, I was greeted by the whoops and hollers of kids snacking on freshly fried potatoes. Then I passed through some pasture lands, where <u>female</u> shepherds led their goats alongside the road. The <u>women</u> wore the distinctive get-up of Wadi Hadhramaut: they were covered from head to ankle in black, and topped this off with a peaked straw hat nearly two feet tall. Supposedly the air circulating inside the hat keeps them cool.

Finally, I rounded a bend, pushed out of a lush palm grove, and beheld Shibam. Its tall, narrow mud-brick tower houses are packed together so densely inside the city walls that the English traveler Freya Stark back in the 1930s christened this city "the Manhattan of the desert."

Conveniently, all the other tourists had now retreated to a hilltop that offers a silhouette of the city at sunset. While dozens of them snapped photos a mile up the mountain, I entered the whitewashed main gate all alone. Just to the left was a small area covered in rugs where village men slammed down dominoes under the dwindling light of the evening sun and sipped glasses of sweet, scalding tea.

As I sat down and ordered a cup, the wise locals who had been cloistered inside during the scorching sunlight hours emerged to shop for sticky desserts from a trio of vendors. Men streamed into the mosque for the final prayer of the day, and the blue light of the moon cast soft shadows down the dirt alleyways.

Inside these city walls, as in the Old City of Sana, you can dart around a corner and leap back centuries.

BACK IN TIME

For visitors from the United States, the most convenient way to reach Yemen is via Dubai. From Dubai, both Emirates and Yemenia offer nonstop flights to Sana, with fares starting at about \$240 for a flight of just under three hours. Based on a recent online search, a round-trip ticket on a nonstop flight in late January between New York and Dubai would cost about \$1,200 on Emirates (800-777-3999; www.emirates.com).

Many United States citizens can buy visas on arrival at Sana's airport (depending on which airline they take) for \$30 to \$50, but check with the Yemen Embassy in Washington (202-965-4760; www.yemenembassy.org) to confirm that this policy is still in effect.

The State Department Web site, www.travel.state.gov, lists a formal travel warning about "the high security threat level in Yemen due to terrorist activities." Other information on Yemen is in the site's Consular Information section.

The Yemeni government periodically restricts visits to certain regions. A responsible and reliable travel operator will update you on the most recent developments and advise accordingly. It's simplest to book a trip outside of Sana through a travel agency that can arrange for government permits, plane tickets, a guide and driver, and hotels.

I traveled to Manakhah and Hadhramaut with Universal Touring Company (967-1-272-861; www.utcyemen.com). Marco Livadiotti, the owner, said that the cost of a driver and a guide would be the equivalent of \$100 to \$140 a day. His e-mail address is marco.universal@gmail.com There are also dozens of other lower-budget travel agencies near the tourist hotels in the Old City.

Upscale hotels and restaurants will normally accept credit cards, but you'll need Yemeni rials (the exchange rate is about 200 rials to the dollar) to pay for everything else. There are a couple of A.T.M.'s around the center of the city,

which will dispense rials from American accounts. But these are often out of cash or out of service, so definitely bring some dollars along just in case; they can be easily exchanged in major cities.

WHERE TO STAY

The Taj Sheba Hotel (Ali Abdulmoghni Street; 967-1-272-372) has been sold and will no longer be part of Taj, the Indian chain, starting Jan. 1. But it's the best-located standard hotel in the city, just on the edge of the old quarter near Sana's central square, Midan Tahrir. Double rooms go for \$160 for the older rooms and \$185 for the newly renovated chambers.

The grandest hotel in Sana is the shockingly ugly but very comfortable Movenpick Hotel Sana (Berlin Street, Dhahar Hemyer; 967-1-546-666; www.movenpick.com) looming above Sana on a hill that also is home to the United States Embassy and the shabby old Sheraton. Doubles in this new 338-room Movenpick start at about \$150. It has an excellent Moroccan restaurant and a nightclub, as well as a fitness center and two pools.

The most comfortable address inside Sana's Old City is the new Burj Al Salam Hotel (Harat Al-Fulayhi; 967-1-483-333; www.burjalsalam.com). The rooftop restaurant, cafe and khat chewing room offer the best views in town. There are 47 rooms, from small singles to larger suites, and prices start at \$50. After staying at the Burj Al Salam, I was told by Mr. Livadiotti of Universal Touring that the contractors built this hotel from concrete rather than traditional materials, and made it three stories higher than any other building in the neighborhood, flaunting the Unesco stipulations for the Old City.

A handful of ancient tower houses in the Old City of Sana have been converted into simple backpacker-style hotels while preserving most of the beauty and some of the disadvantages of medieval living. Most rooms share baths. Mattresses can be thin and treacherous, but the atmosphere is unbeatable. Among the best of these tower hotels is the Arabia Felix (Avenue Saila Al-Jeila; 961-1-287-330; arabiafelix.free.fr) located on Sa'ila, which crosses the Old City. The 44 rooms are 22 to 35 euros (about \$32 to \$51, at \$1.47 to the euro), including breakfast in a delightful garden.

In Manakhah, Al Hajjarah Tourist Hotel and Restaurant (967-1-460-124; e-mail, <u>alhajjarahhotel@hotmail.com</u>) is the best bet, though late-night music and shenanigans may annoy light sleepers. Doubles are 6,000 rials, with breakfast and dinner.

In Shibam, Al Hawta Palace (967-5-425-010; www.universalyemen.com/hotels) is a former palace with 58 air-conditioned rooms, a swimming pool, restaurant and bike rentals; it is owned by the parent company of Universal Touring. Doubles start at \$145.

WHERE TO EAT

Salta, a steamy green stew, is a classic Yemeni dish, and perhaps the best in the country can be found at Ali's, an unmarked restaurant in Sana (near Bab al Shuhub; 967-1-221-708) just outside the Old City in a bustling mercantile quarter. When I was there in April, what appeared to be a handful of giant Bunsen burners were presided over by a few alchemists who transformed miscellaneous meat parts, heaps of fenugreek and handfuls of hot red pepper into a flaming cauldron of spice and flavor. A large meal for two will run about 3,500 rials.

Ali's, like most every restaurant in the country, caters almost exclusively to men, and it's not the kind of place where you'd think to linger after wolfing down your food. When a group of men hunched over their salta saw me come in, they slapped me on the back and generously, if aggressively, urged me to share their salta.

If you yearn for some Indian or Continental cuisine or are desperate for a cold beer, try to weasel your way into the British Club. It's next to the British Ambassador's residence in the Haddah area of Sana.

But if you can't get in the club, the Haddah area, a 15-minute ride from the Old City, offers the best selection of high-end restaurants in town. Haddah Street has a kind of restaurant row, with a variety of Italian, Lebanese and Egyptian restaurants, most of which are passably good.

You'll eat well at the Al Hajjarah Hotel in Manakhah. Outside of hotels in Manakhah and Hadhramaut, the best you'll do is probably a hunk of barbecued meat or fish, and some bread soaked in honey for dessert. There isn't really a restaurant culture in Yemen outside of the big cities, and even there, it's mostly for foreigners and rich Yemenis. Most ordinary places feel more like cafeterias than restaurants.

WHAT TO READ

Lonely Planet's Oman, UAE & Arabian Peninsula Travel Guide (\$20.99 at shop.lonelyplanet.com) contains a useful chapter on Yemen.

The contemporary classic travelogue of the country is "Yemen: The Unknown Arabia" (Overlook Press, 2000) by a British-born Yemen resident, Timothy Mackintosh-Smith, a wonderfully erudite and endearing romp around the country.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTOS: RIGHT: A boy bundles khat, the leafy narcotic, at a roadside shop. BELOW RIGHT: A group gathers to savor tea and chat in Sana's main souk. RIGHT: Jambiyas, the traditional curved dagger, for sale in Sana. BELOW RIGHT: A photo of President Ali Abdullah Saleh in Shibam. LEFT: Sana's central souk at dusk. BOTTOM LEFT: Al-Hajjara, a village carved out of the rocky landscape in the 11th century. RIGHT: <u>Women</u> in Wadi Hadhramaut wearing conical hats said to help them stay cool. BELOW RIGHT: A waiter delivers a stew in Old Sana (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVELYN HOCKSTEIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (pg. TR7). The bustling central souk in Sana's Old City, which is a Unesco World Heritage site. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EVELYN HOCKSTEIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)(pg. TR1)

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Car bomb: the 21st century's weapon of mass destruction; In 1970, an American student took two of the most basic components of civilisation - fertiliser and a car - and created the modern car bomb. Here, an ex-CIA agent - on whom George Clooney's character in 'Syriana' was based - charts the history of the world's most lethal terrorist weapon - and how we are defenceless against it

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Body

It was a sunny afternoon on Beirut's glamorous seafront in April 1983 and the world was about to change forever. Old men stood fishing on the rocks opposite the beachfront American embassy. <u>Women</u> in high heels and sunglasses strolled along the boardwalk undeterred by the civil war and the honking traffic.

It was just before 1pm when a green Mercedes carefully drove past the embassy, scouting the entrance, and then 300 yards later flashed his lights at a waiting GMC flat bed truck. The Texas-built truck driven by a young man, whose name we still don't know, then slowly drove through traffic for a couple of minutes until he arrived at the embassy, accelerated the wrong way through the exit ramp, hit the entrance steps, bounced up into the lobby and exploded his 2,000lb bomb.

It was a stunning assault and the final act in the creation of the deadliest weapon of the 21st century - the car bomb. The embassy bombing was the first ever suicide car bomb attack against a western target.

In the confined space of the lobby the blast wave from the 2,000lbs of raw PETN - an extremely powerful military explosive - was lethal. The explosion ripped away the front of the building, the upper floors falling like cards, crushing, killing; 63 people were murdered. Dead Lebanese, dead Americans, many of them close colleagues in the CIA. They found the hand of my boss Robert Ames a mile offshore - identified by his graduation ring.

Ironically the CIA station had been meeting on the fourth floor, in the CIA's offices, to discuss the threat of terrorism when the bomber struck.

I was lucky, I wasn't there that day. But as a CIA agent stationed in the Middle East I could so easily have been in the building.

For years after, I kept having the same dream. Sitting at the conference suite on the fourth floor drinking coffee, chit-chatting with colleagues, waiting for the meeting to start and then the windows bursting in, doors, ceilings, everything falling around you and the noise of the explosion. And then darkness.

Waiting for the next attack

What happened that summer of 1983 in Beirut has come back to haunt us in Iraq and Afghanistan. In their decades of civil war the Lebanese, an inventive people, refined the weapon and became the best car bombers in the world. The bombs that go off every day in Baghdad, the very concept of the suicide driver, was developed on the streets of Beirut. But the threat from car bombs now spans the globe. Anyone and anywhere, a government building, an airport, could be a target. And across the world, from Downing Street to the White House, governments are turning their offices into car-bomb-proof fortresses. And waiting for the next attack.

Even back then in 1983 in Beirut car bombs were always the number one threat. You were a fool if you drove down the same road at the same time every day. Because all it took to kill you was \$200, an old car and some explosives, and you were dead.

Instead of driving around in an armoured limousine that would have made it obvious I was an American diplomat, I used to take taxis. I bought old Mercedes taxis, changed the colour of them, changed them daily. I even picked up passengers to help maintain the disguise. I survived because I knew just how lethal car bombs could be. And because I was terrified of them.

Every secret thing has an origin down in the muck of history and car bombs are no different. I have now left the CIA but for the last year as part of a Channel 4 documentary series I have gone back on the intelligence trail meeting car bombers, intelligence officials and policemen to discover the origins of the car bomb and the desperate intelligence battle now being waged in the shadows to defeat it.

Strangely, you see, the Lebanese never invented the car bomb. Like a lot of things in the 20th century, car bombs are an American invention.

The first car bomb was planted right in the heart of Wall Street, in the very epicentre of American capitalism. Just after midday on 16 September 1920, a horse-drawn wagon exploded into the lunchtime Wall Street crowd outside the offices of the JP Morgan Bank. The bomber had deliberately packed his 80lb of dynamite with 500lb of heavy sash window weights to add shrapnel to the bomb and multiply the killing power. The metal fragments tore into the crowd like machine gun bullets. Thirty-eight people were killed and 200 injured.

None of the eyewitnesses could even give a description of the driver. In 1920 in New York horse wagons were gradually being replaced by cars but they were still invisible in the busy traffic. No one noticed anything strange because there was nothing strange to notice. The bomber parked his wagon on the target, lit the fuse and nonchalantly walked away. He was never caught.

It is this invisibility that still makes the car bomb so dangerous. Our cities, our lives, are constructed around cars, roads and traffic. And in that constant blur of movement a car bomb, like the Wall Street bomber's horse-drawn wagon or an Iraqi suicide bomber, is undetectable and unstoppable. For US troops in Iraq every car is still a potential bomb waiting to explode in your face.

Over 4,000 American troops have now been killed in Iraq - many of them by car bombs.

Car bombs were used in other conflicts in Palestine and by the mafia in Sicily in the 1960s, but the history of the modern car bomb again begins right in the middle of the American heartland in the mid-western state of Wisconsin and its state capital Madison.

Wisconsin really should be famous for something that happened back in 1970 when a 22-year-old Vietnam war protestor and college drop-out decided to blow up his university and along the way invented the perfect terrorist weapon.

His name was Karl Armstrong and he was part of a generation of American students who were bitterly opposed to the Vietnam war, and the prospect of being conscripted to go and fight in the paddy fields of the Mekong Delta.

Back then almost every week there were student protests and marches on campus. Police fired tear gas. There were mini-riots and broken windows.

But for Armstrong even these violent street protests were futile. He believed the Nixon administration was already at war with his generation. So he decided to blow the campus Army Maths Research Centre, a research lab funded by the Pentagon, that Armstrong mistakenly believed was engaged in Vietnam war work.

"It was two o'clock in the morning and we were just lying out on a lawn and my brother Dwight and I were like basically considering ways to bomb the Army Math Research Centre," he said. "And we considered there are steam tunnels that go all through the campus and we could have brought explosives in through the steam tunnels. And we thought ah nah well ... because we needed to bring almost a tonne of explosives. And my brother Dwight says, 'Why don't we just fill up a truck full of explosives and just set it off outside the building?' And my immediate reaction was that's crazy. And then I thought well you know that's probably the best way to be, to do it."

And in that moment the modern car bomb was born.

A deadly twist

It wasn't difficult to meet Karl Armstrong. He still lives in Madison and even runs a summer juice stall on the campus he once destroyed. In the winter he works as a part-time taxi driver. After the bombing he served 10 years in prison. His trial was a cause celebre. In Madison Armstrong still has an awkward kind of fame.

But he is unrepentant about his actions and the trail of destruction he unleashed. "I have no regrets for my motivation for doing the bombing, and doing the bombing. I think a message was sent to the White House about the Vietnam war. You know, 'Woah, this is the heartland of America, we've got to bring this war to an end."

But there was another deadly twist to what became known as the 1970 Sterling Hall bombing. Armstrong bought the explosives from his local hardware store for \$200.

After looking up the recipe in Encyclopedia Britannica - under 'Explosives' - Armstrong bought 1,500lb of ammonium nitrate farmers' fertiliser and mixed it with diesel fuel. Put together in the right quantities the two substances combine into a simple but deadly compound - ANFO - Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil explosive. ANFO is far less powerful than TNT. But there is a simple way around that problem. Like Armstrong you just make more ANFO to create the same explosive punch, steal a van and drive the bomb to the target.

Ammonium nitrate is ordinary farmers' fertiliser and is used all over the world. Without ammonium nitrate the world's population would starve. Millions of tonnes of ammonium nitrate are manufactured each year. Likewise diesel fuel. In joining together the car and fertiliser-based explosive, two basic components of our civilisation, Armstrong had created the perfect terrorist weapon.

With two other students, the Armstrong brothers then set about mixing their explosive together and buying the crucial detonator - normally only sold to the military or to quarries. Armstrong told me he simply pretended to be a farmer wanting to blow up an old tree stump and bought his detonators over the counter in a farmers' agricultural co-op.

World's first car bomb

At three in the morning on 24 August 1970 Armstrong drove to the university physics lab that housed the Army Maths Research Centre and blew it up. One man, a research scientist, Robert Fassnacht, was killed and 21 buildings destroyed. It was a huge explosion. "We could see this mushroom cloud, 1,500 feet from the ground, with fiery things been thrown up into the cloud, just glowing red, and the sound of glass all the way down University Avenue falling into the street."

Anyone who read a cookery recipe could now make an ANFO bomb and across the Atlantic the IRA were just gearing up for what would become the world's first full-scale car-bomb war. And the Provisional IRA would in time plant and explode more car bombs than any other organisation.

At the beginning of the Troubles the IRA first stole their explosives from quarries or made their own from a highly toxic blend of weed killer and benzene, sodium nitrobenzene. It was dangerously unstable concoction and highly poisonous. For the first two years of the Troubles more IRA men blew themselves up than were shot dead by British troops.

But then someone in the IRA discovered Armstrong's ANFO recipe. What was even better from the IRA's point of view was that the most common form of fertilizer sold in the state, Net Nitrate, was an ideal base material for ANFO.

Sean O'Callaghan was a senior IRA member at the time and ran a bomb factory just south of the border from an isolated farm in Co Louth in the early '70s. "The point about ammonium nitrate was that Net Nitrate was probably the biggest commercial fertiliser in the Irish republic. The government had a share in the company that manufactured it. So every farmer had hundreds of bags of Net Nitrate lying around in sheds and barns. So it was an absolute godsend!"

Turning the fertilizer into an explosive was also straightforward. "So you emptied four bags into a large barrel, and then you filled the barrel with water, and then you put a big gas burner under it and you boiled, and you kept on stirring it and you boiled it, and boiled it. And up to the top rose this very clear liquid. And in the morning that would have crystallised into big lumps of white crystal. You broke it up with wooden shovels and packed it into bags. And that was virtually pure ammonium nitrate. At the end of every week a tractor would appear and cart it away," explained O'Callaghan.

Infinite supply

O'Callaghan produced two tonnes of explosive a week. With an infinite supply of explosives the IRA was now ready to ramp up their car-bomb war.

In Belfast I went to see Tommy Gorman, a small quiet man who had been the Belfast Brigade's chief bomb engineer in the 1970s - assembling the bombs for the IRA's blitz on Belfast in the 1970s. We met in the republican graveyard in Milltown where Bobby Sands is buried and all the other dead IRA men. "The car bomb is just so simple. You can't see it. You're just parking the car like everyone else. That's the beauty of it."

The IRA leadership soon had car bombing down to a fine art. The ANFO explosives would be smuggled into Northern Ireland and the diesel added just before the bombing operation. A trained IRA bomb 'engineer' like Tommy would then assemble the bomb, adding a small booster charge of commercial explosive, a detonator and a timing device. A different IRA unit would then steal or hijack a car and the bomb would be loaded into the boot.

The car bomb would usually be driven to the target by a two-man bomb team and parked. The passenger would arm the timer - usually 45 minutes - and the bombers would walk away. Someone else in the IRA would phone a warning giving the security forces just enough time to evacuate the area but not enough time to defuse the bomb. The IRA went about blowing up Belfast and Derry until it seemed that both cities had been bombed from the air.

Cleverly the IRA often used young <u>women</u> - guaranteed to allay suspicion - to deliver their car bombs. Marion Price, who joined the IRA when she was 17, was one of them.

"Being young and <u>female</u> really was just ideal for the sorts of things we did. I remember this one time we had some explosives in the car. They were the old sort and they smelt very strongly of almonds and marzipan. A blind man would have know they were there. We had hidden them in the door panels and then we got stopped by soldiers. And one of them went to open the door. And I said: 'No, no, I can manage.' If he had opened the door he would have felt the extra weight. Anyway I got out of the car and I was wearing a mini-skirt. I think he was more interested in looking at my legs than the car. So it was useful to have girls because it did distract them a bit."

It's not hard to see why that soldier was so easily fooled. Price is a striking figure - and back in the 1970s she was a real stunner. There's a picture of Price in that famous little mini-skirt. She is girlishly laughing, standing next to her sister Dolores, also a car bomber. They look like girls just going off to the disco rather than terrorists about to blow up the town. How could you ever suspect such seeming innocence?

Adrenaline pumping

Amazingly, Price said she had ever been afraid driving a car with a bomb in it. "No, I'm not the nervy type. Your adrenaline is pumping but if you were terrified you wouldn't do it in the first place. It's very risky to drive with an armed bomb so we always set the timer on when you got to the target. And you were always told to set your timer first before you do your connections. Because if you do your connections first, and then the timer, you are going up with the bomb. And the other thing is that when you park the car you get out and walk, never run, from it."

Promotion in the IRA came quick and Price led the first IRA bomb team that attacked London in March 1973 blowing up the Old Bailey and planting another bomb near Scotland Yard. But on the way back to Ireland she was arrested and spent the next 10 years in prison.

Price remains a hardline republican. She thinks Gerry Adams is a traitor. A sellout for making a peace deal with the British. After all these years, and the deaths, does she think planting car bombs has achieved anything.

"Yes I think car bombs did achieve something at the time. If your country is occupied you need to make choices. Are you going to sit there or do something to stop it? But also I believe we were betrayed by our leadership. And we are probably back to square one from a Republican perspective."

Over time IRA bomb-planting teams grew even more sophisticated. At Omagh in 1998 a Real IRA bomb team used a scout car - to check ahead for possible army checkpoints - as they drove their deadly cargo right into the heart of a sleepy border shopping town and communicated with each other via borrowed mobile phones.

Omagh, when the Troubles were almost over, would prove to be the worst car bombing of all in decades of conflict. The confusing bomb warning misled police who evacuated the crowd right next to the car bomb - loaded with 400lb of ANFO. Twenty-nine shoppers were killed when it exploded amidst them.

Over the years the British government would introduce counter measures to inhibit the IRA's ability to make ANFO explosives. But the IRA always found a way round them.

Just one bomb could destroy a small town or cause billions of pounds worth of damage in a key financial centre like the City of London.

And the biggest IRA bomb of all shook London to its core at 10.21am on Saturday 24 April 1993 when a 3,500lb ANFO truck bomb exploded at Bishopsgate.

The Bishopsgate bomb cost the IRA around £500 for the fertiliser and the timing device. The damage cost the British taxpayer £1bn in insurance claims. It was a lot of bang for very little IRA bucks.

Changing history

Before Bishopsgate the Troubles had dragged on for 24 years. A futile stalemate. But the IRA's London bombs suddenly made the British government a whole lot more receptive to a possible peace deal. Sixteen months after Bishopsgate the IRA declared a ceasefire and serious negotiations to end the Troubles started.

In the right place, and with the right amount of explosives, car bombs really can change history.

The other place where car bombs have changed history is Lebanon. In 1976 civil war broke out and it's never really stopped. Hundreds of thousands of people have died. No one is sure how many. Lebanon wasn't like Ireland. When the Lebanese planted car bombs it was to kill, to explode in the street, to murder and maim and make the

pavements run with blood. Everyone did it; the Christians, the Palestinians, <u>Hezbollah</u> and the Israelis. For three decades the whole country has been a research laboratory for car bombers.

In 1982 president Ronald Reagan sent in the US marines to sort out the aftermath of another Lebanese war - the 1982 Israeli invasion. The French came too. It was called the Multinational Force and it was supposed to restore order. The marines went on patrol, handed out sweets and tried to support the shaky Lebanese government. But in the background the Lebanese civil war was still raging. Foolishly the US got involved, taking sides, and becoming another protagonist in the chaos.

On 23 October 1983 at 6.02am another suicide truck bomber hit the main US marine barracks with a 12,000lb suicide-bomb truck. Less than a minute later another suicide bomber attacked the French - 241 marines and 58 French soldiers were killed. It was the greatest loss to the US marine corps in one day since Iwo Jima in the second world war. There was a lot of the usual bluster about staying the course but we were defeated by car bombs. The Multinational Force died that day. The US fled five months later with their tails between our legs.

A few clicks away

It's a lesson we should have remembered before invading Iraq. Invading and occupying a country are two very different propositions. And at the moment there is no real defence against a fanatic driving a car loaded with explosives. Instructions on how to make a car bomb, and your own explosives, are now just a few clicks away in the internet.

Somewhat belatedly the US military is now spending £2.1bn annually in secret programmes run by a special military task - JIEDDO (Joint Improvised Explosive Defeat Organisation). But even JIEDDO admits it's a long way from defeating what has become the number-one terrorist threat of our time.

Car bombs, whether they are driven by suicide bombers or disguised as delivery trucks, are so lethal because they are so simple and because they disguise such potential killing power in something so familiar we don't even see it until it's too late. And that is why the car bomb is the deadliest weapon mankind has yet invented.

There is only one way we could absolutely defeat the car bomb - we could walk. But we won't and we can't. The car is as basic a tool of our civilisation as a knife. The car is no longer a dream of freedom, it's our necessity. But as long as there are cars there will be car bombs. Truly the car bomb, in its make-your-own simplicity, in its perfect invisibility in everyday traffic, is and will be the decisive weapon of all future human conflict.

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Body

MOVIES

Ratings and running times are in parentheses; foreign films have English subtitles.

THE MONT ALTO MOTION PICTURE ORCHESTRA We are lucky enough in New York City to have a handful of highly talented pianists who are experts in the subtle, self-effacing art of providing accompaniment to silent films. But it's a particular pleasure to hear silent-film music as it was actually performed in most of the first-run theaters of that era -- which is to say, by an orchestra.

The five-member Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra, based in Louisville, Colo., and led by Rodney Sauer, can be heard on several silent-film DVDs, but the group will offer its first live performance in Manhattan on Friday at Lincoln Center, accompanying two films of high interest in themselves: Harold Lloyd's 1927 comedy "The Kid Brother" (6 p.m.) and William A. Wellman's rarely screened 1928 social drama "Beggars of Life" (9 p.m.), with Louise Brooks (above, with Richard Arlen) as a young woman who kills her abusive stepfather and, to escape the police, disguises herself as a boy and joins a group of tramps.

Mr. Sauer specializes in compiling scores from the authentic photoplay music of the period, drawing on the work of neglected composers like Gaston Borch and J. S. Zamecnik; the results are often breathtakingly beautiful and always in the strict service of the film on the screen. (Friday at 6 and 9 p.m., Walter Reade Theater, 165 West 65th Street, Lincoln Center, 212-975-5600, filmlinc.org; \$20.) DAVE KEHR

'ALEXANDRA' (No rating, 1:32, in Russian) The Russian director Alexander Sokurov makes films that are serious, intense, beautiful, at times opaque and so feverishly personal that it can feel as if you're being invited into his head, not just another reality. Here, the soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, the widow of the cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, plays a woman visiting her grandson at the Chechen front. A must-see. (Manohla Dargis)

'ANAMORPH' (R, 1:43) An arty serial killer plays with a cadaverous Willem Dafoe in the nightmarish if derivative feature film debut from H. S. Miller. (Dargis)

'THE BAND'S VISIT' (PG-13, 1:29, in Arabic, English and Hebrew) The Israeli writer and director Eran Kolirin wrenches comedy out of intense melancholia in his beautifully played story about eight Egyptian musicians stranded in the Israeli desert. (Dargis)

'THE BANK JOB' (R, 1:50) A wham-bam caper flick, efficiently directed by Roger Donaldson, that fancifully revisits the mysterious whos and speculative hows of a 1971 London bank heist. With Jason Statham and Saffron Burrows. (Dargis)

'BEAUFORT' (No rating, 2:05, in Hebrew) Joseph Cedar's tense drama takes place at a fortress in Lebanon captured by Israel in the 1980s. The last group of Israeli soldiers is preparing to withdraw, under attack from <u>Hezbollah</u> and with decided ambivalence. The movie's earnest sobriety helps it through passages of tedium and occasional bouts of combat-picture cliche. (A. O. Scott)

'BRA BOYS' (R, 1:24) Part jock movie, part image rehabilitation, "Bra Boys" documents the evolution of a notorious Australian surf gang whose members fight, carouse and ride the waves as if oceanic evaporation were imminent. The overall effect is a kind of Down Under Spring Break, minus the scantily clothed coeds. (Jeannette Catsoulis)

'COLLEGE ROAD TRIP' (G, 1:23) Eyes popping and mouths agape, Martin Lawrence and Raven-Symone mug their way through "College Road Trip" as a disturbingly doting father and his fed-up daughter en route to her college interview. As Dad crashes a wedding and storms a sorority house, you'll be thankful that the movie's target audience is too young to have heard of Freud. (Catsoulis)

'CONSTANTINE'S SWORD' (No rating, 1:35) At the heart of Oren Jacoby's screen adaptation of "Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews: A History," James Carroll's historical study of the relationship between religious militancy and violence, lies a question to which each person of faith must find his own answer: When your core beliefs conflict with church doctrine, how far should your loyalty to the church extend? (Stephen Holden)

'THE COUNTERFEITERS' (R, 1:38, in German) Stefan Rudowitsky's film, winner of this year's Oscar for best foreign-language film, is based on the true story of concentration camp inmates involved in a Nazi scheme to counterfeit Allied currencies. Karl Markovics gives a ferociously concentrated performance as Salomon Sorowisch, a man who brings his underworld code of ethics and his professional pride from Berlin to the Sachsenhausen camp. (Scott)

* 'DEFINITELY, MAYBE' (PG-13, 1:52) This unusually smart, thoroughly charming romantic comedy follows a nice guy's involvement with three <u>women</u>, one of whom he will marry. Isla Fisher, Rachel Weisz and Elizabeth Banks are all wonderful as the candidates, as is Ryan Reynolds as the guy. (Scott)

'DR. SEUSS' HORTON HEARS A WHO!' (G, 1:28) Much better than the recent live-action Dr. Seuss adaptations, this animated feature builds impressively on Seuss's visual whimsy, but overloads the story -- of a noble elephant protecting a tiny world -- with irrelevant pop-culture clutter. Jim Carrey's clowning, jabbering performance as Horton is especially annoying. (Scott)

'DRILLBIT TAYLOR' (PG-13, 1:42) Owen Wilson plays a homeless man hired to protect some high school geeks from bullies. A waste of his time and yours. (A. O. Scott)

'88 MINUTES' (R, 1:45) Actually it's 105 minutes, and they're all bad. (Dargis)

'EXPELLED: NO INTELLIGENCE ALLOWED' (PG, 1:30) Positing the theory of intelligent design as a valid scientific hypothesis, this sleazy documentary frames the refusal of "big science" to agree as nothing less than an assault on free speech. Encouraged by a genial audience surrogate, the actor and multi-hyphenate Ben Stein, interviewees claim that questioning Darwinism led to their expulsion from the scientific fold. Ignoring the distinction between social and scientific Darwinism, the movie shamelessly invokes the Holocaust with black-and-white film of Nazi gas chambers and mass graves, proving that the only expulsion here is of reason itself. (Catsoulis)

'THE FIRST SATURDAY IN MAY' (No rating, 1:40) There are a lot of horses but absolutely no sense in John and Brad Hennegan's glib documentary about six trainers on the proverbial road to the 2006 Kentucky Derby. (Dargis)

'FLAWLESS' (PG-13, 1:45) Michael Caine and Demi Moore are larcenous employees of a corrupt London diamond company in this period heist movie (set in 1960). It is a mildly diverting throwback. (Holden)

'FLIGHT OF THE RED BALLOON' (No rating, 1:53, in French) A wonderment from the Taiwanese master Hou Hsiao-hsien that is, to quote the film itself, "a bit happy and a bit sad," about a lonely Parisian boy, his distracted if loving mother (Juliette Binoche) and the red balloon that hovers at the edge of their lives like a prowler (or an angel). (Dargis)

'FORBIDDEN KINGDOM' (PG-13, 1:53) Jet Li and Jackie Chan kick each other around for the first time in this earnest English-language tribute to Chinese martial arts action movies. Nothing spectacular, but entertaining enough to satisfy kung-fu newcomers and deep-dyed aficionados. (Scott)

'FORGETTING SARAH MARSHALL' (R, 1:45) Jason Segel wrote the script and stars in this raunchy, hit-and-miss tale of a guy trying to rebound from a bad breakup. Most of the laughs are supplied by the usual Judd Apatow cast of supporting players (from whose ranks Mr. Segel was recently promoted). (Scott)

'FOUR MINUTES' (No rating, 1:52, in German) A collage of intense encounters and violent confrontations, this award-winning melodrama from Chris Kraus hinges on the mutually enabling relationship of an elderly Prussian piano teacher (Monica Bleibtreu) and her profoundly damaged young inmate-protegee (a mesmerizing Hannah Herzsprung). Though seething with lesbianism, incest and catfights, this bleak, <u>women</u>-behind-bars movie circles the allure of psychological damage with surprising chastity. (Catsoulis)

'4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS' (No rating, 1:53, in Romanian) In this ferocious, unsentimental film from the Romanian writer and director Cristian Mungiu, the camera doesn't follow the action, it expresses consciousness itself. This consciousness -- alert to the world and insistently alive -- is embodied by a young university student who in the late 1980s helps her roommate with an illegal abortion in Ceausescu's Romania. It's a pitiless, violent story that in its telling becomes a haunting and haunted intellectual and aesthetic achievement. (Dargis)

'GLASS: A PORTRAIT OF PHILIP IN TWELVE PARTS' (No rating, 1:54) Planned as a tribute to the work-obsessed musician Philip Glass, Scott Hicks's affable, admiring movie proceeds genteelly through an intellectually inquisitive and deeply spiritual life. Yet whether chatting about his aversion to music theory or appreciation of negative reviews, Mr. Glass -- like his music -- remains frustratingly distant, and the movie is a hair's breadth from hagiography. (Catsoulis)

'JELLYFISH' (No rating, 1:18, in Hebrew) A charming oddity from Israel, directed by Etgar Keret and Shira Geffen, in which lonely lives criss-cross and zig-zag, revealing serendipitous patterns of meaning and emotion. (Scott)

'LEATHERHEADS' (PG-13, 1:54) Directed by and starring George Clooney, this period piece about the early days of professional football works so hard to approximate the whirling, screwball atmospherics of classic studio comedies that it winds up in traction. Renee Zellweger is the requisite fast-talking dame. (Scott)

'THE LIFE BEFORE HER EYES' (R, 1:30) This drama, which continually doubles back on itself to revisit a Columbine-like high school massacre, is a humorless, pretentious game of narrative hide-and-seek that culminates in a cheap sucker punch. (Holden)

'MARRIED LIFE' (PG-13, 1:30) A comedy of manners merged with a suspenseful psychological thriller, this movie aspires to be a hybrid of the sort that Alfred Hitchcock polished to perfection in the age of sexual subtext and subterfuge. When to shudder and when to smirk: as you watch this sly marital fable of secrets, lies and homicidal intent, you're never sure of what your reaction should be. (Holden)

'MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY' (PG-13, 1:32) The particular screwball screen magic Amy Adams commands in this weightless period fairy tale, based on the novel by Winifred Watson, hasn't been this intense since the heyday of Jean Arthur. She helps turn a little nothing of a movie into a little something. (Holden)

'MY BLUEBERRY NIGHTS' (PG-13, 1:30) Wong Kar-wai takes a long road trip across America, stopping at diners in New York, Tennessee and Nevada and collecting lovely snapshots of Norah Jones, Natalie Portman and Rachel Weisz. Mr. Wong may be a master of color and composition, but this is basically a 90-minute vacation slide show with an O.K. soundtrack. (Scott)

'MY BROTHER IS AN ONLY CHILD' (No rating, 1:48, in Italian) Italy in the volatile 1960s, through the eyes of two brothers, one a left-wing militant, the other a fascist. A well-told if somewhat familiar story. (Scott)

'NIM'S ISLAND' (PG, 1:36) In this sweet but ho-hum adaptation of Wendy Orr's novel, an agoraphobic writer rushes to the aid of a motherless, island-bound girl (Abigail Breslin) whose father has been trapped by a storm at sea. The message that lifelong connections can be forged through books is lovely, but the casting genius who suggested Jodie Foster as a potential love interest for Gerard Butler should be looking for a new occupation. (Catsoulis)

'THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL' (PG-13, 1:55) Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johansson star in a salacious slog about two hot blue bloods who ran amok and partly unclothed in the court of Henry VIII. (Dargis)

'PARANOID PARK' (R, 1:18) Gus Van Sant's haunting, voluptuously beautiful portrait of a teenage boy who, after being suddenly caught in midflight, falls to earth, is a modestly scaled triumph without a false or wasted moment. (Dargis)

'PERSEPOLIS' (PG-13, 1:35, in French) Marjane Satrapi's adaptation of her graphic novel-memoir is a free-spirited coming-of-age story, beautifully drawn and voiced by a formidable trio of French movie stars. (Scott)

'PLANET B-BOY' (No rating, 1:35) Early in this documentary by Benson Lee, an experienced street dancer asserts that break dancing is "as legitimate as any dance that has ever existed." This brisk feature makes his case, showing international teams of break dancers -- or b-boys -- battling to win best-in-the-nation status in their home countries, then going on to compete in the 2005 world finals at the Volkswagenhalle in Braunschweig, Germany. Choppy editing prevents us from fully appreciating the dancers' grace; a couple of parent-child reconciliation stories seem shoehorned in to add "heart." Still, from moment to moment, "Planet B-Boy" is fun, sometimes thrilling and packed with illuminating details. (Matt Zoller Seitz)

'PRICELESS' (PG-13, 1:43, in French) Set in the luxurious resorts of southern France, this fizzy Gallic comedy of mistaken identities and erotic shenanigans observes a gold-digging gamine (Audrey Tautou) and a bartender-turned-gigolo (Gad Elmaleh) playing games of tainted love with wealthy sybarites on the far side of 60. (Holden)

'PROM NIGHT' (PG-13, 1:28) Brittany Snow plays the sole survivor of a stalker who killed her family three years earlier and who has chosen the night of her senior prom to finish the job. For a film about erotomania, this reimagining of the 28-year-old original is a curiously flaccid affair, dampened by a risible villain, a bloodless script and fewer scares than the elimination episodes of "Dancing With the Stars." (Catsoulis)

'REMEMBER THE DAZE' (R, 1:41) A generally entertaining but half-baked variation on Richard Linklater's high school period piece, "Dazed and Confused," which trails assorted students on their last day of school as they carouse, flirt, hook up and even momentarily consider their futures. (Laura Kern)

'THE RUINS' (R, 1:30) More disgusting than scary, this adaptation of Scott Smith's best-selling novel is the latest in a long line of horror films about upper-middle-class travelers being terrorized in unfamiliar environments. It is also, unfortunately, a movie that is nowhere near as original as its monster, a strain of malevolent, seemingly intelligent jungle vine with a taste for human flesh. (Matt Zoller Seitz)

'RUN, FAT BOY, RUN' (PG-13, 1:35) In this first feature by the former "Friends" star David Schwimmer, Simon Pegg plays a slobbish man-boy who enters a marathon to show his ex-girlfriend (Thandie Newton) that he's a worthy rival to her current beau, a rich, faintly smug American (Hank Azaria). There's little that's new here; the film is "Rocky" by way of "There's Something About Mary." Yet between Mr. Pegg's appealing performance and Mr. Schwimmer's evident belief in the script's inspirational message, the film is endearing, sometimes moving. (Seitz)

'SHINE A LIGHT' (PG-13, 2:02) As you scrutinize the aging bodies of the Rolling Stones in Martin Scorsese's riproaring concert documentary filmed in 2006, there is ample evidence that making rock 'n' roll may hold the secret of eternal vitality, if not of eternal beauty. Lean and haggard, the band (especially Mick Jagger) has the juice. (Holden)

'SMART PEOPLE' (R, 1:34) A chaotic but nonetheless insightful comedy about a grumpy professor (Dennis Quaid) who stumbles into an affair with a former student (Sarah Jessica Parker). Ellen Page and Thomas Haden Church steal quite a few scenes as the professor's daughter and his adoptive brother, and Mr. Quaid, with stooped shoulders, wayward facial hair and a closet full of corduroy jackets, is remarkably convincing. (Scott)

'THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES' (PG, 1:37) Computer-generated goblins menace three children in an old house. Not much enchantment. (Scott)'STALAGS' AND 'TWO <u>WOMEN</u> AND A MAN' (No rating, 1:03 and 16 minutes, in Hebrew) "Stalags" is a documentary named for pocket-size, pornographic, possibly anti-Semitic novels, published in early 1960s Israel, that detailed sensational tales of the torture and rape of male concentration camp prisoners by curvaceous <u>female</u> Nazi guards. The film examines the rise and fall of this short-lived craze, its inspirations and the doors it opened for discussing the Holocaust. Preceded by Roee Rosen's short "Two <u>Women</u> and a Man," an intriguing 16 minutes of trickery that offers a seemingly biographical portrait of a <u>female</u> artist and writer. (Kern)

'STOP-LOSS' (R, 1:53) Fine performances -- in particular by Ryan Philippe -- and strong emotions anchor this chaotic, confused but nonetheless arresting drama about the hard homecoming of a group of American soldiers fighting in Iraq. (Scott)

'STREET KINGS' (R, 1:47) An absurd, accidentally entertaining potboiler, based on a story by James Ellroy and directed by David Ayer, about an ultraviolent gang of cops operating inside the modern Los Angeles Police Department and wholly outside the law. Keanu Reeves plays the pit bull, and Forest Whitaker plays his master. (Dargis)

'THE SUPERHERO MOVIE' (PG-13, 1:25) Less parodic than parasitic, this weary spoof adds gross-out humor to the weary conventions of the comic-book crime-fighter genre. (Scott)

'10,000 B.C.' (PG-13, 1:49) In the future this saga, loaded with computer-generated imagery, about a tribe of mammoth-hunters will be enjoyable, in a campy kind of way, for its earnest, B-movie dumbness. At the moment, though, it's just dumb. (Scott)

'TUYA'S MARRIAGE' (No rating, 1:32, in Mandarin) Lest you think this Chinese film about sheepherders in the steppes of Inner Mongolia is an ethnographic curiosity, its characters are motivated by the same needs for companionship and material security and the same demons -- greed, lust, jealousy, despair -- that drive everybody. (Holden)

'21' (PG-21, 2:03) A feature-length bore about some smarty-pants who take Vegas for a ride. Directed by Robert Luketic and loosely based on Ben Mezrich's book "Bringing Down the House." (Dargis)

'TYLER PERRY'S MEET THE BROWNS' (PG-13, 1:40) Angela Bassett supplies the acting, and the rest of the cast contributes the raucous comedy, righteous sentiment and familial warmth that make up Mr. Perry's reliable formula. And don't forget Madea, the director's plus-size, cross-dressed alter ego, who shows up briefly near the end, just to make sure the fans get their money's worth. (Scott)

'UNDER THE SAME MOON' (PG-13, 1:49, in Spanish and English) An "Incredible Journey" for the socially conscience-stricken, Patricia Riggen's shamelessly manipulative film places all its marketing eggs in the cute-kid basket. Following a 9-year-old Mexican boy as he journeys to Los Angeles to reunite with his mother, the movie is too busy sanctifying its protagonists and prodding our tear ducts to say anything remotely novel about immigration policies or their helpless victims. (Catsoulis)

'VANTAGE POINT' (PG-13, 1:24) A gimmick (repeat the assassination of an American president over and over) in search of a point. (Dargis)

'THE VISITOR' (PG-13, 1:43) Tom McCarthy's second film as writer and director (following "The Station Agent") is the quiet, subtle story of a self-effacing man's unexpected awakening. Richard Jenkins gives a faultless

performance as a middle-aged, widowed professor jolted out of his malaise by his encounter with two unexpected houseguests. (Scott)

'WHERE IN THE WORLD IS OSAMA BIN LADEN?' (PG-13, 1:30) Morgan Spurlock ("Super-Size Me") pretends to look for the world's most notorious terrorist, and also pretends to seek insights into terrorism, war, religion and other matters. He travels to Egypt, Afghanistan, Israel and other hot spots, and concludes that the world would be a better place if people were nicer to one another. (Scott)

'YOUNG@HEART' (PG, 1:48) This upbeat documentary about an elderly people's chorus in Northampton, Mass., offers an encouraging vision of old age in which the depression commonly associated with decrepitude is held at bay by music making, camaraderie and a sense of humor. (Holden)

'YOUNG YAKUZA' (No rating, 1:39, in Japanese) In this unusual documentary Jean-Pierre Limosin spends 18 months with a clan of the yakuza, the Japanese mafia, under the provision that he not film any illegal activities. That restriction isn't as deadening as it sounds; the film ends up being an interesting portrait of a way of life that is struggling to stay relevant. (Neil Genzlinger)

Film Series

CREATIVELY SPEAKING (Friday through Sunday) This three-day survey of independent films by and/or about people of color began 12 years ago at Aaron Davis Hall in Harlem, and is now presented by the BAMcinematek in Brooklyn. The program includes a wide selection of features and shorts, documentary and narrative, including two documentaries in world-premiere screenings: Scott Macklin's "Masizakhe: Building Each Other," about a new generation of activists in South Africa (Friday), and Stafford and Judy Bailey's "Blacks Without Borders: Chasing the American Dream on Foreign Soil," which recounts the lives of 12 American expatriates (Sunday). BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Avenue, at Ashland Place, Fort Greene, Brooklyn, (718) 636-4100, bam.org; \$11. (Dave Kehr)

LUC MOULLET SELECTS (Thursday) One of the most accomplished critics of the golden age of Cahiers du Cinema, as well as one of the wittiest filmmakers of his generation, Luc Moullet returns to Anthology Film Archives to organize a weeklong series of overlooked American films. The program begins on Thursday at 7 p.m. with Cecil B. DeMille's wonderfully overheated melodrama of 1929, "The Godless Girl," in which the leader of the high school atheist society (Lina Basquette) falls in love with the leader of the campus Christians (George Duryea); it is followed at 9:30 by Harry J. Revier's weirdly detached, genuinely disturbing 1938 exploitation film, "Child Bride, " about a 13-year-old girl forced into marriage in the rural South. The program continues through May 8 with some provocative double features: King Vidor's "Ruby Gentry" (1952), paired with Elaine May's "Ishtar" (1987) next Friday; Jonas Mekas's 1964 record of the Living Theater's production of "The Brig," shown with Juleen Compton's 1965 avantgarde feature, "Stranded"; and Alan Rudolph's surreal 1999 adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut's "Breakfast of Champions" on May 3. Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Avenue, at Second Street, East Village, (212) 505-5181, anthologyfilmarchives.org; \$8. (Kehr)

SHINING THROUGH A LONG, DARK NIGHT: ROMANIAN CINEMA THEN AND NOW (Saturday and Sunday) The final presentations in the Film Society of Lincoln Center's historical overview of the newly revitalized Romanian cinema: on Saturday, Alexandru Tatos's 1982 film about filmmaking, "Sequences," and, on Sunday, Tudor Giurgiu's 2006 lesbian romance, "Love Sick," and Elisabeta Bostan's popular 1981 comedy, "Circus Performers." Walter Reade Theater, 165 West 65th Street, Lincoln Center, (212) 975-5600, filmlinc.org; \$11. (Kehr)

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL (Friday through Thursday) The festival continues with screenings of more than 120 feature films and 11 programs of shorts at various locations in Lower Manhattan and Union Square. A few of the more intriguing films this week (all with several screenings in multiple locations) include "Charly," the second feature directed by the French actress Isild le Besco; "The Chicken, the Fish and the King Crab," a documentary about an international cooking contest featuring the Spanish chef Jesus Almagro; "Guest of Cindy Sherman," the videographer Paul H-O's examination of his own relationship with Ms. Sherman; the great Polish director Andrzej Wajda's new feature, "Katyn"; the exhilarating documentary about the French daredevil Philippe Petit, "Man on Wire"; the Canadian filmmaker Guy Maddin's barbed paean to his hometown, "My Winnipeg"; Eduardo Coutinho's

documentary about the lives of Brazilian <u>women</u>, "Playing"; the Tunisian-born French director Abdellatif Kechiche's brilliant tale of North African immigrants in France, "The Secret of the Grain"; John W. Walter's fascinating documentary "Theater of War," about Bertolt Brecht, Meryl Streep and "Mother Courage." (Through May 4.) (866) 941-3378, tribecafilmfestival.org; \$15, evening and weekend screenings; \$8, weekday daytime and late-night screenings; ticket packages are available. (Holden)

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Body

The US is heading into a downturn, but as Wall Street reels many Irish migrants have danced their way up to the top. Mark Paul talks to 10 emigrants who have made it big

WHEN the annual St Patrick's Day parade winds its way up 5th Avenue in New York tomorrow, Ciaran O'Kelly will be among the cheering crowd.

Born in Dublin, he was one of tens of thousands of Irish immigrants who left the "old sod" for New York in the 1980s in search of a better life.

Many of them converged on the city's building sites, bars and restaurants looking for work. O'Kelly, though, had his sights set on the hub of the American financial sector.

His story, as much as any other, epitomises how the Irish have advanced on Wall Street. In 1989, after completing a business degree at Dublin City University, he walked into Dermot Desmond's office in NCB stockbrokers and asked the future billionaire for a job.

Desmond eyed up the ambitious young graduate, before telling him that if he wanted to work in financial services, he should get out of Ireland. "Go see the world," he told O'Kelly.

A couple of months later, O'Kelly took his advice. Armed with nothing but a list of phone numbers for influential Irish Americans, he started knocking on doors on Wall Street.

Last year, Desmond and O'Kelly bumped into each other in New York. Desmond, one of the most successful Irish businessmen of his generation, had recently trousered a profit of Euro 1 billion on the sale of London City Airport. O'Kelly, though, had also done well for himself.

At 38, he was head of global equities for Bank of America, one of the world's biggest financial institutions, and he is now considered one of Wall Street's rising stars.

These days it's wide-eyed hopefuls in search of a career in high finance who are knocking on his door, instead of the other way round.

Irish Americans have always punched above their weight on Wall Street. Imbued with the workhorse mentality of their immigrant ancestors, the American dream has always been within their grasp.

But now the Irish-born - better-educated, more confident and more ambitious than before - are also making their mark.

"The historical influence of the Irish on Wall Street has been very strong," said Declan Kelly, the chief executive of Financial Dynamics in America, which helps compile the annual Wall Street 50 list of influential Irish Americans.

"If you walk the floor of the stock exchange, every second guy has an Irish name," he said.

America's top real estate financier is from Mayo. The head of the American division of one of the world's biggest banks is the son of a Dublin butcher. Wall Street's top discount broker is from Kerry, while the man tipped to be the next chief executive of Bank of America was born in a two-roomed cottage in Donegal.

Irish-born executives are barging their way towards the boardrooms of blue chip financial firms, from Lehman Brothers to Goldman Sachs.

Here, we look at 10 of the highest-profile Irish emigrants on Wall Street, many of whom find themselves in the eye of the current global financial crisis.

1) Brendan McDonagh, 49, chief executive, HSBC North America HSBC vies with Citigroup for the mantle of the world's biggest bank outside China. McDonagh, from Terenure in Dublin, runs its entire operation in the biggest economy in the world, with Canada thrown in for good measure.

He is in charge of 50,000 employees and assets totalling \$557 billion (Euro 357 billion). He took over the top job last month.

There is something of an Irish cadre at HSBC. Although the London-based group chief executive Mike Geoghegan was born in the UK, he went to college in Dublin. Anthony Murphy, one of McDonagh's main lieutenants in HSBC North America, is a fellow Dubliner and Trinity graduate.

"The US is a meritocracy and you get on here if you work hard. That's why the Irish have probably had a disproportionate success factor on Wall Street," said McDonagh.

Although he left Ireland in 1979, he arrived in America only in 2002, having spent the intervening two-and-a-bit decades working his way round the world in various senior roles with HSBC.

"The longer you stay away from home, the harder it is to come back. And the more senior you get, the longer you stay in any one place," said McDonagh, who is based in Chicago but spends a lot of his time in New York.

McDonagh is the man tasked with cleaning up HSBC's US subprime mortgage mess, which has seen the bank write down billions in losses.

He was one of a number of bank bosses hauled before a US Senate hearing last year on the issue; HSBC's Finance Corporation is one of the biggest subprime lenders in America.

He dismisses the idea that banks like his were negligent in their lending practices. "Negligent is not a word I would use. Some banks got caught up in the growth and now they have found that has come home to roost," he said. "In the last three or four years, you had an explosion in (the number of) subprime mortgages in America.

"Certain segments of the population see their house as a nest egg, but some used it to finance current expenditure," he said.

"The whole thing got ahead of itself and then suddenly the carousel stopped. It just has to work its way through the system now." He wouldn't comment on whether HSBC would be interested in buying an Irish bank to gain access to the market here.

"One of the reasons for acquiring a retail bank is to acquire its deposit base. You can acquire a euro deposit base by buying a bank of substance in any one of 12 European countries. We already have one in France.

"If someone was to acquire one of the Irish banks, it would be because they had difficulty accessing other Eurozone markets or if they had a specific reason to be in Ireland," he said.

McDonagh's family ran a butcher shop on Moore Street until the 1970s, when it was knocked down to make way for the Ilac shopping centre. As a youth he says he spent his summers with a meat cleaver in his hand, apart from one year when he took a job "as Trinity's laundry-van man".

His brother is head of compliance at the new IFSC branch of Wachovia in Dublin, while his other brother is a French teacher at his old alma mater of Terenure College.

Tomorrow will be spent at a St Patrick's day reception in the home of New York's Irish consul general, Niall Burgess. "But I won't be drinking green beer," he said.

2) Liam McGee, 53, president and head of global consumer and small business banking, Bank of America McGee, considered by some to be a shoo-in for BoA's top job before he retires, was born in Ballyshannon, Co Donegal. His impoverished family emigrated to America when he was a toddler, where his father found work as a bus driver.

"I was born in a two-roomed thatched cottage, where I lived with my mother, father and us 13 kids. My dad had emigrated to New York but he came back and I was born. But he'd had a taste of the US and when I was a year old we left Ireland. I was raised in Los Angeles," he said.

He is now in charge of the bank's 6,000-branch US retail network, having joined the company in 1990. He has overseen massive acquisitions including that of the Fleet Bank network and card issuer MBNA.

A fluent Spanish speaker, McGee taught English in Mexico after graduating from university.

He says he keeps a bottle of Redbreast whiskey to remind himself of his homeland.

3) Denis Kelleher, 69, founder and chief executive, Wall Street Access Kelleher is the undisputed father figure of the Irish in the New York financial sector, having emigrated from Kerry 50 years ago to work as a Wall Street runner.

His discount brokerage, which is worth about \$1.5 billion, was born out of an offshoot of Warren Buffett's hedgefund business in the 1970s.

"I left Ireland on January 26 1958, I got here on the 27th, and I started work on the 28th," he said, in a brogue that is still more Munster than Manhattan.

"When you would run from one brokerage to another in those days with a paper trade, sometimes it got stamped with a DK. I thought, 'Jesus, these guys know my name already'," he said. (DK actually stood for Don't Know - to signify an unrecognised trade.) Kelleher sits on the Irish government's US economic advisory board and will spend much of St Patrick's Day in meetings with taoiseach Bertie Ahern in Washington.

As well as being St Patrick's day, tomorrow is also his daughter Colleen Patricia's birthday.

Kelleher, who was honoured as grand master of the New York St Patrick's day parade in 2005, has homes in Manhattan, Staten Island and the Hamptons.

Last year he put his Kenmare Park stately home in Kerry on the market, but says he might not sell it now - "The family wants me to keep it."

As a man who has seen all the cycles before, Kelleher says we shouldn't worry too much about the credit crunch and the possibility of recession. "It's amazing how all these bright finance people can come up with ever-more innovative ways to screw things up," he said, before tipping slimmed-down financial stocks as the hot sector for next year.

"It will take time to unwind the mess we are in now, but when it happens, financial services will be the sector to be in. Until we screw it up again," he said.

4) Michael Higgins, 47, managing director, CIBC World Markets Mayo man Higgins, who hails from Castlebar, is one of the foremost property financiers in America. As head of real estate finance at CIBC, he closed almost \$10 billion worth of deals last year alone, some of them with Irish developers.

A graduate of University College Galway and New York University, he also sits on the US foundation board of the Irish institution, alongside another of our Wall Street 10, Adrian Jones, and Irial Finan, a top Coca-Cola executive.

Higgins left Mayo for New York in the 1980s with a business studies degree under his arm, eventually finding a job with the real estate finance group at Chase Manhattan bank.

He juggled a property master's degree part-time at NYU while working, moving on to firms including Paine Webber. He set up the real estate office of CIBC in 1996.

Along with many of the Wall Street 10, Higgins is actively involved in a number of Irish American networking and charity groups, including the American Ireland Fund.

5) Adrian Jones, 43, managing director, Goldman Sachs Capital Partners Roscommon native Jones, who avoids self-publicity like the plague, is a serious player on the American investment banking scene and has been negotiating multi-billion-dollar deals for Goldman Sachs since the mid 1990s.

He is Goldman's representative on the board of global fast-food giant Burger King, was part of Tony O'Reilly's Valentia consortium that bought Eircom, and recent deals he has negotiated include the \$3.4 billion acquisition of Education Management Corporation, a private secondary school company.

Jones's route from the west of Ireland to Wall Street, however, was via the <u>Hezbollah</u>-infested warzone that is south Lebanon.

He served as an officer in the Irish army for eight years from 1981, reaching the rank of lieutenant. He served with the United Nations' peacekeeping outfit in Lebanon for two years before leaving the army.

After marrying an American, he moved to New York in 1989 to work for Bank of Boston, earning an MBA from Harvard five years later. He joined Goldman in 1994.

6) Ciaran O'Kelly, 39, head of global equities, Banc of America Securities Before O'Kelly left for New York, he read an article in a Sunday newspaper about influential Irish Americans. He rang James Morrissey, the journalist who wrote it, and Morrissey agreed to give him phone numbers for the article's subjects.

He used those contacts to help him get his start on Wall Street, trading the dollar and the deutschemark with FX Interbank.

His first job in New York had actually been a couple of years earlier, when he spent a summer there on a student visa, working in construction. "It was back breaking, but character-building," he said.

Throughout his college years at Dublin City University, O'Kelly was always dabbling in business. He set up a market research firm with some of his classmates and wrote his final year thesis on the viability of a third television station in Ireland.

He presented his thesis to James Morris, chief executive of Windmill Lane studios. The following year, a consortium led by Morris was granted a television licence by the government, which was later revoked, then restored and eventually sold on to Canwest, which launched TV3.

O'Kelly now runs the 900-person global equities team for Bank of America.

"The growth of the Irish economy over the 18 years since I left has been phenomenal. I can't help but admire the Celtic tiger economy that has been created," he said.

The former football player comes over a little shy when it is put to him that he is viewed as one of Wall Street's rising stars. Some say he could follow his compatriot Liam McGee to the upper echelons of the Bank of America family.

"My goal every day is just to bring passion, persistence and imagination to my job and to be challenged," he said.

7) Michael Brewster, 39, managing director Lehman Brothers It's hard to go wrong on Wall Street with a name like Brewster. Remember the 1985 Richard Prior movie Brewster's Millions? It was about an impoverished Big Apple chancer who ends up bagging \$300m. Not quite our Irishman's story, although his is an interesting one too.

Brewster is from Longford, and studied a diploma in business at Athlone Institute of Technology. One day in 1988, his marketing lecturer brought in a Wall Street bigshot to give the class a pep talk who boasted of all the money he had made in New York. "There wasn't much happening in Ireland at that time," Brewster recalled. "My friend, Patrick McBrien (who is now a Wall Street partner with Deutsche Bank), said: 'That's where we're going.'" Before this encounter, Brewster says, the closest they had been to stocks was "the livestock out in the fields of Longford".

Brewster and his pal went to Atlantic City, where he worked in a casino on a student visa. When it ran out, he kept his head down, kept working, transferred his Irish college credits over to the US and finished his degree there.

When there was a green card lottery in America in 1991, Brewster was living in a house with eight other Irish guys.

They sent in 1,000 applications each, which they piled into the back of a battered car. Brewster drove to Virginia to personally deliver all 9,000 envelopes at the immigration office.

He, along with six of his friends, bagged a green card. Five years later Brewster became a US citizen.

He has been with Lehman since 1993 and runs his own high-performance fund portfolios in the company's wealth management division for a coterie of exclusive clients.

When he first joined Lehman, Brewster supplemented his entry-level wages by ferrying tourists around Central Park on a horse and carriage on his days off.

Brewster says Irish shares are not attractive to him at the moment, because of the strength of the euro.

"At this time, with the euro where it is, we are 100% invested in the US. If the dollar came back, Europe is a pond one might consider fishing in. But at the moment, you are paying 50% more than you were just a few years ago," he said.

He will also be present at the consul general's bash in New York tomorrow, before joining his pals on Enterprise Ireland's financial services advisory board for a St Patrick's day dinner at the famous Bobby Van's Steakhouse.

8) John O'Donoghue, 48, managing director and head of equities, SG Cowen & Company O'Donoghue took over the mantle of head of equities just last week, having previously shared the title with someone else. He previously held senior roles at Credit Suisse First Boston and Schroders.

Cowen is a mid-sized brokerage with 550 staff and revenues of \$350m, and O'Donoghue is one of its top four personnel.

He hails from Newcastle, Co Down, the son of Dublin parents, and studied economics at Queen's university. He now sits on the college's advisory board.

He moved to America in 1980, having first accepted and then rejected a job as a trainee accountant at KPMG in Dublin.

"I had spent the previous four summers in Maine as a student. Through people I had met in the US, I got offered a job in oil and gas tax sheltering," he said. "Once that offer came in, I just flew the coop. I was out of there."

O'Donoghue settled in Manhattan, rather than the traditional Irish areas of Woodlawn in the Bronx or Woodside in Queens.

When Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness arrived in New York last year to plead for investment in Northern Ireland, O'Donoghue went along for dinner and was even photographed alongside Paisley.

One wonders if he mentioned to the big man that his brother is Frank O'Donoghue, the top Belfast barrister who defended Real IRA chief Michael McKevitt.

"But he also defended Johnny Adair (the convicted Loyalist terrorist), so he's an equal opportunities defender," laughs O'Donoghue.

O'Donoghue is not an American citizen, although his two children were born there.

His eldest son is in the US Navy Seals and leaves for his second tour of duty in Iraq on Good Friday. "It makes me nervous, but proud," said O'Donoghue.

On the credit crunch, O'Donoghue said: "I've seen it, I've lived, it's awful, but it won't last forever. I believe we are closer to the end of it than we are to the start. But we need the investment banks to come in with a clean set of hands and tell everyone what they have invested in."

9) David Dempsey, 50, managing director, Bentley Associates Dempsey, from south Dublin, is a high-profile Wall Street investment banker who specialises in doing deals in China.

He is also a qualified pilot and has been flying planes for about 27 years. He is one of just 400 master flight instructors in the whole of north America.

He attended Castleknock college on Dublin's northside, and later studied business at UCD. While a student there, he became involved in the AIESEC, a prestigious international network of young business brains, many of whom go on to become world financial leaders.

After leaving college, he served an 18-month stint in Brussels as the organisation's secretary general.

Famous alumni of AIESEC include former German chancellor Helmut Kohl, and former Finnish president Martii Ahtisaari. Dempsey then went on to advise a number of former eastern bloc countries on their privatisation programmes and ran the entire Hungarian government's programme from Budapest during the 1990s.

"The most interesting thing for US investors is that you often come across early stage Irish companies that are already global in their thinking," he said.

10) Thomas Ryan, 39, managing director, ING Capital Ryan, a Limerick native, won't be out celebrating St Patrick's day. He will be too busy changing nappies - his wife gave birth to their first child in New York last Wednesday.

"It's funny, because the first time I came to New York, on a summer student visa in the 1980s, I never thought that this would be the sort of place where I would want to bring up kids," he said.

He became the youngest managing director in ING Capital a few years ago and has been with the Dutch giant for 11 years, having served stints in its Dublin branch and in its headquarters in Amsterdam.

He is regional head of the Americas for its financial engineering advisory group, although he started his career with NCB stockbrokers in Dublin after graduation from the University of Limerick.

"The financial engineering group is the geek squad of financing. We advise on all the sorts of stuff that don't fit into any other division and we have a particular focus on cross-border deals," he said.

Ryan is a member of The American Ireland Fund and is on the advisory committee of the SDLP in America.

He says he would eventually like to find a role that would allow him to divide his time equally between Wall Street and Ireland or the UK.

When the Irish business fraternity gathers at the consul general's residence tomorrow for their St Patrick's day bash, organised by Enterprise Ireland's American financial services group, talk will surely turn to the turmoil facing the world's financial markets.

Bear Stearns, the troubled American bank that last week had to access emergency federal funds, is another that has a strong Irish contingent at senior level.

Having harried their way to the top table of world finance, the Irish-born executives who have made Wall Street their second home have as much, if not more, than anyone to lose.

High flyers

DUBLINER Anthony Kelly, a senior executive vice president at HSBC North America under Brendan McDonagh, is another high-flying Irishman on Wall Street.

The Trinity graduate, who studied there at the same time as his boss - although they didn't know each other - previously ran the bank's massive securities division in America.

Former Dublin electronics executive Brian Haughey is now a director with Citigroup Global Markets, having moved to America in the mid 1990s.

He has been credited with revamping its securitisations business, driving sales up to \$3.5 billion.

Louthman Martin Brady is another Goldman Sachs executive rapidly rising through the ranks.

He is global technology manager for the bank's private-wealth management division and is also a managing director of the firm.

Ann Duignan, a managing director and highly-regarded analyst at Bear Stearns, is one of the few Irish <u>women</u> to have made an impact on Wall Street.

Duignan, who is originally from Roscommon, covers the machinery sector.

Source: Irish America magazine's Wall Street 50 listing

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La colère dans les camps de réfugiés palestiniens de Sabra et Chatila

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Body

ASSIS derrière son stand de falafels, l'oreille collée au transistor, Abdul Latif Abel s'empresse de nourrir ses clients de passage des dernières informations sur Gaza, avant de baisser son rideau de fer. Cinq jours, déjà, que ce réfugié palestinien de 40 ans ferme, juste après l'heure du déjeuner, les portes de son petit restaurant, au coeur de la rue principale du camp de Chatila, pour aller manifester contre Israël. « On a beau brûler des pneus, on a beau aller protester... Mais dans le fond, on se sent impuissant », concède-t-il.De la Palestine, sa « terre d'origine », Abdul Latif Abed ne connaît que les images qui passent en boucle sur son téléviseur. Comme la plupart des quelque 400 000 réfugiés palestiniens qui vivent au Liban, il fait partie de la deuxième génération, qui est née ici, dans un des douze camps répartis à travers le pays. Mais il ne peut s'empêcher de vivre « par procuration », dit-il, « la tragédie des habitants de Gaza » aux airs de « déjà-vu ». « Ces gens-là partagent notre sang. Quand ils souffrent, nous souffrons aussi », insiste-t-il.Avec ses airs de modeste cité-dortoir où s'entassent de petites bâtisses en ciment, le camp de Chatila ressemble aujourd'hui à n'importe quelle banlieue pauvre du Moyen-Orient. Ouvert en 1949, lors la première guerre israélo-palestinienne, il s'est transformé, au fil des années, en une véritable ville dans la ville, avec ses commerces, ses mosquées, sa vie de quartier. Impossible, pourtant, d'effacer les tragiques souvenirs du massacre de 1982, perpétré par une milice chrétienne libanaise, soutenue par l'armée israélienne, qui occupait à l'époque Beyrouth.

« Je n'oublierai jamais »

« J'étais jeune, mais je n'oublierai jamais ce qui s'est passé », s'enflamme Abdul Latif Abel. « J'ai vu mes cousins et mes oncles mourir. J'ai vu notre maison se faire écraser. Comment ne pas en vouloir aux Israéliens ? » poursuit-il. Un essaim de badauds vient de se former autour de lui. « Mort à Israël! », hurle un homme, en passant. « Avec notre sang, avec notre âme, nous nous sacrifierons pour toi, Gaza! », rétorque un autre. Un peu plus loin, Ahmad Najjar, un jeune réfugié tire nerveusement quelques bouffées sur sa chicha. « J'enrage, je brûle à l'intérieur quand je vois ce qui se passe en Palestine », dit-il.Derrière lui, la plupart des boutiques ont accroché des tissus noirs sur leurs vitrines. Çà et là, des drapeaux du mouvement palestinien Hamas et du *Hezbollah* libanais flottent au vent. La milice chiite libanaise a été une des premières organisations à dénoncer les raids israéliens sur Gaza. Son leader, Hassan Nasrallah, véritable figure de la résistance à travers le monde arabo-musulman, a déjà prononcé deux discours de soutien au peuple palestinien, en se gardant néanmoins de suggérer l'ouverture d'un « second front ». Au pays du Cèdre, le parallèle avec la guerre de 2006 est dans tous les esprits. « Mais où sont les autres

pays arabes ? », s'interroge, déçu, Ahmad Najjar, en pointant du doigt l'Égypte, accusée, par de nombreux Palestiniens, de connivence avec Israël.Pour l'heure, les instructions données par les différentes organisations palestiniennes présentes dans les camps, font écho aux propos de Nasrallah et prônent la retenue. « Nous manifestons par solidarité, mais la réponse armée aux tirs de Tsahal doit se faire du territoire palestinien, pas du Liban », précise Abu Wassin, du parti Fatah Intifada. En 1975, c'est à partir d'opérations commandos lancées contre Israël, depuis le Liban, par des réfugiés palestiniens qu'avait commencé la guerre civile libanaise. Mais entre les défenseurs d'une mobilisation pacifique, les partisans d'un engagement armé, et ceux qui s'efforcent de faire abstraction de la crise, une fracture est aujourd'hui en train de prendre forme. Ce jour-là, à Chatila, c'est sous la contrainte que certains commerçants se sont résignés à fermer leur boutique. « Je veux travailler, je ne veux pas aller manifester! », se plaignait l'un d'entre eux, encerclé par des hommes armés.

Graphic

Palestinian <u>women</u> and children in Chatila refugee camp in Beirut shout slogans during a protest against Israel's attack on the Gaza strip which killed over 150 people

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La colère dans les camps de réfugiés palestiniens de Sabra et Chatila; Jour après jour, ils vont manifester contre Israël, mais respectent les appels à la retenue d'Hassan Nasrallah.

Le Figaro

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Graphic

Palestinian <u>women</u> and children in Chatila refugee camp in Beirut shout slogans during a protest against Israel's attack on the Gaza strip which killed over 150 people

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The Bismarck Tribune April 26, 2007 Thursday

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Body

In Iran, the government overturned the convictions of six men who, among other things, killed a young couple because they were walking together in public. In China, local authorities seized about 60 <u>women</u> and forcibly aborted their pregnancies. In Russia, the Putin government expanded its control of the media. In Cuba - oh, well, you already know. But what you may not know is that given such a vast palate of injustice and depredations, the British National Union of Journalists made a truly original move: It singled out Israel to boycott.

The boycott, mind you, is not a journalistic one. Instead, it will extend to lemons and melons and that sort of thing. The boycott was issued as "a gesture of support for the Palestinian people," some of whom, as it happens, are holding captive a BBC correspondent, Alan Johnston. His execution has been claimed by one group, although no proof has been offered. Suffice it to say the situation is dire.

What possessed the journalist union's board - in a 66-54 vote - to take such action? The question is worth posing because it followed a similar vote last year by British academics (later rescinded) to avoid, under pain of death or something, their Israeli colleagues. And, more important, it is yet another bleat, in Europe and in this country, from people and organizations that, for good reasons and bad, have simply had it with Israel. Why won't the pushy Jewish state shape up?

In some sense, it is a fair enough question. The wrongful and counterproductive occupation of the West Bank is now in its 40th year. Settlements continue to go up, and the government of Ehud Olmert, weak and hapless, is unable or unwilling to contain them. The government proved its incompetence in the Lebanon war of summer past, managing to enhance <u>Hezbollah</u>'s standing and not managing to retrieve the two captured soldiers in whose name the war was launched in the first place. For Israel - but really for Lebanese civilians most of all - the war was a disaster.

But Sudan kills by the score in Darfur and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe beats his opponents to a pulp, and in almost all of the Arab world there is no such thing as freedom of the press. In Israel, there not only is, but the press is as rambunctious as can be found anywhere.

The British journalists say they are moved by the plight of the Palestinian people, and they are right to be. But the misery of a Gazan or a West Banker is not solely Israel's doing. The government of Gaza is the political arm of a terrorist organization, and if the West Bank is suffering - and it is - the cause is not only Israeli land lust but also a morbid fear of terrorism. British journalists would no doubt approve similar measures if London's city buses had not once, but repeatedly, been blown to smithereens by passengers with the exact fare and a belt of explosives.

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So what explains this fury at Israel - and only at Israel? What explains this need to denounce, to boycott? Some of it surely comes from the uncritical support that Israel gets from the United States, which, to lefties all over the world, is a vile state, maybe worthy - if it were not for jeans, movies and hip-hop - of a boycott itself.

Some of it no doubt reflects frustration from the efforts of Jewish organizations to suffocate any criticism of Israel and to hurl the epithet "anti-Semite" at anyone with an odd bent to his thinking. But some of it, surely, is anti-Semitism itself, a rage at the impudent, pushy Jew and this state created in the midst of the Arab world. Forgotten, conveniently and appallingly, is history itself and the reason for Israel's creation. This does not excuse injustice to Palestinians, it merely explains. But it is an explanation so soaked with the blood of Jews as to seem utterly concocted: It cannot be. But it was.

The British journalists, like the academics before them, dare to tread where an army of goons has gone before.

If they do not recognize the ember of anti-Semitism still glowing within them, they ought to park themselves before a mirror and ask why, of all the nations, do they single out Israel for reprimand and obloquy?

This business of assigning to Jews a special burden, for seeing in them both more of mankind's bad qualities and less of its good, has a dark and ugly pedigree: the Chosen People, again - and again in the wrong way.

(Richard Cohen writes for the Washington Post. His syndicated column appears Thursdays.)

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Body

On Sept. 25, 2008, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was interviewed by Neil MacFarquhar of The New York Times. The following is an edited transcript of the interview provided by Mr. MacFarquhar. Ellipses are put in place of Koranic verses, missed words or exchanges devoid of content.

The New York Times: In about seven months you will be facing re-election, so what are you going to present to the people of Iran as your main accomplishments? Do you think they are going to vote against you because people are upset about the economy, about high inflation and high unemployment? There have been some questions asked in the Majlis [the name of Iran's Parliament] and elsewhere about where the oil revenue of about \$120 billion dollars has been spent?

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate We are indeed very glad to be able to discuss issues with one another. Our government has had numerous achievements in different sectors -- cultural, economic and political sectors. It is true that the entire world is faced with economic problems today. It is only natural that Iran's economy is affected. But Iran has had very rapid economic growth in some areas. We are in fact going through a period where we are experiencing a steady high level of economic growth. It's true that there is also inflation, but we are preparing to curb it. Pretty much all over the world we can find that the absolute figure for inflation has doubled. It hasn't yet doubled for us. I have very good relations with the Majlis. Our Majlis is a very free one. They express opinions on every issue.

Regarding the question you have asked where the oil revenue has gone, I have never heard that question asked from us Perhaps you are reading articles by some groups critical of the government in Iran. You can find a lot of those articles; they can say things. But our revenue is actually much higher than the figure you said. The oil revenue is part of the Iranian revenue. We have numerous other aspects to the revenue. We have tax revenues, customs revenues, revenues from our mineral resources, from fields and lands and also revenue from non-oil exports. According to Iranian law all the revenue that Iran receives should be held by the public treasury. All expenditures must be approved by the parliament and the parliament monitors expenditures and they prepare very clear reports which are also published annually. So this is the legal process.

NYT: Hasn't Mr. [Hassan] Rohani published a letter asking where the oil revenues have gone? Hasn't His Excellency the president replaced the central bank governor twice? All the oil-producing countries have experienced an unprecedented economic boom, and yet Iran still has high unemployment. I think there are a lot of questions raised inside Iran about how he has been running the economy?

President Ahmadinejad: Iran is a free country for people to express their opinion. I'm surprised you show such sensitivity to the domestic issues. Mr. Rohani is a free person in Iran who is free to express his views. Everyone is free to express what he or she wants whether for or against the government and there are in fact hundreds of opinions that in fact speak in favor of our policies. In fact unemployment rates are decreasing in Iran. Of course because of the high population growth in Iran, at a certain juncture of time employment generation became a challenge. I would say the problems facing you here in America are probably 10 times bigger than any facing Iran. Our problem is not so big for us to infuse the economy with 700 billion dollars, not even 70 billion dollars, not even 5 billion dollars.

It is only natural that managers at times change. That, too, happens everywhere in the world. We are about to embark on a new economic plan, so we need to establish an economic team that is well-coordinated, and that has happened now. These are all a natural part of running this economy. Do you think it is essential to discuss this bilaterally with you?

NYT: I've been to Iran a lot, and I know people work two jobs to survive and they really are angry about the economy. When you talk to Iranians it is the one thing that they really criticize the government for all the time.

President Ahmadinejad: Let's wait a few months and see how people will vote in the elections. We are always constantly in touch with the people, we live together side by side. I invite you to make the trip with me to Iran, to visit Iran so you can hear what people say. There is a lot of freedom in Iran. They express themselves, they participate in elections, they hold rallies and gatherings. We are not too concerned, and neither should you be concerned.

NYT: The other economic point is the question of gasoline. We know that Iran is one of the largest oil-producing countries in the world, and yet it imports 40 percent of its gasoline. That is another thing that people get upset about. Why is it so high, and why don't you invest more money in refineries, for example?

President Ahmadinejad: Are people really angry over this?

NYT: Yes, occasionally they riot and burn gas stations.

President Ahmadinejad: That is not the reason why they put those on fire. We are actually about to build seven additional refineries. Of course gasoline is used at very high rates in Iran because it is extremely cheap. The government pays a lot of money to afford that.

NYT: You said that human rights and freedom of expression exists in Iran and that people are very free, but there has been a lot of criticism of your human rights record. Iran leads the world now in juvenile executions -- I believe more than 30 recently -- and is now second only to China in executions over all. Why have you felt the need for this increased repression?

President Ahmadinejad: You have asked very good questions. In Iran youngsters are not executed. Where have they been executed? Our law actually sets 18 as the criminally liable age for capital punishment. So I don't really know where you brought the number 30 from.

NYT: It was in a Human Rights Watch report. Behnam Zare?

President Ahmadinejad: Ah. Sometimes these figures get confused with the execution of drug traffickers. A large band of drug traffickers was actually executed in Iran, that is true. We have laws in Iran. People who carry more than a certain volume of drugs on them are subject to execution. It's a very good measure. We are spending so that you can live a healthier life here. Please remember that several thousand members of our security forces have died as a result of combat with drug traffickers, in fact close to 4,000. These drug traffickers are not normally juveniles. Our penal code is in fact very strong and very advanced. In our legal procedures, every person had the right to five appeals, which is almost unique in the world. Let us also remember that a lot of the reaction given to Iran is politicized. That is why we don't pay much attention to it. There are people who like to use this as a reason to put more pressure on Iran.

You must know that people in Iran love their country and like their government. For 30 years we've heard these kinds of statements made about the Iranian government. But at the same time 30 big elections have been held in the country. Annually at least two large demonstrations are held in the country during which almost 30 million people rally in support. Tomorrow on Friday is one such rally. The other is on the anniversary of the victory of the revolution in February.

The relationship between the people and the government in Iran has its own special nature. We live among the people, with people from all strata of society -- students, university students, government employees, farmers, businessmen. There is really no restriction in our relations with the people. Our leader holds meetings in which people come and form a queue to ask questions directly. Everyone can come and ask those questions, very freely. There are no restrictions on it. The relationship between the government and the people in Iran is a very friendly one. All the people support their government. Of course there are people who criticize it or are against it, and that you find everywhere. But they are an absolute minority. We really don't have a major problem in Iran with our people. We live with them, side by side. The entire government is elected by the people -- the leadership, the government, the Parliament, everyone is elected somehow. So the points you raise are really highly politicized issues that matter most abroad outside Iran. Inside it is not the case that we talk about this all the time.

NYT: On another subject, you are a Persian; you are not an Arab. Your country has never directly at least fought a war with Israel, and yet you seem obsessed by the Jews. Why?

President Ahmadinejad: We have nothing to do with their business at all. Jewish people live in Iran; they have lived there historically. They have a representative in our Parliament. Although there are only 20,000 people, they still have one representative in Parliament. Whereas for the rest of the population you have a minimum requirement of 150,000 people to have one representative. So the Jewish people are treated just like everyone else, like the Christians and the Muslims and the Zoroastrians. They are respected. Everyone is respected.

The question is really over Zionism. Zionism is not Judaism. It is a political party. It is a very secretive political party, which is the root cause of insecurity and wars. For 60 years in our region people have been killed, they have been threatened for 60 years, they have been aggressed upon for 60 years. Several large wars have occurred. A large number of territories there are occupied. More than five million people have been displaced and become refugees. *Women* and children are attacked in their own homes. They demolish homes over the heads of *women* and children with bulldozer, in their own house, in their own homeland. These are not crimes that one can shut ones eyes to. We disagree with these criminal acts and we announce it loud and clear. The anger of the U.S. government does not prevent us from saying loud and clear what we think about these acts. As long as these crimes are not rooted out we will continue voicing our concern.

I am surprised that in your media there is hardly any attention to the human rights crimes committed by the Zionist regime, nor to the ongoing crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. NATO troops went to Afghanistan to establish security, but the just expanded insecurity. Terrorism has increased. The production of illicit drugs has multiplied. Some days there are 10 people killed, some days there are 100 people killed. Sometimes wedding ceremonies are bombarded and insecurity has now affected Pakistan as well. In the process of occupying Iraq over one million people have been killed, a lot of <u>women</u> and children, several million people have been displaced. Is there enough forces in America to represent those innocents who have been deprived of their rights innocently those countries?

There are seven billion people living on this planet, close to 200 countries. Why is it that politicians here in the United States only rise to defend the Zionists? What commitment forces the U.S. government to victimize itself in support of a regime that is basically a criminal one? We can't understand it. When human rights are violated in Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo, how come there is just not enough attention given to it? In a lot of countries that are friends of the United States there are vast human rights violations. Human rights has become completely politicized with multiple standards that apply to different parts of the world. I would like to repeat myself: People in Iran like their government. You will see in the election.

NYT: Can we ask about relations with the U.S. government, and in particular whether under a new U.S. administration there would be any possibility of a grand bargain?

President Ahmadinejad: I have said many times that we would like to have good relations with everyone, including the United States. But these relations must be based on justice, fairness and mutual respect. Whenever the U.S. government declares its commitment to these fundamental principles, we will be ready to talk, even though we are very saddened by the behavior of the U.S. government. U.S. administrations have really misbehaved with our people. They have really acted in a misguided way with our people in the last 50 years or so. There is a long list of these misguided policies But once the American government states its commitment to the principles of fairness and mutual respect, then we don't see any problems talking.

One can embark on a new period for talks. I've said that our absolute principle for these talks are fairness and mutual respect. We helped in Afghanistan. The result of that assistance was Mr. Bush directly threatening us with a military attack. For six years he has been engaged in similar talk against us. Next time around we need to take more measured steps, more firm steps. Of course wherever we can help ease the pain of people we will continue co-operating in those areas.

NYT: The Bush administration is considering a proposal to open an interests section in Tehran. Is this something that you could agree to?

President Ahmadinejad: I have announced before that we will look at the proposal with a positive frame of mind.

NYT: Have they discussed it with you in any way?

President Ahmadinejad: There has been no official request made.

NYT: Could you talk about how you perceive the U.S. election. Do you see any difference between the two candidates?

President Ahmadinejad: What do you think?

NYT: I am more interested in what you think.

President Ahmadinejad: Vice versa We do not interfere in domestic affairs here in the United States. We believe that an election is something that is the right of the people here in the United States. People here must decide for themselves.

But we hope that whoever is elected will start a new path on their exchanges with others. We do believe whoever comes to office has to take care of two issues.

The first is to restrict the scope of America's interventions abroad to the geography of this country alone. These interventions have caused instability and insecurity around the globe. And place enormous financial pressure on the American people as well as people around the world. Nobody has invited the U.S. government to be the head of the global village. The early founders of the United States chanted slogans that demonstrated their single desire to assist people within America. You need to solve the problems of the people of this country within the geographic boundary of this country itself. Look at the neglect of these American concerns that have been replaced by an over concern by what goes on abroad and the country's military budget is increasing every year. Maybe if the American government had not gotten so involved abroad there would have been more peace and security in the world and more welfare for the American people today. The economic crisis here today is now hurting the whole world. It probably would have been better if this enormous expenditure had been used to improve the welfare of the people. bringing more health and education to people in this country. Had that been done more than 100,000 Afghanis and more than one million Iraqis would still be alive. People in America would not have had these problems, banks here would not have gone bankrupt. The government would not be considering infusing 700 billion dollars into these large corporations. We think the world can indeed be managed better. So we believe that whoever becomes president must focus on removing the problems here at home and focus on achieving the welfare of the American people.

The second issue they must give attention to is to fix relations with Iran. That answers your question. We hope whoever is elected brings about real fundamental changes.

NYT: On the question of fixing problems at home instead of working abroad, sometimes in Iran you hear criticism-particularly when I was there after the earthquake in 1990 and in Bam after the earthquake. Iranians always say, "Why are we sending money to Palestine, why are we sending money to Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>? We should be rebuilding our houses at home." So does what applies to the United States also apply to Iran?

President Ahmadinejad: I really want to thank you for caring so much for the Iranian people I am an Iranian. I live with the Iranian people. Iranians know best how to fix their problems.

NYT: You talk about fixing relations with the United States. At the core of that disrupted relationship is the nuclear question. India, Pakistan, North Korea, they all have nuclear programs, they have all made accommodations with the United States in some way and they have benefited from it. So why don't you just suspend enrichment, you don't have to end your program you can just suspend it, you have made a lot of progress, and just take the incentives that the six powers have offered?

President Ahmadinejad: I believe I answered your question before. Who has invited the United States and its allies to determine how others should live or that others should seek their permission first if they want to do something?

NYT: But there is a United Nations mandate that Iran should stop enrichment?

President Ahmadinejad: The United Nations is completely under the pressure of the U.S. administration. Head of the I.A.E.A. told me personally that he is under pressure.

NYT: But the Chinese and the Russians, who are allies of yours, have gone along with it?

President Ahmadinejad: It doesn't matter, it has no connection with the relationship that the United States has established with the agency. We believe that behaviors should change. If they don't, problems won't get resolved. If the U.S. wants and likes something for itself they should like it for us, too.

Actually the question in our mind is that the U.S. has good relations with countries that have the atomic bomb and bad relations with countries like us who are simply pursuing peaceful nuclear energy. It was one of the biggest blunders of the U.S. government to cease its relations with Iran. I recall vividly that when the U.S. president at the time announced on television that the United States would cease relations with Iran, it seemed that the United States expected that the government of Iran would soon disappear. That did not happen.

Iran is a very big country, with very big people, with a very big culture. So it is not easy to bring about a downfall of Iran with these kinds of actions. Iran's economy is 100 times larger than what it was back then. Scientifically it has advanced at least 100 times. So we think the U.S. government was mistaken to break those ties, like many other mistakes. Can you just point to one good decision in the international arena in the past 30 or 50 years that the American government has taken. It is mistake after mistake.

The conditions of the world today are the result of the American management of the world. Do you like this what you see? An arms race, threats, increased gap in income, extreme poverty, continuous wars. We don't want all this. We like to have friendships. I really don't think that the American people like what they see either. If the American people had the chance to truly express themselves they would definitely express opposition to how the world has been run. Nobody likes wars or acts of terror or occupation or threats. All people are the same. The American and Iranian people are the same too. They don't like acts of aggression and they do not like to be humiliated.

NYT: In Afghanistan you had previously cooperated with the United States. There has been a resurgence of the Taliban who were very violent toward the Shiites, does that concern you and is that a possible route to cooperate with the United States again?

President Ahmadinejad: I think that I have responded to that already. The U.S. government and NATO do not understand Afghanistan well and they are not managing it well. You said yourself extremism has increased. Who is responsible for it? Whose management is responsible and accountable? Obviously those who have stationed military troops in Afghanistan today. They are also unwilling to hear advice from others. They simply think that all problems can be fixed with military might and bombs and guns. That is wrong by itself. In Afghanistan with the level

of human calamity a humanitarian approach must be adopted. Otherwise extremism will be on the rise again and next time NATO won't be able to stop it. Although we also have very concise information that some members of NATO are also in touch with these extremists. And this complicates matters further.

NYT: You border on the Caucasus, so what is your opinion about what happened in Georgia, and is it a concern of yours?

President Ahmadinejad: Similar things have happened around the Georgian crisis. We believe that NATO did not have a good analysis of the situation on the ground in Georgia. And some Zionist elements and groups -- [The Georgian president, Mikheil] Saakashvili was encouraged to attack, and he made a mistake. Border disputes with one's neighbors cannot be fixed with wars. They should have managed the dispute, so we are unhappy with what happened. We have historical ties with the people of Georgia, and historical ties with the Russians. If NATO stops interfering the issues can be resolved on a regional basis. The problem arises when external groups try to intervene. Efforts to try to besiege Russia or Iran -- the whole calculation is wrong. This behavior belongs to bygone days. Those days are over. Issues must be fixed with constructive cooperation, with dialogue with all. For the United States to try through colorful revolutions to alter the political landscape of countries in that region is a miscalculation. Even 5-year-old kids understand the plans here by the United States. For the people in the region this is a joke. I think if they stop intervening the people in the Caucasus know well how to re-establish security on their own.

NYT: Do you support Russia's decisions to send troops into Georgia?

President Ahmadinejad: We never support conflicts. We always prefer dialogue and negotiations. We are unhappy with what happened there. We sincerely believe that the Georgian government could have managed the situation there to prevent this conflict. But unfortunately it was encouraged. It is young itself. It doesn't have a very long political experience. So it was encouraged. So now things are complicated and we are not happy about it. It was in the news that about 6,000 people lost their lives. I mean 6,000 people. Six thousand people are no longer around. Their families have been broken. Many children lost fathers or mothers. Or people who lost their children. This is terrible. Who is to respond to it? We are unhappy.

NYT: As you know the level of violence is quite a bit down in Iraq. Do you think that is progress or do you think it cannot last?

President Ahmadinejad: We believe that Iraq's internal problems and issues belong to the Iraqi people. Iraq is a country with a long history. People in Iraq will be able to find a resolution to their problems. Whatever choice they make we'll respect You are absolutely correct, the situation there has calmed tremendously, luckily. And we assisted a lot. I think for this to remain a permanent condition will have a lot to do and depend on how the American troops operate over there. In every sector where security has been handed over to the Iraqi government things are calmer and managed better. So we believe that if full responsibility is -- in a very reasonable and logical framework -- handed over to the Iraqi government the whole situation will be managed far better. It seems that on this particular issue we agree. So I certainly hope that the exigencies of the time here in the United States will not create new conditions whereby the United States will decide to alter the current trend. We will soon see the establishment of full security, God willing. In that everyone will come out a winner.

NYT: You know you said earlier people weren't angry with the Iranian government when they burned gas stations, but you didn't explain why they did burn them?

President Ahmadinejad: I owe you one for later.

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Body

MOVIES

Ratings and running times are in parentheses; foreign films have English subtitles. Full reviews of all current releases, movie trailers, showtimes and tickets: nytimes.com/movies.

'NO BORDERS, NO LIMITS: 1960S NIKKATSU ACTION CINEMA' A carefree hit man throws a party-killing punch in a crowded disco and then just as quickly gets back on the dance floor. A mobster trying to escape the underworld with his sweetheart is struck down on a train platform by a roving pack of trench coats. These are not scenes from a jazzy French New Wave film or an American Mafia tragedy, but from the violent and highly Westernized crime movies that flourished in Japan in the 1960s under Nikkatsu, one of the country's oldest studios.

Unlike the sober historical work by Kurosawa and Mizoguchi, the Nikkatsu action pictures -- called akushon, they were churned out by the hundreds -- are quick-cut, intoxicating rides through noirish city alleyways and bars where gangsters order whiskey and take home the waitresses. Since September Japan Society has been presenting a monthly series of these films, none of which have been screened in the United States before.

This Friday is one of the best, "Gangster VIP," directed by Toshio Masuda in 1968. Based on a real yakuza's memoirs, it stars Tetsuya Watari, above (who was the lead in Seijun Suzuki's "Tokyo Drifter," one of the few films in this genre to reach American audiences) as an ex-con who can't escape his criminal past. "Gangster VIP" is filled with split allegiances: brother against brother, gang against gang, the mob code versus the demands of conscience. The bad-boy swagger, crooked fedoras and smoky jazz are Western, but the drama of fate and group loyalty is pure Japanese. (Friday at 7:30 p.m., Japan Society, 333 East 47th Street, Manhattan, 212-715-1258, japansociety.org; \$10, \$7 for members and 65+; \$4.50 for students.) BEN SISARIO

'ALICE'S HOUSE' (No rating, 1:30, in Portuguese) Chico Teixeira's languid, libidinous film observes a messy Sao Paolo apartment where Alice (the wonderful Carla Ribas) copes with an ailing mother, three teenage sons and an unfaithful husband. Simultaneously delicate and earthy, "Alice's House" anchors its soap opera plotlines -- adultery, avarice and incipient blindness -- in the tired body and vaguely ruined features of its dreamy heroine.

(Jeannette Catsoulis)

'ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS' (PG, 1:32) Adults who remember this musical cartoon franchise created by Ross Bagdasarian Sr. in 1958 may derive fleeting amusement from this update, which concerns the efforts of the title

characters' surrogate dad, Dave Seville (Jason Lee), to rescue them from the clutches of a perfidious record executive (a delightfully despicable, movie-stealing David Cross). Kids may find less to connect with: The digitally animated heroes are eclipsed by their adult, live-action co-stars, a fatal mistake. Rent the DVD, or watch it with your children on a plane flight. (Andy Webster)

'AMERICAN GANGSTER' (R, 2:38) The divide between the director Ridley Scott's seriousness of purpose and the false glamour that wafts around American gangsters, and invariably trivializes their brutality, becomes too wide to breach in this story about the rise and fall of a 1970s New York drug lord. Denzel Washington wears the black hat, Russell Crowe wears the white. (Manohla Dargis)

'ATONEMENT' (R, 2:03) Gorgeous and inert, this adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel suggests that some books are best left alone. (A. O. Scott)

'BAB'AZIZ: THE PRINCE WHO CONTEMPLATED HIS SOUL' (No rating, 1:36, in Arabic and Persian) The third feature by the Tunisian filmmaker and poet Nacer Khemir follows the elderly Bab'Aziz (Parviz Shahinkhou) and his young granddaughter (Maryam Hamid) as they travel through the desert en route to a conference of dervishes that takes place every three decades. To take his granddaughter's mind off hardships -- including a fierce sandstorm and treacherous strangers -- Bab'Aziz entertains her with a Narcissus-like legend, about a young prince who becomes obsessed with staring at his reflection in a pool of water and neglects his duties. On the way to the conference, the two encounter other characters with their own stories, including a young man hoping to avenge a brother murdered by dervishes and a poet who has fallen in love with a dervish. All of Mr. Khemir's narratives stress the value of true introspection, as opposed to self-absorption, and convey a sense of the cultural continuity of familial and societal values handed down over generations. (Matt Zoller Seitz)

'BEAUFORT' (No rating, 2:05, in Hebrew) Joseph Cedar's tense drama takes place at a fortress in Lebanon captured by Israel in the 1980s. The last group of Israeli soldiers is preparing to withdraw, under attack from Hezbollah and with decided ambivalence. The movie's earnest sobriety helps it through passages of tedium and occasional bouts of combat-picture cliche. (Scott)

THE BUCKET LIST' (PG-13, 1:38) In this preposterous feel-good comedy about two men with terminal cancer, Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman slip into their stock personas without adding a note we haven't seen before. (Stephen Holden)

'CARAMEL' (PG, 1:36, in Arabic and French) Set in a Beirut beauty salon, Nicole Labaki's debut feature presents a charming, if somewhat familiar, tableau of *female* friendship and mild melodrama. (Scott)

'CASSANDRA'S DREAM' (PG-13, 1:45) A well-matched Ewan McGregor and Colin Farrell play brothers in blood and deed in Woody Allen's London-based, dark-hearted, effective tragedy. (Dargis)

'CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR' (PG-13, 1:36) Tom Hanks plays the hard-drinking, skirt-chasing Texas congressman who helped finance the Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation in the 1980s. Julia Roberts and Philip Seymour Hoffman are terrific as his co-conspirators in this remarkably jaunty excursion into cold war covert operations. (Scott)

'CLOVERFIELD' (PG-13, 1:24) OMG! It's, like, totally the end of the world!! (Dargis)

'DAVID & LAYLA' (R, 1:46) This star-crossed romance tells of a beautiful young Iraqi Kurd named Layla (Shiva Rose) who is threatened with deportation from her adopted home, Brooklyn, and pins her hopes of staying on a suitor named David (David Moscow), an American-born agnostic Jew who has a public-access cable show about sex and is trapped in an unsatisfying relationship with a snooty fiancee (Callie Thorne of the television series "Rescue Me"). By turns incisive and cliched, the movie works thanks to the charm of its leads and the writer and director Jay Jonroy's observations about Jewish and Muslim family life. (Seitz) 'DEFINITELY, MAYBE' (PG-13, 1:52) This unusually smart, thoroughly charming romantic comedy follows a nice guy's involvement with three different <u>women</u>, one of whom he will marry. Isla Fisher, Rachel Weisz and Elizabeth Banks are all wonderful as the candidates, as is Ryan Reynolds as the guy. (Scott)

'THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY' (PG-13, 1:52, in French) Julian Schnabel's film, about Jean-Dominique Bauby, a French magazine editor paralyzed by a stroke, is a marvel of empathy and imagination. It is also a celebration of French sensualism and an examination of the nature of consciousness. (Scott)

'ENCHANTED' (PG, 1:47) This unexpectedly delightful revisionist fairy tale from, of all places, Walt Disney Pictures, doesn't radically rewrite every bummer cliche about girls of all ages and their dreams. But for a satisfying stretch, it works real magic both by sending up stereotypes and through the twinkling, unwinking performance of its superb star, Amy Adams. (Dargis)

'THE EYE' (PG-13, 1:37) Yet another Western deconstruction of a successful Asian horror movie, this one features a vapid Jessica Alba as a blind violinist whose cornea transplant yields the ability to see dead people. But while the original was an insinuating ghost story that cleverly exploited cinema's fascination with all things ocular, this louder and more literal remake only highlights the debt owed by both to "The Sixth Sense." (Catsoulis)

'EZRA' (No rating, 1:50) The gruesome life and times of a child who is kidnapped by a rebel force in Sierra Leone, brainwashed, drugged and forced to attack his own village is a harrowing story told too choppily for its full impact to register. But it still scorches. (Holden)

'FIRST SUNDAY' (PG-13, 1:36) Ice Cube and Tracy Morgan rob a church and find redemption. Meanwhile Katt Williams, as the flamboyant choir director, steals the movie. (A. O. Scott)

'FOOL'S GOLD' (PG-13, 1:52) Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey go swimming. (Scott)

'4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS' (No rating, 1:53, in Romanian) In this ferocious, unsentimental film from the Romanian writer and director Cristian Mungiu, the camera doesn't follow the action, it expresses consciousness itself. This consciousness -- alert to the world and insistently alive -- is embodied by a young university student who in the late 1980s helps her roommate with an illegal abortion in Ceausescu's Romania. It's a pitiless, violent story that in its telling becomes a haunting and haunted intellectual and aesthetic achievement. (Dargis)

'GEORGE A. ROMERO'S DIARY OF THE DEAD' (R, 1:35) The loosest, goosiest chapter in Mr. Romero's continuing zombieland epic pivots on a clutch of students who in the process of fleeing legions of the undead have taken up video cameras, thus becoming the producers of their own snuff biopic. (Dargis)

'THE GREAT DEBATERS' (PG-13, 2:03) The wonder is that "The Great Debaters" transcends its own simplifying and manipulative ploys; it radiates nobility of spirit. (Holden)

'HANNAH MONTANA AND MILEY CYRUS: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS CONCERT' (G, 1:14) This 3-D concert movie, offering musical highlights of Miley Cyrus's recent sold-out tour, offers little in the way of revealing backstage glimpses of the star. But that won't bother your daughter if she's a "Hannah Montana" fan. Good luck getting tickets. (Webster)

'HOW SHE MOVE' (PG-13, 1:34) This feature by the director Ian Iqbal Rashid ("Touch of Pink"), about a disaffected young woman competing in dance contests, is the latest incarnation of the up-by-your-bootstraps musical drama. There's nary a twist you don't see coming. But the film's strong acting, spectacular dance routines and culturally specific details turn cliche into catharsis. It's the sort of film that sends you home with a spring in your step. (Seitz)

'HOW TO ROB A BANK' (No rating, 1:21 minutes) This caper film spoof with a slacker sensibility suggests a clever half-hour sketch extended into feature-length tedium.

(Holden)

'IN BRUGES' (R, 1:47) An amusing trifle from the potty-mouthed playwright Martin McDonagh about two Irish hit men (the very fine Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson) and their nuttier boss (an even better Ralph Fiennes). The characters talk a blue streak beautifully, but Mr. McDonagh has yet to find the nuance and poetry that make his red images signify with commensurate sizzle and pop.

(Dargis)

'I AM LEGEND' (PG-13, 1:40) Will Smith, as the sole surviving human resident of Manhattan, paints the town in fine style in this postapocalyptic zombie action thriller. It falls apart in the last act, but Mr. Smith and the special effects make it quite watchable up until then. (Scott)

'I'M NOT THERE' (R, 2:15) Hurling a Molotov cocktail into the biopic factory, Todd Haynes uses six different actors and an astonishing range of looks and styles to meditate on the life, work and cultural impact of Bob Dylan. Inspired and inexhaustible. (Scott)

'INTO THE WILD' (R, 2:20) In his adaptation of Jon Krakauer's best seller, Sean Penn explores the life and death of Christopher McCandless, a young wanderer who perished in the Alaskan wilderness in 1992. The story is sad, but there is something almost exuberant in Mr. Penn's embrace of it -- and in Emile Hirsch's brilliant performance as McCandless. Rarely has the radical, romantic American attachment to the wilderness been explored with such sympathy and passion. (Scott)

'JODHAA AKBAR' (No rating, 3:13, in Hindi) They may not make 'em like they used to in Hollywood, but sometimes they still do in India. This film, about the 16th-century Muslim emperor Akbar (Hrithik Roshan), who marries a Rajput princess (Aishwarya Rai Bachchan) -- a Hindu, that is -- has star power, romance, a cast of thousands and enough elephants and gold to sink the Titanic. It also has a message of religious tolerance. (Rachel Saltz) 'JUNO' (PG-13, 1:31) A sharply written and acted coming-of-age comedy, starring the remarkable Ellen Page as Juno MacGuff, a teenager who deals with her unanticipated pregnancy in unexpected ways. (Scott)

'THE KITE RUNNER' (PG-13, 2:08, in Dari) This adaptation of the Khaled Hosseini best seller tells a simple yet shrewd story about that favorite American pastime: self-improvement. The locations are exotic; the direction by Marc Forster is soporific. (Dargis)

'LIVE AND BECOME' (No rating, 2:20, in Amharic, Hebrew and French) Fundamental issues of ethnic and religious identity and the agony of exile go to the heart of "Live and Become," an intermittently compelling swatch of recent Israeli history filtered through the experience of an African immigrant. With epic aspirations that are only partly realized, the movie tries to be something like a contemporary "Exodus" from an outsider's point of view. (Holden)

LUST, CAUTION' (NC-17, 2:38, in Mandarin) A sleepy, musty period drama about wartime maneuvers and bedroom calisthenics that makes poor use of the otherwise solid director Ang Lee and the great Hong Kong actor Tony Leung Chiu-Wai. The movie's explicit sex scenes earned it an NC-17, but put me in mind of high school geometry rather than the Kama Sutra. (Dargis)

'MEET THE SPARTANS' (PG-13, 1:32) In this redundant and tasteless spoof of the film "300," King Leonidas (Sean Maguire) and 13 faithful boyfriends -- er, soldiers -- face off against the Persians and an avalanche of popculture detritus. Meanwhile the writers and directors, Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer (whose fingers have been in everything from the "Scary Movie" franchise to the more recent "Epic Movie"), continue to prove that ridiculing other movies is much easier than making your own. (Catsoulis) 'MICHAEL CLAYTON' (R, 1:59) A slow-to-boil requiem for American decency from the writer and director Tony Gilroy in which George Clooney, the ultimate in luxury brands and playboy of the Western world, raises the sword in the name of truth and justice and good. Well, someone's got to do it. (Dargis)

'NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN' (R, 2:02) Mean, violent and impeccable, Joel and Ethan Coen's adaptation of a pulpy, compact novel by Cormac McCarthy lives and breathes in the central performances of Tommy Lee Jones, Josh Brolin and Javier Bardem, who chase one another, \$2 million and metaphysical truth through the Texas back country. (Scott)

THE ORPHANAGE' (R, 1:40, in Spanish) Juan Antonio Bayona's Spanish ghost story, in which a woman (Belen Rueda) returns to her childhood home with her adopted son, is effectively scary, but not as emotionally rich as it could have been. (Scott)

'PERSEPOLIS' (PG-13, 1:35, in French) Marjane Satrapi's adaptation of her graphic novel-memoir is a free-spirited coming-of-age story, beautifully drawn and voiced by a formidable trio of French movie stars. (Scott)

'THE PIRATES WHO DON'T DO ANYTHING: A VEGGIE TALES MOVIE' (G, 1:24) This movie for young children, the second feature film in the Veggie Tales franchise, is harmless but as devoid of zest as overcooked vegetables. Three of the characters are transported back in time and called upon to rescue a prince and princess from pirates. The film seems like a lazy attempt to cash in on "Pirates of the Caribbean" chic by using a plot outline borrowed from "The Wizard of Oz." (Neil Genzlinger)

'PRAYING WITH LIOR' (No rating, 1:28) Filmed in a close-knit Jewish Reconstructionist community in Philadelphia, "Praying With Lior" documents the extraordinary life of Lior Liebling, a rabbi's son with Down syndrome and an obsessive love of prayer. But while family and friends marvel over Lior's putative spirituality, the director, Ilana Trachtman, patiently teases out the tricky dynamics of a family dealing with a disabled child. (Catsoulis)

'RAMBO' (R, 1:33) After 20 years moping in the jungle, John Rambo is back, more muscle-bound and impassive than ever. This time he extracts some bloody payback from the brutal Burmese Army in one of the more brutal humanitarian interventions ever imagined. (A. O. Scott)

'THE SAVAGES' (R, 1:53) Tamara Jenkins's beautifully nuanced tragicomedy involves two floundering souls -- a middle-aged brother and sister, played with force and feeling by Philip Seymour Hoffman and Laura Linney -- who are suddenly left to care for their infirm father (Philip Bosco). There isn't a single moment of emotional guff or sentimentality in "The Savages," a film that periodically caused me to wince, but also left me with a sense of acute pleasure, even joy. (Dargis)

'THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES'(PG, 1:37) Computer-generated goblins menace three children in an old house. Not much enchantment. (Scott)

'STEP UP 2 THE STREETS' (PG-13, 1:38) This earnest sequel to the 2006 cornball musical drama "Step Up" mixes new characters into the original's setting, the neighborhoods surrounding the Maryland School of the Arts in Baltimore. Like its predecessor, it takes place in a gritty neighborhood, has a white lead (Briana Evigan as a striving dancer), posits a universe where racial and class differences are minor obstacles to fun and pretends its cliches aren't cliches. The film's likable cast and exuberant musical sequences almost save it. (Seitz)

'STILL LIFE' (No rating, 1:48, in Mandarin) A modern master of postmodern discontent, Jia Zhang-ke is among the most strikingly gifted filmmakers working today. In his documentary-inflected fictions he weighs the human cost of China's shift from state-controlled Communism to state-sanctioned capitalism, a price paid in the blood and sweat of people who have, paradoxically, inspired him to create works of sublime, soulful art -- works of art like "Still Life." (Dargis)

'SUMMER PALACE' (No rating, 2:20, in Mandarin and German) Lou Ye's sweeping, spirited portrait of Chinese college students before and after Tiananmen Square has the scope of an epic and the rhythms of a pop song. Lei Hao gives a fierce, uninhibited performance as the film's passionate, impulsive heroine, a girl from the provinces who arrives at Beijing University in 1988. (Scott)

'SWEENEY TODD' (R, 1:50) Tim Burton's adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's musical, with Johnny Depp in the title role, is bleak, bloody and brilliant. The songs will stay in your head even as the story and the images trouble your sleep. (Scott)

'TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE' (R, 1:46) This documentary by Alex Gibney ("Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room") traces a path from Bagram prison in Afghanistan to Abu Graib and Guantanamo, and serves up a powerful indictment of some of the American military's tactics in the war on terror. (Scott)'TEETH' (R, 1:27) Clever and crude, this teenage horror spoof follows the misadventures of a mutant teen angel unknowingly afflicted with the mythical condition known as vagina dentata (a toothed vagina). (Holden)

'THERE WILL BE BLOOD' (R, 2:38) Paul Thomas Anderson's epic American nightmare tells a story of greed and envy of biblical proportions, set against the backdrop of the Southern California oil boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There is no God but money in this oil-rich desert, and his messenger is Daniel Plainview, a petroleum speculator played by a monstrous and shattering Daniel Day-Lewis. (Dargis)

'27 DRESSES' (PG-13, 1:47) Katherine Heigl, trading the unexpected maternity of "Knocked Up" for the expectation of matrimony, stars in this bland and forgettable romantic comedy. Ms. Heigl, Malin Akerman (as her sister and romantic rival) and Judy Greer (as the inevitably flaky/slutty friend) are all adept comic performers, but the filmmakers give them nothing fresh or interesting to work with. (Scott) 'UNTRACEABLE' (R, 1:40) Morally duplicitous torture porn: how else to describe this bleak, rain-washed horror thriller, whose predatory villain streams live video of his murders on his own popular Web site, killwithme.com? (Holden)

'U2 3D' (G, 1:25) The musical documentary "U2 3D," which stitches together performances by this Irish rock band during a recent tour of South America, brazenly ignores the usual stipulations about making a 3-D film, to thrilling effect. The movie's directors, Mark Pellington and Catherine Owens, layer the screen with multiple planes of information: long shots and medium shots of the musicians; images of the crowd; close-up details of graphics from the big screen that the band performs in front of that make the designs abstract and merge them with the performers. Thanks to the clarity of the movie's format, digital 3-D, the result is not a confusing mishmash of images but a musical-experimental work that visually simulates the sensation of thinking. (Seitz)

'A WALK TO BEAUTIFUL' (No rating, 1:25, in English, Amharic and Oromiffa) This documentary, about the mistreatment of mothers suffering from birth injuries in Ethiopia, starts out quietly furious, detailing how its *female* subjects were ostracized by their villages, husbands, siblings, even parents. While the narrative of "Beautiful" seems straightforward -- "*Women* suffer and then get better" -- the film is a complex and quietly devastating indictment of chauvinist societies that see *women* as lovers, mothers and servants, and treat anyone who can't fulfill those roles as a nonperson. (Seitz)'THE WATER HORSE: LEGEND OF THE DEEP' (PG, 1:51) In this enthralling adaptation of a novel by Dick King-Smith, a young boy in coastal Scotland stumbles across a mysterious egg that hatches an adorable, mischievous creature (a remarkably lifelike piece of digital animation) that grows into the Loch Ness Monster. (Laura Kern) 'WELCOME HOME ROSCOE JENKINS' (PG-13, 1:54) This comedy about a talk-show host (Martin Lawrence) revisiting his relatives down South is just a shaggy diversion that gives its energetic star and its populous, accomplished supporting cast (including James Earl Jones as Papa Jenkins, Margaret Avery as Mamma Jenkins, and Cedric the Entertainer and Mo'Nique as the hero's siblings) a chance to clown around. But it's a cut above other films of its type, because every scene is packed with details that suggest that the film's writer and director, Malcolm D. Lee ("The Best Man"), is working overtime to smuggle life into formula. (Seitz)

'THE WITNESSES' (No rating, 1:52, in French) Andre Techine's light-handed ensemble drama looks back to 1984, when the AIDS epidemic forces a group of sexually free-spirited friends -- straight, gay and bisexual -- to examine their relationships. This beautifully acted film takes the long view of people faced with a catastrophe, who have complex responses and eventually move on. (Holden)

'THE YEAR MY PARENTS WENT ON VACATION' (No rating, 1:44) A young boy comes of age against a backdrop of political repression and soccer mania in 1970 Sao Paulo. Familiar, but affecting. (Scott)

Film Series

GANGSTER VIP (Tonight) Japan Society's series devoted to the unbridled action films produced by the Nikkatsu studios in the 1960s continues with Toshio Masuda's 1968 revenge drama. Tetsuya Watari stars as a yakuza hit man whose attempts to go straight after serving a prison term prove unsuccessful, as they so often do in this genre. The film was successful enough that it led to five sequels, collectively known as the Burai Series. 333 East 47th Street, Manhatan, (212) 715-1258, japansociety.org; \$10. (Dave Kehr)

SIGUR ROS -- HEIMA (Saturday) Denni Karlsson's documentary follows the Icelandic cult band Sigur Ros on a 2006 tour of the isolated homeland, as it performs in community halls, abandoned fish processing plants, open fields and the huge Asbyrgi canyon (formed, the program notes tell us, by the hoofprint of Odin's six-legged horse

Sleipnir). Acoustic version of the band's hits are featured, including a one-microphone performance of "Vaka" filmed atop a dam soon to be obscured by rising water. Scandinavia House, 58 Park Avenue, Manhattan, (212) 879-9779, scandinaviahouse.org; \$10. (Kehr)

THE BEST OF THE AFRICA DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL (Saturday through Thursday) The Brooklyn Academy of Music plays host to selected prize-winners and crowd-pleasers from last November's edition of this popular citywide festival. Saturday's lineup includes "Cuba, an African Odyssey," Jihan El-Tahri's documentary about Cuban support for African revolutionary movements (2 p.m.); "No Time to Die," a comic romance from the Ghanaian filmmaker King Ampaw (4:30 p.m.); "A Winter Tale," a drama about race relations in Toronto directed by Frances-Anne Solomon (6:50 p.m.); and "Made in Jamaica," a documentary history of reggae music directed by Jerome Laperrousaz (9:30 p.m.). And that's just for starters. BAMcinematek, 30 Lafayette Avenue, at Ashland Place, Fort Greene, Brooklyn, (718) 636-4100, bam.org; \$11. (Kehr)

PASSING POSTON (Saturday and Sunday) This documentary by Joe Fox and James Nubile tries to tell the story of the 120,000 Japanese-Americans rounded up into incarceration camps during World War II through four representative stores. One of the subjects, Ruth Okimoto, returns to the Colorado River Indian Reservation in the Arizona desert, where she spent her youth in the Poston Relocation Center, a relocation camp established by the United States government. Pioneer Theater, 155 East Third Street, East Village, (212) 591-0434, twoboots.com; \$10. (Kehr)

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Observer Magazine: Special investigation: When al-Qaeda was formed 20 years ago, Dr Fad was its spiritual leader. His writings justified global terror.

Last year, he denounced the use of violence- in a stroke undermining the entire intellectual basis of jihad. So can Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri fight the rebellion in its ranks?: Part Three

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Body

Zawahiri responds

Fadl's arguments undermined the entire intellectual framework of jihadist warfare. If the security services in Egypt, in tandem with the al-Azhar scholars, had undertaken to write a refutation of al-Qaeda"s doctrine, it would likely have resembled the book Dr Fadl produced; and, indeed, that may have been exactly what occurred. And yet, with so many leaders of al-Jihad endorsing the book, it seemed clear that the organisation itself was now dead. Terrorism in Egypt might continue in some form, but the violent factions were finished, departing amid public exclamations of repentance for the futility and sinfulness of their actions.

As the Muslim world awaited Zawahiri's inevitable response, the press and the clergy were surprisingly muted. One reason was that Fadl's revisions raised doubts about political activity that many Muslims do not regard as terror - for instance, the resistance movements, in Palestine and elsewhere, that oppose Israel and the presence of American troops in Muslim countries. "In this region, we must distinguish between violence against national governments and that of the resistance - in Iraq, in Lebanon, in Palestine," Essam el-Erian, of the Muslim Brotherhood, told me. "We cannot call this resistance "violence"." Nevertheless, such movements were inevitably drawn into the debate surrounding Fadl's book.

A number of Muslim clerics struggled to answer Dr Fadl's broad critique of political bloodshed. Many had issued fatwas endorsing the very actions Fadl now declared to be unjustified. Their responses were often surprising. For instance, Sheikh Hamid al-Ali, an influential Salafi cleric in Kuwait, whom the US Treasury has described as an al-Qaeda facilitator and fundraiser, declared on a website that he welcomed the rejection of violence as a means of fostering change in the Arab world. Sheikh Ali"s fatwas have sometimes been linked to al-Qaeda actions. (Notoriously, months before 9/11, he authorised flying aircraft into targets during suicide operations.) He observed that although the Arab regimes have a natural self-interest in encouraging non-violence, that shouldn"t cause

readers to spurn Fadl's argument. "I believe it is a big mistake to let this important intellectual transformation be nullified by political suspicion," Ali said.

The decision of radical Islamist groups to adopt a peaceful path does not necessarily mean, however, they can evolve into political parties. "We have to admit we do not have in our land a true political process worthy of the name," Ali argued. "What we have are regimes that play a game in which they use whatever will guarantee their continued existence."

Meanwhile, Sheikh Abu Basir al-Tartusi, a Syrian Islamist living in London, railed against the "numbness and discouragement" of Fadl"s message in telling Muslims that they are too weak to engage in jihad or overthrow their oppressive rulers. "More than half of the Koran and hundreds of the Prophet's sayings call for jihad and fighting those unjust tyrants," Tartusi exclaimed on a jihadist website. "What do you want us to do with his huge quantity of Sharia provisions, and how do you want us to understand and interpret them? Where is the benefit in deserting jihad against those tyrants? Because of them, the nation lost its religion, glory, honour, dignity, land, resources, and every precious thing!"

Jihadist publications were filled with condemnations of Fadl"s revisions. Hani el-Sibai, the Islamist attorney, is a Zawahiri loyalist who now runs a political website in London; he said of Fadl, "Do you think any Islamic group will listen to him? No. They are in the middle of a war."

Even so, the fact that al-Qaeda followers and sympathisers were paying so much attention to Fadl's manuscript made it imperative that Zawahiri offer a definitive rebuttal. Since al-Qaeda's violent ideology rested, in part, on Fadl's foundation, Zawahiri would have to find a way to discredit the author without destroying the authority of his own organisation. It was a tricky task.

Zawahiri's main problem in countering Fadl was his own lack of standing as a religious scholar. "Al-Qaeda has no one who is qualified from a Sharia perspective to make a response," Fadl boasted to al-Hayat. "All of them - bin Laden, Zawahiri, and others - are not religious scholars on whose opinion you can count. They are ordinary persons." Of course, Fadl himself had no formal religious training, either.

In February this year, Zawahiri announced in a video he had finished a "letter" responding to Fadl's book. "The Islam presented by that document is the one that America and the west wants and is pleased with: an Islam without jihad," Zawahiri said. "Because I consider this document to be an insult to the Muslim nation, I chose for the rebuttal the name "The Exoneration", in order to express the nation's innocence of this insult." This announcement, by itself, was unprecedented. "It's the first time in history that bin Laden and Zawahiri have responded in this way to internal dissent," Diaa Rashwan, an analyst for the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, in Cairo, told me.

The "letter", which finally appeared on the internet in March, was nearly 200 pages long. "This message I present to the reader today is among the most difficult I have ever written in my life," Zawahiri admits in his introduction. Although the text is laden with footnotes and lengthy citations from Islamic scholars, Zawahiri's strategy is apparent from the beginning. Whereas Fadl's book is a trenchant attack on the immoral roots of al-Qaeda's theology, Zawahiri navigates his argument toward the familiar shores of the "Zionist-Crusader" conspiracy. Zawahiri claims Fadl wrote his book "in the spirit of the Minister of the Interior". He characterises it as a desperate attempt by the enemies of Islam - America, the west, Jews, the apostate rulers of the Muslim world - to "stand in the way of the fierce wave of jihadi revivalism that is shaking the Islamic world". Mistakes have been made, he concedes. "I neither condone the killing of innocent people nor claim that jihad is free of error," he writes. "Muslim leaders during the time of the Prophet made mistakes, but the jihad did not stop. . . I"m warning those Islamist groups who welcome the document that they are giving the government the knife with which it can slaughter them."

In presenting al-Qaeda"s defence, Zawahiri clearly displays the moral relativism that has taken over the organisation. "Keep in mind that we have the right to do to the infidels what they have done to us," he writes. "We bomb them as they bomb us, even if we kill someone who is not permitted to be killed." He compares 9/11 to the 1998 American bombing of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, in retaliation for al-Qaeda's destruction of two American embassies in East Africa. (The US mistakenly believed the plant was producing chemical weapons.) "I

see no difference between the two operations, except that the money used to build the factory was Muslim money and the workers who died in the factory's rubble" - actually, a single night watchman - "were Muslims, while the money that was spent on the buildings that those hijackers destroyed was infidel money and the people who died in the explosion were infidels."

When Zawahiri questions the sanctity of a visa, which Fadl equates with a mutual contract of safe passage, he consults an English dictionary and finds in the definition of "visa" no mention of a guarantee of protection. "Even if the contract is based on international agreements, we are not bound by these agreements," Zawahiri claims, citing two radical clerics who support his view. In any case, America doesn't feel bound to protect Muslims; for instance, it is torturing people in its military prisons in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. "The US gives itself the right to take any Muslim without respect to his visa," Zawahiri writes. "If the US and westerners don"t respect visas, why should we?"

Zawahiri makes some telling psychological points; for instance, he says that the imprisoned Fadl is projecting his own weakness on the mujahideen, who have grown stronger since Fadl deserted them, 15 years earlier. "The Islamic mujahid movement was not defeated, by the grace of God; indeed, because of its patience, steadfastness and thoughtfulness, it is heading toward victory," he writes. He cites the strikes on 9/11 and the ongoing battles in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia, which he says are wearing America down.

To dispute Fadl's assertion that Muslims living in non-Islamic countries are treated fairly, Zawahiri points out that in some western countries Muslim girls are forbidden to wear hijab to school. Muslim men are prevented from marrying more than one wife, and from beating their wives, as allowed by some interpretations of Sharia. Muslims are barred from donating money to certain Islamic causes, although money is freely and openly raised for Israel. He cites the 2005 cartoon controversy in Denmark and the celebrity of the author Salman Rushdie as examples of western countries exalting those who denigrate Islam.

Writing about the treatment of tourists, Zawahiri says, "The mujahideen don"t kidnap people randomly" - they kidnap or harm tourists to send a message to their home countries. "We don't attack Brazilian tourists in Finland, or those from Vietnam in Venezuela," he writes. No doubt, Muslims may be killed occasionally, but if that happens it's a pardonable mistake. "The majority of scholars say that it is permissible to strike at infidels, even if Muslims are among them," Zawahiri contends. He cites a well-known verse in the Koran to support, among other things, the practice of kidnapping: "When the sacred months are drawn away, slay the idolators wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush."

As for 9/11, Zawahiri writes, "The mujahideen didn't attack the west in its home country with suicide attacks in order to break treaties, or out of a desire to spill blood, or because they were half-mad, or because they suffer from frustration and failure, as many imagine. They attacked it because they were forced to defend their community and their sacred religion from centuries of aggression."

Zawahiri's argument demonstrates why Islam is so vulnerable to radicalisation. It is a religion that was born in conflict, and in its long history it has developed a reservoir of opinions and precedents that are supposed to govern the behaviour of Muslims toward their enemies. Some of Zawahiri's commentary may seem comically academic, as in this citation in support of the need for Muslims to prepare for jihad: "Imam Ahmad said: "We heard from Harun bin Ma'ruf, citing Abu Wahab, who quoted Amru bin al-Harith citing Abu Ali Tamamah bin Shafi that he heard Uqbah bin Amir saying, "I heard the Prophet say from the pulpit: "Against them make ready your strength."" Strength refers to shooting arrows and other projectiles from instruments of war."

And yet such proof of the rightfulness of jihad, or taking captives, or slaughtering the enemy is easily found in the commentaries of scholars, the rulings of Sharia courts, the volumes of the Prophet's sayings, and the Koran itself. Sheikh Ali Gomaa, the Egyptian Grand Mufti, has pointed out that literalism is often the prelude to extremism. "We must not oversimplify," he told me. Crude interpretations of Islamic texts can lead men like Zawahiri to conclude that murder should be celebrated. They come to believe religion is science. They see their actions as logical, righteous and mandatory. In this fashion, a surgeon is transformed from a healer into a killer, but only if the candle of individual conscience has been extinguished.

Several times in his lengthy response, Zawahiri complains of double standards when critics attack al-Qaeda's tactics but ignore similar actions on the part of Palestinian organisations. He notes that Fadl ridicules the fighting within al-Qaeda. "Why don't you ask Hamas the same thing?" Zawahiri demands. "Isn"t this a clear contradiction?"

Zawahiri knows Palestine is a confounding issue for many Muslims. "The situation in Palestine will always be an exception," Gamal Sultan, the Islamist writer in Cairo, told me. Essam el-Erian, of the Muslim Brotherhood, said, "Here in Egypt, you will find that the entire population supports Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, although no one endorses the Islamic Group."

Recently, however, the embargo in the Arab press on any criticism of terrorist acts by the Palestinian resistance movement has been breached by several searching articles that directly address the futility of violence. "The whole point of resistance in Palestine and Lebanon is to accomplish independence, but we should ask ourselves if we are achieving that goal," Marzouq al-Halabi, a Palestinian writer, wrote in al-Hayat in January. "We should not just say, "Oh, every resistance has its mistakes, there are victims by accident". . . Violence has become the beginning and the end of all action. How else would you explain Hamas militants throwing Fatah leaders off the roofs of buildings?" The resistance is destroying the potential of society to ever recover, the writer argues. Unfortunately, this reconsideration of violence appears at a time when despair and revolutionary fervour are boiling over in Palestine.

Zawahiri has watched al-Qaeda's popularity decline in places where it formerly enjoyed great support. In Pakistan, where hundreds have been killed recently by al-Qaeda suicide bombers - including, perhaps, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto - public opinion has turned against bin Laden and his companions. An Algerian terror organisation, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, formally affiliated itself with al-Qaeda in September 2006, and began a series of suicide bombings that have alienated the Algerian people, long weary of the horrors that Islamist radicals have inflicted on their country. Even members of al-Qaeda admit their cause has been harmed by indiscriminate violence. In February, Abu Turab al-Jazairi, an al-Qaeda commander in northern Iraq, whose nom de guerre suggests he is Algerian, gave an interview to al-Arab, a Qatari daily. "The attacks in Algeria sparked animated debate here in Iraq," he said. "By God, had they told me they were planning to harm the Algerian President and his family, I would say, "Blessings be upon them!" But explosions in the street, blood knee-deep, the killing of soldiers whose wages are not even enough for them to eat at third-rate restaurants. . . and calling this jihad? By God, it"s sheer idiocy!"

Abu Turab admitted he and his colleagues were suffering a similar public relations problem in Iraq, because "al-Qaeda has been infiltrated by people who have harmed its reputation." He said that only about a third of the 9,000 fighters who call themselves members of al-Qaeda in Iraq can be relied upon.

In Saudi Arabia, where the government has been trying to tame its radical clerics, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah Aal-al-Sheikh, the Grand Mufti, issued a fatwa in October 2007, forbidding Saudi youth to join the jihad outside the country. Two months later, Saudi authorities arrested members of a suspected al-Qaeda cell who allegedly planned to assassinate the Grand Mufti. That same autumn, Sheikh Salman al-Oadah, a cleric whom bin Laden has praised in the past, appeared on an Arabic television network and read an open letter to the al-Qaeda leader. He asked, "Brother Osama, how much blood has been spilled? How many innocent children, women and old people have been killed, maimed and expelled from their homes in the name of al-Qaeda?" These critiques echoed some of the concerns of the Palestinian cleric Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who is considered by some to be the most influential jihadi theorist. In 2004, Maqdisi, then in a Jordanian prison, castigated his former protege Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the now dead leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, for his unproductive violence, particularly the wholesale slaughter of Shiites and the use of suicide bombers. "Mujahideen should refrain from acts that target civilians, churches, or other places of worship, including Shiite sites," Maqdisi wrote. "The hands of the jihad warriors must remain clean."

In December, in order to staunch the flow of criticism, Zawahiri boldly initiated a virtual-town-hall meeting. This spring, he released two lengthy audio responses to nearly 100 of the 900 often testy queries that were posed. The first came from a man who identified himself sardonically as the Geography Teacher. "Excuse me, Mr Zawahiri, but who is it who is killing, with Your Excellency's permission, the innocents in Baghdad, Morocco and Algeria? Do you

consider the killing of <u>women</u> and children to be jihad?" Then he demanded, "Why have you not - to this day - carried out any strike in Israel? Or is it easier to kill Muslims in the markets? Maybe you should study geography, because your maps show only the Muslim states." Zawahiri protested that al-Qaeda had not killed innocents. "In fact, we fight those who kill innocents. Those who kill innocents are the Americans, the Jews, the Russians, and the French and their agents."

The murder of innocents emerged as the most prominent issue in the exchanges. An Algerian university student sarcastically congratulated Zawahiri for killing 60 Muslims in Algeria on a holy feast day. What was their sin, the student wanted to know. "Those who were killed on 11 December in Algeria are not from the innocents," Zawahiri claimed. "They are from the Crusader unbelievers and the government troops who defend them. Our brothers in al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb [North Africa] are more truthful, more just and more righteous than the lying sons of France." A Saudi wondered how Muslims could justify supporting al-Qaeda, given its long history of indiscriminate murder. "Are there other ways and means in which the objectives of jihad can be achieved without killing people?" he asked. "Please do not use as a pretext what the Americans or others are doing. Muslims are supposed to be an example to the world in tolerance and lofty goals, not to become a gang whose only concern is revenge." But Zawahiri was unable to rise to the questioner"s ethical challenge. He replied, "If a criminal were to storm into your house, attack your family and kill them, steal your property, and burn down your house, then turns to attack the homes of your neighbours, will you treat him tolerantly so that you will not become a gang whose only concern is revenge?"

Many of the questions dealt with Fadl, beginning with why Zawahiri had altered without permission Fadl's Compendium of the Pursuit of Divine Knowledge. Zawahiri claimed the writing of the book was a joint effort, because al-Jihad had financed it. He had to edit the book because it was full of theological errors. "We neither forged anything nor meddled with anything," Zawahiri said. Later, he added, "I ask those who are firm in their covenant not to pay attention to this propaganda war that the United States is launching in its prisons, which are situated in our countries." Fadl's revisions, Zawahiri warned, "place restrictions on jihadist action which, if implemented, would destroy jihad completely."

Is Al-Qaeda finished?

It is, of course, unlikely that al-Qaeda will voluntarily follow the example of the Islamist Group and Zawahiri's own organisation, al-Jihad, and revise its violent strategy. But it is clear radical Islam is confronting a rebellion within its ranks, one to which Zawahiri and the leaders of al-Qaeda are poorly equipped to respond. Radical Islam began as a spiritual call to the Muslim world to unify and strengthen itself through holy warfare. For the dreamers who long to institute God"s justice on earth, Fadl's revisions represent a substantial moral challenge. But for the young nihilists who are joining the al-Qaeda movement for their own reasons - revenge, boredom, or a desire for adventure - the quarrels of the philosophers will have little meaning.

According to a recent National Intelligence Estimate in the US, al-Qaeda has been regenerating, and remains the greatest terror threat to America. Bruce Hoffman, a professor of security studies at Georgetown University in Washington DC, says although Fadl's denunciation has weakened al-Qaeda"s intellectual standing, "from the worm's-eye view al-Qaeda fighters have on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, things are going more their way than they have in a long time." He went on, "The Pakistan government is more accommodating. The number of suicide bombers in both countries is way up, which indicates a steady supply of fighters. Even in Iraq, the flow is slower but continues."

Still, the core of al-Qaeda is much reduced from what it was before 9/11. An Egyptian intelligence official told me the current membership totals less than 200 men; American intelligence estimates range from under 300 to more than 500. Meanwhile, new al-Qaeda-inspired groups, which may be only tangentially connected to the leaders, have spread, and older, more established terrorist organisations are now flying the al-Qaeda banner, outside the control of bin Laden and Zawahiri. Hoffman thinks this is the reason that bin Laden and Zawahiri have been emphasising Israel and Palestine in their latest statements. "I see the pressure building on al-Qaeda to do

something enormous this year," Hoffman said. "The biggest damage that Dr Fadl has done to al-Qaeda is to bring into question its relevance."

This August, al-Qaeda will mark its 20th anniversary. That is a long life for a terrorist group. Most terror organisations disappear with the death of their charismatic leader, and it would be hard to imagine al-Qaeda remaining a coherent entity without Osama bin Laden. The Red Army Faction went out of business when the Berlin Wall came down and it lost its sanctuary in East Germany. The IRA, unusually, endured in various incarnations for almost a century, until economic conditions in Ireland improved significantly, and the membership agreed to reach a political accommodation. When one looks for hopeful parallels for the end of al-Qaeda, it is discouraging to realise its leadership is intact, its sanctuaries are unthreatened, and the social conditions that gave rise to the movement are largely unchanged. On the other hand, al-Qaeda has nothing to show for its efforts except blood and grief. The organisation was constructed from rotten intellectual bits and pieces - false readings of religion and history - cleverly and deviously fitted together to give the appearance of reason. Even if Fadl's rhetoric strikes some readers as questionable, al-Qaeda's sophistry is rudely displayed for everyone to see. Although it will likely continue as a terrorist group, who could still take it seriously as a philosophy?

One afternoon in Egypt, I visited Kamal Habib, a key leader of the first generation of al-Jihad, who is now a political scientist and analyst. His writing has gained him an audience of former radicals who, like him, have sought a path back to moderation. We met in the cafeteria of the Journalists' Syndicate in downtown Cairo. Habib is an energetic political theorist, unbroken by 10 years in prison, despite having been tortured. (His arms are marked with scars from cigarette burns.) "We now have before us two schools of thought," Habib told me. "The old school, which was expressed by al-Jihad and its spinoff, al-Qaeda, is the one that was led by Ayman al-Zawahiri, Sheikh Maqdisi, Zarqawi. The new school, which Dr Fadl has given expression to, represents a battle of faith. It"s deeper than just ideology." He went on, "The general mood of Islamist movements in the Seventies was intransigence. Now the general mood is towards harmony and co-existence. The distance between the two is a measure of their experience." Ironically, Dr Fadl's thinking gave birth to both schools. "As long as a person lives in a world of jihad, the old vision will control his thinking," Habib suggested. "When he's in battle, he doesn't wonder if he's wrong or he's right. When he"s arrested, he has time to wonder."

"Dr Fadl's revisions and Zawahiri's response show that the movement is disintegrating," Karam Zuhdy, the Islamic Group leader, told me one afternoon, in his modest apartment in Alexandria. His daughter, who is four, wrapped herself around his leg as an old black-and-white Egyptian movie played silently on a television. Such movies provide a glimpse of a more tolerant and hopeful time, before Egypt took its dark turn into revolution and Islamist violence. I asked Zuhdy how his country might have been different if he and his colleagues had never chosen the bloody path. "It would have been a lot better now," he admitted. "Our opting for violence encouraged al-Jihad to emerge." He even suggested that, had the Islamists not murdered Sadat nearly 30 years ago, there would be peace today between the Palestinians and the Israelis. He quoted the Prophet Muhammad: "Only what benefits people stays on the earth."

"It's very easy to start violence," Zuhdy said. "Peace is much more difficult."

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Body

CANADIAN FRONT, 2008 Denys Arcand's satire "Days of Darkness," set in the very near future, takes place largely in the mind of Jean-Marc Leblanc (Marc Labreche, above, in a scene from the film), a middle-aged civil servant who works in the provincial citizens rights department listening to the complaints of ordinary people whose problems he is powerless to solve. As his mind wanders, this harried milquetoast entertains grandiose Walter Mittyworthy fantasies of fame, wealth and sex with beautiful <u>women</u> jockeying for his favor.

One reason this concluding chapter of Mr. Arcand's Quebec Trilogy, which began with "The Decline of the American Empire" and continued with "The Barbarian Invasions," isn't as strong as its forerunners is the speed with which satire catches up with reality. But the movie takes some amusingly nasty swipes at political correctness, as when Jean-Marc is brought before a committee and reprimanded after being overheard using the word Negro.

"Days of Darkness" is the centerpiece of the Museum of Modern Art's annual Canadian Front series, an eight-film survey of recent Canadian movies having their New York premieres at the Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters. The highlight of last year's series was "Away From Her," which won Julie Christie an Academy Award nomination.

Other worthy entries this year include "Poor Boy's Game," a boxing drama starring Danny Glover set in working-class Halifax, Nova Scotia, and "The Tracey Fragments," based on a novel by Maureen Medved, which stars Ellen Page as a troubled adolescent girl.

In the breezy comedy "Breakfast With Scot," the life of a gay former hockey star turned sportscaster living a semicloseted life with his partner is upended when his lover's 11-year-old nephew comes to live with them after the death of his mother. The effeminate child, who arrives arrayed in his mother's jewels and scarves, forces the sportscaster to confront his own lingering discomfort with his sexual identity. (Through Thursday, Museum of Modern Art, 212-708-9400, moma.org; \$10; \$8 for 65+.) STEPHEN HOLDEN

THOROLD DICKINSON'S WORLD OF CINEMA Here's a fine opportunity to go spelunking in the perennially underestimated British cinema. The director Thorold Dickinson (1903-84) made only a handful of features and shorts during his career, which concluded with a long stint (at the Slade School of Fine Art in London) as Britain's first officially appointed professor of film. He remains best known for two rip-roaring thrillers he considered commercial quickies: the tense and claustrophobic 1940 version of Patrick Hamilton's stage play "Gaslight" and the genuinely creepy ghost story "The Queen of Spades" (1949).

Both films will be shown in a weeklong retrospective of Dickinson's work that begins on Wednesday under the auspices of the Film Society of Lincoln Center. Both happen to star the Austrian actor Anton Walbrook ("The Red Shoes") as a schemer who seduces a naive young woman in his drive to realize uncontrollable obsessions: the possession of a set of rubies in "Gaslight" (Wednesday and March 23, also starring Diana Wynyard, above) and of the Devil's own method of winning at cards in "Spades" (March 21 and March 22).

But the series will also give us a chance to see the more politically engaged films that Dickinson himself preferred, including the 1946 Technicolor colonial drama "Men of Two Worlds" (March 24 and March 25) and the 1952 film "The Secret People" (Wednesday and March 22), which features Valentina Cortese and Audrey Hepburn (her last film before "Roman Holiday" made her a star) as sisters who are drawn into a shady plot to avenge the death of their father, a slain anti-fascist leader. (Through March 25, Walter Reade Theater, 165 West 65th Street, Lincoln Center, 212-875-5600, filmlinc.org; \$10.) DAVE KEHR

Ratings and running times are in parentheses; foreign films have English subtitles. Full reviews of all current releases, movie trailers, showtimes and tickets: nytimes.com/movies.

'ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS' (PG, 1:32) Adults who remember this musical cartoon franchise created by Ross Bagdasarian Sr. in 1958 may derive fleeting amusement from this update, which concerns the efforts of the title characters' surrogate dad, Dave Seville (Jason Lee), to rescue them from the clutches of a perfidious record executive (a delightfully despicable, movie-stealing David Cross). Kids may find less to connect with: The digitally animated heroes are eclipsed by their adult, live-action co-stars, a fatal mistake. Rent the DVD, or watch it with your children on a plane flight. (Andy Webster)

'ATONEMENT' (R, 2:03) Gorgeous and inert, this adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel suggests that some books are best left alone. (A. O. Scott)

'THE BAND'S VISIT' (PG-13, 1:29, in Arabic, English and Hebrew) The Israeli writer and director Eran Kolirin wrenches comedy out of intense melancholia in his beautifully played story about eight Egyptian musicians stranded in the Israeli desert. (Manohla Dargis)

'THE BANK JOB' (R, 1:50) A wham-bam caper flick, efficiently directed by Roger Donaldson, that fancifully revisits the mysterious whos and speculative hows of a 1971 London bank heist. With Jason Statham and Saffron Burrows. (Dargis)

'BE KIND REWIND' (PG-13, 1:41) Michel Gondry's sweet and lackadaisical new film pays tribute to movie love, not as a grand aesthetic passion but rather as an antidote for boredom. Jack Black and Mos Def are a pair of loafers who recreate well-known films (e.g., "Ghostbusters" and "Driving Miss Daisy") on videotape. Their art, like Mr. Gondry's, is both silly and inspiring. (Scott)

'BEAUFORT' (No rating, 2:05, in Hebrew) Joseph Cedar's tense drama takes place at a fortress in Lebanon captured by Israel in the 1980s. The last group of Israeli soldiers is preparing to withdraw, under attack from Hezbollah and with decided ambivalence. The movie's earnest sobriety helps it through passages of tedium and occasional bouts of combat-picture cliche. (A. O. Scott)

'BLINDSIGHT' (PG, 1:44, in Tibetan) Filmed primarily in and around the cascading Tibetan Himalayas, Lucy Walker's astonishing documentary follows six blind Tibetan teenagers as they attempt to scale the 23,000-foot Lhakpa Ri peak on the north side of Mount Everest. The film is at its strongest and most complex when humanitarian and competitive goals collide, and the raw beauty of the surroundings dwarfs every human ambition. (Jeannette Catsoulis)

'CARAMEL' (PG, 1:36, in Arabic and French) Set in a Beirut beauty salon, Nicole Labaki's debut feature presents a charming, if somewhat familiar, tableau of *female* friendship and mild melodrama. (Scott)

'CHARLIE BARTLETT' (R, 1:37) If the attention span of "Charlie Bartlett" didn't wander here and there, the movie might have been a high school satire worthy of comparing to "Election." But as it dashes around and eventually turns soft, it loses its train of thought. (Stephen Holden)

'CHICAGO 10' (R, 1:43) The '68 Democratic convention and its aftermath, rendered with archival clips and also with animated re-enactments of the trial of a number of activists. More mythology than history, this hybrid, directed by Brett Morgen, squanders its ingenuity on a glib, uninformative rehash of Yippie attitudes. (Scott)

'CHOP SHOP' (No rating, 1:25) Rahmin Barhani, the director and co-writer of this modest, neo-realist gem, stays close to the ground in the Willets Point section of Queens. In following the lives of a brother and a sister scratching out a future amid grim circumstances, he celebrates their resilience without condescension, sentimentality or false hope. (Scott)

'CITY OF MEN' (R, 1:51, in Portuguese) The companion piece (not strictly a sequel) to "City of God," the Brazilian hit about youth gangs in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, is a warmer-hearted melodrama built around the friendship of two 18-year-old boys from the favelas, both brought up without fathers, making their way into manhood. (Holden)

'CJ7' (PG, 1:26, in Cantonese) A devilishly entertaining curveball, "CJ7" is "E.T." as reimagined by the premier clown of Chinese cinema, Stephen Chow. Here he plays an impoverished widower whose young son (the 9-year-old actress Xu Jiao) befriends a tiny alien with magical powers. Ceding the limelight to his young co-star -- who dances in it like a pro -- Mr. Chow devotes his considerable creative energy to unexpected scenes that showcase his bizarre sense of humor. The violence is as exaggerated as vintage Hanna-Barbera, but the film's gentleness of spirit and frequent flights of fancy ensure that no child will be left behind. (Catsoulis)

'CLOVERFIELD' (PG-13, 1:24) OMG! It's, like, totally the end of the world!! (Dargis)

'COLLEGE ROAD TRIP' (G, 1:23) Eyes popping and mouths agape, Martin Lawrence and Raven-Symone mug their way through "College Road Trip" as a disturbingly doting father and his fed-up daughter en route to her college interview. As Dad crashes a wedding and storms a sorority house, you'll be thankful that the movie's target audience is too young to have heard of Freud. (Catsoulis)

'THE COUNTERFEITERS' (R, 1:38, in German) Stefan Rudowitsky's film, winner of this year's Oscar for best foreign-language film, is based on the true story of concentration camp inmates involved in a Nazi scheme to counterfeit Allied currencies. Karl Markovics gives a ferociously concentrated performance as Salomon Sorowisch, a man who brings his underworld code of ethics and his professional pride from Berlin to the Sachsenhausen camp. (Scott)

* 'DEFINITELY, MAYBE' (PG-13, 1:52) This unusually smart, thoroughly charming romantic comedy follows a nice guy's involvement with three <u>women</u>, one of whom he will marry. Isla Fisher, Rachel Weisz and Elizabeth Banks are all wonderful as the candidates, as is Ryan Reynolds as the guy. (Scott)

'THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY' (PG-13, 1:52, in French) Julian Schnabel's film, about Jean-Dominique Bauby, a French magazine editor paralyzed by a stroke, is a marvel of empathy and imagination. It is also a celebration of French sensualism and an examination of the nature of consciousness. (Scott)

* 'THE DUCHESS OF LANGEAIS' (No rating, 2:17, in French) Based on Balzac's 1834 short novel and set against the French Restoration, Jacques Rivette's nearly impeccable interpretation traces how a passionate affair of the heart (Jeanne Balibar and Guillaume Depardieu play the lovers) curdles into cruelty and obsession. (Dargis)

'THE EYE' (PG-13, 1:37) Yet another Western deconstruction of a successful Asian horror movie, this one features a vapid Jessica Alba as a blind violinist whose cornea transplant yields the ability to see dead people. But while the original was an insinuating ghost story that cleverly exploited cinema's fascination with all things ocular, this louder and more literal remake only highlights the debt owed by both to "The Sixth Sense." (Catsoulis)

'FOOL'S GOLD' (PG-13, 1:52) Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey go swimming. (Scott)

'4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS' (No rating, 1:53, in Romanian) In this ferocious, unsentimental film from the Romanian writer and director Cristian Mungiu, the camera doesn't follow the action, it expresses consciousness itself. This consciousness -- alert to the world and insistently alive -- is embodied by a young university student who in the late 1980s helps her roommate with an illegal abortion in Ceausescu's Romania. It's a pitiless, violent story that in its telling becomes a haunting and haunted intellectual and aesthetic achievement. (Dargis)

'FROWNLAND' (No rating, 1:46) An up-close, painfully intimate portrait of a hapless, manipulative schlub -- inhabited with every sweating pore of his being by Dore Mann -- Ronald Bronstein's striking feature film debut is personal cinema at its most uncompromising and fierce. (Dargis)

'GEORGE A. ROMERO'S DIARY OF THE DEAD' (R, 1:35) The loosest, goosiest chapter in Mr. Romero's continuing zombieland epic pivots on a clutch of students who in the process of fleeing legions of the undead have taken up video cameras, thus becoming the producers of their own snuff biopic. (Dargis)

'GIRLS ROCK!' (PG, 1:30) For one earsplitting, consciousness-raising week at the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, Ore., 100 delirious 8- to 18-year-old girls -- many of whom have never touched an instrument -- find expression for more than their music. Employing an amiably chaotic visual style, Shane Cook and Arne Johnson's jubilant documentary observes a place where power chords and empowerment go hand in hand. (Catsoulis)

'HANNAH MONTANA AND MILEY CYRUS: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS CONCERT' (G, 1:14) This 3-D concert movie, offering musical highlights of Miley Cyrus's recent sold-out tour, offers little in the way of revealing backstage glimpses of the star. But that won't bother your daughter if she's a "Hannah Montana" fan. Good luck getting tickets opening weekend. (Webster)

'IN BRUGES' (R, 1:47) An amusing trifle from the potty-mouthed playwright Martin McDonagh about two Irish hit men (the very fine Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson) and their nuttier boss (an even better Ralph Fiennes). The characters talk a blue streak beautifully, but Mr. McDonagh has yet to find the nuance and poetry that make his red images signify with commensurate sizzle and pop. (Dargis)

'I AM LEGEND' (PG-13, 1:40) Will Smith, as the sole surviving human resident of Manhattan, paints the town in fine style in this postapocalyptic zombie action thriller. It falls apart in the last act, but Mr. Smith and the special effects make it quite watchable up until then. (Scott)

'I'M NOT THERE' (R, 2:15) Hurling a Molotov cocktail into the biopic factory, Todd Haynes uses six different actors and an astonishing range of looks and styles to meditate on the life, work and cultural impact of Bob Dylan. Inspired and inexhaustible. (Scott)

'J'ENTENDS PLUS LA GUITARE (I DON'T HEAR THE GUITAR ANYMORE)' This 1991 meditation on love, from the French director Philippe Garrel, is oblique, poetic and unexpectedly moving. (No rating, 1:38, in French) (Scott)

'JODHAA AKBAR' (No rating, 3:13, in Hindi) They may not make 'em like they used to in Hollywood, but sometimes they still do in India. This film, about the 16th-century Muslim emperor Akbar (Hrithik Roshan), who marries a Rajput princess (Aishwarya Rai Bachchan) -- a Hindu, that is -- has star power, romance, a cast of thousands and enough elephants and gold to sink the Titanic. It also has a message of religious tolerance. (Rachel Saltz)

'JUMPER' (PG-13, 1:30) A barely coherent genre mishmash from the usually reliable Doug Liman ("The Bourne Identity") about a guy who transports himself across the globe at will. Next! (Dargis)

'JUNO' (PG-13, 1:31) A sharply written and acted coming-of-age comedy, starring the remarkable Ellen Page as Juno MacGuff, a teenager who deals with her unanticipated pregnancy in unexpected ways. (Scott)

'LIVE AND BECOME' (No rating, 2:20, in Amharic, Hebrew and French) Fundamental issues of ethnic and religious identity and the agony of exile go to the heart of "Live and Become," an intermittently compelling swatch of recent Israeli history filtered through the experience of an African immigrant. With epic aspirations that are only

partly realized, the movie tries to be something like a contemporary "Exodus" from an outsider's point of view. (Holden)

'MARRIED LIFE' (PG-13, 1:30) A comedy of manners merged with a suspenseful psychological thriller, the movie aspires to be a hybrid of the sort that Alfred Hitchcock polished to perfection in the age of sexual subtext and subterfuge. When to shudder and when to smirk: as you watch this sly marital fable of secrets, lies and homicidal intent, you're never sure of what your reaction should be. (Holden)

'MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY' (PG-13, 1:32) The particular screwball screen magic Amy Adams commands in this weightless period fairy tale, based on the novel by Winifred Watson, hasn't been this intense since the heyday of Jean Arthur. She helps turn a little nothing of a movie into a little something. (Holden)

'NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN' (R, 2:02) Mean, violent and impeccable, Joel and Ethan Coen's adaptation of a pulpy, compact novel by Cormac McCarthy lives and breathes in the central performances of Tommy Lee Jones, Josh Brolin and Javier Bardem, who chase one another, \$2 million and metaphysical truth through the Texas back country. (Scott)

'THE ORPHANAGE' (R, 1:40, in Spanish) Juan Antonio Bayona's Spanish ghost story, in which a woman (Belen Rueda) returns to her childhood home with her adopted son, is effectively scary, but not as emotionally rich as it could have been. (Scott)

'THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL' (PG-13, 1:55) Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johansson star in a salacious slog about two hot blue bloods who ran amok and partly unclothed in the court of Henry VIII. (Dargis)

'PARANOID PARK' (R, 1:18) Gus Van Sant's haunting, voluptuously beautiful portrait of a teenage boy who, after being suddenly caught in midflight, falls to earth, is a modestly scaled triumph without a false or wasted moment. (Dargis)

'PENELOPE' (PG, 1:30) In this mirthless and poorly written and directed fairy tale, Christina Ricci plays an English heiress born with the snout of a pig. (Holden)

'PERSEPOLIS' (PG-13, 1:35, in French) Marjane Satrapi's adaptation of her graphic novel-memoir is a free-spirited coming-of-age story, beautifully drawn and voiced by a formidable trio of French movie stars. (A. O. Scott)

'THE SAVAGES' (R, 1:53) Tamara Jenkins's beautifully nuanced tragicomedy involves two floundering souls -- a middle-aged brother and sister, played with force and feeling by Philip Seymour Hoffman and Laura Linney -- who are suddenly left to care for their infirm father (Philip Bosco). There isn't a single moment of emotional guff or sentimentality in "The Savages," a film that periodically caused me to wince, but also left me with a sense of acute pleasure, even joy. (Dargis)

'SEMI-PRO' (R, 1:30) In this 1970s-rooted sports comedy, the latest in his series of wildly successful movies about demented man-children, Will Ferrell plays the owner-coach-promoter-star of the Tropics, a Flint, Mich., team that's part of the soon-to-be-defunct American Basketball Association. The movie is a raunchy, R-rated goof that doesn't cohere as a comedy but contains many hilarious moments, an amusing cast that includes Woody Harrelson and Andre Benjamin as basketball stars, and a wealth of period detail worthy of "Boogie Nights." (Matt Zoller Seitz)

'SNOW ANGELS' (R, 1:46) David Gordon Green's warm, offbeat direction and some fine performances cannot rescue this tale of small-town American misery from a studious grimness that seems assumed rather than observed. (Scott)

'THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES' (PG, 1:37) Computer-generated goblins menace three children in an old house. Not much enchantment. (Scott)

'STEP UP 2 THE STREETS' (PG-13, 1:38) This earnest sequel to the 2006 cornball musical drama "Step Up" mixes new characters into the original's setting, the neighborhoods surrounding the Maryland School of the Arts in Baltimore. Like its predecessor, it takes place in a gritty neighborhood, has a white lead (Briana Evigan as a striving

dancer), posits a universe where racial and class differences are minor obstacles to fun and pretends its cliches aren't cliches. The film's likable cast and exuberant musical sequences almost save it. (Seitz)

'TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE' (R, 1:46) This documentary by Alex Gibney ("Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room") traces a path from Bagram prison in Afghanistan to Abu Graib and Guantanamo, and serves up a powerful indictment of some of the American military's tactics in the war on terror. (Scott)

'10,000 B.C.' (PG-13, 1:49) In the future this saga, loaded with computer-generated imagery, about a tribe of mammoth-hunters will be enjoyable, in a campy kind of way, for its earnest, B-movie dumbness. At the moment, it's just dumb. (Scott)

'THERE WILL BE BLOOD' (R, 2:38) Paul Thomas Anderson's epic American nightmare tells a story of greed and envy of biblical proportions, set against the backdrop of the Southern California oil boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There is no God but money in this oil-rich desert, and his messenger is Daniel Plainview, a petroleum speculator played by a monstrous and shattering Daniel Day-Lewis. (Dargis)

'THE UNFORESEEN' (No rating, 1:33) Laura Dunn's well-meaning if fuzzy documentary about developmental sprawl in Austin, Tex., tackles a great big subject, or rather a handful of great big subjects, among them the rights of man, the death of nature, the water below, the air above and all that going, going, gone green in between. (Dargis)

'UNTRACEABLE' (R, 1:40) Morally duplicitous torture porn: how else to describe this bleak, rain-washed horror thriller, whose predatory villain streams live video of his murders on his own popular Web site, killwithme.com? (Holden)

'U2 3D' (G, 1:25) The musical documentary "U2 3D," which stitches together performances by this Irish rock band during a recent tour of South America, brazenly ignores the usual stipulations about making a 3-D film, to thrilling effect. The movie's directors, Mark Pellington and Catherine Owens, layer the screen with multiple planes of information: long shots and medium shots of the musicians; images of the crowd; close-up details of graphics from the big screen that the band performs in front of that make the designs abstract and merge them with the performers. Thanks to the clarity of the movie's format, digital 3-D, the result is not a confusing mishmash of images but a musical-experimental work that visually simulates the sensation of thinking. (Seitz)

'VANTAGE POINT' (PG-13, 1:24) A gimmick (repeat the assassination of an American president over and ov

'WELCOME HOME ROSCOE JENKINS' (PG-13, 1:54) This comedy about a talk-show host (Martin Lawrence) revisiting his relatives down South is just a shaggy diversion that gives its energetic star and its populous, accomplished supporting cast (including James Earl Jones as Papa Jenkins, Margaret Avery as Mamma Jenkins, and Cedric the Entertainer and Mo'Nique as the hero's siblings) a chance to clown around. But it's a cut above other films of its type, because every scene is packed with details that suggest that the film's writer and director, Malcolm D. Lee ("The Best Man"), is working overtime to smuggle life into formula. (Seitz)

'THE YEAR MY PARENTS WENT ON VACATION' (No rating, 1:44) A young boy comes of age against a backdrop of political repression and soccer mania in 1970 Sao Paulo. (Scott)

Film Series

FILMS BY GEORGES FRANJU (Friday through Thursday) A weeklong retrospective for one of France's most fascinating and difficult-to-classify filmmakers begins on Friday with "Head Against the Wall," Franju's 1959 film about a troublesome young man whose father has him committed to a psychiatric hospital. Typically for Franju, the film is a blend of documentary realism (shot at an actual mental institution) and gothic horror, a combination he worked to unforgettable effect with what is probably his best-known film, the surgical thriller "Eyes Without a Face," also showing on Friday. The series continues with a package of Franju shorts (Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday) that includes his notorious first film, "Blood of the Beasts" (1949), a disturbingly clear-eyed look at a Parisian slaughterhouse, as well as "Judex" (Saturday, Sunday and Thursday), a 1963 feature-length homage to the pioneer

French filmmaker Louis Feuillade, who practiced a similar mix of the real and the surreal. Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, at Second Street, East Village, (212) 505-5181, anthologyfilmarchives.org; \$8. (Dave Kehr)

THE TALKING PICTURES OF MANOEL DE OLIVEIRA (Friday through Thursday) A continuing review of the work of this endlessly inventive and apparently ageless Portuguese director continues at BAMcinematek with two important, rarely screened films from his middle period that both draw on postmodernist devices to communicate a sense of 19th-century life. "Doomed Love" (Saturday) is a 262-minute adaptation of a celebrated Portuguese novel about star-crossed lovers that helped regenerate critical interest in Mr. Oliveira when it made the festival rounds in 1978; it will be followed on Sunday by the even better (and significantly shorter) "Francisca" from 1981. The story of a cynical aristocrat who seduces and abandons an innocent young woman, "Francisca" established the stylistic parameters -- presentational acting, a deliberate theatricality -- that continue to shape Mr. Oliveira's work. BAMcinematek, 30 Lafayette Avenue, at Ashland Place, Fort Greene, Brooklyn, (718) 636-4100, bam.org; \$11. (Kehr)

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Byline: By KATHERINE ZOEPF

Katherine Zoepf is working on a book about young women in the contemporary Arab world.

Body

The struggle, if there was any, would have been very brief.

Fawaz later recalled that his wife, Zahra, was sleeping soundly on her side and curled slightly against the pillow when he rose at dawn and readied himself for work at his construction job on the outskirts of Damascus. It was a rainy Sunday morning in January and very cold; as he left, Fawaz turned back one last time to tuck the blanket more snugly around his 16-year-old wife. Zahra slept on without stirring, and her husband locked the door of their tiny apartment carefully behind him.

Zahra was most likely still sleeping when her older brother, Fayyez, entered the apartment a short time later, using a stolen key and carrying a dagger. His sister lay on the carpeted floor, on the thin, foam mattress she shared with her husband, so Fayyez must have had to kneel next to Zahra as he raised the dagger and stabbed her five times in the head and back: brutal, tearing thrusts that shattered the base of her skull and nearly severed her spinal column. Leaving the door open, Fayyez walked downstairs and out to the local police station. There, he reportedly turned himself in, telling the officers on duty that he had killed his sister in order to remove the dishonor she had brought on the family by losing her virginity out of wedlock nearly 10 months earlier.

"Fayyez told the police, 'It is my right to correct this error,' " Maha Ali, a Syrian lawyer who knew Zahra and now works pro bono for her husband, told me not long ago. "He said, 'It's true that my sister is married now, but we never washed away the shame.' "

By now, almost anyone in Syria who follows the news can supply certain basic details about Zahra al-Azzo's life and death: how the girl, then only 15, was kidnapped in the spring of 2006 near her home in northern Syria, taken to Damascus by her abductor and raped; how the police who discovered her feared that her family, as commonly happens in Syria, would blame Zahra for the rape and kill her; how these authorities then placed Zahra in a prison for girls, believing it the only way to protect her from her relatives. And then in December, how a cousin of Zahra's, 27-year-old Fawaz, agreed to marry her in order to secure her release and also, he hoped, restore her reputation in the eyes of her family; how, just a month after her wedding to Fawaz, Zahra's 25-year-old brother, Fayyez, stabbed her as she slept.

Zahra died from her wounds at the hospital the following morning, one of about 300 girls and <u>women</u> who die each year in Syria in so-called honor killings, according to estimates by <u>women</u>'s rights advocates there. In Syria

and other Arab countries, many men are brought up to believe in an idea of personal honor that regards defending the chastity of their sisters, their daughters and other <u>women</u> in the family as a primary social obligation. Honor crimes tend to occur, activists say, when men feel pressed by their communities to demonstrate that they are sufficiently protective of their <u>female</u> relatives' virtue. Pairs of lovers are sometimes killed together, but most frequently only the <u>women</u> are singled out for punishment. Sometimes <u>women</u> are killed for the mere suspicion of an affair, or on account of a false accusation, or because they were sexually abused, or because, like Zahra, they were raped.

In speaking with the police, Zahra's brother used a colloquial expression, ghasalat al arr (washing away the shame), which means the killing of a woman or girl whose very life has come to be seen as an unbearable stain on the honor of her male relatives. Once this kind of familial sexual shame has been "washed," the killing is traditionally forgotten as quickly as possible. Under Syrian law, an honor killing is not murder, and the man who commits it is not a murderer. As in many other Arab countries, even if the killer is convicted on the lesser charge of a "crime of honor," he is usually set free within months. Mentioning the killing -- or even the name of the victim - generally becomes taboo.

That this has not happened with Zahra's story -- that her case, far from being ignored, has become something of a cause celebre, a rallying point for lawyers, Islamic scholars and Syrian officials hoping to change the laws that protect the perpetrators of honor crimes -- is a result of a peculiar confluence of circumstances. It is due in part to the efforts of a group of <u>women</u>'s rights activists and in part to the specifics of her story, which has galvanized public sympathy in a way previously unseen in Syria. But at heart it is because of Zahra's young widower, Fawaz, who had spoken to his bride only once before they became engaged. Now, defying his tribe and their traditions, he has brought a civil lawsuit against Zahra's killer and is refusing to let her case be forgotten.

Nashweh, where Zahra al-Azzo was born in 1990, is the sort of Syrian town that seems literally to crumble at its edges -- its squat cinder-block houses giving way to heaps of decaying construction materials, then to stubbly wheat fields strewn with garbage. The quantities of laundry drying on wires strung above the houses suggest vast extended families. Nashweh is small enough and remote enough that if a stranger steps out of a car, it is a matter of seconds before a troupe of small boys wearing dirty galabias circles round and begins shouting invitations home for tea. Before last year Zahra had spent her entire life there, but recently, when asked if they had known her, a half-dozen town <u>women</u> -- uniformly dressed in head scarves and thin velour house dresses, most over 40 with blue Bedouin facial tattoos -- simply looked away.

By local standards, the circumstances of Zahra's life in Nashweh were perfectly ordinary. In her early childhood the family earned a good living raising Arabian horses, but the Azzos had lately fallen on hard times, and Zahra's father, according to social workers who talked to Zahra in prison, was rumored to be having an affair.

According to the lawyer Maha Ali, who met Zahra in prison, Zahra first heard the rumors from a friend of her father's. The man threatened Zahra, telling her that he would reveal the scandal if she didn't join him outside her house, itself a grave transgression in her conservative society. That Zahra did so, disobeying her family and going out with a man unaccompanied, even under duress, is so scandalous to many Syrians that advocates working on Zahra's case have tried to obscure this fact, preferring to describe what took place as a simple kidnapping. They also say that at 15 she was naive in the extreme, so young for her age that she took a teddy bear to bed every night in prison.

Zahra was frightened by the man but apparently believed that if she came out with him, briefly, she could ensure her family's reputation and safety. Instead, says Yumin Abu al-Hosn, a social worker at the prison, she was taken to Damascus, held in an apartment and raped. Terrified, in a strange and crowded city she had never visited, Zahra didn't try to run away. She was in the capital with the man for about a week when a tip from a neighbor took the police to the door. The man was taken to jail, where he now awaits trial for kidnapping and rape. Zahra, meanwhile, was taken to a police station for a so-called virginity exam, the hymen examination that, however unreliable at establishing virginity, is standard procedure in Syria in rape cases and common when <u>women</u> are taken into police custody.

In the United States, a whitewashed, heavily guarded building like the one where Zahra was then sent for her protection would probably be called a juvenile-detention center, but Arabic offers no such euphemism, so the words for "prison" or "institution" are used. Syria does not have shelters where girls or <u>women</u> can go if they are threatened with honor killing; instead, minors are often placed in girls' prisons for their protection. Like many of the teenagers who arrive there, Zahra felt humiliated at having gone through the forcible genital examination and tried at first for a show of defiance, according to Maha Ali. "I came in and met Zahra," Ali said. "And she just looked at me and said, 'God, do I have to tell the story all over again?'"

For girls like Zahra, prison is only a temporary solution. Even the most murderously inclined families often issue emotional court appeals to have their daughters returned to them. Judges usually try to extract sworn statements from male guardians, promises that the girls, if released, will not be harmed. But those promises are often broken.

Among Syria's so-called tribal families -- settled Bedouin clans like the one that Zahra belonged to -- first-cousin marriage is common. So it wasn't a shock when her family, looking for someone who could marry her while she was in prison and help secure her release, turned to one of her cousins, Fawaz. But Fawaz hadn't intended to marry a cousin, he told me recently, and was startled when Zahra's brother Fayyez showed up one day at his home.

"Fayyez started telling us that his sister, Zahra, had been kidnapped," said Fawaz's mother, who is usually addressed by the honorific Umm Fawaz, meaning "mother of Fawaz." She was sitting cross-legged, along with her son and husband, in the front room of the family apartment outside Damascus. The shades were pulled down to keep out the searing late spring heat, and the room was lighted by a single fluorescent tube. Umm Fawaz pointed out the place on the cushions -- arranged, Arab-style, on the floor against the walls -- where Fayyez had sat.

The mere fact that Zahra had been taken from her home for a few days signaled dishonor for the family. " 'Oh, Auntie, I don't know what to say,' " Umm Fawaz recalled Fayyez saying as she adjusted her hijab with one hand and dabbed her eyes with a tissue in the other. "I said: 'Don't be ashamed for your sister. Even in the best families, something like this can happen.' " Fayyez claimed that despite having been kidnapped, his sister was still a virgin. Slowly, he broached the subject he had come to discuss. Would Fawaz consider marrying Zahra in order to secure her release?

At first, Fawaz, a shy, wiry man, politely demurred. He felt sorry for Fayyez, he told me, but he couldn't help recoiling a little at the story, which in his community constitutes an ugly sexual scandal. Besides, he was already engaged to another girl. After Fayyez left, though, Fawaz and his mother talked over Zahra's situation. "We decided to visit the girl, just to see," Umm Fawaz said. And so several days later the two of them took a taxi to the girls' prison. They walked past a heavy steel gate, and a guard led them to an office.

Fawaz smiled as he recalled the moment Zahra was brought in. It would be indelicate for him to comment on Zahra's appearance, so it was Umm Fawaz who talked about Zahra's beauty ("As lovely as Sibel Can!" she exclaimed, mentioning a Turkish singer popular in the Arab world).

"I liked the girl," said Fawaz, who seemed embarrassed to have admitted such a personal thing in public, and he quickly corrected himself. "I mean, here we fall in love with a girl after we marry her. But I decided to leave my fiancee for Zahra. I felt that a normal girl like my fiancee would have other chances. With Zahra I thought, my God, she's such a child to be stuck in this prison."

Fawaz's father disapproved, suspecting from the outset that Zahra's family would kill her once she left prison. But when, months later, Zahra's family begged the other family to reconsider, Fawaz's father relented, and Fawaz eventually accompanied Zahra's father to court to sign her release papers. Zahra and Fawaz were married in a civil ceremony at the prison on Dec. 11, 2006, and then a week later in a formal celebration for the neighborhood, held in the bride's new home. The few photographs of the wedding were taken with cellphones, so the prints have a blurry, ephemeral quality. In them, Zahra looks stunned and a bit sulky, her hair teased high on her head, her childish features thickly coated with foundation, shocking pink eye shadow and frosted lipstick.

The marriage, by all accounts, was happy. "Zahra used to call me even after her wedding," Ali, the lawyer, recalled. " 'How is Fawaz?' I'd ask her. And she'd say, 'Oh, Auntie Maha, we're spending all night up together, talking and having fun.' Once, her aunt called me. She said: 'Don't tell Zahra I called, but can you talk to her? You have influence on her. Fawaz can't get up for work because Zahra keeps him up all night.' "

Fawaz told me that, according to his interpretation of Islam, he was "honoring Zahra again" -- restoring her lost virtue -- by marrying her. In this decision he was supported by his sheik, or religious teacher, who according to Fawaz subscribes to a progressive school of Koranic interpretation. Fawaz and his immediate family, though not well educated, are proud of their open-mindedness, and he boasts about Zahra's intelligence and literacy. Even so, he and the family rebuffed Zahra's efforts to describe her ordeal to them, so that to this day they know the details only secondhand. "So many times, when we were married, she wanted to talk to me about what had happened to her," Fawaz said. "But I refused. I told her, 'Your past is your past.'"

According to Fawaz, Zahra had been married just five weeks when her brother, Fayyez, arrived on an unannounced visit, saying he planned to look for work in Damascus. Zahra was happy to see her brother, but Fawaz described feeling painfully torn between his duties to hospitality, a cardinal virtue in Bedouin culture, and his feeling that Fayyez -- sleeping just upstairs in Fawaz's parents' apartment -- was a danger to his wife. On the morning Zahra was attacked, Fawaz recalls going upstairs before leaving for work to find Fayyez awake and tapping nervously at his cellphone.

"He couldn't afford to have a mobile," Fawaz said. "I'd been wondering about that. It turned out that his uncle had given him the phone so that he could call and tell the family that he'd killed his sister. We learned later that they had a party that night to celebrate the cleansing of their honor. The whole village was invited."

Most honor killings receive only brief mention in Syrian newspapers, but Zahra al-Azzo's death has been unlike any other. Dozens of articles and television programs have discussed her story at length, fueling an unprecedented public conversation about the roots and morality of honor crimes.

In May, hoping to gauge public feeling about Zahra's case, I spent a couple of hours walking around a crowded lower-middle-class neighborhood in Damascus. In the wealthiest areas of the city, half the people on the streets might be *female*, but here, in the late evening, there were very few *women* to be found. In shawarma sandwich shops and juice stalls, most men had heard of Zahra, but more than half of them believed that the practice of honor killing is protected -- or outright required -- by Islamic law. A man named Abu Rajab, who ran a cigarette stall, described it as "something that is found in religion" and added that even if the laws were changed, "a man will kill his sister if he needs to, even if it means 15 years in prison."

Yet the notion that Islam condones honor killing is a misconception, according to some lawyers and a few prominent Islamic scholars. Daad Mousa, a Syrian <u>women</u>'s rights advocate and lawyer, told me that though beliefs about cleansing a man's honor derive from Bedouin tradition, the three Syrian laws used to pardon men who commit honor crimes can be traced back not to Islamic law but to the law codes, based on the Napoleonic code, that were imposed in the Levant during the French mandate. "Article 192 states that if a man commits a crime with an 'honorable motive,' he will go free," Mousa said. "In Western countries this law usually applies in cases where doctors kill their patients accidentally, intending to save them, but here the idea of 'honorable motive' is often expanded to include men who are seen as acting in defense of their honor.

"Article 242 refers to crimes of passion," Mousa continued. "But it's Article 548 that we're really up against. Article 548 states precisely that if a man witnesses a *female* relative in an immoral act and kills her, he will go free." Judges frequently interpret these laws so loosely that a premeditated killing -- like the one Fayyez is accused of -- is often judged a "crime of passion"; "witnessing" a *female* relative's behavior is sometimes defined as hearing neighborhood gossip about it; and for a woman, merely speaking to a man may be ruled an "immoral act." Syria, which has been governed since 1963 by a secular Baathist regime, has a strong reputation in the region for sex equality; *women* graduate from high schools and universities in numbers roughly equal to men, and they frequently hold influential positions as doctors, professors and even government ministers. But in the family, a different standard applies. "Honor here means only one thing: *women*, and especially the sexual life of *women*," Mousa

said. The decision to carry out an honor killing is usually made by the family as a group, and an under-age boy is often nominated to carry out the task, to eliminate even the smallest risk of a prison sentence.

Some advocates claim that Syria has an especially high number of honor killings per capita, saying that the country is second or third in the world. In fact, reliable statistics on honor killing are nearly impossible to come by. The United Nations Population Fund says that about 5,000 honor killings take place each year around the world, but since they often occur in rural areas where births and deaths go unreported, it is very difficult to count them by country. Some killings have been recorded in European cultures, including Italy, and in Christian or Druse communities in predominantly Muslim countries. But it is widely agreed that honor killings are found disproportionately in Muslim communities, from Bangladesh to Egypt to Great Britain.

The Grand Mufti Ahmad Badr Eddin Hassoun, Syria's highest-ranking Islamic teacher, has condemned honor killing and Article 548 in unequivocal terms. Earlier this year, when we met for a rare interview in his spacious office on the 10th floor of Syria's ministry of religious endowments, he told me, "It happens sometimes that a misogynistic religious scholar will argue that <u>women</u> are the source of all kinds of evil." In fact, he said, the Koran does not differentiate between <u>women</u> and men in its moral laws, requiring sexual chastity of both, for example. The commonly held view that Article 548 is derived from Islamic law, he said, is false.

With his tightly wound white turban and giant pearl ring, the grand mufti is one of Syria's most recognizable public figures. He is a charismatic and generally popular sheik, but because he is appointed by the state, many Syrians believe that his views reflect those of the ruling party, and they may find his teachings suspect as a result. In downtown Damascus, one man I interviewed on the street declared that the grand mufti was not a "real Muslim" if he believed in canceling Article 548. "It's an Islamic law to kill your relative if she errs," said the man, who gave his name as Ahmed and said that he learned of Zahra's story on Syrian television. "If the sheik tries to fight this, the people will rise up and slit his throat."

There are religious figures who defend the status quo. At a conference on honor killing held this year at Damascus University, Mohammed Said Ramadan al-Bouti, one of Syria's most esteemed clerics, maintained that the laws should not be changed, defending them on the principle in Shariah law that people who kill in defense of their property should be treated with lenience (he is believed to have moderated his stance since). When, at an earlier conference, the grand mufti announced that he didn't believe protecting a woman's virginity was the most important component of honor, many attendees were upset. In response, a group of about a dozen <u>women</u>, all dressed in the long black abayas that in Syria are usually worn by only very conservative <u>women</u>, walked out of the room.

In our interview, the grand mufti told me that he believed Article 548 would be struck down by the Syrian Parliament within months, and given his government ties he might be expected to know. Still, <u>women</u>'s rights advocates are not so optimistic. They point out that Syria's educated elites have long opposed honor killing, though there is often a squeamishness about discussing a practice that is embarrassing to them. They say that some conservative Syrians are having second thoughts about the custom thanks to the efforts of their Islamic teachers, but that their numbers are small.

Bassam al-Kadi, a <u>women</u>'s advocate, told me that Zahra's case made an ideal rallying point. "We have hundreds of Zahras," he said. "But there are some stories that you can campaign with, and others that you can't." Zahra, in other words -- extremely young, a victim of rape, married at the time she was killed -- makes a sympathetic figure for a broad Syrian public in a way that, say, someone older who was killed after being seen with her boyfriend in a cafe might not.

With tensions like these in play, Syrian <u>women</u>'s advocates are careful to phrase their criticisms of tribal traditions of honor and Article 548 in Islamic terms. Though some will privately admit that they are secularists, even feminists, they keep it quiet. It would be politically impossible to suggest in public, for example, that <u>women</u> have the right to choose their sexual partners. The basic culture of chastity is in no way being publicly rethought. Some advocates say that their cause is damaged if they are perceived as sympathetic to "Western values," and even that honor killing is seen by some conservatives as a bulwark against those values. Where 15 years ago Syria banned the import of fax machines and modems, today the Internet is widely accessible. "There's

been a very complicated reaction to the new availability of Western media in this part of the world," Kadi, the **women**'s rights advocate, explained. "We're going through a transition, and our values are changing dramatically.

"Our parents tell us that there was an earlier day when honor meant that you were honorable in your work, that you didn't take bribes, for example," Kadi said. "But now, the political and economic situation is so bad that some degree of corruption is necessary to survive. People will say that you're a good earner for your family; they won't blame you. Historically speaking, all our other ideologies have collapsed. No one talks about loyalty to country, about professional honor. Now it's just the family, the tribe, the woman. That's the only kind of honor we have left."

Syrian activists say that while many in government would like to see Article 548 changed, the government, which is led by a tiny religious minority, the Alawites, may be afraid to risk offending the more conservative elements of Syria's Sunni majority. In other parts of the Middle East, too, tensions between ruling elites and religious conservatives have complicated efforts to combat honor killing. Rana Husseini, a Jordanian <u>women</u>'s advocate, told me that though an effort to establish harsher punishments for men who kill <u>female</u> relatives received support from members of the royal family, Jordan's Parliament rejected the law in 2003 after conservative groups opposed it. In Morocco, a campaign to stop honor killing resulted instead in a ruling that, if anything, endorsed the practice, by extending to **women** who kill in a fit of sexual jealousy the same protection under law that men had.

Yet there are signs of change. In Lebanon last month, Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, the top Shiite cleric and spiritual leader of <u>Hezbollah</u>, issued a fatwa banning honor killing and describing it as "a repulsive act, condemned and prohibited by religion." And earlier this year, Egypt's grand mufti upheld a fatwa stating that Islam permits a woman to have her virginity "refurbished" through hymen surgery, which would allow her to marry and would eliminate the need to cleanse the so-called stain on her family's honor. He even appeared on national television to advise Egyptian <u>women</u> considering the procedure. Although the ruling has been assailed by conservative scholars, it has been welcomed by those who hope it will prevent future honor killings.

In Syria, activists say that the existence of a case like Zahra's -- which has remained open in part because of the bad blood between Fawaz and Zahra's family -- has proved essential to keeping up momentum in the campaign to change Article 548. The civil suit brought by Fawaz claims that Fayyez conspired to deceive him, and the existence of the civil case means that, under Syrian law, the criminal case is unlikely to be dropped as quickly as similar ones. Fayyez is in custody awaiting trial (no lawyer has been appointed for him yet), and if Zahra's death is ruled a murder rather than an honor crime, he could go to prison for 12 to 15 years. Activists say that penalty, whether or not Article 548 is struck down, would stand as a powerful warning to other would-be killers in the name of honor. Fawaz and his family are under enormous pressure from their tribe to drop the case. They have been in touch with Zahra's family members -- who, they say, do not deny the crime, nor having celebrated it. Zahra's family has offered Fawaz money and another daughter to marry, he says, if he will abandon the lawsuit that is now the cause of so much public scrutiny.

"It's a big scandal now, in the whole neighborhood, the whole community," Fawaz said. "I can't even have coffee now with my best friends, because they're afraid for their sisters."

But Fawaz told me that he didn't understand his own feelings about honor killing until Zahra's death, and that he hoped the publicity surrounding her case would help other men to re-evaluate theirs. "In Zahra's case, the girl was basically kidnapped," Fawaz said. "If she'd been a bad girl, if she'd decided to run away with a man, I'd say, maybe. It's a brutal solution, but maybe."

His father broke in. "Even then! When a girl does something wrong like that, especially a girl that young, I don't think that she is responsible. The family is responsible. The father is responsible. I don't want to give anyone excuses for murder."

Fawaz nodded. "I start thinking about Zahra lying there, dying, and I don't think I can believe in that set of values any longer."

Graphic

Photos: Zahra's widower, Fawaz, in the apartment he shared with Zahra.

Zahra al-Azzo's grave on the outskirts of Damascus. (Photographs by Ben Stechschulte for The New York Times)

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Body

JERUSALEM - For the first time since Golda Meir more than three decades ago, a woman is within reach of becoming the prime minister of Israel, a nation dominated by macho military men and a religious establishment with strict views on the role of **women**.

But unlike Hillary Clinton or Sarah Palin, Israel's Tzipi Livni doesn't talk about cracking glass ceilings, even as she leads the field in the ruling Kadima Party's Sept. 17 primary to choose the likely successor to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Yet the tough-minded foreign minister's gender is popping up.

Top male rivals have branded Livni with words like "weak" and "that woman." And there is talk about ultra-Orthodox Jewish lawmakers who might be kingmakers in the next government being uncomfortable with the idea of a *female* leader.

Livni hasn't commented about the gender issue, and adviser Gil Messing said the foreign minister would not agree to be interviewed on the subject, but others have complained about the allusions to her gender.

Former lawmaker Naomi Chazan says the jabs at Livni are built on "deep chauvinistic foundations."

"Livni, it is hinted, exhibits signs of weakness (or is it femininity?), and so is unworthy of taking over the reins of power," she wrote in an op-ed piece in the Jerusalem Post.

The soft-spoken, 50-year-old Livni was an army captain and had a brief career in the Mossad spy agency. She traded that in for a life as corporate lawyer, wife and mother of two sons. Nine years ago, she entered politics as a protege of then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. She has earned a reputation as a pragmatic straight talker who disdains backroom politics.

Her father, Eitan Livni, was a Zionist underground hero who battled the British in pre-state Palestine and thought Israel should expand its borders into Arab lands.

She initially shared that dream. But Livni eventually concluded it clashed irreconcilably with the reality of living among a fast-growing Palestinian population.

During her relatively short tenure in politics, she has held six Cabinet posts, including minister of foreign affairs, justice and immigrant absorption. As foreign minister and vice premier, she has led Israel's negotiations with the Palestinians on ending decades of conflict and establishing a Palestinian state.

Last year, Time magazine included her in its list of the world's 100 most influential people, and she was No. 52 in Forbes magazine's recent ranking of the planet's 100 most powerful *women*.

But this resume apparently doesn't impress political rivals in a nation at war that values toughness over sensitivity.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak, a former prime minister with an eye on his old job, recently played on an ad from Hillary Clinton's failed presidential bid that suggested rival Barack Obama was not the man to handle a 3 a.m. crisis call.

"The foreign minister, her background being what it is, is not cut out to make decisions, not at three in the morning and not at three in the afternoon," said Barak, who also served as commander of the military and is Israel's most-decorated soldier.

His comment was widely regarded in the media as veiled sexism, as was his pointed reference to Livni by her full name, Tzipora - Hebrew for "bird" and a name that aides say she despises.

Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz, a former defense minister and military chief, is Livni's chief rival to become Kadima's new leader. His staffers have been quoted as saying Livni has a "a weak personality."

Some lawmakers dispute that Barak and Mofaz are being sexist.

"I am strong and you are weak" is part of Israel's political discourse, said Michael Eitan, a veteran lawmaker in a parliament that has only 17 <u>women</u> among its 120 members. Male candidates without security experience would also be criticized, he said.

During a recent appearance before foreign reporters in Jerusalem, Livni insisted she had plenty of security experience, including a key role as foreign minister during Israel's 2006 war against <u>Hezbollah</u> militants in Lebanon. That war has been the target of intense criticism in Israel, but Livni emerged largely unscathed because of her calls to end the fighting quickly.

There are also ultra-Orthodox parties to consider.

They could be crucial to Livni's efforts to form a new government, but are uneasy with a woman at the helm because "it's not modest" in their world view, said Menachem Friedman, an expert on religious society in Israel.

But Friedman, a professor at Bar Ilan University outside Tel Aviv, thinks practical politics would trump those concerns. The religious parties would join a Livni-led government if it promised them more money for pet causes and no territorial concessions to the Palestinians on Jerusalem, he said.

"If she gives them what they want, then they'll accept her," he said.

Spokesman Roi Lachmanovich of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, parliament's largest religious faction, said that "Shas has no problem with Tzipi Livni as prime minister of Israel."

For its part, the Israeli public appears to have little problem with having a woman leader.

Polls put Livni ahead of Mofaz in the Kadima primary and indicate she would fare better than him in a general election. She's also significantly ahead of Barak in national polls, though a general election race against her other key rival, hawkish former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, would be tighter.

Back in 1969, Israel took the extraordinary step of choosing a woman as prime minister: Golda Meir. But in the four decades since, <u>women</u> have remained significantly underrepresented in Israel's government and business, though they have made strides in other areas.

Meir resigned in disgrace after Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel in October 1973. Israel repelled the attackers but took heavy casualties in a war that many Israelis still see as their country's most humiliating military episode.

Since then, no woman until Livni has come close to holding the reins of power. But her reputation for honesty, in a country where a series of high-ranking officials, including Olmert, have been convicted or accused of corruption, is an asset for Livni.

"She has a clean-hands image, and this is a time when we're looking for decent, honest people," Chazan told The Associated Press. "She meets this criterion, and it's very, very important."

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Should We Globalize Labor Too?

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Byline: By Jason DeParle

Jason DeParle, a senior writer for The Times, last wrote for the magazine about labor migration from the

Philippines.

Body

The Arniko Highway climbs out of Kathmandu in long wending loops that pay twin tribute to the impassability of Himalayan terrain and the implausibility of its development. Outside Africa, no country is poorer than Nepal. Its per capita income looks like a misprint: \$270 a year. Sudan's is more than twice as high. Nearly two-thirds of Nepalis lack electricity. Half the preschoolers are malnourished. To the list of recent woes add regicide -- 10 royals slaughtered in 2001 by a suicidal prince -- and a Maoist insurgency.

A few hours east of the city, a gravel road juts across a talc quarry, where the work would be disturbing enough even if the workers were not under five feet tall. Scores of young teenagers, barefoot and stunted, lug rocks from a lunar pit. The journey continues through a district capital flying Communist flags and ends, 12 hours after it began, above a forlorn canyon. Halfway down the cactus-lined slope, a destitute farmer named Gure Sarki recently bought four goats.

The story of Gure Sarki's goats involves decades of thinking about foreign aid and the type of program often seen as modern practice at its best. Two years ago, an organizer appeared in the canyon to say that the Nepal government (with money from the World Bank) was making local grants for projects of poor villagers' choosing. First villagers had to catalog their problems. With Sarki as chairman, Chaurmuni village made its list:

"Not able to eat for the whole year."

"Not able to send children to school."

"Lack of proper feed and fodder for the livestock."

"Landslide and flood."

"Not able to get the trust of the moneylender."

"Insecurity and danger."

A week later, they agreed to start a microcredit fund and expand their livestock herds. Twenty villagers would buy a total of 55 goats at \$50 apiece. The plan specified who would serve on the goat-buying committee, the per diem

the goat buyers would get and the interest rates on the loans (just over 1 percent). Those who were literate signed their names, while others inked fingerprints, and the papers went off to Kathmandu, where officials approved a \$3,700 grant. Within two months of the first meeting, Sarki had his goats. They doubled the value of his livestock holdings. He prizes them so much that he sleeps beside them inside his house to protect them from leopards. He plans to sell them next year for a profit of about \$25 each.

Lant Pritchett says he has a better idea. Pritchett, a development economist and practiced iconoclast, has just left the World Bank to teach at Harvard and to help Google plan its philanthropic efforts on global poverty. In a recent trip through Chaurmuni, he praised the goats as community-driven development at its best: a fast, flexible way of delivering tangible aid to the poor. "But Nepal isn't going to goat its way out of poverty," he said. Nor does he think that as a small, landlocked country Nepal can soon prosper through trade.

To those standard solutions, trade and aid, Pritchett would add a third: a big upset-the-applecart idea, equally offensive to the left and the right. He wants a giant guest-worker program that would put millions of the world's poorest people to work in its richest economies. Never mind the goats; if you really want to help Gure Sarki, he says, let him cut your lawn. Pritchett's nearly religious passion is reflected in the title of his migration manifesto: "Let Their People Come." It was published last year to little acclaim -- none at all, in fact -- but that is Pritchett's point. In a world in which rock stars fight for debt relief and students shun sweatshop apparel, he is vexed to find no placards raised for the cause of labor migration. If goods and money can travel, why can't workers follow? What's so special about borders?

When they are being polite, Pritchett's friends say he is, ahem, ahead of his time. Less politely, critics say that an army of guest workers would erode Western sovereignty, depress domestic wages, abet terrorism, drain developing countries of talent, separate poor parents from their kids and destroy the West's cultural cohesion. Pritchett has spent his career puncturing the panaceas of others. It says something about the intransigence of much of the world's poverty that he may be in the grip of his own.

Pritchett was up early, on stinky-toilet patrol. He had arrived in the dark in the village of Bisauli and slept on a dirt floor. Daylight brought the first glimpse of his surroundings and with it a boondoggle alert: several villagers had used program money to build outhouses. "South Asia is littered with toilets that are quickly abandoned because they become smelly," he said. Water hauled up mountains is too precious for cleaning squat toilets; most people go outside. Pritchett had feared that organizers were pushing toilets and was relieved to find most of the money had purchased faucets and goats.

He moved on -- actually up, given the topography -- and offered a primer on rural development through shortened breaths. "PAF (huff)" -- the Poverty Alleviation Fund -- "is a third-generation project (huff)," he said. The first generation tried everything at once -- roads, drinking water, new crops -- and failed through complexity. The second generation simplified: road builders just built roads; well diggers dug wells. But some villages got roads when they needed wells. And some villages got wells that did not work. Some villages got nothing because people stole the cash. The World Bank officials tried to fix these problems when they helped design the Nepal program, which so far has received \$40 million. The program is flexible; the money can be put to many uses. It is "demand driven"; villagers decide. It is "transparent"; the accounting is posted on a bulletin board. And it is "targeted"; only poor villagers qualify. "PAF (huff) is state of the art," he said. "It's pimped up!"

Still, for all of the program's sophistication, it is a modest effort aimed less at ending poverty than at ameliorating it. With an annual per capita income of \$90, the Ramechhap district, where Pritchett was traveling, has much to ameliorate. Midway through his morning tour, Pritchett stopped at a faucet where three <u>women</u> were filling baskets with firewood and water jugs. The baskets were designed to rest on stooped backs with the help of a forehead strap; they looked like a chiropractor's full employment plan. Pritchett was traveling with his 14-year-old son, Isaac (5-foot-8, 135 pounds), and challenged him to lift one. Neck veins popped, but the basket didn't move. Pritchett (5-foot-9, 185 pounds) leaned into the forehead strap and staggered a few steps. Slight as dime-store dolls, the giggling <u>women</u> grabbed their baskets and trundled off in bare feet. Life in Nepal is hard.

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The same could be said of Ireland in the 1850s, Italy in the 1880s and Oklahoma in the 1930s. In each case, large populations suffered economic shocks and responded in the same way. They left. Following the potato blight, the Irish population fell by 53 percent, at least as much because of migration as the deaths caused by famine. That benefited the migrants, of course. But Pritchett notes that it also left Ireland with fewer people to support; gross domestic product per capita never fell.

Pritchett contrasts Zambia, whose economy peaked in 1964 on the strength of copper mines. When copper markets declined, Zambians had no place to go; the population nearly tripled and per capita G.D.P. fell more than 40 percent. Pritchett likens 19th-century Ireland to a ghost town and calls places like Zambia "zombies" -- lands of the living dead. While some distressed regions can adapt and prosper, by far a preferential fix, Pritchett argues that hundreds of millions of people are stuck in places with little chance for development. For them, only "out-migration can prevent an extended and permanent fall in wages."

Nepal has not suffered a sudden shock (except for the civil war, which has paused with the Maoists sharing government power). But it is a small, landlocked country with little manufacturing, daunting terrain, low literacy and scant infrastructure. What it does have -- its "comparative advantage" -- is cheap workers, many of whom already go abroad. While most go to low-wage countries like India, they still send home about \$1 billion a year. That accounts for 12 percent of Nepal's G.D.P. and is three times its spending on "public investment," which includes efforts like education, hunger relief and electrification. Despite the country's troubles, remittances have helped cut the poverty rate by 25 percent and would cut it further, Pritchett says, if more Nepalis could work in the West.

Stinky-toilet patrol completed, Pritchett was getting a report in a neighboring village -- goats bought, fodder trees planted -- when an overseas worker wandered in. Indra Magar, home from Qatar, had the air of a visiting prince. He was 25, with crisp jeans and a shirt stamped "United Precast Concrete." The way his father beamed, it could have said "Princeton." The father, Singha Madur, had spent his life as a human mule, hauling goods by foot over the mountains from a road nine days away. His son made \$400 a month, nearly 10 times the local wage, and was saving to start a shop in Kathmandu. Something looked different about the younger Madur besides his clothes, and I finally realized what: he was the first villager I had seen with a paunch. I asked the father the best part of his son's life. "He's full!" he said. "Full all the time."

Migration is Pritchett's religion. He was raised a Mormon in Utah and Idaho, venerating ancestors who crossed the Plains to chase their dreams of Zion. Fifteen of his 16 great-great-grandparents made the trip. To commemorate the Mormons' arrival, Pritchett and his siblings wore period clothes on Pioneer Day and paraded with covered wagons. "I'm into the general gestalt: people finding God, pursuing a vision to start a new life," he says. "It's a story you can build a culture around."

His father, a lawyer, was a Mormon bishop, a lay position, but Pritchett was the family rebel. He not only drank beer with his buddies; he left the cans in his parents' car. When his father berated him for skipping services, the smirking debate-team son replied, "Is that what you learned in church today?" In high school, he gave a cop the finger just to see what he would do. The defiance continued at Brigham Young University, where a fireworks prank in a bathroom stall made the school paper.

Mormon tradition required him to go on a mission after his freshman year, but Pritchett was unsure whether he believed. He hiked off one night and wandered until dawn, when he found himself at the Geneva Steel Mill, a dying plant that his grandfather, a carpenter, helped to build; it was as ugly as any place he had seen. Then the new sun painted the valley pink, and Pritchett had what he later called an epiphany: "In the right light, everything can be beautiful," including religious duty. "That's when I became a Christian," he says. (His brother, who practices law in San Francisco, told me the story, which Pritchett seemed embarrassed to discuss.) His two-year mission in Argentina awakened him to global poverty. When he returned to B.Y.U. and married after his sophomore year, a text that figured in the courtship of his wife, Diane, was the Mormon book of Mosiah, in which King Benjamin implores the faithful to share their wealth.

If Joseph Smith offered one lodestar, Adam Smith offered another. Pritchett entered graduate school in 1983, as a long era in international development was meeting its end. For decades, experts had pursued variants of the "Big

Push" theory: poor governments would borrow heavily abroad, invest in roads, clinics and schools and subsidize domestic industries protected by high tariffs, expecting their economies to eventually ignite. But the infant industries remained inefficient, and developing countries could not sell enough abroad to pay their debts. After Mexico stunned the world in 1982 by defaulting on its foreign debt, Big Push was out and "structural adjustment" was in. That meant budget cuts, privatization and, above all, free trade: export-led growth would save the world's poor. Pritchett came of age with these policies, which were dubbed the Washington Consensus. He received his Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and joined a group of researchers at the World Bank known as the "Hezbollah of Free Trade."

There he found a mentor in Lawrence H. Summers, the bank's chief economist, who was already famed as a brainy critic of received wisdoms. They wrote papers together challenging conventional views of health programs and population control and set off a tempest after Pritchett, critiquing a colleague's work, wrote a mocking memo that pretended to advocate polluting poor countries. Summers signed the long memo (without reading that passage, he says) and found himself tied to a leaked portion that argued the "logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage country is impeccable." Summers survived to become treasury secretary and until recently president of Harvard, where he and Pritchett will teach a course next year on globalization.

Pritchett's career has straddled a paradoxical time. Poverty in China and India has plunged, Bono campaigns for debt relief and Angelina Jolie puts African hunger on MTV. On the surface, it seems like a golden age for poverty fighters. But despite a half-century of study, the development guild has few reliable answers to its most important question: how to make poor economies grow? China and India, by their very size, are idiosyncratic and have moved toward economic orthodoxies in unorthodox ways. There is little agreement on why they have succeeded, much less on how to transfer their success to places like Nepal. Elsewhere, experts have seen little but disappointment.

No region bought the Washington Consensus more avidly than Latin America. Yet for two decades, the growth of its per capita G.D.P. has hovered close to zero. Everyone expected the countries of the former Soviet Union to face transitional hardships, but their average economic contraction has been greater than that of the Great Depression and longer-lasting. Sub-Saharan Africa, despite decades of Western aid, has had little growth, more wars and new epidemics. Some big-name optimists remain, most notably Jeffrey D. Sachs, whose best-selling book, "The End of Poverty" (foreword by Bono), argues that the West knows how to end extreme poverty by 2025. But Pritchett is more typical of his peers when he says of the development record, "If that hasn't been sufficient to beat the hubris out of you, you haven't been paying attention."

His own career reflects the profession's lowered sights. His first field assignment, in 1998, cast him as a relief worker not a development specialist: he helped to finance rice purchases following the Indonesian financial crisis. His best-known academic work is negative: an article that shows global inequality to be even larger and more longstanding than generally supposed. One of Pritchett's closest friends, William Easterly, attacked the whole rationale for foreign aid in his book "The White Man's Burden," which argues that aid has failed to promote growth. In contrast, Pritchett's book (with David Dollar), "Assessing Aid," argues that foreign assistance can spur growth when accompanied by sound local practices and helped to inspire a major Bush administration program, the Millennium Challenge Account. Still, it says something when Pritchett's failure to condemn all aid casts him as an aid optimist.

When Argentina, a faithful adapter of the Washington Consensus, defaulted on its foreign debt in 2001 -- two decades after Mexico -- it rang down the curtain on another age of failed prescriptions. By then Pritchett was on leave at Harvard, teaching alongside other chastened economists. No one was fully satisfied with the Washington Consensus anymore, at least not as a prescription for growth. But no consensus had taken its place. The gains from increased trade, though sizable in many economists' view, had mostly taken place. Aid and debt relief were generally seen as limited tools. The whole notion of big ideas was out of favor. "So little seems to work," Pritchett warned in an article -- "What's the Big Idea" -- that disparaged big ideas. Yet he was mulling a big idea of his own. True to form, it was a stink-bomb-in-the-bathroom kind of idea: an assault on the morality of borders.

The basics are simple: The rich world has lots of well-paying jobs and an aging population that cannot fill them. The poor world has desperate workers. But while goods and capital can easily cross borders, modern labor cannot.

This strikes Pritchett as bad economics and worse social justice. He likens the limits on labor mobility to "apartheid on a global scale." Think Desmond Tutu with equations.

Pritchett sees five irresistible forces for migration, stymied by eight immovable ideas. The most potent migration force is the one epitomized by Nepal: vast inequality. In the late 19th century, rich countries had incomes about 10 times greater than the poorest ones. Today's ratio is about 50 to 1, Pritchett writes in "Let Their People Come." The poor simply have too much to gain from crossing borders not to try. What arrests them are the convictions of rich societies: that migration erodes domestic wages, courts cultural conflicts and is unnecessary for -- perhaps antithetical to -- foreign development. When irresistible force meets immovable object, something gives -- in this case legality. Migration goes underground, endangering migrants and lessening their rewards.

The key to breaking the political deadlock, Pritchett says, is to ensure that the migrants go home, which is why he emphasizes temporary workers (though personally he would let them stay). About 7 percent of the rich world's jobs are held by people from developing countries. For starters, he would like to see the poor get another 3 percent, or 16 million guest-worker jobs -- 3 million in the U.S. They would stay three to five years, with no path to citizenship, and work in fields with certified labor shortages. He assumes that most receiving countries would not allow them to bring families. Taxpayers would be spared from educating the migrants' kids. Domestic workers would gain some protection through the certification process. And a revolving labor pool would reach more of the world's poor.

In effect, Pritchett is proposing a Saudi Arabian plan in which an affluent society creates a labor subcaste that is permanently excluded from its ranks. His does so knowing full well that his agenda coincides with that of unscrupulous employers looking to exploit cheap workers. Many migration advocates oppose a plan, now dividing Congress, to create a guest-worker force a 15th as large as the one Pritchett wants, saying it would create a new underclass. But Pritchett calls guest work the only way to accommodate large numbers. To insist that migrants have a right to citizenship and family unification, he says, is to let men like Gure Sarki go hungry. It is cruel to be kind. The choice is theirs. Let the poor decide. "Letting guest workers in America doesn't create an underclass," he says. "It moves an underclass and makes the underclass better off."

Part of Pritchett's argument is mathematical. Drawing on World Bank models, he estimates his plan would produce annual gains of about \$300 billion -- three times the benefit of removing the remaining barriers to trade. But the philosophical packaging gives his plan its edge. Pritchett assails a basic premise -- that development means developing places. He is more concerned about helping Nepalis than he is about helping Nepal. If remittances spur development back home, great, but that is not his central concern. "Migration is development," he says.

Indeed, Pritchett attacks the primacy of nationality itself, treating it as an atavistic prejudice. Modern moral theory rejects discrimination based on other conditions of birth. If we do not bar people from jobs because they were born <u>female</u>, why bar them because they were born in Nepal? The name John Rawls appears on only a single page of "Let Their People Come," but Pritchett is taking Rawlsian philosophy to new lengths. If a just social order, as Rawls theorized, is one we would embrace behind a "veil of ignorance" -- without knowing what traits we possess -- a world that uses the trait of nationality to exclude the needlest workers from the richest job markets is deeply unjust. (Rawls himself thought his theory did not apply across national borders.) Pritchett's Harvard students rallied against all kinds of evils, he writes, but "I never heard the chants, 'Hey, ho, restrictions on labor mobility have to go.' "

Even friends fear he has not come to grips with the numbers. The West is nowhere close to accepting Pritchett's 16 million -- and the developing world has a labor force of nearly 3 billion; what if most of them moved? "I think Lant overdoes it in estimating migration's potential," said Nancy Birdsall, president of the Center for Global Development in Washington, which commissioned and published the book. "Do you think the U.S. would accept 300 million of the world's poorest people?" Birdsall praises Pritchett's work as a conversation starter but adds, "People think about development as being about place not person -- they're more right about this than Lant believes."

One of those people is Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. "There's no way that migration is going to substitute for economic development at home," he told me recently. Pritchett's willingness to abide more family separation reddens Sach's face. Separation has spread adultery, divorce and AIDS across the developing world. "It's tragic!" he said. "Let them come as a family! Having tens of millions of men separated from

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their families in temporary living conditions is hardly going to be conducive to the kind of world we're aiming to build."

Lawrence Summers, Pritchett's old mentor, said Pritchett's book may be like Milton Friedman's "Capitalism and Freedom," which seemed "lunatic in the moment" but won converts with time. Still, he wonders if the West can create migrant subcastes without compromising its values and fears that voluntary compacts do not solve the moral problem; we do not let people volunteer to sell body parts or work in unsafe mines. "Lant's kind of compassionate libertarianism carries the risk of a morally problematic coarsening that we resist in many other ways," he said. He is open to guest-worker experiments but wonders about their "sustainability."

Those are migration allies. People who think migration is too high -- 12 percent of Americans are foreign-born -- say that Pritchett is prescribing cultural suicide. "All guest-worker programs result in permanent settlement," says Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies, aWashington group that seeks less immigration. Some workers will overstay their visas, he warns. Advocates and employers will lobby for extensions. And guest workers will increase illegal immigration by attracting relatives and friends. Krikorian fears that immigrants are already forming parallel societies whose numbers do not even bother to learn English; adding to the 36 million already here, he said, would speed the cultural secession. "You'd have more 'Press 2 for Swahili,' no question about that," he says. "It'd be a complete catastrophe."

Pritchett responds in character -- defiantly. Moral coarsening? "We're already being morally coarsened by allowing people to live as fourth-class citizens in the rest of the world," Pritchett says. "We're just not forced to confront it." Scale? Yes, his plan would start small (by global terms), but Pritchett argues that it contains the seeds of its own expansion. With lots of old people to support, rich countries will "get hooked on" the migrants' labor and especially on the taxes they pay into retiree health and pension funds. And if, as critics fear, the migrants stay, then yes, Pritchett does believe the U.S. could eventually swallow 300 million of the global poor. "It's a big, empty country," he says.

With more access to global labor markets, Pritchett predicts some poor countries will develop quickly while others, like Zambia, will depopulate into giant ghost towns as the world grows comfortable with higher levels of permanent migration. Eventually -- over a century, say -- the combination of population adjustments and policy innovation will raise the living standards of most poor countries to that of the West without pulling the West down, just as the rise of the Japanese has not meant the fall of Americans. The labor forces of the West are shrinking, which, he says, should keep wages high despite increased migration. Whether or not his forecasts are correct -- the track record of his field is not reassuring -- he has pondered the economics.

But the greatest risk posed by the Pritchett plan is cultural conflict, or even conflagration, which Pritchett greets with a shrug. "I don't think about it a lot because I'm an economist," he says. "If you say your culture can't survive an influx of migrants, you have a pretty dim view of your culture." Cultures change all the time, he figures, and change is not to be feared. A century hence, nations will still exist, but in a more ecumenical way. Germans will accept Turkish mosques, and Turkey will accept Christian spires, and everyone will be free to come and go as long as they obey the law. Here he sounds less like Adam Smith than Rodney King: "Can't we all just get along?"

So far, in the U.S., at least, the answer has been yes: acculturation has triumphed in every generation, despite the doubters. But Pritchett envisions cultural blending on an unprecedented scale, across societies much less skillful at it. Israel and Palestine, Hutu and Tutsi, Bosnian and Serb -- the world is not exactly galloping away from the ethnic and nationalist identities that he finds anachronistic. With an Ellis Island heart in a sleeper-cell age, Pritchett is reluctant to consider the possibility that the interests of the West and its would-be migrants could diverge. "If you say you believe in open borders, you sound like a lunatic -- I'm aware of that," he says. "I'm saying let's start slow and let what's already happening happen in a managed way. A hundred years is a long time. We can work it out."

On his last day in rural Nepal, Pritchett hiked down a parched canyon to find another group of earnest villagers awaiting him with a report. Along with buying 55 goats, the Chaurmuni group planted 182 trees and built two toilets. Everything about the gathering seemed familiar, except the group's chairman -- Gure Sarki -- whose shirt had such gaping holes they bared his shoulders to the sun. He wore a black knit cap yet shivered in the heat, and a boil-like

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growth the size of an egg rose from his forehead. For all his striking need, he was ruggedly handsome, as if the great Karmic wheel had reincarnated Clint Eastwood as a Nepali goat farmer. Pritchett and I spent the morning at his house.

Sarki, 52, is an Untouchable whose family had lived in Chaurmuni for at least 100 years. Chronically hungry in his early 20s, he walked nine days to an Indian border town with road-building work. He stayed three years and bought a little land, but returned home after his father's death at his grieving mother's request. Sarki's half-acre inheritance was too small to feed his children, so he worked for others when he could and borrowed when he had to at the village interest rate of 36 percent. He pointed to a reedy teenage son and boasted that he fed him three daily meals. "I would like to eat three times a day, but I am feeding the children," he said. (Pritchett, wincing, whispered, "I'm almost certain this boy is malnourished.") On one level, the story confirmed Pritchett's view: migration, even to India, had helped Sarki more than anything else. But he did not leave again. "I like this place," he said. "I have brothers and sisters here." Staying or going -- each involved pain.

A low-caste, underfed goat farmer, in a place with per capita income of \$90 a year, Sarki is global inequality corporealized. He has never seen a bathtub. He has never been to a dentist. He has never owned a pair of glasses and squints to see his feet. He said the boil on his head has been there 30 years. and he did not know what caused it. When I told him the average American lived on about two million rupees a year, \$25,000, he laughed as if hearing a fable. "That is like a story to us," he said. He thanked us for coming and asked how to do better. Pritchett stammered. "What can you say, Be born in America?" he said to me. Then speaking through a translator, Pritchett assured Sarki that few Americans could manage with so little. Sarki smiled.

The jeep was quiet as we drove away, as if the sheer abjectness of Sarki's poverty negated the meaning of anything that could be said about it. When we paused at a teahouse an hour later, I asked why Americans should care -- so what if there are destitute goat farmers on the other side of the world? "I dislike arguments that try to give self-interested explanations: 'We should care because they'll become terrorists,' " Pritchett said. "I think we should care just because they're human beings. The arc of human history has been the broadening of the scope of moral concern."

Just then the power grid failed, leaving Pritchett in the dark as he recalled a college graduation speech -- his wife's -- that urged classmates to meet the gazes of beggars. "The poverty of the poor is so desperate, it creates a situation that most of us are incapable of looking in the eye," he said. "You don't want to realize they're human beings just like you." Rich countries have jobs. Poor people need work. In Pritchett's proudly eccentric view, to dwell on anything else is to blink and turn away.

The chart show the lowest -paying jobs are concentrated in a handful of occupations that require little education. (Chart By Linda Eckstein)

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: Gure Sarki, goat keeper, of Chaurmuni, Nepal.

Subsistence: With few resources of its own, Nepal relies on workers who have gone abroad for 12 percent of its G.D.P. (Photograph By Gary Knight/VII, For The New York Times) Chart: "Poor Work"

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Body

County gun sales measure misguided

I read with interest Don Bekelski's letter and let me provide you with some information. The ordinance by Larry Suffredin and William Beavers can't close gun dealers in other counties.

Also Cabela's generates \$675,000 to Cook County, \$1.8 million to Hoffman Estates and more than \$3 million to the state of Illinois.

Cabela's provides more than 300 jobs. Two thirds are Cook County residents. Nearly \$4 million in wages are injected into the local economy and may be lost.

What commissioners Suffredin and Beavers don't tell you is most illegal handguns come to Illinois from out of state.

If this bill succeeds, I'll be forced to cross the county line for any hunting equipment I need.

Thomas Carras

Elk Grove Village

America is being 'dashed' to bits

On Dec. 16, the Daily Herald published a Fence Post letter under my name. But because of a change the Daily Herald made to my letter, what was published did not reflect my opinion.

Not only was my opinion misrepresented, but due to the change, the Daily Herald also ascribed a title to my Fence Post letter that bore no relation to the opinion I had tried to express.

My letter was published under the title, "Take pride in our American enthnicity." I ascribe to the philosophy that "pride goeth before the fall." The appropriate title, as submitted, should have been, "America is being 'dashed' to bits." I believe the old adage is going to prove itself true in America: United we stood, hyphenated we will fail.

Look around the world. How much strife and civil unrest is caused by ethnicity? Yet "ethnic pride" is now the cause celebre in America. Is our nationwide celebration of cultural diversity bringing us closer together as Americans or only dividing us more?

Is cultural divisity really something to be celebrated in America?

In submitting my original letter, I included this 1915 quote from Woodrow Wilson:

"A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become an American. And the man who goes among you to trade upon your nationality is no worthy son to live under the Stars and Stripes."

There are many individuals, organizations and institutions today that need to examine their worthiness to march under the Stars and Stripes.

Richard H. Skiba Jr.

Palatine

Home rule power and racetrack slots

To the Arlington Heights village board:

Many of us continue to believe that "casino slots" would be a huge negative for our community.

When addressing the board, I mentioned that two of the AP casino proponents who spoke before me were businessmen residing in the affluent suburbs of Deer Park and Hinsdale.

My short comments were then followed by those of Arlington Park's president (Roy Arnold), who is a resident of Barrington.

If we consider how quickly the boards of Barrington, Hinsdale and Deer Park would line up against casino-style gambling in their communities, we gain the clearest understanding as to why so many residents of Arlington Heights don't want that type of activity in our home town.

Providing reasonable support for the interests of our local business leaders is very important, but is it reasonable for these leaders to request accommodations from Arlington Heights residents that we well know would not be supported in the communities in which they reside?

Many hold the strong opinion that casino slots are not required to support thoroughbred racing. Arlington Park's owner, Churchill Downs, Inc., has yet to convince government authorities for its flagship facility in Louisville that slot machines are the right approach.

Even if casino slots were horse racing's solution, they would not be the right choice for Arlington Heights. A community so properly conservative that it frowns on drinking bars operating independently of a food restaurant already knows why a slot-machine facility makes a bad neighbor.

For many of us, the issue has never been about gambling, however, but rather casino-slots style gambling.

I visit Arlington Park several times each summer as a matter of family tradition. Horse racing with its many aspects other than gambling is for the most part favorably regarded and a rich part of Arlington Heights history.

The rather bad reputation of casino slots is well deserved and also based on experience.

Just as I have no doubt the "sky will not fall" if Arlington Park becomes a de facto casino, I also have no doubt that such a shift would make Arlington Heights a less desirable address and place to live.

The exercise of discretion over the types of business activities to allow in a given area is "bread and butter" local governance. This is especially true for gambling.

Steven Weseman

Arlington Heights

Gauge candidates on their records

Presidential candidates are not stupid, but we as voters can be.

Rather than just looking at what our politicians are promising, shouldn't we have been checking on what they have done in the past, both in public and private?

Calvin Lindstrom

Rolling Meadows

Israel only acts in defense of itself

At the risk of starting a debate in Fence Post, John November's letter (Jan. 11) has confirmed my opinion that there are, unfortunately, people who don't want to be bothered with facts.

He obviously did not take my suggestion and look up the time line for the Middle East. And yes, Israel may have nukes, warheads, tanks and bombs, and yes, they did use some of those weapons on Lebanese civilians.

Israel bombed Lebanon only after being pushed to the point whereby they had to do something.

Many Lebanese civilians were storing weapons for Israel's enemies and protecting those terrorists who are out to destroy Israel.

Palestinians, on the other hand, make a habit of bombing civilians for no reason whatsoever except for the fact that they live in Israel.

Furthermore, with the bombing of Lebanon, it is the very first time in the history of Israel that it was the aggressor in any attack.

Yet Mr. November insists on calling Israel a "bully." If Israel is such a bully, why has it not used nukes and warheads to destroy its enemies once and for all so that the citizens of Israel could finally live in peace?

As to the comment that the Palestinians have only "hand grenades and homemade rockets," that is not true.

They have the weapons given by the United States to aid the P.L.O. in its fight against Hamas; Egypt and Jordan supply the Palestinians with arms through Gaza; Russia has supplied Palestinians with arms; missiles are shipped from Iran through Syria into *Hezbollah* hands.

History is very clear on the fact that Israel did not steal any Palestinian land. And any so-called Palestinian land that Israel ever possessed was won in wars in which Israel successfully defended itself against all odds and then Israel gave most of that land back in the hopes for peace.

Judith A. Carlson

Des Plaines

Evolution is only a flawed theory

Mr. Michel Lee of Wheeling has a problem with my statement that most Christian, Moslems and Jews believe that man descended from a man called Adam and his, and all other souls did not evolve, but are created unique by God.

Atheistic evolutionists believe the source of human DNA was a hydrogen atom that some how mutated into a man. But the atheistic evolutionists fail to explain the spiritual part of man and how man got his soul.

G. K. Chesterton stated the theory of evolution pre-supposes a long chain of mutations from the beginning of time that has led to all human and animal life we see to day. But evolutionists can't prove the theory: because so many links are missing.

Geneticists have traced human DNA to a single <u>female</u> human source (Adam's wife Eve?). How does that fit in the evolutionary chain of events?

Ed Smetana

Arlington Heights

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Section: NEWS FEATURES

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Body

January

Quote of the month:

'I accept my share of responsibility, but I will not be made a scapegoat for Societe Generale' French trader Jerome Kerviel who was involved in the bank's EUR 4.9 billion trading loss scandal

January 1: Cyprus and Malta join the eurozone. Slovenia takes over the EU presidency. The Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions comes into force.

January 2: Oil hits \$100 a barrel.

January 3: The exchequer reveals deficit of over EUR 1.6 billion last year, three times the projected figure. Barack Obama and Mike Huckabee win the lowa caucus, the first of the US primary campaign.

January 4: The Dawn Meats plant closes in Ballaghaderreen with 80 jobs lost. Airtricity sold to Scottish and Southern Energy for EUR 1.1 billion.

January 5: Mikheil Saakashvili wins the Georgian presidential election. January 8: Hillary Clinton and John McCain win the New Hampshire primary. The Irish team of Pat Falvey, Clare O'Leary, Sean Menzies and Jonathan Bradshaw reach the South Pole.

January 9: The Press Council and Office of the Press Ombudsman are launched. Bear Stearns chief executive James Cayne resigns after heavy losses are revealed.

January 10: Serious flooding hits Fermoy and Mallow.

January 11: Edmund Hillary, the first man to climb Mount Everest, dies aged 88.

January 15: Hillary Clinton wins again in Michigan, while Mitt Romney wins the Republican contest. The US decides to send 3,000 more marines to counter the insurgency in Afghanistan. Citigroup posts fourth quarter losses of \$10 billion, the first loss since its creation in 1998.

January 17: Two doctors stabbed at a Limerick psychiatric unit. Merrill Lynch takes a \$14.1 billion writedown in the fourth quarter on subprime mortgage losses and posts a \$9.8 billion net loss for the quarter. January 18: Independent News & Media acquires Clear Channel in an EUR 86 million deal.

January 20: Mitt Romney and Hillary Clinton win in Nevada, while John McCain takes the South Carolina Republican primary.

January 21: The FTSE 100 plunges 5.5 per cent as world stock markets show the first signs of recession in the US. Oil falls back to \$89 a barrel after market falls.

January 22: The US Federal Reserve cuts its rate by 75 basis points to 3.5 per cent, the largest interest rate move since 1982. Bank of America net profit down 95 per cent to \$268 million in fourth quarter.

January 24: French bank Societe Generale' reveals a EUR 4.9 billion trading loss after closing positions held by employee Jerome Kerviel. Italian prime minister Romano Prodi resigns after losing a confidence vote.

January 25: Jacob Fruitfield sheds 220 jobs in Tallaght.

January 26: Barack Obama wins in the South Carolina Democratic primary.

January 28: Inflation in Zimbabwe hits 150,000 per cent.

January 29: The US House of Representatives passes a \$146 billion economic stimulus package in an attempt to stave off recession. John McCain wins the Florida Republican primary. US repossession statistics reveal that 1 per cent of all homes are at some stage of foreclosure.

January 30: Republican Rudy Giuliani and Democrat John Edwards drop out of the US presidential race. The Fed cuts rates again by 0.5 per cent to bring key lending rate to just 3 per cent. Some 360 jobs go at Allergan in Arklow.

February

Quote of the month:

'That's the closest I'll ever come to getting a knighthood' Daniel Day-Lewis on winning his Oscar for There Will Be Blood.

February 1: 220 jobs are lost at Grove Turkeys Monaghan and Merriott in Clonmel. Unemployment hits 4.9 per cent, its highest level since December 1999.

February 2: Mitt Romney wins the Maine Republican caucus. French president Nicolas Sarkozy marries former supermodel Carla Bruni.

February 3: Boris Tadic is reelected as president of Serbia.

February 4: US deficit hits \$410 billion.

February 5: Barack Obama wins in 13 states on Super Tuesday, while Hillary Clinton takes 9. The Republican contest sees John McCain take 9 states and Mitt Romney deliver 7 states, while Mike Huckabee won 5.

February 7: Size of US stimulus package grows to \$168 and is passed by Congress. Mitt Romney quits the Republican race.

February 10: Barack Obama wins the Maine Democratic caucus. Hollywood writers' strike ends.

February 11: US files charges against Khalid Sheikh Mohammed for the September 11 attacks. Yahoo rejects Microsoft's \$44.6 billion takeover bid.

February 12: Bupa risk equalisation case rejected by the European Court of First Instance. Car maker General Motors announces a \$38.7 billion loss for 2007, its biggest loss ever.

February 17: Kosovo declares independence.

February 18: Pakistan goes to the polls, with victory for opposition parties the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League. Citco Fund Services creates 150 jobs in Cork. Toshiba announces that it is leaving the high-definition DVD market.

February 19: Fidel Castro resigns as president of Cuba, after 49 years in power. Republican John McCain wins in Wisconsin and Washington, while Barack Obama wins in Wisconsin and Hawaii in the Democrat primary contest. An Irish Blood Transfusion Service computer containing 171,000 blood donor records is stolen in New York. Credit Suisse writes off \$2.85 billion from investments investments after finding pricing errors.

February 20: Irish troops deploy to Chad on UN peacekeeping operation.

February 21: Half a million Serbs protest in Belgrade over Kosovan independence. US and other embassies are attacked. GlaxoSmithKline cuts 100 jobs in Cork. Service Source creates 100 new jobs in Cherrywood, Co Dublin.

February 22: Troubled bank Northern Rock is nationalised by the British government. Turkey sends thousands of troops into northern Iraq to hunt Kurdish rebels.

February 24: No Country For Old Men wins the Oscar for Best Picture. Daniel Day Lewis takes best actor for There Will be Blood. Marion Cotillard wins best actress for La Vie En Rose. Raul Castro is appointed as Cuba's new president. Dimitris Christofias is elected president of Cyprus.

February 27: Microsoft fined a record EUR 899 million by the EU in an anti-trust case. Euro hits a record high of \$1.51 against the dollar. Oil hits a record \$102 a barrel.

February 28: 108 jobs lost as Contact 4 closes its operations in three Gaeltacht areas.

February 29: Britain's Prince Harry is forced to cut short his tour of duty in Afghanistan, after his presence in the country is made public.

March

Quote of the month:

'The choices we faced that Friday night were stark: to find a party willing to acquire Bear Stearns by Sunday night or face . . . a bankruptcy filing by Monday' Bear Stearns chief executive Alan Schwartz.

March 2: Dmitri Medvedev is elected president of Russia to succeed Vladimir Putin.

March 3: The UN Security Council votes for more sanctions against Iran over uranium enrichment. Italian saint Padre Pio is exhumed on the 40th anniversary of his death.

March 4: Ian Paisley announces that he is to resign as the North's First Minister and leader of the DUP. Barack Obama wins in the Democratic Vermont primary, while Hillary Clinton wins in Rhode Island, Ohio, and Texas. John McCain gains enough delegates to secure the Republican nomination as Mike Huckabee withdraws.

March 5: Warren Buffett overtakes Bill Gates as the world's richest man, with an estimated fortune of \$62 billion. John McCain wins President Bush's endorsement. Brian Kearney is sentenced to life after being found guilty of the murder of his wife, Siobhan.

March 6: 54 die and 130 are injured as two bombs go off in a Baghdad shopping centre.

- March 7: The live register rises 8,500 to 189,485, the biggest unemployment increase on record. Former Olympic gold medal winner Marion Jones goes to jail for lying about steroid use.
- March 8: Obama wins the Wyoming Democratic caucus. Serbian prime minister Vojislav Kostunica resigns in the aftermath of Kosovo's independence. Developer Sean Dunne gets only partial planning permission for his controversial Ballsbridge scheme. Dunne says he will appeal.
- March 9: Spanish prime minister Jose' Luis Zapatero and his PSOE party are re-elected to power.
- March 11: Obama wins the Mississippi Democratic primary. Qualcomm buys Irish mobile software firm Xiam for EUR 20 million.
- March 12: Oil hits \$110 a barrel for the first time. Buddhist monks protest in Tibet, demanding independence. New York governor Eliot Spitzer resigns after being caught up in an investigation into a prostitution ring.
- March 13: Time Warner's AOL business buys Bebo for \$850 million. Barry Maloney's Balderton Capital makes \$140 million from the deal. The price of gold reaches \$1,000 an ounce for the first time.
- March 14: US investment bank Bear Stearns gets emergency funding from JPMorgan Chase. EU leaders agree to a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020.
- March 15: Wales complete rugby's Grand Slam, beating France in Cardiff. Ireland lose to England 33-10. Hu Jintao is elected for a second term as President of China.
- March 16: Bear Stearns collapses and is bought by JPMorgan Chase for \$2 a share. Protests continue in Tibet, with 80 protesters confirmed dead. Alitalia is bought by Air France and KLM in a EUR 138 million deal. Wen Jiabao is re-elected as Premier of China for another five years.
- March 17: World stock markets decline on news of the Bear Stearns sale. The FTSE is down 3.9 per cent.
- March 19: A new tape from Osama bin Laden condemns Europe for allowing publication of the controversial Mohammed cartoons. Eddie O'Sullivan resigns as Irish rugby coach.
- March 24: Yusuf Raza Gillani of the Pakistan People's Party is elected prime minister of Pakistan. March 26: Ford sells its British car brands, Jaguar and Land Rover, to Indian firm Tata for \$2.3 billion.
- March 28: The ECB pumps EUR 150 billion of additional liquidity into credit markets.

April

Quote of the month:

'Now he's asked for it. He will have problems leading them' Gaffe-prone Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi on why he won't be following the example of the Spanish prime minister and appointing <u>women</u> to half of all cabinet positions.

- April 1: A report on cancer care at Barringtons' hospital in Limerick finds significant and avoidable delay in diagnosing several cancer cases. Some 270 jobs are created by biotechnology company Genzyme in Waterford. Deutsche Bank says it will write down EUR 2.5 billion in bad loans in the first quarter.
- April 2: Taoiseach Bertie Ahern announces he will resign on May 6. Robert Mugabe's party loses control of Zimbabwe's parliament for the first time.
- April 3: Beverley Flynn is readmitted to the Fianna Fail party. 100 jobs are lost at the Thermo King plant in Galway. April 4: Unemployment jumps to 5.5 per cent, the highest rate since June 1999.

- April 6: Pro-Tibet protesters interrupt the passing of the Olympic flame through London. Hibernian buys health insurer Vivas for an undisclosed sum.
- April 7: The Olympic torch is extinguished amid further protests in Paris. The jury at inquest into the death of Princess Diana returns a verdict of unlawful killing, due to negligent driving by her driver and the pursuing paparazzi.
- April 9: Brian Cowen is elected as new leader of Fianna Fail. April 12: Former president Patrick Hillery dies, aged 84. The Chinese ambassador walks out of a Green Party convention, after a speech by John Gormley criticising China's role in Tibet.
- April 14: Silvio Berlusconi's coalition wins Italian elections, and he becomes prime minister for the third time. Delta Air Lines merges with Northwest to create the world's biggest airline. Peter Robinson is elected leader of the Democratic Unionist Party. Fyffes settles its legal action against DCC and receives EUR 37.6 million.
- April 16: Oil hits a record price of \$115 a barrel. AP's Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer, Bilal Hussein, is released without charge after being held for two years by the US military in Iraq.
- April 17: Senator Ciaran Cannon is elected as the new leader of the Progressive Democrats. Samsung chairman Lee Kun-hee is indicted for tax evasion in South Korea.
- April 20: Former bishop Fernando Lugo wins the Paraguayan presidential election.
- April 21: Bank of Ireland reveals that data relating to 10,000 customers was on one of four stolen laptops. Chartered Land applies for planning permission for a EUR 1.25 billion redevelopment of the old Carlton Cinema site and surrounding area on Dublin's O'Connell Street.
- April 22: The euro hits a record high of \$1.60 against the dollar. Hillary Clinton wins the Pennsylvania Democratic primary.
- April 24: Maoists win the general election in Nepal, two years after a peace agreement was signed ending a long-running insurgency.
- April 25: Actor Wesley Snipes is sentenced to three years in prison for tax evasion.
- April 27: News breaks on how Austrian Josef Fritzl held his daughter in a basement for 24 years and fathered seven children by her.
- April 28: Confectionery manufacturer Mars buys chewing gum firm Wrigley in a \$23 billion deal.
- April 29: Dell cuts 250 jobs in Dublin and Limerick. The downturn continues in the US, as house prices fall 12.7 per cent year-on-year. The EU signs a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia, a precursor to full membership.
- April 30: Bertie Ahern addresses a joint meeting of the US Congress. The US Federal Reserve cuts interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point, to 2 per cent.

May

Quote of the month:

'Ring those people and get a handle on it, will you . . . bring in all those fuckers' Taoiseach Brian Cowen is overheard swearing by the Dail's microphones.

May 1: David Cameron's Conservative Party takes 44 per cent in the British local elections. Gordon Brown's Labour party is left third with a 24 per cent share.

- May 2: Boris Johnson is elected mayor of London, replacing Ken Livingstone. Pfizer announces the create of 100 jobs at its Cork plant.
- May 5: A cyclone strikes Burma, killing an estimated 46,000 people. Oil prices hit \$120 a barrel for the first time.
- May 6: Taoiseach Bertie Ahern leaves office after ten years in power. Barack Obama wins the Democratic primary in North Carolina, but Hillary Clinton takes Indiana. Swiss bank UBS cuts 5,500 jobs as the financial crisis continues.
- May 7: Brian Cowen is elected as the new Taoiseach and names his first cabinet.
- May 8: Fighting erupts in Beirut as the Lebanese government cracks down on *Hezbollah*.
- May 9: The price of oil continues to rocket, hitting \$125 a barrel. Israel's prime minister Ehud Olmert is accused of taking bribes from businessman Moshe Talansky. Waterford man John O'Brien is found not guilty of the murder of his wife Meg Walshe. Diageo announces plans to close plants in Kilkenny and Dundalk.
- May 10: Author and journalist Nuala O'Faolain dies aged 68. May 11: Serbia goes to the polls, with a pro-EU coalition backing president Boris Tadic elected.
- May 12: A massive earthquake in Sichuan, China, kills at least 69,000.
- May 13: Hewlett-Packard buys EDS in a \$13.9 billion deal. Hillary Clinton wins the Democratic primary in West Virginia. Jeweller Tiffany's announces plans to open a store in Dublin.
- May 15: California's Supreme Court rules a ban on gay marriage is unconstitutional under the state's constitution.
- May 20: Barack Obama wins the Oregon Democratic primary, while Hillary Clinton takes Kentucky. US Senator Ted Kennedy is diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour.
- May 21: Manchester United defeat Chelsea to win the Uefa Champions League final. Crude oil hits \$130 a barrel for the first time.
- May 23: Unofficial industrial action at larnrod Eireann affects 20,000 passengers.
- May 24: Munster win the Heineken European Cup, beating Toulouse 1613. Russia's Dima Bilan wins the Eurovision Song Contest.
- May 27: DCC executive chairman Jim Flavin resigns amid the fall-out from an insider trading case. Burma's military dictatorship extends opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest for one year. May 28: Engineers finally manage to stabilise the Leaning Tower of Pisa and claim it is safe for at least 200 years. A convention on Cluster Munitions is signed in Dublin by 100 states. The US, Russia and China decline to sign.
- May 29: larnrod Eireann train drivers return to work after a settlement is negotiated.
- May 30: April figures show house prices down 1.1 per cent and 9.2 per cent below what they were a year before.

June

Quote of the month:

'We take note of the democratic decision of the Irish citizens with all due respect, even though we regret it" Joint statement by French president Nicolas Sarkozy and German chancellor Angela Merkel after Ireland rejected the Lisbon Treaty.

June 1: Hillary Clinton wins the Puerto Rico Democratic primary. Journalist Terry Keane dies at the age of 68.

- June 2: US bank Wachovia fires its chief executive, Kennedy Thompson, after recording mounting sub-prime losses. Designer Yves St Laurent dies, aged 71.
- June 3: Barack Obama wins the Montana Democratic primary, while Hillary Clinton takes South Dakota. Obama becomes the presumptive nominee. US car maker General Motors announces plans to cut 10,000 jobs with the closure of four plants.
- June 4: Exchequer figures show a EUR 1.2 billion shortfall in tax receipts in the first five months of 2008. Construction firm Wolseley Group announces plans to seek 150 redundancies.
- June 6: Crude oil prices hit a new record of \$138 a barrel. Bus Eireann, Meath County Council and maintenance firm Keltank are fined EUR 2.2 million over the 2005 Navan school bus crash.
- June 9: Investment bank Lehman Brothers says it expects a second quarter loss of \$2.8 billion. Food group IAWS merges with Swiss bakery firm Hiestand.
- June 10: The live register goes up 7,600 to 207,300, the highest level in nine years.
- June 11: The Comptroller and Auditor General issues a special report criticising corporate governance at Bord na gCon. Norway legalises same-sex marriage. King Gyanendra of Nepal's reign ends as the country is declared a republic.
- June 12: Ireland goes to the polls to vote on the Lisbon Treaty.
- June 13: The Lisbon Treaty is rejected by a margin of 53.4 per cent to 46.6 per cent.
- June 14: French president Nicolas Sarkozy calls on other EU member states to continue ratifying the Lisbon Treaty. Irish troops are fired on in Chad, as government and rebels clash.
- June 15: The world's biggest insurance firm, AIG, fires chief executive Martin Sullivan because of sub-prime losses.
- June 17: French president Nicolas Sarkozy announces plans to rejoin the military structure of NATO, more than 40 years after Charles de Gaulle opted out. SAP creates 100 new jobs in Dublin.
- June 19: Two former Bear Stearns hedge fund managers become the first executives to face criminal charges over the financial crisis.
- June 20: Estate agent Lisney asks staff to take a 10 per cent pay cut.
- June 22: Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai pulls out of Zimbabwe's presidential run-off election after one of his rallies is attacked by Mugabe supporters.
- June 23: Insurance group Hibernian announces 580 job losses.
- June 24: The ESRI confirms that Ireland is in a recession for the first time in 25 years. June 25: Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert agrees to hold a leadership election for his party in a bid to stave off the dissolution of parliament.
- June 26: The US removes North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism, after it reveals details of its nuclear programme.
- June 27: Microsoft founder Bill Gates leaves full-time employment at the company. He remains as non-executive chairman. A French judge orders a new post mortem on Sophie Toscan du Plantier, 12 years after her murder in Cork. Oil rises again, to \$142 a barrel.
- June 29: Spain win Euro 2008, beating Germany 1-0. Robert Mugabe is once again sworn in as president of Zimbabwe after his opponent, Morgan Tsvangirai, pulls out due to violence.

July

Quote of the month:

"This is a miracle. There is no historical precedent for such a perfect operation" Ingrid Betancourt on being released after six years in captivity.

Conroy Diamonds and Gold, claims that a new gold mine discovered in Monaghan could be the biggest ever found in Ireland or Britain. July 2: Former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt is rescued after being held captive by Farc guerrillas for six years. Irish exchequer figures reveal a shortfall of almost EUR 1.5 billion in tax receipts in the first six months of the year.

- July 3: The ECB increases rates to 4.25 per cent to battle inflation. July 4: The live register is up by 19,000 to 220,811, a ten-year high. Home repossessions double, according to figures from the Courts Service.
- July 5: Venus Williams beats her sister Serena to win the Wimbledon Ladies' Final.
- July 6: Rafael Nadal defeats Roger Federer in the Men's Final at Wimbledon.
- July 8: Finance minister Brian Lenihan announces EUR 440 million in public spending cuts to counterbalance falling tax receipts.
- July 9: Former Fianna Fail minister Seamus Brennan dies at the age of 60. Sharon Collins, nicknamed Lying Eyes, is convicted of conspiracy to murder her partner and his two sons by hiring a hitman over the internet.
- July 11: New figures show the number of companies going into liquidation is up 76 per cent.
- July 14: Davy stockbrokers announces that it is to cut 75 jobs. US president George W Bush lifts a ban on offshore oil drilling. Spain's Banco Santander buys British bank Alliance & Leicester in stg£1.26 billion deal.
- July 15: A report reveals errors in cancer checks at University Hospital Galway.
- July 16: Fed chairman Ben Bernanke tells Congress that mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are in no danger of failing.
- July 20: Golfer Padraig Harrington retains his British Open title. July 21: Former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadzic´ is captured in Serbia. French president Nicolas Sarkozy visits Dublin for discussions on the Lisbon Treaty. Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai agree to begin power sharing talks.
- July 22: US bank Wachovia announces a second quarter loss of \$8.8 billion.
- July 24: Barack Obama addresses 200,000 people in Berlin. Motor racing boss Max Mosley wins a landmark privacy case against the News of the World.
- July 25: Google announces that it has now indexed more than a trillion web pages. TV3 buys Channel 6.
- July 27: Carlos Sastre becomes the third Spaniard in three years to win the Tour de France.
- July 29: World Trade Organisation talks collapse as the US and India fail to broker a compromise on farm import safeguards. Investment bank Merrill Lynch announces a \$5.7 billion third guarter write-down.
- July 30: Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert announces that he will resign in two months after becoming embroiled in a corruption scandal. Former Taoiseach Albert Reynolds is deemed medically unfit to give evidence at the Mahon Tribunal.
- July 31: Radovan Karadzic appears before a UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague to answer genocide charges.

August

Quote of the month: 'I got up at 12. My masseuse brought me nuggets, of course. I'm serious. I didn't want to go to the cafeteria. I went straight to the track and my masseuse brought me more nuggets' Sprinter Usain Bolt on how chicken nuggets were the fuel for his 200-metre record-breaking victory at the Olympics.

- August 1: US unemployment rises to 5.7 per cent, its highest level in four years.
- August 3: Eleven climbers die after an avalanche on the world's second-highest mountain, K2 in Pakistan.
- August 4: Oil prices fall back to \$119 a barrel, their lowest price in three months.
- August 5: Exchequer figures reveal that tax receipts for the first seven months of the year are now EUR 2.2 billion behind projections. Medical devices firm Abiomed creates 250 jobs in Athlone.
- August 6: Pfizer announces plans to cut 180 jobs at its Little Island plant in Cork.
- August 7: Inflation figures for July show the rate falling back from 5 per cent to 4.4 per cent. Georgian army and forces from the breakaway region of South Ossetia exchange fire along the border.
- August 8: The Olympic Games open in Beijing. Georgia begins a full-scale attack on South Ossetia. Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin condemns it as an act of aggression.
- August 9: Russian jets bomb the city of Gori in Georgia. The Georgian parliament declares the country is in a state of war.
- August 10: Padraig Harrington wins the 2008 PGA Championship.
- August 11: It emerges that personal data on 380,000 social welfare recipients was on a laptop stolen from the Comptroller and Auditor General's office last year.
- August 12: Russian president Dmitri Medvedev announces completion of operations in South Ossetia to drive Georgian troops from the region. The Georgian government says its territory is still being bombed.
- August 14: Days of serious flooding in Ireland cause estimated damage of tens of millions of euro.
- August 15: Georgia signs ceasefire agreement with Russia.
- August 16: Jamaica's Usain Bolt wins the 100 metres at the Olympics in a world-record time of 9.69 seconds. Singer Ronnie Drew of the Dubliners dies, aged 73, after a long illness.
- August 17: American swimmer Michael Phelps wins his eighth gold medal in Beijing, setting a new record for the most gold medals won in a single games.
- August 18: Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf resigns before facing impeachment proceedings.
- August 20: Bolt wins the Olympic 200-metre final, setting a new world record of 19.3 seconds. Some 153 people are killed in a plane crash at Madrid's airport.
- August 22: Russian troops begin pulling out of Georgia.
- August 23: Democratic nominee Barack Obama picks Senator Joe Biden as his vice-presidential running mate.
- August 24: Irish boxer Kenny Egan takes a silver medal in the Olympic light-heavyweight boxing competition.
- August 26: Russia recognises the independence of the Georgian breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

August 27: Obama is formally chosen as nominee at the Democrat convention in Denver.

August 29: Republican nominee John McCain selects Alaska governor Sarah Palin as his running mate. Italian airline Alitalia seeks bankruptcy protection.

September

Quote of the month:

'As Putin rears his head and comes into the airspace of the United States of America, where do they go? It's Alaska. It's just right over the border. It is from Alaska that we send those out to make sure that an eye is being kept on this very powerful nation' Republican vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin attempts to explain how the governorship of Alaska provides her with foreign policy experience.

September 1: Premiership club Manchester City is bought out by a group of investors from Abu Dhabi, making it the richest football club in the world.

September 3: US Republican party officially selects John McCain as its presidential candidate. The Independent Monitoring Commission reports that the Provisional IRA has effectively disbanded, but the Army Council continues to exist.

September 6: Asif Ali Zardari of the Pakistan People's Party is elected as the country's new president to replace Pervez Musharraf.

September 7: US government is forced to takeover mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

September 14: Investment bank Lehman Brothers files for bankruptcy. Bank of America acquires Merrill Lynch in a \$38.25 billion deal.

September 15: Hewlett-Packard announces a plan to cut 24,600 jobs worldwide. Dow Jones plummets by 500 points in the aftermath of Lehman Brothers bankruptcy.

September 16: The US Federal Reserve agrees to lend the troubled insurance group AIG \$85 billion in exchange for a 79.9 per cent stake in the company. Trading is suspended on Russia's two main stock exchanges as the financial crisis hits.

September 17: Dow Jones falls by another 440 points in the aftermath of AIG bail-out. British bank Lloyds TSB buys out rival HBOS in a stg£12.2 billion deal. Russian president Dmitry Medvedev injects \$20 billion into the markets in a bid to restore liquidity.

September 19: Financial regulators in Ireland, the US and British ban short-selling in a bid to protect plunging financial stocks.

September 21: Tyrone beat Kerry in the All-Ireland football final. Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert resigns and foreign minister Tzipi Livni begins talks on forming a new government.

September 22: Dow Jones falls 370 points in uncertainty over a proposed US government bailout of the banking sector.

September 26: US bank Washington Mutual is seized by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and most of it is sold to JPMorgan Chase. Actor Paul Newman dies aged 83 after battling lung cancer.

September 27: The British government announces plans to nationalise mortgage lender Bradford & Bingley.

September 28: Belgian bank Fortis is semi-nationalised in an EUR 11 billion bail-out deal backed by Benelux governments.

September 29: US House of Representatives votes against proposed financial sector bailout. German government and banks put EUR 35 billion into struggling property lender Hypo Real Estate. Citigroup buys out Wachovia. Iceland nationalises Glitner Bank as crisis hits that country. Dow Jones falls by 777 points, its biggest oneday drop on record as panic hits the equity markets. Irish government announces EUR 400 billion commitment to guarantee deposits in all domestic banks.

October

Quote of the month:

'I believe that unsubstantiated rumours in the marketplace caused significant harm to Lehman Brothers. In our case, false rumours were so rampant for so long that major institutions issued public statements denying the rumours' Former Lehman Brothers chief executive Dick Fuld blames others for the collapse of his bank.

October 3: US president George Bush signs the \$700 billion bailout plan into law after it is finally approved by the House of Representatives.

October 5: The German government announces its own bank guarantee and increases the Hypo Real Estate bailout package to EUR 50 billion.

October 6: The Dow Jones records a new record daily fall, dropping by 800 points. Former Lehman Brothers chief executive Dick Fuld tells a Congressional committee that the bank acted prudently at all times. The FTSE 100 drops by 391 points, its biggest single day decline.

October 7: Russia provides Iceland with EUR 4 billion in emergency loans. The Icelandic government nationalises a second major bank, Landsbanki. Dow Jones drops 500 points.

October 8: The British government announces a financial rescue package that includes guaranteeing banks up to stg£250 billion. The Fed cuts interest rates to 1.5 per cent. ECB drops rates to 3.75 per cent.

October 9: Greece introduces its own bank guarantee. Dow Jones endures another day of heavy losses and is down by 678 points. French writer Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio wins the Nobel Prize for Literature. Iceland's third major bank, Kaupthing, is nationalised.

October 10: European stock markets take a hammering and the Iseq closes down 5.5 per cent, having lost 13 per cent of its value in a week. The Nobel Prize for Peace is won by former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari. Oil prices drop to \$80 a barrel.

- October 11: Far-right Austrian politician Jorg Haider is killed in a car accident.
- October 12: Australia, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates all announce bank guarantees.
- October 13: The Dow Jones recovers by 935 points following action by governments around the world.

October 14: Finance minister Brian Lenihan's first budget introduces a 1 per cent income levy, increases in motor tax and fuel excise and scraps automatic entitlement for medical cards for the over-70s. Stephen Harper is reelected as prime minister of Canada.

October 17: German parliament approves a EUR 500 million banking sector bailout. Wicklow TD Joe Behan resigns from Fianna Fail over the medical card issue. Independent TD Finian McGrath withdraws support for the government over same issue.

October 21: The government is forced into a climbdown. Some 95 per cent of over-70s will retain their medical cards.

October 24: Sean Quinn steps down as chairman of Quinn Insurance after the Financial Regulator fines the firm a record EUR 3.2 million for regulatory breaches.

October 26: support for Fianna Fail plummets in the Red C opinion poll, giving Fine Gael a seven-point lead.

November

Quote of the month:

'If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time; who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer' Barack Obama, on his election as US president.

November 2: McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton wins the Formula One Driver's Championship.

November 4: Barack Obama is elected president of the United States. Democrats increase their majority in the US House and Senate. Irish exchequer figures reveal that the tax take was EUR 4.3 billion behind expectations for the first ten months of the year.

November 5: Russian president Dmitry Medvedev announces plans to extend the presidential term from four years to six. Unemployment hits 260,300 as the live register climbs by 15,800 to its highest level since March 1997.

November 6: The ECB cuts its main lending rate by 0.5 points to 3.25 per cent.

November 7: US unemployment hits 6.5 per cent, its highest rate in 14 years.

November 8: The Progressive Democrats vote to wind up the party, after 23 years in existence.

November 9: Ireland's biggest-ever drug seizure, a EUR 750 million haul of cocaine, is made off the west coast. Flextronics announces plans to cut 118 jobs in Limerick. Rugby player Shane Geoghegan is shot dead outside his Limerick home in a case of mistaken identity.

November 10: The US government is forced to revise its bailout plan for insurance firm AIG, upping the cost to EUR 150 billion.

November 11: Russia is forced once again to halt trading on its two main stock exchanges after they fall 6.5 per cent. Inter Group Insurance Services closes its doors in Galway with the loss of 118 jobs.

November 12: Russian share values fall a further 10 per cent when trading reopens, forcing another brief suspension.

November 14: The eurozone enters its first recession since the introduction of the common currency.

November 17: Citigroup announces a plan to cut 75,000 jobs worldwide. November 18: Anti-Lisbon Treaty group Libertas announces plans to run candidates in the European Elections.

November 19: The IMF agrees to provide a \$2.1 billion rescue package for Iceland, one of the countries worst hit by the financial crisis.

November 20: The three major US car manufacturers - GM, Ford and Chrysler - appear before Congress asking for a bailout package as sales slump. The Finance Bill is published and introduces a new income levy rate of 3 per cent on those earning more than EUR 250,000 per annum.

November 21: Bank of Ireland announces that it has been approached by investors to help recapitalise the bank.

December

Quote of the month:

'It is clear to me, on reflection, that it was inappropriate and unacceptable from a transparency point of view' Former Anglo Irish Bank chairman Sean FitzPatrick on his resignation.

December 1: Aer Lingus rejects a EUR 748 million takeover bid by Ryanair. Barack Obama announces the appointment of Hillary Clinton as US Secretary of State.

December 2: New exchequer figures reveal that the shortfall in public finances was EUR 8 billion in the first 11 months of the year.

December 3: The Live Register jumps by almost 17,000 to 277,200, bringing unemployment to its highest level in 12 years.

December 4: The European Central Bank (ECB) cuts rates by 0.75 per cent to 2.5 per cent, its biggest-ever rate cut. Heineken announces plans to close the Beamish & Crawford brewery in Cork, with the loss of 120 jobs.

December 5: The US economy receives more bad news when it emerges that half a million people lost their jobs in November, bringing unemployment to its highest rate since 1993. OJ Simpson is sentenced to 15 years in jail for the kidnapping and robbery of a sports merchandise dealer.

December 6: The Food Safety Authority of Ireland recalls all pork products after it emerges that pigs may have been fed with contaminated fodder. An estimated 60,000 people protest against education cutbacks on the streets of Dublin.

December 7: Riots break out in Athens after police shoot a teenage boy.

December 8: 1,400 people are laid off in the pigmeat industry in the aftermath of the pork scare. The Tribune newspaper company in the US files for bankruptcy. December 9: Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich is arrested by the FBI amid allegations that he tried to auction off Barack Obama's Senate seat.

December 10: Mining group Rio Tinto says it will lay off 14,000 workers worldwide.

December 11: Pork goes back on sale after production is given the green light to resume. The annual rate of inflation drops to 2.5 per cent for November, down from 4 per cent a month earlier - the biggest drop on record.

December 12: Switzerland signs up to the Schengen Agreement, making it the 25th European country to drop border controls between participating states. Taoiseach Brian Cowen confirms that a second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty will be held.

December 13: Hedge fund manager Bernard Madoff is arrested on suspicion of defrauding investors of EUR 50 billion. Prosecutors allege that he admitted it was "a giant Ponzi scheme".

December 14: The government announces plans for a EUR 10 billion fund to recapitalise the banks. An Iraqi reporter throws his shoes at US president George W Bush on his last visit to Baghdad.

December 15: Managing director of Toytown Films, Celine Cawley, is found dead on the patio of her home in Howth.

December 18: Anglo Irish Bank chairman Sean FitzPatrick resigns after it emerged he temporarily transferred loans to another bank to keep them out of Anglo's annual report. When he resignes, he had EUR 87 million in loans. Former minister and journalist Conor Cruise O'Brien dies at the age of 91.

December 19: George W Bush announces a \$17 billion bailout of the US car industry to protect it from bankruptcy. Anglo Irish Bank chief executive David Drumm resigns.

December 21: The government agrees to invest EUR 5.5 billion in three banks, taking control of Anglo Irish Bank and 25 per cent stakes in AIB and Bank of Ireland. Celine Cawley's husband, Eamon Lillis, is charged with her murder.

December 22: Aer Lingus confirms it will restore the Shannon-Heathrow route, as it rejects Ryanair bid and announces it expects to make a profit in 2009.

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The greening of the red, white and blue: ONE MAN'S PLAN / More Americans than ever identify themselves as greens, but the dirty little secret is they are fooling themselves and will have to do much more in order to preserve their way of life - and the planet

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Body

One day Iraq, our post-9/11 trauma and the divisiveness of the Bush years will all be behind us -- and America will need, and want, to get its groove back. We will need to find a way to reknit America at home, reconnect America abroad and restore America to its natural place in the global order -- as the beacon of progress, hope and inspiration. I have an idea how. It's called "green."

In the world of ideas, to name something is to own it. If you can name an issue, you can own the issue. One thing that always struck me about the term "green" was the degree to which, for so many years, it was defined by its opponents -- by the people who wanted to disparage it. And they defined it as "liberal," "tree-hugging," "sissy," "girlie-man," "unpatriotic," "vaguely French."

Well, I want to rename "green." I want to rename it geostrategic, geoeconomic, capitalistic and patriotic. I want to do that because I think that living, working, designing, manufacturing and projecting America in a green way can be the basis of a new unifying political movement for the 21st century. A redefined, broader and more muscular green ideology is not meant to trump the traditional Republican and Democratic agendas but rather to bridge them when it comes to addressing the three major issues facing every American today: jobs, temperature and terrorism.

How do our kids compete in a flatter world? How do they thrive in a warmer world? How do they survive in a more dangerous world? Those are, in a nutshell, the big questions facing America at the dawn of the 21st century. But these problems are so large in scale that they can only be effectively addressed by an America with 50 green states -- not an America divided between red and blue states.

Because a new green ideology, properly defined, has the power to mobilize liberals and conservatives, evangelicals and atheists, big business and environmentalists around an agenda that can both pull us together and propel us forward. That's why I say: we don't just need the first black president. We need the first green president. We don't just need the first woman president. We need the first environmental president. We don't just need a president who has been toughened by years as a prisoner of war but a president who is tough enough to level with the American people about the profound economic, geopolitical and climate threats posed by our addiction to oil -- and to offer a real plan to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

After the Second World War, President Dwight Eisenhower responded to the threat of Communism and the "red menace" with massive spending on an interstate highway system to tie America together, in large part so that we could better move weapons in the event of a war with the Soviets. That highway system, though, helped to enshrine America's car culture (atrophying our railroads) and to lock in suburban sprawl and low-density housing, which all combined to get America addicted to cheap fossil fuels, particularly oil. Many in the world followed our model.

Today, we are paying the accumulated economic, geopolitical and climate prices for that kind of America. I am not proposing that we radically alter our lifestyles. We are who we are -- including a car culture. But if we want to continue to be who we are, enjoy the benefits and be able to pass them on to our children, we do need to fuel our future in a cleaner, greener way. Eisenhower rallied us with the red menace. The next president will have to rally us with a green patriotism. Hence my motto: "Green is the new red, white and blue."

The good news is that after travelling around America this past year, looking at how we use energy and the emerging alternatives, I can report that green really has gone Main Street -- thanks to the perfect storm created by 9/11, hurricane Katrina and the Internet revolution. The first flattened the twin towers, the second flattened New Orleans and the third flattened the global economic playing field. The convergence of all three has turned many of our previous assumptions about "green" upside down in a very short period of time, making it much more compelling to many more Americans.

But here's the bad news: while green has hit Main Street -- more Americans than ever now identify themselves as greens, or what I call "Geo-Greens" to differentiate their more muscular and strategic green ideology -- green has not gone very far down Main Street. It certainly has not gone anywhere near the distance required to preserve our lifestyle. The dirty little secret is that we're fooling ourselves. We in America talk like we're already "the greenest generation," as the business writer Dan Pink once called it. But here's the really inconvenient truth: we have not even begun to be serious about the costs, the effort and the scale of change that will be required to shift our country, and eventually the world, to a largely emissions-free energy infrastructure over the next 50 years.

A few weeks after American forces invaded Afghanistan, I visited the Pakistani frontier town of Peshawar, a hotbed of Islamic radicalism. On the way, I stopped at the famous Darul Uloom Haqqania, the biggest madrasa, or Islamic school, in Pakistan, with 2,800 live-in students. The Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar attended this madrasa as a younger man. My Pakistani friend and I were allowed to observe a class of young boys who sat on the floor, practicing their rote learning of the Qur'an from texts perched on wooden holders. The teacher asked an eight-year-old boy to chant a Qur'anic verse for us, which he did with the elegance of an experienced muezzin. I asked another student, an Afghan refugee, Rahim Kunduz, 12, what his reaction was to the Sept. 11 attacks, and he said: "Most likely the attack came from Americans inside America. I am pleased that America has had to face pain, because the rest of the world has tasted its pain." A framed sign on the wall said this room was "A gift of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

Sometime after 9/11 -- an unprovoked mass murder perpetrated by 19 men, 15 of whom were Saudis -- green went geostrategic, as Americans started to realize we were financing both sides in the war on terrorism. We were financing the U.S. military with our tax dollars; and we were financing a transformation of Islam, in favour of its most intolerant strand, with our gasoline purchases. How stupid is that?

Islam has always been practiced in different forms. Some are more embracing of modernity, reinterpretation of the Qur'an and tolerance of other faiths, like Sufi Islam or the populist Islam of Egypt, Ottoman Turkey and Indonesia. Some strands, like Salafi Islam -- followed by the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia and by al-Qaida -- believe Islam should be returned to an austere form practiced in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, a form hostile to modernity, science, "infidels" and <u>women</u>'s rights. By enriching the Saudi and Iranian treasuries via our gasoline purchases, we are financing the export of the Saudi puritanical brand of Sunni Islam and the Iranian fundamentalist brand of Shiite Islam, tilting the Muslim world in a more intolerant direction. At the Muslim fringe, this creates more recruits for the Taliban, al-Qaida, Hamas, <u>Hezbollah</u> and the Sunni suicide bomb squads of Iraq; at the Muslim centre, it creates a much bigger constituency of people who applaud suicide bombers as martyrs.

The Saudi Islamic export drive first went into high gear after extreme fundamentalists challenged the Muslim credentials of the Saudi ruling family by taking over the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979 -- a year that coincided with the Iranian revolution and a huge rise in oil prices. The attack on the Grand Mosque by these Qur'an-and-rifle-wielding Islamic militants shook the Saudi ruling family to its core. The al-Sauds responded to this challenge to their religious bona fides by becoming outwardly more religious. They gave their official Wahhabi religious establishment even more power to impose Islam on public life. Awash in cash thanks to the spike in oil prices, the Saudi government and charities also spent hundreds of millions of dollars endowing mosques, youth clubs and Muslim schools all over the world, ensuring that Wahhabi imams, teachers and textbooks would preach Saudi-style Islam. Eventually, notes Lawrence Wright in The Looming Tower, his history of al-Qaida, "Saudi Arabia, which constitutes only one per cent of the world Muslim population, would support 90 per cent of the expenses of the entire faith, overriding other traditions of Islam."

Saudi mosques and wealthy donors have also funnelled cash to the Sunni insurgents in Iraq. The Associated Press reported from Cairo in December: "Several drivers interviewed by the AP in Middle East capitals said Saudis have been using religious events, like the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and a smaller pilgrimage, as cover for illicit money transfers. Some money, they said, is carried into Iraq on buses with returning pilgrims."

No wonder more Americans have concluded that conserving oil to put less money in the hands of hostile forces is now a geostrategic imperative. President George W. Bush's refusal to do anything meaningful after 9/11 to reduce our gasoline usage really amounts to a policy of "No Mullah Left Behind." James Woolsey, the former CIA director, minces no words: "We are funding the rope for the hanging of ourselves."

No, I don't want to bankrupt Saudi Arabia or trigger an Islamist revolt there. Its leadership is more moderate and pro-Western than its people. But the way the Saudi ruling family has bought off its religious establishment, in order to stay in power, is not healthy. Cutting the price of oil in half would help change that. In the 1990s, dwindling oil income sparked a Saudi debate about less Qur'an and more science in Saudi schools, even experimentation with local elections. But the recent oil windfall has stilled all talk of reform.

That is because of what I call the First Law of Petropolitics: the price of oil and the pace of freedom always move in opposite directions in states that are highly dependent on oil exports for their income and have weak institutions or outright authoritarian governments. And this is another reason that green has become geostrategic. Soaring oil prices are poisoning the international system by strengthening antidemocratic regimes around the globe.

Look what's happened. We thought the fall of the Berlin Wall was going to unleash an unstoppable tide of free markets and free people, and for about a decade it did just that. But those years coincided with oil in the \$10 US to \$30 a barrel range. As the price of oil surged into the \$30 to \$70 range in the early 2000s, it triggered a countertide -- a tide of petro-authoritarianism -- manifested in Russia, Iran, Nigeria, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Egypt, Chad, Angola, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. The elected or self-appointed elites running these states have used their oil windfalls to ensconce themselves in power, buy off opponents and counter the fall-of-the-Berlin-Wall tide. If we continue to finance them with our oil purchases, they will reshape the world in their image, around Putin-like values.

You can illustrate the First Law of Petropolitics with a simple graph. On one line chart the price of oil from 1979 to the present; on another line chart the Freedom House or Fraser Institute freedom indexes for Russia, Nigeria, Iran and Venezuela for the same years. When you put these two lines on the same graph you see something striking: the price of oil and the pace of freedom are inversely correlated. As oil prices went down in the early 1990s, competition, transparency, political participation and accountability of those in office all tended to go up in these countries -- as measured by free elections held, newspapers opened, reformers elected, economic reform projects started and companies privatized. That's because their petro-authoritarian regimes had to open themselves to foreign investment and educate and empower their people more in order to earn income. But as oil prices went up around 2000, free speech, free press, fair elections and freedom to form political parties, and NGOs all eroded in these countries.

The motto of the American Revolution was "no taxation without representation." The motto of the petroauthoritarians is "no representation without taxation": if I don't have to tax you, because I can get all the money I need from oil wells, I don't have to listen to you.

It is no accident that when oil prices were low in the 1990s, Iran elected a reformist parliament and a president who called for a "dialogue of civilizations." And when oil prices soared to \$70 a barrel, Iran's conservatives pushed out the reformers and ensconced a president who says the Holocaust is a myth. And it is no accident that the first Arab Gulf state to start running out of oil, Bahrain, is also the first Arab Gulf state to have held a free and fair election in which <u>women</u> could run and vote, the first Arab Gulf state to overhaul its labour laws to make more of its own people employable and the first Arab Gulf state to sign a free-trade agreement with America.

People change when they have to -- not when we tell them to -- and falling oil prices make them have to. That is why if we are looking for a Plan B for Iraq -- a way of pressing for political reform in the Middle East without going to war again -- there is no better tool than bringing down the price of oil. When it comes to fostering democracy among petro-authoritarians, it doesn't matter whether you're a neocon or a radical lib. If you're not also a Geo-Green, you won't succeed.

The notion that conserving energy is a geostrategic imperative has also moved into the Pentagon, for slightly different reasons. Generals are realizing that the more energy they save in the heat of battle, the more power they can project. The Pentagon has been looking to improve its energy efficiency for several years now to save money. But the Iraq war has given birth to a new movement in the U.S. military: the "Green Hawks."

As Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute, who has been working with the Pentagon, put it to me: the Iraq war forced the U.S. military to think much more seriously about how to "eat its tail" -- to shorten its energy supply lines by becoming more energy efficient. According to Dan Nolan, who oversees energy projects for the U.S. army's Rapid Equipping Force, it started last year when a marine major general in Anbar province told the Pentagon he wanted alternative energy sources that would reduce fuel consumption in the Iraqi desert. Why? His air conditioners were being run off mobile generators, and the generators ran on diesel, and the diesel had to be trucked in, and the insurgents were blowing up the trucks.

Pay attention: when the U.S. army desegregated, the country really desegregated; when the army goes green, the country could really go green.

The second big reason green has gone Main Street is because global warming has. A decade ago, it was mostly experts who worried that climate change was real, largely brought about by humans and likely to lead to species loss and environmental crises. Now Main Street is starting to worry because people are seeing things they've never seen before in their own front yards and reading things they've never read before in their papers -- like the recent draft report by the United Nations's 2,000-expert Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which concluded that "changes in climate are now affecting physical and biological systems on every continent."

Yes, no one knows exactly what will happen. But ever fewer people want to do nothing. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California summed up the new climate around climate when he said to me recently: "If 98 doctors say my son is ill and needs medication and two say, 'No, he doesn't, he is fine,' I will go with the 98. It's common sense -- the same with global warming. We go with the majority, the large majority. ... The key thing now is that since we know this industrial age has created it, let's get our act together and do everything we can to roll it back."

But how? Now we arrive at the first big roadblock to green going down Main Street. Most people have no clue -- no clue -- how huge an industrial project is required to blunt climate change. Here are two people who do: Robert Socolow, an engineering professor, and Stephen Pacala, an ecology professor, who together lead the Carbon Mitigation Initiative at Princeton, a consortium designing scalable solutions for the climate issue.

They first argued in a paper published by the journal Science in August 2004 that human beings can emit only so much carbon into the atmosphere before the buildup of carbon dioxide (CO2) reaches a level unknown in recent

geologic history and the Earth's climate system starts to go "haywire." The scientific consensus, they note, is that the risk of things going haywire -- weather patterns getting violently unstable, glaciers melting, prolonged droughts - grows rapidly as CO2 levels "approach a doubling" of the concentration of CO2 that was in the atmosphere before the Industrial Revolution.

"Think of the climate change issue as a closet, and behind the door are lurking all kinds of monsters -- and there's a long list of them," Pacala said. "All of our scientific work says the most damaging monsters start to come out from behind that door when you hit the doubling of CO2 levels." As Bill Collins, who led the development of a model used worldwide for simulating climate change, put it to me: "We're running an uncontrolled experiment on the only home we have."

So here is our challenge, according to Pacala: if we basically do nothing, and global CO2 emissions continue to grow at the pace of the last 30 years for the next 50 years, we will pass the doubling level -- an atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide of 560 parts per million -- around midcentury. To avoid that -- and still leave room for developed countries to grow, using less carbon, and for countries like India and China to grow, emitting double or triple their current carbon levels, until they climb out of poverty and are able to become more energy efficient -- will require a huge global industrial energy project.

To convey the scale involved, Socolow and Pacala have created a pie chart with 15 different wedges. Some wedges represent carbon-free or carbon-diminishing power-generating technologies; other wedges represent efficiency programs that could conserve large amounts of energy and prevent CO2 emissions. They argue that the world needs to deploy any seven of these 15 wedges, or sufficient amounts of all 15, to have enough conservation, and enough carbon-free energy, to increase the world economy and still avoid the doubling of CO2 in the atmosphere. Each wedge, when phased in over 50 years, would avoid the release of 25 billion tons of carbon, for a total of 175 billion tons of carbon avoided between now and 2056.

Here are seven wedges we could chose from: "Replace 1,400 large coal-fired plants with gas-fired plants; increase the fuel economy of two billion cars from 30 to 60 miles per gallon; add twice today's nuclear output to displace coal; drive two billion cars on ethanol, using one-sixth of the world's cropland; increase solar power 700-fold to displace coal; cut electricity use in homes, offices and stores by 25 per cent; install carbon capture and sequestration capacity at 800 large coal-fired plants." And the other eight aren't any easier. They include halting all cutting and burning of forests, since deforestation causes about 20 per cent of the world's annual CO2 emissions.

"There has never been a deliberate industrial project in history as big as this," Pacala said. Through a combination of clean power technology and conservation, "we have to get rid of 175 billion tons of carbon over the next 50 years -- and still keep growing. It is possible to accomplish this if we start today. But every year that we delay, the job becomes more difficult -- and if we delay a decade or two, avoiding the doubling or more may well become impossible."

In November, I flew from Shanghai to Beijing on Air China. As we landed in Beijing and taxied to the terminal, the Chinese air hostess came on the PA and said: "We've just landed in Beijing. The temperature is eight degrees Celsius, 46 degrees Fahrenheit and the sky is clear."

I almost burst out laughing. Outside my window the smog was so thick you could not see the end of the terminal building. When I got into Beijing, though, friends told me the air was better than usual. Why? China had been host of a summit meeting of 48 African leaders. Time magazine reported that Beijing officials had "ordered half a million official cars off the roads and said another 400,000 drivers had 'volunteered' to refrain from using their vehicles" in order to clean up the air for their African guests. As soon as they left, the cars returned, and Beijing's air went back to "unhealthy."

Green has also gone Main Street because the end of Communism, the rise of the personal computer and the diffusion of the Internet have opened the global economic playing field to so many more people, all coming with their own versions of the American dream -- a house, a car, a toaster, a microwave and a refrigerator. It is a blessing to see so many people growing out of poverty. But when three billion people move from "low-impact" to

"high-impact" lifestyles, Jared Diamond wrote in Collapse, it makes it urgent that we find cleaner ways to fuel their dreams.

According to Lester Brown, the founder of the Earth Policy Institute, if China keeps growing at eight per cent a year, by 2031 the per capita income of 1.45 billion Chinese will be the same as America's in 2004. China currently has only one car for every 100 people, but Brown projects that as it reaches American income levels, if it copies American consumption, it will have three cars for every four people, or 1.1 billion vehicles. The total world fleet today is 800 million vehicles!

That's why McKinsey Global Institute forecasts that developing countries will generate nearly 80 per cent of the growth in world energy demand between now and 2020, with China representing 32 per cent and the Middle East 10 per cent. So if Red China doesn't become Green China there is no chance we will keep the climate monsters behind the door. On some days, says the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, almost 25 per cent of the polluting matter in the air above Los Angeles comes from China's coal-fired power plants and factories, as well as fumes from China's cars and dust kicked up by droughts and deforestation around Asia.

The good news is that China knows it has to grow green -- or it won't grow at all. On Sept. 8, 2006, a Chinese newspaper reported that China's EPA and its National Bureau of Statistics had re-examined China's 2004 GDP number. They concluded that the health problems, environmental degradation and lost workdays from pollution had actually cost China \$64 billion, or 3.05 per cent of its total economic output for 2004. Some experts believe the real number is closer to 10 per cent.

Thus China has a strong motivation to clean up the worst pollutants in its air. But cleaning up is easier said than done. The Communist Party's legitimacy and the stability of the whole country depend heavily on Beijing's ability to provide rising living standards for more and more Chinese.

So, if you're a Chinese mayor and have to choose between growing jobs and cutting pollution, you will invariably choose jobs: coughing workers are much less politically dangerous than unemployed workers.

But if China is having a hard time cleaning up its nitrogen and sulfur oxides -- which can be done relatively cheaply by adding scrubbers to the smokestacks of coal-fired power plants -- imagine what will happen when it comes to asking China to curb its CO2, of which China is now the world's second-largest emitter, after America. To build a coal-fired power plant that captures, separates and safely sequesters the CO2 into the ground before it goes up the smokestack requires either an expensive retrofit or a whole new system. That new system would cost about 40 per cent more to build and operate -- and would produce 20 per cent less electricity, according to a recent MIT study, The Future of Coal.

China -- which is constructing the equivalent of two 500-megawatt coal-fired power plants every week -- is not going to pay that now. China's strategy right now is to say that CO2 is the West's problem. "It must be pointed out that climate change has been caused by the long-term historic emissions of developed countries and their high per capita emissions," Jiang Yu, a spokeswoman for China's Foreign Ministry, declared in February. "Developed countries bear an unshirkable responsibility."

So now we come to the nub of the issue: green will not go down Main Street America unless it also goes down Main Street China, India and Brazil. And for green to go Main Street in these big developing countries, the prices of clean power alternatives -- wind, biofuels, nuclear, solar or coal sequestration -- have to fall to the "China price." The China price is basically the price China pays for coal-fired electricity today because China is not prepared to pay a premium now, and sacrifice growth and stability, just to get rid of the CO2 that comes from burning coal.

"The 'China price' is the fundamental benchmark that everyone is looking to satisfy," said Curtis Carlson, CEO of SRI International, which is developing alternative energy technologies. "Because if the Chinese have to pay 10 per cent more for energy, when they have tens of millions of people living under \$1,000 a year, it is not going to happen." Carlson went on to say: "We have an enormous amount of new innovation we must put in place before we can get to a price that China and India will be able to pay. But this is also an opportunity."

The only way we are going to get innovations that drive energy costs down to the China price -- innovations in energy-saving appliances, lights and building materials and in non-CO2-emitting power plants and fuels -- is by mobilizing free-market capitalism. The only thing as powerful as Mother Nature is Father Greed. To a degree, the market is already at work on this project -- because some venture capitalists and companies understand that clean tech is going to be the next great global industry. Take Wal-Mart. The world's biggest retailer woke up several years ago, its CEO Lee Scott told me, and realized that with regard to the environment, its customers "had higher expectations for us than we had for ourselves." So Scott hired a sustainability expert, Jib Ellison, to tutor the company. The first lesson Ellison preached was that going green was a whole new way for Wal-Mart to cut costs and drive its profits. As Scott recalled it, Ellison said to him, "Lee, the thing you have to think of is all this stuff that people don't want you to put into the environment is waste -- and you're paying for it!"

So Scott initiated a program to work with Wal-Mart's suppliers to reduce the sizes and materials used for all its packaging by five per cent by 2013. The reductions they have made are already paying off in savings to the company. "We created teams to work across the organization," Scott said. "It was voluntary -- then you had the first person who eliminated some packaging, and someone else started showing how we could recycle more plastic, and all of a sudden it's \$1 million a quarter." Wal-Mart operates 7,000 huge Class 8 trucks that get about six miles per gallon. It has told its truck makers that by 2015, it wants to double the efficiency of the fleet. Wal-Mart is the China of companies, so, explained Scott, "if we place one order we can create a market" for energy innovation.

The quickest way to get to the China price for clean power is by becoming more energy efficient. The cheapest, cleanest, non-emitting power plant in the world is the one you don't build. Helping China adopt some of the breakthrough efficiency programs that California has adopted, for instance -- like rewarding electrical utilities for how much energy they get their customers to save rather than to use -- could have a huge impact. Some experts estimate that China could cut its need for new power plants in half with aggressive investments in efficiency.

Yet another force driving us to the China price is Chinese entrepreneurs, who understand that while Beijing may not be ready to impose CO2 restraints, developed countries are, so this is going to be a global business -- and they want a slice. Let me introduce the man identified last year by Forbes magazine as the seventh-richest man in China, with a fortune now estimated at \$2.2 billion. His name is Shi Zhengrong and he is China's leading manufacturer of silicon solar panels, which convert sunlight into electricity.

"People at all levels in China have become more aware of this environment issue and alternative energy," said Shi, whose company, Suntech Power Holdings, is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. "Five years ago, when I started the company, people said, 'Why do we need solar? We have a surplus of coal-powered electricity.' Now it is different; now people realize that solar has a bright future. But it is still too expensive ... We have to reduce the cost as quickly as possible -- our real competitors are coal and nuclear power."

Shi

does most of his manufacturing in China, but sells roughly 90 per cent of his products outside China, because today they are too expensive for his domestic market. But the more he can get the price down, and start to grow his business inside China, the more he can use that to become a dominant global player. And if it takes off, China could do for solar panels what it did for tennis shoes -- bring the price down so far that everyone can afford a pair.

All that sounds great -- but remember those seven wedges? To reach the necessary scale of emissions-free energy will require big clean-coal or nuclear power stations, wind farms and solar farms, all connected to a national transmission grid, not to mention clean fuels for our cars and trucks. And the market alone, as presently constructed in the U.S., will not get us those alternatives at the scale we need -- at the China price -- fast enough.

Prof. Nate Lewis, Caltech's noted chemist and energy expert, explained why with an analogy. "Let's say you invented the first cellphone," he said. "You could charge people \$1,000 for each one because lots of people would be ready to pay lots of money to have a phone they could carry in their pocket." With those profits, you, the inventor, could pay back your shareholders and plow more into research, so you keep selling better and cheaper cellphones.

But energy is different, Lewis explained. "If I come to you and say, Today your house lights are being powered by dirty coal, but tomorrow, if you pay me \$100 more a month, I will power your house lights with solar,' you are most likely to say: Sorry, Nate, but I don't really care how my lights go on, I just care that they go on. I won't pay an extra \$100 a month for sun power. A new cellphone improves my life. A different way to power my lights does nothing.'

"So building an emissions-free energy infrastructure is not like sending a man to the moon," Lewis went on. "With the moon shot, money was no object - and all we had to do was get there. But today, we already have cheap energy from coal, gas and oil. So getting people to pay more to shift to clean fuels is like trying to get funding for NASA to build a spaceship to the moon - when Southwest Airlines already flies there and gives away free peanuts! I already have a cheap ride to the moon, and a ride is a ride. For most people, electricity is electricity, no matter how it is generated."

If we were running out of coal or oil, the market would steadily push the prices up, which would stimulate innovation in alternatives. Eventually there would be a crossover, and the alternatives would kick in, start to scale and come down in price. But what has happened in energy over the last 35 years is that the oil price goes up, stimulating government subsidies and some investments in alternatives, and then the price goes down, the government loses interest, the subsidies expire and the investors in alternatives get wiped out.

The only way to stimulate the scale of sustained investment in research and development of non-CO2 emitting power at the China price is if the developed countries, who can afford to do so, force their people to pay the full climate, economic and geopolitical costs of using gasoline and dirty coal. Those countries that have signed the Kyoto Protocol are starting to do that. But America is not.

Up to now, said Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, we as a society "have been behaving just like Enron the company at the height of its folly." We rack up stunning profits and GDP numbers every year, and they look great on paper "because we've been hiding some of the costs off the books." If we don't put a price on the CO2 we're building up, or on our addiction to oil, we'll never nurture the innovation we need.

Jeffrey Immelt, the chairman of General Electric, has worked for GE for 25 years. In that time, he told me, he has seen seven generations of innovation in GE's medical equipment business - in devices like MRIs or CT scans - because health care market incentives drove the innovation. In power, it's just the opposite. "Today, on the power side," he said, "we're still selling the same basic coal-fired power plants we had when I arrived. They're a little cleaner and more efficient now, but basically the same."

The one clean power area where GE is now into a third generation is wind turbines, "thanks to the European Union," Immelt said. Countries like Denmark, Spain and Germany imposed standards for wind power on their utilities and offered sustained subsidies, creating a big market for wind-turbine manufacturers in Europe in the 1980s, when America abandoned wind because the price of oil fell. "We grew our wind business in Europe," Immelt said.

As things stand now in America, Immelt said, "the market does not work in energy." The multibillion-dollar scale of investment that a company like GE is being asked to make in order to develop new clean-power technologies or that a utility is being asked to make in order to build coal sequestration facilities or nuclear plants is not going to happen at scale - unless they know that coal and oil are going to be priced high enough for long enough that new investments will not be undercut in a few years by falling fossil fuel prices. "Carbon has to have a value," Immelt emphasized. "Today in the U.S. and China it has no value."

I recently visited the infamous Three Mile Island nuclear plant with Christopher Crane, president of Exelon Nuclear, which owns the facility. He said that if Exelon wanted to start a nuclear plant today, the licensing, design, planning and building requirements are so extensive it would not open until 2015 at the earliest. But even if Exelon got all the approvals, it could not start building "because the cost of capital for a nuclear plant today is prohibitive."

That's because the interest rate that any commercial bank would charge on a loan for a nuclear facility would be so high - because of all the risks of lawsuits or cost overruns - that it would be impossible for Exelon to proceed. A

standard nuclear plant today costs about \$3 billion per unit. The only way to stimulate more nuclear power innovation, Crane said, would be federal loan guarantees that would lower the cost of capital for anyone willing to build a new nuclear plant.

The 2005 energy bill created such loan guarantees, but the details still have not been worked out. "We would need a robust loan guarantee program to jump-start the nuclear industry," Crane said - an industry that has basically been frozen since the 1979 Three Mile Island accident. With cheaper money, added Crane, CO2-free nuclear power could be "very competitive" with CO2-emitting pulverized coal.

Think about the implications. Three Mile Island had two reactors, TMI-2, which shut down because of the 1979 accident, and TMI-1, which is still operating today, providing clean electricity with virtually no CO2 emissions for 800,000 homes. Had the TMI-2 accident not happened it, too, would have been providing clean electricity for 800,000 homes for the last 28 years. Instead, that energy came from CO2-emitting coal, which, by the way, still generates 50 per cent of America's electricity.

Similar calculations apply to ethanol production. "We have about 100 scientists working on cellulosic ethanol," Chad Holliday, the CEO of DuPont, told me. "My guess is that we could double the number and add another 50 to start working on how to commercialize it. It would probably cost us less than \$100 million to scale up. But I am not ready to do that. I can guess what it will cost me to make it and what the price will be, but is the market going to be there? What are the regulations going to be? Is the ethanol subsidy going to be reduced? Will we put a tax on oil to keep ethanol competitive? If I know that, it gives me a price target to go after. Without that, I don't know what the market is and my shareholders don't know how to value what I am doing. You need some certainty on the incentives side and on the market side, because we are talking about multiyear investments, billions of dollars, that will take a long time to take off, and we won't hit on everything."

Summing up the problem, Immelt of GE said the big energy players are being asked "to take a 15-minute market signal and make a 40-year decision and that just doesn't work. The U.S. government should decide: what do we want to have happen? How much clean coal, how much nuclear and what is the most efficient way to incentivize people to get there?"

He's dead right. The market alone won't work. Government's job is to set high standards, let the market reach them and then raise the standards more. That's how you get scale innovation at the China price. Government can do this by imposing steadily rising efficiency standards for buildings and appliances and by stipulating that utilities generate a certain amount of electricity from renewables - like wind or solar. Or it can impose steadily rising mileage standards for cars or a steadily tightening cap-and-trade system for the amount of CO2 any factory or power plant can emit. Or it can offer loan guarantees and fast-track licensing for anyone who wants to build a nuclear plant. Or my preference and the simplest option - it can impose a carbon tax that will stimulate the market to move away from fuels that emit high levels of CO2 and invest in those that don't. Ideally, it will do all of these things. But whichever options we choose, they will only work if they are transparent, simple and long-term - with zero fudging allowed and with regulatory oversight and stiff financial penalties for violators.

The politician who actually proved just how effective this can be was a guy named George W. Bush, when he was governor of Texas. He pushed for and signed a renewable energy portfolio mandate in 1999. The mandate stipulated that Texas power companies had to produce 2,000 new megawatts of electricity from renewables, mostly wind, by 2009. What happened? A dozen new companies jumped into the Texas market and built wind turbines to meet the mandate, so many that the 2,000-megawatt goal was reached in 2005. So the Texas Legislature has upped the mandate to 5,000 megawatts by 2015, and everyone knows they will beat that too because of how quickly wind in Texas is becoming competitive with coal. Today, thanks to Gov. Bush's market intervention, Texas is the biggest wind state in America.

President Bush, though, is no Gov. Bush. (The Dick Cheney effect?) Bush claims he's protecting American companies by not imposing tough mileage, conservation or clean power standards, but he's actually helping them lose the race for the next great global industry. Japan has some of the world's highest gasoline taxes and stringent

energy efficiency standards for vehicles - and it has the world's most profitable and innovative car company, Toyota. That's no accident.

The politicians who best understand this are America's governors, some of whom have started to just ignore Washington, set their own energy standards and reap the benefits for their states. As Schwarzenegger told me, "We have seen in California so many companies that have been created that work just on things that have do with clean environment."

California's state-imposed efficiency standards have resulted in per capita energy consumption in California remaining almost flat for the last 30 years, while in the rest of the country it has gone up 50 per cent.

"There are a lot of industries that are exploding right now because of setting these new standards," he said.

The bottom line is this: clean tech plays to America's strength because making things like locomotives lighter and smarter takes a lot of knowledge - not cheap labour. That's why embedding clean tech into everything we design and manufacture is a way to revive America as a manufacturing power.

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We need a Green New Deal - one in which government's role is not funding projects, as in the original New Deal, but seeding basic research, providing loan guarantees where needed and setting standards, taxes and incentives that will spawn all kinds of clean power.

Bush won't lead a Green New Deal, but his successor must if America is going to maintain its leadership and living standard. Unfortunately, today's presidential hopefuls are largely full of hot air on the climate-energy issue. Not one of them is proposing anything hard, like a carbon or gasoline tax, and if you think we can deal with these huge problems without asking the American people to do anything hard, you're a fool or a fraud.

Being serious starts with reframing the whole issue - helping Americans understand, as the Carnegie Fellow David Rothkopf puts it, "that we're not post-Cold War' anymore - we're pre-something totally new." I'd say we're in the "pre-climate war era."

Unless we create a more carbon-free world, we will not preserve the free world. Intensifying climate change, energy wars and petro-authoritarianism will curtail our life choices and our children's opportunities every bit as much as Communism once did for half the planet.

Equally important, presidential candidates need to help Americans understand that green is not about cutting back. It's about creating a new cornucopia of abundance for the next generation by inventing a whole new industry. It's about getting our best brains out of hedge funds and into innovations that will not only give us the clean-power industrial assets to preserve our American dream but also give us the technologies that billions of others need to realize their own dreams without destroying the planet.

It's about making America safer by breaking our addiction to a fuel that is powering regimes deeply hostile to our values. And, finally, it's about making America the global environmental leader, instead of laggard, which as Schwarzenegger argues would "create a very powerful side product." Those who dislike America because of Iraq, he explained, would at least be able to say, "Well, I don't like them for the war, but I do like them because they show such unbelievable leadership - not just with their blue jeans and hamburgers but with the environment. People will love us for that. That's not existing right now."

In sum, as John Hennessy, the president of Stanford, taught me: confronting this climate-energy issue is the epitome of what John Gardner, the founder of Common Cause, once described as "a series of great opportunities disguised as insoluble problems."

Am I optimistic? I want to be. But I am also old-fashioned. I don't believe the world will effectively address the climate-energy challenge without America, its president, its government, its industry, its markets and its people all

leading the parade. Green has to become part of America's DNA. We're getting there. Green has hit Main Street - it's now more than a hobby - but it's still less than a new way of life.

Why? Because big transformations - <u>women</u>'s suffrage, for instance - usually happen when a lot of aggrieved people take to the streets, the politicians react and laws get changed. But the climate-energy debate is more muted and slow-moving. Why? Because the people who will be most harmed by the climate-energy crisis haven't been born yet.

"This issue doesn't pit haves versus have-nots," notes the Johns Hopkins foreign policy expert Michael Mandelbaum, "but the present versus the future - today's generation versus its kids and unborn grandchildren."

Once the Geo-Green interest group comes of age, especially if it is after another 9/11 or Katrina, Mandelbaum said, "it will be the biggest interest group in history - but by then it could be too late."

An unusual situation like this calls for the ethic of stewardship. Stewardship is what parents do for their kids: think about the long term, so they can have a better future. It is much easier to get families to do that than whole societies, but that is our challenge.

In many ways, our parents rose to such a challenge in the Second World War - when an entire generation mobilized to preserve our way of life. That is why they were called the Greatest Generation.

Our kids will only call us the Greatest Generation if we rise to our challenge and become the Greenest Generation.

Thomas Friedman is a columnist for the New York Times specializing in foreign affairs

Graphic

Photo: Reuters; People use computers at an Internet cafe in Suining, Sichuan province, China. The Internet revolution has helped level the playing field for people all over the world.;

Colour Photo: Eric Gay, The Associated Press/File; <u>Women</u> walk down a street near Wall Street shortly after the collapse of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

Colour Photo: Justin Lane, New York Times/File; Milvertha Hendricks, 84, waits in the rain with other flood victims outside the convention centre in New Orleans in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina in 2005.;

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Byline: By JAMES TRAUB

James Traub, a contributing writer, is working on a book about democracy promotion.

Body

Bernard Kouchner, the foreign minister of France, has urged his country's ambassadors to engage in 'diplomacy in motion.' Kouchner, who established the organization Medecins Sans Frontieres 37 years ago; has had four or five careers since then; has often polled as the most popular politician in France; has written a dozen or so books; and once contemplated running for president of France, is himself the chief practitioner of this aerobic statecraft. So it was that at 6 a.m. on New Year's Day, he and a few staff members gathered in the courtyard of the Quai d'Orsay, the headquarters of the foreign ministry, to drive to the airport for an overnight trip to Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. The goal, Kouchner explained, was to "bear witness to the solidarity" of the French people with the family of the former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, murdered the week before, and with democratic forces in Pakistan.

France has no historical relationship with Pakistan. What's more, no other Western foreign minister was going. In fact, a few days earlier, Jean-David Levitte, foreign-affairs counselor to France's president, Nicolas Sarkozy, told me how silly it was to expect Sarkozy to go to Pakistan for Bhutto's funeral, as some critics were demanding. Pakistan was convulsed with violence, and its president, Pervez Musharraf, had "other things to do than to greet political leaders from all over the world to say, 'Oh, we are in deep sorrow, all of us.' "But the 68-year-old Kouchner, who appears to have known everyone important, felt a personal bond with Bhutto, whom he first met in the late 1980s. And he convinced Sarkozy, himself very much a president in motion, that France needed to be more deeply engaged in a country crucial to the war on terror. And it would be: three weeks later, Musharraf would pay his first state visit to France.

Kouchner is a devotee of crisis, drama, danger -- a resistant eager for an evil worth resisting. Half a century ago, as a cadre in the Communist student league, he threw pots of red ink at the United States Embassy in Paris to protest American imperialism. But he was too fond of girls and cafes to submit to revolutionary discipline. And his medical training disposed him to think more about individual people than about abstractions. Over time, like a number of European intellectuals, Kouchner migrated from the radical left to the antitotalitarian center. In 2003, he argued for a humanitarian intervention to oust Saddam Hussein. He is, by French standards, stoutly pro-American. On foreign policy, with only a few exceptions, he shares the views of the conservative Sarkozy. In less than a year, the two have torn France loose from its Gaullist moorings. They have, however, run into opposition at home; the French seem to be suffering from a serious case of motion sickness.

It is easy to make fun of French foreign policy, but not so easy to think what you would do if you were France. Europe's other traditional great power, England, threw in its lot with its former colony across the pond. Germany, a 20th-century power, is largely shaped by "never again." What, then, of France? After World War II, which precipitated the dissolution of its vast colonial empire -- the last vestige of global power -- France under Charles de Gaulle sought a new identity for itself by standing at a remove from the United States and the Atlantic alliance. De Gaulle removed France from NATO's integrated command in 1966. (He suggested a ruling "Directorate" to consist of France, the U.K. and the U.S., but the Americans were not amused.) Since that time, French presidents of all parties have hewed to what Hubert Vedrine, a former Socialist foreign minister, calls "the Gaullo-Mitterrandian-Chiracian consensus." Vedrine defines this consensus as "autonomy of decision" and "autonomy of thought." France drew its own political map. The map was not so very different from the Italian or the German one, but the important thing was that it was theirs. The foreign policy of France, like its cuisine, should be unmistakably, ineffably ... French.

However, the increasing integration of Europe and the globalization of so many formerly domestic issues have made specially flavored foreign policies increasingly quaint. And then President Bush's my-way-or-the-highway approach reduced French policy in the last years of President Jacques Chirac to "the highway." Chirac flatly refused to accept war in Iraq, hectored America's allies in "new Europe" and shrugged at the prospect of an Iranian bomb. This began to feel, to the French themselves, less like a sign of independence than of rigor mortis. Between Chirac's growing passivity and the haplessness of Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, French policy diminished to a series of gestures. "From 2005 to 2007, there was no French foreign policy," says Sophie Meunier, a scholar of international relations at Princeton. "France was completely sidelined." By the time Sarkozy became president in the spring of 2007, you couldn't see the autonomy of thought in Gaullism without a microscope.

During the campaign, Sarkozy sounded less like de Gaulle than like George Bush and Tony Blair, promising to "take the side of the oppressed" against "tyrannies and dictatorships" and scorning "the cultural relativism which holds that some people are not made for democracy." Such was his instinctive contempt for the Gaullist consensus that he told a biographer he would like to raze the Quai d'Orsay. His views and temperament were oddly Kouchnerian. Christine Ockrent, Kouchner's wife and one of France's most admired journalists, told me, "The reason they get along so well, which is kind of surprising, is that they prefer action to theory." They share a metabolic intolerance for the great French indoor sport of abstract speculation.

I first met Kouchner in September in New York, where he and Sarkozy had come for the meeting of the United NationsGeneral Assembly. The foreign minister had already delighted Washington, and infuriated his former Socialist colleagues -- he was expelled from the party on joining Sarkozy's government -- by paying a very public to Iraq and by incautiously observing that Iran could bring a war on itself should it fail to comply with international inspections of its nuclear program. (Sarkozy slapped him down for that indiscretion.) We met at the apartment of Jean-Maurice Ripert, France's ambassador to the U.N. and a member of the inner circle of in from jogging and was still wearing a mousy gray T-shirt, jeans and Kouchner pals. Kouchner had just come He had slung himself sideways across an armchair, and as aides came in and out, he teased them, and they teased him back. They addressed one another by the familiar tu -- an almost unheard-of liberty in the of the French state. I later learned that Kouchner asks everyone in his cabinet uppermost reaches him, though a veteran of the Quai told me that he insisted on addressing his boss as "Ministre," not "Bernard."

Kouchner had just come from Washington. "There is a change in the relationship," he said. "It's not the return of France to the U.S., but the return of confidence between France and the U.S." Important disagreements remained, but he had told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, "I will never betray you" -- a blunt reference to January 2003, when Dominique de Villepin, then foreign minister, shocked Rice's predecessor, Colin Powell, by abruptly announcing that France would never support an invasion of Iraq. Kouchner insisted his widely covered visit to Iraq in August was not done "to support the U.S.," but rather "because the international community together must act in Iraq." Like Sarkozy, Kouchner speaks of returning France to the heart of Europe and Europe to the heart of the Western alliance; but on Iraq he hasn't made much headway among his fellow foreign ministers, or even his own colleagues. "They believe that I am an unguided missile," he fumed. "They believe that I'm a foolish guy. 'Why is this stupid Kouchner going to Iraq? We don't care about Iraq!' They are stupid. They don't know that the core of the

danger is there, in between Iraq and Iran, in between Lebanon and Syria. This is the common enemy, not only for Americans but for all democracies. And the common enemy is extremism."

But there was no mistaking the message to the White House: Sarkozy had not only told the French how much he loved American culture; he had infuriated the anti-Americans by taking his summer vacation in New England, and then, worse still, downing hot dogs with George Bush in Kennebunkport. He took a hard line on Iran and terrorism. And he had chosen Kouchner, who had earned contempt and even hatred at home for aiding and abetting the American cause, and for denouncing protestors who, to him, seemed to prefer Saddam Hussein to George Bush.

Kouchner cut an exotic swath through New York and Washington over the course of the following week. Though his revolutionary politics have long since evaporated, Kouchner retains from the early '60s a Dada sense of the ludicrousness of the postures of authority. At the Council on Foreign Relations he delivered a speech that was rendered semi-incomprehensible by his wholly personal brand of English pronunciation. When the question-and-answer session began, the moderator, Felix Rohatyn, himself a former ambassador to France, politely asked Kouchner whom he was making faces at. Kouchner was, in fact, sticking out his tongue at Richard Holbrooke, the diplomat, who was whispering loudly to his companion. Several days later, at a U.N. press conference, the correspondent for Al Jazeera taxed Kouchner with having said that France was preparing for war in Iran. "Who said France is going to war?" Kouchner cried, peering into the crowd. "You." He began advancing toward the reporter, waving his arms (and smiling) and saying, "With your big mustache and your big eyes, I'm not threatened by you." It was hard to say if the French foreign minister was amusing himself or was unhinged.

For Kouchner, the spontaneous gesture and the tutoyer are not only jokes at the expense of French formalism; they are part of his method. "His meetings are what we in France call 'happenings,' " an aide said to me. "It's very '68. Every idea, no matter how weird it could be, is flying across the room. It's a bit longer, but it's creative -- more ideas are blossoming." A few days after taking office last May, Kouchner summoned his aides to the Quai on a Saturday to talk about Darfur. They were shocked to find a room packed with human rights activists, whom Kouchner invited as well. A happening ensued. Kouchner suggested that the West establish "humanitarian corridors," as it had in Bosnia, to take supplies to refugees inside Sudan -- an idea "beautiful in according to John Prendergast, an Africa its grandeur but entirely impractical," expert who is a chairman of Enough, which campaigns against genocide. After stubbornly defending his inspiration over the next month or so, Kouchner eventually admitted he was wrong and embraced a plan proposed by the Chirac government to post a European-led peacekeeping force on the Chadian side of the border, in order to protect refugee camps and prevent the violence from spreading farther. He then tirelessly promoted his new idea with aid groups and the European Union.

And now, in New York, Sarkozy, who was leading a Security Council session on Africa, was about to largely close the deal on the peacekeeping force. The French president was thus able to show that he meant what he said about taking human rights seriously, and about charting a new direction. In years past, Prendergast observes, for all their magnificent rhetoric, the French had sided with the spoilers on Sudan more often than with the activists. Now, he says, "I'm encouraged across the board with the effort they've made."

The vast and imposing headquarters of the French foreign ministry was built by the Emperor Napoleon III in the middle of the 19th century. Hussars in white cutaways silently patrol the hallways, opening doors with a little bow and pouring pink Champagne into crystal glasses at official functions. The foreign minister is quartered in a splendid salon that looks out over the lawn of an inner courtyard. The walls are lined with a series of 18th-century Gobelin tapestries depicting Roman gods, and six crystal chandeliers hang from the foggy heights of the ceiling. It is a setting designed to evoke the majesty, the antiquity and the elegance of French diplomacy.

Bernard Kouchner is not quite so unsuited to this awe-inspiring milieu as might first appear. He is a man of no little elegance himself, a fastidious and even dandyish dresser who knows how to wear his scarf just so, or even his cape. When the steward on the flight back from Islamabad brought the wine for dinner, Kouchner said: "What? No Batailley?" He had run through the stock of his favorite wine and had to make do with a lesser chateau. Kouchner is, in demographic terms, what the French call gauche caviar -- an upper-bourgeois lefty. He was raised in Paris, the son of a doctor. In the early '60s, Kouchner and his pals would crank out polemics for

Clarte, the young Communists' house organ, and then repair for a night of genteel riot at Balzar, the restaurant frequented by Sartre and his circle. There was a more proletarian hangout nearby, but Kouchner preferred the conversation and the <u>women</u> -- "superbes" -- at Balzar.

Still, Kouchner was no fop. His grandfather was a Jewish emigre who came to France in 1908. Kouchner's father and uncles, he has proudly said, were a tough bunch. He inherited their pugnacity, as well as a dockworker's chin and a boxer's flattened features. Born in 1939, Kouchner also inherited a view of history as tragedy. Kouchner's father's parents perished at Auschwitz. The war, and the Holocaust, shaped him deeply. Kouchner has said, in a book-length conversation with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, another former hero of the left, "I've long wondered how, under Nazism, so many Jews allowed themselves to be led away, though some of them knew even if they could not bring themselves to believe it -- that they were going to their death." Children of Kouchner's generation, and especially Jewish children, grew up in a world whose twin poles were collaboration and resistance. Kouchner always knew what he wanted to be when he grew up -- a resistant.

Life afforded Kouchner a series of glamorous and romantic settings for the drama of resistance. He stood shoulder to shoulder with the other young Communists protesting the war in Algeria and singing about the liberation of the workingman. He made a name for himself as an upstart journalist. "I am a Communist and Rastignac," the 23-year-old Kouchner wrote with supreme provocation, referring to Balzac's arriviste hero. Eugene de Rastignac, desperate to thrive in the Paris beau monde. Kouchner was already a fixture in the Latin Quarter, amusing himself at the expense of the humorless left. He and his friends, anti-Stalinists all, took on the party leadership and were duly expelled from the youth league. But Kouchner was ambitious and careful to make friends as well as enemies. In 1964 he and the Clarte crowd went to Cuba; Kouchner spent the night fishing and drinking with Fidel Castro (and, he says, urging Castro to legitimize his position with a democratic election). And somehow, on the side, he was training to be a doctor.

Kouchner's life took a decisive turn in 1968 when he answered a call from the Red Cross for doctors to go to Biafra, a breakaway province of Nigeria fighting a savage war of independence. Here was horrific suffering, mortal peril, desperate need; Kouchner, a fearless figure besotted with heroism and danger, had found his vocation. But the Red Cross believed in treatment, not resistance; Kouchner and his friends were not permitted to speak publicly about what they viewed as state-sponsored genocide -- a re-enactment of passivity before the Holocaust. Back in Paris, Kouchner circulated a statement condemning Nigeria. Sartre and de Beauvoir and the others signed. And he and his fellow doctors, now a brotherhood sealed in blood, formed an organization to take emergency care to places racked by violence or natural disasters. In 1971, the group was christened Medecins Sans Frontieres -- Doctors Without Borders. The name itself was a provocation: They would not be deterred by borders, or by the will of states, or by the Red Cross code of silence. M.S.F. was something genuinely new and enormously glamorous -- a fearless band of radical humanitarians. In his book "Power and the Idealists," Paul Berman describes the group as "a sort of medical wing to the worldwide guerrilla movement."

But the medical commitment to treatment could not be reconciled for long with revolutionary ideology, for so many of the victims were suffering at the hands of left-wing regimes. Kouchner, though raised in the bosom of Communism and afterward a dedicated socialist, insisted that the reality of suffering must supersede ideology. In 1979, he chartered a ship to rescue thousands of people who had set off in leaky boats in the South China Sea to flee the Communist government in Vietnam. The project was denounced by much of the left, for whom human misery was no match for ideological clarity. A leading figure inside M.S.F. even wrote a screed against "the boat for St. Germain des Pres" -- the Paris neighborhood that was headquarters for the gauche caviar. But Kouchner, by then a dazzling figure in French public life, pulled the threads of all his networks and got a call to action signed by Sartre, Michel Foucault, Eugene Ionesco, Yves Montand, Simone Signoret and Brigitte Bardot. Sartre and Kouchner were photographed with Raymond Aron, France's leading conservative intellectual. The doctrine of "humanitarian action" trumped ideology -- an astonishing moment in European intellectual circles. "It was the end of the cold war in our heads," says the philosopher Andre Glucksmann, a great friend of Kouchner.

It was also the end of Kouchner's career with M.S.F. In the midst of a tumultuous meeting in May 1979, Kouchner and his pals walked out rather than stage an ugly fight for control. Almost 30 years later, the issue is still so clouded

by personal bitterness and ideological rivalry that it's impossible to say for sure what happened. Glucksmann says that Kouchner was ousted by rightists. Patrick Aeberhard, an original M.S.F. doctor, ascribes the split chiefly to jealousy of Kouchner and disgust with his "very strong ego." On the other hand, Rony Brauman, later the head of the organization, says that Kouchner wanted to keep M.S.F. as a kind of pickup group of friends while others wanted it to mature into a more professional body. And the founder, he said, could not be reasoned with. "Kouchner is a kind of emotional Stalinist," Brauman says. "You either support him or you're against him. To disagree is to attack him. And when you attack him, you become jealous, mediocre, a bureaucrat."

One evening in Paris, I told Kouchner about my conversation with his rival. Our bantering stopped cold. "Brauman is an insignificant figure!" Kouchner snapped. You had to conclude that some wounds may never heal.

After the 1979 split, Kouchner and his loyalists went on to create their own organization, Medecins du Monde. Owing, perhaps, to the founder's allergy to bureaucracy, the organization never achieved anything like the scope of Medecins Sans Frontieres, which would later win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Late one morning last October, I was in Paris waiting for Kouchner to return from a European Union meeting in Lisbon when his spokesman called to say that the minister had decided instead to fly to Beirut, with his Spanish and Italian counterparts, to try to advance the stalled process of choosing a new Lebanese president. If I left the next morning for Lisbon, I could fly with Kouchner to Lebanon. (This was slightly more advance warning than I later got for Islamabad.) The next afternoon I boarded the small government jet Kouchner had requisitioned. He and his aides had been up until 2 the night before hammering out the last details of the new, simplified European Union treaty that Sarkozy had made a chief objective. They were in a triumphant mood.

Kouchner claims to know pretty much everything and everyone by heart. One of Rony Brauman's jokes is, "The guy must be four or five hundred years old; he's spent 30 years in every critical situation worldwide." But in Lebanon, at least, it was true. He had been going there since 1975, when he, Aeberhard and others established a hospital in Nabaa, a poor Shiite neighborhood, in the midst of the civil war. He knew all the Shiite leaders and often their fathers and brothers; and the Sunnis and Christians as well. "We embrace each other, we tutoie each other, we are angry at each other, we hold hands, we joke, we say 'shut up' to each other," Kouchner explained to me on the plane. Lebanon's Christian army had "designated me for death," as he liked to remind the Christian warlords. These rivals, who were barely talking to one another, would speak to him without posturing, he said. Kouchner felt that he could make a difference. Then again, Kouchner almost always feels that he can make a difference.

We arrived at night and drove straight to a charming seaside restaurant, where a big dinner had been arranged with "civil society" -- that is, Kouchner's friends. The minister sat across from the brother of Nabih Berri, who is the speaker of Lebanon's Parliament and leader of the Shiite group Amal, and next to an extremely beautiful young French civil-society something, and they toasted one another with arrack. A Shiite wedding was being held in a banquet hall nearby, and Kouchner led us over there. The bride and her bridesmaids, in fabulous evening gowns and ample cleavage, welcomed the minister and had him join them in a dance, which in Kouchner's case involved jumping up and down and shouting enthusiastically. Lebanon seemed like a wonderful country.

The next day, Kouchner visited the cemetery in which the latest assassinated Lebanese legislator had been buried and then flew by helicopter to the arid southern region where 1,600 French troops were serving with a U.N. peacekeeping force. He reminded them that France, which had brought this fragmented country into being, had a special responsibility for its fate, and also that the Shiites, now seen in the West as the chief obstacle to peace owing to the role of <u>Hezbollah</u>, had in fact been scorned and neglected for decades and had legitimate grievances that would have to be addressed. Kouchner then returned to Beirut with the Spanish and Italian ministers for negotiating sessions with each of the country's factions. That night the three held a press conference at which Kouchner spoke hopefully and passionately of a new spirit of cooperation between the Christian and Shiite factions. At least, he said, they had stopped insulting each other. By midnight, we were flying back to Paris.

What was accomplished? A Kouchner aide told me that Nabih Berri was now far more open to a "consensus" candidate to replace the departing president than he was before. The Christians -- from whose ranks, according to

Lebanese law, the president would be chosen -- had also agreed to select someone acceptable to the Shiite opposition. On the flight home, at 2:30 in the morning, Kouchner told me that he had reminded them all that the alternative to compromise was yet another spiral of violence that he, and they, knew so well. But he also assured them that if they could elect a president before the Annapolis conference on Middle East peace in late November, "it would change everything; it will make the Middle East move toward a dimension, not of conflict or violence but, if I daresay, of democracy and constitutionalism."

Here was another vision beautiful in its grandeur. In the event, of course, the factions didn't compromise, and Annapolis produced no breakthroughs. Kouchner, the minister without borders, kept going back to Beirut, coaxing and hand holding and telling his friends to shut up. The effort felt Sisyphean. Professionals in the Quai d'Orsay worried that their boss was so in love with crisis that he was ignoring subjects that bored him, like reintegration into NATO. Worse still, in early November, Sarkozy sent Jean-David Levitte and his own chief adviser, Claude Gueant, to Damascus to ask the Syrian president, Bashar Assad, to use his considerable influence with the Lebanese opposition to break the stalemate. Until that moment, the French had refused to deal with the Syrian regime, which they blamed for the murder of Rafik Hariri, Lebanon's former prime minister, and other Lebanese leaders. Kouchner, who viewed the Syrians as ruthless killers, was incensed and humiliated. His Lebanese interlocutors felt betrayed. And the bid failed utterly, just as Kouchner predicted. It was a fiasco for French diplomacy, confirmed when Sarkozy announced in December that he was breaking off talks with Damascus.

When I spoke to Kouchner later and asked if the failure in Lebanon showed the limits of his brand of intimate diplomacy, he said, "Sorry, no, on the contrary, the problem is to not play the game my people have been playing in Damascus." The problem, he said, was "Elysee" -- the president's office. Not Levitte -- "he was in agreement with me." I told him that I had just had spoken with Levitte, who said that Sarkozy authorized the trip only after Saad Hariri, Rafik's son and the leader of the so-called March 14 majority coalition, agreed that he should do so.

"This is a loyal guy," Kouchner shot back, referring to Levitte. "He knew that I was right." Kouchner was implying that the problem in fact lay with Gueant, who was now emerging as an unexpected rival. "It's always the same game with them. It's a problem of experience. Those who know, know."

One evening in 1985, Kouchner was having dinner with an old friend, Mario Bettati, a professor of law, and complaining that international law, by treating borders as inviolable, erected frustrating and morally insupportable barriers to his work. How, he asked, can you change international law in order to establish the right to cross borders to help the suffering, whether the state in question wants it or not? Bettati explained that Kouchner would have to enlist the French government -- President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Chirac. So, Kouchner responded, "Let's write to them." If you're Bernard Kouchner, this leads to the happening of all happenings. For three days in January 1987, the French universe gathered in the ballroom of the Meridien in Paris to discuss "Humanitarian Rights and Principles." All the intellectuals were there, from left and right, and Yves Montand and Constantin Costa-Gavras -- and, incredibly, Mitterrand and Chirac, a thoroughly pragmatic pair of politicians who recognized a movement they needed to get in front of. Kouchner spent the previous months explaining that, as Bettati says, "it was scandalous to let people die because they were 200 meters beyond the border and we are not allowed to go over the border to save them." Few at the Hotel Meridien were inclined to disagree. Bettati, Kouchner's instruction, drew up a statement laying out a right of "humanitarian" access," read it out to the crowd and then passed it to Chirac, who vowed to take the text to the United Nations.

The U.N. is a club of states, and its charter was always understood to protect states from interference in their domestic affairs. Kouchner, however, was only proposing that doctors and aid workers be granted the right to deliver emergency aid. After a year's worth of persuasion, the General Assembly recognized this limited right in December 1988. And in 1991, when Kouchner and others dramatized the plight of Iraqi Kurds fleeing attack by Saddam Hussein, the Security Council authorized a massive humanitarian effort to cross into Iraqi territory to alleviate Kurdish suffering. Humanitarian access proved to be the thin edge of the wedge. Years later, with the Balkans and Rwanda in mind, Kofi Annan, the secretary general of the U.N., began talking about a right of humanitarian intervention in the case of atrocities. In 2005, the General Assembly adopted what came to be known as "the responsibility to protect."

This doctrine of intervention -- ingerence in French -- capped decades of thinking and acting that had begun with the team of young doctors in Biafra, though ultimately it drew on a far wider range of actors. This "grand-scale alternative view of world politics," as Paul Berman calls it, held out the possibility that Western power, the bane of "could do a world of good for the most oppressed of the oppressed." For Kouchner, ingerence was the answer to the terrible question raised by the Holocaust. When pressed about the real value of the doctrine he had fathered, he invariably said: It has made Auschwitz less likely. At the same time, Kouchner knows all too well that no one, including the French, lifted a finger to stop the genocide in Rwanda and that the janjaweed continue a free hand in Darfur. "Of course," he said to me one evening in to have his melodramatic cadences, "it's always too late, it's always too late. These are the childhood sins of the right of ingerence. Soon, one day, there will be a world government; we're not there yet, maybe in two centuries there will be a world government that these things be done." Yes, history is tragic; but Kouchner has optimism in the glands. His wife, Christine Ockrent, cites an expression attributed to the Italian political thinker Antonio Gramsci: pessimism of the mind, optimism of the will.

Kouchner served in Mitterrand's government from 1988 to 1992 as minister for humanitarian action, a position he treated essentially as Medecins Sans Frontieres with a government seal. Name a disaster area -- Lebanon, Iran, Liberia, Kurdistan, Somalia, Bosnia -- and he was there, surrounded by a nimbus of reporters. In his single greatest coup, in June 1992, Kouchner persuaded Mitterrand to board a secret flight to Sarajevo in order to force the Serbs then besieging the country to open up the airport to humanitarian flights. The Serbs had parked on the runway, and the tiny U.N. force was helpless to move them off. "It was seen as a totally hopeless endeavor," recalls Fabrizio Hochschild, one of the few civilian U.N. officials in the city at the time. Then a French officer announced that Mitterrand would be landing on the runway that night. Panic, shouting, desperate phone calls to Paris. A helicopter lands -- it's Kouchner! And reporters from Paris Match and Agence France-Presse. The next helicopter holds le president. Kouchner introduces him to all the players. Mitterrand demands an airlift to save the besieged city. The news flashes around the world. The Serb tanks rumble off the runway, and a few dozen U.N. troops secure the airport. Kouchner becomes a hero and Mitterrand's pet. course it was a high-profile, media-oriented event," Hochschild says. "But it was the only thing that worked."

But did it work? The U.N. stumbled backward into Bosnia, dispatching a force to protect the airlift, which stood by as the Serbs continued to pound Sarajevo and other major towns, which led to the disastrous "safe havens" policy and the massacre at Srebrenica and, finally, terribly late, a NATO bombing campaign. Mitterrand proved wholly unwilling to stand up to the Serbs, with whom he sympathized. Should we not, therefore, look beyond this heroic intervention to the sickening quandary that succeeded it? David Rieff (a contributing writer to this magazine) argues as much in his book "A Bed for the Night," an all-out attack on humanitarianism as a guide to political action. The terrible consequences, it's true, were unforeseeable at the time, and the Bosnians were surely better off with the airlift than they would have been without it. Nevertheless, the episode serves as a reminder that the intensely politicized humanitarianism that Kouchner virtually invented does not, in fact, have the same moral status as resistance to fascism. It involves hard choices; and sometimes the choices may be wrong.

Kouchner, as a doctor, wanted to alleviate suffering; but, as a politician, he also wanted his actions to be exemplary. His motto was "Concept and action, here and there." And so in late 1992, as Somalia was engulfed in clan violence, which in turn resulted in mass starvation, Kouchner and Jean-Maurice Ripert, then his chief of staff, mounted a campaign among French schoolchildren to collect rice for the Somalis and raise awareness of the mass suffering. They collected 15,000 tons of rice, filled a cargo ship and sent it off to Mogadishu. When the rice finally arrived, Kouchner obliged the news photographers by carrying a sack of rice up the beach -- once, twice, three times, until the shot was just right. The press treated the incident as indecent showboating; the sac de riz became Kouchner's albatross. And yet it's hard to see the difference between Kouchner at his worst and at his best. He and his circle are still bitter about the incident. "Where were you when we were bringing rice to Somalia?" Ripert asks of his critics. "What were you doing? Nothing? Then shut up."

There was a very Kouchnerian aftermath. "We tried to get some international troops," recalls Ripert, "and we could not convince anyone. One night we were drinking whiskey in a bar in St. Germain des Pres, and Kouchner said, 'That's enough; I have to call the president.' It was one of those French cafes where you had the phone near the toilet. He tried to reach the President from this phone, and he could not. So he reached Vedrine, who at the time

was chief of staff, and he was noncommittal. And the next morning he called up the State Department and said, 'The French don't want to do this, so you have to go in.' "Ripert gives Kouchner credit for provoking President George H. W. Bush to send American troops to Somalia, which constitutes something of a revisionist view of history.

Kouchner, by then very much a politician, spent the two years after 1992 as minister of health, then in 1994 he was elected to the European Parliament. He again served as France's minister of health from 1997 to 1999, when Kofi Annan made him special representative for Kosovo, which NATO troops entered only weeks before. For the one and only time in his life, Kouchner got to be head of a country, albeit one that didn't exist, with rampant crime and violence, no social services and a multinational army that wasn't supposed to fight. Kouchner, as always, managed to make the whole enterprise feel exhilarating. He surrounded himself with dashing French buddies and a few reformed '68ers, and the besieged little group drank bad Macedonian wine until late in the night. Less debonair people took a decidedly negative view of Kouchner's tenure. An American consultant who worked with Kouchner found him "wildly disorganized" and unequal to the demands of running even a rump state. A French journalist then quartered in Pristina says, "Once the international media went away, he became bored by Kosovo." But others who expected to find a preening media star say they were struck by Kouchner's seriousness of purpose.

Kouchner's strongest defender may be Jock Covey, a U.N. official who was his deputy, responsible for making Kosovo actually function. Working with Kouchner, Covey says, was thrilling. At one point a Serb leader enraged by continual attacks from the Albanian majority was threatening to wreck the agreements that preserved a tenuous peace between them. "The more threatening he got," Covey recalls, "the more Kouchner leaned forward." Finally Kouchner leaned all the way across the table and shouted: "Who do you think you are, threatening us? Pretending to be radical? I am radical! I was on the barricades before you were born. And I have never left the barricades!" The Serb was unnerved and backed down. It was true, Covey said, that Kouchner raced across town every time he heard a fire engine. But he had a doctor's gift for comforting the afflicted and a politician's gift for getting people who hated each other to talk. Covey says he came to recognize that "simply being present is important in itself. People saw him, as they didn't see his successors." When I visited Kosovo in 2004, the only U.N. representative whom the Albanians seemed to remember fondly, and viewed as their advocate, was Kouchner.

After Kosovo, Kouchner hoped for another big U.N. job, and he set his cap for the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. But the Chirac government gave him tepid support. Seemingly unembarrassable, he then rejoined the government as minister of health, a job he had already held, in one form or another, twice before. He spent a year at Harvard, and then returned to his humanitarian work. In 2005, he began preparing a run for president. He wrote a book of pensees with the puckish title "Two or Three Things I Know About Us" and began holding town-hall meetings across France with the hope of rousing an independent movement. But he had no money and no organization; even Christine Ockrent admits that political campaigning is not her husband's strong suit. Kouchner wound up halfheartedly supporting Segolene Royal, who was seeking nomination as the Socialist candidate, and threw himself into a campaign to become the head of the World Health Organization. This, too, failed. Kouchner was at sixes and sevens. Then President Sarkozy called.

When Kouchner first learned that Benazir Bhutto had been assassinated, he wanted to rush to Pakistan right away. But Sarkozy had scheduled a state visit to Egypt, and Kouchner had to stay put until the end of December. On the flight to Islamabad, he explained to me that France's commitment to the future of Afghanistan, which Sarkozy had underscored by promising to keep troops in the NATO peacekeeping force, gave it an important stake in Pakistan's stability and in the fate of democracy there. He conceded that Bhutto herself was highhanded and feudal and that she was widely considered corrupt. But she was beautiful and brave, believed, and carried the hopes for a better Pakistan. He wanted to fly to the family seat in Larkana and visit her grave site, although Musharraf might block him, as he had others. "I could be defeated," Kouchner said grandly, "but not the spirit of France." Since Paris has backed President Musharraf almost as unstintingly as Washington has, the spirit Kouchner was channeling may well have been his own.

Kouchner held a series of meetings the day after he arrived. At a breakfast with several political-party leaders, he gave the impression that France was plunged into mourning by Bhutto's death. "We were more than shocked by the assassination of Benazir Bhutto," he declared. "We were devastated." He suggested the parties publish a

joint statement in newspapers all over the world condemning the murder. But he also cut them off when they began declaiming about the peaceful message of the Koran and urged them not to blame the Americans for everything.

Kouchner then held an hourlong conversation with Musharraf that was described to me as amiable, expansive and not terribly productive. Musharraf insisted that it was too dangerous to go to Larkana; and that was that.

Kouchner had lunch with leaders of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party at the French Embassy. Their bitterness and rage, six days after their leader's death, were still fresh. They were convinced that Musharraf's government was linked to Bhutto's assassination and gave Kouchner a lengthy forensic analysis featuring the trajectory of brain matter. He tried to talk them down: "Would it be possible to believe that Musharraf betrayed Bush by organizing her death or not doing enough to protect her?" Yes, it would. "O.K.," Kouchner said, "but what am I supposed to do?" He promised to call Condoleezza Rice and David Miliband, his British counterpart, to press for an independent inquiry.

Kouchner was not about to leave Pakistan without honoring Bhutto's memory. He resolved to lay a wreath at the impromptu shrine at the site of her murder. The Pakistanis tried to block that too, but the French delegation went ahead with the plan, and they alerted news organizations in Islamabad. Kouchner drove to the site, shoved his way through a huge crowd of photographers and placed a wreath beneath a giant poster of the fallen leader. "In the name of the French Republic and the president of France and the European Union" -- Kouchner translated his own ringing phrases into English as he went -- "I pay respect to the remains of a fighter for democracy and freedom. . . . " Larkana would have been a more dramatic setting, but Kouchner had made his point, and made it in front of the national and global media: France, and the West, would not stand by while democracy was snuffed out in Pakistan. Or that was the idea, anyway.

Kouchner says he believes that he and Sarkozy have restored France's claim to political and moral leadership -not by the old Gaullist conjuring trick of "autonomy of decision" but by placing the core values of democracy and comfortable with, or at least accustomed to, human rights at the heart of policy. But the French are far more Gaullist realism; and, at least in the cafes and parlors of Paris, Kouchner is routinely tarred as a "neoconservative." This term, which has virtually replaced "fascist" as the epithet of choice on the left, more or less means "one who wishes to use the instruments of state to promote values," though of course, post-2003, it whiff of "warmonger" and "American lackey." Kouchner did, in fact, envision a humanitarian intervention in Iraq, blessed by the U.N., as the supreme achievement of the doctrine of ingerence. But he is far more critical of the Bush administration than are friends of his like Andre Glucksmann. He speaks of postwar Iraq as an unmitigated and wholly avoidable catastrophe, and he is quite open about preferring his friend Condi Vice President Dick Cheney, who he says "is responsible for a lot of mistakes." He is more careful about George Bush, whom he seems to view as an honest, if befuddled, figure.

Kouchner is also damned as a hypocrite and a dupe. Sarkozy has been far more dry-eyed on human rights than his stirring campaign rhetoric implied. In recent months, he has received Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi and Hugo Chavez at the Elysee and congratulated Vladimir Putin on his deeply undemocratic victory in legislative elections. The writer and philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, a regular in the Kouchner circuit who has nevertheless preserved his ties to the left, has taken to lambasting Kouchner and Sarkozy in the press. Even Glucksmann, who voted for Sarkozy and viewed him as a warrior for human rights, said publicly that he could not fathom the courtship of Putin.

I asked Kouchner if he felt discomfort or anxiety over Sarkozy's dalliance with autocrats. "Discomfort, yes," he said. "Anxiety, no." When Kouchner went to Russia, he talked to dissidents and civil-society groups and publicly criticized Putin, and so had Sarkozy -- a sharp break from the Chirac era. But there was a reality principle that the human rights community wouldn't recognize. "They have to protest; that is their role," Kouchner said. "That was my job during 35 years. Now I'm in charge of some particular job. We have to say, 'Sorry, yes, yes, yes,' and to listen to them. This is not the same thing as the president of France! He has to shake Putin's hand. Of course! Otherwise, you send the Charles de Gaulle" -- France's only battleship -- "or what? Ridiculous!"

Kouchner says he doesn't read articles critical of him, but he obviously absorbs their gist quite thoroughly. He was disgusted with Levy, and he was disgusted with the Socialists who treated Sarkozy's invitation to Qaddafi as an affront to human dignity. Sarkozy's intercession with Qaddafi, after all, led to the release of Bulgarian nurses who had been sentenced to death. And the Libyan leader was trying to play a positive role in the Middle East.

For Kouchner, all this is part of the same battle he's been waging with the left since he started picking up boat people in Vietnam: "Are they concerned about victims? No, they are not. They were not. The first slogan before the creation of M.S.F. was 'There are no good and bad victims.' For them, bad victims exist." Abstractions mattered more than people. It was, in other words, something Kouchner -- and not only Kouchner, perhaps -- disliked about the French.

The issue that the French find most entertaining to debate about Kouchner is: Does he matter? One line of argument runs that while Kouchner gets to do the hot spots -- Darfur, Lebanon, Kosovo -- Sarkozy turns to Levitte when it comes to great-power diplomacy. And the Syrian misadventure implies that Kouchner can't even exercise control over the hot spots. Pierre Haski, director of Rue89, a left-leaning French foreign-affairs Web site, calls Kouchner "the weakest minister of foreign affairs in memory, except for Douste-Blazy." Even some of Kouchner's own aides aren't yet sure how broad his remit will be. A senior figure said he told Kouchner that if he kept blurting out whatever was on his mind, "the other ministers aren't going to take you seriously." What's more, he said, Kouchner loves "crisis management" and is bored by details. He worried that Kouchner's inattention to more complicated issues would create a vacuum that other ministers would be only too happy to fill.

Our 13-hour flight from Islamabad reached Paris a little past 2 a.m. Kouchner offered to drop me off at my apartment. He went through a stack of papers in the back seat of his car; but he would almost always rather talk than read. The next day, he said, he would try to persuade Sarkozy, Rice and Miliband to back an independent inquest into Bhutto's death. "Condi is not too enthusiastic," Kouchner admitted; but he needed her to lean on Musharraf. I asked who would conduct the investigation. It couldn't be the U.N., since the assassination had no international dimension. Kouchner had decided to propose the European Union, even though the body had no institutional capacity for judicial inquiries, and Musharraf would likely throw a fit. This may have been another idea beautiful in its grandeur.

I asked Kouchner if he had accomplished what he hoped to accomplish in Islamabad. "Yes, but it's only the beginning," he said as we drove through the silent streets of Paris. "What matters is that we are back in Pakistan. And we are back in the Middle East and in the gulf and in Africa. And we are now back in the heart of Europe."

"What do you mean 'back'? Are you saying that the French had disappeared?"

"We were there; but we were not a factor."

"Because of Douste-Blazy?"

"No, no, it was Chirac. Chirac!" And now Kouchner told me that when he and Sarkozy met with Bush, Bush said, "Chirac promised me that in the end he would be with us on Iraq. And then he betrayed us." That was over; now there was trust. When Kouchner told Rice that Europe needed six more months to try to persuade Serbia to accept sovereignty for Kosovo, she agreed. And when he and his contact-group allies sought yet another delay, they got one. And so France was back, a force in the world.

Then Kouchner dropped me off, and the car drove him to his splendid apartment overlooking the Luxembourg Gardens.

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Correction

An article on Feb. 3 about Bernard Kouchner, the foreign minister of France, referred incorrectly to the Charles De Gaulle, a ship that Kouchner mentioned while speaking about France's relations with Russia. It is an aircraft carrier, not a battleship.

Correction-Date: February 17, 2008

Graphic

PHOTOS: Rehearsing for the Quai d'Orsay. From left: Yves Montand, left, Simone Signoret and Bernard Kouchner at the funeral of Pierre Goldman in France. 1979

Kouchner with Vietnamese refugees as they are transferred to a French hospital boat in the South China Sea, 1979

Kouchner with Medecins du Monde in Afghanistan, 1984

Kouchner in Afghanistan, 1984. Bernard Kouchner has always practiced the politics of showing up. From left: Visiting a canal-building project in southern Sudan, 1992

Kouchner in the southern Lebanese village of al-Tiri with French troops, 2007

President Nicolas Sarkozy, left, and Kouchner in New York, 2007

Kouchner in Pakistan at the site of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, 2008. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FINLAY MACKAY

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Byline: By Thomas L. Friedman

Thomas L. Friedman is a columnist for The New York Times specializing in foreign affairs.

Body

I.

One day Iraq, our post-9/11 trauma and the divisiveness of the Bush years will all be behind us -- and America will need, and want, to get its groove back. We will need to find a way to reknit America at home, reconnect America abroad and restore America to its natural place in the global order -- as the beacon of progress, hope and inspiration. I have an idea how. It's called "green."

In the world of ideas, to name something is to own it. If you can name an issue, you can own the issue. One thing that always struck me about the term "green" was the degree to which, for so many years, it was defined by its opponents -- by the people who wanted to disparage it. And they defined it as "liberal," "tree-hugging," "sissy," "girlie-man," "unpatriotic," "vaguely French."

Well, I want to rename "green." I want to rename it geostrategic, geoeconomic, capitalistic and patriotic. I want to do that because I think that living, working, designing, manufacturing and projecting America in a green way can be the basis of a new unifying political movement for the 21st century. A redefined, broader and more muscular green ideology is not meant to trump the traditional Republican and Democratic agendas but rather to bridge them when it comes to addressing the three major issues facing every American today: jobs, temperature and terrorism.

How do our kids compete in a flatter world? How do they thrive in a warmer world? How do they survive in a more dangerous world? Those are, in a nutshell, the big questions facing America at the dawn of the 21st century. But these problems are so large in scale that they can only be effectively addressed by an America with 50 green states -- not an America divided between red and blue states.

Because a new green ideology, properly defined, has the power to mobilize liberals and conservatives, evangelicals and atheists, big business and environmentalists around an agenda that can both pull us together and propel us forward. That's why I say: We don't just need the first black president. We need the first green president. We don't just need the first environmental president. We don't just need a president who has been toughened by years as a prisoner of war but a president who is tough enough to level with the American people about the profound economic, geopolitical and climate threats posed by our addiction to oil -- and to offer a real plan to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

After World War II, President Eisenhower responded to the threat of Communism and the "red menace" with massive spending on an interstate highway system to tie America together, in large part so that we could better move weapons in the event of a war with the Soviets. That highway system, though, helped to enshrine America's car culture (atrophying our railroads) and to lock in suburban sprawl and low-density housing, which all combined to get America addicted to cheap fossil fuels, particularly oil. Many in the world followed our model.

Today, we are paying the accumulated economic, geopolitical and climate prices for that kind of America. I am not proposing that we radically alter our lifestyles. We are who we are -- including a car culture. But if we want to continue to be who we are, enjoy the benefits and be able to pass them on to our children, we do need to fuel our future in a cleaner, greener way. Eisenhower rallied us with the red menace. The next president will have to rally us with a green patriotism. Hence my motto: "Green is the new red, white and blue."

The good news is that after traveling around America this past year, looking at how we use energy and the emerging alternatives, I can report that green really has gone Main Street -- thanks to the perfect storm created by 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and the Internet revolution. The first flattened the twin towers, the second flattened New Orleans and the third flattened the global economic playing field. The convergence of all three has turned many of our previous assumptions about "green" upside down in a very short period of time, making it much more compelling to many more Americans.

But here's the bad news: While green has hit Main Street -- more Americans than ever now identify themselves as greens, or what I call "Geo-Greens" to differentiate their more muscular and strategic green ideology -- green has not gone very far down Main Street. It certainly has not gone anywhere near the distance required to preserve our lifestyle. The dirty little secret is that we're fooling ourselves. We in America talk like we're already "the greenest generation," as the business writer Dan Pink once called it. But here's the really inconvenient truth: We have not even begun to be serious about the costs, the effort and the scale of change that will be required to shift our country, and eventually the world, to a largely emissions-free energy infrastructure over the next 50 years. II.

A few weeks after American forces invaded Afghanistan, I visited the Pakistani frontier town of Peshawar, a hotbed of Islamic radicalism. On the way, I stopped at the famous Darul Uloom Haqqania, the biggest madrasa, or Islamic school, in Pakistan, with 2,800 live-in students. The Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar attended this madrasa as a younger man. My Pakistani friend and I were allowed to observe a class of young boys who sat on the floor, practicing their rote learning of the Koran from texts perched on wooden holders. The air in the Koran class was so thick and stale it felt as if you could have cut it into blocks. The teacher asked an 8-year-old boy to chant a Koranic verse for us, which he did with the elegance of an experienced muezzin. I asked another student, an Afghan refugee, Rahim Kunduz, age 12, what his reaction was to the Sept. 11 attacks, and he said: "Most likely the attack came from Americans inside America. I am pleased that America has had to face pain, because the rest of the world has tasted its pain." A framed sign on the wall said this room was "A gift of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

Sometime after 9/11 -- an unprovoked mass murder perpetrated by 19 men, 15 of whom were Saudis -- green went geostrategic, as Americans started to realize we were financing both sides in the war on terrorism. We were financing the U.S. military with our tax dollars; and we were financing a transformation of Islam, in favor of its most intolerant strand, with our gasoline purchases. How stupid is that?

Islam has always been practiced in different forms. Some are more embracing of modernity, reinterpretation of the Koran and tolerance of other faiths, like Sufi Islam or the populist Islam of Egypt, Ottoman Turkey and Indonesia. Some strands, like Salafi Islam -- followed by the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia and by Al Qaeda -- believe Islam should be returned to an austere form practiced in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, a form hostile to modernity, science, "infidels" and www.women's rights. By enriching the Saudi and Iranian treasuries via our gasoline purchases, we are financing the export of the Saudi puritanical brand of Sunni Islam and the Iranian fundamentalist brand of Shiite Islam, tilting the Muslim world in a more intolerant direction. At the Muslim fringe, this creates more recruits for the Taliban, Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Sunni suicide bomb squads of Iraq; at the Muslim center, it creates a much bigger constituency of people who applaud suicide bombers as martyrs.

The Saudi Islamic export drive first went into high gear after extreme fundamentalists challenged the Muslim credentials of the Saudi ruling family by taking over the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979 -- a year that coincided with the Iranian revolution and a huge rise in oil prices. The attack on the Grand Mosque by these Koran-and-rifle-wielding Islamic militants shook the Saudi ruling family to its core. The al-Sauds responded to this challenge to their religious bona fides by becoming outwardly more religious. They gave their official Wahhabi religious establishment even more power to impose Islam on public life. Awash in cash thanks to the spike in oil prices, the Saudi government and charities also spent hundreds of millions of dollars endowing mosques, youth clubs and Muslim schools all over the world, ensuring that Wahhabi imams, teachers and textbooks would preach Saudi-style Islam. Eventually, notes Lawrence Wright in "The Looming Tower," his history of Al Qaeda, "Saudi Arabia, which constitutes only 1 percent of the world Muslim population, would support 90 percent of the expenses of the entire faith, overriding other traditions of Islam."

Saudi mosques and wealthy donors have also funneled cash to the Sunni insurgents in Iraq. The Associated Press reported from Cairo in December: "Several drivers interviewed by the A.P. in Middle East capitals said Saudis have been using religious events, like the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and a smaller pilgrimage, as cover for illicit money transfers. Some money, they said, is carried into Iraq on buses with returning pilgrims. 'They sent boxes full of dollars and asked me to deliver them to certain addresses in Iraq,' said one driver. ... 'I know it is being sent to the resistance, and if I don't take it with me, they will kill me.' "

No wonder more Americans have concluded that conserving oil to put less money in the hands of hostile forces is now a geostrategic imperative. President Bush's refusal to do anything meaningful after 9/11 to reduce our gasoline usage really amounts to a policy of "No Mullah Left Behind." James Woolsey, the former C.I.A. director, minces no words: "We are funding the rope for the hanging of ourselves."

No, I don't want to bankrupt Saudi Arabia or trigger an Islamist revolt there. Its leadership is more moderate and pro-Western than its people. But the way the Saudi ruling family has bought off its religious establishment, in order to stay in power, is not healthy. Cutting the price of oil in half would help change that. In the 1990s, dwindling oil income sparked a Saudi debate about less Koran and more science in Saudi schools, even experimentation with local elections. But the recent oil windfall has stilled all talk of reform.

That is because of what I call the First Law of Petropolitics: The price of oil and the pace of freedom always move in opposite directions in states that are highly dependent on oil exports for their income and have weak institutions or outright authoritarian governments. And this is another reason that green has become geostrategic. Soaring oil prices are poisoning the international system by strengthening antidemocratic regimes around the globe.

Look what's happened: We thought the fall of the Berlin Wall was going to unleash an unstoppable tide of free markets and free people, and for about a decade it did just that. But those years coincided with oil in the \$10-to-\$30-a-barrel range. As the price of oil surged into the \$30-to-\$70 range in the early 2000s, it triggered a countertide -- a tide of petroauthoritarianism -- manifested in Russia, Iran, Nigeria, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Egypt, Chad, Angola, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. The elected or self-appointed elites running these states have used their oil windfalls to ensconce themselves in power, buy off opponents and counter the fall-of-the-Berlin-Wall tide. If we continue to finance them with our oil purchases, they will reshape the world in their image, around Putin-like values.

You can illustrate the First Law of Petropolitics with a simple graph. On one line chart the price of oil from 1979 to the present; on another line chart the Freedom House or Fraser Institute freedom indexes for Russia, Nigeria, Iran and Venezuela for the same years. When you put these two lines on the same graph you see something striking: the price of oil and the pace of freedom are inversely correlated. As oil prices went down in the early 1990s, competition, transparency, political participation and accountability of those in office all tended to go up in these countries -- as measured by free elections held, newspapers opened, reformers elected, economic reform projects started and companies privatized. That's because their petroauthoritarian regimes had to open themselves to foreign investment and educate and empower their people more in order to earn income. But as oil prices went up around 2000, free speech, free press, fair elections and freedom to form political parties and NGOs all eroded in these countries.

The motto of the American Revolution was "no taxation without representation." The motto of the petroauthoritarians is "no representation without taxation": If I don't have to tax you, because I can get all the money I need from oil wells, I don't have to listen to you.

It is no accident that when oil prices were low in the 1990s, Iran elected a reformist Parliament and a president who called for a "dialogue of civilizations." And when oil prices soared to \$70 a barrel, Iran's conservatives pushed out the reformers and ensconced a president who says the Holocaust is a myth. (I promise you, if oil prices drop to \$25 a barrel, the Holocaust won't be a myth anymore.) And it is no accident that the first Arab Gulf state to start running out of oil, Bahrain, is also the first Arab Gulf state to have held a free and fair election in which <u>women</u> could run and vote, the first Arab Gulf state to overhaul its labor laws to make more of its own people employable and the first Arab Gulf state to sign a free-trade agreement with America.

People change when they have to -- not when we tell them to -- and falling oil prices make them have to. That is why if we are looking for a Plan B for Iraq -- a way of pressing for political reform in the Middle East without going to war again -- there is no better tool than bringing down the price of oil. When it comes to fostering democracy among petroauthoritarians, it doesn't matter whether you're a neocon or a radical lib. If you're not also a Geo-Green, you won't succeed.

The notion that conserving energy is a geostrategic imperative has also moved into the Pentagon, for slightly different reasons. Generals are realizing that the more energy they save in the heat of battle, the more power they can project. The Pentagon has been looking to improve its energy efficiency for several years now to save money. But the Iraq war has given birth to a new movement in the U.S. military: the "Green Hawks."

As Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute, who has been working with the Pentagon, put it to me: The Iraq war forced the U.S. military to think much more seriously about how to "eat its tail" -- to shorten its energy supply lines by becoming more energy efficient. According to Dan Nolan, who oversees energy projects for the U.S. Army's Rapid Equipping Force, it started last year when a Marine major general in Anbar Province told the Pentagon he wanted better-insulated, more energy-efficient tents in the Iraqi desert. Why? His air-conditioners were being run off mobile generators, and the generators ran on diesel, and the diesel had to be trucked in, and the insurgents were blowing up the trucks.

"When we began the analysis of his request, it was really about the fact that his soldiers were being attacked on the roads bringing fuel and water," Nolan said. So eating their tail meant "taking those things that are brought into the unit and trying to generate them on-site." To that end Nolan's team is now experimenting with everything from new kinds of tents that need 40 percent less air-conditioning to new kinds of fuel cells that produce water as a byproduct.

Pay attention: When the U.S. Army desegregated, the country really desegregated; when the Army goes green, the country could really go green.

"Energy independence is a national security issue," Nolan said. "It's the right business for us to be in. ... We are not trying to change the whole Army. Our job is to focus on that battalion out there and give those commanders the technological innovations they need to deal with today's mission. But when they start coming home, they are going to bring those things with them." III.

The second big reason green has gone Main Street is because global warming has. A decade ago, it was mostly experts who worried that climate change was real, largely brought about by humans and likely to lead to species loss and environmental crises. Now Main Street is starting to worry because people are seeing things they've never seen before in their own front yards and reading things they've never read before in their papers -- like the recent draft report by the United Nations's 2,000-expert Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which concluded that "changes in climate are now affecting physical and biological systems on every continent."

I went to Montana in January and Gov. Brian Schweitzer told me: "We don't get as much snow in the high country as we used to, and the runoff starts sooner in the spring. The river I've been fishing over the last 50 years is now warmer in July by five degrees than 50 years ago, and it is hard on our trout population." I went to Moscow in

February, and my friends told me they just celebrated the first Moscow Christmas in their memory with no snow. I stopped in London on the way home, and I didn't need an overcoat. In 2006, the average temperature in central England was the highest ever recorded since the Central England Temperature (C.E.T.) series began in 1659.

Yes, no one knows exactly what will happen. But ever fewer people want to do nothing. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California summed up the new climate around climate when he said to me recently: "If 98 doctors say my son is ill and needs medication and two say 'No, he doesn't, he is fine,' I will go with the 98. It's common sense -- the same with global warming. We go with the majority, the large majority. ... The key thing now is that since we know this industrial age has created it, let's get our act together and do everything we can to roll it back."

But how? Now we arrive at the first big roadblock to green going down Main Street. Most people have no clue -- no clue -- how huge an industrial project is required to blunt climate change. Here are two people who do: Robert Socolow, an engineering professor, and Stephen Pacala, an ecology professor, who together lead the Carbon Mitigation Initiative at Princeton, a consortium designing scalable solutions for the climate issue.

They first argued in a paper published by the journal Science in August 2004 that human beings can emit only so much carbon into the atmosphere before the buildup of carbon dioxide (CO2) reaches a level unknown in recent geologic history and the earth's climate system starts to go "haywire." The scientific consensus, they note, is that the risk of things going haywire -- weather patterns getting violently unstable, glaciers melting, prolonged droughts - grows rapidly as CO2 levels "approach a doubling" of the concentration of CO2 that was in the atmosphere before the Industrial Revolution.

"Think of the climate change issue as a closet, and behind the door are lurking all kinds of monsters -- and there's a long list of them," Pacala said. "All of our scientific work says the most damaging monsters start to come out from behind that door when you hit the doubling of CO2 levels." As Bill Collins, who led the development of a model used worldwide for simulating climate change, put it to me: "We're running an uncontrolled experiment on the only home we have."

So here is our challenge, according to Pacala: If we basically do nothing, and global CO2 emissions continue to grow at the pace of the last 30 years for the next 50 years, we will pass the doubling level -- an atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide of 560 parts per million -- around midcentury. To avoid that -- and still leave room for developed countries to grow, using less carbon, and for countries like India and China to grow, emitting double or triple their current carbon levels, until they climb out of poverty and are able to become more energy efficient -- will require a huge global industrial energy project.

To convey the scale involved, Socolow and Pacala have created a pie chart with 15 different wedges. Some wedges represent carbon-free or carbon-diminishing power-generating technologies; other wedges represent efficiency programs that could conserve large amounts of energy and prevent CO2 emissions. They argue that the world needs to deploy any 7 of these 15 wedges, or sufficient amounts of all 15, to have enough conservation, and enough carbon-free energy, to increase the world economy and still avoid the doubling of CO2 in the atmosphere. Each wedge, when phased in over 50 years, would avoid the release of 25 billion tons of carbon, for a total of 175 billion tons of carbon avoided between now and 2056.

Here are seven wedges we could chose from: "Replace 1,400 large coal-fired plants with gas-fired plants; increase the fuel economy of two billion cars from 30 to 60 miles per gallon; add twice today's nuclear output to displace coal; drive two billion cars on ethanol, using one-sixth of the world's cropland; increase solar power 700-fold to displace coal; cut electricity use in homes, offices and stores by 25 percent; install carbon capture and sequestration capacity at 800 large coal-fired plants." And the other eight aren't any easier. They include halting all cutting and burning of forests, since deforestation causes about 20 percent of the world's annual CO2 emissions.

"There has never been a deliberate industrial project in history as big as this," Pacala said. Through a combination of clean power technology and conservation, "we have to get rid of 175 billion tons of carbon over the next 50 years -- and still keep growing. It is possible to accomplish this if we start today. But every year that we delay, the job

becomes more difficult -- and if we delay a decade or two, avoiding the doubling or more may well become impossible." IV.

In November, I flew from Shanghai to Beijing on Air China. As we landed in Beijing and taxied to the terminal, the Chinese air hostess came on the P.A. and said: "We've just landed in Beijing. The temperature is 8 degrees Celsius, 46 degrees Fahrenheit and the sky is clear."

I almost burst out laughing. Outside my window the smog was so thick you could not see the end of the terminal building. When I got into Beijing, though, friends told me the air was better than usual. Why? China had been host of a summit meeting of 48 African leaders. Time magazine reported that Beijing officials had "ordered half a million official cars off the roads and said another 400,000 drivers had 'volunteered' to refrain from using their vehicles" in order to clean up the air for their African guests. As soon as they left, the cars returned, and Beijing's air went back to "unhealthy."

Green has also gone Main Street because the end of Communism, the rise of the personal computer and the diffusion of the Internet have opened the global economic playing field to so many more people, all coming with their own versions of the American dream -- a house, a car, a toaster, a microwave and a refrigerator. It is a blessing to see so many people growing out of poverty. But when three billion people move from "low-impact" to "high-impact" lifestyles, Jared Diamond wrote in "Collapse," it makes it urgent that we find cleaner ways to fuel their dreams. According to Lester Brown, the founder of the Earth Policy Institute, if China keeps growing at 8 percent a year, by 2031 the per-capita income of 1.45 billion Chinese will be the same as America's in 2004. China currently has only one car for every 100 people, but Brown projects that as it reaches American income levels, if it copies American consumption, it will have three cars for every four people, or 1.1 billion vehicles. The total world fleet today is 800 million vehicles!

That's why McKinsey Global Institute forecasts that developing countries will generate nearly 80 percent of the growth in world energy demand between now and 2020, with China representing 32 percent and the Middle East 10 percent. So if Red China doesn't become Green China there is no chance we will keep the climate monsters behind the door. On some days, says the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, almost 25 percent of the polluting matter in the air above Los Angeles comes from China's coal-fired power plants and factories, as well as fumes from China's cars and dust kicked up by droughts and deforestation around Asia.

The good news is that China knows it has to grow green -- or it won't grow at all. On Sept. 8, 2006, a Chinese newspaper reported that China's E.P.A. and its National Bureau of Statistics had re-examined China's 2004 G.D.P. number. They concluded that the health problems, environmental degradation and lost workdays from pollution had actually cost China \$64 billion, or 3.05 percent of its total economic output for 2004. Some experts believe the real number is closer to 10 percent.

Thus China has a strong motivation to clean up the worst pollutants in its air. Those are the nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and mercury that produce acid rain, smog and haze -- much of which come from burning coal. But cleaning up is easier said than done. The Communist Party's legitimacy and the stability of the whole country depend heavily on Beijing's ability to provide rising living standards for more and more Chinese.

So, if you're a Chinese mayor and have to choose between growing jobs and cutting pollution, you will invariably choose jobs: coughing workers are much less politically dangerous than unemployed workers. That's a key reason why China's 10th five-year plan, which began in 2000, called for a 10 percent reduction in sulfur dioxide in China's air -- and when that plan concluded in 2005, sulfur dioxide pollution in China had increased by 27 percent.

But if China is having a hard time cleaning up its nitrogen and sulfur oxides -- which can be done relatively cheaply by adding scrubbers to the smokestacks of coal-fired power plants -- imagine what will happen when it comes to asking China to curb its CO2, of which China is now the world's second-largest emitter, after America. To build a coal-fired power plant that captures, separates and safely sequesters the CO2 into the ground before it goes up the smokestack requires either an expensive retrofit or a whole new system. That new system would cost about 40 percent more to build and operate -- and would produce 20 percent less electricity, according to a recent M.I.T. study, "The Future of Coal."

China -- which is constructing the equivalent of two 500-megawatt coal-fired power plants every week -- is not going to pay that now. Remember: CO2 is an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas. Yes, it causes global warming -- but it doesn't hurt anyone in China today, and getting rid of it is costly and has no economic payoff. China's strategy right now is to say that CO2 is the West's problem. "It must be pointed out that climate change has been caused by the long-term historic emissions of developed countries and their high per-capita emissions," Jiang Yu, a spokeswoman for China's Foreign Ministry, declared in February. "Developed countries bear an unshirkable responsibility."

So now we come to the nub of the issue: Green will not go down Main Street America unless it also goes down Main Street China, India and Brazil. And for green to go Main Street in these big developing countries, the prices of clean power alternatives -- wind, biofuels, nuclear, solar or coal sequestration -- have to fall to the "China price." The China price is basically the price China pays for coal-fired electricity today because China is not prepared to pay a premium now, and sacrifice growth and stability, just to get rid of the CO2 that comes from burning coal.

"The 'China price' is the fundamental benchmark that everyone is looking to satisfy," said Curtis Carlson, C.E.O. of SRI International, which is developing alternative energy technologies. "Because if the Chinese have to pay 10 percent more for energy, when they have tens of millions of people living under \$1,000 a year, it is not going to happen." Carlson went on to say: "We have an enormous amount of new innovation we must put in place before we can get to a price that China and India will be able to pay. But this is also an opportunity." V.

The only way we are going to get innovations that drive energy costs down to the China price -- innovations in energy-saving appliances, lights and building materials and in non-CO2-emitting power plants and fuels -- is by mobilizing free-market capitalism. The only thing as powerful as Mother Nature is Father Greed. To a degree, the market is already at work on this project -- because some venture capitalists and companies understand that cleantech is going to be the next great global industry. Take Wal-Mart. The world's biggest retailer woke up several years ago, its C.E.O. Lee Scott told me, and realized that with regard to the environment its customers "had higher expectations for us than we had for ourselves." So Scott hired a sustainability expert, Jib Ellison, to tutor the company. The first lesson Ellison preached was that going green was a whole new way for Wal-Mart to cut costs and drive its profits. As Scott recalled it, Ellison said to him, "Lee, the thing you have to think of is all this stuff that people don't want you to put into the environment is waste -- and you're paying for it!"

So Scott initiated a program to work with Wal-Mart's suppliers to reduce the sizes and materials used for all its packaging by five percent by 2013. The reductions they have made are already paying off in savings to the company. "We created teams to work across the organization," Scott said. "It was voluntary -- then you had the first person who eliminated some packaging, and someone else started showing how we could recycle more plastic, and all of a sudden it's \$1 million a quarter." Wal-Mart operates 7,000 huge Class 8 trucks that get about 6 miles per gallon. It has told its truck makers that by 2015, it wants to double the efficiency of the fleet. Wal-Mart is the China of companies, so, explained Scott, "if we place one order we can create a market" for energy innovation.

For instance, Wal-Mart has used its shelves to create a huge, low-cost market for compact fluorescent bulbs, which use about a quarter of the energy of incandescent bulbs to produce the same light and last 10 times as long. "Just by doing what it does best -- saving customers money and cutting costs," said Glenn Prickett of Conservation International, a Wal-Mart adviser, "Wal-Mart can have a revolutionary impact on the market for green technologies. If every one of their 100 million customers in the U.S. bought just one energy-saving compact fluorescent lamp, instead of a traditional incandescent bulb, they could cut CO2 emissions by 45 billion pounds and save more than \$3 billion."

Those savings highlight something that often gets lost: The quickest way to get to the China price for clean power is by becoming more energy efficient. The cheapest, cleanest, nonemitting power plant in the world is the one you don't build. Helping China adopt some of the breakthrough efficiency programs that California has adopted, for instance -- like rewarding electrical utilities for how much energy they get their customers to save rather than to use -- could have a huge impact. Some experts estimate that China could cut its need for new power plants in half with aggressive investments in efficiency.

Yet another force driving us to the China price is Chinese entrepreneurs, who understand that while Beijing may not be ready to impose CO2 restraints, developed countries are, so this is going to be a global business -- and they want a slice. Let me introduce the man identified last year by Forbes Magazine as the seventh-richest man in China, with a fortune now estimated at \$2.2 billion. His name is Shi Zhengrong and he is China's leading manufacturer of silicon solar panels, which convert sunlight into electricity.

"People at all levels in China have become more aware of this environment issue and alternative energy," said Shi, whose company, Suntech Power Holdings, is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. "Five years ago, when I started the company, people said: 'Why do we need solar? We have a surplus of coal-powered electricity.' Now it is different; now people realize that solar has a bright future. But it is still too expensive. ... We have to reduce the cost as quickly as possible -- our real competitors are coal and nuclear power."

Shi does most of his manufacturing in China, but sells roughly 90 percent of his products outside China, because today they are too expensive for his domestic market. But the more he can get the price down, and start to grow his business inside China, the more he can use that to become a dominant global player. Thanks to Suntech's success, in China "there is a rush of business people entering this sector, even though we still don't have a market here," Shi added. "Many government people now say, 'This is an industry!" " And if it takes off, China could do for solar panels what it did for tennis shoes -- bring the price down so far that everyone can afford a pair. VI.

All that sounds great -- but remember those seven wedges? To reach the necessary scale of emissions-free energy will require big clean coal or nuclear power stations, wind farms and solar farms, all connected to a national transmission grid, not to mention clean fuels for our cars and trucks. And the market alone, as presently constructed in the U.S., will not get us those alternatives at the scale we need -- at the China price -- fast enough.

Prof. Nate Lewis, Caltech's noted chemist and energy expert, explained why with an analogy. "Let's say you invented the first cellphone," he said. "You could charge people \$1,000 for each one because lots of people would be ready to pay lots of money to have a phone they could carry in their pocket." With those profits, you, the inventor, could pay back your shareholders and plow more into research, so you keep selling better and cheaper cellphones.

But energy is different, Lewis explained: "If I come to you and say, 'Today your house lights are being powered by dirty coal, but tomorrow, if you pay me \$100 more a month, I will power your house lights with solar,' you are most likely to say: 'Sorry, Nate, but I don't really care how my lights go on, I just care that they go on. I won't pay an extra \$100 a month for sun power. A new cellphone improves my life. A different way to power my lights does nothing.'

"So building an emissions-free energy infrastructure is not like sending a man to the moon," Lewis went on. "With the moon shot, money was no object -- and all we had to do was get there. But today, we already have cheap energy from coal, gas and oil. So getting people to pay more to shift to clean fuels is like trying to get funding for NASA to build a spaceship to the moon -- when Southwest Airlines already flies there and gives away free peanuts! I already have a cheap ride to the moon, and a ride is a ride. For most people, electricity is electricity, no matter how it is generated."

If we were running out of coal or oil, the market would steadily push the prices up, which would stimulate innovation in alternatives. Eventually there would be a crossover, and the alternatives would kick in, start to scale and come down in price. But what has happened in energy over the last 35 years is that the oil price goes up, stimulating government subsidies and some investments in alternatives, and then the price goes down, the government loses interest, the subsidies expire and the investors in alternatives get wiped out.

The only way to stimulate the scale of sustained investment in research and development of non-CO2 emitting power at the China price is if the developed countries, who can afford to do so, force their people to pay the full climate, economic and geopolitical costs of using gasoline and dirty coal. Those countries that have signed the Kyoto Protocol are starting to do that. But America is not.

Up to now, said Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, we as a society "have been behaving just like Enron the company at the height of its folly." We rack up stunning profits and G.D.P. numbers every year, and they

look great on paper "because we've been hiding some of the costs off the books." If we don't put a price on the CO2 we're building up or on our addiction to oil, we'll never nurture the innovation we need.

Jeffrey Immelt, the chairman of General Electric, has worked for G.E. for 25 years. In that time, he told me, he has seen seven generations of innovation in G.E.'s medical equipment business -- in devices like M.R.I.s or CT scans -- because health care market incentives drove the innovation. In power, it's just the opposite. "Today, on the power side," he said, "we're still selling the same basic coal-fired power plants we had when I arrived. They're a little cleaner and more efficient now, but basically the same."

The one clean power area where G.E. is now into a third generation is wind turbines, "thanks to the European Union," Immelt said. Countries like Denmark, Spain and Germany imposed standards for wind power on their utilities and offered sustained subsidies, creating a big market for wind-turbine manufacturers in Europe in the 1980s, when America abandoned wind because the price of oil fell. "We grew our wind business in Europe," Immelt said.

As things stand now in America, Immelt said, "the market does not work in energy." The multibillion-dollar scale of investment that a company like G.E. is being asked to make in order to develop new clean-power technologies or that a utility is being asked to make in order to build coal sequestration facilities or nuclear plants is not going to happen at scale -- unless they know that coal and oil are going to be priced high enough for long enough that new investments will not be undercut in a few years by falling fossil fuel prices. "Carbon has to have a value," Immelt emphasized. "Today in the U.S. and China it has no value."

I recently visited the infamous Three Mile Island nuclear plant with Christopher Crane, president of Exelon Nuclear, which owns the facility. He said that if Exelon wanted to start a nuclear plant today, the licensing, design, planning and building requirements are so extensive it would not open until 2015 at the earliest. But even if Exelon got all the approvals, it could not start building "because the cost of capital for a nuclear plant today is prohibitive."

That's because the interest rate that any commercial bank would charge on a loan for a nuclear facility would be so high -- because of all the risks of lawsuits or cost overruns -- that it would be impossible for Exelon to proceed. A standard nuclear plant today costs about \$3 billion per unit. The only way to stimulate more nuclear power innovation, Crane said, would be federal loan guarantees that would lower the cost of capital for anyone willing to build a new nuclear plant.

The 2005 energy bill created such loan guarantees, but the details still have not been worked out. "We would need a robust loan guarantee program to jump-start the nuclear industry," Crane said -- an industry that has basically been frozen since the 1979 Three Mile Island accident. With cheaper money, added Crane, CO2-free nuclear power could be "very competitive" with CO2-emitting pulverized coal.

Think about the implications. Three Mile Island had two reactors, TMI-2, which shut down because of the 1979 accident, and TMI-1, which is still operating today, providing clean electricity with virtually no CO2 emissions for 800,000 homes. Had the TMI-2 accident not happened, it too would have been providing clean electricity for 800,000 homes for the last 28 years. Instead, that energy came from CO2-emitting coal, which, by the way, still generates 50 percent of America's electricity.

Similar calculations apply to ethanol production. "We have about 100 scientists working on cellulosic ethanol," Chad Holliday, the C.E.O. of DuPont, told me. "My guess is that we could double the number and add another 50 to start working on how to commercialize it. It would probably cost us less than \$100 million to scale up. But I am not ready to do that. I can guess what it will cost me to make it and what the price will be, but is the market going to be there? What are the regulations going to be? Is the ethanol subsidy going to be reduced? Will we put a tax on oil to keep ethanol competitive? If I know that, it gives me a price target to go after. Without that, I don't know what the market is and my shareholders don't know how to value what I am doing. ... You need some certainty on the incentives side and on the market side, because we are talking about multiyear investments, billions of dollars, that will take a long time to take off, and we won't hit on everything."

Summing up the problem, Immelt of G.E. said the big energy players are being asked "to take a 15-minute market signal and make a 40-year decision and that just doesn't work. ... The U.S. government should decide: What do we want to have happen? How much clean coal, how much nuclear and what is the most efficient way to incentivize people to get there?"

He's dead right. The market alone won't work. Government's job is to set high standards, let the market reach them and then raise the standards more. That's how you get scale innovation at the China price. Government can do this by imposing steadily rising efficiency standards for buildings and appliances and by stipulating that utilities generate a certain amount of electricity from renewables -- like wind or solar. Or it can impose steadily rising mileage standards for cars or a steadily tightening cap-and-trade system for the amount of CO2 any factory or power plant can emit. Or it can offer loan guarantees and fast-track licensing for anyone who wants to build a nuclear plant. Or -- my preference and the simplest option -- it can impose a carbon tax that will stimulate the market to move away from fuels that emit high levels of CO2 and invest in those that don't. Ideally, it will do all of these things. But whichever options we choose, they will only work if they are transparent, simple and long-term -- with zero fudging allowed and with regulatory oversight and stiff financial penalties for violators.

The politician who actually proved just how effective this can be was a guy named George W. Bush, when he was governor of Texas. He pushed for and signed a renewable energy portfolio mandate in 1999. The mandate stipulated that Texas power companies had to produce 2,000 new megawatts of electricity from renewables, mostly wind, by 2009. What happened? A dozen new companies jumped into the Texas market and built wind turbines to meet the mandate, so many that the 2,000-megawatt goal was reached in 2005. So the Texas Legislature has upped the mandate to 5,000 megawatts by 2015, and everyone knows they will beat that too because of how quickly wind in Texas is becoming competitive with coal. Today, thanks to Governor Bush's market intervention, Texas is the biggest wind state in America.

President Bush, though, is no Governor Bush. (The Dick Cheney effect?) President Bush claims he's protecting American companies by not imposing tough mileage, conservation or clean power standards, but he's actually helping them lose the race for the next great global industry. Japan has some of the world's highest gasoline taxes and stringent energy efficiency standards for vehicles -- and it has the world's most profitable and innovative car company, Toyota. That's no accident.

The politicians who best understand this are America's governors, some of whom have started to just ignore Washington, set their own energy standards and reap the benefits for their states. As Schwarzenegger told me, "We have seen in California so many companies that have been created that work just on things that have do with clean environment." California's state-imposed efficiency standards have resulted in per-capita energy consumption in California remaining almost flat for the last 30 years, while in the rest of the country it has gone up 50 percent. "There are a lot of industries that are exploding right now because of setting these new standards," he said. VII.

John Dineen runs G.E. Transportation, which makes locomotives. His factory is in Erie, Pa., and employs 4,500 people. When it comes to the challenges from cheap labor markets, Dineen likes to say, "Our little town has trade surpluses with China and Mexico."

Now how could that be? China makes locomotives that are 30 percent cheaper than G.E.'s, but it turns out that G.E.'s are the most energy efficient in the world, with the lowest emissions and best mileage per ton pulled -- "and they don't stop on the tracks," Dineen added. So China is also buying from Erie -- and so are Brazil, Mexico and Kazakhstan. What's the secret? The China price.

"We made it very easy for them," said Dineen. "By producing engines with lower emissions in the classic sense (NOx [nitrogen oxides]) and lower emissions in the future sense (CO2) and then coupling it with better fuel efficiency and reliability, we lowered the total life-cycle cost."

The West can't impose its climate or pollution standards on China, Dineen explained, but when a company like G.E. makes an engine that gets great mileage, cuts pollution and, by the way, emits less CO2, China will be a buyer. "If we were just trying to export lower-emission units, and they did not have the fuel benefits, we would lose,"

Dineen said. "But when green is made green -- improved fuel economies coupled with emissions reductions -- we see very quick adoption rates."

One reason G.E. Transportation got so efficient was the old U.S. standard it had to meet on NOx pollution, Dineen said. It did that through technological innovation. And as oil prices went up, it leveraged more technology to get better mileage. The result was a cleaner, more efficient, more exportable locomotive. Dineen describes his factory as a "technology campus" because, he explains, "it looks like a 100-year-old industrial site, but inside those 100-year-old buildings are world-class engineers working on the next generation's technologies." He also notes that workers in his factory make nearly twice the average in Erie -- by selling to China!

The bottom line is this: Clean-tech plays to America's strength because making things like locomotives lighter and smarter takes a lot of knowledge -- not cheap labor. That's why embedding clean-tech into everything we design and manufacture is a way to revive America as a manufacturing power.

"Whatever you are making, if you can add a green dimension to it -- making it more efficient, healthier and more sustainable for future generations -- you have a product that can't just be made cheaper in India or China," said Andrew Shapiro, founder of GreenOrder, an environmental business-strategy group. "If you just create a green ghetto in your company, you miss it. You have to figure out how to integrate green into the DNA of your whole business."

Ditto for our country, which is why we need a Green New Deal -- one in which government's role is not funding projects, as in the original New Deal, but seeding basic research, providing loan guarantees where needed and setting standards, taxes and incentives that will spawn 1,000 G.E. Transportations for all kinds of clean power.

Bush won't lead a Green New Deal, but his successor must if America is going to maintain its leadership and living standard. Unfortunately, today's presidential hopefuls are largely full of hot air on the climate-energy issue. Not one of them is proposing anything hard, like a carbon or gasoline tax, and if you think we can deal with these huge problems without asking the American people to do anything hard, you're a fool or a fraud.

Being serious starts with reframing the whole issue -- helping Americans understand, as the Carnegie Fellow David Rothkopf puts it, "that we're not 'post-Cold War' anymore -- we're pre-something totally new." I'd say we're in the "pre-climate war era." Unless we create a more carbon-free world, we will not preserve the free world. Intensifying climate change, energy wars and petroauthoritarianism will curtail our life choices and our children's opportunities every bit as much as Communism once did for half the planet.

Equally important, presidential candidates need to help Americans understand that green is not about cutting back. It's about creating a new cornucopia of abundance for the next generation by inventing a whole new industry. It's about getting our best brains out of hedge funds and into innovations that will not only give us the clean-power industrial assets to preserve our American dream but also give us the technologies that billions of others need to realize their own dreams without destroying the planet. It's about making America safer by breaking our addiction to a fuel that is powering regimes deeply hostile to our values. And, finally, it's about making America the global environmental leader, instead of laggard, which as Schwarzenegger argues would "create a very powerful side product." Those who dislike America because of Iraq, he explained, would at least be able to say, "Well, I don't like them for the war, but I do like them because they show such unbelievable leadership -- not just with their blue jeans and hamburgers but with the environment. People will love us for that. That's not existing right now."

In sum, as John Hennessy, the president of Stanford, taught me: Confronting this climate-energy issue is the epitome of what John Gardner, the founder of Common Cause, once described as "a series of great opportunities disguised as insoluble problems."

Am I optimistic? I want to be. But I am also old-fashioned. I don't believe the world will effectively address the climate-energy challenge without America, its president, its government, its industry, its markets and its people all leading the parade. Green has to become part of America's DNA. We're getting there. Green has hit Main Street -- it's now more than a hobby -- but it's still less than a new way of life.

Why? Because big transformations -- <u>women</u>'s suffrage, for instance -- usually happen when a lot of aggrieved people take to the streets, the politicians react and laws get changed. But the climate-energy debate is more muted and slow-moving. Why? Because the people who will be most harmed by the climate-energy crisis haven't been born yet.

"This issue doesn't pit haves versus have-nots," notes the Johns Hopkins foreign policy expert Michael Mandelbaum, "but the present versus the future -- today's generation versus its kids and unborn grandchildren." Once the Geo-Green interest group comes of age, especially if it is after another 9/11 or Katrina, Mandelbaum said, "it will be the biggest interest group in history -- but by then it could be too late."

An unusual situation like this calls for the ethic of stewardship. Stewardship is what parents do for their kids: think about the long term, so they can have a better future. It is much easier to get families to do that than whole societies, but that is our challenge. In many ways, our parents rose to such a challenge in World War II -- when an entire generation mobilized to preserve our way of life. That is why they were called the Greatest Generation. Our kids will only call us the Greatest Generation if we rise to our challenge and become the Greenest Generation.

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