

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

Job Number: 223498666

Documents (100)

1. Top Israeli Police Official Resigns Amid Charges of Dereliction

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

2. Dartmouth student evacuated from Middle Eastern war zone

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

3. Israeli Leaders Hit With Wave Of Scandals

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

4. News Summary

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

5. Hilali's backing for Iran

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

6. Israeli soldiers speak on reality of war at Boston U.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

7. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

8. UK IN CONTACT WITH BB, NAWAZ

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

9. The Bush/Blair axis v Hezbollah's theocracy

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

10. Former Israeli justice minister convicted of forcibly kissing young woman

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

11. Two-tier political system offers no economic benefits

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

12. In Beirut, Cultural Life Is Another War Casualty

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

13. A campaign of errors: From choice of clothes to foreign policy, Segolene Royal has been roundly criticized

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

14. Israeli politics rocked by president's sex scandal: Moshe Katsav expected to face criminal charges

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

15. Ban the bomblets: The proliferation of cluster bombs is one of the greatest threats to world peace; it's time for an international treaty to outlaw them

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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16. At home, Tehran deals with a restive Arab minority Separatist groups becoming violent

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Apr 15, 2007

17. Syrian ambassador discusses frayed ties with U.S. with U. Florida audience

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Apr 15, 2007

18. Govt leaders 'cowardly silent', say churches

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Apr 15, 2007

19. In troubled Lebanon, a safety zone for sea turtles

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

20. Pro-war Democrat loses Senate contest

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007



21. DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONTLINE Blogs of war

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

22. <u>G2: From Chongqing to Albert Square: To mark the publication of The Guardian Year 2006, we asked</u>
readers to nominate their favourite articles of the year. In this special issue of G2, we publish extracts from
some of your choices

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

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23. President fights rape 'lynch mob'

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

24. 2006 at a Glance: What a year mideast tensions, a war on terrorism, political wrangling, the olympics and an armed school rampage were just some of the highlights

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Apr 15, 2007

25. Lebanon pushes Tories down: Voters don't like to see Canada sidling up to Americans

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

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26. Mid-East Christians keep faith despite exodus

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

27. IN SHORT

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

28. Israeli minister faces jail for forcing kiss on female soldier

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

29. Israeli president faces sex scandal: Attorney general threatens charges, including rape

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

30. Ministers say sheik has to go

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

31. 'Evidence to charge' President



Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

32. Former Israeli justice minister is convicted of forcibly kissing woman

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

33. Israel suspends air strikes after carnage

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

34. California Lawmaker Becomes Highest-Ranking Official To Say He's a Nonbeliever

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

35. 'Evidence to charge' President

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

36. Tories tied with Liberals: poll: Perceived as too cozy with U.S.; Conservatives fall to third place in Quebec

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

37. A phone call means an Israeli missile is aimed at your house

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Apr 15, 2007

38. Lebanese flee the devastation, but it's not easy Survivors emerge and try to go north

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

39. Northern Israel: unpeopled: The feeling is like gambling, says a kibbutz farmer who has stayed

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

40. Put job-shy scroungers to work

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

41. Al-Jazeera 's energy lost in translation

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

42. Tehran's secret war against its own people

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

43. Opinion - Leadership and dialogue needed

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

44. Mideast taking a toll on Tories

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

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45. A brief history of smart bombs

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

46. News Summary

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

47. 'Sadness, desperation and fear': Sombre mood prevails as Ramadan ends and traditional celebrations begin

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

48. Immigration Minister says cleric should resign his position Sheik 'should quit'

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

49. Middle East Crisis - 'What we are witnessing is a war crime by Israel'

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

50. Calling the shots from behind religious veils

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

51. WORLD IN FOCUS How to bridge the divide

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

52. NEWSDESK



Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

53. THE PULSE OF IRAN Ancient land a stew pot of dissent and hope

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

54. For Lebanese, Calm Moment To Flee Ruins

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

55. Sharon's legacy tarnished: Ex-prime minister, in coma for more than a year, has legacy linked to corruption,

analysts say.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

56. How to protect yourself, your family from Lyme Ann L. Johnson Kirkwood Islam, Ann and the truth David Wesselhoft Manor Township Infant drop-off option Donna Carr Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition Lancaster Curfew-law violations David W. Greiner Lancaster

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

57. <u>UK refuses to back cluster bomb ban as extent of use in Lebanon revealed: Global ban also opposed by</u> China, US and Russia Unexploded devices still killing three people a day

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

58. Enough of the U.N.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

59. Clarity in seeing the reality of Middle East crisis

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

60. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

61. <u>Israeli president to be charged with rape: Country's ceremonial head of state faces six indictments for sex</u> crimes

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

62. Rockets shake Israeli city: Sderot woman is gassam casualty Israel responds with raids on Gaza Strip

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

63. Muslim community must help to heal its own cancer Letters to the

Editor>letters.editor@canberratimes.com.au

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

64. Our tank was a death trap

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

65. War of words as general breaks ranks on O'Dea's al-Qaeda fears

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

66. <u>Lebanese women call for local help</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

67. Muslim's poem inflames immigration debate: Verse accuses Quebec women of drinking, being promiscuous



Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

68. DIGEST

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

69. Symbols of separateness

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

70. British court extends detention for suspects

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

71. Israeli army recruits:'When it comes to firing the gun, its a massive shock. Its what you dont see in the movies': We followed young British Jews signing up for service in Gaza and the West Bank

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

72. <u>Nuclear program a source of pride for Iranians Threatened U.N. penalties worry some, but country isn't giving in</u>



Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

73. Review: Commentary: Books under fire in Beirut: Kamila Shamsie reports on the authors caught in the crossfire in Lebanon

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

74. Facing facts on Iraq

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

75._'Islamic fascism' is not a new term

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

76. Lebanon war of words

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

77. Best defence against terrorism is a split with US, say voters

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

78. Bush is after a boost by war, but a Black day has already dawned

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

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79. Israel halts air attacks for 48 hours Suspension occurs after a strike kills 56 Lebanese

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

80. INTERNATIONAL: Katsav stays away after rape scandal

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

81. Labour 'despairs' at PM over Lebanon ceasefire

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

82. We're being robbed of our freedom to think and debate

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

83. <u>Debate on Afghan mission welcomed: Former reservist opposes campaign; former NATO ambassador supports it</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

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84. The pain behind violence'lt hasn't been at all easy...'

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

85. Sixties bungalow set to fetch £1.6m

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

86. The town was like a giant jigsaw puzzle tipped out of its box AFTER 20 DAYS OF BOMBING, LEBANESE EMERGE SHELLSHOCKED AND BLINKING FROM THEIR BUNKERS TO SCENES OF DEVASTATION

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

87. At Home, Tehran Deals With a Restive Arab Minority

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

88. UNITY OF COMMAND

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

89. Government attacks intensify in Darfur

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

90. Islamic women's groups test Syrian secularism

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

91. Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

92. In Lebanese village, 'earth was going up'

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News

Apr 15, 2007

93. G2: 'You go a bit crazy when you see little body after little body coming up out of the ground': Huge numbers of children are being killed, injured or displaced in south Lebanon. Why are so many suffering in this conflict? Ghaith Abdul-Ahad reports

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

94. 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: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

95. Israeli president to face sex charges: Scandals cling to current government

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

96. Attacks on Jews soar since Lebanon

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

97. THE VENT

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by



News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

98. National Briefs

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

99. Muslims can expect more political curry

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007

100._THE VENT

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to

Apr 15, 2007



Top Israeli Police Official Resigns Amid Charges of Dereliction

The New York Times
February 19, 2007 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 858 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER **Dateline:** JERUSALEM, Feb. 18

Body

Israel's police commissioner resigned Sunday evening after an investigative committee severely criticized his actions in a 1999 case involving an Israeli crime family.

The commissioner, Moshe Karadi, whose term would have expired in August, said he was resigning immediately to "set a personal example" and spare the police the harm of a scandal. He insisted that the accusations against him were untrue.

Avi Dichter, the minister for public security, said he was accepting the resignation and would appoint Yaakov Ganot, the current director of the Prison Service, as the new commissioner.

Mr. Dichter said he would also remove the deputy police commissioner, Benny Kaniak, even though he was not mentioned in the report, and offer him the prison job. "The police must and can become better," Mr. Dichter said.

Though the case is an old one, the resignation of Mr. Karadi is the latest scandal in an Israel reeling from accusations of illegal behavior among those in high office. The cases range from a possible rape charge against President Moshe Katsav to various accusations of corruption against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his suspended office director, Shula Zaken, who is under house arrest as part of an expanding investigation into the Tax Authority.

On Sunday night, the director of the Tax Authority, Jackie Matza, announced his resignation, although he said he was sure he would clear his name. The finance minister, Abraham Hirshson, is being investigated in another case involving embezzlement at a nonprofit organization.

Mr. Olmert's predecessor, Ariel Sharon, was widely suspected of political corruption, and Mr. Sharon's son, Omri, has been sentenced to jail. Omri Sharon is still allowed to be free because his father is in a coma.

Last month, a court found a former justice minister, Haim Ramon, guilty by a court of indecent behavior for kissing a <u>female</u> soldier against her will, and there have been accusations of illegal behavior made against top religious figures as well.

Top Israeli Police Official Resigns Amid Charges of Dereliction

The spate of investigations is seen by many here as an effort to change a tradition of political corruption, especially in political fund-raising. But the gloomy introspection that has accompanied the effort has been worsened by the army's performance during the war against <u>Hezbollah</u> last summer.

The Israeli military's chief of staff resigned last month to take personal responsibility for failures during the war, and two Israeli soldiers captured by <u>Hezbollah</u>, and another captured by Palestinian militants, including Hamas, remain in captivity.

In 1999, Mr. Karadi was the chief of Israel's southern police district, and a three-member investigating panel found in a report released Sunday that he failed to pursue an investigation into close ties between policemen and a crime family in the south.

A reputed crime boss, Pinchas Buhbut, was killed that year while in a hospital by a uniformed policeman working for a rival crime family, the Perinians. Mr. Buhbut was recovering from an assassination attempt and was supposed to be under police guard.

A year later, Tzachi Ben-Or, who is thought to have been the killer, and who had left the police force three months earlier, was arrested in connection with a robbery. He offered to testify, but his offer was declined, and a judge, not informed of Mr. Ben-Or's possible involvement in the Buhbut killing, allowed him to be under house arrest. Mr. Ben-Or later fled the country and was killed himself, in Mexico in 2004.

Mr. Karadi was accused by the investigators of promoting a police commander in the southern district who was suspected of hushing up the case for the Perinian family.

The investigation was confidential and became public only in August 2005.

Only one of the three committee members demanded that Mr. Karadi resign; the two others concluded that because his record as police commissioner was clean, he could finish his term.

But Mr. Karadi's term has been marked by some embarrassments, including charges of police brutality during the pullout of Israeli settlers from Gaza in 2005, failures to solve some killings and the escape of a convicted serial rapist, Benny Sela, from police custody. While finally recaptured, Mr. Sela's days on the run became a hot topic on Israeli news programs and talk shows, which made fun of the police.

The report issued Sunday also criticized numerous other top police officials, recommending, for example, that the Jerusalem police chief, Ilan Franco, not be promoted to commissioner.

Vardi Zeiler, a retired judge, led the inquiry. He said that firing Mr. Karadi would "highlight a clear norm for generations to come" and added that if the panel was correct, the case signaled "the beginning of a very corrupt police force, and the infiltration of underworld figures to the police, which corrupts the police and the regime."

Mr. Dichter's appointments were already being seen as possible problems. Mr. Ganot, the prison official, was tried for bribery and cleared on a split vote, and the man whom Mr. Dichter said he would appoint as the new deputy commissioner, Mickey Levy, is known to be close to Mr. Olmert.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Moshe Karadi resigned yesterday but denied allegations that he failed to investigate ties between the police and organized crime in 1999. (Photo by Sebastian Scheiner/Associated Press)

Load-Date: February 19, 2007

End of Document



Dartmouth student evacuated from Middle Eastern war zone

University Wire

August 3, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 The Dartmouth via U-Wire

Length: 772 words

Byline: By Kelsey Blodget, The Dartmouth; SOURCE: Dartmouth

Dateline: HANOVER, N.H.

Body

When Dartmouth student Edward Kim decided to participate in an Arabic language immersion program through Lebanon American University this summer, he thought he was headed to one of the few safe countries in the Middle East.

In Beirut the women wore Western clothing and "there was a Starbucks every few blocks," Kim said.

On July 12, several weeks after his June 23 arrival, Kim found himself immersed in a volatile conflict after the Lebanese Shiite group <u>Hezbollah</u> killed and kidnapped several Israeli soldiers and Israel retaliated by bombing Lebanon.

"At first I didn't really worry too much I guess, because people told me not to," Kim said. When Israel bombed the airports Kim realized he might be in serious danger.

"I remember I was really tired and I was about to go to bed, and we could hear the bombs going off near the airport, hitting the airport," Kim said.

"Sometimes we could see flashes in the sky."

Although the students were not in a "<u>Hezbollah</u> part of the city," according to Kim, it was "unnerving to hear and see these things for the first time in your life."

With the airports inaccessible, most of the highways bombed and exits blockaded, Kim realized it was time to leave -- if he could.

"They said we wouldn't have a chance to get out for a while unless we were evacuated," Kim said. "We started to get a little scared. Not just because we were bombed but because we didn't know what was going to happen."

Kim's parents called the U.S. Embassy and friends in the Pentagon to help evacuate him.

"My parents both really freaked out," Kim said. "They kind of called everyone as much as they could. [They had] a lot of sleepless nights."

Kim said his father also called Dartmouth "to cover all of his bases," but Kim assumed incorrectly that it would be the government, not the College, that would ultimately bring him home.

Dartmouth student evacuated from Middle Eastern war zone

"The government is bigger and richer and has more resources and everything," Kim said. "I didn't realize [Dartmouth was] so well connected. I was really impressed."

Several years ago Dartmouth joined with 15 other colleges and universities to become clients of International SOS, a travel evacuation service provider that operates principally for larger corporations around the world.

Director of Integrated Risk Management and Insurance Hank James said that higher education has "become more of a client in recent years."

The College has used the service seven or eight times in total, James said.

The company's services range from helping replace a lost passport to providing an injured client the name of the nearest hospital.

"It doesn't always end up as being severe as getting someone out of the country," James said.

James said he received a call early in the morning on Saturday, July 15 alerting him to Kim's situation.

"Edward had expressed some desire to get out of Lebanon, and a call was placed to ISOS," James said.

"At that time they were not moving people out of Lebanon. They would just advise people to stay put until they could assess the conditions to get them out."

On Friday the 14th, the university had moved Kim and other students to its campus in Byblos, Lebanon, which was not under attack.

On July 16, Kim received a call in his room informing him that he had to get to a hotel in the town of Dbayeh, near Beirut, by 1 p.m. He was told he could bring only one small travel bag.

"I stuffed as much stuff as I could into my backpack. I got my laptop, some clothes and a toothbrush and that was it," Kim said.

Word spread to the other American students that Kim was being evacuated, and many of them placed calls to find out if ISOS would evacuate them as well.

Three others had schools or parents' companies that were ISOS clients and were able to leave with Kim.

By 3 p.m. six buses, holding both students and Lebanese citizens, left for Damascus, Syria. Kim learned later that the buses were following a UN convoy.

"We were taking a lot of dirt roads, a lot of back ways that we wouldn't normally have taken," Kim said.

"Most of the highways were all bombed. Plus it was an extra precaution."

On the bus Kim said he and his three companions talked about "how lucky we were to be getting out."

Kim said that "in an intensive program just for about three or four weeks, you get really close, especially in a situation like this," which he said made him feel especially guilty to leave his friends behind, though all of his friends were eventually evacuated.

After three days of exhausting traveling, Kim arrived in Washington, D.C., on July 18.

"Honestly when I first got back I was just relieved to be able to sleep horizontally and take a shower," Kim said.

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Load-Date: August 3, 2006

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Israeli Leaders Hit With Wave Of Scandals

The Forward August 25, 2006

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Section: News; Pg. 1
Length: 923 words
Byline: Vita Bekker
Dateline: TEL AVIV

Body

With Israelis already angry over their government's handling of the crisis in Lebanon, Israel has been hit by a wave of scandals involving several top government and military officials.

Justice Minister Haim Ramon, an architect of the ruling Kadima party, resigned Sunday after being indicted for allegedly having kissed an 18-year-old <u>female</u> soldier against her will. Tzahi Hanegbi, another Kadima member and chair of the Knesset's influential Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, was informed last week by the office of the attorney general that he would be charged with fraud, bribery and perjury relating to appointments that he made during his term as environment minister between 2001 and 2003.

President Moshe Katsav and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert could find themselves in legal trouble, as well. Katsav reportedly was summoned this week for questioning in a sexual harassment probe after police seized computers and documents in a late-night raid on his official residence. He has denied any wrongdoing. It was also reported recently that Olmert is being investigated by the state comptroller for allegedly purchasing a Jerusalem property for hundreds of thousands of dollars below market price.

The string of developments and revelations comes just a week after the Israeli daily Ma'ariv triggered a firestorm by reporting that Dan Halutz, Israel's military chief of staff, sold off about \$25,000 in stocks just hours after the fighting broke out with *Hezbollah*. The scandals are fueling many Israelis' increasing distrust in the capabilities of their elected leaders at a time when many people already believe that the month-long war, which claimed 159 lives in Israel, was handled poorly.

"Along with this war, there is a sense in Israel that the whole political arena is rotten from its foundation," said Daniel Kayros, director of fiscal litigation with the watchdog organization The Movement for Quality Government in Israel. "There is a sense that people are waiting for a good leadership," he said.

According to Kayros, about 12 members in the last Knesset - a tenth of the Israeli parliament - faced some sort of police investigation.

The recent postwar discontent - in contrast to the broad support at the start of the hostilities - and the search for culprits have led the Israeli media to devote what some observers see as excessive attention to particular scandals involving political and military leaders.

Israeli Leaders Hit With Wave Of Scandals

"The hysterical element in the media, which just yesterday created a personality cult for [the leaders], is now urgently searching for a demon, a Satan, one man, with or without a uniform, who will carry on his back all the sins of the war," wrote Nahum Barnea, top commentator of the country's most widely read newspaper, Yediot Aharonot.

While the war appears to have exacerbated many Israelis' lack of confidence in their politicians, the mistrust - especially on the issue of corruption - was high long before the conflict started. A 2005 poll commissioned by the global anti-corruption watchdog organization Transparency International found that 77% of Israelis believe that corruption has affected political life to a large extent.

Knesset members from across the political spectrum are joining forces to address the issue.

Arieh Eldad of the nationalist opposition party Ichud Leumi-Mafdal recently created an anti-corruption lobby that includes a diverse collection of fellow Knesset members, as well as such nonparliamentary activist groups as The Movement for Quality Government in Israel. The lobby is working to increase protections for whistleblowers, including a measure to prevent their firings and boost their financial compensation. It already has marked its first achievement: About a month and a half ago, the lobby succeeded in stopping the appointment of a candidate for the Health Ministry's director general, largely due to allegations of fraud and issues of conflict of interest.

The aftermath of the recent war, Eldad told the Forward, provides a chance for Israel to reduce public corruption. "It's true that a war or a national trauma is a situation which reduces our ability to tolerate corruption," Eldad said. "This is really an opportunity to clean up the stables and improve ourselves."

In the previous Knesset, the Likud Party's Michael Eitan established an inquiry committee to probe government graft. However, he suspended the committee ahead of the March elections to avoid interpretation of its activities as politically motivated.

The Movement for Quality Government in Israel is working on other draft laws to enhance the accountability of public officials, which it sees as key to fighting corruption. The group's proposals include opening the vote in primaries to all party members, not just to members of the powerful central committees. Some observers tied Israeli electoral flaws to the recent war with *Hezbollah*.

In a recent opinion article published on Yediot's Web site, Dan Caspi, head of the media studies department at Ben-Gurion University, said that Israel's political leadership is plagued by mediocrity. He criticized the parties' central committees, saying they produce and reward populist and manipulative politicians rather than create great statesmen.

"An institution plagued by mediocrity cannot rule, cannot make level-headed decisions and is not free to effectively lead the conflict against the Palestinians," Caspi wrote. "If a committee of inquiry is set up, it should not avoid the main problem: namely, how to ensure that more adequate people take the helm."

Load-Date: August 28, 2006

End of Document



News Summary

The New York Times

December 8, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 878 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-20

President Bush Resistant To Iraq Panel's Main Ideas

President Bush moved to distance himself from the central recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, even as the panel's chairmen opened an intensive lobbying effort on Capitol Hill to press Mr. Bush to adopt their report wholesale. A1

Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said he disagreed with a central point in the Iraq Study Group's report that drew a strong link between the turmoil in Iraq and the need to resolve the conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

A16

Iraqi Refugees Flood Neighbors

Nearly two million Iraqis have fled the chaos of their country and flooded into neighboring states, especially Jordan and Syria, threatening the social and economic fabric in both countries. A18

7 Test Radioactive in London

Seven bartenders at a London hotel have tested positive for radioactive contamination, the authorities said, raising new questions about the radiation poisoning death of a former Russian agent. A6

Hezbollah Keeps Up Pressure

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, ratcheting up the pressure on the American-backed government of Lebanon, insisted that his followers would not end their demonstrations in Beirut until their demands for more power were met. A20

German Mosques Raise Tension

News Summary

The construction of mosques has become one of the most contentious ways that Christians and Muslims rub up against each other in Germany, stoking antiforeign sentiment and reinforcing fears that Christianity is under threat. A3

Ebola Imperils African Gorillas

The Ebola virus killed 3,500 to 5,500 gorillas in one region of the Congo Republic from 2002 to 2005, and its continued spread, along with hunting, could wipe out the species, researchers are reporting. A10

NATIONAL A22-33

Big Changes Are Expected In Voting by 2008 Election

By the 2008 presidential election, voters are likely to see sweeping changes in how they cast their ballots and how those ballots are counted, including an end to the use of most electronic voting machines without a paper trail, federal voting officials and legislators say. A1

A Last Meeting in Pearl Harbor

With age and aching joints slowing even the most hardy of old sailors, marines and airmen, the major national survivors group of the Pearl Harbor attack has decided this year's anniversary gathering will be its last in Hawaii. A22

F.D.A. Chief Is Confirmed

The Senate confirmed Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach as commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, with some lawmakers expressing hope that his leadership would bring stability to an agency hobbled by turnover and criticized for poor oversight of the nation's drug supply. A30

EDUCATION

Fire Safety in Fraternities

With fatal fraternity house fires in Nebraska and Missouri last month fresh on their minds, fire officials in a handful of college communities have intensified their push for city ordinances requiring fraternity and sorority houses to install sprinkler systems. A24

SCIENCE/HEALTH

College and Mental Disorders

The transition from high school to college, from adolescence to legal adulthood, can be tricky for any teenager, but for the increasing number of young people who arrive on campus with diagnoses of serious mental disorders -- and for their parents -- the passage can be particularly fraught. A1

NEW YORK/REGION B1-10

New York Claims a Victory In Fighting Illegal Guns

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said that the city had reached agreements with six out-of-state gun dealers, who agreed to let court officials monitor their operations to prevent illegal gun sales. The expansion of New York's legal attack from 15 to 27 gun dealers reflects the city's confidence that its novel approach to battling illegal gun traffic is gaining momentum. A1

E. Coli Outbreak Widens

News Summary

Even as health officials and food distributors zeroed in on a California farm as the source of the green onions that have sickened Taco Bell customers, the E. coli outbreak widened considerably, with cases reported for the first time in New York City, as well as in Delaware, South Carolina and Utah. B1

Police Action Disputed at Trial

The misdemeanor trial in Manhattan Criminal Court of Cindy Sheehan, the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq, and three other <u>women</u> who were arrested and jailed overnight as they attempted to submit a petition demanding an end to the war, has turned into an examination of the use of police power in the face of antiwar protest. B3

Neediest Cases B4

WEEKEND E1-30; E31-42

Grammy Nominees Named

Mary J. Blige scored a leading eight Grammy nominations as the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences announced the contenders for its annual awards. E4

OBITUARIES C11

Johnnie B. Hunt

A former truck driver who built a nationwide freight-hauling empire, he was 79. C11

BUSINESS DAY C1-10

Wages Exceed Inflation Rate

For the first time this decade, wages for most American workers have begun rising faster than inflation. The buying power of American workers is rising at the fastest rate since the late 1990's. A1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A34-35

Editorials: Why the achievement gap persists; the comptroller's glass house; blood, toil, tears and nukes; Watergate reform, R.I.P.

Columns: Paul Krugman, Thomas L. Friedman.

Crossword E9

Public B4

TV Listings E30

Weather D8

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: December 8, 2006

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Hilali's backing for Iran

The Australian (Australia)

April 9, 2007 Monday

All-round Metro Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1 Length: 864 words

Byline: Richard Kerbaj

Body

MATP

AUSTRALIA'S most senior Islamic cleric, Taj Din al-Hilali, called on the Muslim world to unite behind the radical Iranian regime and to serve in its "trenches" in published comments during a visit to Tehran last weekend.

As Tehran was involved in a tense standoff with Western powers over the detention of 15 British naval personnel seized when they allegedly entered its waters last month, the Iranian media were using Sheik Hilali's quotes in a propaganda drive.

The controversial Australian mufti was quoted as saying that the global Islamic nation would never "kneel" to itsenemies.

In reports published in Iran on Saturday, Sheik Hilali was quoted as saying that Muslims needed to overcome their sectarian divisions that have led to much "bloodletting" in Iraq.

Leaders in Australia's Muslim community attacked the Egyptian-born cleric over his reported comments, saying he had no authority to speak on their behalf.

The comments will increase the pressure on the mufti, who caused a national furore last year when he compared scantily clad <u>women</u> to uncovered meat. He is also under investigation by police over allegations that he passed money raised by members of the Muslim community in Australia to supporters of al-Qa'ida and <u>Hezbollah</u>'s terrorist arm during a visit to Lebanon last year.

The Australian revealed last week the Sydney-based Lebanese Muslim Association had raised \$70,000 in conjunction with other Islamic bodies following the Israel-<u>Hezbollah</u> war in Lebanon. The money was earmarked for war victims.

The weekend reports of Sheik Hilali praising Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's hardline Islamic regime follow his January outburst on Egyptian television when he described Westerners as "the biggest liars".

"Anglo-Saxons came to Australia in chains, while we (Muslims) paid our way and come in freedom. We are more Australian than them," he told Egyptian television.

In Tehran, the mufti was billed as a celebrity by the Islamic republic's newsagency.

Hilali's backing for Iran

"The mufti of Australia has called on the Islamic world to stand in the trenches with the Islamic Republic of Iran which possesses the might and power," Iran's al-Alam News reported on its website in Arabic on Saturday.

It reported that Sheik Hilali -- who was in Tehran for the three-day International Islamic Unity forum -- told al-Alam TV on Friday following the conference opening that he was committed to the unity of the Islamic nation.

"(Islamic unity) is what has brought all participants together at this Islamic unity conference, to show the whole world that they are dedicated to the one God and dedicated to Islamic unity, and the Islamic nation will not kneel in front of its enemies, never," Sheik Hilali was reported as saying.

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock yesterday told The Australian he was concerned about Sheik Hilali's reported comments.

"I would be concerned if any Australian was offering support and succour to Iran, particularly as it is intent on pursuing the development of the nuclear fuel cycle outside international scrutiny," Mr Ruddock said.

The Ahmadinejad Government has become a source of growing concern for Western leaders because of its nuclear ambitions and incidents such as the capture of the British sailors.

The Australian understands that Sheik Hilali remained in Iran yesterday but will soon travel to Turkey to attend another Islamic conference.

Prominent Sydney-based imam Khalil Shami said Sheik Hilali was further damaging the image of local Muslims by wrongly expressing their commitment to the "radical" Iranian regime.

"As an Australian Muslim, it's very worrying to me that he's speaking on (our) behalf," he said. "Because really, the Iranian people don't know that

Continued Page 2

More reports -- Page 2

From Page 1

we're not behind Hilali. And if you ask Sunni Muslims, you will find that 99 per cent are not with Iran. So this hurts us and worries us."

Another Islamic leader, Mustapha Kara-Ali, a former member of John Howard's Muslim Community Reference Group, warned that Sheik Hilali's support for Iran would be potentially used by extremists in Sydney to recruit alienated young Muslims.

"Hilali's new (declaration) will play into the hands of underground extremists in Sydney's southwest who will use this edict as ammunition to further recruit disenfranchised Muslim youth."

Sheik Hilali's position remains under a cloud, with a significant section of the Australian Muslim community wanting him deposed.

But the new president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Ikebal Patel, dismissed reports that Sheik Hilali had been sacked as mufti.

"No, we haven't sacked the mufti ... (Sheik Hilali) is still the mufti," he said. "The position of mufti itself is very much there and the ... incumbent, while not being paid for the position, is still the holder of the position."

The federation said it was up to the Australian National Imams Council to decide the fate of the mufti, with a decision expected by the end of June.

Hilali's backing for Iran

Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd said yesterday most Australian Muslims would like to see the controversial cleric sacked: "You cannot have someone who defends gang rapists being the mufti of Australia."

Load-Date: April 9, 2007

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Israeli soldiers speak on reality of war at Boston U.

University Wire

September 13, 2006 Wednesday

Copyright 2006 The Daily Free Press via U-Wire

Length: 814 words

Byline: By Caroline Hotchkiss, The Daily Free Press; SOURCE: Boston U.

Dateline: BOSTON

Body

Discussion following a presentation by two Israeli soldiers in a Boston University classroom turned political last night, despite the best efforts of event organizers to keep the focus on the men's personal experience fighting **Hezbollah** forces in Lebanon.

Soldiers Daniel Sack and Shmulik Israel, both 29, are on a country-wide college tour. Last night's presentation, titled "A Tale of Two Soldiers: Two Israeli Soldiers Recently Back from Lebanon Discuss their Experiences," was organized by Boston Chabad and BU Students for Israel.

Chabad President Richard Weiss told the audience the event was a firsthand account of the soldiers' experiences and was meant to be an apolitical discussion. But questions quickly turned political as student asked pointedly questions about Israel's use of force in Lebanon.

Sack answered respectfully, but stressed he and Israel were there to share their experiences, not to debate the war.

"I thought the discussion was really interesting and showed the soldiers' reality," College of Arts and Sciences junior Marissa Weinshel said. "I thought it was unfortunate that there were political aspects brought into it because the soldiers just came to describe their experiences."

The soldiers contacted Boston Chabad and Rabbi Shmuel Posner to organize the discussion. The two soldiers are tour guides for the Taglit-birthright Israel: Mayanot, an organization in Israel that allows Jews between ages 18 and 26 who have never visited Israel to take a 10-day trip for free.

Rabbi Posner said he had taken this trip and knew the soldiers personally from the tour.

"They are nice, warm and caring guys," he said. "The reality is they are soldiers, too."

Posner said he felt the talk was important to the BU community because it served as a reminder of the human aspect of war.

Sack and Israel began with an introduction of themselves, not as soldiers but as civilians. Both men have college degrees, are well-traveled and enjoy spending time with friends and family.

Israeli soldiers speak on reality of war at Boston U.

Israeli citizens over 18 are required by law to serve in the military. Men have a three-year obligation while <u>women</u> must serve for two years. After fulfilling this commitment, Israel citizens continue to serve as reserves, in case of war, until they are 40 years old.

The conflict began on July 12 when <u>Hezbollah</u> captured two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid. A cease fire was reached Aug. 14, though Israeli forces still occupy some portions of southern Lebanon.

Both men said they were waiting for the inevitable call for days before they were finally contacted. Although Sack knew it was coming, he said he found it difficult to grasp the reality.

"It's crazy to think you're going to war," he said. "You're on the beach Friday with your friends, and Sunday you step off a bus and bombs are flying over your head."

The men talked about their experiences fighting, the inevitable destruction and death they witnessed and the reality of war.

Sack spoke about his motivation through the difficult times he faced as a soldier. He said he found inspiration in the people of Israel uniting as a country to support the soldiers and their nation. He said people found ways to help, bringing food and supplies to soldiers, even though they could not serve directly in the fight.

"The people of Israel came together," he said. "It felt like everyone was behind us."

Another motivation for both the soldiers was faith, they said. The soldiers said they are religious and made sure they found time to pray, despite their war-torn reality.

"I was on the bus to northern Israel where I was to serve, and one of the soldiers was studying the Torah," Sack said. "He read a law from the Torah that stated one should not be afraid in times of war. So I kept that with me through all of the difficult times, when bombs were landing all around me."

Weiss, the Chabad president, said he felt it was important to have the soldiers talk because it made the war more relatable for listeners.

Other students said it was refreshing to discuss current events without a political agenda, despite some pointed questions from the audience.

"It was nice not to have a political viewpoint to the presentation," School of Management sophomore Michael Goldsmith said. "People too often read or watch biased news sources and completely base their opinions on that."

Most students said they found the presentation touching and pertinent to their own lives, because many of them had either been to Israel or had friends and family there.

"It was touching to hear the personal stories," CAS sophomore Yael Shapira said.

BUSI President Dana Shulsinger said she thought the event was a success.

"I think this event was really important because it spread awareness of the conflict and realities of the situation in the Middle East and established a connection with the soldiers," the CAS sophomore said.

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Load-Date: September 13, 2006



Letters

The Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois)

August 28, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 The Pantagraph
Section: OPINION; Pg. A6

Length: 902 words

Body

Flu shot risks not fully addressed

An article in the August 25 Pantagraph about the Centers for Disease Control recommending that children up to age 5 get annual flu shots failed to mention the fact that the flu vaccine still contains thimerosal, a neurotoxin that is 49 percent ethylmercury ("New guides could pinch supply," page A1).

Thimerosal would have to be disposed of as hazardous waste according to Environmental Protection Agency regulations if it were not instead injected into pregnant <u>women</u>, young children and the elderly as recommended by the CDC.

While the CDC denies that ethylmercury is harmful after funding zero toxicological studies to prove this safety, Dr. Mady Hornig and her colleagues at Columbia University were able to test their hypothesis that autoimmune propensity influences outcomes in mice following thimerosal challenges that mimic routine childhood immunizations.

They found that autoimmune disease-sensitive mice showed growth delay; reduced locomotion; exaggerated response to novelty; and densely packed, hyperchromic hippocampal neurons with altered glutamate receptors and transporters.

Strains resistant to autoimmunity were not susceptible.

You can read the whole article in the June 2004 issue of Molecular Psychiatry.

Within the last month, Reps. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., and Tom Osborne, R-Neb., introduced legislation that seeks to ascertain why autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders are extremely rare in unvaccinated populations while they are at epidemic levels within vaccinated populations.

Reps. Maloney and David Weldon, M.D., R-Fla., also introduced legislation to create a new agency of vaccine safety that reports to the secretary of health and human services and to require research to be independent of any vaccine-related decisions.

Such changes would remove the CDC from the role of investigating the safety of its own recommendations, largely created by advisory boards with immense conflicts of interest.

If your child or grandma cannot get a flu shot because of short supply, count yourself lucky!

For further reading see the Put Children First Web site.

Letters

Vance Laine

Normal

Do school workers get long breaks?

When I look at my tax bill, it's not the town of Normal or city of Bloomington that takes the large chunk of my tax dollars, it is our education system - District 87, Unit 5 and Heartland College.

We certainly need to pay enough money to have quality teachers, safer buses, new computers and energy efficient buildings.

But we also need school staff that realizes their time on the job is my time, paid for by myself and all the taxpayers in McLean County.

I get a break in the morning for 10 to 15 minutes, but in my break room. This makes me scratch my head and wonder why most mornings most of the Unit 5 maintenance trucks are lined up at Shannon's when I go by and 20 or 30 minutes later when I go back by they are still there.

I have no problem supporting schools. I want quality education for our community's children.

But I do have a problem supporting extended morning coffee breaks.

Maybe I need to find out where these crews take lunch and see how long they spend there.

Are we only paying for the time, or is the supervisor charging the breakfast to us also? I can't afford it. Can you?

Kim Harms

Bloomington

Remember history of Middle East

Israel sustained over a thousand missile attacks on its cities across an internationally recognized border before the war began.

One can only imagine what our military response would have been if missiles were launched at our cities from a foreign country.

Unlike Muslim terrorists, Israel does not target civilians.

Under our own system of jurisprudence, those who use civilians as human shields are responsible for their safety.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, as well as Hamas, hide among Muslim and Christian civilians, and so should be held accountable for their deaths.

The claim is made that if only Israel and the U.S. appease Iran, Syria and their clients, there would be peace. Let's recall the history of this region.

Consider the hundreds of thousands killed during the Iran-Iraq war, the slaughter of Iraqis by Saddam Hussein, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the mass murder of black Christians in Sudan, the slaughter of Syrians by their own president Hafez al-Assad, the deplorable conditions created by the Taliban in Af-ghanistan, the use of poison gas against Yemen by Egypt in the 1960s and the ongoing killings between Sunnis and Shiites.

None of these events have or had anything to do with Israel.

It is natural that the United States would support democratic Israel over Arab and Muslim dictatorships where few freedoms exist and where Islamist terrorists who kill Americans, Christians and Jews-are glorified.

Letters

The former Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, sent tens of thousands of Iranian teenagers marching in formation across minefields toward Iraqi soldiers, clearing a path with their bodies.

According to Khomeini, life is worthless and death is the beginning of genuine existence. Now Iran supplies *Hezbollah* with missiles through Syria, and brags about wiping Israel off the map.

Shouldn't we be concerned about a nuclear-armed Iran?

Steve Friedberg

Bloomington

Load-Date: April 12, 2007



UK IN CONTACT WITH BB, NAWAZ

The Nation (AsiaNet)
August 9, 2006 Wednesday

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Length: 1602 words

Body

ISLAMABAD - British High Commissioner Mark Lyall Grant has said that London is in contact with PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif and PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto, who are important politicians and have played important role in Pakistan. The High Commissioner said he is in contact with a number of politicians, including the Muttahida Majlise-Amal President Qazi Hussain Ahmed and MQM's exiled chief Altaf Hussain. He said his job is to remain in contact with all the politicians.

In a panel interview with The Nation at his office on Wednesday, the High Commissioner deliberated upon a number of issues, including politics in Pakistan, situation in Middle East, measures to counter terrorism, Extradition Treaty, Hudood laws and volume of trade and investment.

The High Commissioner said the Britain want to see the democratic institutions strengthening in Pakistan for the election of parliament as well as the president. They would help the Election Commission in technical assistance, he added. When asked whether the president is not violating the human rights and constitution by wearing two hats at the same time, he said his government's position on the issue of uniform is the same as that of the Commonwealth which urges the President to shed uniform by 2007.

He said his government wants democracy to flourish in Pakistan and Britain and donor community in this regard are helping strengthen the Election Commission to hold free and fair polls in the country, which is the desire of UK like other western states. He said the chief election commissioner is providing them a list of requirements, which comprise updating of the electoral rolls and transparent ballot boxes.

To a question, he said they can't ensure free and fair polls here but what they can do is to ensure the presence of monitors and observers, who would report to their governments regarding the impartiality of polls. When asked why the British government granted only 6-month visa to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, he said Nawaz Sharif had requested for 5-year visa extension but he could have the intentions of staying there permanently, therefore, the UK government granted him 6 months visa.

When asked about the policies of President Musharraf on war against terror especially in the context of the recent statement of US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher who had alleged the presence of anti-India terror camps in Pakistan, the High Commissioner said Pakistan has been greatly affected by terror related incidents, whether they be sectarian or involving extremism.

He said President Musharraf is trying his best to curb extremism by banning hate literature. The high commissioner recollected that during 80's, there were only four to five extremist groups in Pakistan but now they have sprung up to nearly 40. He said Musharraf is fighting the common enemy that is Taliban. He said the religious student militia

UK IN CONTACT WITH BB, NAWAZ

has the support in Qandahar as well as in Balochistan and tribal areas. He said the coalition forces and the Government of Pakistan are fighting together to tackle the menace.

He said the British government supports the measures Pakistan is taking in war on terror. He said Pakistan, Afghanistan and all other countries should do more to deal with this problem. When asked what more Pakistan can do, he said some of the Taliban leaders could have settled in Quetta and the refugee camps in Balochistan and what Pakistan could do is to put a check on them.

He dispelled the impression that British secret agents were present in Balochistan. He was referring to the question of an MMA legislator who had raised this issue in a close door meeting of senate standing committee on defence two months back, which was also reportedly attended by the UK MPs.

He said they have every intension that peace and stability returns to the area as they have their troops in Helmand region of Afghanistan. However, he said the British media teams as well as the officials have contacts with some Baloch and Frontier Nationalist leaders that could have led to the impression of British support for them.

Regarding the Extradition Treaty between the two countries, the high commissioner said agreement has been reached at the official level in April last year, But the political approval is required now. He said Pakistan wanted to add a couple of issues in the treaty. He gave the example of death penalty, which was delaying the first-ever treaty with a Muslim country.

He said the UK has signed the extradition treaty with those countries, which have the death penalty legal in their countries, including the United States, but he said there is a clause on which Britain and Pakistan do not agree yet. That is the UK wants that whosoever is extradited to Pakistan should not be given death penalty.

He said he knew some technical issue is involved in the process because of the presence of Shariat laws in Pakistan. He said if the US could agree to this clause, they couldn't offer more to Pakistan. Replying to a question, he said British citizen Tahir Hussain who is facing death penalty in Pakistan should be given special treatment as at the time of offence he was 18 years old, he has been on death row and in prison since 17 years and twice his death sentence has been commuted to life imprisonment.

On Hudood laws, he says they are looking at it carefully. He said they support the policy of President Musharraf on enlightened moderation and want steps to be taken to amend the Hudood laws. He however said it is the internal matter of Pakistan. He said the British government is concerned about the human rights issues and of those dealing with **women**.

On Lebanese crisis, the British envoy said there must be a cessation to hostilities resulting in the unfortunate killing of civilians both in Lebanon and Israel. He said we accepted the Israel's right to exist and we believed that the conflict started after *Hizbullah* abducted two Israeli soldiers but at the same time, we also wanted the resolution of crisis.

He said the hostilities were killing the civilians on both sides adding that cessation means Israel stopped military action and <u>Hizbullah</u> stopped firing the rockets. He said in order to stop the killings of civilians; cessation to hostilities should be followed by the deployment of stabilization force. To a question on Pakistan's efforts to seek nuclear energy cooperation with the EU and US, he said Pakistan has a number of energy needs and that is why there have been discussions on gas pipelines from Turkmenistan and other states and on nuclear energy.

He said as for Indo-US nuclear cooperation deal and on the same pattern an agreement with Pakistan, Islamabad has to realize its different position. He said there has been a history of nuclear proliferation and Dr A.Q Khan episode but that did not mean it would not be available at all for Pakistan but it could not be linked to India.

British High Commissioner Mark Lyall Grant said he is very proud of the visa services his embassy is providing for visa seekers which he claims is not being provided by any other western country in Pakistan. He said the embassy last year processed 165,000 visa applications and the refusal rate was just 40 per cent. He said there were different categories of visas; among them, the refusal for students' visas was 65 percent.

UK IN CONTACT WITH BB, NAWAZ

He said his government was very strict in dealing with those applicants who produce forged documents. Whether they be in the form of forged or tempered passports, bogus bank statements, or anything like that. Only last month they detected 100 forged passports.

The High Commissioner disclosed that even the Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) are being forged. He said his embassy detected two such passports. The embassy not only confiscates the forged passports but also hands those cases over to FIA people.

The High Commissioner said the trade is increasing bilaterally between the two countries and it is in the favour of Pakistan. As UK's financial year starts from April so in first three months (April to June), exports from UK registered an increase of 40% while Pakistan's exports increased by 20 per cent in this period.

"It is hoped that the bilateral trade will touch \$2 billion by end of this year," he maintained. Dwelling upon investment, he said UK's investment stood at \$250 million in last financial year as Pakistan's macroeconomic stability provides the best opportunities to our investors to come and invest in this part of the world.

Six-trade mission from UK are visiting Pakistan in next 6 months for promoting cooperation in various sectors of economy keeping in view mutual interest of both countries' private sector. There is investment from Pakistani businessmen in UK especially in sectors like real estate as Nawaz Sharif has recently purchased a flat in UK. UK is providing assistance in shape of export credit facility and leaning up travel advisories being imposed on visiting Pakistan.

When told the Travel Advisory plays an important role in promoting trade ties between two countries, the high commissioner said every country has to look after the interests of its citizens. In addition, from time to time they issue travel advisories. He said the travel advisory of Pakistan is not very much different from Indonesia, Malaysia or many other countries.

High Commissioner Mark Lyall Grant was not very happy to leave Pakistan by the end of this year. He has been emotionally attached with this country, as his ancestors have lived here more than a century ago. His wife, Shela, is also a career diplomat and they both met each other in Islamabad during 80'.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006



The Bush/Blair axis v Hezbollah's theocracy

The Times (London)
August 1, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 41 words

Body

Sir, The British Government is now involved in supplying the most devastating aerial bombs to kill <u>women</u> and children without any agreement of the British people. Recall Parliament and discuss the whole matter now.

FRANK JOHNSTON, Weybridge, Surrey

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



Former Israeli justice minister convicted of forcibly kissing young woman

The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island)
February 1, 2007 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. B7

Length: 364 words

Byline: AP

Body

An Israeli court convicted former justice minister Haim Ramon Wednesday of forcibly kissing a young <u>female</u> soldier, a stunning censure of a top official that could reshape the Israeli cabinet.

Ramon, who faces up to three years in prison, joined a growing list of politicians who have fallen from grace, including Israel's president, who is facing rape charges.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 21- year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas in Lebanon last summer. Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman, who cannot be identified under Israeli law, had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

With its salacious details and high-profile defendant, the case captured the country's attention for months, and Ramon's conviction sent a stark message to high officials that behaviour once considered a perk of the job would no longer be tolerated.

"There are some lines that cannot be crossed," said Judge Hayuta Kochan, who read the unanimous verdict by a three-judge panel. "This was not a kiss of affection. This has all the elements of sexual crime."

Ramon, who will be sentenced Feb. 21, said he would appeal.

A close ally of veteran statesman Shimon Peres, Ramon once appeared to be on the fast track toward the prime minister's post, serving as a minister in several cabinets. He bolted the dovish Labour party ahead of elections last year and joined Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Kadima party, serving as justice minister until he was charged last August.

In a statement, Olmert "expressed sorrow" at Ramon's conviction.

As the verdict was read, a visibly anxious Ramon held his head in his hands. His girlfriend hugged him in support.

The verdict said Ramon's defence was full of contradictions, and said it was obvious the young soldier was "authentic and trustworthy" and had suffered a "traumatic experience."

"We completely endorse the plaintiff's version," it said.

Ramon declined to comment on the verdict.

Former Israeli justice minister convicted of forcibly kissing young woman

His accuser, in an interview with Israel's Channel 10 after the verdict, denied ever flirting with him.

"You understand the gap between us? He's eight years older than my father."

Load-Date: February 1, 2007



Two-tier political system offers no economic benefits

South China Morning Post August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 12

Length: 1433 words

Body

One aim of the government's plan to create positions for politically appointed deputy and assistant ministers is to train up political talent. But will these appointees play a part in the democratic development of Hong Kong or will they serve in an executive-led government that has no interest in democracy?

Consideration of Hong Kong's colonial past shows there is no need to have political elites in an executive-led government. The colonial government was executive-led, with the key officials all civil servants. After working in different government departments, they were promoted to senior positions and became policy secretaries. They were effective and efficient administrators, but they were not politicians. Nonetheless, under this liberal but undemocratic system, colonial Hong Kong achieved magnificent economic development and its residents lived satisfactorily.

If the administration today wants to continue this mode of executive-led government, it should rely on elites from its pool of administrative officers. If its plan is to train up the city's pool of political talent in a move towards democratisation, it should remember that the people of Hong Kong lived happily without democracy under British rule.

Rather than spending \$62 million a year on a two-tier political system, why doesn't the government allocate the money to narrowing the gap between rich and poor? If you offered people democracy, on the one hand, or substantial economic benefits, on the other, what would Hong Kong choose?

ERIC CHU, Tsing Yi

Bird flu remarks bode ill

I have serious doubts about the suitability of Margaret Chan Fung Fu-chun for the position of head of the World Health Organisation ("Beijing to bankroll bid for WHO post", July 31).

During the outbreak of bird flu in 1997, I vividly remember that she proudly told the press she ate chicken every day, in a bid to reassure people and despite the rising number of infections.

False assurances from the head of the WHO would tarnish its image and reduce its efficiency in fighting epidemics. If Hong Kong's former health chief does get elected, I hope she will show more responsibility in her statements.

LARRY KWOK, Kwun Tong

Diagnosis misleading

John Read's opinion piece "On the 'illness' assembly line" (July 28) contained basic errors that could confuse your readership. In particular, his points on the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness are profoundly misleading.

He writes that "feeling sad has become 'a depressive disorder', worrying too much is 'anxiety disorder' ... ignoring other people's feelings means that the child is suffering from 'conduct disorder'" and so on.

This is trite and, frankly, incorrect. Making a diagnosis depends on a thorough evaluation of symptoms based on strict clinical criteria derived from solid, validated population-based research.

Also wrong is his suggestion that these diagnoses necessarily imply drug treatment or "quick fixes", rather than psychosocial treatment, or "talking therapies". On the contrary, it is widely accepted that combining psychosocial treatment with medication is often the most powerful approach to recovery.

Assigning a torrent of blame to unnamed governments, funders, policymakers, pharmaceutical companies, even to diagnoses, begins to sound like fashionable pique. Perhaps this is the writer's prerogative, but it should not neglect a balanced description of what mental illness is, and how it is treated. After all, educating the public is a crucial cornerstone in caring for the mentally ill.

DR S.E. CHUA, department of psychiatry, University of Hong Kong

Victim mentality

I refer to John Read's opinion piece on how a growing number of life's problems are being redefined as disorders or illnesses - to the benefit of drug companies ("On the 'illness' assembly line", July 28).

Much of what Dr Read writes is true, but it is also true that many real and debilitating conditions that were previously ignored or unknown, such as depression and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, are now identified and treatable.

Today, there's a medical term for almost every behaviour, so it would seem inevitable that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders has reached a staggering 886 pages. This is a reflection of what has become a worldwide trend towards victimhood - the antithesis of all great philosophical teachings and experience telling us that personal power and positive thinking stem from taking responsibility for our actions, the good and the bad.

Responsibility will always be the cornerstone of successful living. In his illuminating book Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor Frankl wrote: "... each man is questioned by life; and he can only respond by being responsible."

The Psychiatric Folksong is a good reminder of the difference between life lived responsibly or as a victim:

"At three I had a feeling of

Ambivalence toward my brothers,

And so it follows naturally

That I poisoned all my lovers.

But now I'm happy I have learned

The lesson this has taught,

That everything I do that's wrong

Is someone else's fault."

PETER SHERWOOD, Discovery Bay

One person, one tax

It is important that Hong Kong's tax base be broadened before universal suffrage is introduced. At present, only a small percentage of residents pay tax while most are recipients of benefits. It would be quite easy for a political party to hand out free lunches at the expense of the taxpayers and get elected. It is one form of tyranny of the majority. The majority of people will vote sensibly only when they have to pay tax and free lunches mean digging deeper into their own wallets.

H. WONG, Ho Man Tin

Hatred perpetuated

In his defence of the bombardment of Lebanon, Neal Horwitz quotes author Amos Oz as saying that "Israel is not invading Lebanon" and it is "targeting mostly *Hezbollah*" ("Under siege: the moral equation on Lebanon", July 28).

Who will believe these words? The Lebanese people have seen their national airport, roads, bridges and infrastructure destroyed. Thousands of ordinary people have had to flee their homes and hundreds of innocent civilians have died. Will the families and colleagues of the four dead United Nations workers believe these words?

Israel may have killed a few <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters, but it is also effectively recruiting the next generation of <u>Hezbollah</u> from among those in Lebanon who have seen their homes destroyed and their <u>women</u> and children killed. With its actions, it is nurturing further hatred around the region.

Israel's callous disregard for the suffering it has inflicted has lost the moral high ground in the eyes of most of the world.

BRIAN SAVAGE, Sha Tin

Carte blanche to kill

Another year, more war, more death in the Middle East and the so-called international community's mawkish hand-wringing is again much in evidence. It's all rather déjà vu, and the root cause remains the same: America's blind support for Israel.

Israel knows that the US is never going to vote against it in the United Nations or turn off the aid tap, and thus it can do whatever it likes.

In addition to this carte blanche political support, Israel receives more US aid than any other country at roughly \$2US.8 billion a year, with about \$2US billion of this in the form of military aid. This is despite the fact that Israel's per capita gross domestic product is higher than that of Portugal or Greece.

Why don't these countries receive similar financial assistance? I am left thinking that this comes down to some pretty heavyweight lobbying on behalf of Israel and its supporters in the US.

Isn't there a single US politician of any persuasion able to question the country's unrelenting political and financial support of Israel, or are the lobbyists so omnipotent?

If the four UN peacekeepers had been killed by Syria, I wonder whether the US would have resisted calls by other Security Council members to condemn the action. I think not. Quite the opposite, in fact; if the Syrians - or anyone else on America's rogues list - had been involved, the US would have been front and centre in loud condemnation.

Until each stakeholder in the Middle East is treated equally by the US, there is no hope of a settlement. Israel knows this but takes full advantage of the situation - and who can blame it? Its enemies know this and so presumably feel there is nothing to lose as there will never be a level playing field. Most of the rest of the world knows this (with the exception of one notable poodle: Tony Blair). So why doesn't the US?

HENRY DOUGHTY, The Peak

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



In Beirut, Cultural Life Is Another War Casualty

The New York Times
July 31, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section E; Column 1; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1423 words

Byline: By JAD MOUAWAD **Dateline:** BEIRUT, July 30

Body

The invitations had been sent long ago and the ads paid for and printed. Despite the shells shattering a few miles away, Ghazi Abdel Baki, a Lebanese music producer, was determined not to cancel the release of his label's latest album at the Virgin Megastore in this city's former opera house. For him it was also a small act of resistance on the second day of the war.

In the end he didn't have much choice: the store was shut down after Israeli warships were spotted in the Bay of Beirut. Since then the Internet site of Mr. Abdel Baki's production company has carried this small notice: "We are not updating our Web site because we are under siege!"

The war in Lebanon is now in its third week, freezing life in mid-flow. A summer season that looked as if it would be highly successful for tourism was suddenly interrupted, as were numerous music festivals, theatrical and movie openings and, because this is Beirut, wild parties. For Lebanon's burgeoning cultural scene, the conflict has put a stop, at least for the moment, to the patient work begun after the civil war ended in 1990.

Now some movie theaters are opening their doors to refugees, artists are signing manifestoes against the war, commercial stations have turned into 24-hour news channels, and most restaurants and bars are closed. What was supposed to be Beirut's first break after last year's traumas -- including the assassination of Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister -- has been shattered.

"This was to be a turning point for us after years of hard work," said Mr. Abdel Baki, 36, whose label produces both 10th-century Andalusian music and modern fusions of bossa nova and Arab rhythms. "But in 24 hours your life is suddenly turned upside down. Even if this stops now, who is going to have the energy and the stamina to produce music, organize a concert or even attend a show?"

Much of what has made Beirut appealing in recent years, at least to adventurous travelers, are the handful of Phoenician, Roman and Crusader ruins in Baalbeck, Sidon and Tyre, a boisterous night life and a naughty reputation. But beyond the ruins and the rowdy image, Lebanon's artistic expression, after years of neglect, was also blooming.

"The city was thriving," said Ramsey Short, the British editor in chief of Time Out Beirut, a four-month-old publication that had become an indispensable tool to navigate Beirut's busy cultural and entertainment scene.

In Beirut, Cultural Life Is Another War Casualty

The July issue, with its cover story on Lebanon's summer festivals and its 114 pages, has become a memento of a time that never happened: all the events and shows have been canceled. The next issue has been postponed until further notice.

"Just like that, it's all gone," Mr. Short said. "And I don't think we'll return to that world any time soon."

The war caught most people by surprise. Dozens of festivals, concerts and shows have been canceled, including elaborate months-long programs in Baalbeck; in Beiteddine, south of the capital, where open-air concerts are held in a 19th-century palace in the Chouf mountains; and in Byblos, a coastal town north of Beirut. Ticketholders are being reimbursed. Organizers of Liban Jazz, scheduled for September, are trying to keep that festival alive, perhaps as a charity event in Paris. Along the bombed-out coastal highway in the south between Beirut and Tyre, dozens of fancy resorts are deserted, their once-pristine beaches polluted by an oil slick.

The Baalbeck International Festival, set inside stunning Roman ruins in the middle of the Bekaa Valley, east of Beirut, was to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. Organizers had scheduled performances by Lebanon's national diva, Fairuz; the Ballet Theater of St. Petersburg; and the Budapest Symphony Orchestra and Opera of Nice in a joint production of Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor."

Thousands of well-to-do Beirutis had bought tickets and were prepared to drive two hours to attend these open-air productions between the temples of Jupiter and Bacchus. Instead, in the town of Baalbeck itself, away from the historic ruins, Israeli Air Force planes have leveled dozens of buildings in recent days. Baalbeck is a stronghold of the militant Shiite group *Hezbollah*; the Israeli military campaign in Lebanon began after a *Hezbollah* raid into Israel on July 12.

"I feel stupid because I was so optimistic," said Carole Ammoun, a 27-year-old actress who had been performing in a local version of Eve Ensler's "Vagina Monologues," called here "Hakeh Nesswan," or "*Women*'s Talk." The play, which was originally scheduled for five nights, had been extended for three months straight.

"It was such a compliment to perform in something that was successful and that people enjoyed," said Ms. Ammoun, a bubbly woman with a large flashing smile. "We broke so many taboos talking about sexuality in an Arab country. There was a real sense that we were opening new doors."

The performances have been suspended, and Ms. Ammoun said she can't decide what her real role is today. "I feel frustrated, I feel angry, I feel castrated," she said.

Some artists have channeled similar feelings into their work. Mazen Kerbaj recorded a musical piece with his trumpet and the sound of bombs falling on Beirut in the background for a duet he called "Starry Night." He has also created a popular blog (www.mazenkerblog.blogspot.com) on which he posts cartoons, sketches and caricatures he has created in recent days. Most are about the war. One picture, called "Terrorism Is a Funny Word," says: "Lebanon is being sold for the price of a word: TERRORISM. What a bad joke!!!"

Another shows two faces screaming at each other. The bearded one says, "Allahu Akbar" ("God Is Great"), the other answers, "Freedom & Democracy." In the middle a tiny, shy face asks, "Can I say something?"

In Hamra, Beirut's faded former commercial district, Hania Mroue had been looking forward to July as she opened the Metropolis, a theater for art-house movies. For the premiere, attended by the culture minister and the French ambassador, she picked "Les Amities Malefiques" ("Poison Friends") by the French director Emmanuel Bourdieu, which won the Critics' Week Grand Prix in Cannes. The next day the war began.

Now about 40 people from Beirut's bombed-out southern suburbs sleep in her movie theater and offices, which are two floors underground. During the day she shows films and documentaries to keep the children busy.

Last Monday she decided to reopen the theater to the public for daily screenings at 6 p.m.: early enough, she said with grim Lebanese humor, so the audience can go home before the bombing begins.

In Beirut, Cultural Life Is Another War Casualty

"It's important to be able to talk about other things than Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u>," said Ms. Mroue, 31, whose soft features belie her steeliness. "We will have all the time to analyze, to argue and even to cry about all this later. This is why theaters like this are important: so that you can live, even during a war."

Last week she asked two doctors from the nearby American University of Beirut hospital to vaccinate the children in the theater. At the same time she somehow managed to obtain a Sri Lankan movie -- "The Forsaken Land" -- that had been stuck in Damascus for three weeks. Next she plans to show movies by the late Lebanese filmmaker Maroun Baghdadi about the country's civil war.

"It so hurts my heart to admit this that words fail me," she said. "We had such a promising year. I don't think we've realized what we have just lost."

At sunset Beirut's intellectual and artistic crowd has returned to Cafe Rawda, where the Mediterranean licks the city's rocky shores. This open-air restaurant offers scented water pipes, the best views of the sun melting into the sea, and a refuge from the city.

Rawda reopened recently, but it is still short staffed since all its Syrian waiters left when the conflict began. Airplanes on their final approach to the nearby airport no longer drown out conversations: the airport has been closed since the beginning of the conflict.

As everywhere, the war dominates discussions. Many talk about feelings of loss, abandonment or despair. What seems to rankle most, though, is the sense that a huge collective bubble has been pricked without warning.

"It took a long time to get to where we were," said Mr. Abdel Baki, the musician, as the sun slowly dropped into the sea. "Things won't be the same anymore. It's the uncertainty that's unsettling. It shows how precarious our lives were."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: A smattering of filmgoers at Metropolis, a new art-house cinema in Beirut that opened the night before the war began. Now it houses refugees. (Photo by Bryan Denton for The New York Times)(pg. E1)

Ghazi Abdel Baki, a music producer, at a cafe on the corniche in Beirut. (Photo by Bryan Denton for The New York Times)(pg. E7)

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



A campaign of errors: From choice of clothes to foreign policy, Segolene Royal has been roundly criticized

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

January 24, 2007 Wednesday

National Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A3

Length: 914 words

Byline: Peter Goodspeed, National Post

Body

Long before her expression of support for Quebec separatism this week, Segolene Royal had been dealing with the consequences of a series of gaffes that has brought her political honeymoon crashing to a halt.

With three months to go before the first round of France's presidential elections, the Socialist party candidate is struggling with an avalanche of bad opinion polls, controversy over her tax returns, policy differences with her political and life partner, Socialist party leader Francois Hollande, and growing discontent within her own party over her unorthodox election tactics.

Before she has even unveiled a policy platform, critics inside her party and out are describing the 53-year-old former environment minister as a lightweight populist whose lack of political experience, particularly on the foreign stage, is becoming painfully evident.

Ms. Royal moved yesterday to defuse the controversy following her statement of support for "the sovereignty and liberty" of Quebec during a meeting on Monday with Parti Quebecois leader Andre Boisclair, who is on a visit to France, saying that she meant only "that, as in any democracy, people who vote are sovereign and free."

The statement seemed unlikely to douse the fires of discontent raging around Ms. Royal's campaign. In France, foreign policy is the near-exclusive domain of the president, and Ms. Royal's repeated failure to project herself as an experienced stateswoman may doom her election hopes.

An acknowledged political outsider who jumped from being a relatively unknown regional leader to a presidential candidate, Ms. Royal has tried desperately to burnish her foreign policy credentials -- with disastrous results.

In early December she travelled to the Middle East, visiting Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian territories. In Lebanon she met with Ali Amar, a <u>Hezbollah</u> politician who treated her to a verbal thrashing of the United States in which he described U.S. foreign policy as "insanity," and attacked what he called modern day "Nazism" in Israel.

Ms. Royal was unfazed by the comments and responded saying: "I agree with a lot of the things you have said, notably your analysis of the United States."

A full day later, after the news media in France and the Middle East were having fits over her comments, she tried to clarify her position. She hadn't heard the <u>Hezbollah</u> spokesman properly, she said, blaming her embarrassment

A campaign of errors: From choice of clothes to foreign policy, Segolene Royal has been roundly criticized

on a bad translation. Instead of agreeing with Mr. Amar, she now said his comments were "unacceptable, abominable and odious."

During the same trip, Ms. Royal also spoke on Iran, saying she would press to ban Iran's access to nuclear power entirely to prevent it getting nuclear weapons. That contradicts the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which allows countries to have peaceful nuclear programs.

Ms. Royal's opponents had a field day attacking her, saying her trip was "poorly prepared," "useless for peace" and "dangerous."

Ms. Royal tried to recover this month with a three-day trip to China, where she was photographed at the Great Wall and in the Forbidden City. But once again her bid for diplomatic recognition floundered. She repeatedly wore white, the Chinese colour of mourning, and she pulled her punches when it came to criticizing China's human rights record. She actually ended up praising China's justice system for being "more rapid" and "efficient" than the courts in France.

When it comes to domestic policy, she hasn't had much more success. She has faced charges of being a gauche caviar --a "champagne socialist" -- in an Internet campaign that claims she and Mr. Hollande tried to use a family property company to dodge a wealth tax. To refute the charge she revealed her family finances, showing she and Mr. Hollande own properties worth nearly \$1-million.

More recently, she had a public falling out with Mr. Hollande over her party's tax policies.

Ms. Royal has refused to release an election policy platform, saying she wants to consult the people first in a Pierre Trudeau-style version of "participatory democracy." But party officials, including Mr. Hollande, are anxious to tell voters what they stand for, fearing conservative rival Nicolas Sarkozy is stealing a march on the Socialists with his detailed policy proposals.

Last week, Mr. Hollande declared that if his party wins April's election, it will scrap tax cuts granted to people earning more than US\$5,200 a month. The move infuriated Ms. Royal, who pointedly told reporters: "That's not how I see things."

A few days later she had to chastise her own spokesman, Arnaud Montebourg, when he went on a television talk show and declared: "Segolene Royal has only one flaw, her partner."

Ms. Royal suspended Mr. Montebourg from his job for a month. In a public reprimand that may have included her husband, she declared: "It should be understood, particularly by certain men, that they need to accept that <u>women</u> exercise their authority differently, but not more weakly, than men."

The message was lost on critics in her party. When Socialist leaders met to plan strategy last week, one disgruntled party member deliberately left his cellphone on and allowed reporters from Le Monde to listen in as a string of party leaders criticized Ms. Royal for being too passive.

"We need political speeches," one politician pleaded.

The Quebec endorsement probably wasn't what he had in mind. The latest opinion polls show Ms. Royal has plunged a full 5% in the standings and now trails Mr. Sarkozy 52% to 48%.

Graphic

Color Photo : Agence France-presse; French Socialist presidential candidate Segolene Royal is losing public support three months before the first round of elections.;

A campaign of errors: From choice of clothes to foreign policy, Segolene Royal has been roundly criticized

Load-Date: January 24, 2007



<u>Israeli politics rocked by president's sex scandal: Moshe Katsav expected to</u> face criminal charges

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

January 24, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2; Newsmakers

Length: 368 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The often questionable universe of Israeli politics suffered another heavy blow to its reputation Tuesday when the country's attorney general announced that he intends to charge President Moshe Katsav with sex crimes, including rape.

Six separate indictments against Israel's 61-year-old ceremonial head of state are to be handed down as the Israeli government reels from severe domestic criticism over its handling of the war against <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon last summer.

Legal authorities also continued to investigate separate corruption allegations against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert involving the sale of his home and helping friends when a bank was privatized. Olmert's former justice minister, Haim Ramon, was recently forced to resign after being charged with forcing a soldier to kiss him.

The charges to be brought against Katsav by Attorney General Menahem Mazuz involve sexual harassment and sexual coercion, breaches of trust, obstruction of justice and illegally accepting gifts in return for favours.

If convicted on all counts he could face more than 20 years in jail.

Four <u>women</u> who worked for Katsav since he became president in 2000 or earlier, when he was Israel's tourism minister, have accused him of sexual improprieties.

Images of Katsav's young accusers, with their faces blurred, have appeared in the Israeli media for some time and were widely published again late Tuesday.

The pending indictments, which followed a long investigation, triggered a storm of protest from every Israeli political faction, with demands that Katsav resign immediately or face impeachment.

"The indictment that was served against the president is as serious as it gets, but we need to remember that as long as the president is in office, there is no way to actually submit an indictment against him," said Labour Knesset member Shelly Yacinovitch, who praised the president's accusers for their bravery in the face of "mudslinging" designed to destroy their reputations.

Israeli politics rocked by president's sex scandal: Moshe Katsav expected to face criminal charges

"Therefore, the Knesset needs to act to dismiss the president immediately," she said.

Education Minister Yuli Tamir joined the nearly universal calls for Katsav to resign, saying the Israeli parliament needed "to dismiss the president immediately."

Load-Date: January 24, 2007



Ban the bomblets: The proliferation of cluster bombs is one of the greatest threats to world peace; it's time for an international treaty to outlaw them

Ottawa Citizen

November 15, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A17

Length: 879 words

Byline: Citizen Special

Body

The following op-ed was written by six <u>women</u> who have won the Nobel Peace Prize and who have come together in the Nobel <u>Women</u>'s Initiative "to help build a democratic world free of physical, economic, cultural, political, religious, sexual and environmental violence and the constant threat of these forms of violence against <u>women</u> -- and, indeed against all of humanity."

As recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, we have been shocked by the extensive use of cluster munitions during the 33-day conflict between Israel and *Hezbollah* in July and August.

The unnecessary civilian deaths and injuries from cluster bombs and their lasting impact on attempts to rebuild shattered lives and communities will continue long after the conflict has faded from the front pages of our newspapers. We have watched this predictable and preventable situation unfold with deep dismay.

The appalling violence on both sides of the conflict and deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure in both Lebanon and Israel almost defies our imagination. While other weapons were also used indiscriminately during this war, cluster munitions are of particular concern because of the deadly legacy they leave in their wakes -- a legacy like that of antipersonnel landmines.

Submunitions released from the cluster munitions that fail to explode on impact, "duds," are little different from antipersonnel landmines -- except all too often they are much more lethal.

According to the United Nations, Israel used cluster munitions, which released up to four million submunitions over southern Lebanon; the overwhelming majority of those were used in the last 72 hours of fighting before the ceasefire took effect.

Three civilians are still being killed or injured every day by these lethal bomblets.

Beyond the deaths and injuries of men, <u>women</u> and children, the contamination by an estimated one million submunitions that failed to explode on impact means people's lives will not return to normal in southern Lebanon for years.

Israel also reports casualties as a result of *Hezbollah*'s use of more than 100 Chinese-manufactured clusters.

Ban the bomblets: The proliferation of cluster bombs is one of the greatest threats to world peace; it's time for an international treaty to outlaw them

This most recent use of these horrific weapons weighs heavily on our minds, but it is not the first such use -- cluster munitions have now been used in 22 countries by 13 governments and several non-state armed actors. The United States used them decades ago in its war in Vietnam and has used them much more recently in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. The Soviet Union used them in Afghanistan, and Russia in Chechnya.

With more than 70 countries stockpiling billions of these weapons, we are deeply concerned that cluster munitions will increasingly be used in conflicts and that this latest war in the Middle East could mark the beginning of a frightening proliferation to non-state actors.

How can the world stand by mutely and watch the use of clusters become commonplace as happened in the 1970s and '80s when landmine use proliferated in conflicts around the world? It took tens of thousands of civilian deaths and injuries and the contamination of massive tracts of land before the international community finally banned antipersonnel landmines in 1997.

Governments must not make the same mistake with cluster munitions.

Do we passively watch the suffering from cluster munitions in Lebanon today -- just another human tragedy that we can do nothing about? Or do we create the political will necessary for our governments to change their policies on this humanitarian issue?

As ordinary <u>women</u> who have made a difference to peace through dedicated action, we know such changes can happen and do happen.

In fact, a group of individuals and organizations came together in 2003 to form the Cluster Munition Coalition and work to stop yet another humanitarian disaster in the world -- this time from cluster munitions. And their work is bearing fruit: So far Belgium has banned the weapon, Norway has recently made its temporary moratorium on the use of clusters permanent until an international treaty is negotiated, and a growing number of other countries and political leaders are calling for negotiations to address the humanitarian concerns caused by cluster munitions.

As governments meet in Geneva for the Third Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), they have a chance to start work on a new international treaty addressing cluster munitions.

As activists for peace, we call upon the governments there to seize the opportunity and not let it slip through their fingers, as they did at an earlier review conference in 1996 where they proved incapable of banning landmines through the CCW. Then, just as now, the commitment from civil society was clear.

Now, it is up to governments with a genuine concern about the protection of civilians in armed conflict to show responsible leadership and negotiate a ban on unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions.

Jody Williams (United States, 1997), Shirin Ebadi (Iran, 2003), Wangari Maathai (Kenya, 2004), Rigoberta Menchu Tum (Guatemala, 1992), Betty Williams (Ireland, 1976) and Mairead Corrigan Maguire (Ireland, 1976), six of the 12 **women** in history who have been recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize, established the Nobel **Women**'s Initiative in 2006

(www.nobelwomensinitiative.org).

Graphic

Photo: Mohammed Zaatari, The Associated Press; The United Nations has estimated that Israel dropped as many as four million bomblets in southern Lebanon, with perhaps 40 per cent of the submunitions failing to explode on impact.;

Ban the bomblets: The proliferation of cluster bombs is one of the greatest threats to world peace; it's time for an international treaty to outlaw them

Photo: Betty Williams;

Photo: Jody Williams;

Photo: Shirin Ebadi;

Photo: Wangari Maathai;

Photo: Mairead Corrigan Maguire;

Photo: Rigoberta Menchu Tum

Load-Date: November 15, 2006



At home, Tehran deals with a restive Arab minority; Separatist groups becoming violent

The International Herald Tribune September 23, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 941 words

Byline: Michael Slackman

Dateline: TEHRAN

Body

"Help my young child please help me," Yabrra Banitamim, 65, cried in a conference room crowded with a dozen relatives of two men found guilty of participating in a string of deadly bombings in Iran.

The men, Malek Banitamim, 30, and Ghasem Sallamat, 42, are from Khuzestan Province, in the country's southwest. They are Arabs in a country that is predominantly Persian and that is accused by segments of its Arab population of treating them like second-class citizens, thereby creating a separatist backlash.

Iran wants to be a leader in the Islamic world, spreading its influence among Arabs and Indonesians, Sunnis and Shiites. And with its support for <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon and its defiant stand against the West, it has made some progress.

But at home, Iran has often had to labor to unify its own people under one national identity, restricting the expression of ethnic variations like languages that it views as undermining that unity. The problem is often most apparent with its Arabs.

"There is a contradiction in Iran's behavior toward Arab countries and toward the Arabs in the south of Iran," said Mustafa el-Labbad, an expert in Iranian affairs who is based in Cairo.

Iran is a multiethnic country. More than half of its 70 million people are Persian, and about 3 percent are Arabs. Other groups are Azeris, Kurds, Turkmen, Baluchis and Lurs. Iran has recently faced strong protests from some ethnic groups, like the Azeris, with several demanding greater autonomy and cultural freedom.

In the Arab region of Iran, the authorities said, separatist groups became violent last year, setting off a string of bombs that killed and wounded many people. Banitamim and Sallamat were convicted and ordered hanged for their involvement in those attacks.

But to relatives of these men it is impossible to talk only about the crimes they were charged with. Their families see the acts of terrorism as intimately linked with the frustration and lack of hope that stems from the poverty that they sais was forced on them by a Persian majority that discriminates. This is a reality that the Iranian authorities have tried, without success, to reconcile.

At home, Tehran deals with a restive Arab minority Separatist groups becoming violent

"The Islamic Republic is dealing with its own terrorism problem the same way the U.S. is dealing with Al Qaeda," said Emad Baghi, a former cleric who now heads the Tehran-based Organization for the Defense of Prisoners' Rights.

What he meant, he said, was that both governments were using force rather than understanding.

Banitamim and Sallamat were arrested March 11 with 15 other men and two <u>women</u>. Six of the group remain under investigation, while the rest have been convicted and sentenced to death, the relatives said.

Fearful and frustrated, more than 150 family members and friends of the convicted came to Tehran to urge the authorities to lift the death sentences. Their first stop was to visit Baghi at the conference room in the north of this city.

"The prisoners are sentenced to death because of their confessions," Banitamim's older brother Yaghoub said as he opened the conversation with Baghi. "Their confessions were made under torture. They didn't do anything."

Baghi, who spends his days listening to the sorrows of prisoners' families, gently asked if the men were indeed part of the organization that had been connected to bombings in Ahvaz, the capital of Khuzestan. "We don't know," the brother said, his gaze cast down.

Then, perhaps aware that Baghi already knew the answer that the men were members of the group he said: "They can sentence him to life in prison. We just want to stop the execution."

Iranian officials say there is no discrimination against Arabs or, for that matter, any of Iran's ethnic minorities. They note, for example, that classical Arabic is taught in schools. They point out that the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is of Azeri descent.

And they accuse Western governments of financing and helping to incite groups responsible for the violence in Ahvaz. A European diplomat in Tehran said intelligence reports from the diplomat's home capital confirmed that there was Western support for at least one of the separatist groups.

But that has not diminished what many Iranians say is the broader need to address the social, political and cultural concerns of many ethnic groups, including Arabs. "I believe," Baghi said, "that instead of labeling people terrorists, we should also try to understand the reason."

Khuzestan is a place that illustrates the contradictions that can breed anger. The region sits atop most of the country's oil wealth, yet its Arab residents are mostly poor. At the same time, many Arabs complain that they see their country's wealth helping to rebuild Lebanon.

The London-based pan-Arab newspaper Asharq al-Awsat recently reported that in Khuzestan, "residents launched slogans condemning <u>Hezbollah</u> and the government and asked for the rebuilding of their own destroyed homes instead of interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon."

Similar grievances could be heard from the relatives of the condemned men. "We suffered a lot because of the war with Iraq," said Sallamat's wife, Samira, referring to Khuzestan's proximity to the border with Iraq. "This is not fair. We have done nothing wrong. God knows we've done nothing wrong."

Baghi could do no more than advise her on a strategy. But he represented an authority figure, a bridge from the deprivation of Ahvaz to the power of Tehran. Her anger exploded. "Our problems are not only economic, they are cultural," she complained. "They even find fault with the way we dress." The "they" she was referring to were her Persian neighbors.

Load-Date: September 27, 2006



Syrian ambassador discusses frayed ties with U.S. with U. Florida audience

University Wire

October 3, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 Independent Florida Alligator via U-Wire

Length: 352 words

Byline: By Alex Tiegen, Independent Florida Alligator; SOURCE: U. Florida

Dateline: GAINESVILLE, Fla.

Body

The American government betrayed Syria when it invaded Iraq, the Syrian ambassador to the United States told a Gainesville, Fla., audience Monday night.

"We believe that occupation is evil," he said. "Nothing good will come of it."

Imad Moustapha spoke about Syria's relationship with America and other Arab countries during a speech in Emerson Alumni Hall. He also tried to counteract what he considers negative stereotypes of Syria.

He said his country was a new ally of the United States after the first Gulf War, but their honeymoon ended when America ignored Syria's warnings that an American invasion would destabilize the Middle East.

America opened a "Pandora's box of woe" on Syria and other Arab nations the day it invaded Iraq, he said.

"The situation there is in the realm of nightmares," he said. "And there is no exit strategy in the near future."

Every U.S. president since Richard Nixon visited Syria's capital, except Bush, he said.

Denying accusations that Syria let insurgents into Iraq after the U.S. invasion, he noted that Saddam Hussein was an enemy of Syria.

Annie Higgins, faculty adviser for the Arabic Cultural Association, said the ambassador showed guests a more positive side of Syria.

"Many Americans don't even think Syrians can write," Higgins said.

Moustapha told his audience that Syria's population is 20 percent Christian. And the country's vice president is *female*.

Higgins said the American media focus on wartime issues, such as the country's support of Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, when covering Syria.

But Moustapha, a former administrator at Damascus University, said he will keep supporting those groups until a peaceful way to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict is found.

"Why do I believe that peace will form eventually?" he said. "Because there is no other alternative."

Syrian ambassador discusses frayed ties with U.S. with U. Florida audience

Israel doesn't have the resources to keep occupying the Golan Heights area bordering Syria, he said. When Israel retreats from the territory, Syria will offer peace.

The ambassador's visit was sponsored by UF's Arabic Cultural Association and the UF International Center.

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Load-Date: October 3, 2006



Govt leaders 'cowardly silent', say churches

Canberra Times (Australia)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 2 Length: 392 words

Byline: Graham Downie

Religion Reporter

Body

Senior Canberra church leaders questioned yesterday how Australia's leaders had remained "so cowardly silent" in the face of Middle East brutality.

"Where is the moral courage of our leaders? How can the leadership of the Australian Government and the Opposition not cry out for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire?" they said in a letter delivered to the Israeli, Lebanese and US embassies, with copies to Prime Minister John Howard and Opposition Leader Kim Beazley.

The letter said, "We are outraged that such unspeakable pain is being unleashed upon civilians, especially **women** and children, while the world remains largely silent."

The letter was signed by the Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, George Browning; the Auxiliary Catholic Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Pat Power; a minister of the Canberra Central Parish of the Uniting Church, Peter Walker; Churches of Christ minister Kevin Bray; and the director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, James Haire.

They said, "We find it impossible to remain silent in the face of so much pain and suffering in the Middle East, both in Lebanon and in Israel, but we have been particularly outraged by the news this morning of the deaths in the Lebanese village of Qana, no matter what its cause.

"Did it not occur to the governments of Israel and the US that the possibility of a lasting, generational peace was being made almost impossible while a new generation of youth was being accustomed to violence as a way of life?

"We deplore the violence of *Hezbollah* and we deplore the violence of the State of Israel.

"...We have had enough of this so-called war on terror.

"When will the governments of the world come to understand that peace can only be built on justice and fairness?"

All governments were urged to invest in the millennium goals as the road to peace and to immediately apply them for the people of the Middle East. "We can have no peace while violence is repaid with violence. It is a recipe for eventual annihilation."

Govt leaders 'cowardly silent', say churches

Australian humanitarian agencies called yesterday for a permanent ceasefire. The agencies were Anglicord, Care Australia, Australian Lutheran World Service, Caritas Australia, National Council of Churches in Australia Christian World Service, Baptist World Aid Australia, Churches of Christ, Oxfam Australia, AUSTCARE and World Vision Australia.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



In troubled Lebanon, a safety zone for sea turtles

The International Herald Tribune
October 24, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURE; Pg. 22

Length: 926 words **Byline:** Nadim Audi

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon

Body

For millions of years, Mediterranean sea turtles have been coming to this shore in what is now southern Lebanon to lay their eggs. Every summer since the time of the dinosaurs, their babies have hatched and literally run for their lives on the strip of sand that separates their nests from the sea.

An endangered species, they had been largely ignored in this war-torn stretch of Lebanon until six years ago, when two **women** set out to protect their fragile nesting dance.

The inspiration was a walk on the beach by Mona Khalil when she was visiting her homeland. She had flown in from the Netherlands, where she worked as a porcelain restorer. Her family's house, abandoned during the Lebanese civil war in the 1980s, sat between Tyre and Naqoura, dangerously close to the buffer zone that the Israeli Army occupied at the time. Still, she risked a walk, and came upon the turtles.

"The first time I saw them, it was completely by accident," Khalil said. "I suddenly heard a noise. It was a turtle creeping through the sand, coming to lay her eggs."

That beach was one of only three remaining nesting sites in southern Lebanon. Upon learning that the turtles were close to disappearing from her country, Khalil decided to "come back and do something about them."

The next year, 2000, she returned and teamed up with Habiba Fayed, who shares her passion for the environment. They opened a bed-and-breakfast in the Khalil home to finance their efforts, calling it the Orange House in honor of the Netherlands. Guests could simply vacation or, in the spirit of ecotourism, they could help the owners protect the turtles' nests and keep the beach clean. That was key. According to Medasset, a local marine wildlife group, if a turtle finds a garbage-strewn shore when she comes to lay her eggs, she will drop the eggs in the water, condemning her offspring to certain death.

Two species of large sea turtles nest in the Mediterranean, the loggerhead (Caretta caretta) and the green turtle (Chelonia mydas), which has been declared critically endangered by the World Conservation Union. They can live for more than 100 years, taking 50 years and 30 years, respectively, to reach adulthood and start producing eggs.

<u>Female</u> turtles travel to the exact spot where they were born decades earlier to dig their nests in the sand, laying an average of 70 to 100 eggs. The reptiles, about a meter, or three feet, wide, seem to be "in a trance when they lay their eggs," Khalil said. They then go back to the sea. They will have no further part in the lives of their offspring.

This is the moment when the <u>women</u> intervene. They protect the nests from predators by burying an iron grid in the sand above the eggs. This prevents animals from attacking during the month it takes for the eggs to hatch. The spaces on the grid are large enough to allow the baby turtles to emerge and find their way to the sea.

A major reason Mediterranean sea turtles can still be found in southern Lebanon is the Israeli occupation, which kept the area untouched from 1982 and 2000. Construction has destroyed most of their habitat in the rest of the country.

The recent fighting between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> did not affect the turtles, even when shooting in the area around the Orange House grew so intense that Khalil, 57, and Fayed, 48, had to flee. "<u>Hezbollah</u> was shooting rockets from very close," Khalil said. "We were in danger and escaped to Beirut for two weeks."

When they returned, they found that their house had been hit by an Israeli shell. But only one nest had been destroyed by predators. And 30 new nests had appeared, the <u>women</u> said, making 2006 the best season since the project started. Nonetheless, the protection of the nests is far from assured in this troubled land, where animals must coexist with armies, dynamite fishing and pollution. To protect the turtles, Khalil and Fayed have become the de facto police of their shore.

The pollution of beaches in Lebanon has various sources, from hospital waste to factory chemicals and plastic bags. Its impact on the turtles is direct: shorter life expectancy and high cancer rates. Much of the garbage that lands on the shore near the Orange House seemed to come from the headquarters of Unifil, the United Nations peacekeeping force in Lebanon, a few kilometers to the north. "They are not environmentally conscious," Khalil complained. "We've had Italian, Spanish and French garbage washed up on the shore everyday."

Khalil met during the summer with a UN officer who promised to try to curb the pollution. While swimmers and fishermen still find the occasional Italian water bottle or French mustard jar, the amount of garbage dumped has been reduced, she said.

In a country where animals and the environment are far from top priorities, the Orange House is a unique place. It was built in the 1970s by Khalil's grandfather, who intended it as a house where the family's children could come and play. While the civil war prevented this, the "summer vacation" spirit remains.

Though word of a guest house on a beautiful beach with nesting turtles has spread in Lebanon, most visitors to the Orange House are foreigners.

"Our guests are mainly Europeans who work in Beirut French, Germans," Khalil said. "The few Lebanese are often married to Westerners. The rest ignore us."

Khalil and Fayed would like to see this change, hoping that environmentally conscious Lebanese youth will maintain their legacy by protecting the turtles. But how likely is that?

Khalil smiled. "I'm optimistic."

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Load-Date: October 25, 2006



Pro-war Democrat loses Senate contest

August 10, 2006 Thursday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 12

Length: 891 words

Byline: Tony Walker WASHINGTON

Body

Pro-Iraq War senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, a Democrat, has lost a bitter primary contest to a relatively unknown challenger in a result that points to a hardening across America of public sentiment against the war.

Senator Lieberman's defeat at the hands of multimillionaire Greenwich businessman Ned Lamont is only the fourth time since 1980 that a senator has lost a primary contest and reflects growing frustration and anger about the war.

The result will add significantly to pressure on prominent Democrats such as New York senator Hillary Clinton who have supported the war but are now seeking to redefine their positions to take account of swelling public disgust about the war's conduct and its cost.

Mr Lamont's victory also carries an ominous warning for Republicans - not just of a souring public mood about the war but also the potential downside of their association with an increasingly unpopular President George Bush.

Mr Bush declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq on May 1, 2003, but the war has dragged on longer than America's involvement in World War II.

About 2600 Americans have died and more than 10,000 have been injured in what is widely regarded as a debacle.

Senator Lieberman, 64, who has been a steadfast supporter of the war, even chastising fellow Democrats for their criticism of its conduct, has become the most prominent victim of shifting public sentiment. He will not be the last.

Anti-war campaigners will be encouraged and emboldened by the result in what is potentially a watershed moment in eroding public support for Mr Bush's war of choice.

The Connecticut primary came against the background of a continued deterioration of the security situation in Iraq and a faltering diplomatic effort at the United Nations to end an extraordinarily destructive conflict in Lebanon.

Israel has threatened to ramp up its ground offensive and aerial bombardment if diplomatic efforts fail to bring about a cessation of hostilities on acceptable terms. This risks a wider regional conflict.

In the end, Mr Lamont, 52, eked out a relatively narrow victory, by less than 4 percentage points - well down on the double-digit lead awarded to him a week ago in the polls.

Pro-war Democrat loses Senate contest

Conceding defeat yesterday, Senator Lieberman vowed to contest the November mid-term elections as an independent, effectively deserting the party that made him its vice-presidential candidate in 2000.

"As I see it, we just finished the first half and the Lamont team is ahead," he said. "But in the second half, our team - Team Connecticut - is going to surge forward to victory in November."

Senator Lieberman, who risks facing the wrath of the Democratic establishment in the November contest, said he could not let the results stand "for the sake of our state, my party, and our country".

But many people are likely to view his decision to run against his own party as an act of hubris and one that may not be rewarded.

"Lamont is going to get even more positive news coverage from his win, and Democrats will likely rally around their party's candidate," said Douglas Schwartz, director of the local Quinnipiac University Poll.

"Lieberman will be viewed differently [on] Wednesday - he will be viewed as the losing candidate."

Mainstream Democrats, including Chris Dodd, Connecticut's senior senator, have pledged to support the party's nominee. Former president Bill Clinton campaigned for Senator Lieberman in the primary but would almost certainly back Mr Lamont next time.

Mr Lamont's victory has been attributed partly to the involvement of grassroots Democrats who have made their feelings known through what is known as the blogosphere. Liberal bloggers have played an important role in whipping up public sentiment against Senator Lieberman, especially on the issue of his closeness to Mr Bush.

Senator Lieberman's detractors have replayed endlessly a tape of Mr Bush kissing Senator Lieberman on the occasion of the 2005 State of the Union address. This provided useful fodder for Mr Lamont's negative campaign advertisements.

This so-called "netroots" campaign has demonstrated the potency of the internet in claiming its first high-profile political victim.

Lessons about the power of the blogosphere will not have been lost on incumbents nationwide.

MID-EAST SNAPSHOT

*Diplomatic wrangling about an international force for south Lebanon may delay the vote on a UN resolution until Friday, Australian time. Lebanon wants a quick withdrawal of Israeli troops; Israel will pull out only when foreign force and the Lebanese army have curbed *Hezbollah*.

*Israel shut down road traffic in south Lebanon, declaring a no-drive zone south of Litani River and threatening to treat any moving vehicle as a guerilla target. At least 19 Lebanese civilians died in air strikes on Tuesday.

*Israel appointed new commander of offensive against <u>Hezbollah</u>. The head of the northern command, Major-General Udi Adam, has been sidelined in favour of Deputy Chief of General Staff Major-General Moshe Kaplinsky.

*Israeli gunboats shelled Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp, killing at least one person. This was the first time Israel attacked the camp, on the outskirts of Sidon, since fighting began more than four weeks ago.

*And in the West Bank, an Israeli helicopter strike killed two Islamic Jihad militants in an attack on a house in Jenin refugee camp.

Graphic

Pro-war Democrat loses Senate contest

THREE PHOTOS: From top, Greenwich businessman Ned Lamont celebrates his victory over pro-war senator Joe Lieberman in the Democratic state primary; an Israeli woman at a soldier¿s funeral in Jerusalem; Lebanese <u>women</u> mourn citizens killed in the southern town of Ghaziyeh, near the port city of Sidon. Photos: AP

Load-Date: April 5, 2012



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Section: MAGAZINE; Pg. W09

Length: 2536 words

Byline: JAMIE SEIDEL

Body

Free speech or propaganda? The internet has given new power to people caught in the world's most destructive conflicts, writes JAMIE SEIDEL.

A NEW noise has joined the cacophony of war. From among the sirens, screams, bomb blasts and gunshots is emerging the sound of computer keyboards furiously clacking out their urgent messages. And, with the recent assault on Lebanon by Israel, the number of these messages reached a new high. Blogs are not new. Ever since the advent of the internet, people have been sharing their experiences online. But now, blogs are being increasingly recognised as a form of grassroots reportage.

From solders struggling to make sense of the insurgency in Iraq to families fleeing bombing raids on Beirut, first-hand accounts and experiences are flooding on to the worldwide web for all to see.

Just as the power of television was demonstrated in Vietnam, the bombing of Lebanon has proved to be a watershed. The most shocking images of modern war are now on the web. Pictures of children clinging to their dying mothers. Mass graves. Devastated suburbs. And alongside these pictures are words straight from the heart. First-hand accounts. Backyard interpretations of events. And fear.

These blogs attract great debate.

Free from any restriction or restraint, the bloggers let fly. There is no sanitisation here. There is anger. Screens full of it. But even among all the vitriol can be found wit, perception and hope.

The mass of blogs is a tangled web of information, agendas, truth and lies. But they come from everyday people keen to have their voice heard to a greater degree than at any other time in history.

People around the world are able to chat online - via comment boards, real-time text messaging, voice and video - even as the bombs are falling about them. Some describe the experience as surreal. These eyewitnesses are able to describe the feelings and the atmosphere in a uniquely human and personal way.

Here is a small sample of blogs from the world's war zones.

Notes from Lebanon

http://lebop.blogspot.com/

Screen name: Charles Malik

Date: July 15, 7.29am

Panic. Now!

Israel just dropped fliers on the American University of Beirut campus and in the surrounding neighbourhood. The fliers are in English and say something to the extent of: "The Lebanese people protect <u>Hezbollah</u> and will face consequences. Please, get out of Beirut."

This is from a 16-year-old Lebanese American playing soccer on the field at International College next to the AUB dorms, who told a friend who told me.

This is where I live.

Jesus Christ, it sounds like they just bombed a building behind me. That's the downtown! I live on the top of my building!

Update: Only one bomb heard.

Supposedly, the flier was in Arabic, and did not say "Please, get out of Beirut." The first half was correct, but the second half was merely cautionary.

Regardless, I've got to pack and get out of here if they're now dropping leaflets on my neighbourhood.

http://perpetualrefugee.blogspot.com/

Screen name: perpetual refugee

Date: July 18, 9.19pm

Home is where the bomb is.

Jido is a proud man. Late 80s. Recently widowed. Still getting over losing his true love. Crying each day. Always so happy whenever I make my traditional first stop in Lebanon to have a coffee, kiss him on the top of his head, share his argileh (water pipe) and talk.

In the same backyard that I used to play with him and Teta those many years ago. While she would pick a fresh fig for me to eat from one of the many trees. Or akkidinyi. Berries of all sorts.

The same house that I was raised. And to which I returned during the cold years of war. The same house that I used to poke my fingers into the bullet holes. Continued 10

From 9

While watching the news yesterday I was angrily watching the bombs fall in real time. And I noticed the neighbourhood was familiar. I went cold. It was Jido's street. Bombs were landing on Jido's street.

An hour had passed. I got through to my mother. She had sent one of my uncles to forcefully remove him from his home. His sanctuary. For the first time in my lifetime. Through all the catastrophies that have befallen us. The unimaginable has happened. Jido has slept away from home.

http://littlepaperboat.livejournal.com

Screen name: liz

Date: July 28, 2.01am

Who gave you the right, Israel and America? I was never, ever one of those who were against everything American, I grew up dreaming of America, with a Tori Amos song in the background.

Someone tell me how can Bush call what Israel is doing an act of self-defence?

The people dying are the <u>women</u> and children. We are not a war digging nation, despite what the world seems to believe.

I want my life back, I want to wake up at 7, drive down to Beirut, have my coffee and then go up to work, design billboards for summer events, design menus for restaurants, design business cards for fresh grads so full of hope, design ads for festivals and resorts, see my country prosper.

http://www.sabbah.biz/mt/

Screen Name: Uprooted Palestinian Arab

Date: August 15

I hate you, my ENEMY! My enemy's enemy is my friend. We have a saying in Arabic that says: My brother and I against our cousin, and my cousin and I against the foreigner stranger.

This is exactly what happened in the last 34 days of war by the Terrorist State of Israel on Lebanon. The world can't understand why *Hezbollah* has got all this support locally, from the Arab world as well all around the world.

My enemy is still occupying my forefathers' home, and now calling it his home, and he (the Israeli) is asking me to smile, otherwise, I'll be called anti-Semitism (which I was called before, and will be called again by the end of this).

NO! I hate my enemy, I hate my enemy, I hate my enemy, and I hate my enemy.

Peace can't be bought, but fought for. You want peace, so do I, but I'm not ready to drop my tools of resistance while you are still holding the gun against my face and call that peace.

Notes from Israel

http://blogcentral.jpost.com/newsItems/\$1105

Screen name: IDC-ITES.

Date: July 16, 9.06am

Here I am, sitting in a bomb shelter three hours after the first rocket attacks hit. It was just a matter of time. I knew it, but I certainly didn't think it would begin during the 20 minutes that I left the safety of my home to take our dogs out for a walk.

Scared, not really, I'm more nervous about my family. My adopted sister is stuck in the Haifa Merkaz train station, with no way to get home. My husband is near the Jezreel Valley; I know he's safe, but I can't help but worry for him. We're OK. It's hot down here in the miklatim (shelters) but we're safe.

We continually hear the planes and helicopters overhead. They make me so proud! They, our army, are protecting us.

I heard this morning, before this whole mess started, that the majority of the Arab states have condemned the actions of the *Hezbollah*. Wow! That is a very serious advancement. I am under the impression that the only two states that have not condemned the *Hezbollah* are Syria and Iran. Shock! Syria and Iran fund and arm the *Hezbollah* - what can you expect from them?

Since the beginning of this mess, the children have calmed down. My bomb shelter has two children, both too young to truly understand what is going on here. Thank goodness.

http://hezbisraelwar.blogspot.com/

Screen name: David Lisbona

Date: August 14, 7:32pm

Well, I had the feeling that the Israeli army announcements yesterday about their elimination of more Katyusha rocket launchers were premature. We've definitely had a Katyusha day today (about 11 alarms so far and the day is not out yet). The count so far today for the whole of northern Israel - about 220 Katyusha rockets landed, one person (innocent civilian please note) killed, 73 injured. One rocket landed in an open space next to a neighbouring suburb to where we live. A friend of a friend said that he saw the smoke from his porch.

http://israelimom.blogspot.com/

Date: Tuesday, August 15

He's back!!!!

After more than four weeks my dear man is back home!!! He surprised us this morning and just showed up at the door, looking extremely tired, his face covered with stubble, but very, very happy to see us. Our younger son, aged two and a half, woke up first, and was very hesitant about this man who suddenly showed up. It took a few minutes of convincing that this is actually his dad and he is back for good. Then we woke up the older kid, aged four and half. He was thrilled. I haven't even checked the news yet this morning. For now, all the news I needed is right here.)

Notes from Iraq

Residents of Baghdad are systematically being pushed out of the city. Some families are waking up to find a Kalashnikov bullet and a letter in an envelope with the words, Leave your area or else. It's not just Sunnis - it's Shia, Arabs, Kurds - most of the middle-class areas are being targeted by militias.

Other areas are being overrun by armed Islamists. The Americans have absolutely no control in these areas. Or maybe they simply don't want to control the areas because when there's a clash between Sadr's militia and another militia in a residential neighbourhood, they surround the area and watch.

Since the beginning of July, the men in our area have been patrolling the streets. Some patrol the rooftops and others sit quietly by homemade road blocks. You cannot in any way rely on Americans or the government. You can only hope your family and friends will remain alive - not safe, not secure - just alive. That's good enough.

For me, June marked the first month I don't dare leave the house without a hijab, or headscarf. I don't wear a hijab usually, but it's no longer possible to drive around Baghdad without one. It's just not a good idea.

Good morning,

I feel very tired, and have no wish to talk or write. But what calamities are happening in Iraq should be talked about, and I feel it my duty to take the responsibility of talking for what is happening to the Iraqis. Those Iraqis like me, who were forced by the bad security conditions which threatened their families directly by kidnapping or killing, had to leave Iraq and live in different exiles.

The days pass very heavily upon us, each day like a year. And in the countries where Iraqis reside, there is security, settlement, water, electricity and fuel. But we live like strangers. For who can compensate us for the homeland we were forced to leave?

"RPG!!!" was the first thing I heard. The three staccato letters emanated in a flurry of excitement and confusion from my turret gunner. The rocket had sailed about three feet over the top of our HMMWV (armed Humvee), actually coming closer to his head than the truck. It benignly exploded in mid-air on the other side of the road, safely away from our HMMWV. When later questioned as to exactly how close the rocket came to us he replied, "Sir, it was green. I can see it in my mind's eye right here (extending his left hand above his left elbow) and I can vividly see that it was green. Can I get a purple heart if it singed my eyebrows?"

Reaching out across the divide

Even between the warring factions, common ground can often be found. Here are two comments, posted in response to personal accounts of the recent fighting in Lebanon.

http://lebanesebloggers.blogspot.com/2006/07/day-6-more-attacks.html

Screen name: Shachar

Date: July 17, 7.01am

Hey.

I'm an IDF soldier stationed at the Lebanon border, but got back home for a funeral of someone I knew. We can't see all the bombing on Lebanon here from Israel (naturally we're focusing on bombs at Israel), so you're pretty much updating me on what's going on.

I don't want to start arguing about who's right and who's wrong, the final word is that it's not right that civilians get hurt in the process, from both sides. I'm sending you my best wishes and hope that you and your family will be strong and be alright until this horrible situation will be over.

http://ontheface.blogware.com/blog/--archives/2006/7/13/2110272.html

Screen name: R

Date: June 18, 9.36am

Hi,

I think I must first mention that I am Lebanese, and second that I really appreciate the fact that there are reasonable people on both sides of the border. I have been checking Lebanese blogs for the past few days and was frustrated that most of the comments from Israelis were extremely unsympathetic to the plight of the Lebanese civilian. We were dubbed as human shields to terrorists, and justifications were given to every civilian death in Lebanon. I was appalled. I can rest a little easier in this difficult time, because I have found reasonable voices in Israel.

Notes from Iraq

http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com/

Screen name: river

Date: August 5, 2006, 12.38am

Residents of Baghdad are systematically being pushed out of the city. Some families are waking up to find a Kalashnikov bullet and a letter in an envelope with the words, Leave your area or else. It's not just Sunnis - it's Shia, Arabs, Kurds - most of the middleclass areas are being targeted by militias.

Other areas are being overrun by armed Islamists. The Americans have absolutely no control in these areas. Or maybe they simply don't want to control the areas because when there's a clash between Sadr's militia and another militia in a residential neighbourhood, they surround the area and watch.

Since the beginning of July, the men in our area have been patrolling the streets. Some patrol the rooftops and others sit quietly by homemade road blocks. You cannot in any way rely on Americans or the government.

You can only hope your family and friends will remain alive - not safe, not secure - just alive. That's good enough.

For me, June marked the first month I don't dare leave the house without a hijab, or headscarf. I don't wear a hijab usually, but it's no longer possible to drive around Baghdad without one. It's just not a good idea.

http://afamilyinbaghdad.blogspot.com/

Screen name: Faiza Al-Arji

Date: July 20, 10.55am

Good morning,

I feel very tired, and have no wish to talk or write. But what calamities are happening in Iraq should be talked about, and I feel it my duty to take the responsibility of talking for what is happening to the Iraqis. Those Iraqis like me, who were forced by the bad security conditions which threatened their families directly by kidnapping or killing, had to leave Iraq and live in different exiles.

The days pass very heavily upon us, each day like a year. And in the countries where Iraqis reside, there is security, settlement, water, electricity and fuel. But we live like strangers. For who can compensate us for the homeland we were forced to leave?

http://midnight.hushedcasket.com/

Screen name: Midnight

Date: August 13

"RPG!!!" was the first thing I heard. The three staccato letters emanated in a flurry of excitement and confusion from my turret gunner. The rocket had sailed about three feet over the top of our HMMWV (armed Humvee), actually coming closer to his head than the truck. It benignly exploded in midair on the other side of the road, safely away from our HMMWV. When later questioned as to exactly how close the rocket came to us he replied, "Sir, it was green. I can see it in my mind's eye right here (extending his left hand above his left elbow) and I can vividly see that it was green. Can I get a purple heart if it singed my eyebrows?"

Load-Date: August 25, 2006



G2: From Chongqing to Albert Square: To mark the publication of The Guardian Year 2006, we asked readers to nominate their favourite articles of the year. In this special issue of G2, we publish extracts from some of your choices - Correction Appended

The Guardian - Final Edition

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Correction Appended

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Section: GUARDIAN FEATURES PAGES; Pg. 2

Length: 3427 words

Body

Jonathan Watts

Chongging - the fastest growing urban centre on the planet

For me, the best article of the year was Jonathan Watts' amazing account of Chongqing, the Chinese megalopolis most of us in the west have never heard of - Colin Blanchard, London SE23

Thursday 28.12.06 At some point this year, our species will prove Darwin wrong. For the first time since the dawn of civilisation, the human being is about to become a predominantly urban creature: humans have not evolved to fit our habitat, we have changed our habitat to suit ourselves.

According to the United Nations, the planet's population is currently split almost right down the middle: 3.2 billion in the city, 3.2 billion in the countryside. But by the start of 2007, the balance will have tipped decisively away from the fields and towards the skyscrapers.

No one knows for sure precisely where and when urban life started. But we can make a good guess about where the urbanising trend will reach its zenith. Simply count which skylines have the most cranes, track where the bulk of the world's concrete is being poured or follow one of the biggest, fastest movements of humanity in history. All lead east, to China.

Every year, 8.5 million Chinese peasants move into cities. Most of their destinations are mere specks on western maps, if they appear at all. But their populations put them on a par with some of the world's megalopolises. Britain has five urban centres of more than a million people, China has 90. A few - Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Nanjing - are well known around the world. The names of many others - Suqian, Suining, Xiantao, Xinghua, Liuan - are unfamiliar even to many Chinese. Nowhere is the staggering urbanisation of the world more evident than in Chongqing. Never heard of it? This is where the pace and scale of urbanisation are probably faster and bigger than anywhere in the world today. This is the Coketown of the early 21st century.

Set in the middle reaches of the Yangtze, this former trading centre and treaty port has long been the economic hub of western China. But after its government was given municipal control of surrounding territory the size of many

countries, it has grown and grown, becoming what is now the world's biggest municipality with 31 million residents (more people than Iraq, Peru or Malaysia). The population in its metropolitan areas will double from 10 million to 20 million in the next 13 years . . .

As people move off the land and into the sky, they produce less and consume more. In theory, they become socialised and civilised. In practice, they spend more time shopping and eating junk food. A nearby shopping centre, home to Kentucky Fried Chicken, could almost belong to any city on earth: pedestrianised streets, boutiques and fast-food outlets, a giant screen blaring out pop jingle ads, a monorail train running overhead. There are even police girls on roller skates, the latest must-have security accessory.

Li Zhiguan was once a farmer, then a factory worker. Now he earns more as one of the many high-wire artists who clean skyscraper windows, earning him the nickname of Spiderman. We meet him at the top of a 24-storey telecom office just before he abseils down the glass on a rope attached to him by a single clip. "It is 100% safe. You can go too if you wish," says his boss, He Qing, with a strong German accent picked up during an MBA in Mannheim.

With so many towers going up, Li is never going to be short of work. And he has a bird's eye view of the transforming cityscape. "In six months, there have been huge changes. You can notice it from one week to the next."

Marina Hyde

At the risk of stating the bleeding obvious . . .

Marina Hyde's coruscating column was a treat - I loved the way she cut to the chase about Mark Oaten - Penelope Hughes, Sheffield

Thursday 28.12.06 Loath as one should always be to get involved in other couples' domestic finances, I do hope Mark and Belinda Oaten aren't lavishing too much of the housekeeping on this psychiatrist he is seeing.

Writing in the Sunday Times, the Lib Dem MP took £20,000 for what is known in the often facile parlance of Fleet Street as "telling his side of the story". He revealed that as he drove to a safe house on the morning that the story of his liaison with a male prostitute broke, he phoned his psychiatrist, a man he had been seeing "for several years".

"But, as I now realised," wrote Mark, "we had never really worked out why a 40-year-old married man with two children goes to a male prostitute. It certainly made no sense on that drive from my home."

Yes, it is most baffling. What on earth could be behind his behaviour? A small fluctuation in the Japanese futures markets, perhaps, precipitating some sort of butterfly effect? A shift of tectonic plates, imperceptible to Britons, but causing a seismograph needle to jump somewhere in the South Pacific? Or even - but no, it's too stratospherically outlandish - the possibility that Mark likes sex with men?

Sam Wollaston

Planet Earth is even better with the sound down

Sam Wollaston is always entertaining and his review of Planet Earth is one that stood out for me - Joanna Chambers, Cardiff

Thursday 28.12.06 We begin in darkness. Cue music: a grand, swirling score. There's a crescendo of strings, shimmering percussion, a triumphant - almost orgasmic - blast of brass as the sun rises over the earth, bathing our planet in light. And life. This is a big one, oh yeah. Not merely a programme, but a television "occasion". And a television occasion requires a television god. In fact the whole thing has a feeling of Genesis about it - not the one with Peter Gabriel and Phil Collins in it, the one at the start of the Bible . . .

In the beginning Sir David Attenborough created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of Attenborough moved upon the waters (that's a reference to The Blue Planet).

And Attenborough said, Let there be light, and there was light . . .

This is Planet Earth (as Simon Le Bon once said - da, da da, da da, da da. I have no idea why ancient pop music keeps creeping in here). It is BBC's follow-up to The Blue Planet, took four years to create, cost the earth, will be sold round the world, and is certain to win a ton of awards. Quite rightly - it's almost stupidly stunning.

We start, perversely, at the bottom: Antarctica. Those are emperor penguins. I know, I saw the penguin movie. Males I believe, looking after the eggs, tell me something new. Those poor emperors, there must be an almost permanent huddle of wildlife cameramen there, poking their lenses into the big penguin mass.

Then we go up top for a while, to the Arctic, where a lady polar bear emerges from the snow after a winter-long snooze. She lies on the slope and slides lazily down, just for fun it seems, and to shake the sleep from her body. Her cubs then follow her out and take their first, tentative, wobbly steps on the slippery whiteness. It is a scene of unimaginable cuteness, and would surely have the hardest men weeping and cooing at their televisions. Roy Keane, Osama bin Laden: don't tell me you don't love the little polar bears.

Jackie Ashley

The global battle for ideas cannot be fought with guns

The article that really leaped out at me (I actually cut it out of the paper - I do this rarely) was Jackie Ashley's comment piece, "The global battle for ideas cannot be fought with guns". Really clever, lucid, unpretentious and just true, really - Laura Keeling

Thursday 28.12.06 Tony Blair is right. Tony Blair is disastrously wrong. Where he is right is to insist, in his recent speech, that the tragedy of Lebanon is not a single one-off event but part of a much larger confrontation with an "arc of extremism". I have friends so angry about Israel's behaviour that they are beginning to fall for the idea that *Hizbullah* is an admirable resistance army, a movement of social workers, philosophers and urban guerrillas, to be supported "objectively", as the Marxists used to say - the Guardian in the sunshine with rockets. We read admiring reports about the wit and verbal brilliance of Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who is sometimes portrayed as a mix of Che Guevara and Groucho Marx.

Then there are those who think we should support poor little underdog Iran against bullying America over nuclear weapons, while taking President Ahmadinejad's effusions about wiping Israel off the map as just amusing banter from downtown Tehran. And when it comes to Iraq, many feel the Shia resistance movement has had so much provocation that it too deserves to win.

So before going any further, let us remind ourselves just what fundamentalist Islam wants and what kind of society it aspires to. As a woman, I can't regard the compulsory veiling of sisters in the Middle East by men who threaten them with violence as just another cultural choice. Iran, the state that most eagerly supports <code>Hizbullah</code> and had come closest to achieving Shiaism in one country, is a place where <code>women</code> are hanged or stoned to death for adultery, where homosexuals are hunted by the religious police, and where an anti-Semitism that would have been regarded as a little extreme in late-30s Munich is daily fare. And no, I don't think that because <code>Hizbullah</code> is protecting Lebanese Sunnis and Christians against the Israeli onslaught, and because its social service network helps non-Shias too, that makes it a genial or moderate organisation. It is spreading support, building its power base, as any revolutionary group would do in these circumstances. But its ultimate aim, apart from driving out the Jews, is to create a little Iran on the Mediterranean. That would, one day, involve driving out the same Lebanese Christians who currently thank their God for the fighters of <code>Hizbullah</code>.

Harry Pearson

Super-sized stars need bringing down a leg or two

Anything by Harry Pearson, the funniest columnist since Jack Trevor Story, and yes, I have been reading the Guardian since 1968 - Allan Beveridge, Tayport, Fife

Thursday 28.12.06 In the run-up to the Open there was much talk of the prodigious distances golfers are striking the ball these days and the detrimental effect it is having. Yet in all the palaver about clubfaces, shafts and ball aerodynamics nobody addressed the core of the problem: that modern golfers are just way too big.

Compared with the current mighty hulks, the giants of the past look like the type of men who couldn't venture near a bunker without getting sand kicked in their faces. In the present gigantic company Jack Nicklaus is not so much the Golden Bear as a blond squirrel. Golfers have literally outgrown their sport. The solution is either to make courses bigger - something that is practically impossible since, as far as I can judge, they already cover 80% of the world's non-urban landmass - or make the golfers smaller.

There would be a number of ways of achieving the latter, but clearly the cheapest, quickest and, to those of us with a marked antipathy to the game, most cheerful way would simply be to cut off their legs with a chainsaw. Some readers will feel this is cruel and inhumane, but experts assure me that so long as it was blindfolded before tackling lan Poulter the chainsaw would suffer no lasting trauma.

Golf is not the only sport to be suffering under the ever-increasing bulk of humanity. In Scotland a whole football culture based on little men scurrying about the field has been obliterated by the increased affordability of crinkle-cut pies. Were he to reach maturity today, you suspect wee Jimmy Johnstone would weigh 200lb and be about as capable of jinking as the average refuse skip.

The super-sizing of humanity has also affected the ancient art of goalkeeping. "And the keeper made himself big" was once a popular phrase among television pundits. This hard-to-master skill which, in the case of Oliver Kahn at least, involved inflating his body like a bullfrog using a complex physiological process that converted a portion of his ego into hot air, is now no longer a necessity. Today's goalkeepers are already so big that if they made themselves any bigger they would fall through the earth's crust.

The same holds true of football fans, of course. Arsenal's new stadium may hold more than 50,000 people now, but the way things are going, in 10 years' time less than half that number will be able to squeeze in and even that will be putting a marked strain on the steelwork.

Jon Kelly

The diary of my brain surgery

The best G2 article I read in 2006 was Jon Kelly's diary of his brain tumour surgery. As well as providing an incredibly powerful account of his experience, he also managed to be very funny and entirely without self-pity - Sarah Lewis, Preston

Thursday 28.12.06 Monday November 7

They say it's going to rain today, that the temperature is going to take a dive. I couldn't care less - I'm going into hospital. Everything I've written until now has been speculation, a combination of educated guesswork and slightly morbid revelling in worst-case scenarios. The possibles and probables are about to turn into actuals and definites. Tomorrow they'll wake me up at 6.30am. Within the hour I'll be under anaesthetic and out until lunchtime on Wednesday. And what they do between 8am and 9pm could define the rest of my life. I'm just keeping my fingers crossed that the surgeons keep away from the pub tonight.

The temptation is to look upon the growth as a manifestation of some kind of inner turmoil which is about to be excised, or as the sins of my soul that will be cut out for good. I'm not going to do that because I know whatever flaws and demons I carry with me will still be there when the operation is over. But I know they will take from me more than a lump of cells. I've never gone through anything remotely like this before - I suppose I'm going to be changed for ever. Hopefully, something will be added too.

Wednesday November 23

As you can see, I'm not dead. The last couple of weeks have been a bit of a blur, which I suppose is a predictable side-effect of having strangers fiddle around inside your head for 13 hours. But the upshot of it is this: I'm here, and in good shape. I look rather weird, of course. The right half of my face doesn't work and I can't close my eye on that side. I have the haircut of a far-right extremist (or a member of the Bravery) and a huge scar around my temple. My sense of balance is shot: my best attempt at walking consists of shuffling like a Chelsea pensioner on his way to Ladbrokes. None of this bothers me too much. Because just before they stitched me back up, the surgeons checked my facial nerve and it seemed, though bruised and swollen, to be intact. So my chances of looking normal again are good.

Friday November 25

Before my operation, I expected the most troublesome aspect of my recovery to be the head wound left by the surgeons. Failing that, I dreaded losing my balance. I was wrong on both counts. By far the most irritating side-effect of my operation is my permanently open right eye. I wish the sodding thing would hurry up and let me wink like Sid James again. To guard against irritation and, potentially, an ocular ulcer, I have to swipe it with cotton wool dipped in saline fluid every couple of hours. Then I squeeze under the lower lid a substance called Viscotears. That's right, artificial tears. There's a ready-made literary device for all you aspiring novelists.

Friday December 9

Yesterday I celebrated the one-month anniversary of my operation by . . . going back to hospital. Don't worry, I've not started bleeding out of my nostrils or anything. It was a routine check-up. While I was there, my ENT surgeon told me he wanted to slice my right eyelid open and insert a sliver of precious metal. This isn't because I'm keen to engage in bizarre fetishistic practices. I just want to be able to shut both my peepers without having to use industrial quantities of surgical tape. Popping a gold weight into the lid will help it open and close. So hopefully, after this new op I'll look a bit less of a freak.

Now, I'm sure the more scientifically literate among you will know that the element Au is highly stable and inert: it's unlikely to break down, meaning the surgeon can just take it all out again if my nerve heals. I've read up on that too. But all I can think is: gold! Always believe in your soul! How bling is that? I really want to walk through an airport metal detector and, when the alarm goes off, declare nonchalantly, "Oh, I forgot. That must be the gold implant in my eye."

Lucy Mangan

Don't go there

Brilliant, brilliant Lucy Mangan - her five places not to go to was one of her funniest of the year - Sharon Brown, Bradford

Thursday 28.12.06 London. All year round, it is the European capital with the worst cuisine, worst traffic, highest prices and most unwelcoming natives, as well as being

bur dened with a service industry that has only the most tenuous connection with the concept of service or, indeed, industry. Don't go there. If you hanker after the London experience, sit in a bathful of your own sweat in a room full of exhaust fumes and pale, sneering people in shorts, and burn twenties with a lighter.

Rock

"I say, Arabella!"

"What is it, Bottletop?"

"Now that we've finished frittering away daddy's money at Winchborough College and Oxbridge, I quite fancy destroying the peace and tranquillity of a small Cornish fishing village with my braying voice and the kind of behaviour that would get me an Asbo, were I not protected by the amulet of overprivilege."

"Rilly, rilly good idea, Bottletop. I'm so glad we're the most important people in the world."

"Yah. Don't forget to put those bits of leather round your wrist - it's like, sooo much quicker than having to explain to everyone that yah, underneath this rugby shirt there's another rugby shirt, and yah, I've shared spliffs with a man whose Chelsea flat was sublet to a girl who kissed Prince Harry at Eton."

"Rock on, Bottletop! Do you see what I did there? Rock on!"

Yorkshire

Lovely scenery, but there are people in the West Riding who have lived there since 1106 but are still not accepted as true Yorkshiremen because rumour has it that their mother bought clogs from a pedlar who had a cousin in Prestbury, thereby blighting the bloodline forever. They make Londoners look like Hawaiian greeter girls. Plus you can't stray within 50 miles of Haworth sodding Parsonage without being assailed on all sides by Bronte bilge. The Branwell Tea Shoppe. The Helen Burns Sunbed Centre. Mr Rochester Opticians. Grace Poole Loft Conversions. What a load of Wuthering Shite.

Simon Hoggart

Hoarse words for Team Blair

Surely Simon Hoggart for his report of the Queen's speech - Judith Thomas, Wells

Thursday 28.12.06 It was the Queen's last speech prepared by Team Blair, and she sounded wearier than ever. Perhaps it was the beginning of a cold, perhaps it was her bad back. Or maybe it was something we can all relate to, such as existential despair. This stagnant pond full of drivel, she seemed to be saying in her hoarse voice - and next year, brand new Scottish drivel!

As she worked her way through all that New Labour stuff about "meeting the challenges", "better frameworks" and "putting the victim at the heart of the criminal justice system", she looked stooped and weary. At one point I half expected her to fling aside the wretched document and call for Helen Mirren to read the thing instead.

There was one laugh. When she announced an independent board to enhance confidence in government statistics, the peers joined in a deep, cynical chuckle. Curious then, that when she said that government "remains committed to peace in the Middle East", nobody laughed at all.

Before she arrived, the peers sat excitedly together. The official programme announced: Dress (a collar day). Lord Levy, at the heart of the police investigation into the sale of honours, arrived. Perhaps it was a feel-your-collar day. The peers' wives looked younger and more glamorous than ever, as if some had been cage-dancing at Spearmint Rhino. The tiara count was the highest yet - a tribute to Labour's economic policies, or even their doughty attempts to widen the gap between rich and poor.

Margaret Thatcher hobbled in, looking even older and more jaded than Her Majesty. Pauline Prescott was in the gallery, wearing a black hat so vast you could just make out her mouth under the rim. Someone's mobile phone went off. When the ceremony first began you could have been hanged for that. If they had had mobile phones.

Continued on page 8

Correction

* In G2, December 28, the favourite articles chosen by readers from the past year all carried the date "Thursday 28.12.06". What you should have seen was: Jonathan Watts - G2, March 15; Marina Hyde - G2, May 9; Sam Wollaston - G2, March 6; Jackie Ashley - Comment, August 7; Harry Pearson - Guardian Sport, July 28; Jon Kelly - G2, January 19; Lucy Mangan - G2, May 5; Simon Hoggart - Guardian, November 16; Hadley Freeman - G2, September 4; Richard Gott - Comment, July 22; Matthew Norman - Weekend, May 13; Jonathan Jones - G2, September 14; Matt Seaton - G2, April 19; Ben Goldacre - Guardian, October 7; Conor McPherson - G2, March 1; Iain Aitch - G2, July 20; George Galloway - Comment, April 20; Peter Bradshaw - Film and Music, October 16; Nancy Banks-Smith - G2, June 10.

Correction-Date: January 3, 2007 Wednesday

Load-Date: December 28, 2006



President fights rape 'lynch mob'

The Daily Telegraph (Australia)

January 26, 2007 Friday

State Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 24

Length: 389 words

Byline: JDion Nissenbaum

Body

MATP

JERUSALEM: In a bid to salvage his job and his reputation, Israeli President Moshe Katsav offered yesterday to step aside while he fights possible rape charges -- then went on TV to make an impassioned pledge to clear his name.

With his wife Gila looking on, Mr Katsav refused to resign during the hour-long address, categorically rejected the allegations and accused news media of serving as a lynch mob.

"I will fight to my last breath -- even if I have to fight a world war -- to prove my innocence," he said during his TV appearance, which was interrupted by a shouting match with a reporter whose coverage he had criticised.

Minutes after Mr Katsav spoke, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is facing his own, unrelated criminal inquiry, called for the president to resign. The presidential scandal comes as Israel's leaders face a growing crisis fed by the upheaval that began during last year's invasion of Lebanon.

Since the war ended in August, the justice minister has had to step down and face indecent assault charges for kissing a 21-year-old soldier, the military chief of staff has resigned under criticism of his wartime leadership, the attorney general has opened a criminal investigation into Mr Olmert's role in privatising a bank and his office manager has been placed under house arrest while police investigate allegations that she helped line up jobs for friends at the nation's tax authority.

Mr Katsav is fighting to avoid becoming the first sitting Israeli president to be charged with a crime. "It's an epidemic," said lawyer Michael Partem, of the Movement for Quality Government in Israel. "It's certainly a black mark on the government when a public official is caught, and more so when it's the head of the pyramid."

Mr Katsav's troubles began in July, one week before <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters captured two Israeli soldiers patrolling the Israel-Lebanon border on July 12.

Mr Katsav asked the attorney general to look into his claims that he was being blackmailed by a former employee who was threatening to accuse him of sexual misconduct if he didn't pay.

He gave investigators a copy of a secretly recorded phone call.

President fights rape 'lynch mob'

But the investigation, details of which have yet to be made public, quickly turned its focus on Mr Katsav as other <u>women</u> came forward to level similar accusations against the 61-year-old president.

Load-Date: January 25, 2007



The Gazette (Montreal)

December 31, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

Correction Appended

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Section: INSIGHT; Pg. A13

Length: 2067 words

Byline: LIZ FERGUSON, The Gazette

Body

6 Conservative candidate Felipe Calderon is declared the winner of a presidential election in Mexico. His opponent, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, unsuccessfully demands a recount.

7 While visiting France, and speaking of Quebec independence, Premier Jean Charest says: "The question today isn't whether we have the means. Yes, we do. Nobody questions that. The real question is the following: What is in our best interests? What is best for Quebec?" When PQ leader Andre Boisclair gets all excited about the first part of the remark, Charest reminds him: "A lot of things are possible without being desirable."

- 8 137 people are killed when an Airbus A-310 veers off the runway and bursts into flames in Irkutsk, Siberia.
- 9 Italy defeats France to win the World Cup of soccer. Thousands of Montrealers take to the streets to celebrate.
- 11 Bombs on several commuter trains and platforms kill more than 190 people in Mumbai, India.
- 12 <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas capture two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid. The incident sparks a 34-day war that kills at least 1,300 people in Lebanon and 158 in Israel, and causes massive destruction in Lebanon.
- 19 With the help of the Canadian government, Canadians citizens in Lebanon begin leaving the battered country.
- 25 Four UN peacekeepers, including Major Paeta Hess-von Kruedener of Kingston, Ont., are killed when Israel hits their observation post in the village of Khiam.
- 29 About 40,000 people attend the opening ceremony of the First World Outgames at the Olympic Stadium. Prime Minister Stephen Harper does not attend. His representative, Public Works Minister Michael Fortier, is roundly booed.
- 30 People around the word are appalled when an Israeli raid in Qana, Lebanon, kills at least 60 people, including 37 children.

august

- 1 After gastrointestinal surgery, Cuban leader Fidel Castro makes his brother Raul temporary president.
- A violent thunderstorm, with winds of up to 100 km an hour, fells trees and power cables. About 160,000 homes on Montreal Island and 450,000 across Quebec lose power.
- 5 The First World Outgames ends in front of what is described as a "small, but enthusiastic crowd" at the Big O.
- 6 As many as 15,000 Montrealers march to protest against civilian deaths in Israel's attacks on <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon. Federal and provincial politicians are later criticized for taking part because <u>Hezbollah</u>'s flags were prominently displayed and the federal government declared <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization in December 2002.
- 7 The action-comedy Bon Cop, Bad Cop sets a record for the biggest opening for a Quebec-made movie, grossing \$1.4 million Friday through Sunday.
- 10 British authorities arrest 24 British-born Muslims, saying they had planned use liquid explosives to blow up at least 10 transatlantic flights to the U.S. Thousands of passengers are delayed at airports around the world as increased security measures go into effect. Passengers are forbidden to bring drinking water or other liquids, gels, foams and creams into an airplane's cabin.
- 14 PQ leader Andre Boisclair acquires a seat in the National Assembly by winning a by-election in Pointe aux Trembles.
- 15 An explosion and fire in a Boisbriand factory spews a smoky cloud of chemicals over the town and leads to the evacuation of 1,500 people.
- 21 The city closes most of its outdoor swimming pools after tests commissioned by Le Journal de Montreal indicate the water is teeming with bacteria. Environment Minister Claude Bechard institutes tough rules, ordering public pools to test for chlorine and acid levels every three hours, and test for bacteria levels at least twice a month.
- 22 A Russian airliner crashes in Ukraine, killing all 171 people on board.
- 24 Scientists overturn decades of school astronomy lessons by decreeing that distant Pluto is not a planet.
- 27 In Lexington, Ky., a commuter jet trying to take off crashes into a field and bursts into flames, killing 49 people, including three Canadians.
- 28 A Greyhound bus crashes on Interstate 87 in upstate New York, killing five people, including three Montrealers.
- Bloc Quebecois MP Benoit Sauvageau dies in a traffic accident in his Repentigny riding.

SEPTEMBER

- 2 A masked man firebombs a Jewish boys school in Outremont, causing thousands of dollars in damages.
- 4 Crocodile Hunter Steve

Irwin is killed by a stingray while filming off Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

- 6 President George W. Bush admits the U.S. has secret CIA prisons in eight countries where suspected terrorists were aggressively interrogated.
- 10 A Cessna Skyhawk with three people aboard makes an emergency landing on Park Ave. just south of Mount Royal Ave. after its engine dies.
- 12 A Piper Cherokee crash lands in a St. Hubert industrial park.

- 2006 at a Glance: What a year mideast tensions, a war on terrorism, political wrangling, the olympics and an armed school rampage were just some of the highligh....
- In a speech at a German university, Pope Benedict XVI quotes a 14th-century Byzantine emperor as calling Islam "evil and inhuman." Protests ensue.
- 13 Kimveer Gill, 25, goes on a well-armed rampage at Dawson College, killing student Anastasia De Sousa, 18, and wounding 20 others before shooting himself.
- 18 A report by Justice Dennis O'Connor blames false information provided by the RCMP to the U.S. for Syrian-Canadian Maher Arar's eventual deportation and torture in Syria.
- 19 Guy Fournier resigns as chairman of the board of the CBC after making remarks about bestiality and bowel movements.
- In Thailand, prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra is overthrown in a bloodless coup.
- 25 Ama Jan, <u>women</u>'s rights advocate and a provincial director for the Ministry of <u>Women</u>'s Affairs in Afghanistan, is assassinated in Kandahar.
- 29 155 people die when a Brazilian airliner crashes in a densely forested region in the north of the country.
- 30 Three lanes of the de la Concorde Blvd. overpass in Laval collapse onto Highway 19, killing five people and injuring six others. The de Blois Blvd. overpass, about 700 metres north of de la Concorde Blvd., and built by the same company, is closed as a precaution. An emergency inspection of 18 similar overpasses is conducted by the city. All are deemed safe except for de Blois. De Blois and de la Concorde are to be demolished and rebuilt.

october

- 2 In Nickel Mines, Pa., a gunman takes over a one-room Amish schoolhouse, kills five young girls and seriously injures six others before killing himself.
- 4 Don Matthews resigns as head coach of the Alouettes and GM Jim Popp is named the new coach the same day.
- 7 Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, a critic of the war in Chechnya, is shot dead in the elevator of her Moscow apartment building.
- 11 New York Yankees pitcher and amateur pilot Cory Lidle and his flight instructor are killed when they crash into a high-rise in Manhattan, N.Y.
- 13 Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi economist, and his Grameen Bank win the Nobel Peace Prize for helping the poor though micro-credit.
- 14 A Beaconsfield man kills his wife and two daughters before shooting himself.
- The UN Security Council endorses international sanctions against North Korea in an effort to halt its nuclear program.
- 16 An N.D.G. woman is stabbed to death by her former boyfriend, who is then shot, though not killed, by police.
- 17 Former premier Lucien Bouchard raises hackles when he calls us, in effect, lazy. "We need to work more. We don't work enough. We work less than Ontarians, and infinitely less than the Americans."
- 18 When Mayor Gerald Tremblay reveals his plan to rename Park Ave. after former premier Robert Bourassa, residents and shopkeepers react with anger and dismay. A Help Save Park Ave. website is set up and the first of many demonstrations takes place over the weekend.
- 23 A plane crash in Nigeria kills 96 people.

26 Highway 19 in Laval, which had been closed for the overpass demolition,

finally re-opens.

- President George W. Bush signs a law calling for the building of an anti-immigrant fence along the border with Mexico.

november

- 1 Stocks plummet after the Conservative government breaks an election promise and decide to tax income trusts.
- 5 An Iraqi court rules Saddam Hussein should hang for crimes against humanity.
- Daniel Ortega is elected president of Nicaragua.
- 7 In U.S. mid-term elections, Democrats gain control of Congress for first time since '94.
- 8 U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld resigns.
- 11 Canada observes Remembrance Day, honouring those who served in long-ago wars and those recently lost in Afghanistan. By this day, a total of 43 Canadians had died in Afghanistan since 2002, with 35 of those deaths this year.
- 13 The Montreal Outgames reveals a deficit of about \$5.3 million. About \$2.2-million is owed to suppliers, the rest to governments. The Quebec government forgives the Games a
- \$1.4-million line of credit.
- 14 A suspected Russian spy is arrested at Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport before he can leave the country.
- 15 Federal Environment Minister Rona Ambrose tells a climate change conference in Nairobi, Kenya, that it will be "very, very difficult for Canada to reach the Kyoto target," and places the blame on the previous Liberal government. Critics say her remarks were inappropriate for an international event.
- 16 Segolene Royal is elected president of France's Socialist Party, giving her a chance to become France's first **female** president.
- 17 Across North America, people line up for days to buy the new Playstation 3 video-game console.
- 19 The Alouettes lose the Grey Cup, 25-14, against the B.C. Lions in Winnipeg.
- 21 Lebanese Industry Minister Pierre Gemayel, an opponent of Syrian involvement in the country, is assassinated in Beirut.
- 22 The RCMP calls it "one of the most important police operations in the history of Canada" more than 700 police officers take part in Project Colisee, a \$10-million, four-year effort that leads to the arrest of 73 alleged Mafia leaders in the Montreal area, removing the head and the body of the organization.
- Prime Minister Stephen Harper introduces a motion to recognize that "Quebecois" form a nation within a united Canada. Some pundits credit him with taking the wind out of the Bloc Quebecois sails, because the Bloc had tabled a similar motion without the crucial "within a united Canada." Others say the move will come back to haunt him.
- 23 In London, Alexander Litvinenko, a former colonel in the KGB, dies of radiation poisoning after accusing Russian president Vladimir Putin of ordering his death. Litvinenko had been investigating the murder of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

28 Montreal city councillors vote 40-22 to rename Park Ave. after Robert Bourassa. Protesters vow to continue to fight the change, which now goes to the Commission de toponymie.

december

- 2 Stephane Dion is the surprise winner of the Liberal Party leadership. He had been in third place after the second ballot, but an alliance with fourth-place Gerard Kennedy allowed him to defeat front-runners Bob Rae and Michael Ignatieff.
- Alberta Progressive Conservatives elect Ed Stelmach as their leader and premier.
- 3 Hugo Chavez is re-elected president of Venezuela.
- More than 1,000 people are dead or missing after Typhoon Durian unleashes rivers of mud and volcanic ash on villages in the Bicol region of the Philippines.
- 6 NASA says recent erosion on Mars could be evidence of flowing water, hinting at the possibility of life on the planet.
- After changing his story about what he knew and when he knew it in the Maher Arar case, RCMP commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli faces intense pressure to resign and he does so.
- 7 MPs vote 175-123 against the Tories' bid to introduce legislation to restore the traditional definition of marriage and rescind the right of gays to marry.
- 12 Canadian soldiers in Kandahar kill Abdul Rahman, believed to be about 90, after he rides his motorcycle through a security cordon. He was Afghan President Hamid Karzai's elementary school teacher.
- 18 Prime Minister Stephen Harper announces farmers will be able to buy back 4,450 hectares of land that had been expropriated almost 40 years ago to build Mirabel airport.
- 19 About 200 police officers close down two Montreal "boiler rooms," seize \$90,000 in cash, computers and two handguns and arrest 39 telemarketers, who had been preying on vulnerable seniors in the U.S.
- 26 An earthquake off the southern tip of Taiwan kills one person and injures 20.
- 30 A car bomb blamed on the Basque separatist group ETA exploded at Madrid international airport, injuring 26 people and signalling the end of a nine-month ceasefire.
- Former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein is executed for crimes against humanity.

Correction

The Gazette reported in its year-in-review pages on Sunday that at least 60 people had died in an Israeli attack on Qana, Lebanon, on Aug. 30. However, the Lebanese Health Ministry and Human Rights Watch later said they could confirm only 28 deaths.

Correction-Date: January 3, 2007

Graphic

Colour Photo: SOTHEBY'S; Pablo Picasso's 1941 painting Dora Maar au Chat sold for \$95.2 million U.S. at auction in May.; Colour

Photo: JASPER JUINEN, AP FILE PHOTO; Team captain Fabio Cannavaro couldn't contain his joy after Italy won the World Cup in July.;

Colour Photo: AP FILE PHOTO; The suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, were a mess after Israeli warplanes launched airstrikes in July.; Colour

Photo: DAVE SIDAWAY, GAZETTE FILE PHOTO; Stephane Dion rode Gerard Kennedy's support to the Liberal leadership in December.; Colour

Photo: DAVE SIDAWAY, GAZETTE FILE PHOTO; After his plane lost engine power, pilot Gian Piero Ciambella glided his Cessna safely to the ground on Park Ave. in September.

Load-Date: December 31, 2006



<u>Lebanon pushes Tories down: Voters don't like to see Canada sidling up to</u> *Americans*

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

August 3, 2006 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 362 words

Byline: Sue Bailey, Canadian Press

Dateline: OTTAWA

Body

OTTAWA -- A new poll suggests Tory support is sliding because Canada is seen as becoming too cozy with the U.S. on Middle East policy.

The results by Decima Research put the Conservatives and Liberals in a virtual tie nationally.

The Tories had 32 per cent support compared with 31 per cent for the Liberals and 16 per cent for the New Democrats.

But the Liberals widened their Ontario lead to 42 per cent of voter support compared with 33 per cent for the Conservatives, and have pulled in front of the Tories in Quebec.

"When we look at the combination of the alignment of the government with the current U.S. policy -- in particular with respect to Lebanon -- it's reasonable to assume it's one of the factors that's driving Conservative support down," said Decima's Bruce Anderson.

Middle East policy and hefty new defence spending announced by the Tories in June have apparently left some Quebec voters cold, Anderson says.

The province tends to be the most pacifist in Canada. It's also where Harper has invested most of his political capital in a drive for a majority government.

Harper has been vilified by critics for his pro-Israel stance, but Anderson notes that the Tory slide started in June before fighting between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> began killing hundreds of civilians, many of them Lebanese children.

Liberals have also taken the lead in crucial urban ridings by a margin of 35 per cent to 29, and are increasingly preferred by **women** and by voters aged 25 to 34.

The popularity plunge is expected to be a hot topic as the Conservative caucus gathers this week for a retreat in Cornwall. Ont.

Page 2 of 2

Lebanon pushes Tories down: Voters don't like to see Canada sidling up to Americans

Meanwhile, Jewish and Arab <u>Women</u> for Peace is calling on Canadians to push for a peaceful solution to the Lebanon conflict.

The Ottawa-based group says people must not remain silent as innocent lives are lost, and the government should call for an immediate ceasefire.

Organizer Tyseer Aboulnasr, a Muslim originally from Egypt, said Jews and Arabs must think of their children's futures and not about scoring political points.

"We cannot afford to be silent any more," she told about 70 supporters, including a handful of men, gathered at the National War Memorial yesterday.

Graphic

Photo: The Associated Press; Band of brothers . . . Israeli soldiers wish each other luck before marching into Lebanon yesterday.

Load-Date: August 3, 2006



Mid-East Christians keep faith despite exodus

The Irish Times

December 21, 2006 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 832 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Bethlehem, site of Jesus's birth, is not alone in its shifting religious patterns, writes Michael Jansen

The cash-strapped Hamas government has allocated \$50,000 (EUR 38,000) for Christmas commemorations in Bethlehem, and Israel has pledged to facili- tate the transit of 18,000 pilgrims to the Church of the Nativity for the feast. But few of the little town's native Christians will be there to celebrate. In 1948, Bethlehem was 90 per cent Christian; now it is 65 per cent Muslim.

Christians have emigrated while Muslims from the neighbourhood have moved into Bethlehem, which is surrounded by Israel's colonies and wall complex and cut off from Jerusalem by a terminal on the border of the West Bank.

Israel's military occupation and settlement policies, which have displaced Muslims, have also squeezed Bethlehem economically so that few of its inhabitants can make a living by selling services and mementoes to pilgrims. When tourism was at its height, 100,000 visited each month; today that figure is 20,000. Most visitors are bused in for a few hours and spend little money.

The violence and upheaval of two Palestinian risings have also prompted Christians to leave. Although Christians participated in the first intifada (1987-93), they have been largely excluded from the second, which began in 2000. This revolt against Israel has been largely conducted by Muslim fundamentalists initially fostered by the West to counter the region's four secular nationalist movements - the Syrian Social National Party, the Arab Nationalists, the Baath, and the communists, all founded by Christians with a pan-Arab and anti-Israel agenda. When they failed to achieve these objectives, fundamentalists took over the struggle for unity and against Israel.

Hostile graffiti have been spray-painted on the walls of churches, threatening letters have been sent to Christians, and Christian properties have been confiscated by Israel and illegally appropriated by corrupt Palestinian officials. The fall of the secular Fatah movement from power and the formation of a government by Hamas has heightened Christian anxieties.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi Christians are also fleeing the chaos and violence unleashed by the 2003 US occupation. In 1990, before the imposition of sanctions and the 1991 US-led war, Christians numbered 600,000, about 3 per cent of the population.

Most Iraqi Christians are ethnic Assyrians and members of the ancient Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac churches.

Sanctions and warfare have taken their toll: half a million have reportedly left. The outflow has increased since 2004 due to attacks on churches, merchants selling alcoholic drinks, and professors and teachers. Christian <u>women</u> have been forced to don the hijab, quit their jobs or studies and remain at home. Many Christian families have

Mid-East Christians keep faith despite exodus

emigrated to the Kurdish area, Jordan and Syria where there is a local Chaldean community which assists Iraqi refugees.

Syrian Christians comprise 6.5 per cent of the country's 17 million citizens. Syrian Orthodox and Catholic Christians enjoy a privileged position in secular Baathist Syria, where many joined the ranks of the ruling party. But some are leaving due to regional instability, the rise of fundamentalism and the fear that Iraq's instability could infect Syria.

Jordan's Christians, about 2 per cent of the population of six million, enjoy the protection and favour of the monarch and the establishment, and benefit from the kingdom's political stability. While some members of the Christian community are well-connected and wealthy, many remain poor and are eager to emigrate to lands where they feel they can make better lives for themselves and their children.

Many of Lebanon's Christians, who account for 35 per cent of the country's citizens, left during the civil war but flooded back to Beirut during the period of reconstruction. Encouraged by a business boom, they invested in hotels, manufacturing, and services.

But Israel's onslaught on the country's infrastructure during July and August dealt a severe blow to their confidence in the country, and the rumbling political crisis between the political establishment and <u>Hizbullah</u> is causing many to consider leaving for good.

Young Christians, in particular, argue that they have no future in Lebanon.

Many of those who have dual nationality have already departed, while others are trying to secure immigration visas.

In addition to the collapse of secular nationalism and the rise of Muslim fundamentalism, the clash of civilisations is another factor driving Christians from the lands where Christianity emerged and took root.

Western host countries make it easier for Christians than Muslims to emigrate.

Many Christians have relatives who are prepared to sponsor them in these distant countries.

If emigration continues at the current rate, there soon may be no Christians in the land of Jesus's birth, ministry and death. And only small pockets in countries where the church was originally established.

Load-Date: December 21, 2006



IN SHORT

The Southland Times (New Zealand)
February 8, 2007 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 413 words

Body

Man charged after fatal crash A 35-year-old man in the car in which Ashburton woman Melissa Brown was killed has been charged with failing to supply a blood sample after a crash. The 22-year-old died when the car she was a passenger in crashed near the Rakaia River bridge on State Highway 1 on Wednesday last week. She was found about 200m from the crash site after apparently being thrown from the car and washed down an irrigation canal. The man facing a charge of failing to provide a blood sample will appear in the Ashburton District Court on Monday.

Shows postponed American rock trio Crosby, Stills and Nash have postponed by several months their upcoming New Zealand and Australia tour.

The band's management said the postponement was caused by medical issues with David Crosby. Tickets sold for the Auckland and Christchurch shows next month will be valid for the new shows in November.

Lebanon team A specialist munitions team of 10 New Zealand Defence Force personnel is preparing to leave for Lebanon tomorrow. Led by a navy officer and made up of three navy divers and six army engineers, the team will locate and dispose of unexploded munitions left after the conflict between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> in July last year.

Girls can do anything <u>Female</u> police recruits have taken out the top prizes in the latest batch of graduates. Today, 73 new police officers will enter the workforce after they graduate from the Royal New Zealand Police College at Papakowhai, near Wellington. A third of the recruits are <u>women</u>, and amongst them they won awards for both first and second officers overall in the intake..

Female officers also won the academic prize and the prize for tactical skills.

Poll shows indifference More than half of New Zealanders consider Waitangi Day insignificant to them, a poll shows. The poll, undertaken by Research New Zealand and broadcast on Radio New Zealand yesterday, showed that 55 percent of people surveyed did not consider Waitangi day significant. The day was deemed significant for 43 percent of people.

Fairfax staff-NZPA 201840 201840 202639 200646 201926 201840 201908 204670 203172 200346 203954 202417 202271 203974 200595 201199 202577 200184 201567 201210 201928 202807 200346 201321 201304 202331 203226 202715 204300 202842 201050 202755 203333 202807 204367 204460 201124 204471 200320 201607 203398 201721 204212 203363 203166 204669 201943 203824 200031 203530 203523 203197 204319 201420 203135 200348 203468 201720 200350 201938 200350

Load-Date: February 7, 2007

IN SHORT



Israeli minister faces jail for forcing kiss on female soldier

The Australian (Australia)
February 1, 2007 Thursday
All-round Metro Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 407 words

Body

AΡ

TEL AVIV: Former justice minister Haim Ramon was convicted last night of kissing a young <u>female</u> soldier against her will, adding a new layer of scandal to Israel's beleaguered leadership.

The verdict in Tel Aviv's Magistrates Court was expected to clear the way for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to launch a major cabinet shake-up.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after forcing a kiss on the 21-year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with <u>Hezbollah</u> guerillas in Lebanon last July. Ramon, who is divorced, claimed the woman had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

"There are some lines that cannot be crossed," said judge Hayuta Kochan, who read out the unanimous verdict of a three-judge panel.

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

Ramon could face up to three years in prison. He faces sentencing on February 21. The former minister, who left the courthouse without commenting to reporters, is expected to appeal against the conviction. In a statement, Mr Olmert's office said the Prime Minister "expressed sorrow" at Ramon's conviction.

Ramon, a member of Mr Olmert's Kadima Party, was a key political ally of the Prime Minister and served as justice minister until the indictment forced him to step down last August. He has remained a member of parliament.

Ramon arrived to chaotic scenes at the court. Hordes of reporters and TV cameras swarmed around him as he made his way to the small courtroom. With photographers snapping his picture, he sat stony-faced ahead of the verdict.

As the half-hour verdict was read, a visibly anxious Ramon held his head in his hands. After the decision, his girlfriend hugged him in support.

The verdict said Ramon's defence was full of contradictions, and that it was obvious the young soldier was "authentic and trustworthy" and had suffered a "traumatic experience".

"We completely endorse the plaintiff's version," it said.

Israeli minister faces jail for forcing kiss on female soldier

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

Israel's Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz said last week he would indict President Moshe Katsav on charges of raping and sexually assaulting former <u>female</u> employees.

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

Load-Date: January 31, 2007



Israeli president faces sex scandal: Attorney general threatens charges, including rape

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

January 24, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 429 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - The often questionable universe of Israeli politics suffered another heavy blow to its reputation Tuesday when the country's attorney general announced he intends to charge President Moshe Katsav with sex crimes including rape.

Six separate indictments against Israel's 61-year-old ceremonial head of state are to be handed down as the Israeli government reels from severe domestic criticism over its handling of the war against <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon last summer.

Legal authorities also continued to investigate separate corruption allegations against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert involving the sale of his home and helping friends when a bank was privatized. Olmert's former justice minister, Haim Ramon, was recently forced to resign after being charged with forcing a soldier to kiss him.

The charges to be brought against Katsav by Attorney General Menahem Mazuz involve sexual harassment and sexual coercion, breaches of trust, obstruction of justice and illegally accepting gifts in return for favours.

If convicted on all counts he could face more than 20 years in jail.

Four <u>women</u> who worked for Katsav since he became president in 2000 or earlier, when he was Israel's tourism minister, have accused him of sexual improprieties. Images of Katsav's young accusers, with their faces blurred, have appeared in the Israeli media for some time and were widely published again late Tuesday.

The pending indictments, which followed a long investigation, triggered a storm of protest from every Israeli political faction, with demands that Katsav resign immediately or face impeachment. Unless impeached by the three quarters of the deputies in the Israeli Knesset and removed from office, Katsav has political immunity from prosecution until his seven-year term ends in July.

"The indictment that was served against the president is as serious as it gets, but we need to remember that as long as the president is in office, there is no way to actually submit an indictment against him," said Labour Knesset member Shelly Yacinovitch, who praised the president's accusers for their bravery in the face of "mudslinging" designed to destroy their reputations.

Israeli president faces sex scandal: Attorney general threatens charges, including rape

"Therefore, the Knesset needs to act to dismiss the president immediately," she said.

Education Minister Yuli Tamir joined the nearly universal calls for Katsav to resign, saying the Israeli parliament needed "to dismiss the president immediately" in order "not to embarrass the students and people in education."

Katsav, who grew up in poverty after his family arrived in Israel as refugees, has denied all the charges.

Load-Date: January 24, 2007



Ministers say sheik has to go

The Courier Mail (Australia)

April 10, 2007 Tuesday

Late City Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 **Length:** 425 words

Body

'The sheik needs to say if he wishes to continue as a citizen of Australia or reside in an alternate country'

FEDERAL ministers yesterday called for Australia's controversial mufti to quit or be sacked, after he called on Muslims to support the hardline Iran regime.

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews said Sheik Taj Aldin al-Hilali needed to reconsider his Australian citizenship but did not threaten to revoke it.

Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer said Sheik Hilali was a "massive embarrassment" who should give up his position.

Iranian media reported that while on a visit to Iran, Sheik Hilali urged Muslims to unite behind Tehran and not "kneel" to the enemies of Islam.

"The mufti of Australia has called on the Islamic world to stand in the trenches with the Islamic Republic of Iran which possesses the might and the power," the Iranian Alalam News reported in Arabic on its website on Saturday.

"The Islamic nation will not kneel in front of its enemies, never," Sheik Hilali was reported as saying.

The outspoken cleric has previously caused furore by comparing <u>women</u> to uncovered meat and saying Muslims were more worthy of Australian citizenship than those of European convict ancestry.

Mr Andrews said the mufti should consider a future outside Australia.

"The Australian community has lost patience with the sheik," he said. "The sheik needs to say if he wishes to continue as a citizen of Australia or reside in an alternate country."

However, Mr Andrews' spokeswoman said there were no grounds for cancelling the Muslim leader's citizenship.

Sheik Hilali was granted citizenship by the Labor government in 1990 after political intervention by former prime minister Paul Keating to prevent his deportation. He had been slated to be refused Australian citizenship, and would have had to leave the country.

Mr Downer called the mufti an embarrassment.

Ministers say sheik has to go

"Here is a man who travels the world making all sorts of completely absurd and incredible comments," he said. "This reflects on Australian Muslims and it reflects on Australia.

"My view is that he has just got to be removed as the leader of the Islamic community in Australia and some moderate and reasonable person needs to take his place."

Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd said the mufti's latest remarks should be condemned because the Iran government backed *Hezbollah*, a global terrorist organisation.

"When Sheik Hilali calls on Australian Muslims to join in the trenches and fight with Iran, quite plainly, Sheik Hilali has gone, once again, a bridge too far," Mr Rudd said.

Load-Date: April 10, 2007



'Evidence to charge' President

The Australian (Australia)
October 17, 2006 Tuesday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

Length: 417 words

Byline: Correspondents in Tel Aviv

Body

AFP. AP

ISRAELI police have recommended that President Moshe Katsav be charged with rape, sexual assault and fraud, the most serious charges ever to face an Israeli leader.

Investigating officers said last night they had enough evidence to indict Mr Katsav.

The President, due to open the new session of parliament overnight, is immune from prosecution as holder of the largely ceremonial post but could face impeachment by the Knesset.

"There is sufficient evidence indicating that in several cases ... the President carried out acts of rape, forced sexual acts, sexual acts without consent and sexual harassment," the investigators said in a statement released after a meeting with Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz. "There is sufficient evidence indicating violation of the law banning wire-tapping by the President."

Mr Katsav, who has denied the allegations and says he is the victim of a "witch-hunt", could face between three and 16 years in prison if convicted.

Police have investigated 10 complaints of rape and sexual harassment by people who worked for Mr Katsav during his presidency and when he was tourism minister. Mr Katsav has been questioned five times over allegations he forced *female* employees to have sex with him.

Mr Mazuz is expected to decide soon whether to file an indictment against Mr Katsav, a married father of five, in three or four of those cases.

Mr Katsav, from the right-wing Likud party, was elected President by MPs in July 2000 as an outsider, upsetting frontrunner Shimon Peres, an ex-premier and Nobel peace laureate.

Mr Katsav's lawyer Zion Amir said last night: "Police have no legal authority to make any recommendations of this type.

"This is not the first time police have recommended the indictment of senior figures, including prime ministers, and those recommendations have all been rejected."

'Evidence to charge' President

The decision came on the eve of the opening of parliament's winter session, during which the president traditionally makes a speech. Mr Katsav said following the police announcement that he would attend Monday's ceremony but would not speak.

He has been under criminal investigation since July, when a senior <u>female</u> aide complained she was sexually harassed while working with him.

The President filed a simultaneous complaint to Mr Mazuz against the aide for extortion.

The Katsav case is the latest blow to Israel's leadership, with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Government steering its way through public anger over the failings of its 34-day war against *Hezbollah* in Lebanon.

Load-Date: October 16, 2006



Former Israeli justice minister is convicted of forcibly kissing woman

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 384 words

Byline: New York Times News

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

An Israeli court convicted Haim Ramon, former justice minister, Wednesday on charges that, while in office, he forcibly kissed a young <u>female</u> soldier. The outcome in the highly publicized case has added to the cloud of scandal surrounding the country's leadership.

Ramon resigned after he was indicted in August, and his duties were assumed on an interim basis by the foreign minister, Tzipi Livni. Now that Ramon has been convicted, in the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert may look to name a permanent new justice minister and make other changes to re-energize his government.

The verdict comes a week after the president of Israel, Moshe Katsav, suspended himself from office for three months while prosecutors weigh whether to charge him with rape and sexual assault. The Justice Ministry says such charges are likely, but prosecutors have not made a final decision.

Ramon, 56, was charged with kissing a 21-year-old soldier at a government office on July 12, the day the war with *Hezbollah* began.

Ramon said the woman had flirted with him at an office gathering and had asked to have her picture taken with him. In court, Ramon's attorneys showed a photograph of the two hugging each other as they posed for the camera. In his testimony, Ramon acknowledged the kiss but said it was consensual.

However, the soldier said Ramon had kissed her against her will, and the three-judge panel concurred.

Television camera crews and photographers swarmed around Ramon Wednesday as he left the courthouse accompanied by his girlfriend. He did not comment on the verdict. He is due to be sentenced in about three weeks and could receive a prison sentence.

Separately Wednesday, Olmert's office said he had asked security officials to examine the possibility of rerouting part of the separation barrier Israel is building around the West Bank, to take in two additional Jewish settlements. Under current plans, the two settlements, Nili and Naaleh, will fall outside the barrier.

The Haaretz newspaper reported that Olmert had already approved the change, but Olmert's office said he had only asked for a review and could not modify the barrier route on his own.

Former Israeli justice minister is convicted of forcibly kissing woman

If the barrier is moved, Haaretz said, about 20,000 more Palestinians will find themselves on the western, or Israeli, side of the fence.

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Haim Ramon, ex-justice minister of Israel, resigned in August.

Load-Date: June 26, 2007



Israel suspends air strikes after carnage

Bath Chronicle

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: Pg. 6

Length: 427 words

Body

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

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

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

Early today an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council passed a statement expressing "extreme shock and distress", but not condemnation, of the civilian bombing in Qana.

The announcement of the pause in overflights - first made by the US State Department - appeared to reflect American pressure on Israel to make a concession after the strike.

Israeli officials confirmed that Israel had agreed to the pause.

However, the officials left open the possibility that Israel might hit targets to stop imminent attacks on Israel, and that the suspension could last less than 48 hours if the military completed its inquiry and interpretation before then.

The officials said Israel would allow opening of corridors for 24 hours for Lebanese civilians who wanted to leave south Lebanon for the north and would maintain land, sea and air corridors for humanitarian assistance.

The attack on Qana brought Lebanon's death toll to more than 510 and pushed American peace efforts to a crucial juncture, as fury at the US flared in Lebanon. The Beirut government said it would no longer negotiate over a US peace package without an unconditional ceasefire.

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

Two extended families, the Shalhoubs and the Hashems, had gathered together in the house for shelter from another night of Israeli bombardment in the border area when the 1am strike brought the building down.

"I was so afraid. There was dirt and rocks and I couldn't see. Everything was black," said 13-year-old Noor Hashem, who survived, although her five siblings did not. She was pulled out of the ruins by her uncle, whose wife and five children also died.

Israel suspends air strikes after carnage

Israel apologised for the deaths but blamed $\underline{\textit{Hezbollah}}$ guerillas, saying they had fired rockets into northern Israel from near the building.

news@bathchron.co.uk

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



<u>California Lawmaker Becomes Highest-Ranking Official To Say He's a</u> Nonbeliever - Correction Appended

New York Sun (Archive) March 13, 2007 Tuesday

Correction Appended

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 6

Length: 935 words

Byline: JOSH GERSTEIN -, Staff Reporter of the Sun

Dateline: SAN FRANCISCO

Body

A California congressman is breaking a longstanding taboo by declaring himself a nonbeliever.

Fortney "Pete" Stark Jr., an 18-term Democratic veteran of the House, made the unusual declaration after being queried by secular groups running a contest to find the highest-ranking atheist in American politics.

"When the Secular Coalition asked me to complete a survey on my religious beliefs, I indicated I am a Unitarian who does not believe in a supreme being," Mr. Stark, 75, said in an statement emailed to The New York Sun.

Atheist groups hailed Mr. Stark yesterday as the first member of Congress to declare that he does not believe in God. "With Stark's courageous public announcement of his nontheism, it is our hope that he will become an inspiration for others who have hidden their conclusions for too long," the executive director of the American Humanist Association, Roy Speckhardt, said.

Mr. Stark's declaration notwithstanding, the contest sponsored by the Secular Coalition of America hardly had politicians clamoring to embrace nonbelief. A spokeswoman for the group, Lori Lipman Brown, said 47 people entered to win \$1,000 by identifying the highest-ranking politician who is an atheist. The only other politicians willing to identify themselves as nonbelievers were two school board members and one town meeting member. Aside from Mr. Stark, no state or federal official at any level agreed to be named as an atheist.

"That looks rather distressing, especially if we count 30 million people, or 10% of Americans, as nonbelievers," Ms. Brown said, citing figures from opinion polls. Still, she said she was "not at all surprised" that so few politicians said they were nonbelievers. "That could be political suicide," Ms. Brown, a former Nevada state senator, said.

Ms. Brown pointed to a recent USA Today/Gallup Poll that found 53% of Americans would not consider voting for an atheist presidential candidate. Homosexuals, the repeatedly divorced, Jews, Mormons, Catholics, and <u>women</u> all fared better, with a majority of Americans willing to consider them as candidates. "People who don't believe in God are the most distrusted minority in the United States," she said.

The Senate's official historian, Donald Ritchie, said he thought the claim that Mr. Stark was the first avowed nonbeliever in Congress was probably correct.

"A lot of them don't list an affiliation but they don't say they don't believe or they're not religious," Mr. Ritchie said. "We've never had a Madalyn Murray O'Hair-type up here, somebody who made a crusade of it."

Mr. Stark's press secretary, Yoni Cohen, said the congressman was not available for an interview yesterday. Mr. Stark's statement suggested that he disclosed his religious views to promote the separation of church and state and to "stop the promotion of narrow religious beliefs in science, marriage contracts, the military and the provision of social services."

Mr. Stark, whose district covers suburban and rural areas southeast of Oakland, is one of the most liberal Democrats in Congress. Last year, he got a 95% score from Americans for Democratic Action. His voting record has caused concern among some pro-Israel activists.

During Israel's war with <u>Hezbollah</u> last summer, he was one of only eight members of Congress to vote against a resolution backing Israel and condemning Hamas and **Hezbollah**.

A blogger who discussed the issue with Mr. Stark, Amos Bitzan, said the congressman opposed the measure because he viewed it as unreasonably skewed toward Israel. However, Mr. Bitzan, a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley, said Mr. Stark rejected a report by two professors, Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, who argued that the American government is in the thrall of pro-Israel zealots. The congressman noted that a professor popular on the left, Noam Chomsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also took issue with the paper, Mr. Bitzan said.

In a recent tally conducted by the Religion News Service, 393 House members described themselves as Christian or part of a denomination that considers itself Christian. Thirty said they were Jewish, two reported being Buddhists, and one was Muslim. On the opposite side of the Capitol, 87 senators reported being Christian, while 13 were Jewish.

The Sun contacted the six members of Congress found to be "unaffiliated" in that survey, Mark Udall of Colorado, Neil Abercrombie of Hawaii, John Olver and John Tierney of Massachusetts, Earl Blumenauer of Oregon, and Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin. All are Democrats.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Olver, Sara Burch, said her boss did not wish to expand on the unaffiliated designation. "He just thinks religion is a personal matter," she said. "'Non-affiliated,' that's just his way of saying, 'To me, it's personal.'"

A spokeswoman for Mr. Blumenauer, Erin Allweiss, said the Oregon native had no comment. Ms. Baldwin and Messrs. Udall, Abercrombie, and Tierney did not respond to the Sun's inquiry about whether their unaffiliated status should be viewed as a lack of religious belief.

A spokesman for the American Humanist Association, Fred Edwords, said the meager results of the contest undercut claims that secularists have taken over American society. "When people say there's a war on Christianity or there's a war on Christmas, they're talking through their hats," he said. Mr. Edwords said he regularly sees claims that atheists are dominating Congress, the bureaucracy, public schools, universities, and the courts. "The few of us that exist would be spread pretty thin if we're supposed to be overrepresented in so many places," he said.

Correction

Amos Bitzan is the spelling of the name of a blogger who met with Rep. Fortney "Pete" Stark last year. Mr. Bitzan's name was misspelled in an article on page 6 of the March 13 Sun.

California Lawmaker Becomes Highest-Ranking Official To Say He's a Nonbeliever

Correction-Date: March 15, 2007

Load-Date: October 10, 2007



'Evidence to charge' President

The Australian (Australia)
October 17, 2006 Tuesday
All-round Metro Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

Length: 409 words

Byline: Correspondents in Tel Aviv

Body

AFP. AP

ISRAELI police have recommended that President Moshe Katsav be charged with rape, sexual assault and fraud, the most serious charges an Israeli leader has ever faced.

Investigating officers said last night they had enough evidence to indict Mr Katsav.

"There is sufficient evidence indicating that in several cases ... the President carried out acts of rape, forced sexual acts, sexual acts without consent and sexual harassment," the investigators said in a statement released after a meeting with Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz. "There is sufficient evidence indicating violation of the law banning wire-tapping by the President."

Under pressure to resign from his largely ceremonial post, Mr Katsav cancelled an appearance to open the new session of parliament last night after several politicians threatened a boycott.

The bland 60-year-old career politician, who rose from obscurity to become head of state in 2000, is immune from prosecution while President, but could be charged if impeached by the Knesset.

Mr Katsav, who has denied the allegations and says he is the victim of a "witch-hunt", could face between three and 16 years in prison if convicted.

Police have investigated 10 complaints of rape and sexual harassment by people who worked for Mr Katsav during his presidency and when he was tourism minister. He has been questioned five times over allegations that he forced *female* employees to have sex with him.

Mr Mazuz is expected to decide soon whether to file an indictment against Mr Katsav, a married father of five, in three or four of those cases.

Mr Katsav, from the right-wing Likud party, was elected President by MPs as an outsider, upsetting frontrunner Shimon Peres, an ex-premier and Nobel peace laureate.

Mr Katsav's lawyer Zion Amir said last night: "Police have no legal authority to make any recommendations of this type.

'Evidence to charge' President

"This is not the first time police have recommended the indictment of senior figures, including prime ministers, and those recommendations have all been rejected."

He has been under criminal investigation since July, when a senior <u>female</u> aide complained she was sexually harassed while working with him.

The President filed a simultaneous complaint to Mr Mazuz against the aide for extortion.

The Katsav case is the latest blow to Israel's leadership, with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Government steering its way through public anger over the failings of its 34-day war against *Hezbollah* in Lebanon.

Load-Date: October 17, 2006



Tories tied with Liberals: poll: Perceived as too cozy with U.S.; Conservatives fall to third place in Quebec

The Gazette (Montreal)

August 3, 2006 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 375 words

Byline: CP

Dateline: OTTAWA

Body

A new poll suggests Tory support is sliding over voter concern that Canada has become too cozy with the United States on Middle East policy.

The latest results by Decima Research, released to the Canadian Press, put the Conservatives and Liberals in a virtual tie nationally. The Tories had 32 per cent support, compared with 31 per cent for the Liberals and 16 per cent for the New Democrats.

But the Liberals widened their Ontario lead to 42 per cent, compared with 33 per cent for the Conservatives, and pulled in front of the Tories in Quebec for the first time since last winter's election campaign. Both trail the Bloc Quebecois.

"When we look at the combination of the alignment of the government with the current U.S. administration policy on the Middle East - and in particular with respect to the Lebanon-Israel conflict - it's reasonable to assume it's one of the factors that's driving Conservative support down in the near term," said Decima CEO Bruce Anderson.

Liberals have also taken the lead in crucial urban ridings, by a margin of 35 per cent to 29 per cent, and are increasingly preferred by **women** and by voters age 25 to 34, the poll suggests.

Middle East policy and hefty new defence spending announced by the Tories in June have apparently left some Quebec voters cold, Anderson said.

But he noted the party's slide started in June - before fighting between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> began killing hundreds of civilians.

Anderson cautioned against reading too much into the latest telephone poll of 1,000 Canadians, taken July 27 to 31. "I wouldn't say the Conservatives have fallen into some sort of abyss.

"We're talking about shifts that are significant in terms of whether they portend a Conservative minority or majority - or even the outcome of an election.

"But people know the election isn't going to be held right now."

Tories tied with Liberals: poll: Perceived as too cozy with U.S.; Conservatives fall to third place in Quebec

Indeed, the popularity plunge is sure to be a hot topic as the Conservative caucus gathers this week for a retreat in Cornwall. Talk of the minority government engineering its own defeat in order to call a snap election this fall has dissipated as polls show it lacks momentum.

The poll is considered accurate to within three percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is higher for regional breakdowns.

Load-Date: August 3, 2006



A phone call means an Israeli missile is aimed at your house

The Irish Times

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

Copyright 2006 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved **Section:** WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 9

Length: 757 words

Byline: Ashraf Khalil in Gaza City

Body

A man with an Israeli accent called Omar Mamluke on his cell phone just before midnight and asked for him by name. "You have just a few minutes to get out of the house," the man said. An Israeli missile was about to hit.

"I asked if he was joking, and he told me: 'The Israeli defence forces don't joke'," Mamluke recalled.

Mamluke, a police officer and former Palestinian champion jump jockey, wasted no time; he had heard what happened to others in Gaza who had received such calls.

He gathered up his two wives and 15 children and they ran out of the house in their nightclothes, yelling for their neighbours to do the same.

The missile struck within half an hour, lifting Mamluke's house in the air, sending the foundation columns across the street.

No one was hurt, which the Israeli army says is the whole point of the phone calls.

The Israeli military, which launched campaigns in both the Gaza Strip and Lebanon after soldiers were captured in border incursions, says it does its best to warn civilians of impending military action.

Its warnings to civilians to leave southern Lebanon are at the centre of controversy over the air strike early on Sunday on the Lebanese village of Qana that killed almost 60 people, most of them **women** and children.

Although many people have fled southern Lebanon, some say they are afraid to travel roads which have been bombed by Israeli aircraft. The sick or injured, the very young and the old sometimes can't travel, Lebanese say.

Israeli officials have suggested that after several warnings, those who remain behind are responsible for their own fate.

"Those who stay have apparently decided to take the risk, or are being held by *Hizbullah*, which has accepted the risk on their behalf," said Brig Gen Alon Friedman, deputy head of the Israeli army's northern command headquarters, last week. "We have no intention of hitting innocent civilians and will do all possible to avoid harming them, but the fighting has a price."

In Gaza, where the Israeli military began issuing specific warnings in the last two weeks, the practice has not won over many hearts or minds.

A phone call means an Israeli missile is aimed at your house

Few here accept the idea that Israel, even for public-relations reasons, really is trying to limit civilian deaths.

At best, residents decry it as a cynical attempt to portray Israel's military campaigns in a better light. Palestinian Authority prime minister Ismail Haniyeh calls it a form of psychological warfare.

"They just want to sow fear and confusion among the people," Haniyeh said.

Although Palestinians report that dozens of warnings have been received in the last two weeks, only a handful of buildings have actually been hit.

Israeli army officials are tight- lipped about the practice and will not discuss individual cases. The official daily updates of the army's attacks on suspected weapons factories and warehouses in the Gaza Strip invariably mention steps taken to warn residents and limit civilian casualties.

Calls have also targeted official buildings such as the main Gaza City courthouse and the ambulance dispatch centre at Khan Younis Hospital, said Iyad Nasr, spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross. Neither has been hit.

"It's still collective punishment," Nasr said. "Dozens of families have been informed and have evacuated their homes."

The first known case of a pre- strike warning call came on July 23rd, targeting the Gaza City home of Mohammed al-Sheikh Dib. In that case, neighbours generally acknowledged that al-Sheikh Dib was a ranking member of the Islamic Jihad militant group and that rockets probably were being stored in the house. Jihad gunmen surrounded the house immediately after the attack and barred all access.

Other less personal forms of warnings have also been used.

Thousands of leaflets have been dropped on to Gaza towns. One was signed by the "Leadership of the Israeli Defence Forces" and asked: "Will the residents of Gaza pay the high price for the behaviour of those who arrogantly boast about solving the Palestinian issue?"

Last week, many Khan Younis residents answered the phone and heard a recorded warning message in Arabic. The Israeli army also has broken in on the frequency of the Hamas radio station to broadcast warnings.

In all cases the message was similar: Don't harbour militant fighters or store weapons for them. Those who do will place themselves in harm's way.

"It's intense psychological pressure," said Abu Ahmed, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad. "They're trying to force the civilians to drive the resistance away from the civilian population centres."

Load-Date: August 2, 2006



Lebanese flee the devastation, but it's not easy; Survivors emerge and try to go north

The International Herald Tribune
August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 920 words

Byline: Sabrina Tavernise

Dateline: BINT JBAIL, Lebanon

Body

In a bathroom, a basement, and a storage room full of yarn, people in this embattled southern town waited for the bombs to stop. They ate pieces of bread and the grain that they had in their cupboards. Days passed. Food ran out. They began to lose track of time.

On Monday, the first day of a suspension of Israeli airstrikes, a few hundred people emerged, taking in a scene of destruction so complete that they barely understood what they were looking at. Their town had been crushed, its very heart torn out and pulverized into a chalky dust.

Similar scenes unfolded across southern Lebanon on Monday as people used the relative calm to move, seeking safety farther north.

They piled onto tractors, packed into cars, crowded children into open trunks, and even walked, lugging belongings on their backs. They traveled despite Israeli shelling along the border that popped and boomed.

Those who could were getting out of the town, though many who were elderly, infirm or lacking the means remained stuck. Roads in the south and the east had many more cars than usual, and in some places, long lines formed. The road south from Tyre along the coast was heavily traveled. Clumps of cars sped by at regular intervals on several roads that led away from the fighting. The dead were brought out, too. The Red Cross in Tyre, the largest city in Lebanon's south, said it retrieved 23 corpses from rubble in southern villages on Monday.

Israeli soldiers had besieged Bint Jbail, a town in the center of southern Lebanon, for a week, battling <u>Hezbollah</u> militias in what has been some of the fiercest fighting of the war. An antiaircraft gun trimmed with a <u>Hezbollah</u> flag stood in the center of town Monday, a monument of sorts.

Large buildings had folded in on themselves. Roofs were on the ground. Chunks of concrete and power lines were piled waist-high. Cars were flipped over. Strings of colorful flags advertising a shopping festival were wrapped around an unexploded Israeli bomb that was more than a meter long.

The Israelis said they were stopping the airstrikes to let people evacuate from southern Lebanon. But leaving Bint Jbail required climbing mountains of rubble, something that was impossible for most of the dozens of people who had been stranded.

Lebanese flee the devastation, but it's not easy Survivors emerge and try to go north

Off a pathway covered with chunks of concrete and pieces of building, two older Lebanese <u>women</u> and a terrified Sri Lankan maid sat in a basement filled with yarn. The cardboard that coated the floor reeked of urine. Flies buzzed on a pile of grimy blankets.

"Who will take me out?" said Seriya Hamma, a 65-year-old woman with a black head scarf.

Several volunteers, Red Cross workers and Lebanese Army personnel climbed down inside, hoisting the other older woman, Fatma Baidoun, onto a ladder covered with pillows.

Strangers met by accident and stayed together. <u>Women</u> from the Baidoun and Ayub families met during a search for a safer place to live. They moved seven times over 19 days, said Namad Baidoun, who walked over slabs of concrete, diapers, and pieces of metal along the main street in a pair of slippers, crying and appealing to anyone who would hear her as she was being led out by rescue workers.

"There were 35 people together" in their hiding place, she shouted in a high voice. Later, in a hospital in Tebnine, she described the small bathroom that she, her sister, and at least five small children shared for days, while they waited for rescue.

The bombing was so fierce that many did not venture outside at all since it began, nearly three weeks ago. A store whose shelves were stocked with food was open to the street, its windows broken. The food was untouched, even though many who were brought out Monday said they had not had any food for several days.

More than anything, people were afraid of losing their shoes. Ahmed Daibis, a blind man in a blue cap and striped pants, was standing in a room near a couch, turning around and asking a volunteer who found him to help him look for his shoes. Alia Bazeh, an elderly woman who had been carried out of the rubble on someone's back, asked repeatedly for her sandals.

Daibis insisted on locking the door to his house. His sister, who was found earlier, had described to rescuers in a pleading tone where he was. He was carried more than 800 meters, or a half-mile, over the jumble of industrial trash to the center of town, where a few ambulances were driving survivors out. A kitten mewed from a bombed-out building.

At Tebnine Hospital, the Baidoun and Ayub sisters sat crammed together on a wooden bench in a hallway. Five children crawled on their laps. One of the sisters said her foot was injured. She was not wearing shoes. A soldier walked by and she asked for food.

Even if the war ends immediately, it would take rescue workers weeks to dig bodies out of the rubble because of the scale of the devastation.

Namad Baidoun said a neighbor was still buried under the rubble of his crushed house. In all, rescue workers pulled nine bodies out of Bint Jbail on Monday, the Red Cross said, though dozens, if not hundreds, are still assumed to be dead and trapped.

Bodies are lying near roads as well. Just past Bint Jbail, emergency workers stood inspecting the body of a man they said was a Lebanese soldier. He was killed by shrapnel some days ago. Dogs had eaten away the left side of his body.

After so many days inside, Monday's rescue was a return to sunlight and life.

"We heard a noise, we heard voices," said Rowda Bezzah, 45, who was hiding in a house with about 20 people. "We ran outside."

Load-Date: August 4, 2006



Northern Israel: unpeopled: The feeling is like gambling, says a kibbutz farmer who has stayed

The Gazette (Montreal)
July 31, 2006 Monday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 937 words

Byline: MATTHEW MCALLESTER, Newsday

Dateline: KIBBUTZ SASA, Israel

Body

To drive into northern Israel is to enter a land that becomes stranger and stranger with each passing kilometre.

Where are the children? The women? The cars?

The pine-covered hills of this farmland and vacation region house a thousand spas and restaurants and wineries. The gates and doors to most are closed.

Smoke appears suddenly on hillsides and in villages, in a mushroom cloud, then drifts up from the subsequent fire. Swaths of the tinder-dry, summer slopes are charred. This is where a rocket has landed.

Toward the border with Lebanon, deep booms from Israeli artillery batteries nestling in fields sound across the otherwise silent vineyards and forests. Now and then, a farm worker appears, driving a combine harvester through a field of ripe corn. The farmers can't afford the luxury of escape to the south. Crops need tending.

"The feeling is like gambling," said Shay Yatom, 60, secretary of Kibbutz Sasa, a farming collective that nestles next to the border. The kibbutz has about 300 hectares of agricultural land - corn, apples, wheat. "You go to work all the time. You can't stop working. If you stop, you lose your orchards, you lose everything. We can't go away."

The unpeopling of northern Israel is because of the rockets that sail in an invisible arc from Lebanon, fired by <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas about 100 times per day, usually landing harmlessly in a field but sometimes ripping into homes and cars, killing at random. A Jewish woman one day, an Arab teenage girl another.

Never before have so many enemy rockets rained down on modern-day Israel, so even the war-hardened have packed their bags and headed beyond range. For now, that's about 48 kilometres. On Friday, large rockets landed in the town of Afula, farther into Israel than ever before. The fear is moving steadily south.

Left behind in the north are the stubborn, the devil-may-care, the farmers, people with nowhere to go - and the thousands of soldiers involved in the war.

Northern Israel: unpeopled: The feeling is like gambling, says a kibbutz farmer who has stayed

Being farther north than the arid hills of central and southern Israel, the Galilee region is the country's orchard, its weekend hideaway for city dwellers wanting to ride horses in the afternoon, have their shoulders massaged at sundown and eat dry-aged porterhouse steaks from the Golan Heights and drink local wines in the evening.

There's a laid-back atmosphere in the north, a frontier mentality mixed with a love for the good things in life: wine, organic food, hiking, horses, art, space. People who live in tense Jerusalem or non-stop Tel Aviv usually speak of the Galilee as a place of sanity and peace.

At this time of year, the roads are usually packed with families and couples heading for the numerous guest houses, or to the shores of the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee.

Now, the beaches are empty. At a famous spa hotel, Mizpe Hayamim, a guard was the only person to be found on Friday afternoon. The tony hotel had been closed for more than two weeks, he said.

Down the road, at the well-known restaurant Jaouni, the doors were open. Soldiers from a nearby base like to eat there. But there were few customers at lunchtime.

Nearby, at the Bat Ya'ar Ranch and Steakhouse, the restaurant was closed and there were no would-be cowboy guests to witness the birth of a foal. Four hours old, she staggered under her mother, craning her neck to feed for the first time.

The only people watching were ranch hands who sipped mint tea and gazed at the new life, even as deaths piled up only a few kilometres away in Lebanon and, less often, in Israel itself.

Things in the north can sometimes seem a little surreal. Overweight reservist soldiers with dreadlocks amble around at roadblocks. Young male Hasidics stop their van and dance around in wild joy with slightly bemused soldiers. A vendor drives his van along the border, selling ice cream to soldiers, child-friendly music blaring from a speaker.

With its fields of ripening vines, the region also is the heart of Israel's burgeoning wine industry. There's a wine tour that visitors can take, as if they were in the Napa Valley or the wine country of South Africa. But not right now.

Yossi Ashkenazi owns the Ben-Zimra Winery in the collective farm of Kerem Ben-Zimra. He bought it 31/2 years ago and lured a celebrated winemaker to help him produce 4,000 bottles of good cabernet sauvignon each year. He sells only to two restaurants and winery visitors.

"Usually at this time of year there are a lot of people who come here to taste the wine," said Ashkenazi, 30, sitting in the empty bar at his property. He opened it only because he had two unexpected visitors who had called him on his cellphone. He has been closed for two weeks.

As he spoke, the booms from the Israeli artillery pounding Lebanon punctuated the conversation. He sleeps through them. His sister and mother don't find it so easy. But they stay. All the children of the moshav, the collective farm, have left.

Closer to the border and the Israeli artillery batteries, at Sasa - another childless place - Shay Yatom sat outside his house, wishing against conventional wisdom that talking could solve the conflict.

"Let's say two things," he said.

Boom.

"We want peace. Then people should say we want to achieve peace not by war."

Boom.

"If you agree on these two sentences, then you can solve anything."

Boom.

Northern Israel: unpeopled: The feeling is like gambling, says a kibbutz farmer who has stayed

"We've come to the conclusion that <u>Hezbollah</u> don't want to argue," he said, sadly.

Boom.

"If they use force against Israel, this is a mistake. They should know this."

When a loudspeaker somewhere on the kibbutz announced that people should enter their homes, Yatom ignored it and remained sitting on his bench outside.

He wasn't going anywhere.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



Yorkshire Evening Post September 2, 2006

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Length: 1528 words

Body

I burst out laughing when I read A Hague's letter (YEP Aug 24) inferring that there is no work in the UK and suggesting that the jobs available here are mainly part time and meant for **women**.

Since May 1, 2004, more than one million people have travelled from Eastern Europe to secure employment here in the UK and the majority of these migrants are young men.

Jobs are available in the UK but the benefits system here is easy to exploit, thus allowing these lazy people who don't want to work to avoid doing any.

The large influx of migrant workers to the UK is a government ruse to help the business leaders drive down labour costs, yet the trade unions are unwilling to complain because they fear being labelled as racist.

This multi-cultural engineering experiment to appease the capitalists is now placing a great strain on our schools, NHS and social services. Inflation is now starting to rise because of this problem and it will gradually get worse.

Other EU countries had the sense to place restrictions on migrant workers and this off-loading effect has resulted in our own population rising to 60 million.

We are now one of the most densely populated countries in the world and I ask how many more people should we allow into the UK to work?

The answer to the labour shortage in the UK is not to infill our country with migrant workers - this is madness.

The government should force the dole cheats and benefit scroungers to work for a living. It's as simple as that.

PAUL COCKCROFT, Tingley, Wakefield

Moving film with a message we should heed

I have just seen the award-winning film The Wind that Shakes the Barley directed by Ken Loach, about the events leading up to the Partition of Ireland and the resultant civil war.

It is one of the saddest, most powerful films I have ever seen and it moved me to tears.

Unfortunately, many reviewers in the right-wing press vilified this film as poisonous, anti-British propaganda although the events narrated are taken straight from the pages of history.

The film's main message is that when people take up arms for a passionately held belief against a perceived injustice such as the occupation of their country by a foreign power, and they have the support of the local population, it is utterly useless for a conventional army to try to defeat them with brute force in the long term.

Such an approach leads to more hatred and violence on both sides with civilians suffering in between, and Ken Loach's film shows this.

History is full of such examples - Vietnam being one of the most tragic.

Yet, instead of learning from history the 'leaders' of the West continue to send more soldiers to their deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq, instead of addressing the root causes of the conflict, and they stand back while Israel destroys the lives of people in Gaza and Lebanon, in defiance of international law.

The suffering in the film was portrayed by actors.

The suffering on TV screens is by real people.

We should bombard our government with demands to stop supporting the US and, therefore tacitly, Israel, and to use its influence to tackle the real causes of terrorism, which are poverty and injustice.

MS E WELLS, Ash Gardens, Leeds

Blot on landscape

My wife and I took advantage of your featured walk, (YEP, Saturday August 26) around Fountains Abbey, which we both enjoyed immensely and rounded off with a smashing pub lunch at the Black Bull in Ripon.

Part of the final stages of the walk caused concern as travellers had set up camp on a lay-by on Fountains Lane, which seems to have been established for some time, due to the scrap heap, caravan awnings, horse carts, bird coops on both sides of the road and notices for drivers to "Drive slow, hens on road".

All a blot on the beautiful Fountains Abbey countryside.

HW IBBETSON, Rothwell, Leeds

Backward look for Leeds

Recent announcements of a planned massive new programme of house building on the sites of two redundant chemical works in Leeds is welcome news indeed, given today's serious housing shortage. However, there is NO mention of what these new residents will have by way of doctors, dentists, school, even shops, because there are none present.

Both Kirkstall Road and Hunslet Road enjoy, or is it suffer, enormous volumes of traffic and the pollution associated with it and are surrounded by the remnants of Leeds' heavy industries.

It seems a supreme irony that years ago, Leeds City Council cleared away all the old slums there and moved people out to the greener suburbs to enjoy fresh air, parks and other leisure facilities, yet now wish to return them to almost derelict areas devoid of facilities of any kind.

Sometimes you have to wonder if this city, and the country overall, isn't going backwards.

DS BOYES, Bramley, Leeds

Wait for hearing aids is no suprise

RNID was appalled, but not surprised, to read about the experiences of hard of hearing pensioner Audrey Carcone in the article 'Pay up £4,000 to avoid hearing aid wait, 16th August 2006.'

Every day, RNID hears of more people who are waiting for up to three years to get a digital hearing aid from the NHS following their initial visit to their GP.

RNID believes everyone who needs hearing aids has a right to receive them free of charge and in good time.

We are urging the Government to tackle the unacceptable length of waiting times for hearing aids. Until then, thousands of deaf and hard of hearing people will continue to face unnecessary exclusion and isolation.

We are grateful to MPs such as John Battle, who have supported RNID's parliamentary campaign for shorter waiting times.

If readers would like more information about hearing aids and hearing loss they can call RNID's information line on 0808 808 0123 (freephone), email <u>informationline@rnid.org.uk</u> or visit <u>www.rnid.org.uk</u>

Brian Lamb, OBE, RNID Director of Communications and Anna Hollis Senior Media Relations Officer Campaigns

First class wail

They closed all the little Post Offices

beloved by the old and infirm

who now take taxis or buses

Do you wonder it's making them squirm?

Now, in their wisdom, they've altered the price

and given us sums to work out

There are numbers to ring if you want their advice

with a ten minute wait I've no doubt!

The envelope size, the stamp and the weight

Will have to be studied with care

I think I will get me some pigeons

and send all my letters 'by air'!

Mrs E. Martin, Hollin Pk. Mount Leeds

Look after the pennies...

I am sorry DS Boyes (YEP Aug 28): I agree with the head of Yorkshire Bank.

I have been a member of this bank since it was the Yorkshire Penny Bank, when we took our pennies to school on a Monday morning to put in our account.

This is the only bank I have known who encourages children to save.

Today I have my money paid direct into the account. My bills are paid by direct debit. We have savings accounts, where we have a little put in every month, plus a little in a PEP. To avoid any forgotten direct debit or cheque, which could tip our account into the red, we took out an overdraft facility for £100.

Now because of this we run our accounts with no worries, taking the advice the Yorkshire Bank gives us. So I say take the advice of the bank and live in peace, debt free.

LE SLACK, Lingfield View, Leeds

Why we owe the Poles

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Poles for their support throughout the Second World War.

About 40,000 served with great bravery and distinction.

Those who served in the RAF helped us win against great odds the Battle of Britain.

We abandoned them after the war and handed their country on a plate to Stalin.

We benefit from the Polish people who make their permanent homes with us.

M NICHOLSON, Barwick, Leeds

Out of touch

Why on earth do judges give such lenient sentences for a variety of crimes that should warrant years of imprisonment, not months?

These people on the benches are mostly old, antiquated, out of touch with reality.

If it's because the jails are full then bring back hard labour and boot camps.

J SHEDLOW, Moortown, Leeds

Bus stopped!

Regarding our recent letter in your column about buses failing to observe the bus stop at Portage Avenue - this matter has been noted by Coun Mick Lyons (Temple Newsam Ward) and he has dealt with this on our behalf.

We have been assured that all companies concerned are instructing staff to take note.

Notices have also been placed in the bus shelter involved with an address where any more complaints may be sent.

We can assure Coun Lyons of our support in the future.

MR & MRS DOWLING

Portage Crescent, Halton, Leeds

At fault in war

I totally agree with Roy Pearson's letter. I remember well the carnage of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem when Jewish terrorists murdered British officers, men and civilians.

They were trying to make a point to get their own land and the British caved in to these terrorists through the Balfour Declaration.

Is it not the same for the Palestinians, Hamas, <u>Hezbollah</u>, etc, who only want their land and their freedom back and yet they are called 'terrorists'.

I don't agree that *Hezbollah* started this war.

The Israelis captured a doctor and his son and also killed an innocent family picnicking on the beach BEFORE *Hezbollah* captured Israeli soldiers.

Where is the conscience of the world?

R ROBINSON, Harrogate

Load-Date: September 2, 2006



Al-Jazeera's energy lost in translation

The Irish Times

November 16, 2006 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Opinion; Pg. 18

Length: 823 words

Body

The English-language version of the Qatar-based satellite TV station al-Jazeera went on air yesterday. Mary Fitzgerald was watching

There were no new bin Laden videos, no presenters in headscarves, no heated debates and no gory bulletins from Iraq. At times it seemed the only thing al-Jazeera's new English-language channel shares with its Arab sibling is the pointy golden logo - a stylised rendering of the Arabic word for peninsula that gives the channel its name.

Indeed, those unfamiliar with the original al-Jazeera could be forgiven for wondering what all the fuss was about, while regular viewers of the Arabic-language channel were probably asking why much of what made the maverick news station so distinctive appears to have been lost in translation - so far, at least.

Ten years after al-Jazeera tore up the media rulebook in the Arab world, rattling politicians and rulers from Riyadh to Washington, the Qatar-based channel yesterday launched its eagerly anticipated and much delayed English-language spin-off, broadcasting to more than 80 million homes worldwide.

The new channel breaks from al-Jazeera's Arab-oriented format by broadcasting not only from Qatar, but also from hubs in London, Washington and Kuala Lumpur. Its stated aim is to deliver news to the world's one billion English speakers from a non-western perspective. Journalists from more than 30 nations will contribute to a 24-hour schedule of news, analysis, talk shows, documentaries and specialised programming, including a slot focusing on **women**'s issues.

On the first day of al-Jazeera English, as it is now known, there was little evidence of the combative feistiness and edgy journalism that pulls in millions of viewers to its sister news channel.

Instead, those tuning in were treated to a rather worthy debut schedule that was heavy on meandering features but surprisingly light on hard-hitting scoops and solid treatment of breaking news. For months, media analysts had wondered what tone the new channel would strike - would it be like the brash, provocative upstart that is the original al-Jazeera, often described as the Fox News of the Arab world, a reference to Rupert Murdoch's rabidly right-wing US-based satellite? Or would it be more like the BBC - sombre, earnest and careful? For now, it appears more a case of the latter.

Coming on air at noon with a montage of the biggest news stories of the last decade, the channel's anchors opened with a self-congratulatory tone that echoed throughout the day's programming. "It's November 15th, a new era in television news," one presenter intoned.

Al-Jazeera 's energy lost in translation

News bulletins were spliced with more promotional sequences featuring some of the channel's big names, such as Sir David Frost and former BBC reporter Rageh Omar.

Each montage and programme was bookended with the channel's strapline: "Al-Jazeera - setting the news agenda." For its launch day, setting the news agenda meant leading most bulletins with a report on the death of an Israeli woman in a Palestinian rocket attack, conveniently seguing into a lengthy feature on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Many analysts have speculated on how the new channel will approach the vexed issue of language used in reporting the Middle East. The Arabic channel regularly refers to dead Palestinian militants as "martyrs" and described *Hizbullah* as "the resistance" during the recent crisis in Lebanon. There were some hints yesterday on how the new channel would proceed - during one bulletin the presenter referred to "so-called terrorist organisations" operating in the region.

Live feeds proved a mixed bag. Polished reports from Rageh Omar in Tehran and a reporter in Zimbabwe contrasted with shaky contributions from young reporters on the ground in Gaza and Darfur. Exclusive interviews with Democratic Republic of Congo president Joseph Kabila and the head of Interpol were interesting, but perhaps not what viewers expecting the latest al-Qaeda video were looking for. The same could be said of the feature on Liberia and the documentary on a Kenyan photo-journalist credited with bringing the Ethiopian famine to world attention.

Therein lies the biggest challenge for al-Jazeera in its campaign to cater for a target audience that is as varied as it is vast: English speakers in the developing world, Arab immigrants in Europe and the US, the millions of Muslims worldwide that don't speak Arabic and westerners frustrated with mainstream media. Already there are distribution glitches - the channel has failed to secure contracts with any major cable or satellite company in the US.

Much of the first day's oddly lack-lustre programming can perhaps be put down to teething problems, but it remains to be seen whether it can deliver after promising so much.

Irish subscribers to Sky may watch al-Jazeera English on channel 514. NTL hopes to offer the service, but not as part of its basic package.

Due to pressure of space, Newton's Optic has been held over

Load-Date: November 16, 2006



Tehran's secret war against its own people

The Times (London)
October 10, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 21

Length: 990 words

Byline: Peter Tatchell

Body

The persecution of Ahwazi Arabs and the takeover of their land has led to accusations of 'ethnic cleansing'

"NEVER AGAIN" is, I fear, a phrase that we may hear again all too soon -but too late to warn people, let alone save lives. Under the cover of secrecy the fundamentalist regime in Tehran is waging a sustained, bloody campaign of intimidation and persecution against its Arab minority. These Arabs believe that they are victims of "ethnic cleansing" by Iran's Persian majority.

Sixteen Arab rights activists have been sentenced to death, according to reports in the Iranian media. They were found guilty of insurgency in secret trials before revolutionary courts. But most of the defendants were convicted solely on the basis of confessions extracted under torture. Ten are expected to be hanged in a couple of weeks, after the end of Ramadan. Amnesty International says that two of those sentenced to die, Abdolreza Nawaseri and Nazem Bureihi, were in prison when they were alleged to have been involved in bomb attacks. Three others - Hamza Sawa-eri, Jafar Sawari and Reisan Sawari -say that they were nowhere near the Zergan oilfield the day it was bombed.

The death sentences seem designed to silence protests by Iran's persecuted ethnic Arabs. They comprise 70 per cent of the population of the south-west province of Khuzestan, known locally as Ahwaz. Many Ahwazis believe that the 16 were framed and that their real "crime" was campaigning against Tehran's repression and exploitation of their oil-rich homeland.

Further show trials are planned -50 Ahwazi Arab activists have been charged with insurgency since last year. They are accused of being mohareb or enemies of God, which is a capital crime. Other allegations include sabotage and possession of home-made bombs. No material evidence has been offered to support the charges. All face possible execution.

Securing information about the impending hangings has been difficult. The authorities are notoriously secretive, often withholding information about charges, evidence and sentences. Foreign journalists are severely restricted and local reporters are intimidated with threats of imprisonment. Despite this official obfuscation, human rights groups confirm a new wave of repression against Ahwazi Arabs who accuse Tehran of "ethnic cleansing" and racism. Ali Afrawi, 17, and Mehdi Nawaseri, 20, were publicly hanged in March for allegedly participating in insurgency. Amnesty International condemned their trial as "unfair". They were denied access to lawyers. The Ahwazi Human Rights Organisation (AHRO) says that seven other Arab political prisoners were secretly executed at around the same time.

Tehran's secret war against its own people

Tehran's latest tactic is to hold Ahwazi children as hostages. According to Amnesty International, children as young as 2 have been jailed with their mothers to force their fugitive, political-activist fathers to surrender to the police.

Protests against these abuses are brutally suppressed. Ahwazi political parties, trade unions and student groups are illegal. In the past year, 25,000 Ahwazis have been arrested, 131 executed and 150 have disappeared, reports AHRO. The bodies of many of those executed have been dumped in a place that the Government calls lanat abad, the place of the damned. They are buried in shallow graves; dogs dig up and eat the bodies.

Nearly 250,000 Arabs have been displaced from their villages after the Iranian Government's confiscation of more than 200,000 hectares of farmland for a huge sugar-cane project. Dozens more towns and villages will be erased, making a possible further 400,000 Ahwazis homeless, by the creation of a military-industrial security zone, covering more than 3,000 sq km, along the Shatt al-Arab waterway, which borders Irag.

Ironically, the <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon -the supposed embodiment of Arab resistance in the Middle East -is complicit in the displacement of Ahwazi Arabs. On confiscated Arab land Tehran has set up training camps for <u>Hezbollah</u> and for the Badr Brigades, the Iraqi fundamentalist militia. Badr death squads in Iraq are murdering Sunnis, unveiled <u>women</u>, gay people, men wearing shorts, barbers, sellers of alcohol and people listening to Western music.

Tehran has a grand plan to make the Ahwazi a minority in their own land through "ethnic restructuring". Financial incentives, such as zero- interest loans, are given to ethnic Persians to settle in Ahwaz. New townships are planned, which will house 500,000 non-Arabs. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of displaced Ahwazis eke out a subsistence existence in shanty towns on the outskirts of Ahwaz city. Others have been forcibly relocated to poverty-stricken, far flung northern regions of Iran.

Ahwaz produces 90 per cent of Iran's oil and Tehran expropriates all the revenues.

An attempt by Ahwaz MPs to secure the repatriation of 1.5 per cent of these earnings back to the region for welfare projects was rejected this year. Yet it is the third poorest region of Iran: 80 per cent of the children suffer from malnutrition, and the unemployment rate of Arabs is more than five times that of Persians.

Arab language newspapers and textbooks have been banned to crush Arab identity further. In Ahwaz schools, all instruction is in Farsi (Persian), resulting in a 30 per cent drop-out rate at primary level and 50 per cent at secondary level.

Illiteracy rates among Arabs are at least four times those of non-Arabs.

Contrary to Tehran's nationalist propaganda most Ahwazi Arabs just want a measure of self-government; they are not hellbent on independence or in league with the CIA or plotting for an American invasion. Quite the contrary, they fear that Western sabre-rattling will be used as a pretext by Tehran's hardliners to crack down savagely on dissent. Which makes it all the more disturbing that one of the few bodies with diplomatic muscle -the Arab League, which professes pan-Arab solidarity -is so silent in the face of Iran's persecution of Arabs.

Load-Date: October 10, 2006



Opinion - Leadership and dialogue needed

Irish News

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 421 words

Body

THAT THE conflict in the Middle East has been a brutal and bloody affair should be a surprise to nobody - especially to people in countries, like ourselves, which have been similarly affected.

The only thing that differs is scale.

In Lebanon, as evidenced by the deaths of so many innocent people in an Israeli air strike on a village yesterday, civilians continue to make up the majority of casualties.

It cannot be forgotten that <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters have been quite indiscriminately firing rockets into Israeli cities, towns and villages as this confrontation has escalated over the past few weeks.

But the carnage which can be caused by the more sophisticated Israeli weaponry was demonstrated with horrifying effect in the attack on Qana.

As of last night the death toll following the missile attack on a building in the town was approaching 60 with at least 34 of them being children and a further 12 were <u>women</u>.

In attempting to justify this horrible action an Israeli spokesman said that rockets had been fired from the village across the border, some "from near" the building subsequently destroyed.

Another spokesman, while regretting the loss of life, pointed out that Lebanese people had been warned to leave such potential target areas along the Israeli border.

Just over 10 years ago a similar attack on the same village led to the cessation of similar hostilities.

On that occasion over 100 Lebanese civilians died when a UN base was shelled.

Hopes that this latest outrageous loss of innocent life will at least lead to a ceasefire look to be futile. The Israeli prime minister yesterday said that his armed forces would continue their offensive and broaden it if thought necessary, perhaps for another 10 to 14 days.

Just how this dispute which has lasted decades will be finished in two more weeks remains to be seen.

The more likely outcome is that the seeds for decades more conflict have been sown.

Israel should indeed have its borders respected. Its citizens should be able to live free from the fear of indiscriminate rocket attacks. But so too should Israel's neighbours.

Opinion - Leadership and dialogue needed

If this conflict is to be solved it will not be by replying with sophisticated missiles when attacked with crude weapons. It will only be resolved by political leadership and a willingness to engage in dialogue.

The leaders who embark on such a path will be showing a lot more wisdom and bravery than those who push the buttons or light the fuses which will inevitably lead to the deaths of even more innocent civilians on both sides of the border.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



Mideast taking a toll on Tories

The Toronto Star

August 3, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 420 words

Dateline: OTTAWA

Body

A new poll suggests Tory support is sliding over voter concern that Canada has become too cozy with the United States on Middle East policy.

The latest results by Decima Research, released to The Canadian Press, put the Conservatives and Liberals in a virtual tie nationally. The Tories had 32 per cent support compared with the Liberals' 31 per cent and 16 per cent for the New Democrats.

But in a gesture Tory officials predict will halt the slide, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is poised to announce a greater contribution from Canada to the Mideast humanitarian crisis.

Rahim Jaffer, chairman of the Conservative caucus that meets this week for a retreat in Cornwall, hinted last night at an aid announcement.

"There are a lot of issues that can come up in discussions - how to deal with refugees that are currently displaced, humanitarian assistance - and there is a host of issues that we can actually deal with that Canada has a long-standing tradition of helping nations that are in need," Jaffer said.

Harper and his government have taken the line that Israel's attacks on Lebanon are a "measured" response to attacks by <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas. That stance has resulted in harsh criticism from many in Canada's Lebanese community and frontrunners in the Liberal leadership race.

Jaffer said he expects to see a shift in the polls once the Tories "have a chance to clarify our position."

The Decima poll shows the Liberals widened their Ontario lead to 42 per cent of voter support compared with 33 per cent for the Conservatives, and have pulled in front of the Tories in Quebec for the first time since last winter's campaign. The two parties had been neck-and-neck in Ontario as recently as mid-June.

"When we look at the combination of the alignment of the government with the current U.S. administration policy on the Middle East - and in particular with respect to the Lebanon-Israel conflict - it's reasonable to assume it's one of the factors that's driving Conservative support down in the near term," said Decima CEO Bruce Anderson.

"They clearly are encountering some pushback from voters in Ontario and Quebec in particular."

Liberals have also taken the lead in crucial urban ridings by a margin of 35 per cent versus 29 per cent, and are increasingly preferred by **women** and by voters aged 25 to 34, the poll suggests.

Mideast taking a toll on Tories

The poll of 1,000 Canadians, taken July 27 to 31, is considered accurate to within three percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The margin of error is higher for regional breakdowns.

CANADIAN PRESS

Load-Date: August 3, 2006



A brief history of smart bombs

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

October 21, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: MAILBOX: YOUR LETTERS; Pg. 5

Length: 426 words

Byline: Marilyn Juds, The Citizen

Body

U.S. B-2 stealth bombers have been around since the Second World War.

- 1991: In the Gulf War the smart bombs are laser-guided.
- 1999: The smart bombs are satellite-guided, dubbed J-DAMS (Joint Direct Attack Munitions), apparently unaffected by cloud cover. Such bombs are dropped on Sarajevo. Supposedly every bomb hits it target, including the Chinese embassy.
- 1999: the U.S. military has more than 87,000 J-DAMs, and will supply them in virtually every bomber in its arsenal. Britain is next in line for an order.
- Sept. 2003: U.S. outfits Japan with smart bombs.
- Sept. 2004: Ha'aretz News reports the U.S. will supply the Israelis nearly 5,000 smart bombs, 500 of which are one-ton bunker-busters, capable of penetrating two-metre-thick concrete walls.
- July 7, 2006: the U.S. delivers smart bombs to the Israeli army for its campaign against the *Hezbollah*.

The CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) complains the act "unconscionable" to no avail.

John Pike, Federation of American Scientists, effuses about the J-DAM: "It's precise, highly effective; basically the future of aerial warfare. And -- it's dirt cheap." Less than \$20,000. So, one bomb could kill upwards of 2,000 people outright, with some 10,000 left with devastating injuries. Some bargain.

Now back to Feb. 13, 1991. It's 4:30 a.m. in the al-Amiriya bomb shelter, a two-storey bunker, in Baghdad; the elderly, *women*, teenagers, children and babies sleeping.

Suddenly, without warning, a smart bomb rips through five layers of concrete and steel. Huge water tank reservoirs, installed for the bunkers'occupants, burst.

A phosphorous bomb hits the ventilation system, converting the air inside to a toxic mix. Since the temperature inside now reaches 400 C, plus, the water begins to boil, cooking the walls and humans with them. The occupants are blown to bits.

A brief history of smart bombs

The explosion is so great, human body parts fly out the hole made by the bomb. Estimates: 1,200 civilians die -- almost half are children.

The shelter's remains are kept as a memorial to the world of the horrible, senseless carnage. The charred walls hold earlier photos of the victims; another, photos of surviving family members. The pictures are heart-wrenching and overwhelming.

This shelter bombing took place just three days before Saddam quit Kuwait. Too bad the UN weapons inspectors, soon to follow, didn't recognize the real WMDs right under their noses. Another tragic irony of history.

Dick Cheney, that stalwart humanitarian, was U.S. vice-president and secretary of defense at the time.

-- Marilyn Juds

Prince George

Load-Date: October 23, 2006



News Summary

The New York Times

January 28, 2007 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section 1; Column 3; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 424 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL 3-12

Saudi Arabia Shifts Oil Policy

Saudi Arabia, which benefited from record oil prices last year, has sent signals in the past two weeks that it is committed to keeping oil at around \$50 a barrel -- down \$27 a barrel from the summer peak that shook consumers.

Attacks on Shiites Continue

Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad came under attack once again, the 10th consecutive day of large scale bloodshed, as bombings and shootings left at least 300 people dead and roughly 1,000 wounded in the past two weeks. 4

U.S. Debate on Israeli Bombs

The Bush administration will inform Congress that Israel may have violated agreements with the United States when it fired American-supplied cluster munitions into southern Lebanon during its fight with <u>Hezbollah</u> last summer, officials said. 3

3 Killed in Gaza Violence

At least three more Palestinians were killed in Gaza in continuing battles between fighters loyal to Fatah and Hamas, which has been celebrating the anniversary of its victory a year ago over Fatah in legislative elections. 3

Bomb Kills Pakistani Police

At least 14 people were killed, most of them policemen, and several others were wounded in what appeared to be a suicide bombing in the northwestern city of Peshawar, the police said. 4

NATIONAL 14-22

Obama's Years at Harvard Law

Harvard Law School was the place where Barack Obama, the Illinois senator now running for the presidency, first became a political sensation and emerged as the polished public figure he is today. 1

News Summary

Dispute Over Singer's Burial

More than a month after the death of James Brown, the singer's body has still not been laid to rest because of a financial dispute. 14

Early Campaigning

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Iowa, beginning her campaign to become the nation's first *female* president. In New Hampshire, Rudolph W. Giuliani sounded nearer than ever to being a presidential candidate. 16

Antiwar Protest in Capital

Tens of thousands of protesters converged on the National Mall to oppose President Bush's plan for a troop increase in Iraq. 21

NEW YORK/REGION 25-29

Redistribution Helps Casinos

New Jersey's Casino Reinvestment Development Authority was created to capture gambling revenue and redirect it to blighted areas. But the agency has handed about \$400 million back to the casinos themselves. 1

Last Days of Pfizer Enclave

The Pfizer company is set to close its Brooklyn location after 157 years as an industrial magnet and benefactor. The company's imminent departure will mean more than the loss of 600 jobs. 25

Chess 29 Weather 30

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: January 28, 2007



<u>'Sadness, desperation and fear': Sombre mood prevails as Ramadan ends</u> and traditional celebrations begin

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

October 24, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 368 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT -- <u>Women</u> in south Lebanon wept at the graves of loved ones killed in the Israel-<u>Hezbollah</u> war, many Iraqis stayed home and security was tightened elsewhere Monday at the start of a major holiday marking the end of Ramadan.

The three-day holiday of Eid al-Fitr is customarily celebrated with family gatherings, presents and lunchtime feasts, but the legacy of conflict has cast a shadow this year across much of the Middle East.

"There is no Eid. There is only sadness and desperation and fear for the future," said Salma Salameh, 43, a school teacher in the southern Lebanese village of Blatt. Many Lebanese gathered in cemeteries to pay their respects to the more than 855 Lebanese who were killed during the war.

In the southern village of Qana, where an Israeli air strike on July 30 killed 29 Lebanese, **women** dressed in black wept over the graves.

The start of Eid al-Fitr, which means the festival of breaking the fast or the dawn-to-dusk ritual that observant Muslims respect during the month of Ramadan, is determined by clerics based on the sighting of the new moon. While the holiday began in most Arab countries on Monday, it will start in Egypt, Syria and Jordan today. Some Shiites in Lebanon and Iraq also will begin the holiday Tuesday.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli troops shot and killed seven Palestinians and 14 others were wounded in one of the deadliest days of fighting there in four months.

In war-torn Iraq, many Sunni Muslims stayed inside out of fear that they would fall victim to car bombs or gunfire from Shiite militiamen in Baghdad. Militiamen loyal to an anti-American cleric re-emerged Monday in the southern city of Amarah, hunting down and killing four policemen from a rival militia in a brutal Shiite-on-Shiite settling of scores.

Nadhim Aziz said there were fewer worshippers this year at a local Baghdad mosque. "We were 50 to 60 in the mosque. Last year, there were about 400."

'Sadness, desperation and fear': Sombre mood prevails as Ramadan ends and traditional celebrations begin

Jordanian officials stepped up security Monday in preparation for today's holiday. Security also was tight in Beirut. Shiite and Muslim clergyman said they would not be receiving greetings for Eid al-Fitr this year because of the recent war and the violence in Iraq and the Palestinian territories.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Wissam Al-Okaili, AFP/Getty Images; A U.S. soldier secures the scene around the wreckage of a car bomb in downtown Baghdad Monday. The battle for Baghdad claimed five more U.S. lives as Iraqis began today to mark the end of the holy Muslim holiday of Ramadan.

Load-Date: October 24, 2006



Immigration Minister says cleric should resign his position; Sheik 'should quit'

Geelong Advertiser (Australia)

April 10, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 13

Length: 437 words

Byline: DAVID CRAWSHAW

Body

AAP

IMMIGRATION Minister Kevin Andrews yesterday called on controversial Muslim cleric Sheik Taj Aldin Alhilali to think about leaving Australia.

But he stressed there was no possibility of stripping the self-styled mufti of Australia of his citizenship.

Mr Andrews repeated calls for the outspoken sheik to resign amid a growing storm about his increasingly incendiary public statements.

Calls for the sheik to be sacked intensified yesterday after reports he travelled to Tehran and urged Muslims worldwide to support the Iranian government of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, whose nuclear ambitions have raised the ire of the international community.

"The mufti of Australia has called on the Islamic world to stand in the trenches with the Islamic Republic of Iran which possesses the might and the power," the Iranian Alalam News reported in Arabic on its website on Saturday.

The mufti's salary was suspended last year after he used a religious address to compare immodestly dressed **women** with uncovered meat and suggest they invited sexual assault.

Mr Andrews yesterday urged the Egyptian-born Sheik Alhilali to quit his post and consider his future in Australia.

"The cleric should resign immediately," he said.

"The Australian community has lost patience with the sheik.

"The sheik needs to say if he wishes to continue as a citizen of Australia or reside in an alternate country."

Despite the strong words, Mr Andrews' spokeswoman said there were no grounds for cancelling the Muslim leader's citizenship.

Sheik Alhilali was granted citizenship by the Labor government in 1990 after political intervention by former prime minister Paul Keating to prevent his deportation.

Immigration Minister says cleric should resign his position Sheik 'should quit'

The sheik had been slated to be refused Australian citizenship, and would have had to leave the country.

Several Islamic community leaders have spoken out against Sheik Alhilali recently, complaining that he does not represent their views. The sheik was recently accused of failing to account for \$47,000 in donations raised in Australia and earmarked for victims of last year's Israel-<u>Hezbollah</u> war.

It has been reported that after taking charge of the money in Lebanon, the mufti gave at least \$12,400 to a supporter of the Iraqi insurgency, Sheik Bilal Shaaban, to fund his radio station.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer yesterday backed Mr Andrews, describing the sheik as a massive embarrassment.

Mr Downer said yesterday Sheik Alhilali had become a completely discredited figure.

"My view is that he has just got to be removed as the leader of the Islamic community in Australia and some moderate and reasonable person needs to take his place," Mr Downer said.

Load-Date: April 11, 2007



Middle East Crisis - 'What we are witnessing is a war crime by Israel'

Irish News

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: Pg. 8

Length: 417 words

Body

Hundreds of anti-Israel protesters gathered in Trafalgar Square yesterday to demonstrate at the ongoing violence in Lebanon.

Waving Lebanese and <u>Hezbollah</u> flags, they cheered as a series of speakers de-cried the escalating conflict.

Public figures including Four Weddings And A Funeral star Simon Callow, comedian Alexei Sayle and stage performer Corin Redgrave read out poems, elegies and first-hand experiences from Lebanon.

Veteran speaker and former Labour MP Tony Benn said Parliament must be recalled to debate the issue.

He said: "As we talk, <u>women</u> and children are being killed in the Lebanon by bombs sold and given by the US and passed through British airports with the support of the British government.

"What we are witnessing is a war crime committed by Israel with the support of the American and the British governments - that is the truth."

Mr Benn said the US and Israel had been planning the attack on Lebanon for "months if not years".

He said it was part of a long-term strategy to rebuild the Middle East on their terms.

Mr Benn said he was reminded of the Suez Crisis 50 years ago which eventually saw the downfall of prime minister Anthony Eden and called on Tony Blair to resign.

A small group of Hassidic Jews added their support at yesterday's rally.

Rabbi Jacob Weisz, holding a placard which read: "Zionism and Judaism are extreme opposites", said the Israeli air strikes were "outrageous".

He said Jews and Muslims were happy to live together but Zionist terrorists had divided a peaceful community.

"The war is being ignored by the international community, it is totally unacceptable. The international community must call for a ceasefire," he said.

"It is outrageous that the Israeli government were too proud to negotiate the release of two of their soldiers and instead started a bombing campaign."

As he spoke, Lebanese and Palestinians came up and thanked him for taking part.

Middle East Crisis - 'What we are witnessing is a war crime by Israel'

Earlier, comedian Alexei Sayle described Israel as a "psychotic, bullying child" and said its "tattooed parents" were President Bush and Mr Blair.

"While Israel has all the privileges of a state, it behaves worse than a terrorist organisation," he said.

A number of other speakers from the Muslim Council of Britain, the London Assembly and the British Muslim Initiative stood up to join the calls for a ceasefire.

Mohammed Khozbar, a Lebanese man who has lived in London, said the 30,000 Lebanese people in Britain were angry at Mr Blair and the British government.

He said he felt the government had failed them.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



Calling the shots from behind religious veils

Daily Post (North Wales)
August 4, 2006, Friday
North Wales Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 15

Length: 407 words **Byline:** ian PARRI

Body

IF anybody was in any doubt about religion being the root cause of war, even if Northern Ireland didn't persuade them, then the ongoing humanitarian disaster in the Middle East must surely have swung it.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope might call for Israel to stop its bloody massacre of the innocents, but it's the politicians hiding behind their religious veils who call the shots.

Take this bloke with the perma-grin going by the name of Blair, whom I'm growing to detest just as much as Thatcher. Which is some going.

He told that great inquisitor Michael Parkinson, no less, that God told him to invade Iraq in search of those mythical weapons of mass destruction. Oh yeah? Presumably as he put his dosh in the collection tray one Sunday. Talk about passing the buck! He's only succeeded in engulfing the country in murderous mayhem.

Meanwhile his cowboy boss is a self-professed Christian fundamentalist who panders to pro-Israeli factions to whom Israel - a state established purely on religious grounds - can do no wrong.

Warmongers often play the religion card.

Soldiers of Hitler's Vermacht wore belt buckles inscribed with Gott Mit Uns (God is with us), while in Mein Kampf the FŸhrer wrote: "God does not make cowardly nations free."

Bush and Blair hum and haw about <u>Hezbollah</u> giving up its relatively puny arsenal before getting Israel to stop the destruction of defenceless Lebanon, while actively re-arming the Israelis with hi-tech weapons of mass indiscriminate murder flown in via the UK. How's about that for two-faced hypocrisy?

Israel says it needs another few weeks to finish the job. Oh, that's all right then.

Why not kill another couple of thousand for good measure, preferably <u>women</u> and children, to satisfy your bloodlust for a while?

Yesterday I was tempted to buy some fresh figs, but dumped them back on the shelf on realising they were Israeli produce.

Calling the shots from behind religious veils

I couldn't have slept a wink if I'd offered de facto support to a state seemingly bent on genocide. Even if they do believe God is on their side.

Sure, Israel feels threatened, surrounded as it is by Arab states who hate its guts and deny its right to exist. Just as surely as Israel denies the Palestinians, who'd lived on the land for 2,000 years before being turfed out, their right to exist.

So two wrongs do make a right, do they? An eye for an eye, and all that? No wonder atheists and agnostics feel less queasy on the moral high ground than religion's mob.

Load-Date: August 4, 2006



WORLD IN FOCUS; How to bridge the divide

The Advertiser (Australia)
February 17, 2007 Saturday
State Edition

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Section: MAGAZINE; Pg. W03

Length: 1083 words

Byline: by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia

Body

FEW will dispute the fact that the defining tension today is between the West and the Muslim world. Sure, there are other tensions as well - Japan and China; Japan and the two Koreas; Russia and Ukraine; India and Pakistan; the U.S. and Cuba as well as Venezuela; and the many conflicts in Africa. But none of these is as profound or as far-reaching in their global consequences.

This great tension between the West and the Muslim world has sometimes been described as a "clash of civilisations". But this would be to distort the nature and causes of the confrontation completely. I would like to argue that what we are burdened with is the consequence of our inability to construct a global order that can maintain the peace, restrain the strong and protect the weak. Many in the West would identify the critical point as the al-Qaida terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The campaign against terror won the support and participation of the Muslim world. The other actions of the U.S., however, attracted little support.

For the Muslim world, the critical point occurred when Israel was created out of Arab land without their acquiescence, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced from their homeland. Most in the Arab and Muslim world eventually accepted the existence of Israel. But the ensuing conflict, in which the U.S. and the West are perceived to be partial to Israel, remains the single most powerful factor dividing the Muslim world and the West.

Ours is not a confrontation of cultures, religions or civilisations. What pits us against each other is the pursuit and aggrandisement of power, and opposition to it; the desire to dominate and impose one's will, and resistance to it; the usurpation of land and resources, and the struggle against it; and the slaughter of the lives of innocent men, **women** and children, and our outrage at this.

The question is what can we do, together or severally, to moderate the tensions and close the divide? The answer is quite obvious. We must address the issues that most alienate and antagonise us. We cannot avoid giving the greatest priority to the resolution of the issue of Palestine. If we are able to resolve the issue justly and equitably, in accordance with UN resolutions and relevant decisions, much of the roots of conflict and instability in the Middle East will disappear.

Iraq is now the other great irritant and obstacle to better relations between the West and the Muslim world. Indeed, Western governments will be more popular, even with their own people, if they can revise their policies and rehabilitate the situation in Iraq.

WORLD IN FOCUS How to bridge the divide

The third important issue that we should tackle is terrorism. This is perhaps even more a threat to some Muslim countries than it is to Western countries or interests. Where terrorism is essentially driven by domestic factors and has a domestic agenda, it has little impact on our relations. But where it is linked to international terrorism and al-Qaida, the West and the Muslim world must work together to counter the threat. We are in fact already doing this to a large extent. I am convinced that the campaign against militancy and terrorism will be much more successful if we are able to make effective progress with regard to the issues of Palestine and Iraq. Much of the resistance and militancy in the Middle East, as well as terrorism, will begin to subside. Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u> will disband their militant wings when Palestine is liberated.

Hostilities between some countries in the West and Iran and Syria should also decline when the Palestinian issue is resolved and the situation in Iraq returns to normal. Neither Tehran nor Damascus will be providing assistance to Hamas and *Hezbollah*, or supporting sectarian resistance and militancy in Iraq as alleged. The only issue that should remain to be peacefully resolved is the nuclear issue involving Iran.

A certain level of terrorism will conceivably persist for some while, because the terrorists of today are the products of what happened before. But they will be robbed of a cause. Sympathy and support for them will decline. Terrorism that is driven by domestic conditions and that pursues a domestic sectarian agenda will remain, but it will be rid of any anti-Western impulse. There will be no international terrorism.

The fourth area where we should be devoting our energies is reducing the influence of the forces of intolerance, extremism and militancy in our respective body politics and societies. We usually recognise voices of extremism and militancy only on the other side. Extremism and militancy in our own body politics and societies are often viewed as respectable and patriotic voices that have the interests of the country at heart.

These forces can in fact cause great harm to our interests both at home and abroad. They urge adversarial rather than collaborative approaches with other countries. They are quick to counsel the use of coercive policies without adequately exhausting other options. More dangerously, they are quick to counsel war and the use of force.

The influence of the forces of extremism and militancy can be even more pervasive in some Muslim societies. Some of them preach a severe and intolerant brand of Islam that rejects the pursuit of material wealth. They keep Muslims in a state of underdevelopment and backwardness. They preach intolerance of other faiths. They forbid fraternisation with non-Muslims. They deny <u>women</u> a place of dignity in society. A few of them distort the teachings of Islam and the meaning of jihad. They incite violent attacks against not only foreign military forces that are considered to have harmed Muslims but also innocent civilians.

It is incumbent upon us on both sides of the divide to rein in the extremists and moderate their influence upon policy and society. This will help us build a more harmonious and peaceful environment in our own countries and a more harmonious and peaceful community internationally.

Edited extract of a speech to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London.

Abdullah Ahmad

BADAWI

- * He succeeded Mahathir bin Mohamad as Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2003 after four years as deputy.
- * The son of a prominent politician, he graduated at the University of Malaya with a Bachelor of Arts in 1964.
- * He held a series of civil service posts until he was elected to Parliament in 1978.
- * Calling for modern and progressive Islamic rule, he led the National Front coalition to a landslide victory in the 2004 elections.

Load-Date: February 16, 2007



NEWSDESK

The Forward August 18, 2006

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Section: News; Pg. 7 **Length:** 1801 words

Body

Church Campaign Slammed

Church-state activists are blasting Christian conservative leader James Dobson for a new campaign to register evangelical voters before the November elections.

The program, to be coordinated by Dobson's Colorado-based group, Focus on the Family, will conduct voter registration drives at evangelical churches in such battleground electoral states as Maryland, Tennessee, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Earlier this week, in response to the announcement of the voter drive, Americans United for Separation of Church and State issued a statement claiming that the tax-exempt status of participating congregations could be at risk.

While religious organizations' tax-exempt status prohibits them from engaging in partisan activity, registration drives that are done without the endorsement of a specific candidate or party are permissible under the Internal Revenue Service's guidelines.

Judge Permits Aipac Trial

The judge trying the case against two former pro-Israel lobbyists has given the trial a green light, setting the stage for a battle over free-speech rights and Israel's role as an ally of the United States.

On August 10, Judge T.S. Ellis III denied what had been the defense's only possible bid for a dismissal of the case. He rejected the argument that a never-used 1917 statute under which they have been charged violated the constitutional rights of Steve Rosen, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's former foreign policy director, and Keith Weissman, Aipac's former Iran analyst.

The statute criminalizes the receipt - as well as the leaking - of "information relating to the national defense" that the possessor has "reason to believe could be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of any foreign nation." But Ellis, a federal judge based in Alexandria, Va., made clear that he would set the bar high for the prosecution because the case could have far-reaching implications.

Ellis's most important conclusion was that invoking the statute did not necessarily violate the defendants' First Amendment right to free speech. Lawyers for the defense had argued that the 1917 statute never had been used before because it was impossible to enforce.

NEWSDESK

Such a sweeping statute places not just lobbyists but also journalists, researchers and average citizens at risk, the lawyers had argued. Ellis's decision set off alarms among free-speech activists.

"This is a momentous expansion of the government's ability to penalize unauthorized disclosures," said Steven Aftergood, who runs the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists, a nuclear watchdog. "Never before has a court said that a private citizen could be prosecuted for unauthorized receipt of classified information. It's a whole new ball game."

Australian Shul Hit Again

A synagogue on the outskirts of Sydney, Australia, was attacked for the second time in two weeks. On Monday night, vandals hurled concrete blocks at the doors of the synagogue in the suburb of Parramatta. Two weeks ago, a group of men described by witnesses as being of Middle Eastern appearance threw blocks at the compound, damaging Rabbi Yossi Wernick's two cars and his residence. Wernick's house is situated next to the synagogue, which is isolated from the major part of the community in Sydney and is close to areas with a high Muslim population.

JAP Defense Used

The father of a man standing trial in Tennessee for allegedly murdering his wife said that he helped his son conceal the body because "she was a typical JAP." The videotaped deposition by Arthur March was played August 12 in a Tennessee court. March's son, Perry, is accused of killing Janet March in 1996 after she said she wanted a divorce. Court TV reported that Arthur March, who received a reduced sentence in exchange for testifying, called his former daughter-in-law a "Jewish American Princess," adding, "Anything she wanted, she went to her father."

Youth: Protest Killings

Close to 50 Reform youth leaders urged the Union for Reform Judaism to address the deaths of civilians on both sides in the Israel-<u>Hezbollah</u> war. "We applaud the Union for condemning <u>Hezbollah</u>'s and Hamas's violent and terrifying rocket attacks on Israeli civilians, who have been put in grave danger by the ongoing conflict," said the letter, which was delivered Tuesday to URJ leaders. But it adds, "We urge the Union to likewise condemn the Israeli Defense Force's killing of unarmed Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, as well as its premeditated targeting of civilian infrastructure, which has put additional lives at risk and hampered relief efforts." The 48 student leaders, who represent the movement's college-age and high-school-age programs, think that their concerns have been shunted aside. "As is appropriate for our Reform tradition, we embrace a diversity of viewpoints," they write. "Unfortunately, we feel that our voice has been excluded from Union statements and materials, and we ask for inclusion."

Prostitution Ring Busted

Two Israelis were arrested on suspicion of running a prostitution ring based in the United States. Boaz Benmoshe and Ofer Moses Lupovitz, both 44, are being described as leaders of a California-based ring that employed more than 240 <u>women</u> in the western United States. The men reportedly ran an escort service called Elite Entertainment that actually was a prostitution service, law enforcement officials said.

Yeshiva Denies Claims

Along with a local Maryland official, board members of a yeshiva are denying allegations that campaign contributions encouraged the county to spend millions on renovating two religious schools. In 1999, the Yeshiva of Greater Washington leased a decrepit building in Montgomery County, Md., with the understanding that the yeshiva would pay renovation costs. But the county bought the school back and leased a new one for the yeshiva.

Allegations have been raised that the \$9.9 million package, which provided nearly enough money to cover the renovations at both schools, was influenced by \$92,000 in contributions that County Executive Doug Duncan received from yeshiva supporters since 1998. The second religious institution is a girls' school run by the yeshiva.

NEWSDESK

Suspect Pleads Not Guilty

The alleged shooter in the Seattle Jewish federation shooting pleaded not guilty. Naveed Haq, who entered his plea Tuesday, is being held on nine counts, including aggravated homicide and malicious harassment, in connection to the July 28 attack that left one woman dead and five injured. At an August 10 arraignment, Haq surprised the court and his attorney, public defender C. Wesley Richards, when he attempted to enter a guilty plea but apparently changed his mind in the interim. The Kings County prosecuting attorney, Norm Maleng, has 30 days to decide whether Haq will face the death penalty.

A fund was established to assist victims and families of the July 28 shooting at the Seattle Jewish federation.

Load-Date: August 21, 2006



THE PULSE OF IRAN; Ancient land a stew pot of dissent and hope

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

August 27, 2006 Sunday

Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: @ISSUE; Pg. 1C

Length: 240 words

Byline: MARGARET COKER

Cox International Correspondent

Body

Tehran, Iran --- Nukes and mullahs. Hard-line Islamic theology and anti-American rhetoric.

Support for <u>Hezbollah</u> and enmity for Israel. As the White House and the U.N. Security Council grapple with Iran's defiant stand to pursue its nuclear program, the images projected by this country are of deep concern in the West.

Years ago, President Bush called Iran a part of "the axis of evil." But two weeks of travel through Iran this month, and interviews with a wide range of Iranians, suggest that a better description for this ancient land would be a stew pot of dissent, not a caldron of terror.

Down Tehran's tree-lined streets, teenagers in tight pants bare their bling. Security Council resolutions here aren't as important as fashion sense.

In the old oasis city of Esfahan, weekend picnickers rank the acquisition of nuclear weapons far below their desire for jobs.

When it came to power 27 years ago, Iran's revolutionary Islamic government promised a new and better life for all Iranians. But throughout this vast country, home to 68 million and equal in size to Western Europe, Iranians speak of their growing disenchantment.

The gap between rulers and ruled has perhaps never been so great --- and the time to listen to the voices of Iranians perhaps never so urgent. Inside today, a two-page photo essay reflects life in contemporary Iran, where the issues of greatest concern seem not unlike those of ordinary Americans. See pages C4-5.

Graphic

Photo: BITA HONARVAR / StaffJEANS AND BLING: Darband, Tehran: Young <u>women</u> walk down a narrow street in Darband, a neighborhood in northern Tehran that is popular for its teahouses, restaurants and stands selling seasonal sweets made of nuts and fruit. As the sun starts to set, pedestrians young and old --- but especially young --- head to neighborhoods like Darband for a social scene that mostly involves cruising on foot or enjoying one of the cafes.

Photo: BITA HONARVAR / StaffMARRIAGE OF CULTURESBazaar in Esfahan: <u>Women</u> clad in chadors walk past a display of mannequins dressed in suits and ties in the Esfahan bazaar. After the 1979 revolution, Iranian men were strongly discouraged from wearing ties or cravats because they were considered symbols of the West. Today, dress codes in government offices --- and sometimes in the private sector --- prohibit ties, but they are still sold and often worn for private celebrations, especially weddings. The portion of the bazaar where these mannequins were located specialized in wedding accourrements, accessories and supplies.

Load-Date: August 27, 2006



For Lebanese, Calm Moment To Flee Ruins

The New York Times

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: DESTRUCTION

Length: 945 words

Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE

Dateline: BINT JBAIL, Lebanon, July 31

Body

In a bathroom, a basement, and a storage room full of yarn, people in this embattled southern town waited for the bombs to stop. They ate pieces of bread, and the grain that they had in their cupboards. Days passed. Food ran out. They began to lose track of time.

On Monday, the first day of a sharp curtailment of Israeli airstrikes, dozens of people emerged, squinting in the searing sun at a scene of destruction so complete that they barely understood what they were looking at. Their town had been crushed, its very heart torn out and pulverized into a chalky dust.

Similar scenes unfolded across southern Lebanon on Monday, as people took advantage of the relative calm to move, seeking safety farther north. They piled onto tractors, packed into cars, crowded children into open trunks, and even walked, lugging belongings on their backs. They traveled despite Israeli shelling along the border that popped and boomed.

Those who could were getting out of the town, though many who were elderly, infirm or lacking the means remained stuck. Roads in the south and the east had many more cars than usual, and in some places, long lines formed. The road south from Tyre along the coast was heavily traveled. Clumps of cars sped by at regular intervals on several roads that led away from the fighting. The dead were brought out, too. The Red Cross in Tyre, the largest city in Lebanon's south, said it retrieved 23 bodies from rubble in southern villages on Monday.

Israeli soldiers had besieged Bint Jbail, a town in the center of southern Lebanon, for a week, battling <u>Hezbollah</u> forces in what has been some of the fiercest fighting of the war. An antiaircraft gun trimmed with a <u>Hezbollah</u> flag stood in the center of town on Monday, a monument of sorts.

Large buildings had folded in on themselves. Roofs were on the ground. Chunks of concrete and power lines were piled waist-high. Cars were on their backs like turtles. Strings of colorful flags advertising a shopping festival were wrapped around a four-foot-long unexploded Israeli bomb.

The Israelis said they agreed to stop airstrikes for 48 hours, except in cases of an imminent threat or to support ground troops, to let people in southern Lebanon evacuate. But in Bint Jbail, leaving the town required climbing mountains of rubble, something that was physically impossible for most of the people who had been stranded.

For Lebanese, Calm Moment To Flee Ruins

Off a pathway covered with chunks of concrete and pieces of building, two older Lebanese <u>women</u> and a terrified Sri Lankan maid sat in a basement filled with yarn. The cardboard that coated the floor reeked of urine. Flies buzzed on a pile of grimy blankets.

"Who will take me out?" said Seriya Hamma, a 65-year-old woman with a black head scarf.

Several volunteers, Red Cross workers and Lebanese Army soldiers climbed inside, hoisting the other older woman, Fatma Baidoun, onto a ladder covered with pillows.

Strangers met by accident and stayed together. <u>Women</u> from the Baidoun and Ayub families met during a search for a safer place to live. They moved seven times over 19 days, said Namad Baidoun, who walked over slabs of concrete, diapers, and pieces of metal along the main street in a pair of slippers, crying and appealing to anyone who would hear her as she was being led out by rescue workers.

"There were 35 people together" in their hiding place, she shouted in a high voice. Later, in a hospital in Tibnin, she described the small bathroom that she, her sister, and at least five small children shared for days, while they waited for rescue.

The bombing was so fierce that many did not venture outside at all since it began, nearly three weeks ago. A store whose shelves were stocked with food was open to the street, its windows broken. The food was untouched, even though many who were brought out said they had not had food for several days.

More than anything, people were afraid of losing their shoes. Ahmed Daibis, a blind man in a blue cap and striped pants, was standing in a room near a couch, turning around and asking a volunteer who found him to help him look for his shoes. Alia Bazeh, an elderly woman who had been carried out of the rubble on someone's back, asked repeatedly for her sandals.

Mr. Daibis insisted on locking the door to his house. His sister, who was found earlier, had described to rescuers in a pleading tone where he was. He was carried more than half a mile over the jumble of industrial trash to the center of town, where a few ambulances were driving survivors out. A kitten mewed from a bombed-out building.

At Tibnin Hospital, the Baidoun and Ayub <u>women</u> sat crammed together on a wooden bench in a hallway. Five children crawled on their laps. One of the <u>women</u> said her foot was injured. She was not wearing shoes. A soldier walked by and she asked for food.

Even if the war ended immediately, it would take rescue workers weeks to dig bodies out of the rubble because of the scale of the devastation. Namad Baidoun said a neighbor was still buried under the rubble of his crushed house. In all, rescue workers pulled nine bodies out of Bint Jbail on Monday, the Red Cross said, though dozens, if not hundreds, are still assumed to be dead and trapped.

Bodies are lying near roads as well. Just past Bint Jbail, emergency workers stood inspecting the body of a man they said was a Lebanese soldier. He was killed by shrapnel some days ago. Dogs had eaten away the left side of his body.

After so many days inside, Monday's rescue was a return to sunlight and life.

"We heard a noise, we heard voices," said Rowda Bezzah, 45, who had been hiding in a house with about 20 people. "We ran outside."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: Families from Bint Jbail, Lebanon, at a hospital in Tibnin yesterday. Some of them arrived during a break in the Israeli airstrikes. (Photo by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)(pg. A9)

Fatma Baidoun was helped yesterday out of the ruins of Bint Jbail, Lebanon, which had been destroyed by Israeli bombs in a matter of weeks. (Photo by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



Sharon's legacy tarnished: Ex-prime minister, in coma for more than a year, has legacy linked to corruption, analysts say.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
February 25, 2007 Sunday
Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1B

Length: 1049 words

Byline: CRAIG NELSON

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Jerusalem --- Ariel Sharon, still bedridden and deep in a coma after a massive stroke nearly 14 months ago, turns 79 on Tuesday.

Israelis will mark the former prime minister's birthday with sadness at the unlikelihood that Sharon will ever recover. Few, however, will be nostalgic.

Sharon's legacy no longer seems quite as shiny as the image of the endearing patriarch of his latter years.

Israel's government is awash in charges of corruption and sexual scandal. Its vaunted military and intelligence services are under investigation after last summer's performance against Lebanon's radical Islamist <u>Hezbollah</u> militants. Hamas, an organization sworn to Israel's destruction, is a leading political and military force in the Palestinian territories.

The blame for these predicaments falls partly --- and, in some instances, mainly --- on Sharon, said analysts and ordinary Israelis.

"I don't miss Sharon. Look at Gaza! Look at Lebanon! Look at the corruption!" said Nuriel Zarifi, 35, a Jerusalem coffee shop owner who said he had supported Sharon but now regretted it. "I feel cheated."

Sharon's legacy is clouded in part by the scent of corruption that tinged his ascent to the premiership in the 1990s and lingered after he was elected prime minister in 2001.

His eldest son Omri, 42, pleaded guilty last year to illegally raising more than \$1.3 million for his father's campaign for leadership of the Likud party in 1999. A Tel Aviv court has granted him a delay in serving his nine-month jail sentence, citing his father's medical condition.

Sharon's legacy tarnished: Ex-prime minister, in coma for more than a year, has legacy linked to corruption, analysts say.

Sharon's youngest son Gilad, 36, was investigated but never indicted on charges of bribe-taking, though he admitted to destroying documents and tape recordings sought as potential evidence by an Israeli court.

Sharon himself was the subject of at least three corruption probes during his premiership, though charges were never filed.

"In terms of proper government, the Sharon era will be remembered as a very dark era and the damage he caused is still being felt," said Barak Calev, head of the legal department of the nonprofit, nonpartisan Movement for Quality Government in Israel.

Since Sharon suffered a stroke and lapsed into a coma, investigations of his political heirs and appointees have reinforced the impression that under his rule insider dealing and conflicts of interest were normal, and loyalty was valued more highly than competence and rectitude.

The list includes his former deputy and protege, Prime Minister Ehut Olmert, who is under investigation about his role in the privatization of a bank two years ago when he was finance minister.

Moshe Karadi, Israel's chief of police, resigned last week after an independent commission accused him of failing to investigate the department's links to organized crime.

The retired judge who headed the commission, Vardi Zeiler, warned that Israel's police and the rest of the country are at risk of becoming another "Sicily" due to the rising influence of organized crime in Israeli institutions.

Analysts hasten to say that corruption in Israel was not born under Sharon's leadership. They point to Yitzhak Rabin, who resigned in embarrassment as prime minister in 1977 after his wife was discovered to have a U.S. bank account in violation of Israeli currency laws.

But the leading newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth described the current state of affairs in Israel as "Sodom and Gomorrah" after the disclosure of another investigation into corruption in upper reaches of government --- this one a bribes-for-tax-breaks scheme involving Olmert's longtime private secretary.

And that was before President Moshe Katsav, whose bid for the largely ceremonial office Sharon supported, vacated his official residence last month to fight possible indictment on charges of rape and abuse of power. Another official, former justice minister Haim Ramon, was convicted of sexual misconduct for forcibly kissing a *female* soldier.

"Sharon and all his family were responsible for the deterioration of public standards and values that you see in Israel today," said Eyal Naveh, a professor of history at Tel Aviv University.

Sharon's political and military image also has suffered since his illness. Rocket firings from Gaza, the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers and the war with *Hezbollah* have taken their toll.

The Sharon doctrine of "unilateralism" --- the policy that led to Israel's painful withdrawal of soldiers and settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005 --- is dead, said Gerald Steinberg, a professor of political studies at Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan.

Certainly, Israelis across the political spectrum pined for Sharon last summer, when their government retaliated for the kidnapping of two soldiers and the killing of three others with a massive military offensive across Lebanon.

With Sharon at the helm, few Israelis believe he would have given the appearance of bumbling, as the Olmert-led government did.

Yet even out of power and bedridden, Sharon shares partial blame for the war's failures because of appointments to the military command made while he was still in power, said Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies in Ramat Gan.

Sharon's legacy tarnished: Ex-prime minister, in coma for more than a year, has legacy linked to corruption, analysts say.

But the reassessment of Sharon's legacy does not mean he is held in wide disrepute.

Most Israelis do not speak ill of Sharon, as he remains on a mechanical respirator and intravenous feeding tube in the long-term-care wing of Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv. Instead, most speak of him in the past tense, if they speak of him at all.

"The chance of recovery is one-in-a-million," said Dr. Moti Ravid, a professor of medicine at Tel Aviv University who has not been directly involved in Sharon's treatment. Arrangements for Sharon's state funeral and his burial next to his late wife, Lily, at his ranch in southern Israel were completed long ago.

When he is eulogized, Sharon is likely to be remembered as the last of Israel's charismatic, powerful leaders --- a man with a strategic vision.

He was "a hero in the 1972 Yom Kippur war, promoted settlements in the 1970s and 1980s and defeated [Palestinian leader Yasser] Arafat in the 2001-2005 terror war," Steinberg said.

"Regardless of what he has done, he will be remembered as the last founding father of the generation present at the creation of the state. Everyone else is their son," Naveh said.

Graphic

Photo: Despite his critics, former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon likely also will be remembered as the last of Israel's charismatic, powerful leaders./ImageData* ImageData*

Photo: Associated Press / 2001 photoPrime Minister Ariel Sharon (left) was probed for corruption three times but never charged. His son Omri Sharon (second left) was sentenced for illegally raising money for his campaign./ImageData*

Load-Date: February 25, 2007



How to protect yourself, your family from Lyme Ann L. Johnson Kirkwood Islam, Ann and the truth David Wesselhoft Manor Township Infant drop-off option Donna Carr Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition Lancaster Curfew-law violations David W. Greiner Lancaster

Lancaster New Era (Pennsylvania)

August 14, 2006 Monday

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Section: A; Pg. 8 Length: 988 words

Byline: Lancaster New Era Staff

Series: LETTERS

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

Body

Editor, New Era:

I am a Lyme educator and consultant. I present Lyme seminars across the United States to educate the public on this illness. We can take four steps to disable this powerful illness and epidemic.

We can:

Protect our property from ticks. (My property has been tick free the last two years, and my neighbors also benefit from this protection.)

Boost our immunity to protect ourselves from the disabling effects of Lyme.

Enhance our health, if we already have Lyme.

Protect our animals from this crippling illness.

Take action now against the Lyme bacteria in ticks... the invisible epidemic.

Editor. New Era:

With regards to Kenton Glick ("Our militarized world," New Era, 8/5), Joellyn Powers ("Santorum's intolerance," New Era, 8/7) and Barbara A. Beiler ("Stung..." by "slithering" Ann Coulter, New Era, 8/7):

First, Ann is not "slithering," she speaks the truth. Don't believe me? Then how is it that, with all those on the liberal left who would love to hang her, not a single one can dispute any of the points she makes in her books and columns? All one can do is decry her for calling people names which, by the way, the liberal left has the corner on doing.

How to protect yourself, your family from Lyme Ann L. Johnson Kirkwood Islam, Ann and the truth David Wesselhoft Manor Township Infant drop-off option Donna Car....

Ann's last column was mostly a list of the attacks on the United States by Islamic fanatics (22 of 27 paragraphs), yet all Mr. Glick read into it was "neoconservative's New Vision: hatred, violence and war." Are you kidding? It's our country and Israel that is being attacked!

Ms. Beiler can't even refer to Ann without using the word "slithering." So much for rising above the name-calling thing. And to Ms. Powers, you need to read a lot more outside of school, you've been brainwashed. Millions of Muslims are not "defined by the few," as Ms. Powers would suggest. The majority of Muslims want us and the Israelis dead.

In Lebanon, it is estimated that 80 percent of the Lebanese people support <u>Hezbollah</u>. Iran is on record stating that Israel needs to be eradicated. All over the Muslim world, people are crying for our death.

Those - yes, "they," "them" - are the aggressors, not us. They are required by Mohammed to wage Jihad, the three stages of which are, first, Dar al Sulh, when Muslims are a minority in the community and need to temporarily adopt a peaceful attitude in order to deceive their neighbors. Next is Dar al Harb, when the Muslim side feels strong enough to dispense with pretense and make war with the infidels. Finally, there's Dar al Islam, when Muslims dominate and Islam and Shari'a law is imposed.

They do not want peace. They do not want resolutions and they cannot be reasoned with. By Allah and Mohammad, they must abide by these dictates or face eternity in hell.

The <u>Hezbollah</u> hide behind the Lebanese people - <u>women</u> and children. This deplorable act is very telling of the kind of people "they" are.

Islam is not a peaceful religion and Mohammad is not a peaceful prophet. He is a militant prophet and Islam is bent on global domination, by force and at any cost.

The majority of Muslims, not the "few," believes and adheres to this.

Editor, New Era:

I am responding to the Lancaster New Era's timely editorial about Pennsylvania's Safe Haven law. Thank you for bringing this important issue into the public consciousness again.

I have been facilitating a volunteer task force of local health and human service professionals that has been working on this issue for about one year. We have placed community awareness about the Safe Haven program as our No. 1 priority.

We have worked with Lancaster General Hospital in developing its Safe Haven bassinet drop-off for relinquished babies at the LGH ER and the <u>Women</u> and Babies Hospital. At the bassinet stations, there are Safe Haven brochures that can also help to promote community awareness.

This is only a starting point. We have been working with other area hospitals on Safe Haven issues.

Hospitals, incidentally, were chosen by Pennsylvania to be the designated drop-off locations due to concerns about alternate locations, such as fire stations, not being manned 24 hours a day. Hospitals would be most able to readily respond to the needs of the infant, especially if the infant had medical needs.

But a broader community-awareness campaign is needed to assist parents in crisis to be aware of the Safe Haven infant drop-off option. Parents in these situations would then know they could go to any hospital without any fear of prosecution for relinquishing their infant 28 days or younger.

However, we have been hampered by a lack of funding for a broad scale campaign. When the legislation was enacted in 2002, there were to be dollars allotted by the state for this campaign, but it has never come to pass.

How to protect yourself, your family from Lyme Ann L. Johnson Kirkwood Islam, Ann and the truth David Wesselhoft Manor Township Infant drop-off option Donna Car....

We welcome inquiries about the work of the task force and would be happy to provide a speaker from our outreach committee to talk to your community group about the Safe Haven laws.

We would also welcome community members to contact their local elected officials to garner their support for full funding for Safe Haven promotion.

Editor, New Era:

What possible reason would the juveniles, who appeared to be about 11 or 12 years of age, have for being out at 12:30 in the morning? They were riding their bikes down the middle of a main street in the city on a recent summer night. There was not an adult in sight.

Where are the parents, and what could they be thinking, allowing these children out at this time of night? Perhaps they don't care or maybe they just don't think about what could happen. And this is not an isolated incident.

This is not a debate on the wisdom of the curfew ordinance. The simple fact is that it does exist. There are a lot of juveniles out late at night in violation of this ordinance. Do the parents not know of this or do they choose to let their children break the law? These children are at risk of being a victim of crime. And sometimes they are just out looking to get into trouble themselves.

The parents should be ashamed to allow this to happen.

Load-Date: August 15, 2006



UK refuses to back cluster bomb ban as extent of use in Lebanon revealed: Global ban also opposed by China, US and Russia Unexploded devices still killing three people a day

The Guardian - Final Edition
October 19, 2006 Thursday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 17

Length: 826 words

Byline: Richard Norton-Taylor and Ewen MacAskill

Body

Britain has joined the US, China and Russia to block a proposed ban on cluster bombs in the wake of extensive use of the weapons during the war in Lebanon.

A group of countries, led by Sweden, is urging a worldwide ban on cluster bombs at arms talks in Geneva. Each bomb contains hundreds of small "bomblets", many of which fail to explode until picked up by inquisitive children or stepped on by civilians.

Israeli forces dropped an estimated 1m cluster bomblets in southern Lebanon this summer - 90% of which were dropped in the last three days of the conflict, a new report from Landmine Action said yesterday. The weapons have left a trail of unexploded munitions that is killing between three and four civilians each day and impeding relief work.

In just one month, the UN identified more than 500 areas hit by cluster bombs, the report said.

Richard Moyes, policy and research manager of Landmine Action, which supports the proposed ban, said Britain's refusal to back a ban was "incredible". "Unfortunately, it is not surprising because the UK has been one of the biggest users of the munitions, in Kosovo and in Iraq," he added.

Mr Moyes said he did not want to speculate on why Israel had dropped so many cluster bombs in the last days of the war in Lebanon that ended in August. One theory was that Israel hoped it would make it more difficult for <u>Hizbullah</u> to fire its rockets from southern Lebanon.

Aid agencies and human rights groups, such as Landmine Action, have repeatedly called for an international ban on the use of cluster weapons

Most Israeli cluster strikes hit built-up areas. Landmine Action says when the research for its report was undertaken a month after the ceasefire, water and power supplies had been blocked, and schools, roads, houses, and gardens were still littered with unexploded devices.

The report says: "In many affected areas, farmers have not been able to safely harvest what was left of this summer's tobacco, wheat, and fruit; late-yielding crops such as olives will remain too dangerous to harvest by November and winter crops will be lost because farmers will be unable to plough their grains and vegetables."

UK refuses to back cluster bomb ban as extent of use in Lebanon revealed: Global ban also opposed by China, US and Russia Unexploded devices still killing three....

Simon Conway, the director of Landmine Action, said: "Every day <u>women</u> and children are killed or injured as they sift through the rubble of their former homes by cluster munitions that failed to go off. If they were any other kind of product, they would have been recalled."

The Foreign Office confirmed that the UK is opposing the diplomatic push led by Sweden in Geneva to change the certain conventional weapons treaty.

It said: "The UK believes existing humanitarian law is sufficient for the conduct of military operations, including the use of cluster munitions, and no treaty is required. The UK remains committed to improving the reliability of all munitions with the aim of achieving lower failure rates and leaving few unexploded ordnance in order to minimise the humanitarian risk." It said this had been longstanding British policy.

Sweden is supported by various countries, including Austria, Mexico and New Zealand, as well as the Vatican and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Cluster bombs have been used in most conflicts since the Vietnam war. Belgium has banned them and Australia and Norway have declared a moratorium on their use. Germany has said its forces will stop using them.

The Foreign Office minister, Lord Triesman, told peers in a debate this month that "cluster munitions are legitimate weapons when used in accordance with international humanitarian law".

He added: "They provide a unique capability against certain dispersed and wide-area military targets, for which other munitions are not necessarily practical." He said Britain expected the Israeli government to investigate any "well-founded allegations of the misuse of munitions by their armed forces".

The British embassy in Tel Aviv was pursuing the matter with the Israeli authorities, Lord Triesman said.

According to the UN's mine action coordinating centre, Israeli forces fired 1,800 rocket systems, each with 12 individual rockets, into south Lebanon.

The high failure rate meant that 450,000 cluster bomblets were left on the ground, according to the Liberal Democrats.

Nick Harvey, the Liberal Democrat defence spokesman, said: "There is now an irrefutable case for a comprehensive international ban on the use, production, and transfer of cluster munitions."

guardian.co.uk/lebanon

Flawed weapons

- * Cluster bombs are usually dropped from medium to high altitudes and consist of dozens of bomblets in an outer casing. They have anti-armour and anti-personnel capabilities
- * They do not have precision guidance. With a 5% dud rate, unexploded bombs become landmines
- * According to Human Rights Watch, Nato aircraft dropped nearly 2,000 during the campaign in the former Yugoslavia in 1999
- * They also estimate that 1,600 Kuwaiti and Iraqi civilians were killed by the estimated 1.2m duds left after the 1991 Gulf war.

Load-Date: October 19, 2006



Enough of the U.N.

New York Sun (Archive)
September 12, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 1677 words

Byline: ANNE BAYEFSKY

Body

Today marks the opening of the 61st annual session of the United Nations General Assembly. But just yesterday we were marking a turning point in a war that threatens the lives of decent people all over the world - a war that we cannot afford to lose.

The U.N. above all other institutions claims the right to lead this war, to play the part of the general in its prosecution. This organization calls this role a birthright, for its founding Charter took root in the calamity of a genocide that brought civilization to the brink of annihilation.

But is the United Nations a help or a hindrance to our success on the battlefield of ideas and the very real trenches that lie beyond? Parentage is not a sufficient qualification for leadership two generations later. Let us consider, therefore, the U.N.'s contribution to the war effort.

Just last Friday the U.N. gave the world its answer to 9/11. The General Assembly adopted its first-ever "Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy." The title is grand. The substance was not: it called for the implemention of a General Assembly resolution from 1991, which draws a distinction between terrorism and the "legitimacy of the struggle of national liberation movements." The document was also telling for what it omitted: a definition of terrorism, a reference to state sponsorship of terrorism and a call to sanction states that harbor and assist terrorists. Worst of all it began, not with defeat of terrorists, but with "measures to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, which it describes as "prevent[ing] the defamation of religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures," "eradicate[ing] poverty" and reducing youth unemployment.

What does such a strategy do for winning the war? It throws sand in the eyes of the troops on the front lines and renders the goalposts a mirage.

The previous post-9/11 record was just as bad. Shortly after 9/11 the U.N. created a new body to take the lead on responding to terrorist threats - the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee. To this day, the CTC has never named a single terrorist, terrorist organization, or state sponsor of terrorism. What does such a record do for the war effort? It leaves the stewardship of the war against terrorism in the hands of an agent that cannot define it.

The U.N.'s top human rights body for six decades, the Commission on Human Rights, was charged with identifying and responding to human rights abuse. During that time, 30% of all its resolutions condemning a specific state for human rights violations were directed at Israel, while not one resolution was adopted condemning states like China, Syria, or Zimbabwe. In recent years, Libya served as Chair. In the name of enhanced credibility, the Commission was replaced this past spring by a Human Rights Council. Its members include Cuba, China, and Saudi Arabia.

Enough of the U.N.

Since June, the Council has adopted three resolutions and held two special sessions critical of human rights violations in specific states. Now 100% of them are on Israel. In the meantime, thousands die in killing fields and deserts and torture chambers around the world. What does this U.N. game plan do for winning the war? It defines the enemy as the Jew.

Last weekend U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, decided to go to Iran and shake hands with President Ahmadinejad. The message Annan delivered, in his own words, was that "The international community should not isolate Iran." Mr. Ahmadinejad has embraced genocide, called for the eradication of a U.N. member state, denied the truth of the Holocaust even though its ashes form the cornerstone of U.N. itself, and broken his treaty obligations to end the pursuit of nuclear weapons. Yet the Secretary-General still believes the President of Iran does not deserve isolation. What does such a message do for winning the war? It tells us to appease, apologize, and run away.

The U.N. system produces hundreds of reports, resolutions, letters, journals, and circulars critical of human rights abuse by particular states. It multiplies their impact through the world's largest multilingual human rights internet database, a constant stream of press releases, and the sponsorship of meetings year round across the globe. Of the top ten countries of human rights concern to the U.N. in 2005, Israel was first and America was 10th. Iran was 18th. The human rights actions statistics for 2006 are even starker. So far Israel is first and America is 3rd - of all 192 countries on earth. Human rights are the watchword of our time. They have become the rallying cry both for the forces of good and of evil. What does the U.N. campaign to demonize America and its democratic allies do for winning the war? It provides sustenance for our foes and sows confusion among our friends.

Time and again the United Nations has stood opposed to America's attempts to ensure a decent world order, for itself, and for others.

America has tried to galvanize legal and political forces by calling the millions dead, displaced, and dying in Sudan "genocide." But the U.N. reported last year that events in Darfur didn't meet their criteria for genocide.

America has called for immediate sanctions to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. But the U.N. Security Council called only for another report. Published a week ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency said that it "remains unable to ... verify the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations with a view to confirming the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme." And we're meant to wait.

America has named <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization. But the U.N. refuses to do so - notwithstanding the 3,900 missiles directed at Israeli civilians this summer. On the contrary, said Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch-Brown, "It is not helpful to couch this [Lebanon] war in the language of international terrorism" - this because <u>Hezbollah</u> is "completely separate and different from Al Qaeda."

America has worked arduously to support the nascent democracy in Iraq. But the U.N. has dragged its feet responding to appeals to train Iraqi judges and prosecutors.

America has sought repeatedly to put Chinese violations of the civil rights of a billion people on the U.N. agenda. But all such attempts have been defeated by maneuvers that take draft resolutions off the table before they can even be put to a vote.

America has called for the Security Council to take action on the dire situation in Burma or Myanmar. But the subject has not even made it to the Council's agenda.

America attempted to introduce minimal qualifications for membership on the Human Rights Council relating to actual human rights performance. The General Assembly rejected the idea out-of-hand.

Why have our best efforts to enlist the U.N. in the battle against intolerance and extremism failed? Who are these opponents, wrapped in the U.N. flag, who inculcate the view that American unilateralism and non-cooperation is the root cause of the world's ills?

Enough of the U.N.

Opponents of such reform include U.N. staffers like the secretary-general and his deputy, who claim they are hapless functionaries operating at the mercy of member states - notwithstanding self-motivated trips to Iran, handshakes with <u>Hezbollah</u>, "doing business" with Saddam Hussein, and blaming middle American ignorance for the credibility gap. They are the 45 "Not Free" nations - to use Freedom House labels - who pass judgment on others in the General Assembly. These are the state sponsors of terrorism. The ones who don't let <u>women</u> vote or drive, or who kill them in the name of "honor." The ones who raise their children to die while murdering as many others of a different faith as possible. The ones who shoot mothers and babies from behind. The ones who claim that authoring a cartoon, a movie, or a book can justify a death sentence.

They are also the 58 "Partly-Free" countries. Some of these are cronies, others are just cowards. Some are likeminded with their more notorious neighbors, others are very dependent.

Together, these nations represent the majority of the 132 developing states and the majority of 192 U.N. members. They are unified not by a desire to democratize, or even to develop, since many are quite content with kingdoms and with servitude in their own backyards. They are a team because they are adroit at U.N. politics, and they have learned that the cartel is good for business. This holds true particularly for the largest single bloc amongst them - the 56-member Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The one loose-knit collective that has miserably failed at coordination within U.N. is the Community of Democracies - the pretense of a democratic caucus that counts Nepal, Qatar, and Russia among its members.

The remaining 89 "Free" countries are not only outnumbered at the UN, they are pitted against each other. The plethora of non-democratic regimes in the U.N. framework creates an incentive for a second-string player like France to take on the role of the power-broker and middleman. The possibility of using their influence with dictatorships to offset American power is too tempting for many EU nations. The halfway point between America and the state sponsors of terrorism, however, is not where any democracy ought to be. The U.N. system, though, does not merely divide and conquers democracies - it makes the loser pay for the experience. Just eight developed democracies contribute three-quarters of the entire U.N. regular budget.

There is an alternative, an antidote to the self-doubt and moral relativism planted in our midst by Turtle Bay. Senator Frist calls it a "council of democracies outside of the U.N. system ... [that would] truly monitor, examine and expose human rights abuses around the globe." Such a gathering is an idea whose time has come: the United Democratic Nations - an international organization of democracies, by democracies, and for democracies. It is time to say enough.

This material is drawn from Ms. Bayefsky's remarks yesterday at a Hudson Institute conference. Ms. Bayefsky is founder of EYEontheUN.org.

Load-Date: September 12, 2006



Clarity in seeing the reality of Middle East crisis

Yorkshire Post August 11, 2006

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Length: 2376 words

Body

From: Joy Wolfe, Cheadle, Cheshire. BRAVO to the Rev Mark Madeley (Yorkshire Post, August 8) for his clear vision of the reality of the tragic situation in the Israel/Lebanon conflict, and his bravery in being willing to stand up and speak for what he believes in. And bravo to the Yorkshire Post for publishing it. I was proud to stand alongside Mr Madeley recently at a Yes to Peace - No to Terror rally attended by more than 3,000 people when we clearly spoke against the tragic consequences for all sides in this long-running conflict. Such a contrast to a pro-Palestinian rally the previous week with war-mongering slogans and calls for "Death to the Jews" and the destruction of Israel.

If only everyone could see things as clearly and logically as Mr Madeley and your correspondent R England who in his letter (Yorkshire Post, August 8) rightly advises people to unite against the forces of fundamentalism. As he rightly asks, how can Israel have a dialogue with people whose declared aim is her total destruction? Unlike Coun Pete Allen who really should take his own advice and separate fact from propaganda. So many of his facts are simply completely wrong, not based on what the Israelis say but on what the Palestinians and Lebanese say. That applies to the Gaza beach tragedy, the truth about what happened in Qana and the kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers on Israeli territory which triggered this whole unhappy saga. But let's face it, this is not about the kidnap of soldiers but about the fact that 250,000 Israelis have been forced to leave their homes in northern Israel because of a constant barrage of rocket attacks mounted by *Hezbollah* from civilian areas in southern Lebanon. Sadly, there have been a number of tragic consequences to that, but no Coun Allen, unlike Hezbollah, Israel does not deliberately target Lebanese civilians. Hezbollah has admitted they have planned their offensive against Israel for the past six years, with the backing of Syria and Iran, and only needed an excuse to trigger it. Finally, I was stuck by the views of journalist Alex Warren, the journalist based in Beirut (Yorkshire Post, August 4). Maybe he would like to file a similar report from the deserted streets of Haifa, or other Israeli towns in the north, where people can no longer live normal lives and a generation of traumatised children are having their first taste of life under mortal attack. The one thing I do agree with him on is that the UN has become a symbol of the world's failure to act. From: Chris Read, Church Street, Swinton, Mexborough. YOUR letter writer R England (Yorkshire Post, August 8) asks: "Why harass Israel into a ceasefire when they have shown the only way to combat the greatest evil in the world today, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, is by force?" His premise is mistaken. As we see on our television screens every night now, violence has begotten violence. Not only has Israel's military response over recent weeks failed to combat the immediate threat of *Hezbollah* attacks at its borders, it appears to have encouraged more. Far from being bowed, the extremists have been placed centre-stage. We must come to recognise that, although its causes will vary from place to place, the world over violent Islamic extremism is a set of ideas that cannot be dislodged with ease. As Jimmy Carter put it when he won the Nobel Peace Prize four years ago: "War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children." The international community should heed his words and pursue an immediate resolution to the conflict with the greatest of urgency. Vital to keep our nuclear defence From: JU Oston, The Cloisters, Eastgate, Beverley. REGARDING the report on the "No new Trident" petition (Yorkshire Post, August 5). I am totally opposed to giving up our nuclear defence systems. By not replacing Trident, we leave this country totally at the mercy of any potential enemy. In this uncertain world, it is essential to be prepared for any eventuality. In the Second World War, I experienced the realities of not being prepared. We ended up as Far East prisoners-of-war in Singapore in 1942. I managed to survive three-and-a-half years of forced labour under the Japanese - thousands did not. Those of us still alive after three-and-a-half years were finally saved by the two atom bombs. If it had not been for those two bombs, I would not be penning these lines. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, we must keep the nuclear deterrent - there is no possible alternative to maintain the security of our country. A view from the terraces From: Harry Mead, High Street, Great Broughton, Stokesley. YOUR picture accompanying the correspondence about Yorkshire County Cricket Club (Yorkshire Post, August 7), reveals that the club has sited a large scoreboard at the precise spot where it impairs Headingley's only attractive view - of the spire of St Michael's Church from the Western Terrace. This does not augur well for the full redevelopment of the ground. If county cricket is to meet the challenge of today's very keen competition for people's leisure time, it must devote as much attention to the creation of a high-quality setting, pleasing to the eye, as to satisfying the more obvious needs of the spectator - or indeed the form of the game itself. Aesthetics might not have figured much in the glory days of Yorkshire CCC, or their undistinguished aftermath, but they are vital now. From: Stanley Hopkins, Stanhope Gardens, Barnsley. I AM 71 years of age and I never thought I would see the day when Test cricket on television (unless I wanted to pay for Sky) would be a thing of the past, especially when last year's win of the Ashes was meant to encourage children to take up cricket. Now we are reduced to 45 minutes of highlights on Channel Five. We have tennis, golf, football etc on television, but to whom it may concern, please bring back the happy summer days of watching cricket on television. Paying for TV licences From: Pipa Doubtfire, head of Revenue Management, BBC TV Licensing, Wood Lane, London. RE "Licence to kill' (Yorkshire Post, July 28) and "Another blow for post offices" (August 2). I write in response to the letters above, to clarify that it was the BBC's decision to award the contract for over-the-counter TV Licensing services to PayPoint - not that of the Government, as suggested. I would also like to reassure your readers that two of the most important considerations in the BBC's decision to switch to PayPoint were value for money and ease of payment for licence fee payers. We expect to save more than £100m over the life of the new six-year contract, savings which will be put directly into programmes and services. It is an unfortunate fact that the Post Office has a declining network. There are already more PayPoint outlets than Post Office branches across the UK, with an additional 2,000 PayPoint outlets expected to become available by 2007, bringing the total to 17,000. Furthermore, PayPoint outlets are also open for an average of 100 hours per week and 98 per cent are open on Sundays. Seventy-nine per cent of PayPoint outlets are open from 9am to 8pm. A code for a moral life From: Ken Hartford, Durham Mews, Butt Lane, Beverley. I REFER to Kathleen Beanland's letter (Yorkshire Post, August 4) which suggested that a law- abiding society could be achieved easily if children were actually taught some basic values. In the 10 years I attended school, I only learned six things which have stood me in good stead all my life: 1. To honour and respect my Mum and Dad. 2. Not to commit murder, but I was puzzled by the War. 3. Not to commit adultery. I followed the dictionary definition for that because I didn't know what it meant. 4. Not to steal anything from anybody. I didn't keep to this. I found I had to steal dog biscuits to feel I'd had enough to eat - and I stole many other things, too. I stopped before I was called up in 1944. 5. Not to lie or even suggest things about my fellow beings that I didn't actually know to be true. 6. Not to even think I could have things I couldn't afford. The Army helped me to cement these things into my mind, though I couldn't understand why I was ordered to charge at a sack with a bayonet screaming my head off. Points Surprise over Thornborough From: Nicole Raleigh, Mary Street, Petersfield, Hampshire. HAVING recently become aware of the concerns of the Thornborough and ancient monument complex, I would just like to inform you that I, personally, consider it amazing that such an inspirational place came to be in the county of Yorkshire. Conversely, it is absolutely astounding that a company such as Tarmac, with their lofty claims of corporate responsibility, could imagine that they could so easily destroy such significant portions of the site without causing serious damage and repercussions to their valued corporate image. Tax people From: Brian Sheridan, Redmires Road, Sheffield. MANY readers will sympathise with JA Hufton who, presumably, is the sole, pensioner occupant of one house but pays more in council tax than another house that accommodates five working people (Yorkshire Post, August 3). Your correspondent rightly favours a taxation on people rather than property. Not so long ago, a section of the public held the country to ransom and brought down a government over such a tax. That section mainly comprised people who had never paid rates. The tax, of course, was the poll tax. Lad samaritans From: Mrs S McNally and Mrs E Edward, Yarrow Terrace, Dundee, Scotland. THANK you to the good samaritans who assisted my friend and me on holiday. Our car broke down between Wakefield and Morley on the hard shoulder. Seeing our hazard lights flashing, two lads both stopped to help. Our thanks to them. While on the hard shoulder with hazard lights on, seven police cars passed. Not one

stopped. Transport guide From: Iain Morris, Caroline Street, Saltaire, Shipley, West Yorkshire. SOME time ago, Bradford invested in a guided bus system in Manchester Road. Supertram it may not be, but could a similar project help on some main arterial roads into Leeds? Requirements for effective warfare From: Paul Emsley, Hellifield, North Yorkshire. GENERAL Sir Mike Jackson's remarks about the committing of the British troops in Afghanistan were in the same vein of those of Field Marshal Douglas Haig on the New Army, just before the Battle of the Somme, in 1916 (Yorkshire Post, August 7). Any soldier knows, that to sustain a 24-hour battle against an enemy, you need three to four times the number of combat troops as that enemy, with all the necessary logistic support to sustain them in action. The recent "reinforcements" to the Afghanistan theatre were less than one infantry battalion. As a Chief of the Defence Staff who has presided over the decimation of some of our finest regiments and military units, who has seen a fatal lack of proper combat equipment, who has agreed to the early withdrawal of Jaguar and Sea Harrier combat aircraft, and who has not resigned in protest against such decisions, he is as culpable as Lord Robertson, Geoff Hoon and Dr John Reid, all former Defence Secretaries, for the avoidable risks currently faced by our service personnel. Senior command brings with it serious responsibilities. The sooner that we have senior commanders who will assume those responsibilities on behalf of the servicemen and women who they represent, rather than kowtow to their political masters, we will refurbish and regenerate our Armed Forces, so that they do have the capacity and capabilities to meet their current and future commitments. I trust that the Chancellor of the Exchequer agrees with this? Or has he gone walkabout again? Praise for much-maligned health service From: Colin White, Alwoodley Lane, Leeds. ALMOST every day we read in the newspapers of the shortcomings of some aspect of the NHS. May I be permitted to help redress the imbalance? A month ago, my wife was admitted to the Cardiac Unit of the Leeds General infirmary with a sudden heart attack. Within one minute of her arrival her personal details had been tapped into the system. Within two minutes she was in a wheelchair bound for the treatment area. Within five minutes she was on a trolley with a doctor and nurse in attendance, the appropriate emergency drugs had been administrated and she was being wired up to a monitor. Two days later, she was successfully operated on. Two days after that, she was able to go home. The establishment of the NHS in 1948 was one of the finest pieces of legislation this country has ever enacted. I would report that here, at least, the service is flourishing. From: Chris Warner, Main Street, Hutton Buscel, Scarborough. LAST Friday I had to attend Malton Hospital as a day patient. I was very fortunate in as much that everything about the hospital was superb. It is with much pleasure I have to report that this was a great surprise to me after all the poor press we read. The place was spotless, the staff wonderful, happy and a delight to be with. It was obvious to me that the dedicated and friendly staff were responsible for turning what could have been a traumatic experience into a thoroughly satisfactory experience. Thank you NHS, more especially Malton Hospital. HAVE YOUR SAY... Letters to: The Editor, Yorkshire Post, Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 1RF. Fax: 0113 238 8537. e-mail: yp.editor@ypn.co.uk. Phone: 0113 238 8910 (after 4.30pm, max 150 words please). Please include your full postal address and the publication date if referring to a Yorkshire Post article or a previous letter. Please print as well as signing your name. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters. The Yorkshire Post adheres to the newspaper industry's voluntary code of practice, issued and administrated by the Press Complaints Commission. If you have a complaint, please write to: the Editor, Yorkshire Post, Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 1RF. A copy of the PCC code can be obtained from the following address: The Press Complaints Commission, Halton House, 20/23 Holborn, London EC1N 2JD. Their website is: www.pcc.org.uk

Load-Date: August 12, 2006



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Australian (Australia)
April 4, 2007 Wednesday
All-round Country Edition

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Body

MATP

MOST TALKED ABOUT

IRAN'S BRINKMANSHIP

Tehran will provoke until there is a strong response

S.NONA's prescription for dealing with Iran's hostage taking -- soft diplomacy (Letters, 31/3-1/4) -- will really only lead to more hostages, because it proves to Tehran that belligerence works.

Nona has drawn the wrong conclusion about how to deal with Iran from last year's Israel/<u>Hezbollah</u> war. Israel responded not only to the kidnapping of two soldiers and not even only to the killing of eight soldiers and the barrage of rockets fired at Israeli civilians that were part of that attack. It was also responding to six years of unprovoked attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians that followed Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon.

While Israel showed restraint in its responses, the attacks continued, but since Israel reacted more strongly, the attacks have so far ceased, although <u>Hezbollah</u> is rearming. Perhaps the correct conclusion is that rogue organisations such as <u>Hezbollah</u> and rogue regimes such as Iran will continue provocations until there is a strong response to dissuade them.

George Greenberg

Malvern, Vic

AM I the only person wondering why on earth the British sailors and marines held captive by Iran don't just refuse to make any more of these ridiculous videos? They certainly don't look to be under too much pressure to me ("All sailors admit incursion, claims Iran", 3/4).

As an ex-member of the British navy, I can just imagine what their peers in the armed forces must be thinking -- they will be laughing stocks. Surely their best interests are served by keeping silent.

Clive Barratt

Chiswick, NSW

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IRAN is obviously intent on demonstrating to the world exactly why it should never ever be allowed to possess really dangerous weapons.

Mike Carrette

Cairns, Qld

DANIEL Hannan ("Punish mullahs for act of piracy", Opinion, 3/4) and James Forsyth ("If Britain doesn't act, its shameful", 3/4) both argue that the mullahs in Iran should be taught a lesson, without spelling out exactly what the lesson should be.

That the world will be a better place once the mullahs are removed is beyond dispute. What no one seems to know is how to get rid of them without creating, in Iran, the sort of nightmare that currently exists in Iraq.

Furthermore, the sabre-rattling advocated by your correspondents really holds no fears for people who see martyrdom not as a form of heroic madness but as a fast track to paradise. Your correspondents also overlook the fact that the first task is to get the sailors out alive and that military action will have the opposite effect.

We must all remember that there are some problems that are so complex that an immediate satisfactory solution is not possible. This is such a problem and the British must learn to accept, as the Americans had to accept with the US embassy hostage crisis in 1979, that there are really only two plausible options. A military one or diplomacy. The latter option is the only one that can be realistically employed until such time as the sailors are released.

Tony Letford

Ashfield, NSW

JIMMY Carter's softly, softly approach in 1979-80 ensured that the staff at the US embassy in Tehran were hostage for 400 days. Their captor -- one Mahmoud Ahmadinejad -- suddenly changed his mind and released the hostages when confronted with the bellicose Ronald Reagan. Ahmadinejad and his government are thugs. The only way to deal with thugs, without inviting future thuggery, is to apply violence or threats of violence in such a way that the thugs think again.

Andrew Murphy

Kangaroo Point, Qld

SOME much needed perspective is necessary to understand the current crisis over Iran's capture of the British naval personnel. Perhaps the best way to begin to understand it is to reverse the roles. Imagine if a bunch of Iranian sailors were captured somewhere between the high seas and British territorial waters. What would the media's response be? The obvious answer is that they had no right to be there in the first place. They would most certainly be paraded on international television. The British Prime Minister would condemn this latest act of aggression by Iran. And Iran would profess that it's quite unlawful for Britain to detain sailors who were merely undertaking a routine exercise on the high seas.

Now this scenario immediately appears absurd because one cannot think of a circumstance where Iranian military assets would be roaming around the waters surrounding Western Europe. And that absurdity is at the heart of the present situation.

Lost in the present debate is the simple question: what right does Britain have to be in the Persian Gulf in the first place? Please, spare me the patronising and naive talk about UN Security Council resolutions, of maintaining international peace and security, or even that the Iraqi Government, which was installed by the Americans and the British, invited the British into their waters. None of this would have happened if Western nations had not interfered in the geopolitics of the region.

Mustafa Qadri

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

London, UK

Shocked that traditional

land owners not consulted

I STARTED supporting the Wilderness Society at about the same time as I started supporting Reconciliation. I thought they were complementary: respect for the Earth and respect for indigenous people who can teach white Australians so much about how to care for our environment.

I am shocked that the traditional owners were not invited to take part in the discussions between the Wilderness Society and the Queensland Government before it passed legislation concerning the wild rivers in Cape York ("Rough passage", Features, 3/4).

Jane Wilson

Medindie Gardens, SA

IT seems that the Wilderness Society and the Beattie Government are just another bunch of whitefellas who think they know what's best for blackfellas.

Kevin Williams

Merewether Heights, NSW

ACADEMIC Boni Robertson is misguided in her call for free infant formula for babies living in remote Aboriginal communities ("Free provisions a formula to end malnutrition", 2/4). The experience of mothers and babies in developing countries in the 1970s -- when babies starved because breastfeeding was undermined -- should be enough for us to know we should protect and promote breastfeeding in already disadvantaged communities.

There is very little scientific evidence to suggest the quantity or quality of breastmilk is affected by the nutritional status of the mother anyway. If Aboriginal <u>women</u> are malnourished, the \$1500 a year it would cost to artificially feed a baby should be spent on subsidising fresh food for the entire community. Infant formula simply does not contain all that is required for normal infant growth and development, and is linked to increased rates of obesity and diabetes. Far from ending Aboriginal malnutrition, infant formula would perpetuate it.

Robyn Hamilton

Queensland president

Australian Breastfeeding Association

A precipitous path

PASTOR Peter Curtis (Letters, 3/4) enters a precipitous path when he criticises Maxine McKew on moral grounds, unfavourably comparing her with John Howard. Describing Mr Howard's values and beliefs as "consistent" and Ms McKew as "adulterous" is gutter politics. Coming from a pastor it's incredible.

So, is Mr Howard without fault or bias? Should I mention children overboard or a system that victimises asylum-seekers? For Curtis's position to hold water, this has to be his conclusion. It's also unlikely he knows anything at all of the details of Ms McKew and her partner's relationship or their spirituality, let alone of any resulting political bias. He would do well to observe the dictum of the founder of his faith, "Judge not, or you will be judged."

Jonathan Hogarth

Enfield, SA

Indignant concern

THE Howard Government's hypocrisy is again dazzlingly obvious, this time with Attorney-General Philip Ruddock's display of indignant concern over Sheik Hilali's distribution in Lebanon of \$70,000 raised by the Australian Muslim community for victims of last year's Israel-<u>Hezbollah</u> war ("Hilali can't say where aid for Lebanon war victims went", 2/3). In contrast, the AWB's contribution of around \$300 million in kickbacks to Saddam Hussein barely stirred official torpor until this monumental corruption was publicly exposed.

Stewart Rose

Burbank, Qld

Toxic chemicals in CFLs

I HAVE grave concerns about the news that Australia will gradually replace incandescent light bulbs with "electronic" compact fluorescent lamps, or CFLs. While it's correct to replace the traditional light bulbs with energy-saving lighting devices, the promotion of electronic CFLs and electronic ballasts (for tubular fluorescent lamps) is a big mistake.

Electronic CFLs and electronic ballasts contain highly toxic chemicals such as mercury, lead and PCB that can contaminate soil and water. Limited by the lifetime of a critical component called an electrolytic capacitor, electronic CFLs have a very short lifetime ranging from 6000 hours (8 months) to 10,000 hours (1.1 years). Electronic ballasts for tubular flourescent lamps have a typical lifetime of 15,000 hours (or 1.7 years). After using them to save energy for a few months to less than two years, they will become toxic/non-biodegradable electronic waste for thousands of years.

In the pursuit of energy savings we must not sacrifice environmental protection. The toxic chemicals in electronic CFLs will lead to long-term environmental disaster. There is better technology that is both energy-saving and environmentally friendly.

Professor Ron Hui

Department of Electronic Engineering

City University of Hong Kong

Misleading photographsAT a time when there's so much shameless dishonesty in public life (children overboard, WMD, David Hicks "the worst of the worst", etc) it's nice to know there's a Sydney-based newspaper that always tries to tell the truth and would never run misleading photographs of a damp squib event with an adverse environmental outcome such as Earth Hour ("Earth Hour takes a light load off road", 2/4). I pledge \$100 to the charity of the Sydney Morning Herald's choice if it will publish the exposure details (aperture and shutter times) of their "before" and "after" photographs of the lights switch-off in Sydney's CBD on Saturday night.

Chris Oliver

Elizabeth Bay, NSW

UNLESS the Hunter Valley power stations were turned down for the occasion, or the physical laws governing the conservation of energy have been repealed to suit the demands of the climate change brigade, not a single molecule of greenhouse emissions was saved during the Earth Hour event in Sydney.

E.Dook

Balmain, NSW

HOW fortunate for the people of Sydney that the "lights off" exercise was for only one hour. If Bob Brown and his ilk got their way with coal mining, blacked-out cities could become the norm in this country.

Carin Timo

Lawnton, Qld

I WONDER how many tonnes of carbon were released directly into the atmosphere from all those burning candles during Earth Hour. I'm sure the ozone layer appreciates the gesture.

Kay Stevens

Woodroffe, NT

The safe sex message

YOU have to hand it to Brian Haill (Letters, 3/4) for being so frank about the wrong headedness of the safe sex message. He only made one mistake. The term safe sex can and should be maintained in his proposed "nitty gritty" sex education courses.

In those courses, it should be emphasised that the term refers only to sex within an exclusive, life-long relationship between a couple who were virgins before the definitive commitment or who had been tested for sexually transmitted infections and the relevant windows of time allowed to elapse to ensure that they were not carriers of STIs.

Martin Fitzgerald

Chatswood, NSW

A moral tipping point

IF any week in Tasmanian political history deserved to be a moral tipping point, it was the last week of March, 2007 ("Gunns put their stamp on mill bill", 31/3-1/4).

Apart from Terry Martin, now expelled from the ALP for breaking ranks, no Labor or Liberal member of the Tasmanian parliament has shown any concern or care about the health of the Tasmanian population living within the air shed of Gunns Ltd's proposed pulp mill.

They have all endorsed a legislative process reminiscent of authoritarian, non-democratic regimes, supporting legislation written in direct consultation with Gunns, in Gunns's interest, which statute bars any action by citizens in the event pollution destroys their health or business.

Their abject poverty of ethical and moral responsibility in knowingly not representing their electors, of deliberately preventing any avenue for redress, and in ignoring basic principles of due process, make all of them unfit for public office.

Peter Henning

Exeter, Tas

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

It didn't take long for someone to blame "climate change" for the near-miss tsunami, with one dill on national TV declaring that "with global warming now a certainty, we can expect more extreme events like this". It's enough to make a grown man weep.

Ray Duncan

Smithfield Heights, Qld

lan Kennon (First Byte, 3/4) asks for Nicholas Stern's recommendations for reducing flatulence from cattle and sheep as a contributor to Australia's greenhouse gases. Maybe a Stern warning is in order.

Judi Cox

Springfield, Qld

Neither John Howard nor Kevin Rudd is taking comfort from the latest Newspoll. But I'm sure one of them is punching the air with joy behind closed doors.

Cilla Tey

Mulgoa, NSW

Since it's inconceivable that Messrs Howard, Ruddock and Downer would be lying to us about their non-involvement in an election-year fix for the David Hicks problem, I can only assume that Hicks was guilty of "non-core" terrorism. How silly do they think we are?

Ned Wood

Bunbury, WA

I'm sure Schapelle Corby would be very happy to change places with Mohammed Dawood, alias David Hicks.

Brenda Johnson

Gowrie, ACT

With Peter Debnam stepping aside as NSW Liberal leader, pehaps the beloved Speedo can now resume its iconic status free of political taint.

John Byrne

Randwick, NSW

If Ian Thorpe were a Chinese swimmer, the Australian media would have already assumed his guilt.

Gavin Date

Marleston, SA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: April 3, 2007



Israeli president to be charged with rape: Country's ceremonial head of state faces six indictments for sex crimes

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

January 24, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 424 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- The often sleazy universe of Israeli politics suffered another heavy blow to its reputation yesterday when the country's attorney general announced that he intends to charge President Moshe Katsav with sex crimes including rape.

Six separate indictments against Israel's 61-year-old ceremonial head of state are to be handed down as the Israeli government reels from severe domestic criticism over its handling of the war against <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon last summer.

Legal authorities also continued to investigate separate corruption allegations against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert involving the sale of his home and helping friends when a bank was privatized.

Olmert's former justice minister, Haim Ramon, was recently forced to resign after being charged with forcing a soldier to kiss him.

The charges to be brought against Katsav by Attorney General Menahem Mazuz involve sexual harassment and sexual coercion, breaches of trust, obstruction of justice and illegally accepting gifts in return for favours.

If convicted on all counts he could face more than 20 years in jail.

Four <u>women</u> who worked for Katsav since he became president in 2000 or earlier, when he was Israel's tourism minister, have accused him of sexual improprieties. Images of Katsav's young accusers, with their faces blurred, have appeared in the Israeli media for some time and were widely published again late yesterday.

The pending indictments, which followed a long investigation, triggered a storm of protest from every Israeli political faction, with demands that Katsav resign immediately or face impeachment. Unless impeached by the three quarters of the deputies in the Israeli Knesset and removed from office, Katsav has political immunity from prosecution until his seven-year term ends in July.

"The indictment that was served against the president is as serious as it gets, but we need to remember that as long as the president is in office, there is no way to actually submit an indictment against him," said Labour Knesset

Israeli president to be charged with rape: Country's ceremonial head of state faces six indictments for sex crimes

member Shelly Yacinovitch, who praised the president's accusers for their bravery in the face of "mudslinging" designed to destroy their reputations.

"Therefore, the Knesset needs to act to dismiss the president immediately," she said.

The white-haired Iranian-born banker and father of five is a former minister for the right-wing Likud party.

His wife Gila has been an outspoken advocate for women's rights and for abused women.

Katsav, who grew up in poverty after his family arrived in Israel as refugees, has denied all the charges.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Tomeriko/Associated Press; Israeli President Moshe Katsav, centre, walks yesterday with his wife Gila, escorted by security personnel, as they leave his daughter's home near Tel Aviv. The Israeli attorney-general recommended yesterday that Katsav be indicted on charges of rape and abuse of power.

Load-Date: January 24, 2007



Rockets shake Israeli city: Sderot woman is qassam casualty Israel responds with raids on Gaza Strip

The Gazette (Montreal)

November 16, 2006 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A21

Length: 397 words

Byline: MATTHEW FISHER, CanWest News Service; AFP contributed to this report

Dateline: SDEROT, Israel

Body

Retaliate or negotiate.

Both positions found support on the quiet residential street where one of 13 homemade Qassam rockets fired from the Gaza Strip yesterday killed an Israeli woman and cut off the legs of a bodyguard to the country's defence minister as they walked down a path behind a row of houses.

"Every time they hit us with a Qassam, we should take down one of their tall buildings," said 72-year-old Elie Bonifad as he stared angrily from his doorstep at the spot 20 metres away where one of the rudimentary missiles exploded as children were getting ready for school.

"After a few buildings are gone, these attacks will stop."

But faced with a regular barrage of rockets from Gaza for six years in this small Negev desert farming city only five kilometres from the Palestinian territory, Bonifad's next-door neighbour, 66-year-old Shaul Sigler, was equally adamant the only way to stop them was to talk with Gaza's violent hardliners.

"We have gone in there a million times with the army and what happened? Nothing!" Sigler said as he stood at his front door beside his wife, Haya. "We must negotiate directly."

Although more than 1,000 rockets have been fired into Israel from Gaza in the past year, yesterday was the first lethal attack launched from the Palestinian territory in 16 months.

The bloodshed presented fresh security and political worries for beleaguered Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who was already reeling from immense public unhappiness over how his government and the Israeli Defence Forces failed to stop *Hezbollah* from launching thousands of rockets from Lebanon this summer.

Israeli warplanes carried out five raids on the Gaza Strip late yesterday and early today, Palestinian security officials said.

Rockets shake Israeli city: Sderot woman is qassam casualty Israel responds with raids on Gaza Strip

They said two Palestinians were wounded when the Israelis targeted a house in Shatti refugee camp in the north of the Gaza Strip, where an official of the Palestinian militant umbrella group the Popular Resistance Committees lived.

A second Israeli air raid took place on the Jabaliya refugee camp, also in the north of the Gaza Strip. That attack targeted the home of a leader of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, which heads the current Palestinian government, the sources said. They gave no further details.

The Israeli army confirmed that aircraft had carried out two attacks "aimed at buildings used to store weapons."

Graphic

Photo: DAVE BUIMOVITCH, REUTERS; Israeli <u>women</u> react at the scene of a rocket attack on the southern Israeli town of Sderot yesterday. A rocket fired by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip killed Fatima Slutsker and seriously wounded another person, medical officials said.; Graphic/Diagram: (See hard copy for graphic)

Load-Date: November 16, 2006



Muslim community must help to heal its own cancer; Letters to the Editor>letters.editor@canberratimes.com.au

Canberra Times (Australia)
September 4, 2006 Monday
Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 10 Length: 440 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

Most Australians would agree with the Australian Muslim community that it is wrong to believe that "all Muslims are terrorists".

However, most Australians will not turn a blind eye to the fact that "most international terrorists today are Muslim".

To do so is not sensible.

Consequently, the Australian Muslim community is foolish to ask other Australians to spend an equal amount of time seeking out Buddhist, Hindu, Christian or Muslim terrorists, just so this community can feel at ease.

The Australian Muslim community faces a big problem. A minority in the community is spreading a vicious cancer throughout the civilised world.

The Muslim community is the best equipped, in our society, to root out this evil with precision. Other members in the Australian community cannot be anywhere near as effective, nor achieve a long-lasting cure.

Having said that, the Muslim community has a second problem - they apparently do not see that there is a problem in their community.

For several years I believed that the more balanced and moderate members in their community were working hard to eradicate these problems.

On occasions, there did appear to be signs of such action.

However, my faith in the Muslim community facing up to these problems was totally undermined when several of the moderate leaders of this community asked our Prime Minister to take <u>Hezbollah</u> off the proscribed list of terrorist organisations.

This terrorist organisation, created approximately 30 years ago, to attack the civilised world at the behest of Iran and Syria, does not hesitate to openly state its aims of committing genocide, of having the state subservient to its religion, and to treat its **women** abysmally, just to mention a few of its aims.

Muslim community must help to heal its own cancer Letters to the Editor>letters.editor@canberratimes.com.au

Any Muslim, anywhere in the world, is mad to think that such aims will be supported by most Australians.

Nick Ford, Kambah We all know Prime Minister John Howard is a "whatever it takes to win" man, but I'm sad to see him using his position to pit one Australian against another as he's doing with his exhortations to what he calls a small number of Muslims.

Former waves of migrants have, with time and tolerance, become valued members of our society. I don't recall ever hearing anyone complaining about the widespread failure to learn English of the housebound mothers and grandmothers among these earlier arrivals.

We just accepted that, English speaking or not, they were helping to raise and support another generation of Australians.

If only Mr Howard's numbers would improve in the polls he might be persuaded to refrain from making damaging comments that do not reflect well on him or our country.

Marcia Turner, Gosford

Load-Date: September 3, 2006



The Times (London)
August 30, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: FEATURES; Times2; Pg. 7

Length: 3259 words

Byline: Jonathan Spyer

Body

Israeli reservist JONATHAN SPYER drove a tank into Lebanon on the evening of August 9. It was a routine mission, but as his unit got the order to move out, things began to go wrong

On the evening of August 9, we received word that the operation into El Khiam and Marjayoun was on. We would be commencing movement at 6pm. The unit was positioned on a field next to an avocado grove, on land belonging to a border kibbutz. We had been waiting there for three days. Twice the entry into Lebanon had been postponed.

The routine of tense expectation and cancellation was something you could get used to. You can get used to a lot. You can sit next to a verdant field of avocados, and get used to the endless, sinister booming of our artillery in the morning, and the Katyusha-type rockets from the other side that started around 11am. You can get used to scrabbling in the rich dirt under the tracks as the Katyushas fly overhead, and watching them ploughing up white smoke in the hills. All of that can, within 72 hours, start to feel like a normal routine.

The operation was into one of the areas south of the Litani River as yet untouched by our forces. They postponed it twice. There were fewer jokes than usual, and no one was playing cards. We knew that shortly we were going into the killing zone, and that it was not certain who would be emerging from it. Lebanon was just a few hundred yards ahead. Familiar and utterly alien.

There was a feeling of something like an elegy with the tanks all in line as the sun began to fall, as we made the final preparations before moving off. There was time for thoughts, cigarettes, maybe surreptitious final mobile phone calls home.

Or last-minute adjustments on the tanks.

We had been called up five days earlier. I have served for 14 years in the reserves in Northern Command. In civilian life, I work at a research institute in Herzliya. We deal with Middle East foreign policy, and consult and write and advise. And I live the comfortable life of a bourgeois Jerusalemite in his late thirties. I have lived in Jerusalem for 16 years. But when I was young and ardent in the early 1990s I came to Israel from London and volunteered to join the Armoured Corps. And after finishing in the regular army in 1993, like thousands of other Israelis, I began the yearly round of reserve duty.

I narrowly missed serving in Lebanon in the days of the security zone. And I have spent some unpleasant times in Nablus and Hebron and Gush Etzion over the years.

This time, though, as we all knew, it would be of a different order of magnitude.

The call came on Friday evening. I had just finished cleaning my apartment, and was cooking something for dinner. I had met an American journalist just down from Beirut earlier in the day, and we were planning to go out drinking that warm summer evening. The phone rang, and after a second or so of silence on the line a woman's voice was telling me to report immediately to the agreed point at which buses would be arriving to take us to the north.

I had showered, put the food in the fridge, e-mailed my loved ones and put the uniform on. Three hours later, I was at the depot on the northern border. We'd trained for three days. On the rifle ranges, and in the tanks. The heat was astonishing. A curious silence surrounding everything.

We finished the training exercise with a trip to a shawarma restaurant at the roadside. As we ate, the news came in of 12 reserve soldiers killed by a direct hit from a Katyusha at Kfar Giladi. As we filed out of the restaurant, I caught the eye of Lavav, an old comrade from the first days when they put our company together in 1994. "The last supper," he remarked with a wry grin.

From there, we had got on a bus to the kibbutz, a few kilometres outside of Metulla, on the northern border, and into the avocado fields. And we had waited.

The time had come. After briefings, and practices, and hours empty but for the constant noise of the rockets and shells. There would be no further cancellations.

People walked from tank to tank, shaking hands with friends, wishing each other luck. I remember standing with Ariel R. and exchanging a few brief words before we boarded.

Ariel, like me, was a tank driver from platoon 2. He was watching affairs with a worried furrow to his brow. "We aren't ready for this," he said, as we shook hands. I looked at him quizzically, but he declined to elaborate, adding simply: "Not all of us will be coming back."

"We will," I reassured him, assuming the father-confessor role that I had awarded myself in the previous days.

Again he didn't reply, and there was a strange little silence that lasted a few seconds.

I passed by the company commander's tank. It was about ten to six, the sun still strong in the sky. Alon Smoha was there, another of the old lot from the first days. A day earlier, on the rifle ranges, we had discussed the meaning of the current conflict, and what should and should not be done. Alon, from a traditional Jewish family in Hod Hasharon, favoured a hard-line approach. Unlike with others, his hawkishness had not abruptly vanished when he found himself in the firing line.

Smiling, he had described how the call-up had come as he sat with his parents making the Friday night Kiddush.

We didn't talk in the moments before setting off for Lebanon. Instead, as I passed by the tank, we just shook hands. I remember his hand, lean and strong, gripping mine for a long moment, and then setting off for our own tank. Time to move.

We had to drive up to Metulla, right on the border. This was to be the entrance point. The sun was shining as we pulled out of the avocado field. We drove on the main street. A sign of war. The sound of the artillery in the distance. When we got to the ascent toward the border in Metulla, we stopped for a while, waiting for darkness.

At Metulla, we witnessed strange scenes. The lights of the houses turned off. Most of the residents had long since headed for the south.

But by the side of the roadside were a group of Hassidim from the sect of Nahman of Breslau, who had rigged up a makeshift sound system at the furthest point accessible to civilians.

They had recorded some songs especially for the campaign. There was one about Hassan Nasrallah which they were blaring out over and over again. The light was fading into twilight as we waited. There were 300 <u>Hezbollah</u> men in El Khiam, they'd told us, who were waiting too.

The media -Israeli and foreign -were there in force. The boys swapped lewd comments about the young <u>female</u> reporters. An Italian cameraman made a great show of delivering a speech detailing his love for Israel, which did not, of course, in any way detract from the equal love he bore for the peoples of the Arabic speaking world. Overcome by emotion, he produced a small cigar from his top pocket. He gestured up to us. "I will give you this cigar," he said grandly, "if you will promise me you will think of me when you smoke it, later, in Israel."

Itzik, our loader, who was of similarly theatrical temperament, answered him that he would certainly do so, and the cigar was duly transferred.

As the darkness came down, we got the order to move. I remember a Bratslav Hassid, standing on the roof of a car by the side of the road as we went in. He was blowing kisses at us as we went by.

It was as though we shrugged aside the lunacy of the scene as we took the dirt road toward the Good Fence. No more foreign journalists beyond this point. No more Bratslav Hassidim. Silence except for the engine and the crackle of the internal communications. Into the purifying fire.

It took a while, down a silent descent, until we were in the first fields of southern Lebanon, heading towards the El Khiam ridge. Itzik said the travellers' prayer through the intercom as we entered. Darkness and silence all around us

We entered El Khiam in the dead of night, slowly, cautiously and with no resistance. In neighbouring Marjayoun, the objective of another company from our battalion, the situation was a little different. There, the lead tank encountered an RPG 29 team at a distance of around 30 metres. The RPG team had managed to fire a single rocket, causing damage to the turret, but not destroying it, before being killed by a shell launched from the tank.

All round El Khiam, things were quieter than we expected. Our job wasn't to enter the town. Instead, we circled around it, firing at certain, selected targets.

Hours passed. There was a fire spreading in the fields, set off, I suppose, by a stray Israeli shell. As the hours went by, I began to feel sleepy, the fire in my left periscope, the green of the night vision, and the earphones pressing in my ears.

Things began to go wrong shortly before first light. We got the order to move out, back in the direction of Israel, about an hour before the dawn. We were 7km (4 miles) north of the border, and this would have been ample time. Unfortunately, however, we got word through the radio that the company commander's tank had developed a problem and couldn't move.

We had to head back, and fix cables to it, ready to tow it the distance back to the border. Towing a tank is a laborious, slow business. It limits speed to about 5 km/h, and we had at most just under an hour of darkness left.

We got the cables strapped on, and began the slow, painful journey back.

After about half an hour, it began to get light. We were still 6km north of the border.

The dragging process was an excruciating, draining business, with the two tanks bumping and lurching against one another. It was Alon Smoha in the driver's compartment of the other one. Smoha, whose hand I had shaken before we'd set out.

Rising daylight, the snail's pace, and our bobbing along like a procession of ducks way down in the valley. Obvious disaster.

I was thinking about the thoughts I imagined one would have between going over a mine and death. Both tanks were sending out as much smoke as we could manage, in the forlorn hope that it would confuse the enemy.

Then an unfamiliar girl's voice came through the external communication. She said that the brigade had information that within ten minutes we would come under missile attack.

It was broad daylight. We were still about 5km north of the border. The <u>Hezbollah</u> men had seen out the night and now were going to work. Which wouldn't have mattered if we'd covered the necessary ground in time to beat the dawn. But we hadn't. There was nothing much we could do except keep going, at an excruciating snail's pace, and hope.

We were dragging the tank from a reverse position, so I was looking at the company commander's tank in front of me.

Then there was an almighty crash into the tank we were dragging, and flame was coming out of the engine grille. The crash confused us for a moment, because it sounded similar to the sound that a tank makes when it is firing off a shell.

I heard the company commander shouting "Missiles, missiles!" through the radio, which left no more room for doubt. Calm, I don't know why but with absolute calm, I thought with a sort of mild surprise that very possibly I wasn't going to be getting back across the border.

Then, suddenly, I had no brakes left. Tried to brake, couldn't, nothing left. Then there was a godawful jolt on our own tank, and the engine was dead. Everything was quiet. Peaceful, for a moment. But the internal radio was working, and I heard the order to get out of our dead tank, which had just caught a Kornet missile in the engine, and which was about to turn into a death trap. The engine would go up in flames, and the flames would spread to the turret, and begin setting off ammunition. There wasn't much time.

I grabbed my rifle and ammunition, and pushed back the driver's chair, crawling into the turret area. The boys were waiting there, and Itzik opened up the back door. He was first out.

There were mortar rounds landing all around. Dangerously close. Maoz, our commander, spotted an anti-tank ditch close by, and shouted for us to take cover there.

We sprinted for the ditch and into it. Up to our knees in muddy water, we splashed and sloshed our way along it, through grass and thorns. Behind us, we saw the company commander's crew also making for the ditch. But one man was on a stretcher, jolting and motionless, and even though I could see only his boots I knew he was dead. Someone shouted: "The company commander's dead," and I thought for a moment of that thin youth, in his midtwenties, who had only recently taken over and who had now been killed.

But then I saw him entering the ditch, and had to re-adjust. So it wasn't him. Who was it then? Who was the dead man? With a round chambered in the rifle, I peered up to have a look. It was Alon Smoha on the stretcher, lying on his front, with a very deep wound in his right side. He wasn't burnt or blackened. His feet were crossed over one another. The missile itself must have torn into him.

My main worry, as I stared out across the ditch, was that the <u>Hezbollah</u> in El Khiam would now send down a squad to have a look at the handiwork of the missile team. I strained my ears to hear the sound of Arabic voices, or the crackle of footsteps. That would be the beginning of the final bloody act. There would be a firefight, and I imagined my own body crashing back into the muddy water. I looked down at the rifle, and imagined a bearded Arab face coming over the edge of the ditch.

Would I give him a bullet between the eyes? We would see.

The minutes passed. It was clear that back across the border they must have known that we'd been hit. I had always imagined that if soldiers were lost in the field, complex, efficient systems, perhaps involving the Air Force, would spring into life. Instead, we crouched in the ditch, with mortar rounds landing from up on the ridge, and waited.

Either the *Hezbollah* or our own guys were going to find us.

I looked down at the water, and noticed that it was full of tadpoles. Strange to see them flitting easily in the murky swamp.. All quite indifferent. And the body of Alon Smoha lying at the edge of the ditch.

Then we heard a loud crack from where the tanks were. This was it. The <u>Hezbollah</u> were here. I strained my ears in the absolute silence for a moment. Another crack.

But someone announced after a long moment that it was only the pop of ammunition cooking up and going off, as the two tanks went up in flames. More time passed.

The moths and the tadpoles. The filthy water. The rifle, with a round in the chamber, heavy in my hands.

I looked at my watch. Forty minutes had passed since we had entered the ditch.

Where the hell were they? Had they forgotten us? We couldn't hear any artillery, nor anything from the air.

After 50 minutes we heard the rumble of tanks in the distance, and machinegun fire. Once again, the look of everything changed. It meant there was a chance, after all, that we might get out of this. But the tanks were very far off. It would take some minutes before they reached us. I strained everything in my heart willing them to get a move on.

Then suddenly, much closer, and out of nowhere, a different sound. And someone shouted: "It's an APC, it's the engineers." We all scrambled over the ditch and there, like manna from heaven, was an APC of the engineers, with a frantic soldier motioning us to get in, fast. I began to make for the APC, but then someone called me back, and I realised that they needed to bring the stretcher and the body of Smoha over the ditch. I ran back, jumped into the ditch again, and took hold of one side of the stretcher. Cursing, up to my knees in water again, we managed to manouevre it over to the other side. We fixed the stretcher up on the APC, and all dived in. There was gunfire all around, and I didn't know what was theirs or ours.

In the APC, packed like sardines. I was next to Amit, who had been in the same crew as Alon Smoha, and I knew they'd been close friends. He was half in a daze, and he asked me "Where's Smoha?" "He's dead, Amit," I said, and he began to weep.

I was nowhere near weeping. Rather, I felt something close to a sort of grim exhilaration which it is very hard to describe or precisely locate. Finally someone said: "OK, we are over the border. We're in Israel."

There were still explosions everywhere. There was still the dead man, on the stretcher, with his cruel, gaping wound. But at that point, I realised that death, which had seemed to be bringing its huge, empty face very close up to me and the rest of us, was receding back again to its own realm.

Once we were over the border, there were medical crews waiting, and they took Alon and laid him out and covered him with a white plastic cover within minutes. The noise of the artillery all around was still deafening. But we were back in Israel.

Thirteen hours. That was the time of the whole thing. From leaving the avocado field to making it back across the border.

Afterwards, there would be the accusations, the recriminations. Why had we been left to drag the tank back in broad daylight? With a clear view of us from the ridge. Crawling along in a valley 6km north of the border. Why had we been left to carry out a suicide mission?

There would be Alon Smoha's funeral in Hod Hasharon, the terrible keening and wailing of his Iraqi mother and his sisters.

And there would be the moment when Itzik and I took a trip to have a look at our two tanks, after they finally managed to drag their burnt wrecks back across the border. We checked where the missiles had entered. The missiles that took out the engines of the two tanks entered at precisely the same point. At the engine grille. But in Smoha's tank, the missile had entered, and then continued inwards, flying over the engine, in the area between the engine and the outer armour. Then it had penetrated the wall of the driver's compartment, and killed him. In my

case, on the other hand, owing to a difference in trajectory of no more than a few centimetres at most, the missile had ploughed into the engine -destroying the tank, and leaving me untouched.

We also learnt later that a ten-man <u>Hezbollah</u> squad had been spotted descending from El Khiam in our direction. Presumably because of the presence of our forces in the area, they had turned back, preventing the firefight I had feared and expected.

I took part in two more missions into Lebanon before we were demobilised. The country was full of bitterness and confusion in the days that followed the ceasefire.

What is most prevalent now is a feeling that it isn't over. That the war and its uncertain outcome have failed to resolve any of the underlying factors that led to its outbreak. This is the factor fuelling the urgency of the protests now being organised by reserve soldiers. The anger and disgust felt by many of those who fought in Lebanon and returned does not represent a crisis of Israeli identity or national ideals, but rather a re-affirmation of them. This, however, goes together with a deep sense that the hedonism, cynicism, mediocrity and corruption that prevail among large sections of our leadership are not worthy of the sacrifices made for the country by the frontline soldiers.

Whether Israel will find within itself a spirit worthy of this sacrifice, and whether this spirit can find its way to the leadership of the country is the key issue. The forces arrayed against us throughout the region and beyond it are vigorous, youthful and suffused with a fanatical hatred. We will prevail against them, I believe, on condition that we can make of ourselves and our society a thing that does not shame those who died in its defence and preservation.

Load-Date: August 30, 2006



War of words as general breaks ranks on O'Dea's al-Qaeda fears

Daily Mail (London)

February 28, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: ED IRE; Pg. 24

Length: 432 words **Byline:** TOM FELLE

Body

IRISH soldiers could become victims of terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda in Lebanon, Defence Minister Willie O'Dea warned yesterday.

But the claim was quickly dismissed by chief of staff of the Defence Forces, Lt General Jim Sreenan, who said there is no heightened level of threat at the moment.

The alert status is green, the lowest on the scale, said Lt Gen Sreenan, who is accompanying the Minister on the visit.

Mr O'Dea was speaking following a meeting with Lebanese defence minister Elias Murr in Beirut during a three-day tour of Lebanon.

Mr O'Dea said intelligence given to him by Mr Murr suggested that Irish troops, as part of the UNIFIL force, may be targeted by al-Qaeda. The Minister said: 'The political situation here is very fragile. There will be attempts to bring the government down.

'The minister told me he feels there may be a potential attack on UNIFIL. I don't want to be alarmist but there is a possibility, however remote.

'The threat is linked to al-Qaeda, and to those with strong associations with Syria.' On the first day of his visit, the Defence Minister claimed the Irish Government was fully aware of the situation in Lebanon.

However, a report published in the New Yorker yesterday, by respected journalist Seymour Hersch, claimed the situation in Lebanon is more complicated.

The report said there has been a radical 'redirection' in U.S. policy in the region and it now supports funnelling of arms and money to Sunni fundamentalist groups formerly connected to al-Qaeda.

This is being done, according to Hersch, to beef up opposition to <u>Hezbollah</u>, the Iranian-backed Shia militia. It is part of a wider anti-Iranian strategy, said Hersch.

As Minister O'Dea met his Lebanese counterpart, the country's prime minister rejected the claims in the New Yorker article, describing it as 'totally unfounded'.

War of words as general breaks ranks on O'Dea's al-Qaeda fears

Mr O'Dea also raised the issue of the killing of Privates Derek Smallhorne and Tom Barrett, who were abducted and killed while serving with UNIFIL in 1980. The main suspect in the killings has never been charged, and is currently living in the U.S.

He also raised the issue of Private Kevin Joyce, who was kidnapped in 1981 and is presumed dead, although his body was never found. Irish army officers have since tried in vain many times to track down his body.

'I wanted to make sure that the case isn't closed. It is important for the families of these men,' he said.

Some 157 Irish soldiers, including 15 women, are in southern Lebanon as part of UNIFIL.

The soldiers are working as part of a joint Finnish-Irish battalion on mine clearing, security and construction duty.

Graphic

AT ODDS: CHIEF OF STAFF JIM SREENAN

Load-Date: February 28, 2007



Lebanese women call for local help

Chorley Guardian August 2, 2006

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Length: 417 words

Body

THREE <u>women</u> have spoken of their horror at the conflict in the Middle East in the hope of spurring local people into action.

Eva Aston-Chereif escaped from Lebanon last week as trouble flared up between Israel and the guerrilla group *Hezbollah*.

She was forced to flee the country leaving her family, including her Lebanese husband, behind.

Eva is hoping to eventually go back to the country to help those people who have been forced out of their homes because of rocket attacks.

She said: "I saw some awful things as I was leaving. The stuff on television doesn't really show you the true extent of what is happening. People are being forced out of their homes and up into the north of the country.

"Essential supplies are running out."

Eva had to travel 12 and a half hours from the north of the country to a waiting ship in Beirut, which took her to Cyprus before she flew to England.

She added: "I have relatives in Chorley who helped me to get out of the country, but I was forced to leave my husband and his family behind.

Eva hopes to return to the country to try and help with humanitarian aid efforts. She added: "I want to do all I can to help the people of Lebanon."

Naela Gabbor, was who now lives in Standish, was shipped from Lebanon to Cyprus on HMS York with 230 others, before being flown to London

She and her friend Sana Virdi, of Chorley, are also urging local people to do all they can to help.

The <u>women</u>, who moved to Lancashire 20 years ago, fear for the safety of their families and say that thousands of innocent Lebanese civilians are being left without electricity, water and essential medication.

Naela added: "People are blocked in. They have no way of getting out and supplies are not getting in.

"When I left there was already shortages of food and water. They only get a few hours of electricity and medical supplies in pharmacies are running out."

Lebanese women call for local help

Sana is also concerned about her family and the people left behind. She said: "I try to speak to my family and friends as often as I can and I watch it on the television

"The violence does not reflect the true story of Lebanon. It is a wonderful little country, full of hospitality and generosity.

"Lebanese people have nothing to do with the violence they are caught in the middle of."

Many charities are sending aid to Lebanon, but Eva, Naela and Sana are urging local people to get involved.

Anyone who wants to donate can contact Unicef at www.unicef. org.uk or call 0207 4055592, or British Red Cross at www.redcross.org.uk or 08701 707000.

Load-Date: August 2, 2006



Muslim's poem inflames immigration debate: Verse accuses Quebec women of drinking, being promiscuous

Ottawa Citizen February 13, 2007 Tuesday Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 420 words

Byline: Jeff Heinrich, The Montreal Gazette

Dateline: MONTREAL

Body

MONTREAL - A poem in which a Muslim woman praises the wearing of the hijab and suggests those who fear her are godless people who've led lives of debauchery, has sparked angry reaction in Quebec.

The poem, written in French by a young male Lebanese Montrealer for an Arab-language newspaper and posted on the Internet, is being called an outrage and the work of hypocritical fanatics.

The 22-year-old poet wrote it in response to the town of Herouxville's controversial guidelines for immigrants.

Herouxville's council made headlines last month after proclaiming a "code of life" that prospective immigrants should abide by -- for example, by not stoning **women** or forcing them to wear veils.

The poet, Haydar Moussa, was part of a Muslim delegation that went to Herouxville on Sunday to plead for mutual respect and an end to ethnic stereotypes.

Mr. Moussa defended his work as merely a made-up cry of pain by what could be any devout Muslim woman hurt by anti-Islamic prejudice in Quebec.

"She's criticizing anyone who tries to bring her down, who tells her 'Your veil is bad for our society'," said Mr. Moussa, who came to Canada from Lebanon when he was eight years old and speaks for the Association of Young Lebanese Muslims.

The poem, titled Letter to You, reads in part:

My veil is not a kerchief,

It's my skin,

My modesty, my dignity, my respect.

And if you, old-stock immigrant women,

Muslim's poem inflames immigration debate: Verse accuses Quebec women of drinking, being promiscuous

You have neither faith nor law,

And you spent your youth drunk,

And went from one male to the next,

That's not the case for me."

The poem was published Jan. 23 in the Montreal biweekly Sada Al Mashrek.

The village is at the centre of a debate in Quebec society over how far to "reasonably accommodate" the demands of traditional religious minorities.

"I'm not a woman, but I'm an immigrant, and it was hurtful" to hear Herouxville's declaration and see it supported by a section of Quebec public opinion, said Mr. Moussa.

"I was hurt, and I wanted others to get a taste of what I got -- you understand?"

Posted on several Quebec and French websites critical of Islamic fundamentalism, including the blog of well-known Quebec commentator Richard Martineau and a Jewish site called Judeoscope.ca, the poem has drawn a flood of criticism, much of it anti-Arab.

"The friends of *Hezbollah* thank Quebecers by calling their daughters sluts," is the headline of one comment posted to the online forum of LibertyVox.com, a French site.

But Mr. Moussa says the poem is about individual feelings, and is not a blanket statement about Quebecers and their values.

Load-Date: February 13, 2007



DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

November 14, 2006 Tuesday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 481 words

Byline: From news services

Body

VATICAN CITY

Pope calls meeting on celibacy rule

Pope Benedict XVI has called a meeting Thursday with top Vatican officials to discuss lifting the celibacy requirement for priests seeking to marry or who have already married.

Benedict called the summit to examine the implications of the "disobedience" of Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, the Zambian prelate excommunicated in September for installing four married American men as bishops, the Vatican said Monday.

The Vatican stressed that the meeting would not open a general discussion of the celibacy requirement but would only examine requests for dispensation made by priests wishing to marry and requests for readmission made by clergy who had married in recent years.

BEIRUT, Lebanon

U.N. plan for tribunal in assassination is OK'd

A weakened Lebanese government on Monday approved a U.N. plan for an international tribunal for suspects in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri -- despite the resignation of six ministers and the objections of the president.

The vote was a victory for Prime Minister Fuad Saniora, who is facing a challenge from <u>Hezbollah</u>, which has threatened mass protests unless the group and its Shiite Muslim allies gain effective veto power in the Cabinet. All 18 ministers remaining in the Cabinet voted for the U.N. plan, which begins the process of prosecuting Hariri's alleged killers in a court with international legitimacy.

The draft document now returns to the Security Council for endorsement. Its final approval by the weakened government was uncertain.

CAPE TOWN, S. Africa

Government reports boost in AIDS assistance

DIGEST

More than 235,000 South Africans with AIDS are receiving anti-retroviral medicines in the public health sector, up 55,000 from the end of June, the government said Monday.

Officials said this proved the government's commitment to giving free drugs to all those in need.

South Africa has an estimated 5.4 million people with HIV/AIDS, the second highest in the world after India. An estimated 19 percent of the adult population and 30 percent of pregnant <u>women</u> are infected with the virus, according to government figures. An estimated 900 people die each day because of the disease.

WARSAW, Poland

Returns show setbacks for ruling party

Poland's ruling socially conservative Law and Justice party suffered losses in big cities and at the regional level in weekend local elections but maintained a strong hold in rural districts, preliminary returns released Monday show.

Among the biggest setbacks was the loss of the Warsaw City Council to the pro-business opposition Civic Platform. The mayor's race is one of several that will need to be decided in a Nov. 26 runoff.

President Lech Kaczynski announced the elections too close to call, with 80 percent of ballots counted by midday Monday.

The National Electoral Commission was expected to announce the turnout and full returns later.

Load-Date: November 14, 2006



Symbols of separateness

The Sunday Times (London)
October 8, 2006

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Section: FEATURES; News; Pg. 18

Length: 474 words

Body

Jack Straw sparks a row by asking Muslim <u>women</u> who attend his constituency surgery to remove their veils. A Muslim policeman from the Diplomatic Protection Group is excused guarding the Israeli embassy in London during the war with <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon. There are violent clashes between Asian and white youths at a Muslim dairy in Windsor. Just a few examples last week of what seem to be rising Muslim-related tensions.

The 1.6m Muslims in Britain represent the country's biggest religious minority. A new study from the Office for National Statistics shows that most live in Greater London or in the industrial conurbations of the Midlands and the north of England.

In some areas Muslims are close to being the majority. In the main they live with a complete absence of friction with other groups.

After the July 7 bombings last year, fears were expressed that there would be a backlash against Britain's Muslims. In fact, while there was evidence of an increase in racially motivated attacks, most people accepted that the bombers and their sympathisers had to be isolated from the rest of the peaceful Muslim population.

There is, though, a sense of unease across Britain, driven by the perception that Muslims are getting special treatment. Would a white policeman have been listened to so sympathetically if he had asked for a change of duties? Is there a stench of political correctness about the way the authorities deal with these issues? Still, let's keep a sense of proportion. Nobody today minds that Sikhs are allowed to ride motorbikes without switching their turbans for helmets - a hot issue in the 1970s.

Jack Straw, leader of the Commons, is an old political hand who has ambitions to succeed John Prescott as deputy prime minister. After John Reid, the home secretary, impressed at the Labour party conference, Mr Straw needed to make up ground and his remarks on the wearing of veils should be seen in that context. But he did have a perfect right to say them. His justified concern, along with others such as Trevor Phillips, head of the Commission for Racial Equality, is of the development of parallel communities, separate from the mainstream.

The niqab, and even more the burqa, are demonstrations of visible separateness to some and, modern Muslims would argue, are sanctioned by alien custom rather than the Koran. Mr Straw's intervention may have been politically motivated but there was a point to it. Few would suggest the veil should be banned. A tolerant society requires that everybody makes concessions to the cultural norms but it does not impose a dress code.

That said, the response of some Muslim groups - a few hotheads said Mr Straw's remarks were "appalling" - was silly. If the veil contributes to a growing distance between Muslims and other groups, those more likely to suffer will be the Muslims themselves.

Symbols of separateness

Load-Date: October 8, 2006



British court extends detention for suspects

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

August 24, 2006 Thursday

0 Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 2A

Length: 496 words

Dateline: LONDON; MIAMI; JERUSALEM

Body

A British court Wednesday extended the time nine suspects in the alleged plot to blow up U.S.-bound flights can be held without being charged, officials said. Scotland Yard said two others were freed.

Authorities said eight suspects who have not been charged could be kept in custody until Wednesday, giving police more time to question them, while the detention for the ninth suspect was extended until today.

The 11 were among about two dozen people arrested Aug. 10 in police raids in Britain. The others arrested have either been charged or released.

The Associated Press reported that one of the people released Wednesday without being charged was Tayib Rauf, citing an anonymous official with Britain's antiterrorist unit. Britain's Press Association and a friend, Mohammed Nazam, also confirmed his release.

Tayib Rauf's brother, Rashid Rauf, is being held in Pakistan over his alleged key role in the plot.

The identity of the other released person was not disclosed.

Wednesday's court action represented the first time that police have used new antiterrorism laws to hold suspects for more than 14 days without charge, Britain's Home Office said. The law lets officers apply to hold terrorism suspects for up to 28 days before filing charges.

Tropical Storm Debby weakens off Africa's coast

MIAMI - Tropical Storm Debby weakened Wednesday off the coast of the Cape Verde islands in the eastern Atlantic Ocean and posed no immediate threat to land, forecasters said.

At 5 p.m. EDT, the storm's top sustained winds had slowed to about 45 mph from about 50 mph earlier in the day, well below the 74 mph threshold for a hurricane. Slow strengthening was forecast for today.

The fourth named storm of the 2006 Atlantic hurricane season was centered about 610 miles west-northwest of the Cape Verde islands, which are about 350 miles off the African coast. Debby was moving northwest at about 20 mph, the National Hurricane Center said.

Israeli president questioned in sexual harassment case

British court extends detention for suspects

JERUSALEM - Detectives questioned Israeli President Moshe Katsav for five hours Wednesday about two former employees' allegations that Katsav sexually harassed them. Katsav denies any wrongdoing and says the case is an extortion attempt.

Police plan to talk to him again today, police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said. On Monday, police seized computers and documents in a late-night raid on his official residence in Jerusalem.

The inquiry is the latest in a series involving Israeli political leaders, including Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is being investigated over a Jerusalem property deal. All deny any wrongdoing.

Former Justice Minister Haim Ramon was charged Wednesday with sexual misconduct after a <u>female</u> soldier accused him of forcibly kissing her. The alleged incident occurred July 12, the day the campaign against Lebanon's <u>Hezbollah</u> militia began.

Ramon, who resigned Sunday to face the allegations, was replaced Wednesday by Cabinet Minister Meir Sheetrit, a former justice minister.

Load-Date: August 24, 2006



Israeli army recruits: When it comes to firing the gun, its a massive shock. Its what you dont see in the movies': We followed young British Jews signing up for service in Gaza and the West Bank

The Guardian - Final Edition
November 23, 2006 Thursday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 17

Length: 807 words

Byline: Jeevan Vasagar

Body

He grew up in suburban north London and still misses home comforts like milky British tea, the friends he left behind and the local pub.

But yesterday Joe Wainer joined an elite Israeli army unit, and now he faces the prospect of active service in the occupied West Bank. The 19-year-old, one of nine young Britons who have signed up for a programme that recruits foreign Jews for the Israel Defence Forces, realised his life had changed when he fired an M16 rifle for the first time in training.

"When it comes to fire the gun, it's one of the biggest shocks," he said. "The smell of the gunpowder, the kickback. It's what you don't see in the movies."

The soldiers, all of whom will have dual nationality, are part of a wave of migration to Israel from western countries including Britain, France and the US, as fewer Jews arrive from regions such as the former Soviet Union.

The British recruits, who arrived in the summer when the war with <u>Hizbullah</u> was at its height, believe the Jewish state needs a show of solidarity.

Training began in September, when they spent a week sleeping in tents, learning to obey orders and doing endless press-ups. A two-day test involving running uphill while carrying sandbags decided who was fit for combat roles.

Mr Wainer, who grew up in Barnet, was selected to join Nahal, a reconnaissance unit currently deployed in the West Bank. Nahal soldiers shot dead three Palestinians last month in what the Israeli army said were counter-terrorist operations. Some Israelis have refused to serve in the West Bank or Gaza but he does not share their doubts.

"If it's a job that we have to do, then I have to do it," Mr Wainer said. "Israel has always been under attack. Without the army, there would be no Israel."

For now, the six young men and three <u>women</u>, who are all taking Israeli citizenship under the Garin Tsabar programme, which recruits foreign Jews, live in Sasa, a kibbutz on the border with Lebanon. The hilltop settlement of low-rise concrete buildings became a rear base for the army during the recent war. "We were shooting missiles from the foot of this kibbutz," said Danny Young, 19, another British recruit, pointing from the crest of a hill down to

Israeli army recruits: When it comes to firing the gun, its a massive shock. Its what you dont see in the movies':

We followed young British Jews signing up for....

a line of yellow scrub marking the border. "We were also receiving Katyushas (rockets). Some of them landed in the fields over here."

To the right of the slope is a reminder of another war, the cloud-capped peak of Mount Hermon, part of the Golan Heights that Israel annexed from Syria in the Yom Kippur war of 1973.

Mr Young grew up in Southgate, a north London suburb, and misses the pub, his mates and the 24-hour Asda.

His new home remains geared up for battle. In the evenings, armoured cars clatter along the pathways and there is a constant buzz from a factory making bulletproof vests and vehicle armour.

On Tuesday nights, a bomb shelter is converted into a nightclub, where Israel's foreign legion drink lager and sing karaoke to a soundtrack which includes Bob Marley's Buffalo Soldier.

Mr Young, whose grandfather fought in the British army in the second world war, will serve in the paratroopers. He left Britain because he felt he had to hide his identity, quitting a job at an Essex bus garage because of antisemitism. "They would be Nazi saluting. On toolboxes, they had written stuff like 'Essex Nazis'. It was done as a laugh, making fun, they'd be saying 'Jew' in German. They didn't know I was Jewish at first, but I didn't like being in a community where I felt I had to put things away."

Mr Wainer fell in love with Israel during a gap year. "There's something very mystical about it," he said. "It's the ancient Jewish homeland. It's where it all started. This is where Abraham was and where Moses fled to.

"There's a feeling of togetherness that England really lacks. There's a lot of different groups in England and they're all at each other's throats."

This British contribution to Israel's defence is tiny in scale, but provides a morale boost. "It's not about the number of people, its about the intention," said Dafna Brenkel, an Israeli soldier who mentors the British group. "The idea of people from overseas showing support and love for Israel, giving up their daily comfort, their home and their usual way of life, is an amazing thing."

Joining the army is a rite of passage in Israel, a formative experience in which friendships are made. For foreign Jews, it can be a shortcut to integration. Mr Young said: "When you join the British army, you're joining just to be in the army - it's a profession. Here it's part of the way of life."

In their spare time they watch DVDs of the US mini-series Band of Brothers on a laptop. Mr Wainer said: "I haven't quite experienced the part where somebody's leg is blown off. Hopefully we never will. But they really are a band of brothers, and that's what we are."

guardian.co.uk/israel

Load-Date: November 23, 2006



Nuclear program a source of pride for Iranians; Threatened U.N. penalties worry some, but country isn't giving in

USA TODAY August 28, 2006 Monday FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1859 words **Byline:** David J. Lynch

Body

TEHRAN, Iran -- Four young salesmen met last week at a Tehran coffeehouse, only to find that city officials had inexplicably ordered the shop not to serve coffee that day. Things are seldom simple in Iran.

The four settled for sodas. Their talk turned to Iran's tense standoff with the United Nations, which has given the country until Thursday to halt its nuclear program or face economic and political sanctions.

"Of course, we are worried about it," said Morad Daneshvar, 26, a jewelry salesman. "Although in the end, I don't think our politicians are that stupid."

Iran has repeatedly defied the United States and the West on uranium enrichment. Saturday, hard-line Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad opened a heavy-water production plant that could be used to make nuclear weapons, a provocative gesture five days before the U.N. deadline.

Fathoming Iran's worldview is critical to understanding the roots of the crisis. Conversations with policy experts and ordinary Iranians alike suggest an Islamic republic that is simultaneously insecure about its standing in the world and emboldened by the drift of recent events.

Both impulses were evident in its response last week to a package of incentives by the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany: Iran expressed its desire for serious talks with the West but would not halt enrichment as a precondition. Iran's nuclear research program, underway in secret from 1988 until it was exposed by an opposition group in 2002, has become a source of national pride for many Iranians.

"Having nuclear technology is our legal right," said Ali Maghsoodi, 36, a jobless architect looking for work at a day-laborer site in Tehran's Vanak Square.

Ahmadinejad has cast the program as essential to national development. Inaugurating the new heavy-water plant, he insisted Iran is not pursuing weapons and is not "a threat to anybody, even the Zionist (Israeli) regime, which is a definite enemy for the people of the region."

By continuing nuclear development, he said, Iran might have to face sanctions by the United States and the West. "But will they be able to prevent the thoughts of a nation? Will they be able to prevent the progress and technology to a nation? They have to accept the reality of a powerful, peace-loving and developed Iran."

Nuclear program a source of pride for Iranians Threatened U.N. penalties worry some, but country isn't giving

'Iran is a player in this region'

Despite U.S. attempts to isolate it, Iran possesses considerable leverage because it:

*Trains and equips Shiite militias in neighboring Iraq, a senior Pentagon official said last week. Brig. Gen. Michael Barbero, deputy director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the Iranian government is trying to destabilize Iraq.

*Sits atop 10% of the world's petroleum reserves at a time when oil prices are over \$70 a barrel.

*Provides inspiration, arms and funds to <u>Hezbollah</u>, the Lebanese Shiite militant group that rained rockets on Israel and clashed with Israeli troops for 34 days in July and August.

"Iran is a player in this region and nobody can ignore it. ... They can't dismiss Iran," says Mahmood Vaezi of the Center for Strategic Research, a government agency that advises top Iranian policymakers.

He and other Iranian officials argue that their country is the key to political stability in the Middle East. Like the coffeehouse without coffee, Iran poses a contradiction: Its leaders demand international -- especially American -- respect. At the same time, they pursue a policy of nuclear self-reliance that renders such recognition impossible -- at least from a U.S. government that distrusts Iran and believes it capable of attacking its neighbors.

"An Iran in possession of nuclear weapons is unthinkable for all who value security and peace," Nicholas Burns, undersecretary for political affairs at the State Department, said last fall.

The Bush administration regards the cleric-led Iranian government as illegitimate and undemocratic. White House policy has been to isolate Tehran and use diplomacy and the threat of sanctions to end Iranian nuclear ambitions. The administration has condemned Iran's support of <u>Hezbollah</u> and called Tehran "the world's most active state sponsor of terrorism." Washington has encouraged pro-democracy groups -- inside and outside Iran -- to challenge the regime.

The United States broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980 after militants seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage. U.S. policymakers have to decode Iran's conduct without the benefit of diplomatic exchanges and personal relationships.

Iran "is the only country in the world today with which the United States has no sustained direct contact," Burns said last year, noting the presence of U.S. diplomats in Cuba, Syria and Libya, and ongoing talks with North Korea.

"The main issue between the United States and Iran is a lack of trust. If this persists -- even if we solve the nuclear issue -- there'll be another issue. The only way to address the (nuclear) issue is to address the lack of trust between the two sides," says Mohammad Adeli, who was Iran's ambassador to London until last year.

The 26-year estrangement between Tehran and Washington has only deepened since Ahmadinejad became president in August 2005.

His government is populated by veterans of Iran's 1980-1988 war with Iraq. In that conflict, the United States -- fearing the spread of Iran's Islamic revolution -- provided satellite intelligence to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and ignored his use of chemical weapons against Iranian troops.

Today, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and a handful of other top Shiite clerics control most of the power in Iran. They set foreign policy, vet candidates for parliament, quash reformist laws and sanction state action against dissidents, according to the State Department.

Ahmadinejad is subordinate to Khamenei and is supposed to take a back seat on foreign policy matters. Instead, he has staked out extreme positions -- such as that Israel must be "wiped off the map" -- that have boxed Iran in and given it little room to maneuver.

Nuclear program a source of pride for Iranians Threatened U.N. penalties worry some, but country isn't giving

Leader's hard line popular

Many educated Iranians say they recognize their president is a controversial and polarizing figure in the West. But they say his statements questioning the Holocaust and threatening to destroy Israel are no more outrageous or fanciful than President Bush's talk of a "new Middle East" modeled in a democratic Irag.

"Ahmadinejad and Bush -- they have the same personality. You have the American version, and we have the Persian version," said Mehrdad Salali, 26, as his coffeehouse friends nodded.

Others say it's clear Ahmadinejad's explosive rhetoric has damaged Iran's image.

"I follow the Internet a lot, and they judge the Iranian people by our government. ... Our government has made some mistakes and said some bad things," said Mohamed Reza Farzadi, 22, a network administrator interviewed outside the city of Shiraz.

Still, the Iranian president has supporters who admire his tough approach to foreign powers, his simple lifestyle and his devotion to the poor. The anti-Israel rhetoric that sounds extreme and anti-Semitic to Western ears reflects Muslim frustration with Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, they say.

Ahmadinejad "stands face to face with the Westerners and says, 'We are not going to step back.' ... He has good support in Iran, and people really respect him," says Behrooz Norouzi, 36, a theology instructor in the city of Isfahan.

Ahmadinejad also has shown a deft political touch. He was elected on a platform of using Iranian oil wealth to benefit the poor. Since taking office, he has visited 154 cities, many in remote provinces long neglected by top officials. He has shelled out funds for new marriage allowances for young couples, debt relief for farmers and low-cost loans for small businessmen.

"He's clearly tapped into a reservoir of support among the lower classes who at least feel that he's listening to them," says Kenneth Katzman, an expert on Iran at the Congressional Research Service in Washington.

Until recently, Ahmadinejad's hard-line ideology had little impact upon Iranians' daily existence. The tight social strictures imposed in the early days of Iran's Islamic revolution, when morals police roamed the streets chastising **women** for insufficiently modest clothing, have long since eased. Iranians, especially in cities, take for granted the ability to hear Western music, read foreign news on the Internet and dress with a little flair.

In recent weeks, though, officials began confiscating home satellite dishes, which Iranians use to watch the British Broadcasting Corp. and Western entertainment. The sudden enforcement of this long-ignored regulation has been coupled with a heavy hand on the media and intellectuals.

Some hope for the best. Government officials "are clever enough to understand they can't go back and reverse the process because there is strong public opinion against this," says Saeed Kazemi, 25, another coffeehouse customer.

With global oil prices near record highs, Iran has doubled public spending from four years ago. Generous subsidies have helped dull public discontent by keeping staples cheap. A tasty three-person lunch of lamb kabobs, grilled tomatoes, fresh herbs, yogurt and drinks can be had for less than \$7; a 70-minute flight from Tehran to Shiraz is \$26; gasoline costs less than 40 cents a gallon.

Iran took in \$45 billion in oil revenue last year, the Council on Foreign Relations in New York says. Subsidies are critical to the regime's ability to retain support at home: 90% of Iranians get income from the state, the council says.

Some here oppose Iran's decision to use part of its oil windfall to support <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon and Islamic militants in the Palestinian territories. "They are giving money to Lebanon and Palestine. They don't invest anything

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Nuclear program a source of pride for Iranians Threatened U.N. penalties worry some, but country isn't giving

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in factories in the countryside," said Araf Torkashvand, 22, who traveled to Tehran from his home province of Lorestan seeking work.

The Bush administration has indicated it wants to move swiftly to bring the sanctions issue to the U.N. Security Council once Thursday's deadline has passed. Russia and China have signaled they might use their votes to veto sanctions.

"I know of no instances in world practice and previous experience in which sanctions have achieved their aim and proved effective," Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said Friday. "Russia stands for further political and diplomatic efforts to settle the issue."

Sanctions are likely to do little to hurt the regime and could cement the hard-liners' grip on power. Government opponents say U.S.-led efforts to punish Tehran would discredit pro-Western voices inside Iran and put them on the defensive in the face of an inevitable patriotic, popular response.

Pressure from the United States and other countries feeds Iranian nationalism, bolstering Ahmadinejad and others in the hard-line Islamic government, says Davoud Bavand, an international law professor at Alameh University in Tehran.

"They see that their power resides in the existence of crisis and the presence of the enemy lurking in our bush," Bavand says. "They're very much interested in the continuation of this crisis."

Graphic

GRAPHIC, B/W, USA TODAY (Map): PHOTO, Color, Misha Japaridze, AP

PHOTOS, B/WDavid J. Lynch, USA TODAY(2)

Load-Date: August 28, 2006



Review: Commentary: Books under fire in Beirut: Kamila Shamsie reports on the authors caught in the crossfire in Lebanon

The Guardian - Final Edition
August 19, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN REVIEW PAGES; Pg. 2

Length: 907 words

Byline: Kamila Shamsie

Body

For all the benefits of immediacy that the electronic and print media offer, there are times when we reach for the heft of a book to try to give context to history as it unfolds around us. So, in the past few weeks, there has been reason aplenty to be grateful for the existence of Saqi Books, whose wide range of titles includes *Hizbullah*, Israel's Ayatollahs and Rafiq Hariri and the Fate of Lebanon . For those who like to take more winding avenues towards understanding, Saqi also publishes fiction, poetry, and books on art, food, drink, philosophy and culture - its original focus on the Middle East having widened in the past few years to include writers and subjects from Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Balkans, France, America and the UK.

But while Saqi's books have always showed a fierce concern for worlds of conflict, they now find their own fates tied more directly to war and bombings. Saqi's warehouse is in Beirut, and at the time of writing the publishing house has just received word that the warehouse has been bombed: its ceiling collapsed, its iron door melted.

Among the books stored in the warehouse were Hikayat: Short Stories by Lebanese <u>Women</u> and Qissat: Short Stories by Palestinian <u>Women</u>, two collections due in London this month. Soon after the war started, someone from Dar al-Saqi (Saqi's sister company in Beirut) sent six copies each of both books to Jordan with a friend fleeing the country - the 12 books later made their way to Paris, just in time for a planned window display. The rest of the books, or what remains of them, are still in the warehouse.

Meanwhile, in London, stocks of previously printed books are running low, and Saqi has to try to find a printer for its new catalogue. Moreover, all those who work at Saqi are deeply concerned about their colleagues at Dar al-Saqi - a large number of whom have chosen to remain in Lebanon rather than escape. Those from the south have moved in with colleagues from the north, and many of the Dar al-Saqi team are now involved with relief work. Paralleling the shifts in their lives - publishers turned voluntary aid workers - is the transformation of cultural centres (such as the one in Beirut where Dar al-Saqi hosts book launches) into makeshift aid centres.

Brian Whitaker, a Guardian journalist and author of Unspeakable Love: Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East, is only one of the Saqi authors now in Lebanon - others include Jean Said Makdisi, whose Teta, Mother and Me is a family memoir starting in Ottoman Syria in the 1880s

and concluding with the civil war in Lebanon, and Alexandre Najjar, whose recently published The School of War powerfully recalls growing up in war-ravaged Beirut. Najjar had only recently returned to Beirut after seven years of voluntary exile.

Review: Commentary: Books under fire in Beirut: Kamila Shamsie reports on the authors caught in the crossfire in Lebanon

The civil war in Lebanon is, in fact, directly responsible for the existence of Saqi Books. In 1979, childhood friends Andre Gaspard and Mai Ghoussoub left a warring Beirut and came to London. Here, in Westbourne Grove, they started up Al-Saqi Bookshop, which quickly became established as a beacon of enquiry and intellectual exchange in London, providing readers in England with books about the Middle East as well as allowing travellers from the Middle East to buy books banned in their own countries. By 1984, Gaspard and Ghoussoub had ventured into publishing - a natural extension of the philosophy of Al-Saqi Bookshop - and three years later Saqi Books became an independent publishing concern.

Dar al-Saqi was established the same year in Beirut, with a mandate to publish seminal western texts in Arabic and also to provide a home for Arab writers, many of whom were unable to find publishers in their own repressively governed nations.

Despite the paucity of distribution channels, many of Saqi's authors - and books - rapidly became huge successes. At the heart of Saqi's ethos is an understanding of the need for two-way exchanges - western books translated into Arabic, Arabic books translated into English, constant conversations between Beirut and London, titles which demand that readers from different parts of the globe reconsider their perceptions of their own worlds and also that they look more deeply into received wisdom about other worlds. It is an ethos that has enabled Saqi to build up a list of exceptional writers - in addition to its unparalleled list of literary luminaries from the Middle East, Saqi publishes acclaimed writers such as the Albanian winner of the first international Booker prize, Ismail Kadare, Argentine-born Alberto Manguel, British writer Maggie Gee, Aamer Hussein from Pakistan and Croatian novelist Dubravka Ugresic.

Among the most poignant of Saqi's recent publications is Samir Khalaf's Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj. The Bourj is a public square in Beirut described as an "open museum of the world's civilisations". During the Lebanese civil war and in the Israeli air-strikes that followed, this vibrant, cosmopolitan space was reduced to a no-man's land. As the Saqi catalogue explains, Khalaf's book "argues passionately that its reinvention is at hand, and must be encouraged: the Bourj must reclaim its disinherited legacy of pluralism and tolerance". It is among the books in the bombed-out warehouse in Beirut.

Kamila Shamsie is one of the contributors to Lebanon, Lebanon, an anthology to be published next month by Telegram (Saqi's fiction imprint), with all proceeds going to Save the Children, Lebanon.

Load-Date: August 19, 2006



Facing facts on Iraq

The International Herald Tribune September 25, 2006 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 529 words

Body

While Iraq is a central issue in this year's election campaigns in the United States, there is very little clear talk about what to do, beyond vague recommendations for staying the course or long-term timetables for withdrawal. That is because politicians running for election want to deliver good news, and there is nothing about Iraq including withdrawal scenarios that is anything but ominous.

In the real Iraq, armed Shiite and Kurdish parties have divided up the eastern two-thirds of the country, leaving Sunni insurgents and American Marines to fight over the rest. Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki and his "national unity Cabinet" stretch out their arms to like-thinking allies like Iran and <u>Hezbollah</u>, but barely lift a finger to rein in the militias and death squads spreading terror across Baghdad and the Shiite south.

The civilian death toll is now running at roughly 100 a day, with many of the victims gruesomely tortured. Over the summer, more Iraqi civilians died violent deaths each month than the number of Americans lost to terrorism on Sept. 11. Meanwhile, the electricity remains off, oil production depressed, unemployment pervasive and basic services hard to find.

Iraq is today a broken, war-torn country. Outside the relatively stable Kurdish northeast, virtually every family Sunni or Shiite, rich or poor, powerful or powerless must cope with fear and physical insecurity on an almost daily basis. The courts, when they function at all, are subject to political interference; street-corner justice is filling the vacuum. Religious courts are asserting their power over family life. **Women**'s rights are in retreat.

Growing violence, not growing democracy, is the dominant feature of Iraqi life. Every Iraqi knows this. Americans need to know it too.

Beyond the futility of simply staying the course lies the impossibility of keeping the bulk of American ground forces stationed in Iraq indefinitely. They have already been there for 42 months, longer than it took the United States to defeat Hitler. The strain is undermining the long-term strength of the Army and Marines, threatening to divert the National Guard from homeland security and emboldening Iran and North Korea. Yet with the military situation deteriorating, the Pentagon has had to give up any idea of significant withdrawals anytime in the foreseeable future.

If there is still a constructive way out of this disaster, it has to begin with some truth-telling. Politicians are not going to press for serious solutions when their constituents have not been prepared to understand what the real options are. Republicans will not talk about genuine alternatives as long as their supporters have been primed to believe victory is possible. Few Democrats will advocate anything that might wind up transferring responsibility for this awful mess to them.

Facing facts on Iraq

Acknowledging the hard facts of today's Iraq must be more than a political talking point for the president's opponents. It is the only possible beginning to a serious discussion about what kind of American policy has the best chance of retrieving whatever can still be retrieved in Iraq and minimizing the damage to wider American interests.

Load-Date: October 3, 2006



'Islamic fascism' is not a new term

Lancaster New Era (Pennsylvania) September 2, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Section: A; Pg. 8 Length: 519 words Byline: Editorials

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

Body

In recent days, President Bush, Sen. Rick Santorum and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld have criticized "Islamic fascists" for waging a war of terrorism on the West.

Some close listeners have directed their criticism not at Islamic fascists but at the administration and its friends who supposedly have minted this "new buzz word for Republicans."

Not only is the phrase new, they say, but it slanders Islam and, in calling radical Muslims "fascists," is historically inaccurate.

These critics are wrong.

"Islamic fascism',' or "Islamofascism," is hardly a new description if radical Muslims. It apparently first appeared in an article in the Sept. 8, 1990, issue of The Independent.

The article's author, Malise Ruthven, wrote: "Authoritarian government, not to say Islamo-fascism, is the rule rather than the exception from Morocco to Pakistan."

The term came into general usage, particularly among conservatives, but also among some Mideast scholars, following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States by al-Qaida operatives.

The columnist Christopher Hitchens condemned "fascism with an Islamic face" three days after the attacks.

Neither have George Bush and Rick Santorum suddenly adopted the terminology this week.

Santorum compared the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to fascism and communism in a speech to Lancaster County ACTION in February 2002.

Bush used the phrase as early as October of last year in a speech before the National Endowment for Democracy.

"Some call this evil Islamic radicalism; others, militant Jihadism; still others, Islamo-fascism," he said. "Whatever it's called, this ideology is very different from the religion of Islam."

That brings us to the supposed slam on Islam that critics say the term suggests.

'Islamic fascism' is not a new term

Bush and other administrative spokesmen have said repeatedly since 9/11 that they have no quarrel with Islam or Muslims in general, only radical Muslims, or Islamic fascists. Nothing they have said or done contradicts that.

Neither is the phrase inaccurate simply because it was first applied to Italian fascism - a political, not religious, movement.

Those who use the term "Islamic fascists" are not referring to one group of religious fanatics, but to several organized bands of Muslim terrorists who, together, present a threat to Western civilization.

Robert S. Wistrich, who discussed "the new Islamic fascism" in The Jerusalem Post on Nov, 16, 2001, describes it this way: a totalitarian mind-set, hatred of the West, fanatical extremism, repression of <u>women</u>, loathing of Jews and dreams taking over the world.

Osama bin Laden is not the only Islamic fascist who has called for Muslims to overrun the West and reclaim the glory Muslim countries have lost.

Islamic fascism also extends to groups of Muslim fundamentalists such as Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, as well as the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Instead of arguing that the term Islamic fascist is new and wrong, critics of the Bush administration should pay closer attention to what these religious zealots are planning for the rest of us.

By whatever name they are called, Muslim terrorists are bad news for free people.

Load-Date: September 3, 2006



Yorkshire Evening Post August 2, 2006

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Length: 1782 words

Body

Andrew Wilkinson's letter 'Why we should be supporting Israel's war' (YEP, July 26) criticises government minister Kim Howells for failing to mention the kidnapping of a soldier from Israel soil.

But Mr Wilkinson also forgets to mention the 9,000 Palestinian prisoners that are held in Israel's gulags.

This is not a war of equal proportion; Israel is a nuclear state backed by the world's only superpower - America.

Israeli bombs have created a million homeless in Lebanon. The majority of deaths have been citizens, including children.

Four United Nation observers have been killed; Red Cross ambulances destroyed; massive damage to bridges and roads.

Both Christian and Muslim areas have been bombed.

Thousands of British and American passport holders had to flee Lebanon, while Bush and Blair remained shamefully silent.

This war is a disaster for Jews and Arabs; this ain't fighting terrorism, it's creating it.

JOHN APPLEYARD, Liversedge

Russell Whincup (Letters, July 29) in calling for a "peaceful world" is hopelessly one-sided. He talks of "Israel's brutal assault" as if the truth were not - as he knows perfectly well - that the present conflict was started by the unprovoked attacks on Israel by <u>Hezbollah</u> terrorists backed by Syria and Iran.

Peace is not gained by caving in to terrorism. The Israelis repeatedly gave warning to the civilian population to move out before they attacked terrorist strongpoints and weapons stores in residential areas. That is something that no other country does.

In contrast <u>Hezbollah</u> has rained many hundreds of rockets indiscriminately on the homes of civilians in Israel. Yes, we have all been distressed to see dead and injured children in Lebanon, but the BBC has been strangely silent over the dead and injured children in Israel, whether it be Jews in Haifa or Arab children in Nazareth or elsewhere in Northern Israel. (Some of your readers may not realise that there are almost 1.5 million Arabs living in Israel as Israeli citizens.)

Israel desperately wants peace. To that end last year she withdrew all Israelis from the Gaza strip, where many had lived for over 30 years. Her reward was months of rocket attacks on nearby Israeli towns.

Israel has learned the hard way that if you want peace you have to stand up against those who, like Hizbollah and Hamas, are out to destroy peace.

JOHN M. COLLINS Sandhill Oval Leeds

At the risk of being simplistic, am I the only one to think that 'the lunatics have taken over the asylum' in terms of President George Bush's foreign policy objectives?

It is unbearable to watch the deteriorating situation in Iraq and now the terrifying violence being unleashed between Israel and Lebanon.

In tandem, we have our own Prime Minster, Tony Blair, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Bush; for all the world like a nodding dog!

As a lifelong socialist and a member of the Labour Party, I watch the news and read newspapers and I feel heart sick and aghast.

I am no expert on world affairs but surely enough is enough and other (peaceful) solutions have to be found, The tragic suffering of innocent people, many of them children, is an affront to civilised society and basic human rights.

CHERRIL CLIFF, Hall Lane, Armley, Leeds

In reply to Andrew Wilkinson's letter, how can the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers justify the carnage and suffering of innocent Lebanese men, <u>women</u> and children and the devastation of their country and also the treatment of the Palestinians who have been intimidated by Israel for years.

He writes about <u>Hezbollah</u> and Hamas bombarding Israel but fails to mention the near destruction of the Gaza strip and the rest of Palestine. He also notes Syrian troops occupied Lebanon but has conveniently forgotten that Israel also occupied Lebanon.

Israel would soon stop wielding the big stick if it was not backed by the US. Unfortunately, there will be no peace in the Middle East until Israel returns the land it illegally occupies to Palestine. Also, Mr Wilkinson states that terrorism is the major threat to world security.

Wrong again, Mr Wilkinson.

George Bush is the biggest threat to world security along with Israel's actions of the past weeks.

J CASEY, Gipton Approach, Leeds

Watching Tony Blair in conference with George Bush was, in a word, nauseating. My mind went back to the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. She was much maligned by the socialists but I wonder what would be her reaction to the present situation in the Lebanon. I would think that she would definitely go for cessation of hostilities, if only for the sake of the children.

Brian Fleming, Rothbury Gardens, Adel, Leeds

Leeds has power to abolish care charges

The letter (July 29) from Coun Peter Harrand, the Chair of the Leeds Scrutiny Board for Heath and Social Care, complaining of the scandal of under-funded care for the elderly and disabled by central government is reminiscent of Basil Fawlty complaining to the guests for the inadequacy of his staff.

In Leeds, he is the manger in charge, and it is his responsibility with power to abolish charges. It is question of social priorities and time to kick some butt.

Whilst it is undoubtedly true the Labour Government have discriminated severely against the elderly in its allocation of funds, Coun Harrand also knows that charging is discretionary. Leeds does not have to do it.

There are least four local authorities in England who do not charge for non-residential care services.

In Scotland there are no charges and soon in Wales charges will be abolished. So if they can do it why not Leeds?

What we have here is not only a postcode lottery for care but racial discrimination against the English.

If the Liberal Democrat/Conservative Leeds administration wishes to differentiate itself from the Labour government, abolishing charges is a perfect way to do it.

No more crocodile tears please Coun Harrand.

If you are sincere, let's see some action.

Malcolm Naylor, (Carer), Grange View, Otley

Wanted: A new view of transport

Further to the letters on 'Slaves to the motor car' (YEP July 19 and 22), how refreshing to see some outspoken analysis of a problem glaringly obvious to many, the solution to which rests with us all, in requiring a cultural mindshift away from our current transport option "comfort zones".

Rarely does this paper seem to report on or recognise the fantastic potential benefits for our own health, as well as the social and physical environment, in seriously encouraging a wider uptake of 'active travel' within the city.

Projects such as those which support people to build walking up to two miles or cycling up to five miles a day into their daily lifestyle could be set up and supported for a fraction of the cost of complex infrastructure projects - Supertram, new roads, etc.

So for the sake of the future well-being of both ourselves and the planet, do we - and our elected politicians - possess the insight, courage and willpower required to set a differing transport priority to that so firmly ordained by the highly powerful global motor and civil engineering lobby?

RICHARD SHAW, Leeds

Let's lower our sights

Where is the sense in closing sports centres down, especially at a time of obesity and teenage crime, if the users are happy with them?

But then again, the powers-that-be are over-ambitious. Words like ordinary, average, mundane and usual have disappeared from their vocabulary. We don't use the terms small, medium and large any more. Everything has to be "super".

Super schools, hospitals, care homes, leisure facilities and, no doubt, prisons. Is this really necessary?

Do we need these so-called "work of art" elaborate glass and chrome surroundings? It is all so imposing and soulless. I am aware all buildings have to be disabled-friendly and comply with health and safety laws, but it can be done without all the superism.

Perhaps we should come down to earth and lower our sights: then we might hit the targets.

JENNIFER ODDY, Saxton Gardens, Leeds

Justice for child victims

In 2005 Governor Jeb Bush of Florida introduced the Jessica Lunsford Act - known as Jessica's Law - in the wake of a horrific murder of a nine-year-old girl.

This Legislation demands that child molestors must serve a minimum of 25 years if the victim is under 12 years old.

When they are released, sex offenders must keep authorities aware of where they live. They are also tagged and are monitored by GPS satellite for the rest of their lives.

Disregarding recent events involving America, this is one way that they are showing the rest of us how to deal with this problem.

It may not suit the PC brigade or human rights apologists but it seems it is the only way to get justice for abused children and their families.

John Selby, Mickley Street, Leeds

Too much cash for Sutcliffe

So, Peter Sutcliffe wants £55 a week pocket money after murdering all those <u>women</u>? I get £98 a week pension to live on and only because I don't smoke or gamble etc can I live comfortably on it.

Why should killers have more pocket money than pensioners?

They should not get more than £20 per week. No wonder there is a shortage for the ill and elderly. Do they get luxury carpeting as well!

A HAGUE, Bellbrooke Grove, Leeds

Sutcliffe's benefits should be taken off him and given to the families of the victims he murdered.

He should be locked in the darkest corner of hell with the key thrown away - £12 a week? To me he shouldn't get 12p a week.

Mrs Carder, Bridlington.

Τ

ired of abuse

I am, like many readers, becoming tired of the tirade of abuse about certain Leeds city councillors from Mark Dobson.

The chairman of the Garforth Residents Association should be working with all the Leeds councillors for the benefit of Garforth.

I have no doubt that all the councillors of all parties are working for the future and betterment of Leeds.

The chairman of the GRA should spend more time promoting the needs of Garforth residents and less time on trivial party politics.

JW THORNTON, Garforth

Turmoil warning

Coun David Schofield suggests sending about 10,000 of our 78,000 prisoners back to their own countries overseas, to save building expensive new prisons (Letters, July 29).

Think of the turmoil and the cost if we did this. Also, if other countries did this to us, we would probably need far more prisons to cope with all the extra places needed.

D HALL, Bellbrooke Place, Leeds

Thanks...

I would like to thank the nurse from the LGI who had just finished her night shift and was on Whitehall Road on July 17. This lady helped my father who had collapsed - unfortunately he passed away later in hospital - but I never got her name.

Also I would like to thank PC909 Cookson from Holbeck police station who was also at the scene and paramedics and nurses from A&E at the LGI.

Rebecca Buckley, Wortley

Load-Date: August 2, 2006



Best defence against terrorism is a split with US, say voters

The Times (London)
September 6, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: HOME NEWS; Pg. 24

Length: 519 words **Byline:** Peter Riddell

Body

MOST people believe that the Blair Government's foreign policy has increased significantly the risk of terrorist attacks and now want Britain to distance itself from America and set a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq, according to a poll for The Times.

The Populus poll was undertaken over the weekend as news came of the death of 14 British servicemen on board a crashed Nimrod aircraft in Afghanistan.

The results underline the unpopularity of Tony Blair's Middle Eastern policy and how a majority of voters believe there is a direct connection with terrorist plots and attacks at home.

Nearly three quarters of the public (73 per cent) believe that "the British Government's foreign policy, especially its support for the invasion of Iraq and refusal to demand an immediate ceasefire by Israel in the recent war against *Hezbollah* in Lebanon, has significantly increased the risk of terrorist attacks on Britain".

Moreover, three fifths (62 per cent) agree that "in order to reduce the risk of future terrorist attacks on Britain the Government should change its foreign policy, in particular by distancing itself from America, being more critical of Israel and declaring a timetable for withdrawing from Iraq". **Women** (66 per cent) and Liberal Democrat voters (74 per cent) agree with this view particularly strongly.

Nonetheless, a similar proportion of voters (63 per cent) believe that "Muslim extremists hate democracy and the Western way of life, and if Britain's foreign policy were different they would find another excuse for their terrorist activities". This is a widely held view, backed by two thirds of Labour and Tory voters, but only just over a half (53 per cent) of Lib Dems.

However, voters are also sympathetic to Muslim concerns. Just a half (52 per cent) believe that "even though there is no justification for terrorism, the British Government's foreign policy, especially towards Iraq and the recent attacks on Lebanon by Israel, is anti-Muslim and it is understandable that many Muslims are offended by it". Most people back the increased security at airports and say they feel safe travelling. Just under one in three (29 per cent) believes that the airport authorities have "overreacted to the threat of terrorism and introduced excessive security measures that cause unnecessary delays without improving safety", the view argued by Ryanair. But more than two thirds (69 per cent) disagree.

Best defence against terrorism is a split with US, say voters

Just a third believe that security checks should be "particularly focused on people who appear to be from the same ethnic or religious background as previous terrorists, rather than treating everyone as if they represent an equal risk". But two thirds disagree.

Only a quarter (26 per cent) say they would not feel safe travelling from British aiports at the moment, but 71 per cent say they do feel safe flying.

A third report that they or someone in their families were directly affected, experiencing delays as a result of increased airport security. But two thirds say they were unaffected.

Populus interviewed 1,504 adults by telephone on September 1-3. For more details go to www.populuslimited.com

Load-Date: September 6, 2006



Bush is after a boost by war, but a Black day has already dawned

Western Mail
August 11, 2006, Friday
First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 18

Length: 467 words

Byline: ELAINE MORGAN

Body

After 9/11, the war on terrorism powerfully boosted Bush's popularity, and perhaps by renaming it 'the long war' he hoped to ensure that the gung-ho effect would last his lifetime. But it's not working. His poll ratings have plummeted, his faithful ally Blair is increasingly regarded as - in the latest political catchphrase - 'unfit for purpose', and recruitment for the US Army is so sluggish that they offer automatic American citizenship to any immigrant willing to join up. So Bush's present strategy is to deploy his client state, Israel, in a game of 'Let's you and him fight'. The war in Iraq was - and is - appalling, but at least it was thought necessary to present a case for it.

Not this time.

Lebanon isn't under the heel of a sadistic dictator seeking weapons of mass destruction. It is a small democracy struggling to rebuild after the last time it was reduced to rubble, and its offence was that <u>Hezbollah</u> forces operating inside Lebanon captured two Israeli soldiers. I try not to be angry; I distrust anger. The Palestine problem is partly of our making and Zionism once seemed such a great idea. Now it's hard to sympathise with anything Israelis say because every speech is stained with the lofty contempt they feel for their neighbours. But they also feel cornered and isolated and unable to trust anyone but themselves - and they have reason to.

Anger is counter-productive because if you join an angry demo you don't know who you're standing next to. It may be someone itching to say the things Mel Gibson said when sozzled - it's all the fault of the Jews. That's rubbish. The ones I know say, like Michel Hanson last week, that they 'never wanted a wall, an illegal occupation, a religious state or an undeclared war and we are enraged, ashamed, and tearing our hair out'.

Some express those sentiments inside Israel. There was recently an extraordinary mass march of '<u>Women</u> Against War' in Tel Aviv, with around 3,000 participants. Many of them belonged to a worldwide anti-war organisation called <u>Women</u> in Black (WiB). It has several predecessors - the Black Sash movement in South Africa, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina.

In Britain the same impulse created the <u>women</u>'s peace movement in Belfast and the Greenham Common <u>women</u>.

WiB now has branches in more than 30 countries, including India, Japan, America, Italy, Israel/Palestine, Serbia, Brazil - and Wales. Last Saturday I stood in at their monthly vigil on the steps of Cardiff museum. Access to the site was hampered by traffic blocks, a helter-skelter, the noise generated by the Cardiff Festival and a procession of supporters of Hare Krishna. But they were there, as usual, with placards - a dozen or so members of WiB. They just want the war to stop. They don't hate anybody. And I don't think they'll go away.

Load-Date: August 11, 2006



<u>Israel halts air attacks for 48 hours; Suspension occurs after a strike kills 56</u> Lebanese

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: ACROSS; Pg. a6

Length: 486 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel suspended air attacks on south Lebanon for 48 hours in the face of widespread outrage over an air strike Sunday that killed at least 56 Lebanese, almost all of them <u>women</u> and children, when it leveled a building where they had taken shelter.

The announcement - made by a State Department spokesman with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Jerusalem - appeared to reflect American pressure on Israel to make some concession after the strike.

In addition to suspending air attacks, Israel also will allow the opening of corridors for 24 hours for Lebanese civilians who want to leave south Lebanon for the north and would maintain land, sea and air corridors for humanitarian assistance, officials said.

Israeli government officials confirmed that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed to an immediate 48-hour halt in air strikes on Lebanon around midnight Sunday while the military concludes its inquiry into the attack on the south Lebanese village of Qana. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

The officials left open the possibility that Israel might hit targets to stop imminent attacks, and that the suspension could last less than 48 hours if the military completes its inquiry before then.

Lebanon said the Israeli suspension was inadequate.

"There is no cease-fire and there is no cessation of hostilities," Lebanese special envoy Nouhad Mahoud told reporters at the United Nations late Sunday. "We are looking for something much more than that."

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

A three-story house on the outskirts of Qana was leveled when a missile crashed into it at 1 a.m. Red Cross officials said 56 were killed and police said 34 children and 12 adult <u>women</u> were among the dead. It was worst single strike since Israel's campaign in Lebanon began on July 12 when <u>Hezbollah</u> militants crossed the border into Israel and abducted two soldiers.

Israel halts air attacks for 48 hours Suspension occurs after a strike kills 56 Lebanese

The attack in Qana brought Lebanon's death toll to more than 510 and pushed American peace efforts to a crucial juncture, as fury at the United States flared in Lebanon.

The Beirut government said it would no longer negotiate over a U.S. peace package without an unconditional cease-fire.

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

Two extended families, the Shalhoubs and the Hashems, had gathered in the house for shelter from another night of Israeli bombardment in the border area when the strike brought the building down.

President Bush repeated his call for a "sustainable peace" in the Middle East and said: "America mourns the loss of innocent life, those tragic occasions when innocent people are killed."

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



INTERNATIONAL: Katsav stays away after rape scandal

Birmingham Post
October 17, 2006, Tuesday
First Edition

Copyright 2006 Reach PLC All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 511 words **Byline:** Paul Aston

Body

Israeli president Moshe Katsav yesterday decided to skip the opening of the autumn session of parliament after police recommended he be indicted on rape charges.

Katsav's brother, Lior, said the president would avoid the session out of respect for the office of the presidency.

Lior Katsav said the president would stay at home to protect the dignity of the Knesset, or parliament.

In his largely symbolic post, Moshe Katsav is responsible for presiding over such ceremonies.

"We have no doubt of his innocence," Lior Katsav told Army Radio. "We know he is being framed and he is being blamed of things that did not happen."

Police have recommended that Moshe Katsav be indicted for rape, aggravated sexual assault and other counts, wrapping up a months-long investigation into complaints by **women** who worked for him.

Attorney General Meni Mazuz must make the final decision on whether to indict.

Although Mazuz's decision is likely weeks away, calls on Katsav to suspend himself or resign are growing.

Several politicians, including all members of the liberal Meretz Party, had threatened to boycott yesterday's parliamentary ceremony if Katsav attended.

While Israel has a long history of political scandals, the charges that Katsav may face would be the most serious criminal counts ever brought against a serving official.

In the past, a previous president and several prime ministers were suspected of financial misdeeds, and a former defence minister as convicted of sexual harassment.

In a statement, police said the recommendations were based on complaints filed by "women who worked under his (Katsav's) authority".

It said there was evidence he committed crimes of "rape, aggravated sexual assault, indecent acts without permission and offences under the law to prevent sexual harassment".

Page 2 of 2

INTERNATIONAL: Katsav stays away after rape scandal

Police also said the found the basis for charges of fraud and malfeasance, as well as illegal wiretapping. Investigations that Katsav disrupted a police investigation and harassed a witness are still in progress.

Katsav has denied any wrongdoing, saying he was the victim of a conspiracy.

His lawyer, Zion Amir, issued a statement saying that police were not authorised to bring charges. It noted that in the past, when police have recommended putting senior officials on trial, the attorney general has dismissed most of the cases.

The scandal has marred the two-decade career of a politician with an image of being dull but squeaky-clean.

Katsav, a long-time backbencher in the Likud Party, was elected to the presidency by parliament in a shocking upset over Nobel laureate and elder statesman Shimon Peres.

Although the position is largely ceremonial, the president is expected to set moral standards and help unify the country during times of trouble.

During the recent war against <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas in Lebanon, Katsav visited areas hit by rocket fire, rushing for shelter in a building during one barrage.

The Israeli president has said he has no intention of stepping down before the end of his seven-year term next year.

However, if indicted he would likely have to step aside.

Graphic

Moshe Katsav

Load-Date: October 17, 2006



Labour 'despairs' at PM over Lebanon ceasefire

Western Mail
August 3, 2006, Thursday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7 Length: 500 words

Body

Tony Blair returned to Britain from the United States yesterday to face a growing backlash from Labour MPs over his stance on Lebanon. On another day of heavy fighting as Israel pressed forward its military offensive, senior backbenchers warned the party was in 'despair' over the Prime Minister's refusal to back international calls for an immediate ceasefire.

Critics said the anger could spill over into the party conference in September and ultimately affect the timing of his departure from Downing Street.

They urged him to distance himself from US President George Bush's support for the continued Israeli assault on *Hezbollah*.

Despite calling for a 'complete renaissance' of Middle East strategy, with a renewed effort to establish a Palestine state, Mr Blair has resisted all calls to condemn the Israeli action.

Former Minister for Women Joan Ruddock said there was now a sense of 'despair' within the Labour ranks.

'I have not met any member of the Labour Party myself who actually agrees with our strategy,' the Lewisham MP told BBC Radio 4's The World At One. I really can't envisage at the moment how the party conference will go.

There is enormous anger, disappointment and the sense that there has to be a change of direction, but that the damage has been done.

'There will be a huge effort required in order to rebuild any kind of confidence and at the moment I can't see how that will be done.

'I think there is a huge legacy from Iraq and that, unfortunately, this latest problem with Israel and Lebanon will only build on that and deepen the sense that we have got a foreign policy in the Labour Party unacceptable to our membership.'

The latest criticisms came against a background of reported unease within the Cabinet over the Government's position, with Leader of the Commons Jack Straw, Environment Secretary David Miliband and International Development Secretary Hilary Benn all reported to have voiced concerns.

Even Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett is reported to have dispatched officials to press No 10 for a change of direction, with no apparent success.

Labour 'despairs' at PM over Lebanon ceasefire

Meanwhile the deputy secretary general of the United Nations, Mark Malloch Brown, urged Mr Blair and Mr Bush to take a back seat in talks on resolving the crisis. 'It's not helpful for it again to appear to be the team that led on Iraq,' he told the Financial Times. 'This cannot be perceived as a US-UK deal with Israel.'

Mr Blair, who arrived back from his visit to the United States yesterday morning, was said to have been holding a series of meetings with officials to discuss the ongoing crisis. 'He is obviously going to continue speaking to foreign leaders tomorrow,' a spokeswoman for No 10 said last night. Mr Blair will face further questions on the issue today when he holds his monthly Downing Street press conference. It had been expected to be his final official engagement before he leaves for his summer break, but there has been speculation that he will delay his departure because of the Lebanon crisis.

Load-Date: August 3, 2006



We're being robbed of our freedom to think and debate

Yukon News (Yukon)
February 2, 2007 Friday
Final Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Pg. 9; Culture Watch

Length: 1145 words

Byline: Brian Brett, Special to Yukon News

Body

It's about time we talked about the invisible 900-pound gorilla in the room.

That's right, Israel, perhaps the most dangerous media subject on the planet.

Say one wrong word and you can instantly be called an anti-Semite -- as Jimmy Carter found out.

Jimmy Carter? An anti-Semite? The former president of the USA? Renowned Christian and social activist, orchestrator of the Camp David Accords, founder of uncountable charity projects? Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize?

His newest book, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid has raised a firestorm of criticism, as can happen to North American public commentators with the temerity to criticize Israel's behaviour.

So far, I've not been able to find the opinion of a single Palestinian or Islamic reviewer in a major publication.

I'm sure there are a few out there, somewhere, but they're hard to find, and this is one of the difficulties about truthspeaking Jimmy Carter wants to call to our attention.

We should know this: after all, we live in Canada, where the largest media chain, CanWest, declared in 2000 that no editorial in its many newspapers can criticize Israel without the approval of the head office in Winnipeg.

To illustrate how tough it is to discuss the occupation of Palestine, consider Tony Judt, once a respected historian, until he made the mistake of agreeing with a Times London Review of Books article complaining about the treatment of advocates of Palestinian freedom.

When the Polish embassy in New York invited him to give a lecture, the embassy phones were soon ringing and the invitation was cancelled.

Another 'historian' who got the slam dunk was the infamous British Holocaust denier, David Irving.

He made the arrogant mistake of suing a renowned history professor for libel after she correctly pointed out he was a Holocaust denier.

His lawsuit was crushed, deservedly, in court, and he went bankrupt.

We're being robbed of our freedom to think and debate

But, five years later, while delivering a lecture in Austria, he was arrested and sentenced to three years in jail for Holocaust denial.

Interestingly, his professorial opponent, Deborah Lipstadt, said, "I am not happy when censorship wins, and I don't believe in winning battles via censorship.

"The way of fighting Holocaust deniers is with history and with truth."

Now there's a real historian, one who clearly understands the dangers of both lies and censorship.

Irving's jail sentence came down around the time European newspapers were publishing insulting cartoons about Islam and Mohammed in the name of free speech. Some free speech.

The main American source for the campaign against critics of Israel is Abe Foxman, the director of the Anti-Defamation League, with its fat \$50-million annual budget for "anti-bias education and diversity training."

It's notorious for searching for anti-Semites under every bed.

The league is only the most well-financed of many groups defending Israel's right to do as it pleases in the Mideast.

The New York Times just published an article about a recent essay by the director of the Institute for Jewish Culture, which bizarrely accuses anyone who criticizes Israel (including Jews) of promoting anti-Semitism.

Frankly, Israel has enough troubles without idiots like that promoting its cause.

Every day it faces the terror of suicide bombers in bakeries and cafeterias and on buses.

Heavily armed terrorist organizations like *Hezbollah* and Hamas call for Israel's extinction and another Holocaust.

The whacko president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, currently on a quest for nuclear power, claims "Israel must be wiped off the map."

This is harsh news indeed for the men, women, and children of Israel to wake up to in the morning.

Meanwhile occupied Palestine is being crushed by walls and settlements, the orchards cut down, 10 Palestinians killed for every Israeli, water diverted, homes leveled by bulldozers -- the people unable to bring in medical supplies without Israel's permission, parents facing dozens of clogged Israeli military checkpoints just to visit their children a few kilometres away.

The truth is, as always, there are no white hats and black hats. Both peoples are capable of committing atrocious crimes against each other.

What is needed is open and reasonable dialogue.

These days, we're not going to get that in the Arab nations whose media is full of inflammatory anti-Christian and anti-Semitic diatribes, fuelled by America's adventures in the region.

According to a recent UN survey the number of books translated into Arabic during the last 1,000 years barely equals the number of books translated into Spanish in a single year.

But because Israel is facing an implacable and ignorant foe doesn't mean its supporters should advocate an equally implacable ignorance.

The awful truth is that there's no shortage of critics of Islamic or Palestinian fanaticism in North America. Critiquing Israel's tactics is more difficult, as Michael Ignatieff discovered when he accurately pointed out that Israel committed war crimes in the attack on Qana in Lebanon.

We're being robbed of our freedom to think and debate

The meagre coverage of his later remark that <u>Hezbollah</u> also committed war crimes against Israelis mainly consisted of criticism that he was just trying to look fair. Nobody considered that he was trying to be fair.

This is what former-president Carter wants us to discuss, and he's got one hell of a debate on his hands.

I saw the CBC interview (it's on YouTube) in which he gave a reasonable, gracious explanation of his intentions and views, pointing out that he used the dreadful "apartheid word" only in referring to Palestine and not Israel, and that he thought that Israel had been lured into a no-win situation by its opponents and Zionist extremists (an alarming number of which are American settlers).

The awful truth is that Israel's confiscation and settling of Palestinian land defies both the Geneva Convention and UN Resolution 242.

He also quickly pointed out his book denounces Palestinian suicide bombers (and later apologized for one sentence about suicide bombers that unintentionally appears equivocal).

This reasoned interview was followed by a brutally acid critic who ignored his concerns and single mindedly accused him of being one sided.

The Jewish people have twice suffered a forced exodus, once by the Egyptians and once by the Romans.

Then they faced the Holocaust. It's small wonder the Israeli government and its supporters are twitchy, but they also have to understand that their peace can only be won with knowledge, understanding, and debate, not cluster bombs.

If people like Carter, probably the most decent man to stumble upon the American presidency in the 20th century, can be accused of promoting racism, then the debate will be lost, along with Israel.

Perhaps it would be wise for those so quick to sling accusations to consider the words of the Jewish astronomer, Carl Sagan: "We are only as strong as the courage of our questions and the depth of our answers."

Load-Date: February 3, 2007



<u>Debate on Afghan mission welcomed: Former reservist opposes campaign;</u> former NATO ambassador supports it

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

January 17, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 440 words

Byline: Louise Dickson, Times Colonist

Body

Francisco Juarez and Gordon Smith have one thing in common: They agree Canadians have not been engaged in a proper debate about our country's mission in Afghanistan.

Juarez, 35, a justice student at Royal Roads, will talk at UVic tonight about his decision to leave the Canadian army reserves after realizing he couldn't support Canada's mission to Afghanistan.

Smith, a former deputy minister of Foreign Affairs and director of the UVic Centre for Global Studies, is preparing a report -- Canada and Afghanistan: Is it Working? -- which will be published next month. The answer to that question will be no, said Smith, but the former NATO ambassador believes Canada's involvement in Afghanistan is necessary.

"It's the right thing to do," Smith said in an interview. "It's where our values lie. There's no questions we're doing something for the Afghan people who've had a pretty miserable lot for the past few years."

While the two men differ on Canada's involvement in Afghanistan, Smith said only good will come out of tonight's presentation by the Canada Out of Afghanistan Campaign.

"It will stimulate a debate," he said.

Juarez was a member of the Canadian Armed Forces from 2002 until March 2006. Last summer, he transferred into the reserves and was training to be an officer. He was really hoping to be sent to Afghanistan by 2009.

After Israel bombed Lebanon to target <u>Hezbollah</u>, Juarez realized he disagreed with Stephen Harper's foreign-policy changes.

He began to believe the objective of the Conservatives' foreign policy was to parallel and support the U.S. in the Middle East.

Canada has a place in Afghanistan, particularly through the United Nation, said the former reservist.

"But by using the blunt end of the military, we're not going to achieve success, and Afghanistan is unravelling."

Debate on Afghan mission welcomed: Former reservist opposes campaign; former NATO ambassador supports it

Juarez is concerned that 90 per cent of the operational budget for the Afghan mission goes to the military mission, while 10 per cent is set aside for development and humanitarian assistance.

Smith argued that more has to be done in Afghanistan. The mission is not succeeding, he says, because the overall military contribution is not as great as it should be.

But, like Juarez, he believes far more has to be done on the development side by Canada and other countries.

Juarez speaks tonight at 7 in room C125 at UVic's engineering and computer science building.

He will be joined by Nikolai Lanine, a former Russia soldier who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s, who questions Canada's and NATO involvement. Zainum Bahadshah, a Muslim <u>women</u> concerned with the impact of military intervention of Afghan <u>women</u> and children, is also a guest speaker.

Graphic

Photo: Darren Stone, Times Colonist; "Afghanistan is unravelling," says Francisco Juarez, a member of the Canadian Armed Forces from 2002 until last March.

Load-Date: January 17, 2007



The pain behind violence'lt hasn't been at all easy...'

The Toronto Star
October 15, 2006 Sunday

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Section: IDEAS; Pg. D01

Length: 1132 words

Byline: Andrew Chung, Toronto Star

Body

Talks began last week to restore self-rule to Northern Ireland after the Independent Monitoring Commission, the body charged with, among other things, monitoring paramilitary activity in the province, said in a major report that the Irish Republican Army was no longer engaged in terrorism. It was a major step to a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, which has suffered under 30 years of conflict between Catholic Irish Republicans and pro-British Protestants, during which 3,600 people have been killed.

John Alderdice, a psychiatrist, former member of the Northern Ireland assembly, and a member of the House of Lords, is a commissioner with the IMC. A Protestant, he has also worked tirelessly to bring the sides together over the years. It has meant he has had to talk to, and try to understand, terrorists - something most authorities and governments engaged in the war on terror today seem unwilling to do.

How did growing up in Northern Ireland affect you?

I was growing up when the violence started. My question was, why are people doing this? What is it that drives people to behave in such a self-destructive way? Those were the reasons I went into psychology and psychoanalysis, and politics. Understanding the psychology of individuals and groups was a way of addressing politics in a different fashion.

Did you see a lot of the fallout of the violence in your practice?

We're beginning to see the long-term sequelae of young people growing up in this kind of atmosphere, where normal boundaries are put to the side and living with criminal behaviour and what not. There's a huge amount of pathology.

You have some theories about the pathology of terrorism.

One thing that came out for me as I started to talk to people in Northern Ireland, those involved in violence and those who were sympathetic to the violence, was a strong feeling that their community had been humiliated, and it was historical and it had been deeply felt.

And when I went to other parts of the world - the Balkans, Middle East, Latin America in Peru, Nepal, Sub-Saharan Africa - I discovered this was a widespread phenomenon, the feeling that their community was not treated with respect. They responded in an angry and very violent way.

The pain behind violence'lt hasn't been at all easy...'

That's not to say that economic disadvantage and other political issues are not of importance. But this is something that has kept coming out to me as a common feature of countries and communities where terrorism emerges.

But what's the difference, say, between two people, both of whom experience these feelings of humiliation, yet one embraces paramilitarism and the other does not?

We don't really know the answer. It's the same as what happens when someone is physically or sexually abused. What turns someone into an abuser and the other into a social worker working with the abused? It's a question for which we don't quite know enough to be able to say with clarity.

But there are a number of things we do know. If somebody is raised in an emotionally supportive, thoughtful, congenial and consistent environment, they have a better chance of becoming that social worker, but if they're in an unhappy, emotionally deprived environment, they're more likely to be an abuser. You can transpose that to the political environment.

What is it that IRA leader Martin McGuinness said during peace talks that struck you so deeply?

He told the story of wanting to be a motor mechanic and asking to be taken on for a job. And the guy said there was no job available. He said, "Keep me in mind." But the guy explained to him that he'd never have a job there because he's a Catholic. He became really humiliated with that.

But he also said, "Sometimes I wonder if I'd ever have got involved in all the subsequent things if I'd gotten that job." That was a powerful thing for those of us listening to hear. And I wonder if that garage owner had heard that, would he feel any sense that maybe he played a part in it?

But is giving someone a job enough to stop him from becoming a terrorist?

It's not a question of giving him a job. It was the emotional reaction to the reason for not giving him a job.

Why have you been so willing to embrace those that have been behind so much terror in Northern Ireland?

It hasn't been at all easy. I've had to struggle both emotionally and intellectually, my colleagues advising me not to do it. For a long time I felt that to get moderate people working together we had to marginalize those responsible for the violence. But we tried it and it didn't work. Repression was tried, and it didn't work. So should we continue with something that wasn't working? Or take a risk? It was very difficult, and it took a very long time, but it made an enormous change. If we didn't try to engage with people who supported the use of violence and involved the use of terrorism, then you can't come to understand why they did it.

The conventional wisdom nowadays is to never talk to, or negotiate with, terrorists.

Well, it may be the conventional view, but it's not wisdom.

What about terror in the name of Islam?

Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, they have clearly identified origins and a political agenda they want to achieve, different from the global jihadists. I've gone and sat down with people in Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, not because I agree with their positions or their methods, but because I don't agree with the way they've done things and want to find a way in which disagreements can be handled in a different way. People don't see a way out without resorting to violence. Then they go down the democratic road, Hamas gets elected, and then people say we don't want to do business with you.

What does that have to do with humiliation and disrespect?

Because if you talk to those people, they will tell you how profoundly they feel disrespected and humiliated. Some of it is current, some historic. It's not difficult to find reasons why they feel this way. And again, like our situation, there are two sides of it. There's a profound insecurity and despair and long history of disrespect and humiliation of the

The pain behind violence'lt hasn't been at all easy...'

Jewish people. You've got to understand the profound depth of feeling there. You can't just deal with Palestinian feelings.

What about global jihadists, Al Qaeda?

It's more complex. But you have many young people who look at how the West is related to the Middle East, and (they say), "You talk about rights, <u>women</u> in society, but who are your allies? They're leaders who do not conduct their countries democratically, and we think you're keeping people in place who support you and provide you with strategic resources, and we're not getting the benefit."

This is not to justify terrorism; it's appalling, reprehensible. But you can't say that you can't find a way of understanding it if you think only a military approach is usable. You'll find it gets worse and worse.

Graphic

PETER MUHLY getty images John Alderdice: No wisdom in not talking.

Load-Date: October 15, 2006



Sixties bungalow set to fetch £1.6m

Aberdeen Press and Journal February 2, 2007 Friday

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 494 words

Body

A Three-bedroom bungalow built in the 1960s and in need of renovation went on the market for more than £1.6million yesterday. Shoreside bungalow is built on the seafront on the exclusive Sandbanks peninsula in Poole, Dorset. The detached split-level bungalow needs renovation work. But estate agent Savills is optimistic it will sell for above the £1,600,000 price tag.

Attacks on Jews up

ATTACKS on Jews in the UK rose to record levels last year, a new report said yesterday. There were 594 antisemitic incidents in Britain in 2006, up 31% from 2005, said the Community Security Trust (CST). More than one-fifth of the race-hate incidents took place during the 34-day war between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon in July and August. This is the highest level since the CST began collating such incidents in 1984, and 12% more than the previous record in 2004. The total included 112 violent assaults (up 37% on 2005), 70 of damage of Jewish property (up 46%), 365 of abusive behaviour (up 34%) and 27 threats (up 8%).

Sports ban 'absurd'

EDUCATION Secretary Alan Johnson yesterday condemned the "absurd" political correctness which has led some schools to ban competitive sports.

Speaking at a conference in Telford, the minister said football, cricket and athletics were the 'bedrock' of school sport.

Store faces fine

A MOUSE seen "feasting on chocolate" has led to a supermarket facing fines which could be as high as £20,000. The mouse was spotted by a shopper as it tucked in to confectionery at an Asda store in Lavender Hill, London. Wandsworth Council environmental health officers prosecuted Asda Stores for four offences alleging breaches of food hygiene regulations in June 2005. Asda's legal team pleaded guilty at South Western Magistrates' Court. The case will now go to the Crown Court for sentencing.

Fuel for thought

A FARMER is to convert his gas-guzzling Jaguar into an eco-friendly car which runs on fuel made from crushed apples. Henry Hobhouse, 52, from Hadspen, near Castle Carey, Somerset, plans to transform the vehicle to run on methane rather than petrol.

Bid to tackle touts

THOUSANDS of music fans were yesterday registering online for Glastonbury Festival tickets in a bid by organisers to beat the touts. The new system means people must send off a passport-style photo of themselves when they register, with their address and phone number. They will then be able to apply for the tickets when they go on sale on April 1. The three-day event returns to the Worthy Farm Site in Somerset on June 22, with The Who, Arctic Monkeys and Bjork, above, on the bill.

Over-50s 'invisible'

MOST <u>women</u> over 50 think society should change its attitude to growing older because many of them are left feeling "invisible", a new survey says. Three quarters of the 1,200 UK <u>women</u> interviewed thought the ageing process was hidden by the beauty industry. The findings were released by Dove as part of its new campaign featuring "real <u>women</u>" aged over 50.

Load-Date: February 3, 2007



The town was like a giant jigsaw puzzle tipped out of its box; AFTER 20 DAYS OF BOMBING, LEBANESE EMERGE SHELLSHOCKED AND BLINKING FROM THEIR BUNKERS TO SCENES OF DEVASTATION

Daily Mail (London)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: ED 1ST; Pg. 18

Length: 1119 words

Byline: RICHARD PENDLEBURY

Body

MARIAM Al Sghair should have been allowed a little more dignity as she lay dying in the hot sun. Eighty years old, abandoned in the centre of the street on an orange stretcher amid a maelstrom of rubble, she looked like the last survivor of a shipwreck in a heavy sea.

'Stay awake, don't let go,' she was told, as her eyelids flickered. We carried her to the shade of what was once a pavement where, her face covered with flies, she gasped and rolled her eyes again. You could see in them only a blankness, an absence of hope. She had simply had enough of this life.

A couple of hundred yards away, in the centre of Market Street, lay an unexploded bomb, dropped by an Israeli jet. Hebrew script stencilled on its olive green casing said that it weighed 2,500lb.

A haggard, dehydrated old man in an illfitting, dust-covered suit staggered past, tripping over debris in his exhaustion. 'It is the first time I have seen the sun in 20 days,' he told me.

How life had changed while he was sheltering underground. His home town of Bint Jbeil was now like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle which some child had tipped from its box.

After Israel announced a 48-hour aerial ceasefire yesterday, those civilians who had been trapped, too terrified or unable to move, emerged from their hiding places and attempted to flee. In Bint Jbeil, only three miles from the Lebanese-Israeli border, that largely meant the elderly, the infirm, the handicapped. It was a pitiful and distressing sight.

Those who were not dead had been driven near insane and were in a state of physical and emotional exhaustion.

The temporary absence of much of the air power which has cleared this landscape of visible human life for almost three weeks also allowed us to make a harrowing road journey right across devastated southern Lebanon.

Mail photographer Jamie Wiseman and I took the opportunity to travel to the centre of this border town, over which Israeli ground forces have been battling for control with <u>Hezbollah</u>. Of course, a terrible price had been paid for this respite.

The town was like a giant jigsaw puzzle tipped out of its box AFTER 20 DAYS OF BOMBING, LEBANESE EMERGE SHELLSHOCKED AND BLINKING FROM THEIR BUNKERS TO SCENES O....

The blood sacrifice was made by the <u>women</u> and children of Qana, more than 50 of whom were killed when two Israeli missiles hit a house on the edge of the village in the early hours of Sunday morning, causing international outrage.

Yesterday was a Lebanese day of mourning for those who died. Many of them were to be found still wrapped in plastic in a battered refrigerator lorry, parked outside Tyre's state hospital in the midst of a Palestinian refugee camp. In peacetime the truck carried oranges and lemons from Lebanon's fertile southern farmlands to the international markets. Now it contained 29 bodies from Qana, 17 of them children aged between two months and 14 years.

In the compound beside it there was a stack of cardboard coffins.

The smallest had written upon it: 'Unknown corpse (child).' The funerals will not take place until all the bodies are recovered. That may take some time.

We passed a group of men in an otherwise deserted village, making yet more coffins. Israeli artillery was hitting targets a few miles away and, although they were not bombing near us, jets and unmanned drones were overhead.

Twelve hours before, Chinese army engineers had recovered 20 more bodies from the remains of the home of Mohammed Hachem.

A further seven were still in the rubble, although now it was a matter of retrieving body parts rather than whole corpses.

That familiar stink of death prevailed.

Another ten miles along the road we reached the small town of Tibnin, which had been under heavy shellfire when we visited in the middle of last week.

Now its centre was filled with exhausted, shocked and wounded refugees, who had fled Bint Jbeil on foot that morning as soon as they heard of the aerial ceasefire.

Scores were huddled on the forecourt of a petrol station opposite the Red Cross compound.

They were in a terrible state.

'It took me four hours,' said Nasser Khalil. 'There is no food, no water left, we were reduced to scavenging like animals.

'This was our only chance to escape, so here we are.' He had left behind his handicapped uncle, who had been just too difficult to move by foot.

Dentist Dr Ibrahim Sabbagh was covered in his own blood and very angry. 'Mrs Rice, Mr Bush and the Israeli prime minister are not leaders, they are criminals,' he raged.

They have destroyed my home, my office, my car and almost killed my family, for what? I had the radio to my ear for 24 hours a day, for 20 days waiting for some good news. We are here, with our lives at least.' Now they waited for an emergency bus to take them to Tyre. An ambulance came tearing up the road from Bint Jbeil, siren screaming. Heading in the opposite direction, weaving round a series of huge bomb craters, we passed a wheelchair abandoned by the roadside in an otherwise empty gully. The evidence of intense air and artillery bombardment grew as did the signs of a *Hezbollah* military presence.

In the village of Beit Yahoun lay the remains of a jeep-mounted Katyusha rocket launcher, with munitions scattered around.

In Kounine, the last village before Bint Jbeil, a tank had been destroyed.

The town was like a giant jigsaw puzzle tipped out of its box AFTER 20 DAYS OF BOMBING, LEBANESE EMERGE SHELLSHOCKED AND BLINKING FROM THEIR BUNKERS TO SCENES O....

Another was wrecked on the edge of the town, along with several civilian vehicles. But this damage was as nothing compared to what the centre had suffered.

Gently rising Market Street, the town's main retail thoroughfare, appeared to have been hit by a severe earthquake. Sameha Akeeh, 63, was staggering among the ruins with her belongings in a carrier bag on her head. She had spent 20 days in a basement with little water and no food.

A 92-year-old woman was being carried, piggyback, through the devastation by a young man.

A grey-faced woman came and asked if we could help her carry her handicapped sister-in-law from the wreckage of their home.

So far only one ambulance had arrived from the outside world and now it had left.

A blanket was found and turned into a makeshift stretcher. The woman was carried out, beetroot red-faced, swooning, helpless. At the top of Market Street fresh vistas of ruin opened up, framed by the Biblical hills beyond.

Buildings had been hit not only by bombs but hundreds of small arms rounds, evidence of the heavy street fighting in recent days.

Fikeeha Hnaid sat in the shadow of a destroyed shop weeping, a man lying supine and oblivious beside her. 'We were in a basement with 30 others,' she whimpered. 'We need to eat. By any means I want to leave this place. It has been a nightmare.' Regular artillery fire could now be heard but the town seemed to have been abandoned by both sides.

Only an elderly and traumatised civilian population remained to remind one that this was once a community. Bint Jbeil yesterday was one more argument against the continuation of this war.

Graphic

IN DISTRESS: A WOMAN IS LIFTED ON A MAKESHIFT STRETCHER (2) DEMOLISHED: THE TOWN OF BINT JBEIL, WHERE MANY TERRIFIED RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN TRAPPED IN THE RUBBLE FOR WEEKS (3) RESCUED: MAILMAN PENDLEBURY (CENTRE) HELPS CARRY A VICTIM

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



At Home, Tehran Deals With a Restive Arab Minority

The New York Times
September 22, 2006 Friday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4; MEMO FROM IRAN

Length: 1186 words

Byline: By MICHAEL SLACKMAN

Dateline: TEHRAN

Body

"Help my young child -- please help me," cried Yabrra Banitamim, 65, in a conference room in the north of this city crowded with a dozen relatives of two men found guilty of participating in a string of deadly bombings in Iran.

The men, Malek Banitamim, 30, and Ghasem Sallamat, 42, are from Khuzestan Province, in the country's southwest. They are Arabs in a country that is predominantly Persian and that is accused by segments of its Arab population of treating them like second-class citizens, thereby creating a separatist backlash.

Iran wants to be a leader in the Islamic world, spreading its reach and influence among Arabs and Indonesians, Sunnis and Shiites. And with its support for <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon and its defiance of the West, it has made some progress.

But at home, Iran has often had to labor to unify its own people under one national identity, restricting the expression of ethnic variations -- like languages -- that it views as undermining that unity. The problem is often most apparent with its Arabs.

"There is a contradiction in Iran's behavior toward Arab countries and toward the Arabs in the south of Iran," said Mustafa el-Labbad, an expert in Iranian affairs who is based in Cairo.

Iran is a multiethnic nation. More than half of its 70 million people are Persian, and about 3 percent are Arabs. Other groups include the Azeris, Kurds, Turkmen, Baluchis and Lurs. Iran has recently faced strong protests from some ethnic groups, like the Azeris, with several demanding greater autonomy and cultural freedom.

In the Arab region, the authorities say, separatist groups became violent last year, setting off a string of terrorist bombs that killed or wounded many people. Mr. Banitamim and Mr. Sallamat were convicted and ordered hanged for their involvement in those attacks.

But to relatives of these men it is impossible to talk only about the crimes they were charged with. Their families see the acts of terrorism as intimately linked with the frustration and lack of hope that stems from the poverty that they say is forced on them by a majority that discriminates. This is a reality that the Iranian authorities have tried, but not succeeded, in reconciling.

At Home, Tehran Deals With a Restive Arab Minority

"The Islamic Republic is dealing with its own terrorism problem the same way the U.S. is dealing with Al Qaeda," said Emad Baghi, a former cleric who now heads the Tehran-based Organization for the Defense of Prisoners' Rights.

What he meant, he said, was that both governments were using force rather than understanding.

Mr. Banitamim and Mr. Sallamat were arrested on March 11, along with 15 other men and two <u>women</u>. Six of that group remain under investigation, while the rest have been convicted and sentenced to death, the relatives said.

Fearful and frustrated, more than 150 family members and friends of the convicted came to Tehran to urge the authorities to lift the death sentences. Their first stop was to visit Mr. Baghi.

"The prisoners are sentenced to death because of their confessions," said Mr. Banitamim's older brother Yaghoub, as he opened the conversation with Mr. Baghi. "Their confessions were made under torture. They didn't do anything."

Mr. Baghi, who spends his days listening to the sorrows of prisoners' families, gently asked if, indeed, the men were part of the organization that had been connected to bombings in Ahvaz, the capital of Khuzestan. "We don't know," the brother said, his gaze cast down.

Then, perhaps aware that Mr. Baghi already knew the answer, that the men were members of the group, he said: "They can sentence him to life in prison. We just want to stop the execution."

Iranian officials insist that there is no discrimination against Arabs or, for that matter, any of Iran's ethnic minorities. They note, for example, that classical Arabic is taught in schools. They point out that the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is of Azeri descent.

And they accuse Western governments of financing and helping to incite groups responsible for the violence in Ahvaz. That charge may sound self-serving, but a European diplomat in Tehran said intelligence reports from the diplomat's home capital confirmed that there was Western support for at least one of the separatist groups.

But that has not diminished what many Iranians say is the broader need to address the social, political and cultural concerns of many ethnic groups, including Arabs. "I believe," Mr. Baghi said, "that instead of labeling people terrorists, we should also try to understand the reason why."

Khuzestan is a place that illustrates the contradictions that can breed anger. The region sits atop most of the country's oil wealth, yet its Arab residents are mostly poor. At the same time, many Arabs complain that they see their country's wealth helping to rebuild Lebanon.

The London-based pan-Arab newspaper Al Sharq al Awsat recently reported that in Khuzestan, "residents launched slogans condemning <u>Hezbollah</u> and the government and asked for the rebuilding of their own destroyed homes instead of interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon."

Similar grievances could be heard from the relatives of the condemned men. "We suffered a lot because of the war with Iraq," said Mr. Sallamat's wife, Samira, referring to Khuzestan's proximity to the border with Iraq. "This is not fair. We have done nothing wrong. God knows we've done nothing wrong."

Mr. Baghi could do no more than advise her on a strategy. But he represented an authority figure, a bridge from the deprivation of Ahvaz to the power of Tehran. Her anger exploded. "Our problems are not only economic, they are cultural," she complained. "They even find fault with the way we dress." The "they" she was referring to were her Persian neighbors.

The complaints, the crying, the charges of discrimination went on around the room. A child's eyes filled with tears every time someone mentioned that his father was to be hanged, or that his relatives could not find work because, the charge went, they were Arab.

At Home, Tehran Deals With a Restive Arab Minority

When the relatives left, Mr. Baghi cautioned against sympathy. He said that the terrorists had taken a video of the explosions and that it had fallen into the hands of the authorities.

But it is also often much easier to make friends with strangers than to settle differences with people living under the same roof. Mr. Labbad of Egypt said that was exactly the case with Iran. When Iran addresses Arabs outside its borders, he said, it can focus on common enemies in the United States and Israel. It has no obligation beyond giving voice to feelings that already exist.

But when it comes to its own Arab population, its first responsibility is to provide life's essentials -- food, work and shelter. And that is what the families of the two condemned men tried to say, why the grievance over the sentence had become a catalyst for venting their frustrations.

"I have nine brothers and sisters, and out of all of us one brother -- the brother who was arrested -- was working," said Yaghoub Banitamim. "What is the reason? Only because we are Arabs."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Members of the Sallamat and Banitamim families met with Emad Baghi, left, to plead the case of two relatives. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)

Load-Date: September 22, 2006



UNITY OF COMMAND

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 3, 2006 Thursday

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Length: 1234 words **Byline:** M.A. Niazi

Body

The responses to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon illustrate the limits of international opinion on a determined state with backing from major powers, as well as the limits of military might when faced with a determined opposition, even if the resistance is outnumbered and outgunned.

While these theoretical issues are of great interest to students of political science, the Muslim world in particular has to absorb certain lessons from this crisis, lessons which have been derivable in the past, but which are now being rammed home with even greater force. International opinion is just words, in the last analysis. However, in the last couple of centuries, the leaders of the international system, which consisted of the European powers and the USA, have made a commendable effort to place checks on excessive behaviour by other states. Aggression, which used to be an accepted mode of behaviour by states, went out of fashion to the extent that even Hitlerine Germany had to create a fiction of a Polish attack before launching World War II. It is a symptom of this trend that the entire world's War Ministers (which actually meant Army Ministers) turned into Defence Ministers.

So Israel's second naked aggression against Lebanon in the last quarter of a century has been described as an act of self-defence. This is a little more tenable since the US conquests of Afghanistan and Iraq, where there was little self-defence involved. In the first case, it was punitive action, and in the second, it was simply dislike for the regime. Israel has relived this particular configuration, because whereas its attack on Hamas-ruled Palestine was because it detested the regime, its attack on Lebanon was punishment for its government's inability or refusal to rein in Hezbollah. In addition, while the USA might have won a certain amount of sympathy for attacking authoritarian regimes, Israel has hit the only two outposts of democracy in the Arab world.

Israel's attack on Lebanon led to some squawking by other countries, but it managed to obtain a free hand. The USA and other Western powers have not been condemnatory, as expected, but the interesting part is that this time around they have not even been critical. There is no pretence at fairness; they are on Israel's side. So who are they against? Why would the USA and other Western powers be so enthusiastic about the Israeli pounding of two democracies? Hamas is perhaps easier to understand. Western powers have never accepted the results of apparently democratic elections unless there was a certain degree of ideological conformity. Salvador Allende was as unacceptable in 1973 as the Sandinistas in 1979 and after the fall of the USSR, as the FIS in Algeria, or Hamas in 2006.

Those who believe that Western democracy is not just compatible with, but completely congruent with, Islam, need to ponder why this is the case. It should never be forgotten that democracy is not just a method of transfer of power, but also the political manifestation of capitalism, and constitutes part of an entire package. It is feasible to extract

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methods from democracy to ensure participatory government in some other system, such as Islam or socialism, but democracy is not just about elections and legitimacy through a popular mandate.

Is Lebanon a primarily Muslim issue? While it is indeed a humanitarian tragedy of huge proportions, with Israeli forces once again proving that they will give no quarter to <u>women</u> and children, Muslims are generally viewing it as an attack on 'themselves.' On the other hand, their governments are viewing it as an attack on a friendly country, but are distancing themselves from the whole episode.

Pakistan's reaction is typical. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz thinks he has done his national and international duty by telephoning his Lebanese counterpart, assuring him of his deepest sympathies and promising more relief goods. Fawad Siniora probably would have preferred anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft missiles and a couple of divisions of mechanized infantry thrown in, but all he is getting is sympathy and relief goods, as if his country was hit by an earthquake, as if his affliction has come from an act of God, not from men.

Siniora is caught in a nutcracker. He might wish to disarm the <u>Hezbollah</u> militia, but it is a political actor. The only force, which could keep it in check, the Syrian occupying forces, has been thrown out by US intervention, and now a small Lebanese army is supposed to do what the powerful Israeli army cannot. In addition, since the Israeli army is failing to achieve its military objectives, Lebanon is being punished. This is much like the USA's -do-more' tactics with Pakistan over Afghanistan, where its own military's professional failures are being covered up by blaming Pakistan for not doing enough.

Israel, the USA and India are all united by a wish to see other Muslims deal with their Muslim problems. Pakistan is involved in two of these problems, in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Condemnatory resolutions and sympathetic noises are not helping the Lebanese, any more than they helped the Palestinians, the Kashmiris, the Chechens, the Afghans and the Iraqis, or even the many Muslim victims of murder and massacre committed by other Muslims. The nearest to a practical solution came from Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who called on the Muslim governments to form a single military force to expel the Israelis from Lebanon. There is a certain sense in this. The 50-odd members of the OIC have more than four million men under arms, apart from something like 4000 military aircraft, over 20,000 tanks and heavens knows how many artillery pieces. A lot of this equipment is in horrible shape, but it is better than nothing is.

However, the problem is that there are more than 50 governments, and they will never act in unison. There we come to a concept, which our own President Pervez Musharraf has popularized in another context: unity of command. If there were a single government commanding these forces, then a rather different situation would prevail. Muslims, after a millennium of thinking of each other as essentially the same, had nationalism imposed on them by the colonial experience. The paradox is that while they have not developed vibrant nationalisms of their own, as the originators did, they have certainly developed a feeling of hostility towards other Muslim nationalities. We bemoan the failure to develop a true Pakistani nationalism, at the same time as we bemoan the Arab and Palestinian failure to do anything for us.

Yet these same Arabs have stopped fighting for their rights in the name of nationalism alone, as they did until 1982. Now the fighting is done in the name of Islam as well, and this automatically creates a stake throughout the Islamic world. Kashmir, Afghanistan. Iraq. Chechnya. All have had 'foreigners' laying down their lives not in the name of international brotherhood, but Islam.

Until Muslims themselves understand the phenomena that are at work in this readiness to sacrifice for 'others' who are actually 'ours', there is little chance of a resolution. There will continue to be bloodshed, humiliation and suffering. We come back to the need for unity of command. How is this to be achieved? That is, again to quote Musharraf, 'just tactics.' Once we agree on the strategy that will be easier than anyone could think. *E-mail:maniazi@nation.com.pk*

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

UNITY OF COMMAND



Government attacks intensify in Darfur

Christian Science Monitor September 8, 2006, Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 7

Length: 934 words

Byline: Rob Crilly Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: NAIROBI, KENYA

Highlight: Rights groups report bombings, as aid workers warn a 'vacuum' in peacekeeping threatens their work.

Body

Three years after rebels from the farming tribes of Darfur rose up against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, Sudan, the region is staring into the abyss once again.

Government planes have embarked on a wave of indiscriminate bombings in Darfur, killing civilians in Sudan's wartorn western region, according to human rights campaigners.

Witness statements collected by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International detail deaths and injuries to <u>women</u> and children as Russian-made Antonov planes deliver their deadly payload. "Government forces are bombing villages with blatant disregard for civilian lives," says Peter Takirambudde, HRW's Africa director.

The fresh government onslaught against rebel-held villages is being played out against a backdrop of diplomatic uncertainty, as Khartoum rejects outside peacekeeping efforts amid its push to establish full sovereignty over the area.

This week, Khartoum threatened to evict a cash-strapped, weak African Union (AU) monitoring force when its mandate expires Sept. 30.

Government figures also continued to voice strident opposition to the deployment of a proposed force of more than 20,000 UN peacekeepers - seen by many analysts as the only way to rein in combatants in a war that has killed more than 200,000 people and forced some 2.5 million to flee to squalid aid camps.

Aid agencies warn that a "peacekeeping vacuum" could make their operations impossible to maintain. Meanwhile, proposed international sanctions as well as investigations of evidence by the International Criminal Court have been brushed off by Khartoum.

John Prendergast, a senior adviser at the International Crisis Group who has just returned to the US from Darfur, said the reported attacks were merely the "first moves on the chessboard," as the government massed troops in Darfur.

"They are embarked on their usual strategy of cutting the umbilical cord of the rebellion by destroying the civilian population, a strategy which is unchanged since 2003 and 2004," he says.

Government attacks intensify in Darfur

Residents of El Fasher, the regional capital of North Darfur, report the daily arrival of planes delivering troops and arms. HRW reports that one woman was killed and seven children injured near Kulkul, when a bomb was rolled from the back of an Antonov cargo plane. Amnesty International has accounts of government planes bombing Kulkul to prepare for ground troops and their Janjaweed allies.

For now, 7,000 AU soldiers are charged with protecting civilians and aid workers. They have struggled to stamp their authority on an area the size of France.

A peace deal signed in May has brought little respite. Only one faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army and the government signed on to its terms, leaving two large rebel factions outside the deal. They have since fragmented further.

Noureddine Mezni, spokesman for the AU mission, said his monitoring force did not have the resources to police the accord. "It's not easy to create buffer zones between rebel-held and government territory, to deploy around camps, or to use aircraft to patrol the area," he says.

Last week, the UN Security Council voted to take over and expand the peacekeeping effort. But the plan has been rejected repeatedly by the Sudanese government.

Sudan's president, Omar Al-Bashir, has vowed to fight off UN troops himself, and warned that Sudan would take on international soldiers "as <u>Hizbullah</u> beat Israeli forces." His ministers have also stepped up pressure on the AU, warning that AU troops can stay beyond September only if they drop plans to hand over their operation to the UN.

Mr. Prendergast said the diplomatic maneuvering was designed to distract from Darfur operations.

"Their strategy is pacification, and that means zero tolerance of rebels and zero tolerance pretty much of international witnesses," he says. "That's why we have seen arrests of journalists and growing insecurity for aid workers."

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson traveled to Sudan yesterday to seek the release of Paul Salopek, an American writer for National Geographic and The Chicago Tribune. He is to appear in court Sunday, charged with espionage, entering without a visa, and writing "false news."

A Canadian Broadcasting Corp. camera crew was assaulted at their hotel entrance in Khartoum on Wednesday by plainclothes police, as protests unfolded in the city. Reporters and aid workers arriving at the airport say their laptops have been seized and scanned for incriminating material.

The AU says that it does not have the resources to stay in Darfur beyond Sept. 30. But African foreign ministers are to meet in New York this month, concurrently with the UN Security Council, raising hopes that they may seek to renew the mandate.

On Wednesday, Sean McCormack, State Department spokesman, said US officials were in close contact with their African counterparts. "They are going to have to make some crucial decisions about their force in Darfur," he said. "We are confident that there will not be a vacuum, one way or the other, in Darfur...."

Many aid workers have already reduced operations following an upsurge in attacks. Eight were killed during July alone, and an International Rescue Committee nurse died amid fighting last Friday in Hashaba, about 70 miles north of El Fasher.

Mark Blackett, country director of the Irish charity Goal, said everyone was pinning hopes on a deal to sustain AU protection. "If we are proved wrong, that is a serious problem. I can see many agencies, including ourselves, having to pull out if the AU itself withdraws," he said by phone from Khartoum.

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Government attacks intensify in Darfur

Load-Date: September 7, 2006



Islamic women's groups test Syrian secularism

The International Herald Tribune

August 30, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1151 words

Byline: Katherine Zoepf

Dateline: DAMASCUS

Body

Enas al-Kaldi stops in the hallway of her Islamic school for girls and coaxes her 6-year-old schoolmate through a short recitation from the Koran.

"It's true that they don't understand what they are memorizing at this age, but we believe that the understanding comes when the Koran becomes part of you," Kaldi, 16, said proudly.

In other corners of Damascus, <u>women</u> who identify one another by the distinctive way they tie their head scarves gather for meetings of an exclusive and secret Islamic <u>women</u>'s society known as the Qubaisiate (pronounced koo-BAY-see-AHT).

At those meetings, participants say, they are tutored further in the faith and are even taught how to influence some of their well-connected fathers and husbands to accept a greater presence of Islam in public life.

These are the two faces of an Islamic revival for <u>women</u> in Syria, one that could add up to a potent challenge to this determinedly secular state. Though government officials vociferously reject it, Syria is becoming increasingly religious and its national identity is weakening.

If Islam replaces that identity, it may undermine the unity of a society that is ruled by a Muslim religious minority, the Alawites, and includes many religious groups.

Syrian officials, who had front-row seats as <u>Hezbollah</u> dragged Lebanon into war, are painfully aware of the myriad ways that state authority can be undermined by increasingly powerful, and appealing, religious groups. Though the Syrian government supports <u>Hezbollah</u>, it has been taking steps to ensure that the phenomenon it helped to build in Lebanon does not come to haunt it at home.

In the past, said Muhammad al-Habash, a Syrian lawmaker who is also a Muslim cleric, "we were told that we had to leave Islam behind to find our futures.

"But these days," he said, "if you ask most people in Syria about their history, they will tell you, 'My history is Islamic history.' The younger generation are all reading the Koran."

<u>Women</u> are in the vanguard. Though men across the Islamic world usually interpret Scripture and lead prayers, Syria, virtually alone in the Arab world, is seeing the resurrection of a centuries-old tradition of sheikas, or <u>women</u> who are religious scholars. The growth of girls' madrasas has outpaced those for boys, religious teachers here say.

There are no official statistics about precisely how many of the country's 700 madrasas are for girls. But according to a survey of Islamic education in Syria published by the pan-Arab daily Al Hayat, there are about 80 such madrasas in Damascus alone, serving more than 75,000 <u>women</u> and girls, and about half are affiliated with the Qubaisiate.

The group is named for its founder, a charismatic Syrian sheika, Munira al-Qubaisi.

For many years any kind of religious piety was viewed here with skepticism. But while men suspected of Islamist activity are frequently interrogated and jailed, subjecting **women** to such treatment would cause a public outcry that the government cannot risk.

<u>Women</u> have taken advantage of their relatively greater freedom to form Islamic groups, becoming a deeply rooted and potentially subversive force to spread stricter and more conservative Islamic practices in their families and communities.

Since intelligence agents still monitor private gatherings that involve discussion of Islam, groups like the Qubaisiate often meet clandestinely, sometimes with <u>women</u> guarding the door to deter interlopers.

A wealthy woman in her 50s living in Damascus, who has attended Qubaisiate meetings and who asked that her name not be used because she feared punishment, provided a rough description of the activities.

A girl thought to be serious about her faith may be invited by a relative or a school friend to go to a meeting, the woman said. There, a sheika sits on a raised platform, addresses the assembled <u>women</u> on religious subjects and takes questions.

Qubaisiate members, the woman said, tie their head scarves so there is a puff of fabric under the chin, like a wattle. As girls and <u>women</u> progress in their study of Islam and gain stature within the group, the color of their scarves changes. New members wear white ones, usually with long khaki-colored coats, she said. At the final stage the sheika may grant them permission to cover themselves completely in black.

Hadeel, a Syrian woman in her early 20's who asked to be identified only by her first name, described how her best childhood friend had become one of the Qubaisi "sisterhood" and encouraged her to follow suit.

"Rasha would call and say, 'Today we're going shopping,' and that would be a secret code meaning that there was a lesson at 7:30," Hadeel said. "I went three times, and it was amazing. They had all this expensive food, just for teenage girls, before the lesson. And they had fancy Mercedes cars to take you back home afterward."

Hadeel said she had at first been astonished by the way the Qubaisiate, ostensibly a <u>women</u>'s prayer group, seemed to single out the daughters of wealthy and influential families and girls who were seen as potential leaders.

<u>Women</u> speaking about the group asked that their names not be used because the group is technically illegal, though it seems the authorities are increasingly turning a blind eye.

"To be asked to join the Qubaisiate is very prestigious," said Maan Abdul Salam, a women's rights campaigner.

Abdul Salam explained that such secret Islamic prayer groups recruited <u>women</u> differently, depending on their social position. "They teach poor <u>women</u> how to humble themselves in front of their husbands and how to pray, but they're teaching upper-class <u>women</u> how to influence politics," he said.

The Islamic school where Kaldi, the 16-year-old tutor, studies has no overt political agenda. But it is a place where devotion to Islam, and an exploration of **women**'s place in it, flourishes.

Islamic women's groups test Syrian secularism

The school, at the Zahra Mosque in a suburb of Damascus, is a cheerful, cozy place, with soft carpets layered underfoot and scores of little girls running around in their socks. Kaldi spends summers, vacations and some afternoons there, studying and helping younger children to memorize the Koran.

The atmosphere is relaxed. Children share candy and snacks as they study, and the room hums with the sound of high-pitched voices reciting in unison.

After girls in the Zahra school have committed the Koran to memory, they are taught to recite the holy book with the prescribed rhythm and cadences, which usually takes several years of devoted study. Along the way they are taught principles of Koranic reasoning.

It is this art of Koranic reasoning, Kaldi and her friends say, that most sets them apart from previous generations of Syrian Muslim *women*.

"Society has really changed," said Fatima Ghayeh, 16, an aspiring graphic designer and Kaldi's best friend. "Today, girls are saying, 'We want to do something with Islam, and for Islam.' We're more active, and we ask questions."

Load-Date: August 30, 2006



Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers

The New York Times
July 31, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 2; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: THE SCENE

Length: 1038 words

Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE **Dateline:** QANA, Lebanon, July 30

Body

The dead lay in strange shapes. Several had open mouths filled with dirt. Faces were puffy. A man's arm was extended straight out from his body, his fingers spread. Two tiny children, a girl and boy, lay feet to head in the back of an ambulance, their skin like wax.

In the all-day scramble to retrieve the bodies from the remains of this one house -- backhoes dug for hours at the site after an early-morning airstrike -- tallies of the dead varied, from as many as 60 to 27, many of them children.

This was the single most lethal episode in the course of this sudden war. The survivors will remember it as the day their children died. For the village, it is a fresh pain in a wound cut more than 10 years ago, when an Israeli attack here killed more than 100 civilians. Many of them were children, too.

The Israeli government apologized for that airstrike, as it did for the one here on Sunday. It said that residents had been warned to leave and should have already been gone.

But leaving southern Lebanon now is dangerous. The two extended families staying in the house that the Israeli missile struck -- the Shalhoubs and the Hashims -- had discussed leaving several times over the past two weeks. But they were poor -- most worked in tobacco or construction -- and the families were big and many of their members weak, with a 95-year-old, two relatives in wheelchairs and dozens of children. A taxi north, around \$1,000, was unaffordable.

And then there was the risk of the road itself.

Dozens, including 21 refugees in the back of a pickup truck on July 15, have been killed by Israeli strikes while trying to evacuate. Missiles hit two Red Cross ambulances last weekend, wounding six people and punching a circle in the center of the cross on one's roof. A rocket hit the ambulance convoy that responded in Qana on Sunday.

"We heard on the news they were bombing the Red Cross," said Zaineb Shalhoub, a 22-year-old who survived the bombing. She was lying quietly in a hospital bed in Tyre.

"What can we do with all of our kids?" she asked. "There was just no way to go."

Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers

They had moved to the house on the edge of a high ridge, which was dug into the earth. They thought it would be safer. The position helped muffle the sound of the bombs.

But its most valuable asset was water. The town, mostly abandoned, had not had power or running water in many days. A neighbor rigged a pumping system, and the Shalhoubs and Hashims ran a pipe from that house to theirs.

Life had taken on a strange, stunted quality. In a crawl-space basement area near the crushed house, five mattresses were on the floor. A Koran was open to a prayer. A school notebook was on a pillow. Each morning, the <u>women</u> made breakfast for the children. Ms. Shalhoub gave lessons. And they all hoped for rescue.

The first missile struck around 1 a.m., throwing Mohamed Shalhoub, one of the relatives who uses a wheelchair, into an open doorway. His five children, ages 12 to 2, were still inside the house, as was his wife, his mother and a 10-year-old nephew. He tried to get to them, but minutes later another missile hit. By morning, when the rescue workers arrived, all eight of his relatives were dead.

"I felt like I was turning around, and the earth was going up and I was going into the earth," said Mr. Shalhoub, 38, staring blankly ahead in a hospital bed in Tyre.

Israeli military officials said the building did not collapse until the early morning, and that "munitions" stored in the house might have brought it down. But the house appeared to have been hit from above, and residents said the walls and ceiling came down around them immediately after the first bomb.

"My mouth was full of sand," Ms. Shalhoub said. She said doctors had told her family that those who died had been suffocated and crushed to death.

"They died because of the sand and the bricks, that's what they told us," she said.

At least eight people in the house survived, and told of a long, terrifying night. Some remained buried until morning. Others crawled free. Ms. Shalhoub sat under a tree with Mohamed Shalhoub, without his wheelchair, and three others, listening to the planes flying overhead in the dark.

"You couldn't see your finger in front of your face," said Ghazi Aidibi, a neighbor.

Ms. Shalhoub said she tried to help a woman who was sobbing from under the wreckage, asking for her baby, but she could not find the child. A neighbor, Haidar Tafleh, said he heard screaming when he approached the debris, but that bombing kept him away.

"We tried to take them out, but the bombs wouldn't let us," Mr. Tafleh said.

The area took several more hits. A house very close to the Shalhoubs' was crushed. A giant crater was gouged next to it. Residents said as many as eight buildings had been destroyed over two weeks.

Collapsed buildings have been a serious problem in southern Lebanon. Dozens of bodies are still stuck under the rubble. The mayor of Tyre, Abed al-Husseini, estimated that about 75 bodies were still buried under rubble in Slifa, a village on the border.

A grocer, Hassan Faraj, stood outside his shop, near a monument to those killed in the 1996 attack. He said that **Hezbollah** fighters had not come to Qana, but that residents supported them strongly. There was little evidence of fighters on Sunday, but **Hezbollah** flags and posters of Shiite leaders trimmed the streets. "They like the resistance here," he said.

He cautioned people not to stand in the street in front of his shop, because that was where the ambulance convoy was hit in the morning.

Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers

At the Hakoumi Hospital in Tyre, Mr. Shalhoub sat in bed. His face was slack, stunned. His relatives poured him spicy coffee, and the room filled with its scent. The survivors spoke of their faith as a salve. The children, Mr. Shalhoub said, were in paradise now.

But 24-year-old Hala Shalhoub, whose two daughters, ages 1 and 5, were killed, was moaning and rocking slightly in her hospital bed.

"I want to see them," she said slowly. "I want to hold them."

A relative said, "Let her cry."

Zaineb Shalhoub, in the next bed, rested quietly.

"There's nobody left in our village," she said. "Not a human or a stone."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: Mohamed Shalhoub lost his mother, his wife, their five children and a nephew in the collapse of a building his family had been hiding in. (Photo by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)(pg. A11)

Rescuers moved bodies out of an apartment building in Qana, Lebanon, that was hit by an Israeli missile yesterday. Dozens of people were killed. (Photo by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



In Lebanese village, 'earth was going up'

The International Herald Tribune
August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 1062 words

Byline: Sabrina Tavernise **Dateline:** QANA, Lebanon

Body

The dead lay in strange shapes. Several had open mouths filled with dirt. Faces were puffy. A man's arm was extended straight out from his body, his fingers spread. Two tiny children, a girl and boy, lay feet to head in the back of an ambulance, their skin like wax.

In the all-day scramble to retrieve the bodies from the remains of this one house backhoes dug for hours at the site tallies of the dead varied. Residents said as many as 60 people had been inside. News agencies reported that 56 had been killed, and that 34 of them were children. The Lebanese Red Cross, which conducted the rescue, counted 27 bodies. As many as 17 were children. The youngest was 10 months old, and the oldest was 95. One was in a wheelchair.

This was the single most lethal episode in the course of this sudden war. The survivors will remember it as the day their children died. For the village, it is a fresh pain in a wound cut more than 10 years ago when an Israeli attack here killed more than 100 civilians. Many of them were children, too.

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But leaving southern Lebanon now is dangerous, and pricey. The two extended families staying in the house that the Israeli missile struck the Shalhoubs and the Hashims had discussed leaving several times over the past two weeks. But they were poor most worked in tobacco or construction and the family was big and weak, with a 95-year-old, two relatives in wheelchairs and dozens of children. A taxi north, around \$1,000, was unaffordable.

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But its most valuable asset was water. The town, mostly abandoned, had not had power or running water in many days. A neighbor rigged up a pumping system, and the Shalhoubs and Hashims ran a pipe from that house to theirs.

Life had taken on a strange, stunted quality. In a crawl-space basement area near the crushed house, five mattresses were on the floor. A Koran was open to a prayer. A school notebook was on a pillow. Each morning, the **women** made breakfast for the children. Zaineb Shalhoub gave lessons. They hoped for rescue.

The first missile struck around 1 a.m., throwing Mohamed Shalhoub, one of the relatives who use a wheelchair, into an open doorway. His five children, ages 2 to 12, were still inside the house, as was his wife, his mother and a 10-year-old nephew. Shalhoub, 38, tried to get to them, but minutes later another missile hit. By morning, when the rescue workers arrived, all eight of his family members were dead.

"I felt like I was turning around, and the earth was going up and I was going into the earth," Shalhoub said, staring blankly ahead of him in a hospital bed in Tyre.

Israeli military officials said that the building did not collapse until the early morning and that "munitions" stored in the house might have brought it down. But the house appeared to have been hit from above, and residents said the walls and ceiling came down around them immediately after the first bomb.

"My mouth was full of sand," Zaineb Shalhoub said. She said doctors had told her family that those who died had been suffocated and crushed to death. "They died because of the sand and the bricks, that's what they told us," she said.

At least eight people in the house survived, and they told of a long, terrifying night. Some remained buried until morning. Others crawled free. Zaineb Shalhoub sat under a tree with Mohamed Shalhoub, without his wheelchair, and three others, listening to the planes flying overhead in the dark.

"You couldn't see your finger in front of your face," said Ghazi Aidibi, a neighbor.

Zaineb Shalhoub said she had tried to help a woman who was sobbing from under the wreckage, asking for her baby, but she could not find the child. A neighbor, Haidar Tafleh, said that he had heard screaming when he approached the debris but that bombing had kept him away.

"We tried to take them out, but the bombs wouldn't let us," Tafleh said.

The area took several more hits. A house very close to the Shalhoubs' was crushed. A giant crater was gouged next to it. Residents said as many as eight buildings had been destroyed over two weeks.

Collapsed buildings have been a serious problem in southern Lebanon. Dozens of corpses are still stuck under the rubble. Tyre's mayor, Abed al-Husseini, estimated that up to 75 bodies were still buried under rubble in Srifa, a village on the border.

A grocer, Hassan Faraj, stood outside his shop, near a monument to those killed in the 1996 attack. He said that *Hezbollah* fighters had not come to Qana but that residents supported them strongly. There was little evidence of fighters Sunday, but *Hezbollah* flags and posters of Shiite leaders trimmed the streets. "They like the resistance here," he said.

He cautioned people not to stand in the street in front of his shop because that was where the ambulance convoy had been hit in the morning.

At the Hakoumi Hospital in Tyre, Mohamed Shalhoub sat in bed. His face was slack, stunned. His relatives poured him spicy coffee, and the room filled with its scent.

In Lebanese village, 'earth was going up'

The survivors spoke of their faith as a salve. The children, Shalhoub said, are in paradise now.

But Hala Shalhoub, who is 24 and whose two daughters, ages 1 and 5, were killed, was moaning and rocking slightly in her hospital bed.

"I want to see them," she said slowly. "I want to hold them."

A relative said, "Let her cry."

Zaineb Shalhoub, in the next bed, sat quietly.

"There's nobody left in our village," she said. "Not a human or a stone."

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



G2: 'You go a bit crazy when you see little body after little body coming up out of the ground': Huge numbers of children are being killed, injured or displaced in south Lebanon. Why are so many suffering in this conflict?

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad reports

The Guardian - Final Edition
August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Byline: Ghaith Abdul-Ahad

Body

Three days ago, next to the gutted and destroyed house in Qana, seven bodies lay covered with bedsheets, a blanket and a prayer mat. One small arm stretched out from under the sheets; thin, the arm of a little girl, a piece of cloth like a bracelet wrapped around the wrist. As bodies were loaded on the stretcher, I saw another dead girl; she was dressed in a black shirt with a coloured scarf wrapped loosely around her head. Her face was swollen.

In some ways I was relieved. The rumour we had heard in the hotel in Tyre was that at least 40 people, half of them children, had been in the house in Qana when it was bombed by Israeli planes, and here I was an hour later, with Red Cross workers and others running up and down, and all I could see was the bodies of two girls and five adults.

It's weird, the things that make you feel better in the south of Lebanon, but seven dead instead of 40 gave me a sense of relief.

But even as I stood there registering that emotion, hellish scenes were unfolding. Four medics carried a little boy by on an orange stretcher: he was perhaps 12 years old, dressed in black shorts and a white T-shirt with a coloured motorcycle on it. His arms were stretched behind his head, but apart from the bruises on his face and the swollen lips, he looked OK. For half a second I told myself, as I tell myself every time I see death, that he was just sleeping, and that he would be fine. But he was dead.

Then came two more boys in the arms of the rescuers. One of them, the younger, around eight years old, had his arms close to his chest, his nose and mouth covered with blood. The elder, around 10, had dirt and debris in his mouth. Their slight bodies were put on a blanket, the head of the younger boy left resting on the shoulder of the elder, then four men carried the blanket off, stopping twice to rest as they took them away. The bodies of the boys were piled with other corpses in the back of an ambulance.

Two more small dead boys followed them. The medics were running out of stretchers, so they piled the corpses of the boys on one orange stretcher. One of the kids was slightly chubby; he was wearing a red T-shirt and shorts. His head rested on the lap of the younger, who was about six years old; both had the same exploding lips, covered with blood and dirt. It was obvious to everyone that these boys were not sleeping.

G2: 'You go a bit crazy when you see little body after little body coming up out of the ground': Huge numbers of children are being killed, injured or displaced....

Then another child was pulled from under the rubble, and another followed, and then another. You go a little crazy when you see little body after little body coming up out of the ground. I looked around me and all I could see in the house was the detritus of their short lives - big plastic bags filled with clothes, milk cans, plastic toys and a baby carriage.

By three in the afternoon, when the corpse of a one-year-old boy was pulled from the rubble, he looked more like a mud statue than a child. The medics held him high above their heads, clear of the rubble. The faces of the rescue workers said everything that needed to be said.

What is obvious to everyone covering this conflict is that children are bearing the brunt of it. The few official figures collated so far seem to support this. Unicef says that 37 of the 60 dead in Qana on Sunday were children, and everywhere you go, it seems that it is the children who are being killed, injured and displaced. Yesterday the Lebanese government said that of the 828 of its civilians killed in the conflict so far, around 35% have been children - that's around 290. Unicef also estimates that about a third of the dead have been children, although it bases that figure on the fact that an estimated 30% of Lebanon's population are children, rather than any actual count of the dead. There are no official figures yet for the number of wounded children, but they will certainly exceed the number killed; as for those displaced, Unicef says that 45% of the estimated 900,000 Lebanese to have fled their homes are children.

Aid agencies believe that the reason children are suffering so much in this conflict is because of the big families that are traditional in south Lebanon. "You are not talking about nuclear families, you are talking about families huddling together with four, five or six children. Inevit-ably, a high percentage of children are killed," says Anis Salem, a Unicef spokesman. "We estimate that before Qana, 30% of the deaths were children, but it is a very fluid situation and that figure can quickly become redundant."

It is not just a matter of many children huddled together, of course: with numbers come all sorts of problems. If an air raid is coming, and you are running, how many children can you pick up and carry with you? How many do you have to leave behind?

Children often suffer most in wars like this - wars in which civilians suffer heavy casualties. They are weaker, they may be too small to run or walk, they may suffer more on long journeys by foot. And as Amelia Bookstein, head of humanitarian policy at Save the Children, points out: "Children who are wounded, separated from their families, or traumatised, may be too frightened or unable to flee their homes."

There are the official statistics, and then there are the children, who seem to be everywhere in the heart of this conflict, all with their own, painful, awful stories. A week ago I met Abbas Sha'ito, a chubby 12-year-old boy in a bright orange T-shirt who was sitting on the side of a road south of Tyre, blood covering his face, his T-shirt torn by the bomb that had hit the minivan he had been in. He and 17 others had been inside; his mother, brother and aunt were all injured, moaning and in agony a few feet away. Inside the minivan remained the headless corpse of his uncle, and the bodies of his grandmother and another man who had been fleeing with them.

Abbas was weeping, and had an arm round his mother, who seemed to be fading fast: she was injured in the chest and head, and one of her arms was almost severed at the bicep. "Don't leave me, mother," the boy wept. "Don't go, don't go."

It was clear that his mother believed herself to be close to death. "Take care of your brothers and sisters," she said to Abbas.

"Don't leave me," Abbas kept saying.

"My purse is under me. There is money, take care of it," his mother said; as she did, her head began drooping, and Abbas screamed, and a medic rushed in: "Don't cry, don't cry, she will be OK. Just keep talking to her," the medic said.

G2: 'You go a bit crazy when you see little body after little body coming up out of the ground': Huge numbers of children are being killed, injured or displaced....

As it is, Abbas's mother is still alive, although still in intensive care, but Abbas was not to know this then. He buried his face in his hands and wept, while his brother Ali stood nearby, one hand bandaged and his eyes on the horizon.

Last Wednesday, in a hospital in Tyre, I met Samah Shihab, a seven-year-old girl with beautiful long eyelashes from the hamlet of Mlooka near Tyre. She was in the yard of her house with her two brothers, aged four and nine, and her 14-year-old sister, when a shell fell. "I was playing with my sister and brothers when the rocket came," said Samah. "They started screaming and crying. There was pressure in my ears and my hands and legs were all in blood. I was scared. My brother was screaming and I was scared." According to her doctors, Samah, who was badly burned and needs skin grafts on her legs, is unlikely to walk again.

On Monday I met Ali (he didn't give me a second name), who is nine and had been hiding in the basement of his house, along with his aunts, his grandmother and an uncle with learning difficulties, for 20 days in the village of Bint Jbeil. While the family hid below, war raged above: the village has suffered the heaviest shelling of anywhere in the south of Lebanon, as well as intense street battles between Israeli soldiers and <u>Hizbullah</u> fighters. When Ali emerged from the basement on Monday, during a brief halt to the aerial bombardment, he was visibly frightened and shocked, and seemed unable to recognise his surroundings.

As he made his first steps on the big chunks of rubble and concrete strewn everywhere, clutching a bottle of water in one arm and a blue bag in the other, he began shaking and crying. His grandfather, who was leading him through the rubble, collapsed in the shade of a doorway, and Ali and other family members continued their walk to the Red Cross vehicles - parked a kilometre away, at the edge of the village, beyond the edge of the vast and almost impassable rubble field - without him. I walked with them.

As we walked, jumping from one boulder to the other, Ali said: "My father and mother went with my other brothers and sisters to another town. They said they will come and get me when the bombs stop."

In the scorching sunshine above, Israeli jets were flying, their sound mixed with that of the drones. Suddenly a thud came from the hills and Ali froze. "They are going to bomb again!" He started to cry. "Why are the Israelis hitting us? Do they hate us? My cousin Mahmoud called me on the phone and he told me that the nuclear bombs are really big. Are they as big as these rockets?" It's hard to convey quite how shocked, perhaps quite literally shell-shocked - this little boy was. He was almost delusional.

We reached the town square. There was a large, deep crater on one side of it, and a half-destroyed petrol station on the other. Burnt-out cars lay flipped over on to their sides. A few hundred metres later we had to stop for a rest. Ali opened his blue bag and got out a small green bottle of mineral water. It had only a few centimetres left, but he sipped some and passed it to me. I was about to throw the bottle away when he said, "No, no, this is my charm - it's green, the colour of Imam Hussein." (Imam Hussein was the grandson of the prophet Muhammad; he is central to the Shia faith, and a great symbol of martyrdom.)

A few hundred metres further on we reached the Red Cross ambulances. Ali squeezed in with his aunts and other **women** and children; they were to be taken to the displacement centres in Sidon and Beirut. Ali, it turned out, was fortunate. As I left town, I saw, all along the road, children and their families who had been forced to walk to safety. One father was pushing a wheelbarrow with four young children inside.

In another hospital in Tyre, which has seen 120 injured and 35 dead so far, I meet the young son of the head of the hospital. Muhammad Najem, 11, spends his days inside where it's safe, because a week ago a car was hit by a missile on the road directly outside the hospital. Muhammad draws on a computer: his latest drawing is of <u>Hizbullah</u> fighter. Next to the fighter is a star of David stabbed with a dagger - blood drips down into a vat full of blood marked "Hell".

His elder brother Ali Najem, a fourth-year medical student in his 20s, is rueful. "The Israelis are planting very bad hatred in the children against Israel," he says. Ali has spent the past three weeks documenting the stories of the children who have passed injured or with their injured families through his father's hospital. He particularly remembers one boy, aged about seven, who was caught in a convoy that was hit in the first days of the bombing.

G2: 'You go a bit crazy when you see little body after little body coming up out of the ground': Huge numbers of children are being killed, injured or displaced....

This boy described to him, quite calmly, "as if it were a cartoon", how a baby from the car in front of them was ejected out of the window when the vehicle was hit. The boy's father had been killed at the scene.

Ali also talks about the impact on <u>women</u> delivering babies in the midst of conflict. In the first week of the war one of them named her new son Intisar, which means victory. In the past week, two new names have been given to newborns at this hospital: "Wahid, which means 'the lonely', and Dayaa, which means 'the lost'." The woman who gave birth to Dayaa did so alone, having been separated from her husband somewhere in the Bekaa Valley. Ali says that she became disturbed, and called out to her husband: "If you don't come and take me out of this place, I will put myself under these bombs and kill myself and the baby." For newborns, as well as for the older children, the scars of this war are going to take a long time to fade *

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Body

MATP

A reinterpretation of Koran would erode clerics' authority

MOST TALKED ABOUT

PROPHET NOT PERFECT

THE Catholic Church was, for almost 1000 years, the most powerful organisation in Europe. That power started to wane with the scientific discoveries of the Renaissance. The rise of science has brought with it a corresponding reduction in the influence of religion in all our lives. We see that struggle between science and religion even today in the battle over <u>women</u>'s rights to control their own fertility. This is a struggle the church is doomed to lose.

Islamic theologians, like their medieval Catholic counterparts, are well aware that freedom of thought in a world dominated by science can only erode their own position.

Dr Ameer Ali ("Prophet not perfect, says Islamic scholar", 4/10) may hope that reason and moderation will prevail within the Islamic world's encounter with the modern world. The mullahs, however, will fully understand that the road Dr Ali proposes can only lead to their own loss of authority. The mullahs may be quite happy to see their followers blow themselves up in the name of Islam. I do not detect among them any enthusiasm for a similar fate for themselves.

Tony Letford

Ashfield, NSW

AMEER Ali's modern interpretation of the Koran is very welcome and a much-needed counterbalance to the fundamentalist rhetoric that has been allowed to dominate the media.

Hopefully, the media will give other Muslim moderates around the world frequent coverage to reinforce this crucial appeal for common sense in reinterpreting Mohammed's teachings for today's multicultural, pluralist society.

We certainly need Dr Ali, and Muslims like him, to be heard far and wide.

James Rogers

Gosford, NSW

WHAT Ameer Ali has said is plain common sense, an element sorely missing from much of the Islam practised today. Unless reinterpreted and reformed, Islam and its followers will continue to find themselves out of place in the contemporary world.

However, I am afraid that instead of considering Dr Ali's rational message with open minds, many Muslims, in another show of intolerance of reason, will be baying for his blood with fatwas flowing thick and fast from the pulpit.

Jehanzeb Chohan

Gungahlin, ACT

AMEER Ali has to be commended for his moral courage as much as for his enlightened views. He has put his neck where his mouth is. Needless to say, more and more Muslims have to liberate themselves from the stranglehold of their clerics, whose literal and often distorted interpretation of Islam has turned them into misfits in the modern world. Thank you, Dr Ali, I hope you are a trailblazer. You walk where others fear to tread.

R. Azmi

Mt Druitt, NSW

THE apparent call for moderation by Ameer Ali, chairman of John Howard's Muslim advisory board, is very welcome but is it genuine? In the same article, you reported that "Dr Ali called for <u>Hezbollah</u> to be removed from the Government's terror organisations list two months ago, saying they were freedom fighters defending their country against Israeli invasion."

Israel has been defending its very existence from rejectionist, aggressive neighbouring nations and terrorist groups, including <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon, for decades. In 2000, Israel withdrew to a Lebanese "blue line" that even the demonstrably anti-Israel UN accepted as a full withdrawal. The recent hostilities were sparked by a cross-border attack by <u>Hezbollah</u> from Lebanon into Israel followed by 4000 rockets armed with ball-bearing-packed explosives launched into the Israeli civilian population. What does Dr Ali suggest that <u>Hezbollah</u> is "defending"?

His support for terrorism is worrying. We have seen many so-called Muslim "moderates" seek acceptance by their pronouncements in English but take an entirely different stance in Arabic.

Steve Lieblich

Mt Lawley, WA

THE principles and application of all religions should be open to questioning and reinterpretation without endangering the lives of critics, but the abusive language used by Robert Redeker in his criticism of Islam ("Thinkers support critic of prophet", 4/10) is unlikely to persuade Muslims to reconsider their views. The writings of Islamic modernists such as Muhammad Abduh and Ali Abd al-Raziq offer far more constructive alternative approaches.

Norm Neill

Leichhardt, NSW

I HAVE always thought that religion was a recipe or formula for living a peaceful and harmonious life. I never imagined that in this day and age it would be used as a tool for destruction, suicide and murder. Judging by the way it is used today by members of the Islamic faith and those who would use it for political advantage in the Christian community, it seems that we haven't moved on from the barbarism of the Middle Ages.

There is no excuse for the violence being practised today in the name of Allah or God that has produced the devastation seen in Bali, the Middle East, the US and other countries suffering under the yoke of misinterpreted religious beliefs, religion-fuelled terrorism or misguided political ambition. Violence is the antithesis of true faith.

John Doherty

Richmond, Vic

Sustainability has a long tradition in geography

THE Australian is to be applauded for its support for the teaching of geography as a separate subject, for more teaching of basic knowledge in geography, and for that teaching to be done by teachers qualified in geography.

However, your editorial ("Don't know much about geography", 4/10) ends up confusing these concerns with an ideological attack on concepts that your writer seems to associate with left-wing political correctness. As an example, one of the concepts identified as "nebulous" is ecological sustainability.

One of the basic principles of ecological sustainability is that a renewable resource should not be exploited faster than it can be renewed or regenerated. There is nothing nebulous about this principle, and neither is it a principle only supported by left-wing ideologues. It underlies, for example, commonwealth government policies on protected marine areas in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and is well understood by farmers, water managers and most of the forestry industry.

In relation to ecological sustainability in general, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, with a majority of Government members, is currently holding an inquiry into a sustainability charter. An examination of the submissions to that inquiry will show that ecological sustainability is a concept that is widely supported by professional bodies and business, as well as by environmental NGOs. Where ideology (both Left and Right) can become an issue is in explaining the causes of unsustainability and the policies that should be adopted to overcome it, but the concept itself is not nebulous, Left or postmodern. It is also a concept which, in various forms, has a long tradition in geography.

Alaric Maude

Secretary, Institute of Australian Geographers

Parkside, SA

WATER is a finite resource. Finite means limited, and despite irregular renewal in many places annually, spatial variability means there is not enough to go around. Just ask the farmers in most of eastern Australia.

Sustainable development is not a left-wing policial agenda item but a critical process, both to use our resources wisely and to conserve the environment of this planet.

Properly taught geography and environment programs provide one other essential item: students learn to think, critically, about the need to protect the environment, and about ways to minimise resource destruction from over-development.

Howard Bridgman

Jesmond, NSW

Sleep deprivation defended

I WOULD like to address the following scenario to those high-minded critics of Philip Ruddock for daring to suggest that sleep deprivation may be used to get information from terrorists (Letters, 3/10).

Credible evidence has surfaced that a nuclear weapon has been smuggled into an Australian capital city and will be detonated in the next few days. The authorities capture a suspect who they strongly believe knows where that weapon is.

The suspect is taken to an interrogation room and offered a comfortable chair and a cup of tea until his lawyer arrives. He is then advised that he will be asked some questions but he doesn't have to answer them. His lawyer tells him not to answer because that may incriminate him. After a fruitless afternoon's questioning, he is fed and put to bed. The same thing happens the next day until 3pm, when the bomb goes off, wiping the city off the map and killing 1million people.

What would you do in this situation?

C.A. Bond

Cleveland, Qld

Democracy is superior

IN accusing the Howard Government of "playing Pacific strongman with overbearing cultural superiority", Chris Harries (Letters, 4/10) offers an interesting interpretation of our role in encouraging the principles of accountable government and the rule of law among our Pacific neighbours.

Foreign aid can inadvertently prop up dysfunctional governments that fail to represent their constituents' interests. Mr Harries may ask: who are we to say what serves the best interests of a populace? This is a difficult question to answer, but ignoring the issue may result in well-intentioned aid supporting dictatorial behaviour.

Australia's diplomats and peace-keeping forces have a difficult task. I believe their objective is to support and, where necessary, establish autonomous democratic states. Of necessity this involves the promotion of institutions that underpin democracy.

Despots are always ready to play the race card to ensure their grip on power. Some politicians in Pacific states may resent external influences that undermine that grip. Such resentment of our actions is not necessarily shared by the general population. Western democracy is superior to either mob rule or dictatorship. Asserting this is not cause for embarrassment or self-flagellation.

John Allsop

Mont Albert, Vic

Iran the real enemy in Iraq

I WAS intrigued by the fact that not one letter published yesterday under the heading "Iraq: stay or leave?" mentioned the part Iran is playing in the escalation of the insurgency in Iraq. Iran is a huge player in the ongoing conflict. It could be argued that Tehran is the real enemy of US forces in Iraq.

The obvious outcome of a US withdrawal from Iraq would be the immediate establishment by Iran, using force both political and military, of a puppet government. Iraq would become a theocratic dictatorship and would be used as a launching pad for further terrorist attacks on Western targets primarily in the US and Europe. And what of Iranian control of Iraq's oil resources and its effect on Western economies? Blackmail is not beyond the realms of possibility.

The US cannot cut and run from Iraq. Indeed it needs international support to destroy the insurgency and establish an Arab democracy. This is not a time for cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. The consequences for the West if the US is defeated in Iraq would be disastrous.

Deric Davidson

Bunbury, WA

Fat doctor sick of hypocrisy

I NOTE that Professor Paul Zimmet, who's described as a keen cyclist, rejects claims by some doctors that they do not have time to exercise ("GPs told to get their waistlines into better shape", 3/10).

I'm not a GP, I'm a radiation oncologist and palliative care physician effectively in sole practice. I'm also morbidly obese, hypertensive and diabetic. I'm striving to correct these problems, as are many of my patients, although, by and large, that is not their primary concern (cancer changes one's perspective). Yes, I advise my follow-up patients to lose weight, whilst emphasising that I'm in no position to "cast the first stone".

I don't know Professor Zimmet personally, professionally or by reputation. I do know that many academics usually work a standard working week or less, with a team of graduate students or equivalent to do their work while they vet and read scientific papers. That is when not on sabbatical or a sponsored junket. In my experience, they rarely visit the coalface.

GPs work long hours. So do I. Try working 50 per cent above the standard working day, in a high-stress, emotionally challenging environment and then just dash home for a glass of Perrier and a couple of hours in the home gym, followed by a couple of celery sticks for dinner and then bed. I don't think so. A glass of red and a modest meal is much more realistic, in bed by 10pm and up for an 8am start, not to mention almost permanently on call. This from one fat, busy doctor who is sick of hypocrisy and political correctness.

John Ward

Hobart, Tas

They were not my words

IN a recent article ("Iemma must counter complacency in a critical state", Opinion, 2/10), Ross Fitzgerald asserted that I have been advising the Blair Government to "sell off what you can, and raise the fees and charges on the services you can't".

The words in quotation marks have never been used by me, nor have I, at any time, suggested to the UK Government that it sell off public services or increase charges.

Tony Blair has been pursuing greater diversity and contestablity in public services without any advice from me. From time to time, in the course of my employment, I have discussed with government advisers and officials how they might obtain better value for money in competition and contracting, but I would not presume to suggest what government policy might be.

Gary Sturgess

Surrey, UK

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Would it not be dangerous for Houdini Howard, who has made an artform of escaping censure by NOT being told, to demand full access to the US intelligence network on Iraq?

Andrew Wyminga

Bicheno, Tas

After the Iraq experience, we would be better off without US intelligence.

Tom Trueack

Morphett Vale, SA

Since we have had little or no cooperation from those brought before the Cole inquiry, and since there are now suggestions that AWB bribes may be linked to Saddam's reign of terror against the Kurds, perhaps those witnesses who have been less than forthcoming should be subjected to the aggressive interrogation techniques supported by Philip Ruddock?

Lou Brown

Redfern, NSW

Did the guest list for Quadrant magazine's 50th birthday constitute the new elite?

David Bookallil

Glebe, NSW

Having just read the top 40 list of Australian intellectuals in The Australian Literary Review, I think a definition of "intellectual" is needed as a matter of urgency. The list is heavily biased towards third-rate polemicists such as Phillip Adams who are more suited to "Pseuds Corner" than a think-tank.

Barry Wells

Clifton Beach, Qld

Surely the fixing of the speed of the courts for the next Australian Open tennis tournament to favour a home player ("Courts to be given facelift for Open", Sport, 4/10) is akin to ball-tampering in cricket? If this is the only way an Australian can win the tournament, is it worth winning?

Keith Houghton

North Richmond, NSW

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Israeli president to face sex charges: Scandals cling to current government

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Body

JERUSALEM - The often-questionable universe of Israeli politics suffered another heavy blow to its reputation Tuesday when the country's attorney general announced that he intends to charge President Moshe Katsav with sex crimes including rape.

Six separate indictments against Israel's 61-year-old ceremonial head of state are to be handed down as the Israeli government reels from severe domestic criticism over its handling of the war against <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon last summer.

Legal authorities also continued to investigate separate corruption allegations against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, one involving the sale of his home and another alleging he helped friends when a bank was privatized.

Olmert's former justice minister, Haim Ramon, was recently forced to resign after being charged with forcing a soldier to kiss him.

The charges to be brought against Katsav by Attorney General Menahem Mazuz involve sexual harassment and sexual coercion, breaches of trust, obstruction of justice and illegally accepting gifts in return for favours.

If convicted on all counts, he could face more than 20 years in jail.

Four <u>women</u> who worked for Katsav since he became president in 2000 or earlier, when he was Israel's tourism minister, have accused him of sexual improprieties. Images of Katsav's young accusers, with their faces blurred, have appeared in the Israeli media for some time and were widely published again late Tuesday.

The pending indictments, which followed a long investigation, triggered a storm of protest from every Israeli political faction, with demands that Katsav resign immediately or face impeachment.

IMPEACHMENT

Unless impeached by the three-quarters of the deputies in the Israeli Knesset and removed from office, Katsav has political immunity from prosecution until his seven-year term ends in July.

Israeli president to face sex charges: Scandals cling to current government

"The indictment that was served against the president is as serious as it gets, but we need to remember that as long as the president is in office, there is no way to actually submit an indictment against him," said Labour Knesset member Shelly Yacinovitch

She praised the president's accusers for their bravery in the face of "mudslinging" designed to destroy their reputations. "

Education Minister Yuli Tamir joined the nearly universal calls for Katsav to resign, saying the Israeli parliament needed "to dismiss the president immediately" in order "not to embarrass the students and people in education."

The white-haired Iranian-born banker and father of five is a former minister for the right-wing Likud party. His wife, Gila, has been an outspoken advocate for **women**'s rights and for abused **women**.

Katsav, who grew up in poverty after his family arrived in Israel as refugees, has denied all the charges.

However, there were mixed signals from Katsav's lawyers and friends about whether the president would announce today that he would take a temporary leave of absence for three months while the justice ministry decides whether to proceed with the charges.

According to Israeli law, there would be a judicial hearing where Katsav could testify in his defence before the charges could proceed.

"The president believes that everyone will see that he is the victim of false charges," his lawyer, David Libai, told journalists in Tel Aviv Tuesday

Graphic

Colour Photo: Emilio Morenatti, Associated Press, File; hot water: Israeli President Moshe Katsav, centre, and his wife Gila, right, greet a <u>female</u> soldier during an open day at the President's Residence in this photo taken in Jerusalem in October.

Load-Date: January 24, 2007



Attacks on Jews soar since Lebanon

The Times (London)
September 2, 2006, Saturday

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Section: HOME NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 555 words

Byline: Joanna Bale and Anthony Browne

Body

Synagogues and citizens have been targeted, report Joanna Bale and Anthony Browne.

BRITISH Jews are facing a wave of anti-Semitic attacks prompted by Israel's conflict with <u>Hezbollah</u> in Lebanon. Synagogues have been daubed with graffiti, Jewish leaders have had hate-mail and ordinary people have been subjected to insults and vandalism.

On Thursday an all-party parliamentary inquiry will state that anti-Semitic violence has become endemic in Britain, both on the streets and university campuses. The report will call for urgent action from the Government, the police and educational establishments.

Mark Gardner, of the Community Security Trust, said: "In July, when the conflict in Lebanon began, we received reports of 92 incidents, which was the third worst month since records began in 1984." In 2000 the monthly average was between 10 and 30 incidents.

The former minister Denis MacShane, who chaired the parliamentary inquiry, said: "These figures confirm the evidence given to us that anti-Semitic attacks are a very real problem."

The Board of Deputies of British Jews submitted evidence to the inquiry that anti-Semitism in Britain was at its worst level.

The July incidents "were more dispersed than usual", Mr Gardner said. "It is usually a small number responsible for a large number of attacks, but these were very widespread across the country and included graffiti attacks on synagogues in Edinburgh and Glasgow."

The attackers, when visible, are from across society, he said. "When it's verbal abuse, it's just ordinary people in the street, from middle-class <u>women</u> to working-class men. All colours and backgrounds. We hardly ever see incidents involving the classic neo-Nazi skinhead. Muslims are over-represented."

In hate-mail to senior Jewish figures, ordinary Jewish people were being blamed for the deaths of Lebanese civilians. "There are also references to the Holocaust, saying that Hitler should have wiped out the Jews."

Mr Gardner said that the rise in attacks reflected increased hostility to Israel and Jews in the media and across society: "The number of anti-Semitic attacks reflects the mood music around Jews and Israel."

Attacks on Jews soar since Lebanon

There have been several attacks in Golders Green and Hampstead Garden Suburb in North London, where there is a large Jewish population. La Maison du Cafe in Golders Green Road was targeted two weeks ago by two young men who threw chairs at the restaurant, punched workers and threatened to kill the owner, Ruth Cohen, with a knife.

Ms Cohen, 34, said: "They asked if it was a Jewish restaurant. They said they were going to kill me and called me a 'dirty Jew', a 'stinking Jew'. One of them had a knife. A colleague came out. They started punching him and throwing chairs."

In Hampstead Garden Suburb, swastikas and the words "Kill all Jews" and "Allah" were daubed on the house and car of Justin Stebbing. Dr Stebbing, who works at a hospital, said: "I felt violated. It's horrible."

Jon Benjamin, of the Board of Deputies, said: "The problem is the spin that Israel is an irredeemably evil regime, and we are concerned that it may become common currency to connect British Jews with this."

The Association of Chief Police Officers said: "Our National Community Tension Team are alert to recent incidents. We are working with the CST. We are strongly encouraging reporting of incidents."

Load-Date: September 2, 2006



THE VENT

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

August 16, 2006 Wednesday

Main Edition

Copyright 2006 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: METRO NEWS; Pg. 2D

Length: 493 words

Byline: For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Atlanta will soon need to change its slogan from "The City Too Busy To Hate" to "The City With Too Many Condos."

It's comforting to think there is a special place reserved in hell for terrorists, mass murderers and the guy who came up with the idea of putting wheels on the bottom of kids' shoes.

I hope Atlanta isn't included in your claim that Georgia has some of the nation's best roads.

I thought about suggesting to the Vent Guy that we hold a convention of all published Venters, but it would attract more fakes and cheaters than the New York Marathon.

Adult ethics training is a futile effort to compensate for people who weren't raised right.

OK, I'll bite. What is "hoppin' john"?

Of all the first ladies I can remember, Laura is the fairest.

If you think this year's storm season is quiet, you're ignoring what's happening in China.

My cat was recently prescribed an adult version of an antidepressant. I was curious, so I took one to see what would happen. It made me catatonic.

It's a good thing there were conservative Republicans in England to foil the airline plot.

I watched one of the cable news networks this morning. It reminded me of Hispanic TV --- lots of beautiful <u>women</u> acting stupidly.

You know you're in a redneck church when the baptismal pool is a No. 2 galvanized washtub.

High-rise habitats, no matter how luxurious, remind me of filing cabinets for people.

THE VENT

Helping negotiate a cease-fire to stop Israel from obliterating <u>Hezbollah</u> is completely inconsistent with our objectives in the War on Terror.

I cannot understand how supposedly competent adults complain about the price of gas yet buy bottled water.

The Washington Post says the Connecticut Senate race we just watched may be a preview of the '08 elections. It would certainly be good news for the Republicans if the Democrats continue to destroy their best and brightest leaders in the '06 primaries.

The weather was so much nicer on Sunday I went outside to do some gardening, but was soon gobbled up by mosquitoes. I can't stand those sons of itches!

Cynthia called me Jewish. She called me white. She called me a Republican. Too bad she forgot to call me the most important thing: constituent.

The headline read, "Hillary Clinton's bust revealed." Now that is one thing I hope I never have to see.

From another Wal-Mart cashier: Every teacher I checked out used the majority of their \$100 school card for groceries and personal items.

In a TV news interview, a member of a metro Atlanta K-9 squad said a suspect sustained a "minor dog engagement on the arm." Is that anything like a dog bite?

On Aug. 13, 1945, at 2 p.m., I joined the Navy. President Truman came on the radio five hours later to announce that the Japanese had agreed to an unconditional surrender. Yep, ended that one single-handed!

You know, if you can't find something beautiful in your life, you can simply plant a seed. Put dirt on it. Water it. Watch it. There you go.

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Load-Date: August 16, 2006



National Briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA) September 15, 2006 Friday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a5

Length: 579 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Astronomers find distant, 'puffy' world

WASHINGTON - The largest planet ever found orbiting another star is so "puffy" it would float on water, astronomers said Thursday.

The newly discovered planet, dubbed HAT-P-1, is both the largest and least dense of the nearly 200 worlds astronomers have found outside our own solar system. HAT-P-1 orbits one of a pair of stars in the constellation Lacerta, about 450 light-years from Earth.

"This new planet, if you could imagine putting it in a cosmic water glass, it would float," said Robert Noyes, a research astrophysicist with the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. The planet, a gas giant, is probably a puffed up ball of hydrogen and helium.

Astronomers believe HAT- P-1 might belong to an entirely new class of planets, along with a second, smaller distant world that's also puffier than theories would have predicted.

Youth coach convicted of abusing autistic boy

UNIONTOWN, Pa. - A youth baseball coach accused of offering an 8-year-old money to bean an autistic teammate twice before a game so he couldn't play was convicted Thursday of two lesser charges against him and evaded more serious charges.

A jury convicted 29-year-old Mark R. Downs Jr. of corruption of minors and criminal solici- tation to commit simple assault, according to Fayette County authorities.

Downs was acquitted of criminal solicitation to commit aggravated assault, and jurors deadlocked over a charge of reckless endangerment.

Reputed mob boss admits racketeering

NEW YORK - The ailing, aging reputed boss of the Genovese crime family pleaded guilty Thursday to helping try to infiltrate a union and thwart a federal grand jury probe.

The 86-year-old Matthew "Matty the Horse" lanniello entered the plea before U.S Magistrate Judge Ronald L. Ellis in Manhattan.

National Briefs

A plea agreement signed with the government called for lanniello to be sentenced to 11/2 to two years in prison on the single racketeering charge. Without the deal, lanniello would have faced up to 20 years in prison. Sentencing was set for Dec. 14.

He also agreed to forfeit up to \$1 million to the government.

lanniello, who lives on Long Island, is free on bail.

Judge strikes down Missouri voter-ID law

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. - A judge struck down Missouri's new voter-identification law Thursday as an unconstitutional infringement on the right to vote.

The law required voters to show a federal or Missouri- issued photo ID at the polls, which Cole County Circuit Judge Richard Callahan said was an unconstitutional burden on voters because the paperwork required to get those IDs is not free.

The right to vote is "a right, and not a license," the judge wrote.

Those whose name has changed, such as some married <u>women</u>, also must provide documents showing those changes. And some people might not have the knowledge of how to navigate bureaucracy to obtain a license, he said.

U.S. officials blast China's sale of weapons

WASHINGTON - Top U.S. officials on Thursday criticized what they called China's indiscriminate sale of weapons to rogue countries, suggesting that Beijing's policies had made the world a more dangerous place.

Peter Rodman, assistant secretary of defense for international security, urged China to re-evaluate its relationship with Iran and North Korea, two countries with which the United States is locked in standoffs over nuclear weapons development.

Rodman mentioned Iran, Sudan, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Cuba and Venezuela, and he also linked China to North Korea and to *Hezbollah*.

Load-Date: September 15, 2006



Muslims can expect more political curry

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

September 5, 2006 Tuesday

Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 19

Length: 595 words

Byline: Peter Cameron

Body

PRIME Minister John Howard and his team look set to play the terrorist card when it is federal election time next year.

It worked before.

The PM was first to fire up the debate, followed by Treasurer Peter Costello. By Sunday even Attorney-General Philip Ruddock had chimed in to reinforce the not-so-spontaneous message.

Australian Muslims were solemnly told that they should embrace Australian values, learn our language and renounce terrorism.

"Would-be-terrorists can be born in this country," Mr Costello thundered with a not-so-subtle dig at Muslim convert 'Jihad Jack' Thomas. The al-Qaeda-trained Thomas has escaped incarceration by the skin of his teeth.

The pollies were not alone. Australia's Catholic boss Cardinal George Pell, not exactly a Muslim convert, is seldom frightened to questioned Islamic tolerance.

Mr Ruddock, an old hand at refugee scares, warned against complacency.

"It's what we don't know," Mr Ruddock insisted.

Muslims were quick to be affronted. Cliches about Muslim customs and dress reflect on Australia's self-belief on tolerance and the traditional fair go.

But it is not surprising that some Muslims and other ethnic groups struggle with our language and idiom. Some third or fourth-generation Australians would benefit from English lessons.

But if Muslims wish to avoid political targeting in Australia (or elsewhere) they need to address the frightening, ongoing stereotypes.

The despicable World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, were followed by the outrageous July bombings in London last year. It is not much consolation that terrorism in Australia appears to be under control when we have murderous, semi-local atrocities such as the Bali bombings.

Muslims can expect more political curry

Too often there are gloating, fascist Islamic clerics promoting international belligerence. Jihadist hatreds may be preached with more venom in Britain than Australia. But just yesterday, our sister Sydney newspaper The Daily Telegraph reported that terrorism organisations in Australia may be funded from poker machine money laundering.

It is little consolation that international Muslim factions are literally at each other's throats.

Mr and Mrs Gold Coast are flat out differentiating between Shi'ites and Sunnis. Terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda and <u>Hezbollah</u> are consigned to the same baffling pot of suspicion. A daily news summary may record that al-Qaeda leaders will shield behind <u>women</u> and children when under fire. Every time we catch a plane there are latent terrorist-security reminders.

Then there is Pakistan. What hope of keeping their cricketers under control when some Pakistani Sunnis are labelled as among the most radical, bloodthirsty fanatics on the planet. The poor old Poms - there are believed to be a million Sunnis living in Britain.

It is probably not a coincidence that Britain is seen as the next major terrorist target and the failed recent conspiracy to bomb transatlantic airliners may not be the last.

Recent British polls following the tourist-season scare revealed that about 75 per cent of Britons feared they were locked into a new war against terrorist extremists.

The largest percentage expect more terrorist alerts and more terrorist attacks in Britain.

The right-wing Spectator magazine observed that British voters wanted strong action at home and abroad to counter the scourge.

None of the above reads well for Australian Muslims keen for a fair go. The latest British developments would not have escaped a cunning political warrior such as John Howard. Australian Muslims can expect more political curry during the next 12 months.

Load-Date: September 5, 2006



THE VENT

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

August 24, 2006 Thursday

Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: METRO NEWS; Pg. 2B

Length: 486 words

Byline: For the Journal-Constitution

Body

We must stop the extremist terrorists who want to subjugate us. I do not look good in a burga.

When a federal judge makes a decision that puts me and my family in danger, there is something terribly wrong with the system.

Partisans who support unwarranted government intrusion into our private lives dishonor the men, <u>women</u> and children who have died defending liberty since the Revolutionary War.

My brother lets the air out of tires on cars that are illegally parked in handicapped spaces.

The U.N. cease-fire in the Middle East is nothing more than a timeout so Iran can rearm <u>Hezbollah</u>.

Congressmen don't need to be on "The Colbert Report" to look foolish.

If Bush was Captain Kirk, Bones would declare him unfit for duty and confine him to his quarters. Unfortunately, there is no Mr. Spock to take his place --- only Klingons.

The aquarium had 3 million visitors in nine months. Just shows you how little else there is to do in Atlanta.

Of course I earn my pay! Right after I finish the Vent.

It sounds like Michael Adams intends to take all the fun out of the UGA experience. You're 21st, and dropping, Mikey.

Here in the mountains, if I plant a seed, put dirt on it and water it, I can expect a deer to come by, stand and wait for the bloom to appear so he can devour it, then look at me like I am an idiot.

If you must talk on the phone while you drive, at least learn to use your knees to operate the turn signals.

THE VENT

A former mistress says Osama bin Laden was obsessed with Whitney Houston. Dude, come take her. And Bobby, too!

The New York Times reports there are more than 1,000 additional species of poisonous fish than previously thought by scientists. If they are so wrong about poisonous fish, how can we believe them when they say global warming is destroying the planet?

If Dr. Z was really smart, he'd be working for Porsche.

Somebody already did build a bypass around Cleveland, Ga., several years ago. We just don't tell people about it. There's just one stop light between Ga. 400 and Helen. But I'm not telling you where it is!

I stopped at the grocery store after work to get a few things and found myself talking out loud, asking, "What am I here for?" A woman handed me her grocery list and told me that she'd wait for me in the car.

Bush has so little regard for the Constitution, I'm wondering whether he'll agree to leave office in 2009. Given two more years of acting like a king, he may believe he is one.

As a taxpayer, before we pay for any more fact-finding trips for politicians, I want to know how many facts are lost, who lost them, and exactly which facts they are looking for.

Just wondering, will P's baby call him "Diddy" or "Daddy?"

Thank you, Andrew Young, for exposing the need to address racism within the black community.

I just saw someone talking on a pay phone. I'm guessing it was the one person in the country who doesn't have a cellphone.

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Load-Date: August 24, 2006