

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:15:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498059

Documents (100)

1. <u>Middle East crisis: Lebanon : Hizbullah fear after six killed at border: Violence may be spreading to second</u> front

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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2. Hezbollah hits Israeli positions

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

3. 500,000 mass for Hizbullah in Beirut: Shia poor throw their weight behind status quo

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

4. Smeared in blood, Hezbollah fingerprints all over globe

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

5. Hezbollah: Where Islamic fundamentalism meets Dollywood

Client/Matter: -None-



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

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Dec 31, 2005

6. GLOBAL TERROR'S HEZBOLLAH THREAD

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

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7. Syria 's exit from Lebanon may boost Hezbollah

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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8. U.S. sets sights on Lebanon 's Hezbollah

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

9. U.S. looks at potential danger from Hezbollah

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

10. Hezbollah stuck in 'wooden-speak' rutHezbollah's dilemma

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

11. Hezbollah Strong in Lebanese Region Vote

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

12. Jewish group plans lawsuit over shielding of Hezbollah

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

13. Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

14. Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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15. Bodies of 59 guerrillas returned to Hezbollah

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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16. New Hezbollah rockets threaten Israeli cities; The Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

17. AFTEREFFECTS: THE REGION Hezbollah Seen Making Subtle Changes After War in Iraq

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

18. MIDEAST TURMOIL: LEBANON Hezbollah Keeps Focus On Border With Israel

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

19. Hezbollah rejects call to guit south Lebanon; Under U.S. pressure, it tempers rhetoric

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

20. Hezbollah, Israel forces clash; Guerrilla positions destroyed by air attacks in fighting along disputed

<u>Lebanese border</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

21. <u>Hezbollah and Israelis exchange fire; Shells and rockets were fired across Lebanon 's border. Israeli planes</u> attacked guerrilla posts.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

22. B'nai Brith plans court action to have Hezbollah blacklisted: Government is 'lax, irresponsible'

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

23. <u>Hezbollah declares election sweep; Officials claim they won all 23 seats in a south Lebanon region</u> bordering Israel

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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24. Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

25. <u>Hezbollah claims regional victory: Second of four Lebanese elections. Voter turnout heavy in Shiite areas;</u> group hopes to grow its political influence

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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26. <u>U.N. looking into kidnapping</u>; A peacekeeper in Lebanon says troops collaborated with Hezbollah in abducting 3 Israeli soldiers in Oct.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

27. Hezbollah warns Israel of more kidnappings: Move seen as bargaining chip for prisoner release

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

28. Counter-rally dwarfs protests against Syria: Organized by Hezbollah: In Beirut, thousands show up to denounce U.S.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

29. <u>Hezbollah claims win in 2d round of votes in Lebanon; Results are due today. The guerrilla group fought</u> Israel 's 18-year occupation of south Lebanon.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

30. Crisis Erupting Over Soldier Won Back in Hezbollah Trade THE SITUATION

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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31. B'nai Brith to sue federal government; Ottawa 'lax and irresponsible for not including Hezbollah on terrorist list,' it says

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

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32. Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Dec 31, 2005

33. <u>Hezbollah tempers rhetoric: Colin Powell speaks for Israel</u>, <u>leaders of this Iran -backed terrorist group</u> contend, but there are signs they might be listening to what he has to say

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

34. Half a million pro- Syrian Lebanese march in Beirut

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

35. Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

36. Attacks in Kenya signal Al Qaeda's expanding war

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

37. Middle East crisis: Suicide bomb: Carnage at Armageddon junction: Attack that turned number 830 bus into

fireball echoes Hizbullah tactics

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

38. Suicide bombers are buried in Turkey 's breeding ground of extremism

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

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39. Q & A: Lebanon 's elections

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

40. Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally; All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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41. Lebanese Sunnis join massive anti- Syrian protest

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

42. Ending bomb campaign is the first step to peace; It may be up to Arab countries to leash Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

43. Attack on Afghanistan: Syria: Listed as an enemy, wooed as a friend in a crisis: Hatred for Israel could be stumbling block in talks

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

44. Deal is short of full Syrian troop withdrawal

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

45. Assad told to cut links with terror: Israeli fury at Syrian leader's visit

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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46. In Short

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

47. Obituary: Imam Mohammed Shamseddin

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

48. AFTEREFFECTS: NEIGHBORS Iran 's Chief, in Lebanon, Urges Quick U.S. Exit From Iraq, but Favors

<u>Vote</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

49. Jihad widows keep the faith - MIDDLE EAST MAYHEM

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

50. Get out, half million protesters tell Syria

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

51. Smarter than being a martyr

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

52. On the brink of war: Reprisal: Israel sweeps aside Middle East ceasefire: Crucial deal in tatters and six die as tanks roll into Gaza Strip and cabinet frees army to return to policy of assassinations

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

53. Iranian Leader Visits Beirut In Show of Shiite Solidarity

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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54. Neoconservatism turning Middle-East into powder keg

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

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55. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; A visit with Syria 's President Assad

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

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56. Terrorist mobs flag a warning



Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

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57. International Briefs; 6 Russians die in attack near Chechnya

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

58. PRO- SYRIA PARTY IN BEIRUT HOLDS A HUGE PROTEST

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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59. Thousands in Lebanon hail prisoner exchange

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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60. Rally boosts pro- Syrian forces

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

61. Israel warns of 'stealth terrorists'

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

62. <u>Women: 'Killing is what we do': Private Noa Berman, one of the first Israeli women to serve in combat, is</u> described by her fellow soldiers as a 'natural warrior'. Ewen MacAskill reports

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

63. In sermon, leading imam of Egypt assails terrorism People who kill innocents in the name of Islam are "liars and charlatans," he tells worshippers.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

64. MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE ISRAELIS On Border With Lebanon, 'This Family Is Never Scared'

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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65. Turkey 's town of terrorists

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

66. O<u>UR PARTNER SYRIA ? GIVE ME A BREAK</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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67. Israel - Lebanon tensions heating up

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

68. Middle East four are shown the carrot and stick

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

69. Report: Israeli military kill woman, wound 3 children; Gaza Strip:Bombing on the Lebanon border injures 2

soldiers

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

70. Two faces of protest

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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71. Israel sets up Iran as next target for the US

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

72. Middle East crisis: The toll after two weeks of mayhem: The victims on both sides

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

73. <u>U.S.</u>, <u>Syria</u>, <u>Israel compose volatile triangle</u>; <u>The United States has long had a rocky relationship with Syria and has turned up rhetoric.</u> Israel drives much of the contention.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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74. Israel releases prison-swap list

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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75. Democracy and its consequences

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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76. Tens of thousands in Lebanon march to back Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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77. Briefly

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

78. WHAT IN THE WEIRD

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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79. *Update*

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Dec 31, 2005

80. Prosecutors in Turkey question 18 suspects in suicide bombings

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

81. <u>PEACE WITH SYRIA WOULD MEAN LOSS OF GOLAN, SHARON SAYS/ PRIME MINISTER SAYS HE</u> HAS ORDERED REVIEW OF SEPARATION BARRIER

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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82. Sharon: Golan withdrawal key to peace

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

83. Terrorism campaign mired in the swamp of politics

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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84. Ottawa's selective deportation policy

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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85. The men and the attacks they are wanted for

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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86. The men and the attacks they are wanted for

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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87. LEBANON

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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Dec 31, 2005

88. SIX ISRAELI SOLDIERS ARE WOUNDED IN CLASHES NEAR LEBANESE BORDER

Client/Matter: -None-

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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

89. Mystery over Iran hostage payments provokes another French scandal

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

90. Israel put on alert as spy chief predicts worsening onslaught

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

91. WEST BANK ATTACKS WIDEN; ISRAELI TANKS ENTER NABLUS, OTHER CITIES

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

92. Tough to drain terrorism's breeding grounds

Client/Matter: -None-



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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

93. Hate's breeding grounds

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

94. South America Region Under Watch for Signs of Terrorists

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

95. The endorsement no one wants

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

96. <u>UK fears return to the bad old days in Iran : Ahmadinejad's victory spells trouble for nuclear talks, western engagement, and women's rights, say diplomats: Hardline at home and abroad</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

97. Lebanon is back on U.S. radar Divisions, threats lie beneath shiny surface of re-emerging nation

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

98. LEBANESE TV STATION MAKES NO DISGUISE OF ITS HATRED FOR ISRAEL

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

99. Blast disrupts Israeli calm; 1st suicide attack since Nov.

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to

Dec 31, 2005

100. Middle Eastern Freedom

Client/Matter: -None-

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to



<u>Middle East crisis: Lebanon: Hizbullah fear after six killed at border:</u> Violence may be spreading to second front

The Guardian (London)
March 13, 2002

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Section: Guardian Home Pages, Pg. 4

Length: 534 words

Byline: Graham Usher in Jerusalem

Body

Israel faced the prospect of a second front opening in the Middle East conflict yesterday when gunmen killed at least six Israelis one kilometre from Israel's northern border with Lebanon.

It was the worst violence in Israel's western Galilee region since it withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000. The fear is that the increasingly Lebanon-like conflict in the occupied territories may have spread to the north, through the participation of *Hizbullah* fighters in the Palestinian struggle.

Gunmen dressed in Israeli army uniforms opened fire on a bus and two cars on the road linking the town of Shlomi with Kibbutz Metzuha. Among the dead were two <u>women</u> and a police officer. Seven Israelis were wounded in the ambush, one critically.

Army and police mounted a massive sweep operation around the kibbutz, killing two gunmen in a 30-minute gun battle in a banana plantation. Three others were thought to be still at large.

Vast stretches of Israel's border region were put on high alert, with residents in cities like Kiryat Shomna, 40 kilometres east of the ambush, instructed to remain at home and schoolchildren within their classrooms. "We are all stuck. But we expect anything in Israel these days," said Barul Kadmon, a Metzuha resident.

A senior intelligence official had earlier told the Israeli parliament that <u>Hizbullah</u> was preparing a "significant attack" on Israeli border towns.

There was confusion last night about the extent of Lebanese involvement in the attack. Lebanese officials and local Israeli police denied any connection. "There is no indication of a terrorist infiltration from the northern border," said Galilee police chief, Yehuda Sluman.

But other Israeli army officials quoted by Israeli media suggested that while the assailants may have been Palestinians from Israel or the occupied territories, the attack "may have been planned in Lebanon". Their worries were supported by the first claim for the attack, aired on <u>Hizbullah</u>'s al Manar TV station. "The Intifada Holy Warriors shifted their operations to northern occupied Palestine (Israel's western Galilee) at noon today by attacking a Zionist bus near the Shlomi settlement," read the newscaster. She said the assailants were Palestinian.

The Intifada Holy Warriors are an unknown group. There has been no other claim of responsibility.

Middle East crisis: Lebanon: Hizbullah fear after six killed at border: Violence may be spreading to second front

Tensions between Israel and <u>Hizbullah</u> have been rising in recent days. On Monday <u>Hizbullah</u> fired anti-aircraft missiles near Shlomi, in retaliation, it said, for Israeli violations of Lebanese air space. Israel denied the charge.

Later the same day there was an armed exchange after shots were fired on an Israeli army position near the divided village of Ghajar, which straddles the border. And last week <u>Hizbullah</u>'s general secretary, Sheikh Hussein Nasrallah, said his movement was trying to supply Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza with Katyusha rockets, since these "serve the intifada's best interests". He also lambasted the Jordanian security officials who had blocked the supply by arresting <u>Hizbullah</u> members.

"Had those weapons reached the hands of the Palestinians, (Israeli prime minister Ariel) Sharon would not have dared enter the (Palestinian refugee) camps," he said.

Load-Date: March 13, 2002

End of Document



Hezbollah hits Israeli positions

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

May 14, 2005 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. B8

Length: 410 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT (AP) -- <u>Hezbollah</u> and Israeli forces exchanged barrages of shells and rockets across the Lebanese border Friday and Israeli warplanes destroyed a series of guerrilla positions in the heaviest clash in months between the two sides.

The exchange began when <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters fired a volley of shells and rockets at Israeli positions in the disputed border area of Chebaa Farms. Israeli forces retaliated with artillery fire against the apparent source of the fire in the Lebanese village of Kfar Chouba.

Witnesses counted at least 45 Israeli shells, and Israel said the barrage hit a *Hezbollah* position.

Warplanes and helicopter gunships firing missiles then stuck struck three more guerrilla posts, the Israeli military said. An Israeli tank also fired at a <u>Hezbollah</u> observation post near the village of Rmeish, far from the combat near the Mediterranean coastline, witnesses said.

There were no casualties from the <u>Hezbollah</u> fire, an Israeli military spokesperson said. There was no immediate word on casualties on the Lebanese side from the Israeli retaliation.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al-Manar television said the attack was in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory, including a hit on civilian houses in Kfar Chouba.

"The Islamic Resistance warns the Zionist enemy that any attack on civilians will be met with the appropriate response," the statement said.

The Israeli military accused <u>Hezbollah</u> of seeking to disturb the calm along the border and warned it will "not allow further provocations of any sort."

"What is most important at this stage is that there is a government in Beirut, and Lebanon is obliged by the UN not to allow <u>Hezbollah</u> or other terror organizations to act," Maj.-Gen. Benny Gantz, Israel's chief of the northern command, told reporters. "And as I said, if we have to respond we will respond."

Hezbollah hits Israeli positions

It was the heaviest clash between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> since January, when <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas blew up an Israeli bulldozer operating in Chebaa Farms and Israeli warplanes retaliated with strikes that wounded two Lebanese <u>women</u>.

The increase in tensions comes amid political turbulence in Lebanon. <u>Hezbollah</u>'s ally Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon last month, weakening Damascus' hold in the country -- while <u>Hezbollah</u> has been seeking a greater political role.

The Lebanese army has not deployed in the south, allowing <u>Hezbollah</u> to keep security control there since Israeli troops ended their 18-year occupation in the area in 2000.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Associated Press; An Israeli soldier inspects the border between Israel and Lebanon

Load-Date: May 14, 2005

End of Document



500,000 mass for Hizbullah in Beirut: Shia poor throw their weight behind status quo

The Guardian (London) - Final Edition

March 9, 2005

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Section: Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 14

Length: 874 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker in Beirut

Body

Syria's supporters in Lebanon struck back against the "cedar revolution" yesterday with a show of strength which easily dwarfed anything their opponents have been able to muster.

They drove into Beirut throughout the morning in cars waving Lebanese flags and battered buses decorated with pictures of the Syrian-backed president, Emile Lahoud.

They came from towns and villages all over Lebanon: from the Beka'a valley, the mountains, and the far south. Opponents claimed that some had come from Syria.

Half an hour before the rally was due to begin Riad al-Solh Square, one of the largest open spaces in Beirut, was already full but more kept coming, often several hundred at a time, and overflowed into side roads and on to flyovers.

In the city centre many shops closed and streets were almost deserted. Large numbers of troops stood by on the fringes of the demonstration.

Trying to estimate the number was futile, but half a million would be plausible and a million not unbelievable.

From a distance it resembled a larger version of Monday's opposition rally. As on Monday, they patriotically waved the red and white Lebanese flag and the national anthem blared out several times over the loudspeakers.

But they also waved pictures of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, and his Lebanese counterpart. There were even a few of President Assad's late and largely unlamented father.

Much of the language, unless decoded, sounded similar too: one of the slogans was "Sovereignty, not foreign intervention". But the foreigners referred to were the Americans, the Israelis, the French: anyone but the brotherly Syrians.

Looked at more closely, this was a very different crowd.

The anti-Syrian protesters who have attracted worldwide attention are mostly Christians, plus Sunni Muslims and Druze, and they are generally from the better-off sections of Lebanese society. Yesterday's masses were overwhelmingly the poorer - and historically downtrodden - Shia, who form 40% of the population.

500,000 mass for Hizbullah in Beirut: Shia poor throw their weight behind status quo

Armani sweaters and flashy sunglasses were not to be seen. Some of the <u>women</u> were clad from head to foot in black, Iranian style, a few cradling babies in their arms. Among the men there was more than a smattering of beards.

All, ostensibly, had turned out to show their gratitude to Syria for its efforts in Lebanon.

From a platform in front of the sea-green windows of the UN building the <u>Hizbullah</u> leader Hassan Nasrallah denounced security council resolution 1559 as a "coup" against the Taif accord which ended the Lebanese civil war.

The accord is Syria's justification for its leisurely moves to withdraw troops; the UN, citing resolution 1559, is demanding swift action.

<u>Hizbullah</u> has grievances of its own against 1559, because the resolution also calls for all militias in Lebanon to be disbanded. Although <u>Hizbullah</u> functions nowadays mainly as a political movement, it is loth to abandon its guerrilla wing entirely.

Yesterday it flexed its political muscles with conviction - though the rally was entirely its own. Other supporters included Amal (the other main Shia party), Nasserists, Ba'athists and a long list of obscure organisations.

What cannot be disputed is *Hizbullah*'s ability to organise.

On Monday loudspeaker cars toured the streets of Nabatieh and other towns, calling on citizens to show their "opposition to foreign interference in Lebanese affairs, solidarity for the preservation of national unity and civil peace, objection to the UN resolution 1559, denunciation of the assassination of former premier Rafik Hariri and appreciation for Syria's sacrifices in Lebanon".

What is less clear is how many of those who joined the demonstration yesterday had strong personal feelings about any of these matters, and how many were pressed into attending or simply fancied a day trip to Beirut.

Opposition supporters alleged that influential figures in some towns and villages had strongly encouraged attendance, and there were groups of youngsters at the demonstration who looked like entire school classes.

None of this may be enough to save the <u>Hizbullah</u> militia from eventual extinction, but it plainly has no intention of going quietly.

Syrian troops made further moves yesterday in their planned redeployment to the Beka'a valley, according to witnesses in a mountainous area east of Beirut.

Two senior Lebanese officials said a major redeployment of the Syrian army from central and northern Lebanon would begin late last night and would be completed by March 23.

The Lebanese defence minister, Abdul-Rahim Murad, told the Associated Press: "All the force in the (central) mountains and north will move to the Beka'a as of 10pm tonight."

He said that included the main Syrian intelligence offices in Beirut.

Under an agreement between the Syrian and Lebanese presidents on Monday the redeployment will be followed at an unspecified date by complete withdrawal of the 14,000 Syrian forces personnel in Lebanon.

The controversial intelligence agents will also leave, a Damascus official source told Reuters yesterday.

"The fact that security forces were not mentioned in the (withdrawal) statement is merely because they move along with the armed forces. It is a given. The withdrawal is of all Syrian forces," the source said.

Load-Date: March 9, 2005

End of Document



Smeared in blood, Hezbollah fingerprints all over globe

The Australian

June 9, 2003 Monday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2003 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 963 words

Byline: Matthew Levitt

Body

BODY POLITIC

Evidence of *Hezbollah*'s international terrorist activity is overwhelming, writes Matthew Levitt in Washington

THE UN operates by consensus, a major counterterrorism handicap given that several of its members are proactive state sponsors of terrorism. <u>Hezbollah</u> poses a threat to Australia and threatens others with support of members in Australia. The Australian initiative to ban <u>Hezbollah</u>, despite the group's absence from the UN Security Council's terrorism list, is therefore critically important.

As was the case when Canada banned <u>Hezbollah</u> last December, some oppose the Australian measure, arguing that <u>Hezbollah</u> is not a terrorist group but a social and political organisation engaged in armed struggle against Israel. Yet evidence of <u>Hezbollah</u>'s international activity as a terrorist group of global reach is overwhelming. MATP

While <u>Hezbollah</u> may be more likely to use Australia as a base for logistical support operations than a target, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s threat to target Australians over the country's role in the liberation of Iraq is not the only reason the group should be banned. Terrorism experts concur that <u>Hezbollah</u> is one of the most active international terrorist groups in Australia. Indeed, Australia is one of only seven counties where a <u>Hezbollah</u> video game glorifying terrorism was successfully marketed. According to the game's designers, it is intended to instil <u>Hezbollah</u> "values" by giving supporters a virtual opportunity to participate in the attacks they fund and laud from abroad.

<u>Hezbollah</u> poses an international threat, but does the presence of <u>Hezbollah</u> sympathisers and logistical and financial supporters pose a direct threat to Australians themselves? Absolutely.

Terrorism scholar Rohan Gunaratna notes <u>Hezbollah</u> operatives have attempted to recruit Malaysians and Indonesians to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel and Australia. Moreover, <u>Hezbollah</u> has a long track record of plotting terrorist attacks in southeast Asia.

On March 17, 1994, <u>Hezbollah</u> terrorists attempted to bomb the Israeli embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. The attack failed because the terrorists got in a car accident and fled the scene. Authorities later discovered C4 explosives in the car.

In 1995, <u>Hezbollah</u> operatives began surveilling Singapore's coastline. Two years later authorities thwarted the group's plans to blow up US Navy ships passing through the Singapore Straits or berthed in the city-state's harbour. The cell included <u>Hezbollah</u> operatives who infiltrated the region with visa-waivers and married local <u>women</u>.

<u>Hezbollah</u> operatives have been arrested in Thailand, Singapore, and The Philippines. The group has also been active in Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan and Korea, and has infiltrated Islamic charitable societies throughout the region.

The conviction of two <u>Hezbollah</u> operatives in the US Federal Court last year highlighted the links between these types of support networks and senior <u>Hezbollah</u> military leaders, as well as radical Iranian elements.

In June 2002, brothers Mohamad and Chawki Hammoud were convicted of providing material support to a terrorist group. Their Charlotte, North Carolina-based cell was part of a network responsible for raising funds and procuring dual-use technologies for <u>Hezbollah</u> terrorist operations. Mohammed Hassan Dbouk and his brother-in-law, Ali Adham Amhaz, ran the Canadian portion of this network under the command of Haj Hasan Hilu Laqis (<u>Hezbollah</u>'s chief military procurement officer). Their activities were funded in part with money that Laqis sent from Lebanon, in addition to their own criminal activities in Canada (eg, credit card and banking scams).

Among the items that they purchased in Canada and the US and smuggled into Lebanon were night-vision goggles, global positioning systems, stun guns, naval equipment, nitrogen cutters and laser range finders. The Canadian <u>Hezbollah</u> network also sought to take out life insurance policies for <u>Hezbollah</u> operatives committing acts of terrorism in the Middle East.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s international activities are all the more dangerous in light of the group's ties to al-Qa'ida. In June 2002, US and European intelligence officials described <u>Hezbollah</u> as "increasingly teaming up with al-Qa'ida on logistics and training for terrorist operations". This alliance, described as "ad hoc", "tactical", and "informal", was said to involve mid and low-level operatives. US and European intelligence officials reiterated this concern in September 2002, noting that "the most worrisome" of al-Qa'ida's new "tactical, ad-hoc alliances" is with <u>Hezbollah</u>. Hamas, <u>Hezbollah</u> and al-Qa'ida members co-operate in the lawless tri-border area in South America, where Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina meet; similar co-operation has been noted in Asia, as in the cases of Abdul Nasser Nooh (who facilitated both al-Qa'ida and <u>Hezbollah</u> operations) and Muhammad Amed al-Khalifa (a <u>Hezbollah</u> member linked to a shipment of explosives sent by a company tied to al-Qa'ida and confiscated by Philippine police).

To be sure, <u>Hezbollah</u> is a terrorist group of global reach, with an international logistical and financial support network stretching to Australia and beyond. <u>Hezbollah</u> runs operational and logistical support cells in Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America and the Middle East. Canberra must protect Australians against the kinds of attacks <u>Hezbollah</u> operatives successfully executed in Argentina and attempted in Singapore and Thailand; it must also do everything in its power to prevent <u>Hezbollah</u> supporters in Australia from funding and facilitating the group's attacks targeting others.

Matthew Levitt, a former FBI counterterrorism analyst, is a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He is writing a book on *Hezbollah*

Load-Date: June 8, 2003

End of Document



Hezbollah: Where Islamic fundamentalism meets Dollywood

The Ottawa Citizen
October 21, 2001 Sunday
Final EDITION

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Section: THE CITIZEN'S WEEKLY,; News

Length: 1109 words **Byline:** Negar Akhavi

Body

On a humid July afternoon, two friends and I piled into an un-air-conditioned sedan in Beirut. We headed south to a place I call "Hezbollahland."

We'd found an affable taxi driver, a Shiite Muslim from the south named Ali, who was excited to show us around his home turf. As we entered his car he reminded us not to speak English where we were going and in fact to avoid speaking with anyone. He was glad to hear I had Iranian roots and reminded me that <u>Hezbollah</u> "likes" Iran. (My friends didn't get the same approval. One was half-Lebanese, which won a few points, and the other was a pure Anglo-American.)

Slate

Ali insisted he knew all the back roads, so we didn't need permits for the <u>Hezbollah</u> checkpoints. Since we hadn't bothered to get permits, not wanting to deal with the bureaucracy, we were pretty much at Ali's disposal here. We nodded enthusiastically, then spent the next three hours driving south, slightly terrified: We all had American passports, and <u>Hezbollah</u> often takes hostages.

<u>Hezbollah</u> ("Party of God") was formed in the mid-'80s to expel Israeli troops, as well as all other non-Islamic interests, from Lebanon. Israel had invaded in 1982 during the Lebanese civil war to banish the PLO, and in 1983 it set up a "security zone" ranging 14 kilometres over the border. To drive Israel out, <u>Hezbollah</u> members engaged in suicide bombings, and many credit the organization with the attack on the U.S. Marine garrison in Lebanon that killed more than 200 soldiers. After Israel withdrew from the security zone in May 2000, <u>Hezbollah</u>, which has received funding and guidance from Iran and Syria, solidified its gains in southern Lebanon. These days, it holds seats in the legislature and continues to advocate an end to the Israeli state.

The territory unofficially under <u>Hezbollah</u> control starts an hour south of Beirut. It's a world apart from the flashy capital city, where billboards depict half-naked <u>women</u>. The shabby roads here are lined with giant posters of <u>Hezbollah</u> martyrs and turbaned men toting Kalashnikovs. Along our route we stopped a few times to sightsee at the Qana Memorial, where an Israeli bombardment killed more than 100 civilians at a UN shelter in 1996, and Fatimah Gate, the border crossing where author Edward Said famously threw rocks from Lebanon into Israel. Finally, we reached the site Ali had assured us he was saving for last -- the <u>Hezbollah</u> Museum, formerly known as the notorious Khiam prison.

The South Lebanese Army, Israel's proxy, ran Khiam. Israel claims to have had no authority over the prison, a former French outpost, which opened in 1985. The prison held people without charges or trials -- some for as long as 10 years -- and among its prisoners were <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrilla fighters and their relatives and people who refused to cooperate with the SLA and their relatives. On May 23, 2000, when Israel withdrew, 145 inmates were liberated from Khiam and the complex was turned into a museum.

At Khiam's entrance, two young guys sat and eyed everyone who entered. Ali had apparently been here several times, so he hung back, but he reminded us once again to avoid speaking English. It was a strange request in some ways because <u>Hezbollah</u> had transformed the compound into a tourist attraction, with everything labelled in English and Arabic.

We moved through the prison's six buildings, all spread out over single floors, and peeked inside its 200 cells. Rooms had been left as they were, many still with clothing in them. We saw decomposing, urine-drenched bathrooms; solitary-confinement spaces the size of a nightstand; rooms described as torture chambers in which electrical wiring hung from the walls; and an area labeled "A Room For the Boss of Whippers." The International Red Cross did not start monitoring here until 1995. In several cells we saw graffiti, mostly curses against Israel. "Faq you, Israel," read one, with a drawing of a middle finger and the Star of David. About 100 other tourists joined us in walking the prison grounds -- mostly Middle Eastern, but some Europeans mixed in.

The maze of passageways eventually led to an outdoor space with two massive murals. The first was an enormous Israeli flag with a Katyusha rocket-launcher exploding through the Star of David. Beneath the flag, written in Arabic: "Israel will be annihilated." The second mural showed a dove flying through a jail cell window, with a message that read, "And with God's help, victory will be ours." An old Israeli Jeep in the courtyard was draped with <u>Hezbollah</u> flags.

After 45 minutes or so we finished our tour, grabbed lunch at the busy Khiam cafe, and headed for the <u>Hezbollah</u> gift shop -- a must for any visitor. It was a long, narrow room, stocked with two wide aisles of <u>Hezbollah</u> keepsakes. They had yellow <u>Hezbollah</u> flags in every size and <u>Hezbollah</u> clothing -- T-shirts, sweatshirts, baseball caps. Along one wall were display cases of various stickers, posters, lapel pins and key chains, and pictures of Ayatollah Khomeini, spiritual leader Musa al-Sadr, and the current <u>Hezbollah</u> secretary-general, Nasrallah. A few photos even caught these men cutting loose with smiles. A table near the back of the room featured videotapes of successful **Hezbollah** attacks on Israeli troops.

The children's section (yikes!) featured colouring and comic books, one of which I had to bring home. The back cover illustrated a little boy running with flowers in his hand, birds and butterflies in the background, his foot is about to detonate a landmine decorated with the Star of David. Inside was a child's poem about Al-Quds (Jerusalem) with an illustration, as if drawn by a child, that depicted a little boy throwing a rock at a soldier who is wearing a helmet emblazoned with the Star of David. The soldier has a large, bandaged hook-nose, and he's wincing in fear.

I had been in Jerusalem before coming to Lebanon, so as I approached the bearded man behind the cash register to pay for my souvenirs I accidentally blurted out, "Kamo zeh oleh" in Hebrew. I froze as the man scrunched his eyebrows together and said, "Shoo???!" -- a rude form of "What?" in Arabic. I recovered, and in a louder voice asked in Arabic how much I owed, marvelling at how the Islamic movement had grown so far that it had to finally merge with capitalism. I put my money on the table, making a reluctant contribution to *Hezbollah*.

My friend grabbed my arm and pulled me from the counter, making me promise not to open my mouth until our *Hezbollah* holiday was over.

Negar Akhavi has written for the Jerusalem Report and the New Republic. This story first appeared in Slate magazine.

Graphic

Photo: Reuters; Posters of Iranian leaders factor heavily, in <u>Hezbollah</u> life.; Photo: Reuters; Even children's colouring, books, above, carry grim warnings of Israeli landmines.

Load-Date: October 21, 2001

End of Document



GLOBAL TERROR'S HEZBOLLAH THREAD

Daily News (New York)
October 17, 2002, Thursday
SPORTS FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2002 Daily News, L.P.

Section: EDITORIAL;; COLUMNOPINION

Length: 499 words

Byline: BY RICHARD CHESNOFF

Body

Surprise! Saddam Hussein just won the Iraqi presidential race in which he was the only candidate. Now that he is back in power - theoretically - for another seven years, allied military action against him is all the more urgent.

Unfortunately, ousting Saddam is only part of the work facing what we used to call the Free World. A cauldron of other dangers is bubbling up. Al Qaeda remains the greatest threat, of course. But the lines of terror lead, directly and indirectly, from Al Qaeda to *Hezbollah*, which is a growing threat the U.S. must deal with.

Al Qaeda, whose subsidiary struck in Bali last week, is active on at least five continents. Osama Bin Laden's sleeper cells in the U.S. and Canada have their counterparts all across Asia - in Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. In Africa, where Al Qaeda terrorists murdered hundreds in two bombings at U.S. embassies in 1998, governments from Morocco to South Africa are on high alert. Security forces in Britain, France, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Italy continue to comb their cities and borders for activists and brace for new attacks. After Bali, Australians understand that they, too, can be targeted - at home and abroad.

Even South America is looking over its shoulder. Argentina already has been racked by terror attacks authored by Islamic extremists. But nearby Paraguay, Ecuador and Brazil also have significant Islamic populations that include ardent *Hezbollah* militants with ties to Al Qaeda.

Still, it is in the Mideast where the greatest dangers lie. In Yemen, Al Qaeda operatives are considered the culprits in the explosions that ripped through the French oil tanker. Bin Laden even supposedly praised the act publicly.

In Iran, Lebanon and probably Saudi Arabia, authorities go through the charade of "arresting" Al Qaeda fugitives while remaining fully aware that others are harbored in their borders - many of them, as this column reported seven months ago, in the Ein al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in south Lebanon. The most important link here, intelligence sources say, is the Iranian-backed, Lebanese-based *Hezbollah* terrorist army.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which has been helping to shelter Al Qaeda operatives, is convinced that once an attack begins on Iraq, it will become the next target of President Bush's war on terror. Accordingly, and with enthusiastic Iranian backing, say the sources, <u>Hezbollah</u> stepped up efforts to acquire anti-aircraft weapons from as many outlets as possible -including Chechen rebels.

<u>Hezbollah</u> - most of whose arms flow through Syria - has a plan. Once the war begins in Iraq, <u>Hezbollah</u> will launch its own artillery and rocket attacks on northern Israel. The goal: to complicate the already tense coalition the U.S. has with some of the supposedly moderate Arab states.

GLOBAL TERROR'S HEZBOLLAH THREAD

As the President said yesterday when he signed the bill authorizing him to go to war if necessary, "We will face our dangers squarely and unafraid."

That has to be on all fronts.

E-mail: rzc@att.net

Graphic

AP Balinese women prayed yesterday for victims of Saturday's terrorist bombing.

Load-Date: October 17, 2002

End of Document



Syria's exit from Lebanon may boost Hezbollah

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

March 13, 2005, Sunday

Copyright 2005 Charleston Newspapers

Section: News; Pg. P5A

Length: 1140 words

Byline: Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson Knight Ridder Newspapers

Body

BAALBEK, Lebanon - If Syrian forces leave Lebanon in the face of growing international and Lebanese pressure, the Islamic militant group <u>Hezbollah</u> - entrenched in this Bekaa Valley hamlet and across much of eastern and southern Lebanon - is ready to fill the military and political vacuum.

Should it succeed, the anti-Syrian democratic protests that have attracted so much international attention since opposition leader Rafik Hariri was assassinated Feb. 14 could prove stillborn. Instead of clearing the way for pro-Western democrats, Syria's withdrawal could bring to the fore a virulently anti-Western political force believed to be responsible for attacks on U.S. Marines and the American Embassy in Beirut and for kidnapping dozens of foreigners.

Uncertainty may rule the streets of Beirut after dueling protests for and against Syrian involvement in Lebanon's affairs, but loyalties are crystal-clear in this town built around Roman ruins 6 miles east of the Syrian border.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s green and yellow flags flutter along its streets. Taped to nearly every shop window and plastered across intervening concrete walls, the face of <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah broods at passers-by, as it does throughout Lebanon's predominantly Shiite Muslim east and south.

Syria, whose forces have dominated Lebanon for the last three decades, is closely aligned with Nasrallah's movement and has readied it to take Syria's place as Lebanon's dominant power.

"The Syrians are trying to leave behind a system they can control. A pillar of that will be <u>Hezbollah</u>," said Michael Young, the opinion editor of Lebanon's English-language newspaper Daily Star.

The price could be further divisions in Lebanon. Young and others said that Syria, through its many agents and supporters in Lebanon, would move to lift the political restrictions that distribute power to religiously based factions according to an unwritten 1943 agreement that today leaves Lebanon's Shiite plurality underrepresented. That would net *Hezbollah* more parliamentary seats in May elections.

It's also likely to make <u>Hezbollah</u> a newly partisan player in a nation still smarting from 15 years of civil war that ended in1990.

"For 10 to 15 years no one has dared to say much against <u>Hezbollah</u>," Young said. "That is changing because now they [Hezbollah] are using their muscle; they want to be Syria's enforcers."

If the Syrians make good on their promises to withdraw to or beyond their border, Baalbek residents are confident that *Hezbollah* can take charge.

"Disarming <u>Hezbollah</u>" - as the West has called for - "is not an option, especially when we have Israel, our enemy, on our border," said Naji Awada, 28, who owns a cellular-phone store in Baalbek. "The weapons of the resistance are for the security of our country, to hold a knife to Israel's side. The army doesn't have the necessary knowledge to do that."

Backed by Syria and by the Shiite-run government of Iran, <u>Hezbollah</u> is under fire from the United States and its Western allies for periodic attacks on northern Israel and its support for Palestinian militant groups.

During Lebanon's civil war, <u>Hezbollah</u> was blamed for attacking and kidnapping Westerners, including the truck bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, which killed 241 Marines, and the murders of CIA Lebanon chief of station William Buckley, U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem and U.S. Army Col. William Higgins.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s ties to Iran are visible on its office walls, which feature framed photographs of the Islamic Republic's founder, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the current supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iranian arms are still delivered to <u>Hezbollah</u> via Syria, even as the group has become more self-sufficient in a Shiite population whose faith demands that they give part of their income to clerics. In the Bekaa Valley this week, for example, a half-dozen <u>Hezbollah</u> activists set up a donation stop along the Beirut-Damascus highway, collecting money from drivers.

<u>Hezbollah</u> has matured from a guerrilla group during the civil war to a military and political powerhouse, patrolling the southern Lebanese skies with robot aircraft and representing the country's largest religious group, with 12 seats in the Parliament.

Community involvement may be the secret to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s popular appeal. <u>Hezbollah</u>-funded hospitals and schools serve thousands of poor and underemployed Lebanese in the Shiite-dominated south and east.

In Baalbek, Mohammed Yezbek, 47, shrugged when he was asked why he had pictures of Nasrallah in his fabric shop and not slain former Prime Minister Hariri, whose posters have adorned buildings across Beirut since his assassination. "He never came to Baalbek in 12 years," during his terms as prime minister, Yezbek said.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, on the other hand, is active every day in Baalbek. Residents say the Islamic group holds a 70 percent share of power in town, including the mayor's seat. Few here appear to want a clerical government, and despite its power <u>Hezbollah</u> hasn't imposed one, residents said.

In fact, <u>Hezbollah</u> activists help run Baalbek's annual classical music festival, which draws thousand of Lebanese and foreign tourists to the world-famous Roman ruins here each year. The hotels serve alcohol - taboo for Muslims - and many <u>women</u> walk the streets without the Islamic veil.

<u>Hezbollah</u> also provides security by patrolling the country's southern border with Israel. Lebanon's army mans a few checkpoints and little else.

<u>Hezbollah</u> forces attained legendary status on the border after Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak withdrew his soldiers from southern Lebanon under fire in May 2000. <u>Hezbollah</u>'s anti-Israeli stance resonates where the memory of 22 years of Israeli occupation is still fresh.

Israel's fighter jets still crack the sound barrier over Lebanese airspace and Israeli forces attack <u>Hezbollah</u> and Syrian outposts from time to time when the militant group fires Katyusha rockets or antiaircraft guns at Israeli targets.

Many Lebanese think that <u>Hezbollah</u>, commonly known as "the resistance," and its guerrilla tactics - rather than the army - are better suited to fighting their southern neighbor.

Syria 's exit from Lebanon may boost Hezbollah

<u>Hezbollah</u> also has captured anti-American sentiment brought on by the U.S. presence in Lebanon during its civil war and more recent Bush administration policies in the Middle East.

Now the group has its eye on the general elections in May.

"We are not with the opposition and we're not part of the government," said <u>Hezbollah</u> Parliament member Mohammad Raad, 49.

Its policies include preserving Syrian-Lebanese ties, keeping <u>Hezbollah</u> armed and rejecting the assimilation of Palestinian refugees, which might lessen their claims to a right to return to their homes in what's now Israel.

"Otherwise, Lebanon could become part of a greater American project for the Middle East," Raad said.

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U.S. sets sights on Lebanon's Hezbollah

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Body

Following up swiftly on its war in Iraq, the United States wants further changes in the Middle East. Among its targets: *Hezbollah*, the Islamist "Party of God," based in Lebanon, with strong ties to Syria and Iran.

"We have emphasized strongly our concern about continuing terrorist activities of <u>Hezbollah</u> in the region and around the world," U.S. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said after meetings with Syrian and Lebanese leaders this month.

Also serving to put the spotlight on <u>Hezbollah</u> was the visit this week of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, the first by an Iranian leader since Tehran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

"<u>Hezbollah</u> is at the intersection of all the problems the Americans want to solve," says Gebran Tueni, editor of Lebanon's leading Arabic newspaper, An-Nahar.

The United States says <u>Hezbollah</u> gets upwards of \$100 million a year, mostly from Iran. Syria, which has 20,000 troops inside Lebanon and virtually runs its central government, facilitates the transshipment of arms from Iran to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s military wing, U.S. intelligence sources say.

Syria says it supports <u>Hezbollah</u> but denies supplying it with arms. The U.S. State Department lists <u>Hezbollah</u> as a terrorist organization. Lebanon regards it as a legitimate resistance group, fighting Israeli occupation of a controversially defined tract on the Israel-Lebanon border.

Lebanon claims the parcel. Syria supports the claim. But the United Nations, citing old maps, says it is Israelioccupied Syrian land.

Political analysts here tend to view it as a pretext for continued fighting.

<u>Hezbollah</u> leaders say fewer than 10,000 full-time fighters live in the rugged hills of southern Lebanon, the crowded Haret Hreik suburb of Beirut, and the lush Bekaa Valley. Vastly more "irregulars" can be mobilized if needed, the leaders say.

"<u>Hezbollah</u> [is] a symbol of power and resistance throughout the Islamic world," Khatami said, wrapping up his three-day visit with a news conference. He called for regional calm, demanded that Israel give up its weapons before <u>Hezbollah</u> ever disarms, and swiped at the United States for not knowing "the difference between terrorism and resistance to occupation."

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s presence on the Israel-Lebanon border - while the Lebanese army sits six miles away - is a recipe for conflict, says Powell, who wants <u>Hezbollah</u> disarmed and Lebanon's regular army fully deployed.

"This is not the first time the United States has come after <u>Hezbollah</u> rhetorically," says Simon Karam, a Beirut lawyer who was Lebanon's ambassador to the United States from 1991 to 1993. "This kind of verbal campaign was conducted by successive American administrations."

But in a post-9/11 world, with U.S.-led forces having crushed Iraq's Saddam Hussein, Washington's resolve may be different this time.

"It was always well-known that <u>Hezbollah</u> had links to Hamas and Islamic Jihad. But it wasn't until after Sept. 11 that <u>Hezbollah</u> ended up on the U.S. list of terror organizations," says Farid Khazen, chairman of the political studies department at the American University of Beirut.

"We should tell the Syrians that we expect them to shut down [<u>Hezbollah</u>'s training camps], and if they don't, we are reserving the right to shut them down ourselves," Sen. Bob Graham (D., Fla.), a former chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has said.

The U.S. Congress, through the "Syrian Accountability Act," is considering sanctions against Syria unless it drops its support for groups such as *Hezbollah*.

The United States and Israel hold <u>Hezbollah</u> responsible for the deaths and kidnappings of hundreds of Americans and Israelis inside Lebanon, including U.S. Marines in the 1980s and sporadic attacks on Israel across Lebanon's southern border.

The group, which deputy U.S. Secretary of State Richard Armitage calls the "A-team" among guerrillas, perfected roadside bombings and other attacks that helped force an end to Israel's 22-year occupation of southern Lebanon in May 2000.

Operating under other names, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s core came together in the early 1980s. It was underground until 1985, when it published a manifesto calling on members to be "fighting soldiers" against Israel and its allies.

"Allah is behind us, supporting and protecting us, while instilling fear in the hearts of our enemies," the document assured.

Today <u>Hezbollah</u> is at once defiant and mainstream. It has eight members in Lebanon's 128-member parliament. It runs a network of schools, hospitals, charitable organizations, and even its own television station, Al-Manar, seen by 10 million viewers in the Middle East.

As the most successful Islamic fundamentalist group, <u>Hezbollah</u> is a model for others, including Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which have emulated its tactics in paramilitary operations against Israel.

In an interview Wednesday after Israeli warplanes penetrated Lebanese airspace and <u>Hezbollah</u> responded with antiaircraft fire, Mohammed Raad, 48, a top <u>Hezbollah</u> official and leader of its parliamentary faction, said: "We reply to their message with our message. Breaking the sound barrier disturbs us. So we disturb them."

Raad said <u>Hezbollah</u> gunners shoot at Israeli planes in the direction of the border so that shrapnel falls onto Israeli towns. Last month, a dud round fell near an Israeli school.

"If there is an overflight, there is also shooting," says Capt. Dieter Bachmann, an Austrian soldier assigned to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, which observes and records incidents on the border.

U.S. sets sights on Lebanon 's Hezbollah

"Love for <u>Hezbollah</u> here is strong," said Bachmann, seated in a caf in Aaita ech Chaab, near Lebanon's southern border. "It's everywhere," he said, pointing to a picture of <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Hassan Nasrallah, whose blackturbaned visage is as ubiquitous here as JFK portraits are in Boston pubs.

"People are tired. They don't want any more fighting," said Ali Rahme, 36, a minivan driver from Aaita ech Chaab. "But we're scared of Israel. That's why we need <u>Hezbollah</u> here."

The Lebanese government has said it will not send its troops to the border because that would provide security for its enemy, Israel.

"When Colin Powell was here, the president [of Lebanon] told him that the Lebanese army is in the south, but we don't want a nose-to-nose confrontation with the Israeli army so we keep it 10 kilometers [six miles] from the border," said Tewfik Mishlawi, editor of the Middle East Reporter newsletter.

"This is an anomalous situation that you don't find anywhere else in the world," says Khazen, the political scientist. "You have a state. You have an army. But the government sends a militia to man the border."

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Graphic

PHOTO AND MAP;

ADNAN HAJJ ALI, Associated Press

Wearing <u>Hezbollah</u> hats and waving Iranian and Lebanese flags, <u>women</u> in Beirut prepare to greet Mohammad Khatami, the first Iranian leader to visit since 1979. <u>Hezbollah</u> has close ties to Iran.

MAP

Lebanon (SOURCE: ESRI; The Philadelphia Inquirer)

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U.S. looks at potential danger from Hezbollah

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Body

CHARLOTTE -- Mohamad Hammoud, his brothers and friends blended into America quickly after arriving here in the early 1990s. They landed jobs delivering pizzas, got married and bought homes in modest neighborhoods.

A federal jury decided last year that they also secretly established one of the most sophisticated terrorism fundraising cells detected in recent years in the USA -- for <u>Hezbollah</u>, an organization that before al-Qaeda's Sept. 11 attacks had killed more Americans than any terrorist group.

The cell led by Hammoud, 30, a native of Lebanon, generated up to \$ 2 million in profits from smuggling cigarettes purchased in North Carolina and sold in Detroit to elude Michigan's taxes. Part of the proceeds were used to buy high-tech military equipment that was smuggled into Lebanon for use against Israelis.

A U.S. official says there are "hundreds" of <u>Hezbollah</u> members in the USA. Not all are potential terrorists; many support <u>Hezbollah</u>'s desire to form an Iranian-style government in Lebanon.

U.S. officials say the Charlotte group's deftness at infiltrating this community illustrates <u>Hezbollah</u>'s potential to unleash coordinated attacks in the USA -- if it ever chose to do so.

The case also has added urgency to FBI efforts to identify <u>Hezbollah</u> members here and determine their plans. A senior FBI official says fewer than 20 potential <u>Hezbollah</u> cells are being investigated.

"I believe that if there is a <u>Hezbollah</u> terrorist cell in Charlotte," U.S. Attorney Robert Conrad told Congress in November, "then there are similar cells elsewhere."

'The A-Team' of terrorists

Terrorism investigators and analysts say <u>Hezbollah</u> could attack U.S. interests at home and abroad if the Bush administration were to take on Iran, the group's chief benefactor, or Syria, its supply pipeline between Lebanon and Tehran.

U.S.-Syrian relations have been strained by accusations that Syria helped top Iraqi officials flee coalition forces. Secretary of State Colin Powell recently warned Syrian President Bashar Assad against aiding Palestinian terrorist groups.

But when it comes to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s potential threat on U.S. soil, the bigger worry is Iran and its reaction to U.S. efforts to rebuild Iraq, says Magnus Ranstorp, director of the Center for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at St. Andrew's University in Scotland.

"If Iran's agenda isn't satisfied," he says, "the threat from *Hezbollah* to the U.S. rises exponentially."

U.S. officials have called <u>Hezbollah</u> (which means "party of God" in Arabic) "the A-Team" of terrorist organizations. A radical Shiite group, its leaders are known for carrying out synchronized attacks -- a technique al-Qaeda has copied.

Within a year of its creation in 1982, <u>Hezbollah</u> carried out a suicide bombing that killed 241 people at the U.S. Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut. In 1985, <u>Hezbollah</u> members killed a U.S. Navy diver during the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in Lebanon. And in the 1990s, the group kidnapped several Americans and Westerners.

Terrorism analysts say <u>Hezbollah</u> attacks on Americans declined as its leaders focused on making the transition from terrorists to political players in Lebanon. Equally significant, analysts say, <u>Hezbollah</u> and other radical Muslim groups realized that they could raise millions of dollars in the USA -- legally and illegally -- as long as they didn't draw attention by killing Americans.

So far, <u>Hezbollah</u> has no reason to jeopardize its money train, Ranstorp says. But if <u>Hezbollah</u> decides to target Americans, he says, "the cost-benefit calculation will be very rational."

The smuggling begins

When Hammoud and his friends arrived here in 1992, they appeared to be law-abiding visitors, says Kenneth Bell, who prosecuted the case.

But in 1996, an off-duty sheriff's deputy near Charlotte alerted authorities after he saw young, Middle Eastern men buying cigarettes in bulk with bags of cash at a wholesaler.

Over the next four years, investigators gathered evidence as the men bought about \$ 8 million worth of cigarettes in North Carolina, where the tax was 50 cents a carton, and sold them in Detroit, where the tax was \$ 7.50 a carton.

To hide and move their profits, the men used false names, difficult-to-trace cashier's checks and more than 500 accounts at local banks.

Said Mohamad Harb, who lived in Charlotte, provided the link between the cigarette-smuggling operation and a *Hezbollah* equipment procurement cell in Canada.

Harb was a longtime friend of Mohamad Hassan Dbouk, a high-ranking <u>Hezbollah</u> member who oversaw purchases of military-type equipment, such as night-vision goggles and map copiers, designed to help soldiers improve their ability to attack.

Bell says agents could not track the equipment after it was smuggled into Lebanon. However, a former U.S. intelligence expert testified that during the smuggling operation, <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters became more accurate in shooting Israeli soldiers.

To stay in this country, Hammoud and other defendants engaged in sham marriages to American <u>women</u> out of friendship or in exchange for minor payments.

In all, 19 people were convicted, including Angela Tsioumas, who married Hammoud. She ran a pizza shop where the men worked and became a key player in the cigarette-smuggling scheme.

Five others are fugitives, including Dbouk; Sheik Abbas Harake, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s military commander near Beirut; and Hassan Hilu Laqis, its operative in charge of getting equipment from North America.

Hammoud, who is serving a 155-year sentence, had ties to top <u>Hezbollah</u> leaders in Lebanon. In a letter seized by the FBI, Harake called Hammoud "a dear brother who is hopefully not forgotten his field of work," which Bell says he believes is a reference to terrorism.

In the defendants' homes, investigators also found videotapes of a "martyr squad," strapped with explosives, vowing to "continue to detonate ourselves to cause the earth to shake under the feet of our enemy, America and Israel."

In another video, Hammoud's toddler nephews are urged by adults to "tell them who you are." After being poked in the chest several times, one boy raises his fist and yells, "*Hezbollah*!"

"All we ever proved was fundraising," Bell says. "There was nothing found of planned violence or that they had ever carried out" any attacks. "But they were in a position to do whatever was asked."

More capable than al-Qaeda

U.S. officials say <u>Hezbollah</u> has more operatives in the USA than al-Qaeda, access to chemical and biological agents through Iran and active training camps in Lebanon.

"<u>Hezbollah</u> has a significant presence in the United States waiting for a call to action," says Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., former chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. He says he is worried about law enforcement's ability to confront the threat.

The task is daunting, Ranstorp says. "<u>Hezbollah</u> is not an organization you just tackle. They are not some small hornets' nest you stick your hand in and get moderately stung. These are super bees who can, because of the Iranian connection, wreak serious havoc to the United States."

Ranstorp says <u>Hezbollah</u> would not launch suicide attacks on U.S. soil unless Iran felt its agenda in neighboring Iraq was threatened. Terrorism analysts say they believe Iran would like to see a clergy-led Islamic government in Iraq.

"Could Iran and Syria bring <u>Hezbollah</u> in? Yes," says Gideon Rose, managing editor of foreign affairs for the non-profit Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. "That would be . . . a scenario that would be bad for us. It would be even worse for Iran and Syria."

Rose says the Iraq war has shown the Middle East that "the last thing you want to do is actually come after the U.S. . . . If you do, we will beat the crap out of you."

FBI officials worry about an alliance between *Hezbollah* and al-Qaeda.

In his book *Inside Al-Qaeda*, Rohan Gunaratna wrote that Osama bin Laden put aside religious beliefs years ago and forged ties between the Sunni-dominated al-Qaeda and the Shiite *Hezbollah*.

With Iran's help, al-Qaeda received training from <u>Hezbollah</u> operatives such as Imad Fayez Mugniyah, who is credited with perfecting <u>Hezbollah</u>'s use of timed, multiple attacks.

But Rose and other analysts say <u>Hezbollah</u> is comparable to the Irish Republican Army in using the United States for fundraising and in its efforts to become a political player.

"The debate is are they going the way of the IRA, toward politics," a senior FBI official says, "or are they just waiting for the opportune moment to strike?"

Graphic

U.S. looks at potential danger from Hezbollah

PHOTO, B/W; PHOTO, B/W, AP file photo by Bill Foley; PHOTO, B/W, FBI; Blending in: Mohamad Hammoud, right, and Mohamad Atef Darwiche, members of a *Hezbollah* cell, visit the White House in this undated photo. <>Bombing in Beirut: Rescue workers carry a Marine on stretcher after a suicide bombing at a Marine Corps base in Beirut on Oct. 23, 1983. <>Mugniyah: Trained al-Qaeda members.

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Highlight: It's one of the biggest, most important parties in the Arab world, yet it no longer has a clear mission

Confusion and ennui reign in an organization that once was the galvanizer of Islamic anger in Lebanon

Body

Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah began in little more than a whisper - a hushed, solemn prayer for the feast of Iftar, marking the end of another daylong fast by Muslims during the holy month of Ramadan.

But his voice is at a crescendo now, carrying forth the full barking dogma of the man who leads *Hezbollah*.

Yet something strange is happening here in this cavernous school gymnasium in south Beirut, where Nasrallah has convened an invitation-only audience of several hundred <u>women</u> for a rare personal address on the state of the struggle.

In a word: apathy. In another word: borrrring. Nasrallah's excoriations against American and Israeli injustice are going down like a lead Zeppelin.

Neither the over-amped sound system, nor the imposing presence of stone-faced bodyguards fanned out across the hall, seems to be making a difference.

A ho-hum, heard-it-all-before glaze permeates the faces of the <u>Women</u>'s Association for Social Solidarity, a <u>Hezbollah</u>-funded charity known for its work with Lebanese orphans and widows.

The women here are unmistakably uninterested, some chatting among themselves even as Nasrallah speaks.

Several pass the time smoking cigarettes, anxious for the speech to end.

The empty seats speak even louder. A full one-third of the banquet tables are vacant tonight, the steaming trays of a catered feast - a mouth-watering array of chicken, rice, lamb, hummus, olives, dates and pickles - left unclaimed by no-show invitees.

Perhaps it's just an off night for the Party of God. But for an organization branded by many Western governments, including Canada, as a primary enemy in America's war on terror, such embarrassing ennui warrants careful examination.

"That is not the kind of scene <u>Hezbollah</u> wants you to see," says Wajh Kanso, co-founder of the Beirut-based Oriental Institute for Islamic Studies.

"They are very careful about their public image. But there is no hiding the fact that <u>Hezbollah</u> is in trouble. They have lost their way.

"They need a new purpose, a new vision for the future. But now that Israel is gone from Lebanon, and because of what is happening in Iraq, they are unsure of what to do next."

There was no such confusion in the ranks of <u>Hezbollah</u> 20 years ago, when the organization coalesced as a powerful flashpoint for Islamic anger in war-torn Lebanon.

Leading with a mantra to expel Israeli troops from the country, the movement galvanized the fragmented elements of resistance into an ideologically driven military force, replete with outside support from the Islamic revolution in Iran.

But whatever ambitions <u>Hezbollah</u> had of importing Islamic revolution to Lebanon have been replaced by a new pragmatism.

The organization has fielded candidates, won seats and now stands as a powerful voice in Lebanon's wildly sectarian political spectrum, where 19 varieties of Christianity and Islam share power.

Modern-day <u>Hezbollah</u>'s political wing is not only the key outlet for Lebanon's long-suffering Shiite Muslim masses, it also is arguably the only element in the political spectrum absolutely bereft of corruption.

Outwardly, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s journey toward pragmatism has been seen as a deft transformation. But the shift left some party insiders with an appetite for more sweeping changes.

Lebanese journalist Faysal Abdel Sater, a former <u>Hezbollah</u> strategist, is among a handful of long-time activists who chose to make a clean break.

"For me, it was a question of conscience. I was reading a lot, and my readings took me into conflict with some of the core beliefs of *Hezbollah*," Sater told the Star.

"What bothered me was the totalitarian element, the inflexible dogma, the idea that <u>Hezbollah</u> was the only way to redemption for Muslims.

"I came to the point where I could differentiate between religion and ideology. I wanted the party to be more open and free, to be open to new ideas. But it went nowhere."

Sater went public in 1997, announcing his resignation. Others have since left the party, though <u>Hezbollah</u> has worked hard to keep such dissension behind closed doors.

Insiders say it was the May, 2000, withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon - ostensibly a public relations triumph for *Hezbollah* - that has cost the party dearest.

"That was the peak for <u>Hezbollah</u> power," says Kanso. "Yet the liberation of Lebanon revealed the real problem - they have no strategy, no vision.

"Now, they are living an empty time. Fighting Israel is not a vision but an ethical commitment. But beyond that, what do they really stand for?

"They are not calling for an Islamic state, because it's impossible in Lebanon. Yet this shows a political pragmatism that is paradoxical to their religious dogma."

<u>Hezbollah</u> has maintained nothing more than a peripheral role in the Palestinian intifada, occasionally engaging in borderland clashes with Israeli troops. It also has initiated boycotts of American and Israeli products in an effort to bring economic pressure to bear on the conflict.

Afamia Kaddour, founder of the Lebanese Campaign to Boycott Supporters of Israel, rejected <u>Hezbollah</u>'s attempt to enlist her organization "because they wanted to manipulate us to make it more anti-American."

Explains Kaddour: "We did our research. We are strictly targeting companies like Burger King, which operate restaurants in Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

"<u>Hezbollah</u> asked for our research. But they were mainly interested in bashing America, which is not our purpose. So, we backed away from them."

Kaddour, 26, a researcher at the American University of Beirut, says she rebelled against her strict Islamic upbringing seven years ago, announcing to her family that she was becoming an atheist.

"My parents gave their approval," she says. "But my uncle was a member of <u>Hezbollah</u>. He told me he had the right to kill me for what I did. I laughed in his face. We haven't spoken since.

"I think that's part of why <u>Hezbollah</u> is losing its hold on many Lebanese <u>women</u>. The poverty never changes under their rule, yet <u>women</u> are beginning to see that there's more to life than what the fundamentalists will allow."

<u>Hezbollah</u> may find itself with another public relations victory in the near future, as German mediators near completion of a prisoner swap with Israel that could see as many as 400 jailed Arabs, mostly Palestinians, released in exchange for a single living Israeli hostage and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is expected to present the controversial package to his cabinet today. Completion of the deal would be viewed as a huge victory for both <u>Hezbollah</u> and Syria, which has maintained de facto control over Lebanon since the end of the latter's brutal 15-year civil war.

But as in May, 2000, the glow of victory is likely to be followed by questions about <u>Hezbollah</u>'s future, and whether the organization has any reason to maintain its military apparatus.

In his Iftar speech last week, Nasrallah appeared to pre-empt such suggestions, citing continuing Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and vowing to maintain resistance.

"We are pursuing our resistance today without being influenced by the threats of Israel or the United States ... or by their change in terminology from 'resistance' to 'terrorism,'" he told his audience in Arabic.

"We now face a new situation where there is no place for a word such as 'resistance' because Americans want to erase it from the dictionary.

"Even those who were defending the concept of resistance two years ago keep their mouths shut today. Many do not dare today to support the resistance or talk about the resistance or support it financially."

Nasrallah went on to blur the lines between Israeli incursions into Lebanon and the larger Palestinian conflict to the south. His boilerplate denunciations of Israel and the United States amount to what many in the Arab world call "wooden speak" - phraseology heavy with grievance but short on specifics - as it relates to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s status goals.

"In the American logic of Sept. 11 - and even before Sept. 11 - Americans and Zionists have the right to defend themselves, but the rest of the world doesn't have that right," Nasrallah said.

"And this is American and Zionist racism. If you are stealing from me my right to defend myself, you are robbing me of my human rights because the basic human right is to self-defence."

Talal Salman, editor-in-chief of as-Safir, Lebanon's second-largest Arabic daily newspaper, says <u>Hezbollah</u>'s ambitions for a larger role in the Middle East hinge entirely on the outcome of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

"<u>Hezbollah</u> is in crisis," he says. "On one hand, they are one of the biggest and most important parties in the Arab world, yet they no longer have a clear mission.

"One of the ways out of that would be to reinvent its image beyond Lebanon, but right now they find themselves in an awkward position because of Iraq.

"Remember, Saddam Hussein killed thousands of Shiites - people who are the spiritual, and in some cases the actual, brothers of *Hezbollah* here in Lebanon.

"The Americans ended this nightmare. So <u>Hezbollah</u>, no matter what it wants to do, cannot afford to upset the balance in Iraq. If the Shiites in Iraq become more resistant to the U.S. occupation, <u>Hezbollah</u> is a model they could copy.

"What we are witnessing now is a parallel in people's minds between the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

"But we don't know how it will end. Everything depends on the volume of mistakes the Americans make in Iraq."

Graphic

JAMAL SAIDI/Reuters File photo <u>Hezbollah</u> recruits fill a Beirut auditorium for a November, 2001, speech by leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah memorializing a 1982 suicide attack on Israeli occupiers. Insiders say the May, 2000, withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon, ostensibly a triumph for <u>Hezbollah</u>, cost the party dearly setting it on a pragmatic road and leaving it, in the words of one analyst, "unsure of what to do next."MOHAMED AZAKIR/REUTERS FILE PHOTO "If you are stealing from me my right to defend myself, you are robbing me of my human rights because the basic human right is to self-defence," argues <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, seen here addressing a Beirut rally in support of the Palestinian intifada. MOHAMED AZAKIR/REUTERS FILE PHOTO "If you are stealing from me my right to defend myself, you are robbing me of my human rights because the basic human right is to self-defence," argues <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, seen here addressing a Beirut rally in support of the Palestinian intifada.

Load-Date: November 9, 2003



Hezbollah Strong in Lebanese Region Vote

The New York Times
June 6, 2005 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 7

Length: 548 words

Byline: By JOHN KIFNER

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, June 5

Body

Shiite political parties long supported by and identified with Syria -- appeared to be heading to a sweeping victory on Sunday night in the second of four rounds of parliamentary elections, this time in the hilly Shiite heartland along Lebanon's southern border with Israel.

Caravans of cars waving both the yellow flags of <u>Hezbollah</u> and the green flags of Amal, its ally and sometimes rival, swooped through the twisting mountain roads and villages of stone houses, where black-veiled young <u>women</u> handed out campaign posters.

The overwhelmingly strong showing of the Shiite parties, locked in an electoral alliance, raises questions about the political power of the growing opposition to Syria's longtime influence over Lebanon among other religiously oriented political groups and, more important, about whether this troubled land could again fall into sectarian strife.

In the first round of voting in Beirut and its environs on May 29, the ballots strongly reflected the views of more cosmopolitan Lebanese, who have been galvanized by the assassination in February of the former prime minister Rafik Hariri -- widely viewed as an act of the Syrians -- which brought street demonstrations demanding a new era. Under strong international pressure after the Hariri killing, Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon on April 26, ending a 29-year military presence.

The next round of voting, a week from now, will be in Mount Lebanon, the traditional Maronite Christian heartland. The Maronites are the longtime ruling class and the main opponent of the Syrians.

The results on Sunday cast doubt on whether the desire for change would go beyond sectarian differences.

With polls closing at 6 p.m., celebrations were in full swing in Nabatiye, the major Shiite center, and surrounding villages, with fireworks and men doing the traditional Dabke Arab dance. By contrast, in Merj 'Uyun, a mixed but mostly Christian town, turnout appeared light, and was even more so in the chain of Christian areas around Jezzin, where steep mountain villages once sheltered Maronite militiamen who were longtime allies of Israel.

In early results with roughly two-thirds of the votes counted in the first election district -- where the leading candidate was the Amal chieftain Nabih Berri, the speaker of Parliament, a post traditionally reserved for Shiites -- the combined Amal-**Hezbollah** list appeared to have about 33,000 votes, compared with 5,000 votes for its nearest

Hezbollah Strong in Lebanese Region Vote

rival. Similarly, in the second election district, the Amal-<u>Hezbollah</u> list appeared to have about 80,000 votes, compared with 8,000 for its nearest rival.

In those polling places, the areas where ballots were cast were strictly divided, with Christians voting in one area while Shiites and other Muslims voted in another.

At stake were 23 seats representing the southern region in the 128-seat Parliament, in which a complex formula is used to allot power among the country's more than one dozen major and minor religious sects.

From the time Lebanon gained independence after World War II, the bulk of power had gone to the Christians, particularly the Maronite Catholics, who controlled the presidency and commanded the Army under an unwritten pact known as the Confessional Agreement. That led to a civil war from 1975 to 1990.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: At the group's election center in Nabatiye, members of <u>Hezbollah</u> followed the results of parliamentary voting yesterday. <u>Hezbollah</u> and Amal, its election ally, appeared headed for a big victory in the southern region. (Photo by Moustafa Hammoud/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)

Load-Date: June 6, 2005



Jewish group plans lawsuit over shielding of Hezbollah

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

November 29, 2002 Friday Final Edition

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Section: Canada; Pg. A8; News

Length: 379 words **Dateline:** OTTAWA

Body

OTTAWA -- B'nai Brith Canada plans to take the federal government to court for refusing to designate the Islamic militant organization *Hezbollah* as a terrorist group.

"Our government is being very lax and irresponsible in not including <u>Hezbollah</u> on the list of terrorist organizations," said Rochelle Wilner, president of B'nai Brith Canada, a Jewish advocacy group.

"There's no excuse. This notion that there's a social welfare arm and a military arm or wing is absolutely ludicrous," she said.

Southam Newspapers

"It is a terror organization in the Middle East.

"They hide behind women and children. They raise money hiding behind this notion of social welfare."

Wilner said the legal action was being pursued out of exasperation and after much unsuccessful behind-the-scenes lobbying to convince the government to label *Hezbollah* as a full-fledged terrorist group.

"CSIS has presented our government with more information than they need," she said.

In 1997, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service warned the government that <u>Hezbollah</u> had established a base in Canada that could "assist and support terrorists" seeking a base of operations in North America.

Wilner would not divulge the legal grounds on which the lawsuit against the federal government would be based. B'nai Brith is to lay out its case at a press conference in Ottawa today.

Its action comes two days after the federal government announced that it was listing five additional terrorist groups to the growing number organizations whose activities are banned under the country's new anti-terror law.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which was formed almost 20 years ago in the Middle East and is dedicated to the destruction to Israel, was not added to the list.

The government maintains that the group has two wings -- militant and political -- and that it cannot be punished for its political activities, which include education, health care and various social programs.

Various security experts, as well as the Canadian Alliance, say the distinction is ludicrous and that no credible line can be drawn between the group's terrorist activities and its social programs.

Jewish group plans lawsuit over shielding of Hezbollah

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which has claimed responsibility for scores of deadly attacks on Israeli civilians, has been branded a terrorist group by the United States.

Load-Date: November 29, 2002



Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman

The International Herald Tribune

March 14, 2005 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 1143 words

Byline: Neil Macfarquhar

Dateline: BEIRUT:

Body

When Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Lebanon's militant <u>Hezbollah</u> organization, addressed the hundreds of thousands of party faithful who gathered in the largest rally in Lebanon's modern history last week, his usual theme of liberating Jerusalem went unmentioned.

Instead, Nasrallah, a 44-year-old bearded cleric, focused, uncharacteristically, on the future of Lebanon.

The speech last Tuesday was also remarkable for its venue downtown Beirut and the absence of the trademark <u>Hezbollah</u> backdrop, its green and yellow banner with a fist brandishing a Kalashnikov rifle.

Manar Television, the organization's satellite channel, ended its somewhat triumphant reporting with a tight shot of Nasrallah standing on the balcony of a sparkling white sandstone building in front of a Lebanese flag. The New York Times

"Today Sayyid Nasrallah has become a national leader," the announcer intoned.

With the assassination of the former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, on Feb. 14, Lebanon lost a rare man who succeeded in appealing to some extent across the patchwork of often murderous sects who compete for the spoils in this tiny mountainous country.

The question is whether anyone can fill his shoes as a kind of national arbitrator. The huge march on Tuesday served as Nasrallah's opening bid for the job.

"This is the first time that Nasrallah played the role of statesman, we have never seen him as a Lebanese leader," said Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, a professor at the Lebanese American University and author of a book on <u>Hezbollah</u>'s politics and religion. "<u>Hezbollah</u> might emerge as the new power broker in Lebanon outside Syria."

Nasrallah's bid is a major gamble. To some extent, he has stayed above the endlessly bickering fray of Lebanese politics.

He gained national stature by directing <u>Hezbollah</u>'s considerable firepower and thousands of armed men against the Israeli Army, winning admiration across the Arab world for ending the 22-year Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000.

Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman

Once he plunges fully into the political fray, however, he becomes less of a pan-Arab, pan-Islamic figurehead and may be considered just one more Lebanese ward boss, albeit representing the largest Shiite bloc.

It is also questionable how his support for Syria his speech on Tuesday was laced with glowing references to Syria's Assad dynasty and ended with the line "Long live Syria!" will play in a country where many are sick of what they see as its exploitative neighbor.

But becoming "more Lebanese" could well prove necessary. With the anticipated departure of <u>Hezbollah</u>'s Syrian protectors, it will be harder for the group to pursue its emphasis on maintaining Lebanon as a battlefield for the Palestinian cause.

It is only by flexing the muscles of the Shiite community that Nasrallah can ensure that <u>Hezbollah</u> retains a voice in a political system where religious identification remains all-important. (Under Lebanon's rigid divisions, the highest political post a Shiite Muslim can aspire to is speaker of Parliament.)

At the very least, the scale of the march on Tuesday is almost certain to stall the U.S.-led attempt to disarm *Hezbollah*, which Washington has labeled a terrorist organization.

Hani Hammoud, one of Hariri's closest advisers, summed up Nasrallah's gamble in organizing the extraordinary march this way: "Before he did it, when the Americans and the French and the UN said disarm <u>Hezbollah</u>, you had at least 50 percent of all Lebanese who said no, this is not a militia, this is not a terrorist movement."

"This is not bin Laden," Hammoud said in reference to the Al Qaeda leader, "this is a national resistance movement, the only one that ever liberated any Arab land."

The next phase could be markedly different.

"But if he turns himself into a local political player and keeps repeating 'We want Syria,' pretty soon you will find that not just 50 percent of the Lebanese, but even 50 percent of the Shiites, will start asking, 'Why does that militia still hold its weapons?' This is the risk," Hammoud concluded.

In some ways the struggle over post-Hariri Lebanon resurrected the long fight over how the Lebanese see themselves. Hariri was a Sunni Muslim who believed in Arab causes, but he also spoke to the many Lebanese, particularly Christians, who consider themselves misplaced Europeans.

He was a self-made billionaire real estate tycoon. He wore good suits, smoked expensive cigars, spoke three languages fluently and lunched with friends like the president of France, Jacques Chirac.

He was rebuilding downtown Beirut to make it the financial and tourism Mecca it had been before the civil war. He ran up some \$35 billion in debt

Many Lebanese took note Tuesday that Nasrallah, in his black turban, spoke from a balcony right above the trendy Buddha Bar and just a few buildings away from Bank Street, lined with the country's premier financial institutions, which together hold an estimated \$65 billion to \$85 billion

It is not turf frequented by the bulk of the working-class Shiite Muslims from the capital's unkempt southern suburbs who form <u>Hezbollah</u>'s backbone. Indeed, it was the group's emergence during the civil war that gave that underclass its first substantial voice.

The march underscored that the downtrodden were not going to cede turf to the more secular, more Westernized coalition of Christians, Sunni Muslims and Druse who have been marching weekly since Hariri died.

"He staged the march in central Beirut, in Hariri's Beirut," said Saad-Ghorayeb, the professor. "For them it symbolized that they too belong to Beirut."

Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman

Many in the crowd were hoisting pictures of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria or his late father which prompted some in other sects to claim that the bulk of the marchers were from the estimated 300,000 Syrian workers in Lebanon or were even bused over the border.

What really shocked many people was their first face-to-face encounter with Nasrallah's core constituency.

"There is a whole generation who had a sort of curtain in front of their eyes, who did not realize that this country was not only theirs," said Ghassan Tueni, the retired publisher of An Nahar newspaper and the dean of Lebanese political analysts.

In reaction, the opposition is trying to pull off its own gargantuan rally on Monday. The math of the Lebanese population means that no sect is big enough to dominate.

Nasrallah himself says he has never tried to direct his appeal only toward Shiite Muslims. Although the dour pictures of Iran's revolutionary patriarchs stare down on <u>Hezbollah</u> neighborhoods, there is no forced veiling for <u>women</u> or other Islamic rigidity.

"We don't think in a sectarian manner," he said in an interview with The New York Times in November 2002. "It is true that I am a Shiite Muslim, but when I think about Palestine or Iraq or any other country, I don't think within the limits of the Shiites affiliated with my own sect."

Load-Date: March 14, 2005



Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics

The New York Times

March 13, 2005 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 1; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1501 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, March 12

Body

When Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Lebanon's militant <u>Hezbollah</u> organization, addressed the hundreds of thousands of party faithful who gathered in the largest rally in Lebanon's modern history on Tuesday, his usual theme of liberating Jerusalem went unmentioned.

Instead, Sheik Nasrallah, a 44-year-old bearded cleric, focused, uncharacteristically, on the future of Lebanon.

The speech was also remarkable for its venue -- downtown Beirut -- and the absence of the trademark <u>Hezbollah</u> backdrop, its green and yellow banner with a fist brandishing a Kalashnikov rifle. Manar Television, the organization's satellite channel, ended its somewhat triumphant reporting with a tight shot of Sheik Nasrallah, standing on the balcony of a sparkling white sandstone building and in front of a Lebanese flag.

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"This is the first time that Nasrallah played the role of statesman; we have never seen him as a Lebanese leader," said Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, a professor at the Lebanese American University and author of a book on <u>Hezbollah</u>'s politics and religion. "<u>Hezbollah</u> might emerge as the new power broker in Lebanon outside Syria."

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Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics

Assad dynasty and ended with the line "Long live Syria!" -- will play in a country where many are sick of what they see as its exploitive neighbor.

But becoming "more Lebanese" could well prove necessary. With the anticipated departure of <u>Hezbollah</u>'s Syrian protectors, it will be harder for the group to pursue its emphasis on maintaining Lebanon as a battlefield for the Palestinian cause. It is only by flexing the muscles of the Shiite community that Sheik Nasrallah can ensure that <u>Hezbollah</u> retains a voice in a political system where religious identification remains all-important. (Under Lebanon's rigid divisions, the highest political post a Shiite Muslim can aspire to is speaker of Parliament.)

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In some ways the struggle over post-Hariri Lebanon resurrected the long fight over how the Lebanese see themselves. Mr. Hariri was a Sunni Muslim who believed in Arab causes, but he also spoke to the many Lebanese, particularly Christians, who consider themselves misplaced Europeans.

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It is not turf frequented by the bulk of the working-class Shiite Muslims from the capital's unkempt southern suburbs who form <u>Hezbollah</u>'s backbone. Indeed, it was the group's emergence during the civil war that gave that underclass its first substantial voice. The march underscored that the downtrodden were not going to cede turf to the more secular, more Westernized coalition of Christians, Sunni Muslims and Druze who have been marching weekly since Mr. Hariri died. The strength of the Shiite showing was shocking to many Lebanese.

"There is a whole generation who had a sort of curtain in front of their eyes, who did not realize that this country was not only theirs," said Ghassan Tueni, the retired publisher of An Nahar newspaper and the dean of Lebanese political analysts.

In reaction, the opposition is trying to pull off its own gargantuan rally on Monday. The math of the Lebanese population means no sect is big enough to dominate. Sheik Nasrallah himself says he has never tried to direct his appeal only toward Shiite Muslims. Although the dour pictures of Iran's revolutionary patriarchs stare down on <u>Hezbollah</u> neighborhoods, there is no forced veiling for <u>women</u> or other Islamic rigidity.

"We don't think in a sectarian manner," he said in a previous interview with The New York Times in November 2002. "It is true that I am a Shiite Muslim, but when I think about Palestine or Iraq or any other country, I don't think within the limits of the Shiites affiliated with my own sect."

Part of Sheik Nasrallah's appeal is rooted in his own story. He was born in Beirut, the son of a grocer, and attended public schools until leaving at age 15 for Najaf, Iraq, where he studied in a Shiite seminary. He fled in 1978 when Saddam Hussein's government rounded up Lebanese clergy, and for the next decade his studies were interrupted repeatedly by the vagaries of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war.

In 1989, he did a short stint in Qum, an Iranian city holy to Shiites.

When Israel assassinated Sheik Abbas Musawi, his spiritual mentor and <u>Hezbollah</u>'s leader in 1992, he took over the organization at age 32.

Among the scores of <u>Hezbollah</u> foot soldiers who died fighting the Israeli Army was his son Hadi, the oldest of his five children, killed in September 1997.

A leader whose children suffer for his cause is virtually unknown in the Arab world. That combined with his modest lifestyle lends Sheik Nasrallah and other <u>Hezbollah</u> politicians a reputation for not being corrupt, rare among Lebanese leaders. <u>Hezbollah</u> has 13 Parliament members and could double the number once the Syrians are no longer around to force them into an election alliance with a rival movement, Amal.

Still, the <u>Hezbollah</u> march left a distinct unease that an alien fundamentalist state had suddenly sprouted in Lebanon. "Christians are really afraid that he could take control whenever he wants," said Georges Kenaan, a 20-year-old business major eating an avocado salad for lunch at a chic Beirut restaurant on Friday. "I don't have a problem with **Hezbollah**, but not for him to have his own arms; he's kind of scary."

Even Shiite critics argue that <u>Hezbollah</u> must reconcile its long-held stand as a body of persecuted outsiders with its yearning for more stature before it tries to lead the nation.

The issues, says Waddah Sharara, a Lebanese University sociology professor, start with small, symbolic matters like the fact that most people in *Hezbollah* neighborhoods refuse to pay their electric bills -- but never get cut off.

On a larger scale, Lebanon's potential will be hobbled as long as <u>Hezbollah</u> remains a possible source of instability, he argues.

"Hariri paid for all the windows broken by Syria and Iran via <u>Hezbollah</u>, but even he realized it could not continue," said Mr. Sharara, adding that Sheik Nasrallah espoused "a political program for a community, not a state."

"Ultimately it squeezes Lebanon both economically and politically," he said.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the <u>Hezbollah</u> leader, was featured in portraits being sold yesterday in the town of Nabatiya in southern Lebanon. He may have to become "more Lebanese" as he enters the political fray there.

Crowds in Beirut protested Tuesday against the withdrawal of Syrian troops and United Nations Resolution 1559, which seeks the pullout. (Photographs by Lynsey Addario for The New York Times)(pg. 4)

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah addressing a rally last week in Beirut. (Photo by Mohamed Azakir/Reuters)(pg. 1)

Load-Date: March 13, 2005



Bodies of 59 guerrillas returned to Hezbollah

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)
January 31, 2004 Saturday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A10; News

Length: 316 words

Dateline: NAQOURA, Lebanon

Body

NAQOURA, Lebanon (AP) -- <u>Women</u> in black wept and a military band played sombre music to honour the remains of 59 guerrillas returned to Lebanon on Friday, the last step of a complex prisoner exchange between <u>Hezbollah</u> and Israel.

A Canadian-Lebanese man was released as part of the transaction.

Hundreds of people lined the streets as the convoy of trucks carrying the coffins slowly made its way up the coastal road from the border with Israel to Lebanon's capital Beirut.

Associated Press

Elsewhere in Lebanon, thousands of people took to the streets to welcome home released prisoners, showering them with rice and chanting "Death to Israel."

"I say that the enemy can kidnap a man from a house by various methods, but it is impossible to hijack his will and determination to resist injustice," said Mustafa Dirani, a <u>Hezbollah</u> leader who was abducted by Israeli commandos in eastern Lebanon in 1994 and released under the deal.

Residents of his village of Qsarnaba slaughtered dozens of sheep and calves in his honour. When Dirani entered the village on the top of a slow-moving car, thousands crowded around him and people fired shots in the air.

The other leading <u>Hezbollah</u> figure that Israeli commandos kidnapped, Sheik Abdel Karim Obeid, sat on layers of flowers on the roof of a car that crawled through the crowd in his home village of Jibsheet, southern Lebanon.

"There is happiness in my heart that no one can imagine," the white-turbaned cleric said. But he expressed regret for being unable to attend the funerals of his parents and other villagers who died after he was seized in 1989.

The exchange of prisoners and bodies completed a German-mediated deal that saw Israel release 400 Palestinians, about 30 prisoners of other nationalities and the bodies of the 59 Lebanese guerrillas.

Among those released by Israel was Fawzi Mohammed Mustafa Ayoub, a Canadian-Lebanese citizen.

Load-Date: January 31, 2004



New Hezbollah rockets threaten Israeli cities ; The Middle East

The International Herald Tribune March 12, 2003 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 952 words

Byline: Larry Collins

Dateline: LONDON

Body

The eyes of the world are, quite rightly, focused on Baghdad and a looming U.S.-Iraq war. There is, however, another potentially explosive Middle Eastern area that is not getting the attention it deserves. It is the Lebanese-Israeli border.

In the spring of 2000, Israel's then prime minister, Ehud Barak, ordered the Israeli Army out of the 20 kilometer (12 mile) swath north of the border which Israel had occupied since 1982. He did so expecting the Lebanese government to exercise its natural sovereign rights and move Lebanese Army troops onto the border. They never did.

International Herald Tribune

Why? Because the leaders of the <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas controlling the area informed the Beirut government that any attempt to replace them with Lebanese troops would be met with force. The leadership, made up primarily of Lebanese Shiites, then began to import from Iran massive quantities of a souped up version of the Katushya rocket with which they had once made life hell for Israeli villages along the frontier. Labelled the Fajr-3, the new rockets carry the same high explosive warhead as the original but have a range expanded from 20 to 50 kilometers. A still newer version, the Fajr-4, with a range of 70 kilometers bringing the coastal city of Haifa and the northern outskirts of Tel Aviv within range, has been reaching the **Hezbollah** since early 2002.

A year ago Shimon Peres and senior Israeli Army intelligence officers estimated that the <u>Hezbollah</u> already had 8,000 of the rockets in their possession. Last week, they both raised that figure to 10,000. At the time of the first estimate, I was in Lebanon working with senior UN officials keeping watch on the <u>Hezbollah</u>'s activities. They dismissed Peres' estimate as exagerrated but were prepared to admit that the <u>Hezbollah</u> could have as many as 5,000 of the new rockets. Today? They might well raise that estimate to between 7,000 and 7,500.

The rockets have no guidance system to speak of and in a massive firing many would splash into the sea or plow up an empty field. Israel's northern villagers, however, can attest to the damage they can cause when they hit a building head on. Fire off such a salvo, and some would inevitably hit high-rise apartment buildings, crowded shopping malls, perhaps a school or a hospital.

A fleet of hundreds or thousands of those rockets flying south toward Tel Aviv could leave in their wake devastation more terrible than anything Israel has ever known. Will they fly in the event of a U.S.-Iraq war? The chances, alas, are very high that they will.

Beirut's Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the organization's spiritual guide, is on the record as saying that the <u>Hezbollah</u> will not attack Israel simply because America invades Iraq. But will he be able to convince the <u>Hezbollah</u> to keep its powder dry in the face of a nightly barrage of horrifying TV images of Iraqi homes being destroyed by U.S. smart bombs, <u>women</u> and children mourning their dead?

Much more to the point, I learned from a first-rate Israeli source that Ariel Sharon is confiding to his inner circle that when the United States attacks Iraq, he will seize the occasion to move against the <u>Hezbollah</u> in the north himself. Undoing the action of his predecessor, Ehud Barak, is something Sharon has been aching to do since he took office.

Such a move on Sharon's part will almost certainly add a new dimension to the U.S.-Iraq war, a Syrian-Israeli conflict. While the <u>Hezbollah</u> is dependent on the mullahs of Tehran for their financing, administrative guidance and weaponry, those rockets were shipped to Lebanon via the Damascus airport with the knowledge and approval of the Syrian government. Sharon, via the good offices of the U.S. ambassador in Damascus, has informed Syria's President Bashar Assad that if the <u>Hezbollah</u> fires the rockets, Israel will hold Syria responsible.

But suppose it's Sharon who strikes first? There are between 30,000 and 35,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley north of the <u>Hezbollah</u> strongholds. How is Assad going to stop them from rushing to the aid of their <u>Hezbollah</u> friends? If they do, they will be no match for the Israelis. The Syrian Army and Air Force have not received any spare parts for their Soviet weaponry since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989.

So how then might Assad and his generals respond to a humiliating defeat of their military at the hands of the Israelis? Last summer the thinkers at the Begin Sadat Institute of Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University in Tel Aviv published a little noticed paper noting that it was Syria, not Iraq, that possessed the most sophisticated chemical and biological weaponry in the Middle East. A fortnight ago, a senior Israeli confirmed to me that this is indeed true.

The Syrians don't have a sophisticated delivery system to hurl such weapons at Israel, but they don't need one. They live right next door. They can in a sense toss them over the fence.

The extent to which Bashar Assad is really in control of his nation is a mystery at the moment to most Middle Eastern thinkers. Is he running the show or is he still beholden to the Alawite military, police and political leaders who were his father's supporters and now surround him? In either case would he or they be crazy enough to such weapons at Israel in a moment of despair?

That would be a gesture of suicidal madness. It would alter the regional stability of the Middle East all right, but not in the manner George W. Bush has in mind.

Larry Collins is, with Dominique Lapierre, the co-author of "0 Jerusalem." He has spent most of the last three years in the Middle East researching a book on the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

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Load-Date: May 20, 2003



AFTEREFFECTS: THE REGION; Hezbollah Seen Making Subtle Changes After War in Iraq - Correction Appended

The New York Times
May 11, 2003 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

Correction Appended

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Section: Section 1; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 16

Length: 1194 words

Byline: By DANIEL J. WAKIN

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, May 10

Body

With President Saddam Hussein's government a thing of the past, the United States has turned to putting pressure on one of its most persistent foes, *Hezbollah*, the militant group entrenched in Lebanon. But the organization insists that nothing has changed in its implacable opposition to Israel and its ally, the United States.

In an interview on Thursday, a top <u>Hezbollah</u> official, Hajji Hussein al-Khalil, rejected American demands that it cease military operations and leave the area in southern Lebanon bordering Israel. Mr. Khalil, responding to statements here last week by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, said Washington was merely doing Israel's bidding.

"I look at Colin Powell as if he is an official spokesman for Israel," said Mr. Khalil, who is the chief aide to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s general secretary, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah. "Colin Powell is asking <u>Hezbollah</u> to withdraw from the south, and this cannot be applied to us. <u>Hezbollah</u> are the sons of these towns and villages. So where would they withdraw to?"

The United States considers <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization that caused the deaths of hundreds of Americans in the 1980's and carried out a wave of kidnappings of Westerners. It later emerged as a relentless antagonist of Israeli troops in southern Lebanon and took credit for the Israeli departure in May 2000.

"We have emphasized strongly our concern about continuing terrorist activities of <u>Hezbollah</u> in the region and around the world," Mr. Powell said last week after talks with Syrian and Lebanese leaders. He asked Syria, whose domination of Lebanon gives it ultimate control over <u>Hezbollah</u>, to crack down on the group and called on Lebanon to send its army to the border with Israel to "end armed <u>Hezbollah</u> militia incursions." Lebanon said its troops were close enough.

Mr. Khalil rejected the notion of a new strategic situation in the Middle East with the fall of Mr. Hussein and an Iraq occupied by more than 100,000 American soldiers. "If the United States wants to put military pressure on us, of course we will defend ourselves," he said. "We hope they will not fall into this stupidity."

AFTEREFFECTS: THE REGION Hezbollah Seen Making Subtle Changes After War in Iraq

Mr. Khalil spoke in the offices of the party's central information office, an apartment in a nondescript building in a rundown area of southern Beirut dominated by Shiite Muslims. Huge portraits of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the current Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, hung from the wall in a waiting room. The Romance lingerie shop incongruously occupied the ground floor, while on the streets outside many **women** wore head scarves.

Nevertheless, there were some indications that <u>Hezbollah</u> was making subtle adjustments to react to the United States pressure. One sign was the tempering of <u>Hezbollah</u> rhetoric. <u>Hezbollah</u> officials in recent days have said Mr. Powell's remarks were no surprise and stressed that Israel was their only foe. This contrasted with a speech to supporters just before the Iraq war by Sheik Nasrallah, in which he warned the Americans not to expect a warm welcome in Iraq. "The people of this region will receive you with rifles, blood, arms, martyrdom and martyrdom operations," he said. " 'Death to America' was, is and will stay our slogan."

Sheik Nasrallah kept a low profile after the Iraq war. But in an interview with Al Jazeera on Thursday night, he said that a disarmed *Hezbollah* would be "useless," adding, "are we going to resist occupation with words and poems?"

He also said that after the attacks on New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, the United States sent "messages" offering to remove the group from its terrorist list and provide economic aid.

"In return, they wanted us to drop out of the struggle and they wanted us to secretly cooperate with them against the so-called terrorist groups," he said. "This was not acceptable to us and still isn't."

The United States denies any such contact.

The sheik also said, when asked about support for an Iraqi resistance to American troops, that "our position in principle is to support any oppressed people that is subjected to tyranny and occupation," but he stopped short of offering specific help.

In recent days, <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters have fired anti-aircraft rounds at Israeli warplanes they say violate Lebanese air space. But few here expect the group to stir up trouble. "<u>Hezbollah</u> is a local institution," said Timur Goksel, the spokesman for the United Nations monitoring force in southern Lebanon. "All those guys have families in those villages. They would be the biggest victims if <u>Hezbollah</u> started something."

Mr. Goksel credits <u>Hezbollah</u> with keeping the border relatively calm in recent months. He also said that, contrary to Mr. Powell's concerns, the Lebanese military presence in the area is strong enough, with up to 7,000 troops deployed some five miles from the border. <u>Hezbollah</u>, he said, has about a dozen small observation points along the border.

In the analysis of Mr. Khalil, <u>Hezbollah</u> and Israel did not clash during the Iraq war because Israel feared attacking its enemy and because <u>Hezbollah</u> had no desire to help Saddam Hussein, who had persecuted Shiites in Iraq and whom Mr. Khalil termed a past tool of Washington who was discarded when he became an inconvenience.

But observers of the situation here suggested other reasons, among them orders from <u>Hezbollah</u>'s sponsors, Syria and Iran, to stay quiet. "They just don't want to escalate tensions with the United States," said Tewfik Mishlawi, editor of The Middle East Reporter newsletter.

<u>Hezbollah</u> has become entrenched in Lebanese society. It has a network of social services financed by donations and the profits from gas stations and other businesses. It appears to have given up the idea of an Islamic state, and says it welcomes coexistence with Lebanon's other religions. "I think <u>Hezbollah</u> has come down to earth," Mr. Goksel said. "There is a strong sense of realism."

While <u>Hezbollah</u> does not discuss military matters, Waddah Sharara, a columnist for the pan-Arab newspaper Al Hayat and a descendant of Shiite clerics, said it has 3,000 regular fighters and up to 12,000 irregulars. Its arsenal includes artillery pieces and thousands of Katyusha rockets. Iran has 300 or 400 Revolutionary Guards in the area, he said.

In the rugged hills of southern Lebanon, the group has created what amounts to a theme park of anti-Israeli resistance. Pictures of young men "martyred" in attacks on Israelis line the road, like macabre political campaign posters. Images of Shiite clerics abound, including a larger-than-life, double-sided cutout of Ayatollah Khomeini standing on top of a captured Israeli tank.

The former prison in Khiam, run by Israel's Lebanese proxies during the Israeli occupation, is now a museum run by <u>Hezbollah</u> under government sponsorship where the flame of suffering is tenderly maintained. The 3-by-3 isolation cells, the post on which prisoners were said to be tied during torture sessions, the rusting barbed wire, are all preserved. "The American Administration Is the Mother of International Terrorism" reads a yellow banner put up on a wall last week.

http://www.nytimes.com

Correction

An article and a picture caption on May 11 about the resilience of <u>Hezbollah</u>, the militant group based in Lebanon, referred incorrectly to one of many popular public images dotting the country's south and intended as signals of Shiite might. It shows a cutout of a larger-than-life Ayatollah Khomeini standing on top of a tank, but the vehicle is one of those that were left behind when the Southern Lebanon Army, Israel's ally in the region, withdrew; it was not a captured Israeli tank.

Correction-Date: May 14, 2003

Graphic

Photo: A cutout of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, spiritual leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, stands on a captured Israeli tank in southern Lebanon. (Courtney Kealy for The New York Times) Map of Lebanon highlighting Beirut: A leader of the militant group *Hezbollah* spoke from Beirut.

Load-Date: May 11, 2003



MIDEAST TURMOIL: LEBANON; Hezbollah Keeps Focus On Border With Israel

The New York Times

April 17, 2002 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2002 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 9

Length: 1070 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, April 16

Body

On a potholed, one-lane strip of asphalt in the middle of nowhere, near Lebanon's southern border with Israel, a giant white concrete road sign veers up suddenly next to the fallow fields scattered with wild thistles, poppies and mustard. The Arabic words written in bright red paint say "Jerusalem 180 kilometers," an unlikely destination across this hostile border.

Farther along, past the sign, there are far more perilous expressions of <u>Hezbollah</u>'s campaign to portray itself as the main inspiration and supporter of the Palestinian cause.

In the more than two weeks since Israel began its assault on the Palestinians in the occupied territories, <u>Hezbollah</u> gunners have peppered Israeli positions with artillery shells and occasional rockets, provoking return fire or airstrikes. Virtually all the exchanges were in the disputed Shebaa Farms region of the border.

But while Secretary of State Colin L. Powell was in Syria and Lebanon on Monday, warning that such exchanges carried the threat of a larger war, diplomats and political analysts in the area expected that they would taper off. Despite the appeal of such attacks across the region and the wider Arab world, they have already served their purpose, and indeed there have been none over the past three days.

For one thing, the exchanges helped inspire Secretary Powell to add to his itinerary Damascus, a crucial <u>Hezbollah</u> patron and a capital long fearful of not being accorded sufficient recognition by Washington in any peace negotiations.

For its part, <u>Hezbollah</u> could still claim to be the only force actually fighting the Israelis, without having gone so far as to provoke a deadly Israeli airstrike on Lebanon that might hurt its popularity domestically. Given that Iran, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s other patron, warned it to stop, Tehran could claim some influence over its unwieldy charge. And Israel was not forced to redeploy troops from its battle against the Palestinians to wage war on a second front.

"The whole thing could almost be considered a ritual," said one Western diplomat here. But it is a ritual with possible deadly consequences.

"One cannot guarantee that if something goes wrong at the border, either with Israel or <u>Hezbollah</u>, that it might not escalate into a wider war," said Nizar Hamzeh, a professor of political science at the American University of Beirut.

There were signs from Arab capitals today of impatience with Secretary Powell, especially in Damascus and Beirut, where he apparently showed up more interested in warning about fighting along the southern border than with any concrete details of how the United States planned to pressure Israel to end its offensive.

"Is he a broker carrying peace ideas or just a postman carrying a warning?" said Fayez Sayegh, a senior Syrian official.

Officials in other capitals said they had not been officially informed about any proposed peace conference. The idea provoked scorn from many, given the current circumstances in the occupied territories.

"How can you hold a peace conference when the president of the Palestinians is being treated like a prisoner of war?" said Talal Salman, publisher of Beirut's Al Safir daily newspaper.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, the Shiite Muslim group busy transforming itself from a militia into a political party, vowed to continue its attacks. About 15 people have been injured on both sides.

"Our goal is twofold, both to liberate Lebanese territory and to send a message of solidarity with the Palestinian people," said Sheik Hassan Ezzeddin, the senior spokesman for <u>Hezbollah</u>, predicting that the Powell mission would fail. "The Americans have not been able to touch the essential problem, which is the occupation for the past 35 years."

<u>Hezbollah</u>, through a campaign of fatal suicide bombings, roadside booby traps and other violence, pushed Israel in May 2000 to withdraw from the strip of southern Lebanon it had occupied since its 1982 invasion.

While the Israeli withdrawal was supposed to still the border, the border remained periodically violent because *Hezbollah* suddenly claimed as part of Lebanon an uninhabited, rocky hillside of intermittent olive groves and other fields known as Shebaa Farms. Although the area was long considered part of the Golan Heights and was policed by Syria before Israel captured the area in 1967, most farmers who owned the land were Lebanese.

The proxy war waged there underscores Syria's demands that peace will only arrive when it gets the Golan Heights back. For <u>Hezbollah</u>, which Washington calls a terrorist organization, the border battles cement its reputation as the only Arab force in 50 years that has been able to hand Israel a battlefield defeat.

The Lebanese Army avoids the Shebaa area, although all cars entering southern Lebanon this week were searched and the government arrested some Palestinians it accused of the attacks outside that area.

Publicly, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of <u>Hezbollah</u>, declared in a speech that the group had to muster its strength for important future battles.

Meanwhile, it continues its relentless publicity campaign. On Sunday a group of at least 300 <u>women</u> from the <u>Hezbollah women</u>'s group rallied at Fatima Gate, a former crossing point between Israel and Lebanon.

Carrying giant portraits of the full pantheon of Shiite Muslim leaders, starting with the late Iranian revolutionary patriarch, Ayatollah Khomeini, the marchers chanted "Death to Israel" and "Death to America" as they walked along the border.

The women, covered from head to toe in black chadors, then threw stones at the Israeli outpost.

"They are monsters, devils, they need to be stoned," bellowed Hania Malwilein, a 53-year-old housewife pitching stones over the chicken-wire fence. "This is our land; we must liberate it."

MIDEAST TURMOIL: LEBANON Hezbollah Keeps Focus On Border With Israel

Shebaa, a town of 4,000 inhabitants further east along the border, sits under the watchful gaze of a different Israeli border observation post. On a recent spring day, Ali Dakour, 54, a vegetable seller, was outside his shop counting the *Hezbollah* artillery hits on the heavily fortified post 400 yards up a steep rocky, hillside.

Suddenly an Israeli machine gunner opened fire on the town and a bullet passed through one of Mr. Dakour's hips and lodged in the other.

"For years we can live under it and forget at about, and then suddenly there are clashes," he said. "There are people who want them and people who don't, but you just have to go with the tide."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Members of the <u>Hezbollah</u> <u>women</u>'s group prepared to march on Sunday along Lebanon's border with Israel. The <u>women</u> carried portraits of Shiite Muslim leaders, including the late Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, center. (James Hill for The New York Times)

Load-Date: April 17, 2002



Hezbollah rejects call to quit south Lebanon; Under U.S. pressure, it tempers rhetoric

The International Herald Tribune
May 12, 2003 Monday

Copyright 2003 International Herald Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 848 words

Byline: Daniel J. Wakin

Dateline: BEIRUT:

Body

With Saddam Hussein's government a thing of the past, the United States has turned to putting pressure on one of its most persistent foes, <u>Hezbollah</u>, the militant group entrenched in Lebanon. But the organization insists that nothing has changed in its implacable opposition to Israel and Israel's ally, the United States.

In an interview last week, a top <u>Hezbollah</u> official, Hajji Hussein Khalil, rejected U.S. demands that the group cease military operations and leave the area in southern Lebanon bordering Israel.

Responding to recent statements in Beirut by the U.S. secretary of state, Colin Powell, Khalil said that Washington was merely doing Israel's bidding.

The New York Times

"I look at Colin Powell as if he is an official spokesman for Israel," said Khalil, who is the chief aide to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s general secretary, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah. "Colin Powell is asking <u>Hezbollah</u> to withdraw from the south, and this cannot be applied to us. <u>Hezbollah</u> are the sons of these towns and villages. So where would they withdraw to?"

The United States considers <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization that caused the deaths of hundreds of Americans in the 1980s and carried out a wave of kidnappings of Westerners. It later emerged as a relentless antagonist of Israeli troops in southern Lebanon and took credit for the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000.

"We have emphasized strongly our concern about continuing terrorist activities of <u>Hezbollah</u> in the region and around the world," Powell said recently after talks with Syrian and Lebanese leaders.

Powell asked Syria, whose domination of Lebanon gives it ultimate control over <u>Hezbollah</u>, to crack down on the group and called on Lebanon to send its army to the border with Israel to "end armed <u>Hezbollah</u> militia incursions."

Lebanon said its troops were close enough.

Khalil rejected the notion of a new strategic situation in the Middle East with the fall of Saddam and an Iraq occupied by more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers.

"If the United States wants to put military pressure on us, of course we will defend ourselves," he said. "We hope they will not fall into this stupidity."

Hezbollah rejects call to quit south Lebanon; Under U.S. pressure, it tempers rhetoric

Khalil spoke in the offices of the party's central information office, an apartment in a nondescript building in a rundown area of southern Beirut dominated by Shiite Muslims.

Huge portraits of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the current Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, hung from the wall in a waiting room. The Romance lingerie shop incongruously occupied the ground floor, while on the streets outside many <u>women</u> wore head scarves.

Nevertheless, there were some indications that <u>Hezbollah</u> was making subtle adjustments to react to the U.S. pressure.

One sign was the tempering of <u>Hezbollah</u> rhetoric. <u>Hezbollah</u> officials in recent days have said Powell's remarks were no surprise and stressed that Israel was their only foe.

This contrasted with a speech to supporters just before the Iraq war by Nasrallah, in which he warned the Americans not to expect a warm welcome in Iraq. "The people of this region will receive you with rifles, blood, arms, martyrdom and martyrdom operations," he said. "'Death to America' was, is and will stay our slogan."

Nasrallah kept a low profile after the Iraq war. But in an interview with Al Jazeera on Thursday night, he said that a disarmed *Hezbollah* would be "useless," adding, "Are we going to resist occupation with words and poems?"

He also said that after the attacks on New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, the United States sent "messages" offering to remove the group from its terrorist list and provide economic aid.

"In return, they wanted us to drop out of the struggle, and they wanted us to secretly cooperate with them against the so-called terrorist groups," he said. "This was not acceptable to us and still isn't."

The United States denies any such contact.

Nasrallah also said, when asked about support for an Iraqi resistance to U.S. troops, "Our position in principle is to support any oppressed people that is subjected to tyranny and occupation." But he stopped short of offering specific help.

In recent days, <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters have fired anti-aircraft rounds at Israeli warplanes that they say violate Lebanese air space. But few in Lebanon expect the group to stir up trouble. "<u>Hezbollah</u> is a local institution," said Timur Goksel, the spokesman for the UN monitoring force in southern Lebanon.

"All those guys have families in those villages. They would be the biggest victims if *Hezbollah* started something."

Goksel credits <u>Hezbollah</u> with keeping the border relatively calm in recent months. He also said that contrary to Powell's concerns, the Lebanese military presence in the area was strong enough.

By Khalil's analysis, <u>Hezbollah</u> and Israel did not clash during the Iraq war because Israel feared attacking its enemy and because <u>Hezbollah</u> had no desire to help Saddam, who had persecuted Shiites in Iraq. But observers in Lebanon suggested other reasons, among them orders from <u>Hezbollah</u>'s sponsors, Syria and Iran, to stay quiet.

Load-Date: May 12, 2003



Hezbollah, Israel forces clash; Guerrilla positions destroyed by air attacks in fighting along disputed Lebanese border

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

May 14, 2005 Saturday Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A9; NEWS

Length: 461 words

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

<u>Hezbollah</u> and Israeli forces exchanged barrages of shells and rockets across the Lebanese border yesterday and Israeli warplanes destroyed guerrilla positions in the heaviest clash in months between the two sides.

The exchange began when <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters fired a volley of shells and rockets at Israeli positions in the disputed border area of Chebaa Farms.

Israeli forces retaliated with artillery fire against the apparent source of the fire in the Lebanese village of Kfar Chouba.

Associated Press

Witnesses counted at least 45 Israeli shells, and Israel said the barrage hit a *Hezbollah* position.

Warplanes and helicopter gunships then struck three more guerrilla posts, the Israeli military said. An Israeli tank also fired at a <u>Hezbollah</u> observation post near the village of Rmeish, far from the combat near the Mediterranean coastline, witnesses said.

There were no Israeli casualties from the <u>Hezbollah</u> fire, a military spokesperson said. There was no immediate word on casualties on the Lebanese side.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al-Manar television said the attack was in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory, including a hit on civilian houses in Kfar Chouba.

"The Islamic Resistance warns the Zionist enemy that any attack on civilians will be met with the appropriate response," it said.

The Israeli military accused <u>Hezbollah</u> of trying to disturb the calm along the border and said it will "not allow further provocations of any sort."

"What is most important at this stage is that there is a government in Beirut, and Lebanon is obliged by the UN not to allow <u>Hezbollah</u> or other terror organizations to act," Maj.-Gen. Benny Gantz said. "If we have to respond we will respond."

Hezbollah, Israel forces clash; Guerrilla positions destroyed by air attacks in fighting along disputed Lebanese border

It was the heaviest clash between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> since January, when <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas blew up an Israeli bulldozer operating in Chebaa Farms and Israeli warplanes retaliated with strikes that wounded two Lebanese <u>women</u>.

The increase in tensions comes amid political turbulence in Lebanon. <u>Hezbollah</u>'s ally Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon last month, weakening Damascus' hold in the country -- while <u>Hezbollah</u> has been seeking a greater political role.

At the same time, <u>Hezbollah</u> is under international pressure to disarm, with a UN resolution demanding militias in Lebanon give up their weapons. The guerrilla group has refused, and Lebanese authorities have resisted pressuring <u>Hezbollah</u>, calling it a resistance movement, not a militia.

The Lebanese army has not deployed in the south, allowing <u>Hezbollah</u> to keep security control there since Israeli troops ended their 18-year occupation in the area in 2000.

The guerrilla group's years-long confrontation with Israel has been a major source of its popularity in Lebanon, even beyond the country's Shiite community.

Load-Date: May 14, 2005



Hezbollah and Israelis exchange fire; Shells and rockets were fired across Lebanon's border. Israeli planes attacked guerrilla posts.

The Philadelphia Inquirer
MAY 15, 2005 Sunday BULLDOG EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A05

Length: 363 words

Byline: Sam F. Ghattas ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

<u>Hezbollah</u> and Israeli forces exchanged barrages of shells and rockets across the Lebanese border Friday, and Israeli warplanes destroyed guerrilla positions in the heaviest clash in months between the two sides.

The flare-up came amid political turbulence in Lebanon. <u>Hezbollah</u>'s ally, Syria, withdrew its troops from Lebanon last month, weakening Damascus' hold in the country. Meanwhile, <u>Hezbollah</u> has been seeking a greater political role.

The Israeli military accused <u>Hezbollah</u> of seeking to disturb the calm along the border and warned it would "not allow further provocations of any sort."

"Lebanon is obliged by the U.N. not to allow <u>Hezbollah</u> or other terror organizations to act," Maj. Gen. Benny Gantz, Israel's chief of the northern command, told reporters. "And as I said, if we have to respond, we will respond."

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al-Manar television said the group's barrage was in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory, including a hit on civilian houses in the village of Kfar Chouba.

"The Islamic Resistance warns the Zionist enemy that any attack on civilians will be met with the appropriate response," the statement said.

In the clash, <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters fired a volley of shells and rockets at Israeli positions in the disputed border area of Chebaa Farms. Israeli forces fired artillery at Kfar Chouba. Each side said the other began firing first.

Witnesses counted at least 45 Israeli shells, and Israel said the barrage hit a *Hezbollah* position.

Hezbollah and Israelis exchange fire; Shells and rockets were fired across Lebanon 's border. Israeli planes attacked guerrilla posts.

Warplanes and helicopter gunships then struck three more guerrilla posts, the Israeli military said. An Israeli tank also fired at a *Hezbollah* observation post near the village of Rmeish, witnesses said.

No Israeli casualties or damage were reported, an Israeli military spokesman said. There was no immediate word on casualties on the Lebanese side.

It was the heaviest clash between Israel and <u>Hezbollah</u> since January, when <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas blew up an Israeli bulldozer operating in Chebaa Farms and Israeli warplanes retaliated with strikes that wounded two Lebanese <u>women</u>.

<u>Hezbollah</u> is under international pressure to disarm, with a U.N. resolution demanding militias in Lebanon give up their weapons.

Graphic

PHOTO:

MOHAMMAD ZAATARI, Associated Press

An Israeli military base along the border with Lebanon, seen from Abbat Tomb, near Houla, southern Lebanon. The Israeli army retaliated against an artillery barrage by Lebanese guerillas.

Load-Date: September 13, 2005



<u>B'nai Brith plans court action to have Hezbollah blacklisted: Government is 'lax, irresponsible'</u>

Ottawa Citizen

November 29, 2002 Friday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A11; News

Length: 417 words

Byline: Mike Blanchfield

Body

B'nai Brith Canada plans to take the federal government to court for refusing to designate the Islamic militant organization *Hezbollah* as a terrorist group.

"Our government is being very lax and irresponsible in not including <u>Hezbollah</u> on the list of terrorist organizations," said Rochelle Wilner, president of B'nai Brith Canada, a Jewish advocacy group.

"There's no excuse. This notion that there's a social welfare arm and a military arm or wing is absolutely ludicrous," she said. "It is a terror organization in the Middle East. They hide behind <u>women</u> and children. They raise money hiding behind this notion of social welfare."

The Ottawa Citizen

Ms. Wilner said the legal action was being pursued out of exasperation and after much unsuccessful behind-the-scenes lobbying to convince the government to label *Hezbollah* as a full-fledged terrorist group.

"CSIS has presented our government with more information than they need," she said.

In 1997, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service warned the government that <u>Hezbollah</u> had established a base in Canada that could "assist and support terrorists" seeking a base of operations in North America.

Ms. Wilner would not divulge the legal grounds on which the lawsuit against the federal government would be based. B'nai Brith is to lay out its case at a press conference in Ottawa today.

Its action comes two days after the federal government announced that it was listing five additional terrorist groups to the growing number organizations whose activities are banned under the country's new anti-terror law.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which was formed almost 20 years ago in the Middle East and is dedicated to the destruction of Israel, was not added to the list.

The government maintains that the group has two wings -- militant and political -- and that it cannot be punished for its political activities, which include education, health care and various social programs.

Various security experts, as well as the Canadian Alliance, say the distinction is ludicrous and that no credible line can be drawn between the group's terrorist activities and its social programs.

Hezbollah has been branded a terrorist group by the United States.

B'nai Brith plans court action to have Hezbollah blacklisted: Government is 'lax, irresponsible'

Since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Canada has been directed to freeze the assets of dozens of groups, pursuant to United Nations regulations.

Although B'nai Brith would not divulge its legal strategy, a source said one possibility would be to call Canada on the carpet for not meeting its UN obligations.

Graphic

Colour Photo: B'nai Brith Canada president Rochelle Wilner will reveal details of the lawsuit today.

Load-Date: November 29, 2002



Hezbollah declares election sweep; Officials claim they won all 23 seats in a south Lebanon region bordering Israel

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

June 6, 2005 Monday

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Section: National/World; Pg. a8

Length: 855 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BINT JBEIL, Lebanon

Body

<u>Hezbollah</u> and its Shiite allies claimed a massive victory in southern Lebanon in Sunday's second stage of national elections, a vote the militant group hopes will prove its strength and send a message of defiance to the United States.

Hundreds of <u>Hezbollah</u> supporters drove through the streets of Beirut waving the group's yellow flag and the green flag of Amal in celebration. In Beirut's predominantly Shiite southern suburbs, people lit up the sky with fireworks.

Four hours after polling stations closed, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s deputy leader, Sheik Naim Kassem, and election ally Nabih Berri, of the Shiite Muslim Amal movement, said they had won all 23 seats in this region bordering Israel. Official results aren't expected until Monday.

"It has become clear that all members of the Resistance, Liberation and Development Ticket have won in (southern Lebanon's) two regions," Kassim told reporters. "The south has declared through this vote its clear stance in supporting this track."

He said that in one constituency, with more than half the votes counted, <u>Hezbollah</u> official Mohammed Raad was leading with 69,207 votes against his closest rival, Elias Abu Rizk, with 7,000 votes. In the another, with more than a third of votes counted, Berri was leading with 35,560 while his closest opponent, Riad Asaad had 5,304 votes, Kassim said.

Berri thanked the people for "renewing the confidence in the ticket that all its members have won."

The elections, divided by region and spread over four consecutive Sundays, began last week in the capital Beirut where the dominant issue was the February assassination of former premier Rafik Hariri. His killing triggered massive street protests at home and international outrage abroad that eventually forced Syria to pull its army out of Lebanon, ending three decades of military domination.

"All the south came out today to send a clear message to the Americans that they embrace the resistance (<u>Hezbollah</u>'s) weapons and that they are independent in their decision and they are not subservient to international resolutions," Sheik Nabil Kaouk, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s commander in southern Lebanon, told reporters shortly after voting began in Sunday's second phase of four-stage parliamentary elections.

Hezbollah declares election sweep; Officials claim they won all 23 seats in a south Lebanon region bordering

The United States, which labels <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization, wants the guerrilla group to abandon its weapons in line with last year's U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559. <u>Hezbollah</u> has refused to disarm, a position backed by Lebanese authorities.

Voter turnout was noticeably heavy in Shiite areas and lower in Christian and Sunni Muslim districts, according to preliminary estimates by candidates' campaigns and local television stations. Amal and <u>Hezbollah</u> campaigners estimated voter turnout at about 45 percent.

One reason for the lack of interest by some of the 665,000 eligible voters is that six of the 23 seats were won uncontested before the balloting even began because there were no major challengers.

Those citizens who did vote expressed strong support for <u>Hezbollah</u>, the guerrilla group that fought Israel during an 18-year occupation. Israel occupied south Lebanon from 1982-2000.

"We should show our support for the resistance and those who were martyred for the sake of liberating this country," a smiling Kamel Hamka, 77, said as he walked out of a polling station in Bint Jbeil, a Shiite town a few miles from the Israeli border.

Outside a polling station in the town's center, veiled young <u>women <u>Hezbollah</u> activists distributed candidate lists and cars blared guerrilla songs and speeches from loudspeakers to encourage voters.</u>

"The people's participation in the elections is a vote for the resistance and its weapons," said Hassan Fadlallah, a <u>Hezbollah</u> candidate allied with Amal.

<u>Hezbollah</u> expects strong voter support will give it greater political influence to confront international pressure to disarm now that its Syrian backers have withdrawn from the country.

The elections, which are scheduled for two more Sundays in other regions, follow the assassination last week of an anti-Syrian journalist and continuing calls by the opposition for President Emile Lahoud's resignation. The anti-Syrian opposition hopes the elections will end Damascus' control of the legislature.

In last Sunday's polls in Beirut, anti-Syrian opposition candidates took most of the capital's 19 parliamentary seats.

But the vote in the predominantly Shiite south is centered on *Hezbollah* and its weapons.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, backed by both Syria and Iran, is fielding 14 candidates across Lebanon, hoping to build on the nine seats it already holds in the 128-member legislature. It has already won a seat in Beirut.

While the balloting in southern Lebanon was peaceful, the first major violence of the elections broke out in central Lebanon, where Druse supporters of opposition leader Walid Jumblatt and rival Talal Arsalan clashed. Seven people were wounded in the gunfire in the mountain resort of Sofar before troops intervened and separated the two sides, the official National News Agency reported. The region votes next Sunday.

The Lebanese army said it had detained 20 people involved in the clashes in Sofar.

Load-Date: June 6, 2005



Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

June 7, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: Other; Pg. a5

Length: 722 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: CAIRO, Egypt

Body

To much of the West, <u>Hezbollah</u> is an Islamic militant group known for its weapons and attacks on Israel. But for many voters in southern Lebanon, it's the group that provides the schools, the health clinics and a healthy dose of national pride.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s success Monday in the first Lebanese vote free of Syrian domination and the growing strength of Hamas in Palestinian elections signal that as democracy spreads in the Middle East, those with strong Islamic ties are likely to do well.

The question is, how much should that worry the West?

Is the prominence of Islamic parties - not just in the Lebanese south and in Palestinian towns, but also across Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt - a sign of support for ideas like denying *women* rights and a turn toward militancy?

Or does it simply show the natural evolution of groups that, because of their longtime opposition to autocratic regimes and their strong social service networks, are now the natural heirs to political power?

Getting the radicals to run - that is, drawing them into a normal political process - might be the best way to get them to turn away from militancy, said Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an Egyptian-American scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington.

He points to the example of Turkey, where an Islamic-rooted party proved relatively moderate once in power. The worst thing the West can do is keep religious groups out, making them "martyrs" who gain support without proving their governing skills, he says.

Reza Aslan, a scholar at the University of California-Santa Barbara say it's inevitable that Islamic groups will do well in societies that are deeply traditional and where majorities are Muslim.

In Iraq, the Shiite-based party now in power has said it wants to make Islam the foundation of the new constitution, but has shown no signs it will try to create an Iranian-style theocracy, Aslan said.

As part of its push for democracy in the Middle East, the Bush administration has indicated it supports the idea of Islamic parties' participation in Egyptian elections.

Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties

Nevertheless, there are still strong fears about the idea of Islamists hostile to the West and Israel taking power.

"If <u>Hezbollah</u> was only a political party, we in Israel wouldn't be as concerned as we are," said Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mark Regev, noting that the group remains heavily armed.

There is no doubt that many Arabs support Islamist parties simply because they are perceived as anti-American, said Diaa Rashwan, a Cairo-based expert on Islamic groups. Their popularity "has increased because America makes them look like its enemies," he said.

Yet, there also are autocratic governments willing to make that argument simply to retain power.

Egypt's ruling Mubarak regime insists the country's most powerful opposition group - the religious Muslim Brotherhood - can never become a political party. The country's prime minister told U.S. officials recently that the group may pretend to support democracy and be moderate in public sessions, but reverts to calling for strict Islamic adherence before true believers.

Critics say Mubarak's regime makes that argument simply because it would lose to the Muslim Brotherhood in open elections.

In a similar vein, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas called off upcoming parliamentary elections earlier this month, a move widely seen as giving his Fatah party time to fend off a challenge from Hamas. Hamas already had won a number of key local elections.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s situation is not as strong, yet there is no denying its support in at least southern parts of Lebanon.

Going into Lebanon's staggered elections, it had nine seats in the outgoing 128-seat legislature. Overall, after the victories in the south, the group is expected to win 11 seats, and also have one allied legislator in the south and two in the east.

<u>Hezbollah</u> itself has toyed with toning down its radicalism - insisting on keeping its arms as a buffer against Israel, but also seeking international support as a player in the country's politics.

Nsecretary Scott McClellan said Monday the United States regards <u>Hezbollah</u> as a terror group that should be disarmed.

No one, says Ibrahim, should expect *Hezbollah* or Hamas "to turn into Western-style democratic parties overnight."

Sally Buzbee is the Chief of Middle East news for The Associated Press, based in Cairo.

Load-Date: June 8, 2005



Hezbollah claims regional victory: Second of four Lebanese elections. Voter turnout heavy in Shiite areas; group hopes to grow its political influence

The Gazette (Montreal)

June 6, 2005 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 526 words

Byline: HUSSEIN DAKROUB, AP

Dateline: BINT JBEIL, Lebanon

Body

<u>Hezbollah</u> and its Shiite allies claimed a massive victory in southern Lebanon in yesterday's second stage of national elections, a vote the militant group hopes will prove its strength and send a message of defiance to the United States.

Hundreds of <u>Hezbollah</u> supporters drove through the streets of Beirut waving the group's yellow flag and the green flag of Amal in celebration. In Beirut's predominantly Shiite southern suburbs, people up lit the sky with fireworks.

Four hours after polling stations closed, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s deputy leader, Sheik Naim Kassem, and election ally Nabih Berri of the Shiite Amal movement, said they had won all 23 seats in this region bordering Israel. Official results aren't expected until today.

"It has become clear that all members of the Resistance, Liberation and Development Ticket have won in (southern Lebanon's) two regions," Kassem told reporters. "The south has declared through this vote its clear stance in supporting this track."

He said that in one constituency, with more than half the votes counted, <u>Hezbollah</u> official Mohammed Raad was leading with 69,207 votes against his closest rival, Elias Abu Rizk, with 7,000 votes. In the another, with more than one-third of votes counted, Berri was leading 35,560-5,304 over his closest opponent, Riad Asaad, Kassem said.

Berri thanked the people for "renewing the confidence in the ticket that all its members have won."

The elections, divided by region and spread over four consecutive Sundays, began last week in the capital Beirut, where the dominant issue was the February assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri. His killing triggered massive street protests at home and international outrage abroad that eventually forced Syria to pull its army out of Lebanon, ending three decades of military domination.

"All the south came out today to send a clear message to the Americans that they embrace the resistance (<u>Hezbollah</u>'s) weapons and that they are independent in their decision and they are not subservient to international resolutions," Sheik Nabil Kaouk, **Hezbollah**'s commander in southern Lebanon, said shortly after voting began.

Hezbollah claims regional victory: Second of four Lebanese elections. Voter turnout heavy in Shiite areas; group hopes to grow its political influence

The United States, which labels <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization, wants the guerrilla group to abandon its weapons in line with last year's United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559. <u>Hezbollah</u> has refused to disarm, a position backed by Lebanese authorities.

Voter turnout was noticeably heavy in Shiite areas and lower in Christian and Sunni districts, according to preliminary estimates by candidates' campaigns and local television stations. Amal and <u>Hezbollah</u> campaigners estimated voter turnout at about 45 per cent.

One reason for the lack of interest by some of the 665,000 eligible voters is that six of the 23 seats were uncontested.

<u>Hezbollah</u> expects strong voter support will give it greater political influence to confront international pressure to disarm now that its Syrian backers have withdrawn from the country.

The first major violence of the elections broke out in central Lebanon, where Druse supporters of opposition leader Walid Jumblatt and rival Talal Arsalan clashed. That region votes Sunday.

Graphic

Colour Photo: DARKO BANDIC, AP; Lebanese <u>women</u> watch from their balcony as <u>Hezbollah</u> supporters pass by in Nabattiyeh, southern Lebanon, yesterday. <u>Hezbollah</u>, which fought Israel during an 18-year occupation, hopes to gain legitimacy through this month's elections.

Load-Date: June 6, 2005



<u>U.N. looking into kidnapping;</u> <u>A peacekeeper in Lebanon says troops collaborated with Hezbollah in</u> abducting 3 Israeli soldiers in Oct.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JULY 14, 2001 Saturday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A04

Length: 355 words

Byline: REUTERS

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

Body

The United Nations said yesterday that it would investigate allegations that U.N. peacekeepers in Lebanon helped *Hezbollah* guerrillas kidnap three Israeli soldiers in October.

U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said a planned internal probe of the handling of a U.N. videotape linked to the abduction also would look into any allegations of collaboration with <u>Hezbollah</u> by peacekeepers in the U.N. mission in Lebanon, known as UNIFIL.

Yesterday's edition of the Israeli newspaper Maariv quoted an unidentified soldier from UNIFIL's Indian contingent as saying that a number of his fellow peacekeepers had collaborated with *Hezbollah* in the Oct. 7 kidnapping.

The newspaper said dozens of Indian peacekeepers had witnessed the abduction and done nothing to prevent it, and at least four had collaborated with the *Hezbollah* kidnappers.

"We told them they were making a mistake. I am very sorry about what happened, because the <u>Hezbollah</u> people who kidnapped the soldiers stood opposite us and we saw them. They wore our clothes [U.N. uniforms], and it's a pity we didn't prevent the kidnapping," Maariv quoted the soldier as saying.

For months before the incident, <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas had supplied cash, <u>women</u> and alcohol to some peacekeepers, the newspaper said.

UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel said Thursday that such accusations were "total slander."

"This discredits UNIFIL, because it makes us look like we're the nasty guys and that we're backing one side against another," Goksel said.

U.N. looking into kidnapping; A peacekeeper in Lebanon says troops collaborated with Hezbollah in abducting 3 Israeli soldiers in Oct.

In Beirut yesterday, a <u>Hezbollah</u> official source denied the Maariv report. "The Zionist enemy is living in a state of political and media disarray," the source said.

The allegations of UNIFIL collaboration surfaced days after the U.N. acknowledged for the first time that peacekeepers had videotaped <u>Hezbollah</u> men blocking a UNIFIL attempt to seize two vehicles that apparently had been used in the abduction. The <u>Hezbollah</u> men's faces can be briefly seen on the videotape, which was made a day after the kidnapping, U.N. officials said.

Reacting to repeated Israeli demands for information on the abduction, U.N. officials had long denied such a tape existed.

Graphic

PHOTO

Load-Date: October 31, 2001



Hezbollah warns Israel of more kidnappings: Move seen as bargaining chip for prisoner release

Ottawa Citizen

January 30, 2004 Friday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A7; Crime; Chronology

Length: 618 words

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

BEIRUT, Lebanon -- Lebanese prisoners released by Israel returned home yesterday to a hero's welcome by tens of thousands of flag-waving people, from <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrilla comrades to veiled <u>women</u> who showered them in rice and rose petals.

Israel also freed about 400 Palestinians to the West Bank and Gaza Strip as part of the German-brokered deal with *Hezbollah*. Delighted relatives greeted the Palestinians and expressed thanks to the Lebanese terrorist group.

In return, Israel received the bodies of three of its soldiers and won the release of a kidnapped Israeli businessman. Israelis held a memorial service for the three dead, but whisked away Elhanan Tannenbaum, who was kidnapped while reportedly engaged in a shady business deal, for interrogation.

The Associated Press

At a mass rally in Beirut that <u>Hezbollah</u> staged to welcome the freed Arabs, the group's leader warned it would kidnap more Israelis to use as bargaining chips to secure the release of Lebanese prisoners.

Turning to a huge poster of a guerrilla ambush in which the three Israeli soldiers were captured, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah declared: "This is a choice."

At the memorial service near Tel Aviv -- where the three caskets were covered with Israeli flags and a woman sang mournfully -- Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned against more kidnappings.

The complex swap -- carried out in two stages in Germany and in the Palestinian territories following months of arduous negotiations -- went ahead despite yesterday's suicide bombing in Jerusalem.

The prisoner exchange boosts the regional standing of <u>Hezbollah</u> because of its success in freeing Palestinian prisoners and in extracting concessions from Israel. <u>Hezbollah</u> is listed as a terror group by the United States and Canada.

A Deadly History

During more than three years of fighting, 454 people have been killed in 109 Palestinian suicide bombings. Here are some of the deadliest attacks:

Oct. 4, 2003: A seaside restaurant in Haifa, killing at least 19.

Hezbollah warns Israel of more kidnappings: Move seen as bargaining chip for prisoner release

Sept. 9, 2003: Cafe Hillel in Jerusalem, killing seven.

Sept. 9, 2003: A bus stop near an army base outside Tel Aviv, killing eight Israeli soldiers.

Aug. 19, 2003: A bus in Jerusalem, killing 23.

June 11, 2003: A bus on Jerusalem's central Jaffa Street, killing 17.

May 18, 2003: A bus at Jerusalem's French Hill neighbourhood, killing seven.

March 5, 2003: A bus in Haifa, killing 17.

Jan. 5, 2003: Two bombers strike the Neve Shaanan pedestrian mall in Tel Aviv, killing 23.

Nov. 21, 2002: A bus in Jerusalem, killing 11.

Oct. 21, 2002: A bus at the Karkur Junction in northern Israel, killing 14.

Aug. 4, 2002: A bus at the Meron Junction in northern Israel, killing eight.

June 19, 2002: French Hill intersection in Jerusalem, killing seven.

June 18, 2002: Patt Junction in southern Jerusalem, killing 19.

June 5, 2002: Bus near Megiddo Junction in northern Israel, killing 17.

May 7, 2002: A pool hall in the Tel Aviv suburb of Rishon Letzion, killing 15.

April 10, 2002: A bus in Haifa, killing eight.

March 31, 2002: A restaurant in Haifa, killing 15.

March 27, 2002: A hotel dining room during a ritual Seder meal at the start of Passover in the city of Netanya, killing 29.

March 20, 2002: A bus near village of Kfar Musmus, killing seven.

March 9, 2002: Jerusalem's Moment Cafe, killing 11.

March 2, 2002: Jerusalem's Ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim neighbourhood, killing 11.

Dec. 2, 2001: A bus in the coastal city of Haifa, killing 15.

Dec. 1, 2001: Two bombers strike Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall, killing 11.

Aug. 9, 2001: Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem, killing 15.

June 1, 2001: The entrance of the Dolphinarium seaside disco in Tel Aviv -- killing 21, mostly teenagers.

Graphic

Photo: Reuters; Ali Jaara, 24, is the suicide bomber responsible for yesterday's blast in Jerusalem that killed 10.

Load-Date: January 30, 2004



Counter-rally dwarfs protests against Syria: Organized by Hezbollah: In Beirut, thousands show up to denounce U.S.

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

March 9, 2005 Wednesday

Toronto / Late Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A14

Length: 662 words

Byline: Evan Osnos, Knight Ridder Newspapers

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT - In a startling display of political strength, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese followers of the Syrian-backed group <u>Hezbollah</u> converged on Beirut yesterday to express their gratitude to Syria and angrily denounce the United States and Israel.

The demonstration dwarfed a series of anti-Syria rallies it was designed to counter and provided a sobering illustration of Lebanon's religious and political rivalries. After weeks of mounting pressure on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the outpouring of Lebanese support is likely to strengthen his hand as he weighs international calls to withdraw thousands of troops from Lebanon.

<u>Hezbollah</u> leaders and protesters scolded the demonstrators at earlier rallies for "insulting" Syria and taunted U.S. President George W. Bush and other Western leaders for hailing those protests as representative of Lebanese popular sentiment.

"To America and President Bush ... you're wrong in your calculations about Lebanon," <u>Hezbollah</u>'s spiritual leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, shouted to a fervent but peaceful crowd estimated to be as large as half a million people.

"I ask our compatriots in Lebanon or those observing us from abroad: Are these hundreds of thousands of people all puppets?" Sheikh Nasrallah asked from a balcony overlooking Riad Solh Square. "Is this entire crowd agents for the Syrians?"

The masses overcrowded a downtown plaza and filled acres of surrounding streets, swaying and chanting for hours. Men shinnied up trees and lampposts to wave the Lebanese flag and get a better glimpse of their leader. One banner billowing above the crowd succinctly captured the contrast to the previous weeks of anti-Syria protests: "Surprise."

Ismael Assiyali, a 72-year-old who attended the rally, belittled the earlier demonstrators.

"They are a speck in the sea," said Mr. Assiyali, who said he made the 90-minute trip to Beirut to honour a son who died fighting for *Hezbollah* against Israeli forces.

Counter-rally dwarfs protests against Syria : Organized by Hezbollah: In Beirut, thousands show up to denounce U.S.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, Arabic for "Party of God," is an Islamic resistance movement that grew out of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and has evolved into a major voice in Lebanese politics and society. Backed by weapons, money and guidance from Iran and Syria, it is an avowed enemy of Israel and the United States and seeks to create a Muslim fundamentalist state modelled on Iran.

Its leaders are concerned that a Syrian pullout could deprive them of their key patron and protector in Lebanese politics. They vowed to stage further rallies in coming days, opening an uncertain new phase in the Lebanese political drama that in three weeks has toppled a Syrian-backed government and forced the ongoing pullback of Syrian troops.

In contrast to the predominantly urban Christians, Druze and Sunni Muslims who have been rallying for an end to Syrian domination under the slogan "Independence 2005," *Hezbollah*'s mostly Shiite Muslim followers streamed in on rickety buses from rural stretches of southern and eastern Lebanon.

Where other protests have been a showcase for Beirut's appetite for Western fashion, this crowd was replete with <u>women</u> in traditional headscarves, overwhelmingly drawn from the 1.2 million Lebanese Shiites who make up a plurality of the country's four million people.

Even as yesterday's demonstration unfolded, Mr. Bush reiterated his demand for a full and immediate Syrian withdrawal, telling an audience in Washington: "Any who doubt the appeal of freedom in the Middle East can look to Lebanon, where the Lebanese people are demanding a free and independent nation." He said similar demands are likely to spread.

But for protesters like 35-year-old Wissam Mahmoud, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s appeal has only grown with U.S. and European pressure.

"Defending every last piece of Lebanese soil is our responsibility," he said. "We don't want any interference of any kind. We don't want America or France interfering in our affairs. We want co-operation between all the religious groups in Lebanon."

Lebanon's many mansions, A18

Graphic

Colour Photo: Sharif Karim, Reuters; A Lebanese demonstrator marches in a <u>Hezbollah</u>-organized protest yesterday.

Load-Date: March 9, 2005



Hezbollah claims win in 2d round of votes in Lebanon; Results are due today. The guerrilla group fought Israel's 18-year occupation of south Lebanon.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JUNE 6, 2005 Monday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A03

Length: 496 words

Byline: Hussein Dakroub ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BINT JBEIL, Lebanon

Body

<u>Hezbollah</u> and its Shiite allies claimed victory yesterday in Lebanon's second stage of parliamentary elections, a vote the group hopes will prove its strength and send a message of defiance to the United States.

Hundreds of *Hezbollah* supporters drove through the streets of Beirut waving the group's yellow flag in celebration. In Beirut's predominantly Shiite southern suburbs, fireworks lit the sky.

Four hours after polling stations in south Lebanon closed, <u>Hezbollah</u> and a key ally, the Amal movement, claimed they had won all 23 seats in the region bordering Israel. Official results were due today.

The elections, which are set for two more Sundays in other regions, follow the assassination last week of an anti-Syrian journalist and calls by the opposition for the resignation of President Emile Lahoud, an ally of Syria. The anti-Syrian opposition hopes the elections will end Damascus' control of the legislature.

In voting on May 29 in Beirut, anti-Syrian opposition candidates took most of the capital's 19 parliamentary seats.

Yesterday, the pro-Syria <u>Hezbollah</u> claimed victory in south Lebanon. "The south has declared through this vote its clear stance," said Sheikh Naim Kassem, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s deputy leader.

The United States, which labels <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization, wants the guerrilla group to abandon its weapons in line with last year's U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559. <u>Hezbollah</u> has refused to disarm.

Voter turnout was heavy in Shiite Muslim areas and lower in Christian and Sunni Muslim districts, according to estimates by candidates' campaigns and local TV stations. Amal and <u>Hezbollah</u> campaigners estimated turnout at 45 percent.

Hezbollah claims win in 2d round of votes in Lebanon; Results are due today. The guerrilla group fought Israel 's 18-year occupation of south Lebanon.

One reason for the lack of interest by some of the 665,000 eligible voters was that six of the 23 seats were uncontested. Those six candidates were from the *Hezbollah*-Amal coalition.

Some voters expressed strong support for <u>Hezbollah</u>, which fought Israel during its 18-year occupation of south Lebanon. Israel withdrew in 2000.

"We should show our support for the resistance and those who were martyred for the sake of liberating this country," a smiling Kamel Hamka, 77, said as he walked out of a polling station in Bint Jbeil, a Shiite town a few miles from the Israeli border.

Outside a polling station in the town's center, veiled young <u>women</u> distributed <u>Hezbollah</u> candidate lists, and cars blared guerrilla songs and speeches from loudspeakers to encourage voters.

<u>Hezbollah</u> hopes strong voter support will give it greater political influence to confront international pressure to disarm now that its Syrian backers have withdrawn from the country.

"All the south came out today to send a clear message to the Americans that they embrace the resistance weapons and that they are independent in their decision and they are not subservient to international resolutions," said Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, *Hezbollah*'s commander in southern Lebanon.

Voting continues next Sunday and concludes June 19 for the 128-member parliament.

Graphic

PHOTO:

MOHAMMAD ZAATARI, Associated Press

Lebanese <u>women</u> who support <u>Hezbollah</u> ring up their cell phones outside a polling station in Deir Kanoun an-Nahr in southern Lebanon, where voters expressed strong support for the guerrilla group.

Load-Date: September 14, 2005



Crisis Erupting Over Soldier Won Back in Hezbollah Trade; THE SITUATION

The Forward March 5, 2004

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Section: News; Pg. 1 Length: 1138 words Byline: Ofer Shelah Dateline: TEL AVIV

Body

The simmering debate over Israel's January 29 hostage exchange deal with <u>Hezbollah</u> erupted into a full-scale political crisis this week, following news reports that Prime Minister Sharon had a personal relationship with the father-in-law of the sole Israeli brought home alive in the deal, reserve colonel and suspected drug dealer Elhanan Tennenbaum.

The disclosures forced Sharon to break his month-long silence on the hostage deal and publicly deny that he had any knowledge of the family relationship between his onetime friend, Shimon Cohen, and the freed captive. Sharon said he had not worked with Cohen in years and had no motive in pushing for the deal other than the moral imperative of freeing an Israeli citizen from captivity.

The daily Ma'ariv charged in a front-page story Wednesday that personal motives had led Sharon to press for the controversial deal, in which Israel freed 400 Palestinian, Lebanese and other prisoners in exchange for Tennenbaum and the bodies of three soldiers missing since 2000. The disclosure has led to a wave of calls by Ma'ariv and opposition politicians for Sharon's resignation.

Sharon's denials put him on the spot. He has been under pressure for a year because of investigations into his campaign finances, but has retained the public's basic confidence because of his leadership on security. The current charges, however, imply that personal considerations impaired Sharon's judgment in security affairs. If any part of the charge is proved true - if Tennenbaum's family or anybody else proves he did know of the relationship - the prime minister will be caught in an outright lie over a highly sensitive matter, and could be forced to resign.

Critics have long wondered about Sharon's motives in pushing for the lopsided hostage deal, a swap of 400 security prisoners for three corpses and a suspected drug dealer. The prime minister has so far refused to say how much he knew of Tennenbaum's misdeeds before the hostage deal was signed. Critics of the hostage deal had claimed from the outset that Sharon was trying to divert attention from his legal troubles.

The debate has continued to heat up since Tennenbaum's return. He has been questioned nonstop by the police, the army and the Shin Bet security service on the murky circumstances that led him into the terrorists' hands. No decision is expected until late next week on whether to press charges against him.

In an effort to get his full story, prosecutors last month signed an immunity deal under which he will not be prosecuted for criminal offenses if he tells the whole truth. He could still be liable for security offenses.

Crisis Erupting Over Soldier Won Back in Hezbollah Trade THE SITUATION

The immunity deal has sparked new protests. Protests have focused on Tennenbaum's unbecoming conduct as a ranking military officer, endangering state security, forcing the state to pay a high price for his freedom and then forcing the state to bargain with him for the full story. Several Knesset members claim Tennenbaum was handled with kid gloves, allowed home visits and then held in a relatively posh detention facility, because the military and the Shin Bet wanted to cover up their own bungling. Two lawmakers, Ophir Pines of Labor and Hemi Doron of Shinui, have asked the Supreme Court to void the agreement. Another, Haim Ramon of Labor, has called for Tennenbaum to be stripped of his rank and demoted to private.

The plea deal specified that Tennenbaum must give a full accounting of events, including answers to three main questions: How did he arrive in Lebanon, what kind of deal was he supposed to make with <u>Hezbollah</u> operative Keis Obeid, and what information did he divulge to his interrogators during his three years in captivity? If he passes a lie detector test, Tennenbaum will not face common criminal charges. But if he lies or is suspected of crimes involving state security, he will be charged. Initial reports on a polygraph test this week were mixed.

Tennenbaum originally claimed he went to Lebanon to obtain information on the missing Israeli airman Ron Arad. After the immunity deal he changed his story, and now says he went to Dubai to pursue a drug deal with Obeid, a longtime acquaintance who fled Israel in 2000 and became a top <u>Hezbollah</u> operative. Tennenbaum said he used a fake Venezuelan passport to get into Dubai, and that Obeid had promised him \$150,000 for his part in the alleged drug deal. He said his main motive was the fact that he was deep in debt - some \$110,000, according to one version.

Once in Dubai, Tennenbaum claimed, he was taken to a villa, where he was drugged and abducted to Beirut.

As for the information he divulged, Tennenbaum claimed the <u>Hezbollah</u> interrogators were "amateurish" and failed to ask him about secret projects in which he had been involved. He even bragged that, being "a colonel and a genius," he had no trouble fooling them, and managed to give away only unimportant information such as names and ranks of his superiors.

But some of his police and Shin Bet interrogators have leaked word to the press that they doubt his version. According to these sources, there is evidence that Tennenbaum was "abducted with his own consent" and was actually working with *Hezbollah*. They also said they suspected he was not after any drug deal, but rather went to Dubai to sell sensitive security information to *Hezbollah*. Ha'aretz reported this week that Tennenbaum had illegal possession of secret military documents before his trip to Dubai.

Lawmakers and the media accused the army's counter-intelligence arms of failing to detect Tennenbaum's compromised position before he left Israel. How, critics ask, could the army fail to notice that a ranking colonel in the artillery corps, privy to some of the nation's most secret military projects, was deep in debt, prone to gambling and associating with known criminals? Knesset member Yossi Sarid of the opposition Meretz party has called formally for a full-dress inquiry on the matter by the chamber's Foreign Relations and Defense Committee.

Adding to the suspicions are reports that the army paid Tennenbaum's family more than \$50,000 in reserve pay during his three years in captivity and also anted up for his current legal bills.

To compound Tennenbaum's troubles, some of the <u>women</u> in his life intend to sue him. Raimonda Fisher, who claims to have been his mistress in the period before his ill-fated trip, says that he swindled her. Another woman, identified only as M., announced her intent to sue him for patrimony of her 11-year-old son. She is said to have been the one who tipped off security forces to Tennenbaum's alleged drug dealing while he was still in captivity.

Tennenbaum's wife and two children, who argued powerfully for his release in the days leading up to the hostage deal, were unavailable for comment after his return, suggesting more surprises yet to come.

Load-Date: June 14, 2006



B'nai Brith to sue federal government; Ottawa 'lax and irresponsible for not including Hezbollah on terrorist list,' it says

Windsor Star (Ontario)

November 29, 2002 Friday Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14; News

Length: 420 words

Byline: Mike Blanchfield Southam Newspapers

Dateline: Ottawa

Body

B'nai Brith Canada plans to take the federal government to court for refusing to designate the Islamic militant organization, *Hezbollah*, as a terrorist group.

"Our government is being very lax and irresponsible in not including <u>Hezbollah</u> on the list of terrorist organizations," said Rochelle Wilner, president of B'nai Brith Canada, a Jewish advocacy group.

"There's no excuse. This notion that there's a social welfare arm and a military arm or wing is absolutely ludicrous," she said. "It is a terror organization in the Middle East.

Southam Newspapers

"They hide behind women and children. They raise money hiding behind this notion of social welfare."

Wilner said the legal action was being pursued out of exasperation and after much unsuccessful behind-the-scenes lobbying to convince the government to label *Hezbollah* as a full-fledged terrorist group.

"CSIS has presented our government with more information than they need," she said.

In 1997, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service warned the government that <u>Hezbollah</u> had established a base in Canada that could "assist and support terrorists" seeking a base of operations in North America.

Wilner would not divulge the legal grounds on which the lawsuit against the federal government would be based. B'nai Brith is to lay out its case at a press conference in Ottawa today.

Its action comes two days after the federal government announced that it was listing five additional terrorist groups to the growing number organizations whose activities are banned under the country's new anti-terror law.

Political activities

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which was formed almost 20 years ago in the Middle East and is dedicated to the destruction to Israel, was not added to the list.

B'nai Brith to sue federal government; Ottawa 'lax and irresponsible for not including Hezbollah on terrorist list,' it says

The government maintains that the group has two wings -- militant and political -- and that it cannot be punished for its political activities, which include education, health care and various social programs.

Various security experts, as well as the Canadian Alliance, say the distinction is ludicrous and that no credible line can be drawn between the group's terrorist activities and its social programs.

Hezbollah has been branded a terrorist group by the United States.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Canada has been directed to freeze the assets of dozens of groups, pursuant to United Nations regulations.

Although B'nai Brith would not divulge its legal strategy, a source said one possibility would be to call Canada on the carpet for not meeting its UN obligations.

Load-Date: November 29, 2002



Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

May 31, 2005 Tuesday 0 South Pinellas Edition

Copyright 2005 Times Publishing Company

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 1A; Newspaper

Length: 1205 words

Byline: SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

Al-Manar TV, run by the militant group *Hezbollah*, leaves little doubt about where it stands.

It calls Israel the "Zionist enemy."

President Bush is "stupid and crazy."

The United States is "waging war against Islam."

With its gruesome footage and supercharged rhetoric, the Beirut-based network has long been a bane of Israel and its allies. In December they got partial revenge - French authorities banned Al-Manar from TV there and the United States declared it a terrorist organization in a move that has knocked it off the airwaves in many other parts of the world.

"It's not a question of freedom of speech," a State Department spokesman said. "It's a question of incitement of violence."

To others, it's a clear case of censorship.

"It shows the duality of American society - on the one hand you want democracy and openness and on the other you're trying to suppress views you don't like," says Abdallah Bouhabib, Lebanon's former ambassador to the United States. "I don't watch it but I don't want the government telling me I can't watch it."

Arabic for "the beacon," Al-Manar says it does what most Western media do not - shed light on what's really happening in the Middle East. In Al-Manar's view, that is U.S.-supported Israeli aggression against Palestinians.

"We cover the Palestinian issue not because they are Palestinians but because we sense their torture and suffering," says Ibrahim Farhat, the public relations and advertising manager. "We focus on the crisis and problems in the region, and this is what Arabs and Muslims care about."

Founded in 1991, Al-Manar operates out of a heavily-guarded building in a poor Muslim area of south Beirut. Armed men check vehicles for bombs; visitors must go through a metal detector and leave their passports or other ID at the front desk.

Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere

In the well-equipped newsroom, staffers work under monitors showing dozens of channels, including CNN, BBC and Al-Jazeera, the leading Arab satellite network.

Like its competitors, Al-Manar offers a range of cultural, educational and sports programming. Though the network has an anti-American slant, it features U.S. teams that are wildly popular in the Mideast - among them, the Chicago Bulls and the Miami Heat.

"We have many programs that are not political," says Mona Noureddine, a recent college graduate. She hosts a Sunday show, Under 20, which fields questions from Arab youth about health, jobs and relationships.

It is Al-Manar's news programs, though, that cause the controversy.

"Al-Manar is the propaganda arm of a recognized terrorist organization," says Avi Jorisch, a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington, D.C. "It is terror television 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

In his book Beacon of Hatred, Jorisch criticizes the network for some things that arguably are no worse than what is seen or heard in the West. While Al-Manar says Bush is "stupid," an aide to a former Canadian prime minister once called the president a "moron."

More troubling are what Jorisch calls "persistent messages of incitement and glorification of violence."

Al-Manar, he says, was the first network to broadcast a report that 4,000 Israelis were told to stay home from the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. Though false, the story gave rise to a rumor still widely believed throughout the Muslim world: Jews and Israel were responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

When violence flares, Al-Manar newscasts are filled with grisly footage of Israeli strikes against Palestinians. Some of it is shot by Al-Manar's own crews in Gaza and the West Bank; other scenes are pulled off Israeli TV, which Al-Manar constantly monitors.

In one case, Jorisch says, a Palestinian woman who had watched Al-Manar "incessantly" blew herself up outside a Jerusalem supermarket in 2002, killing two Israelis. The network denies it encourages suicide bombings.

"Palestinians have enough suffering to do such an act - they are not going to wait to see Al-Manar to go blow themselves up for a righteous cause," says Tamara Mattar, who writes the daily English-language newscast.

"The main instigator is Israel and the Israeli occupation, not Al-Manar and other parties in the region."

Mattar says Al-Manar's reporting is objective, though she acknowledges she gets the "Israeli point of view" only by quoting other news agencies. Because it is an arm of <u>Hezbollah</u>, Al-Manar does not recognize the Jewish state, and refuses to interview Israeli officials or anyone who supports Israeli policies.

"There is no problem with Jews because they are Jews - we respect the Jewish religion and the Jewish people. Our problem is with Israeli policy in Palestine," Farhat says. He notes that a crew recently flew to Britain to interview a Jewish professor, albeit one critical of Israel.

French authorities, though, found enough anti-Semitism in Al-Manar's programming that in December they banned the network. Among other things, they noted that it had run a 30-part series during Ramadan 2003 called The Diaspora, which depicted the killing of a Christian child and the use of its blood to make matzoh, and that it had accused Jews of spreading AIDS around the world.

A few weeks later, the State Department put Al-Manar on its Terrorist Exclusion List, prompting satellite TV systems to yank it off the air in much of North America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Al-Manar says the actions have cut into its audience, once estimated at 10-million to 15-million viewers. It also lost revenue when Pepsi, Western Union and other U.S. companies pulled their ads.

Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere

The terrorist designation has even affected the network's Internet site, manarty.com.

"Companies that do hosting for us are getting afraid of the consequences by the U.S.," says Webmaster Mohammed Obeid. When users in the United States tried to call up the site one recent day, they got a notice that the domain name was for sale. (The site was accessible later in the week.)

Despite the setbacks, Al-Manar retains a staff of more than 250, between 30 and 40 percent of them <u>women</u>. Two of the anchors are <u>female</u>; unlike their glamorous counterparts on Al-Jazeera, they wear head scarves that reflect **Hezbollah**'s conservatism.

The network has crews in most Mideast countries including Iraq. After the 2003 invasion, Jorisch says, Al-Manar incited violence against U.S. troops by "inflammatory" programming. One example: images of death and destruction followed by a graphic that said "Freedom: the American Way."

The network, though, continued to operate uninterrupted, even as authorities banned Al-Jazeera and closed the newspaper of radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, sparking a Shiite uprising that lasted for months.

Farhat, the public relations manager, finds it ironic that Western countries promoting democratic values would squelch dissent.

"Unfortunately, the West is not accepting the Arab point of view and they are trying to lessen the areas in which Arab media are working. If an Arab station is transmitting something that is not consistent with Western values, then we can say Western stations are not presenting values consistent with our Arab values."

Susan Taylor Martin can be contacted at susan@sptimes.com

ON THE WEB

The station's Web site, http://www.manartv.com, is sometimes unavailable.

Graphic

PHOTO, SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN; Mona Noureddine hosts an Al-Manar show called Under 20. It fields questions from Arab youth about health, jobs and relationships.

Load-Date: May 31, 2005



Hezbollah tempers rhetoric: Colin Powell speaks for Israel, leaders of this Iran-backed terrorist group contend, but there are signs they might be listening to what he has to say

The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec)
May 12, 2003 Monday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A14

Length: 650 words

Byline: DANIEL J. WAKIN

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

With President Saddam Hussein's government a thing of the past, the United States has turned to putting pressure on one of its most persistent foes, *Hezbollah*, the militant group entrenched in Lebanon. But the organization insists that nothing has changed in its implacable opposition to Israel and Israel's ally, the United States.

In an interview late last week, a top <u>Hezbollah</u> official, Hajji Hussein al-Khalil, rejected U.S. demands that it cease military operations and leave the area in southern Lebanon bordering Israel. Khalil, responding to recent statements here by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, said Washington was merely doing Israel's bidding. New York Times

"I look at Colin Powell as if he is an official spokesman for Israel," said Khalil, who is the chief aide to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s general secretary, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah. "Colin Powell is asking <u>Hezbollah</u> to withdraw from the south, and this cannot be applied to us. **Hezbollah** are the sons of these towns and villages. So where would they withdraw to?"

The United States considers <u>Hezbollah</u> a terrorist organization that caused the deaths of hundreds of U.S. citizens in the 1980s and carried out a wave of kidnappings of Westerners. It emerged as a relentless antagonist of Israeli troops in southern Lebanon and took credit for the Israeli departure in May 2000.

"We have emphasized strongly our concern about continuing terrorist activities of <u>Hezbollah</u> in the region and around the world," Powell said recently after talks with Syrian and Lebanese leaders. He asked Syria, whose domination of Lebanon gives it ultimate control over <u>Hezbollah</u>, to crack down on the group and called on Lebanon to send its army to the border with Israel to "end armed <u>Hezbollah</u> militia incursions." Lebanon said its troops were close enough.

Khalil rejected the notion of a new strategic situation in the Middle East with the fall of Saddam and an Iraq occupied by more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers. "If the United States wants to put military pressure on us, of course we will defend ourselves," he said. "We hope they will not fall into this stupidity."

Khalil spoke in the offices of the party's central information office, an apartment in a nondescript building in a rundown area of southern Beirut dominated by Shiite Muslims. Huge portraits of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the current Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,

Hezbollah tempers rhetoric: Colin Powell speaks for Israel , leaders of this Iran -backed terrorist group contend, but there are signs they might be listening t....

hung from the wall in a waiting room. The Romance lingerie shop incongruously occupied the ground floor, while on the streets outside many <u>women</u> wore head scarves.

Nevertheless, there were some indications that <u>Hezbollah</u> was making subtle adjustments to react to the U.S. pressure.

One sign was the tempering of <u>Hezbollah</u> rhetoric. <u>Hezbollah</u> officials in recent days have said Powell's remarks were no surprise and stressed that Israel was their only foe. This contrasted with a speech to supporters just before the Iraq war by Nasrallah, in which he warned the United States not to expect a warm welcome in Iraq. "The people of this region will receive you with rifles, blood, arms, martyrdom and martyrdom operations," he said. " 'Death to America' was, is and will stay our slogan."

Nasrallah kept a low profile after the Iraq war. But in an interview with al-Jazeera, he said that a disarmed *Hezbollah* would be "useless," adding, "Are we going to resist occupation with words and poems?"

He also said that after the attacks on New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, the United States sent "messages" offering to remove the group from its terrorist list and provide economic aid.

"In return, they wanted us to drop out of the struggle, and they wanted us to secretly cooperate with them against the so-called terrorist groups," he said. "This was not acceptable to us and still isn't."

The United States denies any such contact.

Load-Date: May 12, 2003



Half a million pro-Syrian Lebanese march in Beirut

The Irish Times March 9, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: Front Page; Pg. 1

Length: 533 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Beirut

Body

Eyewitness: Half a million Lebanese Shia Muslims converged on downtown Beirut yesterday in an overwhelming show of force by the pro-Iranian, pro-Syrian *Hizbullah* movement.

In three weeks of anti-Syrian demonstrations, the Christian, Sunni and Druze opposition have never assembled such a huge crowd.

Superficially, the <u>Hizbullah</u> protest had much in common with the anti-Syrian demonstrations that preceded it. 20050308234248

<u>Hizbullah</u>'s secretary general, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, asked his followers to carry only the red, white and green Lebanese flag.

From a distance, the rivers of people who began pouring down Beirut's boulevards from late morning looked like those of the previous day. They sang the national anthem with the same fervour.

The Shia throngs even adopted the opposition's slogan: "Freedom. Sovereignty. Independence." Alluding to the assassination of the former prime minister Rafik Hariri, the Shia also flew a banner saying: "We want the truth."

But the same words mean different things to the Shia, who fear western intervention and believe Mr Hariri was assassinated by the US and Israel.

Before the denizens of the Shia southern suburbs set off on their five-kilometre journey, <u>Hizbullah</u> passed out portraits of the Syrian and Lebanese presidents. And <u>Hizbullah</u> hung a provocative banner from a downtown building saying "Thank you, Syria."

Most of the **women** wore long robes and headscarves. The men were poor and downtrodden, "the oppressed" in Shia parlance.

This demonstration had the feel of the Arab Middle East: <u>Hizbullah</u> security men sidling up to eaves-drop on interviews; people fearful of being quoted by name.

And though a small percentage were bused in from Syria, and despite allegations that some were paid to travel from the north, south and Bekaa Valley, this was no ordinary rent-a-mob.

Half a million pro- Syrian Lebanese march in Beirut

The Shia Muslims who accosted me, bursting with the desire to speak, are convinced that the expulsion of Syrian forces under UN Security Council Resolution 1559 will result in Israeli domination of Lebanon. Israel occupied parts of the country from 1978 until 2000.

The Lebanon that overflowed Riad Solh Square yesterday has a different history from what one Shia Muslim called "the Gucci revolution" on Martyrs' Square.

"We do not forget that when the Americans came, they shelled us with the battleship New Jersey. The Syrians never did that to us," said Fatima (40), a housewife.

The Christians on Martyrs' Square remember they were shelled by the Syrians in 1978 and in 1989.

<u>Hizbullah</u> held their demonstration just on the Muslim side of the 1975-1990 civil war demarcation line.

The Christian-dominated opposition convene several blocks away, on Martyrs' Square. Hundreds of Lebanese soldiers separated the two protest areas.

When Hassan Nasrallah addressed the Lebanese and Syrian people, as well as the presidents of France, the US and Israel, the cheers reverberated like crashing waves.

Meanwhile, a portrait of the slain prime minister, Mr Hariri, and banners proclaiming "Independence 05" and "Syrians Out" hung forlornly over the quiet Martyrs' Square. A cold wind blew down the empty esplanade to Beirut harbour.

"People knew not to come today," sighed a gendarme at the barricade.

Load-Date: March 9, 2005



Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair

The Irish Times May 13, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: World; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 679 words

Body

Letter from Tehran Ramita Navai The traffic around north Tehran is worse than usual. Hundreds of battered Hillman Hunters, blacked-out jeeps and souped-up Peugeots are locked bumper to bumper, pointlessly hooting their horns. But for once, this strange tangle of cars is crawling towards the same destination - Tehran's annual international book fair is the hottest event in town.

Foreign books in the Islamic Republic are expensive and rare. Iranians travel from towns and villages across the country to buy, or just browse through books from around the world, on offer at government subsidised prices. 20050512222040

The English-language book hall is one of the most popular. The small stalls are besieged with crowds and there is a scrum to get to the books. But amid this melee, opposite the Oxford University Press stand is an incongruous sight a computer beams horrific war images to a soundtrack of machine-gun fire and above hangs a poster of Palestine. This is Hamas, the militant Palestinian organisation, and it is the only stall with no customers.

"We are here because all Muslim brothers want to help fight until the last Israeli has been kicked out of Israel," says 23-year old Mohammad, a Hamas volunteer worker.

Unfortunately for Mohammad, the Muslim brothers of north Tehran are more interested in the Design and Architecture stand, where a group of girls have descended in a wave of skin-tight jeans, bubble-gum pink headscarves and lashings of make-up. The book fair is not only about buying books and Tehran's youth are out in full force.

"We have to grab every opportunity we can to meet girls," says 21-year-old Arash, ostensibly flicking through a coffee table book on Le Corbusier.

But it was not always like this - last year the Hamas stand was packed.

"The organisers made a mistake this year - we should actually be in the Arabic hall as most of our books are in Arabic. By the time we found out we'd been put here they told us it was too late to change, there was no more space left," says Mohammad.

Although they have sold fewer books this year, Mohammad says that T-shirts of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Hamas's late spiritual leader, have been flying off the shelves, as have replica suicide bomber headbands.

"But our bestsellers have been a poster of a woman suicide bomber and a book on <u>women</u>'s role in the intifada and one on **women** suicide bombers - a very popular theme this year," says Mohammad.

Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair

Just around the corner, business has also been slow for Islamic Jihad. Their piece de resistance - a CD-Rom called "Martyrdom-Seeking Operators" - has been facing stiff competition from Sesame Street's Big Bird next door.

But there is more action at the impressive camouflage-decked stand of the Lebanese Shia organisation, <u>Hizbullah</u>, with its minimalist banners and shining glass cabinets packed with grenades and rusty machine guns.

A <u>Hizbullah</u> representative is on hand to guide visitors through the mock war zone, past the gigantic posters of rocket launchers - "the Israelis are scared to bits of those babies" - towards its gleaming white bookshelves, with books on agricultural projects. "This is part of an image change. We want to let people know that <u>Hizbullah</u> isn't all about war, you know. We build hospitals and help communities."

As part of its rebranding, <u>Hizbullah</u> has expanded into the world of multimedia. Website addresses are emblazoned on flags and they even have computer games to lure the children: "Resistance Boy: The Boy from Quds (Jerusalem)", where the object is to shoot down Israeli missiles and planes.

<u>Hizbullah</u> says that interest has been high, even from the middle class kids who head straight to the English-language hall in search of Western culture.

"The name <u>Hizbullah</u> can put people off a bit, but when they see the booth, they want to come and have a look and find out more."

But Arash and his friends are not impressed.

"I've got my own problems to deal with. I didn't come here for politics," he says.

"I came for books." And with that he winks, tucks an Albert Camus under his arm and is off, trailing a new pack of girls.

Load-Date: May 13, 2005



Attacks in Kenya signal Al Qaeda's expanding war

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

December 2, 2002, Monday

Copyright 2002 The Christian Science Publishing Society

Section: USA; Pg. 04 **Length:** 896 words

Byline: By Faye Bowers Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Highlight: Bin Laden may be exploiting US-Israel ties to trigger broader Muslim backlash.

Body

Osama bin Laden has long promised that he'll punish Americans in "blood and treasure" for US support of Israel, sanctions on Iraq, and deployment of military forces in Saudi Arabia. But though Mr. bin Laden has targeted Israel as enemy No. 1, he has never before targeted Israelis.

Now, intelligence officials and terror experts say it looks increasingly likely that Al Qaeda was responsible for Thursday's attacks on Israelis in Mombasa, Kenya, in which 16 people died. They also say that bin Laden probably at least influenced Palestinians in their attacks inside Israel that day, and that he may be getting assistance from the Iranian- and Syrian-backed *Hizbullah* group in Lebanon.

If true, this could signal an expanded war against the West, an attempt to ignite a clash of civilizations by inciting and including more terror groups under the Al Qaeda umbrella in bin Laden's own version of an evil axis. The combination of Al Qaeda's operational abilities, matched with the fervor of radical Islamists from Pakistan to Chechnya to Somalia, already pose a formidable adversary. And it could get worse.

"Since the 1998 bombings of the US embassies [in Kenya and Tanzania], he's been striving to broaden the struggle to the largest constituency possible," says Bruce Hoffman, a terror expert at the RAND Corp. "He's always positioned himself as the defender of Muslims everywhere." Bin Laden's newer strategy of hitting soft targets - because they're more difficult for governments to protect and because of the unparalleled economic damage 9/11 achieved - probably led him back to Kenya and the Israeli target, experts say.

Making Israel the hot issue

Moreover, the recent spike in violence between Israelis and Palestinians, and their plight returning to the fore on the international stage, may have presented the right moment. Bin Laden "doesn't want to lose ground," Mr. Hoffman says. "So Israel and Palestine becomes the hot issue for him to demonstrate his relevance to world affairs."

In fact, according to Hoffman and others, bin Laden hopes to exploit the US relationship with Israel, and trigger a broader Muslim backlash in what is already deemed the most sympathetic of issues to Muslims around the world - US support for Israelis against Palestinians. By spilling Israeli blood, the logic goes, bin Laden may push Israel and the US closer in the "war on terror" - and in the process, gain broader Muslim support, and more recruits for his war on the West.

Attacks in Kenya signal Al Qaeda's expanding war

On the most recent audiotape released by Al Jazeera television last month, bin Laden accuses Bush of "killing our sons in Iraq" and conspiring with Israel to bomb "houses that shelter old people, <u>women</u>, and children with US-made aircraft in Palestine." He goes on to say, "You will be killed just as you killed."

A senior intelligence official says it is crucial for bin Laden to follow through in order to increase his following.

In Kenya, bin Laden may be trying to tap into the same Muslim sympathy. He's long had support there and in neighboring Horn of Africa nations, and it is from that network that US intelligence officials believe the recent attacks in Kenya were launched. They say they believe the attacks were perpetrated either directly by Al Qaeda members or by an affiliated local Somali Islamist group, Al Ittihad Al Islamiya.

"Osama bin Laden has always maintained that his main goal is inciting others," says the senior intelligence official. "You can see that manifesting itself now."

Evidence of spreading ties

One of the most worrisome aspects of this, intelligence officials and terror experts say, is that bin Laden may be pulling in the radical Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and the anti-Israeli group, *Hizbullah*. He "will cooperate with *Hizbullah*, Iraq, the Russian mafia," and basically any group that can help him achieve his aims, the senior intelligence official says.

He and others point out that intelligence sources, as well as court testimony from the 1998 embassy bombers, indicate <u>Hizbullah</u>-Al Qaeda ties. They suspect stronger links may be growing, and recent events seem to bolster that claim. Intelligence officials say they've received reports that <u>Hizbullah</u> is training Hamas members in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, where Al Qaeda members have also trained.

It was <u>Hizbullah</u> that taught Al Qaeda the two-tiered, simultaneous-attack approach. <u>Hizbullah</u> pioneered the strategy in 1983, attacking the US Embassy in Beirut, killing 241 US Marines, and, seconds later, French paratrooper headquarters.

Last month, two Palestinians in a small fishing boat loaded with explosives tried to blow it up beside an Israeli patrol boat. Last May, Israelis intercepted a Lebanese fishing boat that they say was laden with Iranian arms, including SA-7 Strella anti-aircraft missiles, the same as those used in Thursday's attack in Kenya.

Of course, dozens of countries possess these weapons as leftovers from Soviet days. And the fishing boat attack may have just been a copy-cat move. But together, these events have intelligence officials and terror experts thinking these groups may work together in a "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" campaign.

"We have seen a steady increase in 'blood and treasure,' " the senior intelligence official says. Bin Laden's focus is America, not only [in] America, but attacks with increasing cost."

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Load-Date: December 3, 2002



Middle East crisis: Suicide bomb: Carnage at Armageddon junction: Attack that turned number 830 bus into fireball echoes Hizbullah tactics

The Guardian (London)
June 6, 2002

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Section: Guardian Home Pages, Pg. 3

Length: 1130 words

Byline: Suzanne Goldenberg in Megiddo junction

Body

Bus number 830 was turned into an inferno of death at 7.15am, somersaulting along this stretch of road in the lower Galilee in a ball of smoke and flames, killing 16 Israelis and wounding 40 others.

Most of the passengers were Israeli soldiers in their late teens or early 20s, but there was also an elderly couple on board, on a day trip to a hot spring, and holidaymakers from Belarus - some of whom had landed at Tel Aviv airport only a few hours earlier.

The living scrambled from this smouldering hell through the windows. The dead, who were killed instantly or burned alive inside the cabin, were so mangled and charred that Israel's coroner said they might not be identified until this morning.

Almost nothing remained of the Palestinian suicide bomber or his stolen minivan - which was crammed with as much as 100kg (220lb) of explosives, according to Israeli television - after he rammed it into the flank of the bus, igniting the fuel tank and setting off the blaze which engulfed the passengers inside.

When it exploded, the bus was only a few hundred yards from the turnoff for the West Bank town of Jenin - home to Islamic Jihad, the radical Islamist group that claimed the attack.

The town, which Israeli security officials describe as the "hornet's nest" of the suicide bombers, was swarming with Israeli tanks and armoured personnel carriers.

The junction is called Megiddo - Hebrew for Armageddon.

"Suddenly there was a huge explosion. I knew it was an attack," said the bus driver, Michael Harel, his hands and face cut from shards of broken glass. "I tried to stop, but it wouldn't stop. I lost control of the bus, and it was thrown in the air."

Israel's intelligence agencies had been warning for days of a "mega" attack like yesterday's - intended to kill and injure many more than the 55 previous suicide bombings of the past 20 months did.

Security officials believe that Palestinian militant groups are refining tactics to outwit Israeli police: using car bombs to increase the quantities of explosives, or expanding their zone of operations.

Middle East crisis: Suicide bomb: Carnage at Armageddon junction: Attack that turned number 830 bus into fireball echoes Hizbullah tactics

Mr Harel's last ride on the 830 ended with his bus smashing and burning its way through guard rails, leaving a trail of crushed glass, charred debris and personal belongings before it came to rest in a heap of weeds at the foot of Megiddo jail, a high security prison with many Palestinian prisoners. The impact of the explosion drilled a big crater in the pavement, and hurled a green panel from the bus nine metres (30ft) in the air. It came down in the barbed wire of the jail's security fence.

The bus journey began at 5.50am when it wheeled out of the Tel Aviv depot and headed towards Tiberias, on the shores of Lake Galilee, stopping to take on passengers at Netanya, Ra'anana and Hadera. A big group of soldiers got on at Netanya. Three <u>women</u> soldiers boarded at an army base only a few miles from the site of the attack.

Marina Jakamutzik and her sister, who were heading for Tiberias to volunteer for the Israeli army, arrived in Tel Aviv from Belarus just five hours before the attack.

They were lucky. Along with relatives who had met them at the airport, they were sitting immediately behind Mr Harel and escaped with minor injuries.

Mr Harel is a regular on the 830, and the route has been regularly targeted by suicide bombers. He has had three close encounters with the bombers in the past, he said, and he has no qualms about asking suspicious-looking travellers to show him the contents of their bags.

Yesterday, there were none.

Daraba Andasho and his wife, Bateyesh, got on at Hadera. The couple - Mr Andasho is 74 and his wife is 63 - were on a trip to the eastern shores of Lake Galilee.

"My wife thought it would be good for our health," he said from his hospital bed. Mr Andasho escaped with a back injury and cuts and burns to his right hand. His wife was more seriously injured.

By the time the Andashos boarded, the bus was filling up with soldiers nodding off in their seats, or listening to personal stereos. The couple, who arrived in Israel from Ethiopia 11 years ago, sat three rows apart, towards the front of the vehicle.

The bus drew near to the junction. In the driver's seat, Mr Harel slowed down, and flashed his lights, anticipating the checkpoint that usually stands near the jail entrance. Yesterday it was unmanned.

At precisely that moment, the minivan pulled out from behind as if it were about to overtake. Instead, it rammed into the rear of the vehicle. "In the first moment of the explosion, I was showered with glass shards and I immediately jumped out the window," Mr Andasho said.

The bus was in flames, with smoke billowing out of the windows. Bodies were strewn along the pavement.

"It lit up instantly," a guard who was in a nearby watchtower told Army Radio. "People were fleeing from it like ants." In their cells, the Palestinian prisoners cheered, Israeli television reported.

Mr Andasho returned to the vehicle to try to reach his wife, pulling her through the window with the help of a soldier.

By that time, Mr Harel had scrambled from his window. A soldier sat, frozen, in the middle of the road, her face dripping with blood.

"I started to drag soldiers to the centre of the road. They were seriously injured," Mr Harel said. "It was very painful for me to see." The blaze would burn for an hour, reducing the bus to a skeleton.

For Israel, the method of yesterday's attack was disturbingly familiar to that used by <u>Hizbullah</u> fighters in their guerrilla war against the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon. The mounting death toll among Israel's soldiers led to its withdrawal two years ago.

Page 3 of 3

Middle East crisis: Suicide bomb: Carnage at Armageddon junction: Attack that turned number 830 bus into fireball echoes Hizbullah tactics

Last month, a security guard at a Tel Aviv nightclub averted a similar attempt to turn a car into an engine of death, shooting a Palestinian militant dead just as he was revving his motor to ram his car bomb into a crowd of revellers.

Israeli officials said they had also foiled plans to park a lorry loaded with explosives under twin towers in Tel Aviv, and uncovered an attempt to blow up Israel's largest fuel depot by attaching a bomb to a tanker.

Hours after the attack, the stench of burning rubber hung in the air. In the hospital at Hadera, Mr Andasho's daughters shuttled between his bedside and that of his wife.

What did he think of the Palestinian who had blown up his bus? He turned to his daughter to translate from the Amharic: "God should destroy them."

- 1 Bus leaves Tel Aviv depot at 5.50am, picking up passengers along route
- 2 The vehicle slows down as it nears Megiddo junction, anticipating a normally manned checkpoint
- 3 At this moment a minivan packed with explosives pulls out from behind as if to overtake, but rams into the rear of the bus. The explosion causes the bus's petrol tank to ignite and the vehicle somersaults along the road

Load-Date: June 6, 2002



Suicide bombers are buried in Turkey's breeding ground of extremism

The Guardian - Final Edition November 27, 2003

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Section: Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 16

Length: 1240 words

Byline: Helena Smith in Bingol

Body

Of all the graves dug into the windswept bluff overlooking Bingol, that of Gokhan Elaltuntas is by far the smallest. When, under armed guard, relatives buried the suicide bomber in the middle of the night they had only to lower his casket into a tiny gash in the earth. Now the man who drove his "car of death" into a synagogue in Istanbul lies under a mound of red clay no bigger than a short Turkish rug.

"They couldn't do otherwise because he came with no head or arms or legs," said Harkan Turk Ilmas, a policeman who watched over the ceremony. "It was just his torso that they managed to retrieve."

Across the southern mountain town, in a roadside grave, lies his comrade Mesut Cabuk, who died almost simultaneously in a second synagogue attack. When no one was looking, his family buried him too.

That was last Tuesday. Two days later Azad Ekinci and Feridan Ugurlu followed suit, driving their "cars of death" into the British consulate and HSBC bank, also in Istanbul.

The first attack, it seems, had given them their cue. Within hours of the first explosions they were driving out of Bingol. Passing military checkpoints they took the 500-mile route to Turkey's great commercial capital and the heart of their mission: their country's worse ever terrorist attack.

These two men - so good, so calm, say friends - were no strangers to hardship. From early on they had known suffering, first as ethnic Kurds who inhabited the heavily militarised badlands of Turkey, then as Muslim fundamentalists.

Ekinci, who would ram his explosive-laden truck into the British consulate, saw his father, Idris, shot dead by Turkish nationalists when he was two.

"Idris was a good man who led a workers' union at Bingol's town hall, but Turkish nationalists shot him because he was a prominent member of the PKK (the outlawed Kurdish rebel group)," said Ridvan Kizgin, who heads the local Turkish Human Rights Foundation.

"I think his death played a role in making Azad the sort of person he became."

For the rest of his childhood and much of his adult life, Ekinci was kept indoors by a protective mother - until he met Mesut, who had a taste for Jean-Paul Sartre and the Islamist guerrilla group <u>Hizbullah</u>. With no work and little else to do, the pair soon became inseparable.

Suicide bombers are buried in Turkey's breeding ground of extremism

"They were so tight, one couldn't go without the other to the toilet," said Adul Ali Benghizou, a middle-aged man who said he knew the two well.

"Ekinci was a bit isolated, but when he met Mesut he changed. Mesut was obsessed with existentialism and Jean-Paul Sartre. Personally, I think he had psychological problems, but he had a great influence on Azad."

Although Ekinci had displayed no particular affection for political Islam, he began patronising the plethora of mosques and Koranic schools in Bingol. Through the charismatic sheikhs who lead underground religious sects, known as tarikats, the pair soon became infused with a militant Islam that took them to Bosnia, Afghanistan and Chechnya.

In Bingol, with its population of 60,000, many believe it was the sheikhs who first schooled the bombers in the fundamentals of hate. The four Turkish Kurds reportedly spent years crisscrossing into Iran, Syria, Pakistan and the Gulf states to train in the art of wiring explosives.

In Istanbul, the experts on militant Islam say the trips were almost certainly funded by the business-endowed foundations that support the sects.

But the bombers could have come from anywhere in Turkey's remote south-east, where most residents barely scratch a living from the land. "When you have no work and no hope of a job you get angry, and then you look elsewhere for things to do," said Mr Benghizou, a former Istanbul journalist who returned to Bingol to look after his mother.

"A lot of young people here are so desperate they become nihilists. The only thing Bingol offers them is heroin smuggling from Iran. With nothing to lose, they become open to the spirit of al-Qaida," he said. "When they go to Pakistan they can make money to send back to their families. It's the same with <u>Hizbullah</u>. Once you're in <u>Hizbullah</u>, I hear, they make sure to look after you and your family."

Until 1999, when Kurdish separatists declared a unilateral ceasefire in their fight to create an independent state in the south of Turkey, successive governments in Ankara gave support to Islamic radicals in the region. For more than two decades *Hizbullah* received arms and money from Turkish security forces to crush rebels in the PKK. As a *Hizbullah* stronghold, some of the most brutal fighting took place around Bingol. "They were tolerated on the basis that the enemy of my enemy is my friend," said Ersin Kalaycioglu, a political scientist at Istanbul's Sabachi University.

"But when <u>Hizbullah</u> stopped being of use to the government it clamped down on them with a vengeance. According to police databases, it had around 20,000 members, but only 4,000 were caught. So the question is, what happens to the rest?"

Mr Kizgin, the human rights worker, says the answer is obvious. "When the dirty war was over, <u>Hizbullah</u> began looking to radical Islamic groups for support. Unfortunately, it's a repeat of the same story that we saw with the Americans and the Taliban. The Turkish state created <u>Hizbullah</u> and now it is paying the price."

In this climate the movements of Ekinci and his comrades went unchecked. Although there was clear evidence that 1,000 Turks had gone abroad as religious warrior volunteers, their missions appear to have been dismissed by the Turkish security forces. Western intelligence services now think the Turkish jihadis acted as intermediaries between local groups such as *Hizbullah* and networked links to al-Qaida.

The Istanbul bombings plunged Bingol into a strange mourning. The revelation that all four suicide bombers came from the town has shamed locals, who want nothing to do with terrorists. The mountain-rimmed town, famed for honey and nuts, had barely recovered from an earthquake which killed 167 in May.

But as Ankara turns its military might against terrorism, the residents of Bingol will have to live with the fear that the security forces who have now swamped the town will make their lives even harder.

Suicide bombers are buried in Turkey's breeding ground of extremism

"The whole of Bingol is very upset," said the town's deputy governor, Fikret Zaman. "Even the relatives of the four bombers are very upset. Not at their deaths so much, but that they brought this terrible shame to Bingol. We Turks are not Islamic fundamentalists. We are very proud that we have the Muslim world's only secular state."

But Bingol is also in denial. The suicide bombers were not an isolated group. They were a product of a system that appears to nurture religious inspired hate - as well as the country's failure to address the problem of its 12 million ethnic Kurds.

Few believe that this is the end of the flow of suicide bombers from these areas.

"All the ingredients are in place for several more to come along," said Mr Kizgin. "Turkey has to give us Kurds better basic rights. It has to give us our dignity and a better education. We have to be able to use our own language, have our own names . . . That would be one of the better steps authorities could take to ensuring that no more oddly- ized graves overlook the wild, windswept bluffs of Bingol."

* Three more alleged accomplices in the Istanbul bombings were arrested, two of them <u>women</u>, on charges of belonging to and aiding an illegal organisation.

guardian.co.uk/turkey

Load-Date: November 27, 2003



Q & A: Lebanon's elections

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

June 6, 2005, Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 06

Length: 976 words

Body

Nicholas Blanford, the Monitor's Beirut correspondent, answers questions about Lebanon's parliamentary elections, which have been taking place in five regions over four consecutive Sundays, beginning with Beirut on May 29. Sunday, the southern district voted, to be followed by the Bekaa Valley and Mount Lebanon on June 12 and northern Lebanon on June 19.

Why are these elections so important?

It's the first vote free from Syrian interference since the end of Lebanon's 1975-1990 conflict. Although Syrian troops first moved into Lebanon in 1976, Damascus took full control of Lebanon only at the end of the war in 1990. The first parliamentary polls in 20 years were held in 1992, and again in 1996 and 2000. However, each election was manipulated, and districts were drawn to ensure that Syria's Lebanese allies would be returned to power.

Now that Syrian troops and intelligence agents have left Lebanon because of the protests and international pressure following the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February, the results of these elections will help define the direction the country takes in coming months.

How do voters choose candidates?

Voters are offered lists of candidates, which include <u>female</u> contenders. A prominent politician may decide to head his own list. He then selects a number of candidates to fill the various sectarian slots apportioned by law for his electoral district.

If Shiite Muslims form the majority in his electoral district, then Shiite candidates will form the majority on the list, followed by the next-largest religious sect, and so on.

By polling day, there could be, say, three competing lists in one electoral district. But voters do not have to approve any one list in its entirety. They can mix and match lists, marking off names on one list and replacing them with others. So, it's candidates that count, whether they are independents or members of a party.

How will the opposition fare?

The leading opposition parties are the Future Tide movement, led by Rafik's son, Saad Hariri, and the Democratic Gathering, led by Walid Jumblatt. They, along with various smaller allies, have much more support than their opponents, some of whom sided with Syria in the past, and some of whom are former allies in the opposition. In the first round of voting in Beirut on May 29, Hariri's list swept all 19 seats.

Q & A: Lebanon 's elections

Several prominent pro-Syrian figures have withdrawn from the electoral race, including Emile Lahoud Jr., the son of the Lebanese president. He says he quit in protest of the law under which the elections are being held. But the reality is that he and several other Syrian allies are no longer likely to be elected.

Mr. Hariri predicts that the opposition will win 80 to 90 of the 128 seats in parliament. Hariri is a leading contender to be the country's next prime minister.

How is the prime minister chosen?

Following the elections, the government will officially resign but remain in office while consultations begin for the nomination of a new prime minister and the formation of a new government. The prime minister is selected by the president after he holds consultations with members of parliament and hears their views.

The nominated prime minister then selects his cabinet in consultation with the president. Traditionally, Lebanon's president is a Maronite Christian, the prime minister is a Sunni Muslim, and the parliamentary speaker is a Shiite.

Will the election be fair?

Probably more so than in the past. There is considerable international interest in these elections. In addition to domestic electoral watchdogs, the United Nations and the European Union have sent observers to monitor the proceedings. They gave a clean endorsement to the first round of voting in Beirut.

The most important aspect of these elections is that they will be free from Syrian interference, even though the law under which they are being held was engineered by the Syrians in the 2000 polls.

What are the top issues?

Although there is no shortage of important issues to discuss - the poor state of the economy, redefining relations with Syria, disarming <u>Hizbullah</u>, economic and political reform - few candidates actually present proposals for tackling them.

During the run-up to elections, the media have tended to dwell on the infighting between politicians rather than the debate over important issues. That has left many Lebanese feeling jaded by the whole process.

After the tumultuous developments of the past few months, many Lebanese are complaining that nothing has really changed, with many of the same politicians continuing to squabble among each other over the distribution of power and influence.

What are **Hizbullah**'s prospects?

The southern round of voting took place Sunday. Of the five districts, this one is easiest to predict. *Hizbullah*, the Shiite militant organization, has teamed up with its traditional rival, the Amal Movement, to produce an unbeatable alliance that will capture the Shiite vote and almost certainly sweep all 23 available seats. The Lebanese media have nicknamed the alliance "the bulldozer."

About 650,000 people are eligible to vote in the southern round, although turnout is expected to hover between 30 and 40 percent. The low turnout is due to six candidates securing their seats unopposed, a partial Christian boycott in protest at the electoral law, and a certain amount of apathy at the foregone results.

Still, *Hizbullah* is fielding 14 candidates, hoping to raise the number of its lawmakers from nine.

<u>Hizbullah</u> is under stiff international pressure to disband its military wing. And its disarmament will be one of the most pressing political issues for the next government. <u>Hizbullah</u>'s television station, Al Manar, has said that the elections will serve as a referendum on the party's political positions.

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Load-Date: June 5, 2005



Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally; All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest

The International Herald Tribune

March 15, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1068 words

Byline: Neil Macfarquhar

Dateline: BEIRUT:

Body

Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese jammed the center of Beirut on Monday, packing its central square and spilling out onto the surrounding roads in the largest demonstration to date demanding the withdrawal of all Syrian forces from the country.

Seemingly every available space around the heart of the city overflowed with people waving the red-and-white striped Lebanese flag in what was being billed as the largest demonstration in Lebanon's history. In the main mosque, still under construction, demonstrators even crammed the tiny balconies hundreds of feet up on the four minarets, balconies that the muezzin traditionally use to sing out the call to prayer.

A few daredevils inched their way along the huge construction crane out over the square to drape a Lebanese flag at the end.

The New York Times

"We don't want Syrian spies and secret police; we don't want any foreign intervention," said Noha Dahir, 18, a veiled Sunni student who came by bus from Tripoli. "Those Lebanese who want the Syrians to stay can go live in Syria. There are plenty of Lebanese here to fill the country."

The most notable element in the rally was that it represented all sects in the country.

"They can say that they represent a wide spectrum of Lebanese factions, including some Shiites, and they have been able to bring the Sunnis into the streets, which is not easy," Ghassan Salame, a former minister of culture and political science professor, said by telephone from Paris. "They have an upward momentum now after a week that was full of uncertainty."

There have been rallies in the city center every Monday since former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated on Feb. 14, but organizers were determined to make this one especially large in response to the pro-Syrian march last Tuesday that filled the area with hundreds of thousands of mostly Shiite demonstrators.

"This will counterbalance last Tuesday, and now we can sit and talk," said Mazen al-Zain, 30, a financial analyst, noting that he himself was a member of an illustrious Shiite clan from southern Lebanon. "What is really important after today's gathering is that we all sit down at the same table."

Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally; All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest

Such a big turnout puts added pressure on Syria's government to announce a serious timetable for the withdrawal of its 14,000 troops and estimated 5,000 secret police officers in Lebanon.

Although President Bashar al-Assad of Syria has promised a withdrawal into the Bekaa Valley by the end of March and a further discussion with a joint Lebanese-Syrian commission in early April, there is still no indication of a timetable of a complete withdrawal.

A United Nations envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen, was due to report back to the UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, about the exact promises delivered by the Syrians in talks Saturday. The United States and other Western nations have said they want all Syrians out before new parliamentary elections tentatively scheduled for May.

With the UN fact-finding mission of senior police officers sent to Lebanon to assess the investigation into Hariri's assassination also heading back to New York to report to Annan, much of the focus on the issue is likely to shift to New York this week.

But participants in the march Monday were convinced that the size of the opposition to any Syrian presence meant that the withdrawal was only a matter of time.

"They are trying to prove they are still strong to their nation while they are retreating," said Samer Khoury, 32, a manager in the Virgin store overlooking Martyrs' Square, where the demonstrators gathered. The store's former parking lot is now the burial place for Hariri and the bodyguards who died with him.

The demonstration turned into an all-day affair, with marchers gathering in midmorning, hours before the official 3 p.m. start time, and the last speakers still going strong at 6 p.m. Banks and schools closed early and offices around the capital emptied, all swelling the crowds. The mob was so thick that numerous participants fainted, and ambulances slowly inched their way to them.

Marwan Hamade, the first speaker, who himself survived a car bomb in October, addressed some of his words to the slain prime minister.

"Your dream came true today and the horrendous crime failed," he said, before going on to repeat the opposition demand that all the leaders of the security services resign for their failure to protect Hariri. Given such organizations' close ties to Syria, of course, many Lebanese suspect that one or more of the secret services might have had a hand in the crime.

Bahiya Hariri, Hariri's sister, who is a member of Parliament, used her speech to reach out to both <u>Hezbollah</u> and its godparent Syria, which has long seen Lebanon as its last negotiating card to retrieve the occupied Golan Heights from Israel.

"We will stand by Syria until its land is liberated and it regains its sovereignty on the occupied Golan Heights," she said, prompting boos from the crowd. As for <u>Hezbollah</u>, she said, "We insist on building together with them the future of great Lebanon."

There were numerous calls for President Emile Lahoud to resign, and one sign read "The Anti-Swimming Revolution," a reference to Lahoud's penchant for spending hours each day at the pool.

Syria's forcing through a three-year extension to Lahoud's term last August was the opening shot in the tensions that culminated with Hariri's assassination and the current popular movement demanding that Syria withdraw.

Lahoud angered many here over the weekend by suggesting that the demonstrations should end because someone might throw a hand grenade, possibly setting off a renewed civil war. They were also angry that Lahoud reinstated Omar Karami as prime minister. Karami was forced to resign on Feb. 28 after a giant opposition protest. Still, the opposition has not pressed the demand that Lahoud resign, fearing a complete power vacuum at the top in the absence of a cabinet.

Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally; All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest

"We kicked him out the door and he came back through the window," said Marwan Kayrouz, 33, a real estate investor who, like many, dismissed the idea of a renewed civil war. "Who is going to fight who? All the factions are here."

Indeed, the mix of demonstrators was readily apparent in the mix of dress codes, from veiled <u>women</u> to horsemen in traditional Arab head scarves to <u>women</u> with bare midriffs and pierced navels. A few of the banners cemented the theme of unity by displaying both a cross and a crescent.

Load-Date: March 15, 2005



Lebanese Sunnis join massive anti-Syrian protest

The Irish Times March 15, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: World; Pg. 11

Length: 452 words

Body

Lebanon: Christians, Sunnis and Druze - veterans and first-timers - united in a common cause yesterday to ensure that their anti-Syrian rally in Beirut was the biggest and noisiest in Lebanon's history.

Martyrs' Square, which has been home to a camp of live-in protesters for the past four weeks, was overflowing with flag-waving masses demanding an international investigation into the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri.

A month to the day after the explosion which blew apart his motorcade, many Sunni Muslims took to the streets for the first time with Druze and Christians. Mr Hariri was a Sunni. 20050315000223

It was the Sunni Itani family's first protest. "We came here to commemorate the martyr Hariri's death," Mohammed Itani said.

It was clear yesterday that a Beirut protest last week by the Syrian-backed Shia Muslim <u>Hizbullah</u> group, which drew hundreds of thousands, had galvanised many people.

"We want to show them we are more than the others, <u>Hizbullah</u> and the pro-Syrians," Mr Itani said. "We want Syria out."

Sunnis are traditionally less politicised than Lebanon's other sects. But the murder of Mr Hariri angered the community. Scores of Sunni clerics turned up, distinctive in their white-and-red turbans. Many <u>women</u> wore headscarves.

The organisers claimed that a million people had joined the protest.

No independent estimate was available, but witnesses said that the rally looked even bigger than <u>Hizbullah</u>'s Beirut demonstration.

Men, <u>women</u> and children formed a vast sea of red and white - the opposition colours - as they thronged the square and surrounding streets. They fell silent for two minutes to commemorate Mr Hariri, a billionaire philanthropist.

"Hariri was not sectarian, he paid for the education of many people of all religions. He was a man of peace," Mohammed Qabbani said.

Lebanese Sunnis join massive anti- Syrian protest

Protesters climbed on to the domes and the minarets of the massive unfinished mosque Mr Hariri had financed, which has now become his resting place. They also lined the rooftops and flyovers.

Opposition MPs denounced Syria and the Lebanese leaders it backs from a stage. Many in the opposition blame Damascus for the murder of Mr Hariri.

Syria has denied any involvement and has started to pull its troops out of Lebanon over the past week as a result of huge Lebanese and global pressure.

"We have won this battle. The Syrians are leaving because of these people," Nabil Jurdi said, gesturing to the ocean of flags.

The crowd chanted "Syria out" and "Sovereignty, freedom, independence."

One placard read: "We want the truth: Who killed Hariri?" Another said: "May God curse your killers."

When the speeches ended, nets were opened to release hundreds of red-and-white balloons into the twilight.

Load-Date: March 15, 2005



Ending bomb campaign is the first step to peace; It may be up to Arab countries to leash Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad.

Portland Press Herald (Maine)

April 3, 2002 Wednesday, FINAL Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 6A

Length: 346 words

Body

The peace proposal coming out of the Arab summit had its flaws, but it also held promise. Saudi Arabia and the other countries that have offered the olive branch, however, should go further to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East. They should take steps to end the suicide-bombing campaign that has already claimed too many lives.

Each time a Palestinian bomb goes off, innocent men, <u>women</u> and children are killed and injured. Each explosion, furthermore, provokes a response from Israel, which claims the right to defend itself against such attacks.

The situation continues to deteriorate. The Passover Massacre at Netanya killed 22 Israeli citizens and has been followed by daily attacks. Israel's army is menacing Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat, holding him accountable for failing to restrain *Hezbollah*, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Arafat's exile, even his death, is no longer unthinkable, wrong as it would be.

It is clear to us that while Arafat has refused to take the steps necessary to crack down on terrorist groups within Palestinian-controlled lands, he also lacks the power to stop the bombing campaign unilaterally.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has declared a war on terror and moved his army against Palestinian cities, but even if he removes Arafat from power and pounds refugee camps into rubble, the bombs will continue to go off.

Sharon cannot make them stop just as Arafat cannot make them stop.

It's time, then, for the leaders of the Arab world to come forward and fully commit themselves to the peace process. They wield influence over the terrorists because they are the primary funders of these organizations. If Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries demand a cessation to the suicide bombing campaign, if only to get the Israeli army to withdraw, that would be a first step back to the bargaining table.

Until a sustainable cease-fire is achieved, Israel will not negotiate. Without negotiation, the Saudi peace proposal is but a scrap of paper - and as such, it will only fuel the fires of a drawn-out, bloody war without winners.

Load-Date: April 3, 2002



Attack on Afghanistan: Syria: Listed as an enemy, wooed as a friend in a crisis: Hatred for Israel could be stumbling block in talks

The Guardian (London)
October 31, 2001

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Section: Guardian Home Pages, Pg. 10

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Byline: Brian Whitaker in Damascus

Body

George Washington was once a terrorist, the Syrian minister of information tells visitors as he reels off a list of other suspects: Nelson Mandela, Joan of Arc, Charles de Gaulle.

It is a point the Syrians are sure to make today in their talks with Tony Blair, though perhaps the English civil war leader, Oliver Cromwell, will replace George Washington.

Syria - one of the countries listed by the US as a state sponsor of terrorism - earned some unexpected kudos by condemning the suicide attacks on New York and Washington last month and offering to do what it could to help. But their support depends on a somewhat selective definition of terrorism.

Nobody in Syria has much time for Osama bin Laden; "Arrest him, kill him, do what you like," a Damascus taxi driver says, "but leave the Afghan people alone".

Memories of the government's past conflicts with Islamist militants - culminating in the bloody suppression of the 1982 Hama uprising which left thousands of Syrians dead - are still strong, though reluctantly talked about.

The official media have been careful not to report Bin Laden's activities in a way that might give a platform to his ideas. For them, the lesson of that period is that such people are not to be tolerated.

"We don't have sympathy for those who kill under the banner of fundamentalism," the information minister, Adnan Umran, says.

Syria had been a victim of fundamentalism and besides, he says - unable to resist a dig at Washington - those responsible were "very friendly with the Americans" at the time.

Despite sympathy for the Afghan people, attitudes towards the Taliban are hostile. "The nature of the Taliban regime is contrary to secularism, which is the principle we believe in in this country," Mr Umran says.

Around Damascus, the call of the muezzin to prayer echoes through the city five times a day, pilgrims flock from Iran to the Shi'a monuments - much to the delight of hotelkeepers - but <u>women</u>, at least in the cities, can dress in western clothes and even take discreet puffs on a hubble-bubble pipe.

In contrast to some other Arab countries, Syria has not witnessed street demonstrations supporting Bin Laden or opposing the Americans.

Attack on Afghanistan: Syria: Listed as an enemy, wooed as a friend in a crisis: Hatred for Israel could be stumbling block in talks

It is hard to tell whether this reflects the inclinations of ordinary Syrians or is the result of official discouragement. According to Mr Umran, "the basic reason is that the government's position has been satisfactory for the people, unlike that in Pakistan".

Syria takes issue with the "war on terrorism" on two main points. The first, as the foreign minister, Farouq al-Sharaa, reportedly told his Canadian counterpart on Monday, is that it regards the military campaign in Afghanistan as "not helpful".

The other, which will probably interest Mr Blair more, is Syria's support for anti-Israel groups such as <u>Hizbullah</u> and the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine.

The PFLP has an office in Damascus but the group is fragmented and the Syrian faction is said not to have been directly responsible for the recent assassination of the Israeli tourism minister. <u>Hizbullah</u> is a different matter. Although its religious basis is Shi'a Islam, few Syrians would place it in the same category as Bin Laden's al-Qaida.

"It's a political organisation with a military wing which is fighting Israel," one Syrian journalist said. If there was peace with Israel it would probably devote itself entirely to Lebanese politics, he suggested.

Syria, along with Iran, is almost certainly in a position to dictate what <u>Hizbullah</u> does, but would have difficulty disowning it without some compensatory reward. <u>Hizbullah</u>'s fighters were credited by many ordinary Arabs with ending Israel's 22-year occupation of south Lebanon last year and won huge popularity as a result.

Since the Israeli withdrawal, sporadic attacks by <u>Hizbullah</u> have continued - mainly in connection with the Shebaa Farms area, which is still occupied by Israel on the grounds that it is Syrian, not Lebanese, territory.

On Monday, John Manley, the Canadian foreign minister made clear at meetings with President Bashar Assad and the foreign minister, Mr Sharaa, that the west disapproves of *Hizbullah*.

He had urged them, he said, "to use their influence to attempt to discourage those who would use violence to attain political objectives from doing so at the present time". But in the end, there was no movement. "We respectfully disagreed with one another," Mr Manley said.

The view in Damascus, which Mr Blair will no doubt probe further, is that those who resist Israeli occupation should not automatically be classified as terrorists. The first need, Mr Umran says, is to define terrorism. "Then we can create a readiness to combat it through the framework of the United Nations."

But Syria also has its eyes on a bigger prize: the return of the Golan Heights captured by Israel in the 1967 war. There is more than a passing interest in the idea that one side effect of the Afghan conflict could be a revival of the Middle East peace process - in which Syria would like to be included.

Dominated by one party

Area: 71,498 sq miles

Population: 14,619,000 (1994 UN estimate), mostly Muslim.

Languages: Arabic is principal language, but Kurdish, Turkish and Armenian spoken among significant minorities.

Capital: Damascus

History: Once part of the Ottoman empire, Syria came under French mandate after first world war. Became independent republic during second world war, and remained so until 1958, when it became part, with Egypt, of the United Arab Republic. Seceded from the United Arab Republic in 1961.

Politics: Ba'ath party has been ruling party since 1963.

Page 3 of 3

Attack on Afghanistan: Syria: Listed as an enemy, wooed as a friend in a crisis: Hatred for Israel could be stumbling block in talks

President: Bashar Assad

The constitution:

promulgated in 1973 declares Syria is a democratic, popular socialist state, and that the Arab Socialist Renaissance (Ba'ath) party is the leading party in the state and society. The president is head of state and elected by parliament for a seven-year term.

Elections: to 250-seat people's council in November 1998 resulted in National Progressive Front retaining all 167 seats unchallenged. This seven party bloc is dominated by the Ba'ath party, with its allies the Arab Socialist Union, Socialist Unionist party, Arab Socialist Movement, Syrian Communist party and Socialist Unionist Democratic party.

Economy: Agriculture is principal source of production (wheat, barley, cotton, tobacco). Oil has been found in north-east of country. Also gas reserves, deposits of phosphate and rock salt. Produces asphalt.

Load-Date: October 31, 2001



Deal is short of full Syrian troop withdrawal

The Irish Times March 8, 2005

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Section: World; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 941 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Beirut

Body

Middle East: The Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and the general whom he appointed president of Lebanon, Emile Lahoud, yesterday announced they had agreed on the withdrawal of all Syrian troops to the eastern Bekaa Valley by the end of March.

But the agreement, after a meeting of the "Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council" in Damascus, left vague the most important question - a complete withdrawal of all Syrian troops from Lebanon. It specified only that once the redeployment to the Bekaa is completed, "the governments of the two countries will decide on continuing the redeployment of the remaining Syrian forces".

The anti-Syrian opposition have scored two victories in as many weeks. On February 28th, they brought down the Karami government. Yesterday, they obtained the Syrian commitment to withdraw to the Bekaa. 20050307230156

Yet for the demonstrators on Martyrs' Square, the wishy-washy statement and the handful of lorries seen carrying old mattresses and furniture over the mountains were not sufficient.

"We want them completely out of here. They can make promises and hang on," said Elias Noufaily (21), a Christian computer science student. "I'm afraid that's what will happen. They have the Lebanese government in their pockets."

"Freedom. Sovereignty. Independence," the crowd chanted as a human sea topped by sails of red, white and green Lebanese flags converged on the square, flanked by hundreds of Lebanese army troops armed with assault rifles and rockets.

Lebanon's "independence uprising" claimed its first wounded man on Sunday night, a Christian youth shot in the thigh by pro-Syrian troublemakers near Martyrs' Square. Opposition leaders fear that more than a dozen cars stolen from the streets of Beirut could be used as carbombs.

Lebanese police estimated yesterday's crowd at 150,000, as many as attended the funeral of the much-loved former prime minister Rafik Hariri on February 16th.

Sunni Muslims were there in force yesterday, to mark the third week after their leader's assassination. "We all pitched in to rent buses to come here," explained Sana'a Ghazal (43), a veiled Sunni Muslim woman from Sidon. Aziza Barnawi, an old woman with a wizened face, held a poster of Hariri to her chest. "He sent me a widow's pension every month. He paid for all my medicine," she said.

Deal is short of full Syrian troop withdrawal

The Sunni community were traditionally close to Syria, but the <u>women</u> from Sidon were adamant. "We want Syria to leave, and we want the truth about Hariri's assassination," Ms Ghazal said.

Maurice Baz (84), a Christian and the former president of the Lebanese appeals court, had come to the protest march with his wife Hayat (73). The couple brought their three children and their spouses. Their son Jamil flew from London, where he is the director of a German bank, for yesterday's demonstration.

Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of the Shia Muslim movement <u>Hizbullah</u>, who has called for a pro-Syrian demonstration today, said: "The goal of the US and Israel is to spread chaos in Lebanon . . . to push certain Lebanese to clamour for international intervention."

There is no chaos - yet - but Mr Baz was already clamouring for intervention. "Without the West, we cannot make Syria leave," the ageing lawyer said. "We need a NATO army to control the situation. Ten thousand soldiers would be enough. Bush is popular in Lebanon. I am starting to like him." Mr Baz said he hoped it would rain on **Hizbullah**'s demonstration today.

Most Lebanese believe the Shia Muslims will mobilise an even bigger crowd than the anti-Syrian throng who marched from Martyrs' Square to the site of Hariri's assassination and back yesterday.

"Lebanon is divided," Mr Baz admitted. "They claim we have sold out to Israel, but we have no contacts with Israel and we want good relations with Syria, if they would just leave."

The tent city that has sprung up around the statue of the martyrs executed by Ottoman Turkey has become the capital's most fashionable venue for young Christians. I found a group of Maronite men singing a song they had written. "Assad get off our backs. Your army is driving me crazy..." it began.

Claude Hajjar, a middle-aged Christian woman wearing military dog-tags, accosted me. "We want to send a message to Bashar," she said: "He has to leave right away." Ms Hajjar belongs to the Guardians of the Cedars group, which earned a reputation for atrocities against Palestinians in the 1970s. The group's leader, Etienne Sakr, lives in Israel.

The Hariri Baha School in Sidon bused in 50 ninth grade students. In their grey and green uniforms, the students congregated near Hariri's tomb, in the shadow of the huge Mohamed al-Amin mosque that Hariri was building. All wore black and white stickers demanding "The Truth".

"We are so afraid of division here," Mounir Dadda (14), said. Most of the teenagers had met Hariri. "He was our father, the backbone of the country," Mounir said.

Today's <u>Hizbullah</u> demonstration was on the minds of the protesters as they left Martyrs' Square. "I hope this beautiful image will not be damaged tomorrow," said Naim Chami (25), a Sunni law student. "I believe the Syrians have mandated <u>Hizbullah</u> to continue their work here. <u>Hizbullah</u> are the only pro-Syrian group with any popular legitimacy."

Chami said he'd wanted to leave Lebanon when he learned of Hariri's death, but had been inspired by the "true nationalism" that has emerged in three weeks of protests on Martyrs' Square.

"Lebanon represents an idea of progress in the Middle East. We have the highest number of university graduates, and we must show the other Arabs how to build democracy. Lebanon can no longer be dominated by bedouins from Syria."

Load-Date: March 8, 2005



Assad told to cut links with terror: Israeli fury at Syrian leader's visit

The Guardian (London)

December 16, 2002

Copyright 2002 Guardian Newspapers Limited

Section: Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 10

Length: 491 words

Byline: Ewen MacAskill and Michael White

Body

Tony Blair will press the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, today to close down the offices in Damascus of three of the most feared Islamist militant groups in the Middle East.

He will tell Mr Assad, who is almost certain to reject the request, that cutting links with Hamas, Islamic Jihad and <u>Hizbullah</u> will be a signif- icant contribution to reviving an Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

A British-sponsored effort earlier this year to secure an end to Palestinian suicide bombings was scuppered when the Hamas headquarters in Damascus overruled the Hamas leadership in Gaza and the West Bank.

A senior Foreign Office source said Mr Assad's visit was an opportunity to "put across home truths in a way that the president could stand and that would be in private rather than in public".

Mr Assad's four-day visit, the first by a Syrian leader to Britain, is controversial. The Israeli government, while maintaining publicly that Britain has a right to invite whoever it chooses, will seek to embarrass Mr Blair.

Jewish lobby groups are planning to demonstrate outside Downing Street today. The Israeli government is particularly incensed at the red-carpet treatment, which includes a meeting with the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

The Israeli government has organised a simultaneous visit to Britain by Ori Tenenboim, whose father, Elchanan, was kidnapped two years ago during a business trip to Europe by, Israel claims, *Hizbullah*.

When Mr Blair met the Syrian leader in Damascus last year, Mr Assad embarrassed the prime minister at a joint press conference with his trenchant views on Israel. Syria is unapologetic about its support for the Palestinian groups and the Lebanese-based <u>Hizbullah</u> and regards suicide bombings as a legitimate tactic of resistance against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

A Downing Street official said yesterday of Mr Assad's visit: "It is important that we have a dialogue that is honest and candid . . . we are very concerned about terrorist groups operating out of Syria."

No 10 said Britain would do whatever it could to help Mr Assad make progress on his domestic reform agenda, though Mr Blair will insist that more changes are still needed.

British officials are playing up the modest reforms which have occurred under the young British-educated president since he succeeded his bloody and autocratic father two years ago, citing the amnesty for political prisoners, a

Assad told to cut links with terror: Israeli fury at Syrian leader's visit

loosening of restrictions on the press, modest improvements to <u>women</u>'s rights and reforms of Syria's previously closed economy.

The British approach to Syria contrasts with that taken towards Iraq, even though Syria has a chemical and biological weapons programme and, unlike Iraq, supports groups listed by Britain and the US as terrorists.

The Foreign Office source, denying double standards, said: "There is no single template for how we treat countries of proliferation concern. Each must be treated as its behaviour merits."

Load-Date: December 16, 2002



In Short

The Irish Times

November 24, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: World; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 567 words

Body

A round-up of today's other stories in brief

Spain wants to sell aircraft to Venezuela

MADRID - Washington is still considering whether to allow Spain to sell aircraft with US technology to Venezuela, but hopes the sale will not go ahead, according to the US ambassador to Spain.

Spain angered the US government in March with plans to sell EUR 1.3 billion of equipment to Venezuela, including four coastal patrol ships, four corvettes, 10 C-295 transport aircraft and two maritime surveillance aircraft.

The aircraft Spain wants to sell to Venezuela have 50 to 60 per cent of US components and so would require a US export licence. - (Reuters) 20051123235959

Researcher halves Bosnian war toll

SARAJEVO - The death toll from the Bosnian war, which ended 10 years ago this week, was half of the widely used figure of about 200,000, a leading Bosnian war crimes researcher has said.

"This is still an extremely high figure but there is a big difference now that people cannot irresponsibly use inflated numbers for their political goals," said Mirsad Tokaca, who heads the Sarajevo-based Investigation and Documentation Centre.

Mr Tokaca estimated the number of victims at between 100,000 and 150,000 a year ago. - (Reuters)

Israel, Hizbullah exchange fire

LEBANON - Israeli troops exchanged fire with <u>Hizbullah</u> guerrillas across the Lebanese border yesterday to provide cover for an Israeli paraglider pilot who drifted into Lebanon by accident.

The second incident on the border in three days was brief but looks set to increase tension in the area, hours after Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets in Beirut urging Lebanese to act against <u>Hizbullah</u>, which is backed by Syria and Iran. - (Reuters)

Anti-Semite tape by Jackson on TV

In Short

NEW YORK - Michael Jackson has been taped making overtly anti-Semitic remarks during a phone call, describing Jews as "leeches" who conspired to leave him "penniless".

"They suck," said Jackson. "I'm so tired of it . . . they start out the most popular person in the world, make a lot of money. It's a conspiracy. Jews do it on purpose."

The message, aired on Good Morning America, was taped two years ago. - (Guardian service)

French MP seeks case against rapper

PARIS - A French court has agreed to consider a complaint brought by a conservative MP against rapper Monsieur R, for referring to France as a slut in a song.

The court said it would rule early next year on the complaint filed by Daniel Mach, MP for the Pyrenees Orientales, who said he had the backing of 150 MPs but was bringing the action "on my own personal account, because I feel assaulted by these insults". - (Guardian service)

Brazilian priest jailed for abuse

BRASILIA - A Brazilian court has sentenced a Catholic priest to 14 years and eight months in prison for his second paedophilia conviction amid concern of a looming child abuse scandal in the world's largest Catholic country. The incidents involved a 13-year- old altar boy and a five-year- old boy. - (Reuters)

New president of Liberia confirmed

MONROVIA - Election officials have confirmed Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the winner in Liberia's first post-war elections, making her Africa's first elected **female** president.

Officials representing her opponent, George Weah, said he still refused to concede defeat, maintaining allegations of ballot-box stuffing and vowing to keep fighting the results in court.

International observers said the vote was largely clean. - (AP)

Load-Date: November 24, 2005



Obituary: Imam Mohammed Shamseddin

The Guardian (London)
February 19, 2001

Copyright 2001 Guardian Newspapers Limited

Section: Guardian Leader Pages, Pg. 20

Length: 777 words

Byline: Lawrence Joffe

Body

The death from lung cancer of Imam Mohammed Mahdi Shamseddin, at the age of 67, caused trepidation among Lebanon's 1.2m Shi'ite Muslems. Who could possibly replace the man who had represented their community for 22 years? In a nation still recovering from civil war, Shamseddin (the name means "sun of religion" in Arabic) championed recon- ciliation between Christian and Muslim, and between Shi'ite and Sunni.

Shamseddin wrote some 25 books, on issues ranging from Shi'ite history and social ethics to the status of <u>women</u> in Islam. He epitomised a scholastic tradition that had flourished quietly for centuries in Lebanon's most impoverished and neg- lected region, the southern Jabal Amil. But the imam found himself dragged willy-nilly into politics and, as patron of a strong Shi'ite bloc in Lebanon's national assembly, he made enemies. Would-be assassins targeted him twice - once, near his home in 1990, and again, in 1997, while he was praying at a Beirut mosque.

Shamseddin was born to Lebanese parents in Najaf, southern Iraq, the spiritual cradle of Shi'ism. There he studied Arab sciences and Islamic jurisprudence, and argued for divine governance according to sharia law. However, returning to a religiously heterogeneous Lebanon in 1968 changed his views. In 1985, he coined the term adadiyya, or dialogue between the Abrahamic faiths.

Initially, he basked in the reflected glory of his charismatic mentor, Imam Sayid Musa Sadr. He served as Sadr's deputy on the higher Shi'ite council and promoted Sadr's new movement, Amal, which galvanised the Shi'ite downtrodden. For while Shi'ites represented the largest single sect in Lebanon, they played third fiddle to Beirut and Tripoli's Christian and Sunni elites.

Three events in 1978 irrevocably altered Shamseddin's life. First came the disappearance of Musa Sadr in Libya. This mysterious affair played to the archetypal Shi'ite motif of a hidden imam, who would return victorious on some unspecified day of judgment. For Shamseddin to claim Sadr's throne was obviously unthinkable. Only in March 1994 was he named president of the higher council. Yet as Musa Sadr's de facto successor, he gained renewed authority.

Also in 1978 came Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution in Iran. Lebanese Shi'ites were elated and Shamseddin welcomed Tehran's subsequent patronage. All the same, he cherished his community's autonomy, and realised that Iranian-style velayat e-fagih (or rule by religious jurists) would alienate his more worldly adherents.

Obituary: Imam Mohammed Shamseddin

Finally, Israeli incursions in 1978 exacerbated Shi'ite animosity towards Palestinians, whom they blamed for these reprisals. Four years later, though, a much larger invasion displaced thousands of Shi'ites, leading the imam to demand "total civil resistance against Israel". Paradoxically, this campaign also spawned *Hizbullah*, a rival to Amal.

Shamseddin rejected zionism, yet grudgingly accepted the reality of Israel. Just prior to the 1973 Geneva talks, he implored Arabs to adopt a "new style" to protect themselves against the "dangers of peace with the Jews". <u>Hizbullah</u> may have later boasted of marching on Jerusalem, but Shamseddin was more circumspect. "If Israel withdraws from Lebanon," he told an American audience in 1995, "our differences would be over. There would be no more bullets between us."

He also fought against corruption and injustice. He highlighted the plight of poverty-stricken farmers, railed against "monstrous" government institutions and protested about human rights abuses. Last May, he condemned the absence of an independent judiciary in Lebanon, a body "trusted by the weak, not an object of whispers and accusations".

He opposed sectarianism with equal virulence. "There is no Lebanon without its Christians", he once declared. When <u>Hizbullah</u> threatened to wreak vengeance on Jezzine, a largely Christian stronghold from which Israeli forces withdrew in 1998, the imam ordered the guerrillas to respect residents as fellow Lebanese. In 1999, he warned against "returning Lebanon to partition in the guise of decentralisation".

Never fond of secularism, he argued against using civil marriage as a tool for fostering inter-communal harmony. Increasingly, his gratitude to Damascus as "a guarantor of civil peace" irritated those Lebanese who yearned to see Syrian troops leave.

Ultimately, Shamseddin will be remembered for two major successes: indirectly ensuring the departure of Israeli troops from Lebanon last year, and winning a place at the high table for Lebanon's Shi'ites. He is survived by a second wife and three sons.

Mohammed Mahdi Shamseddin, Shi'ite religious leader, born 1933; died January 11 2001

Load-Date: February 19, 2001



<u>AFTEREFFECTS: NEIGHBORS; Iran's Chief, in Lebanon, Urges Quick U.S.</u> Exit From Iraq, but Favors Vote

The New York Times

May 14, 2003 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 14

Length: 746 words

Byline: By DANIEL J. WAKIN

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, May 13

Body

In a speech both defiant and conciliatory, President Mohammad Khatami of Iran called on the United States today to leave Iraq quickly but pledged that his country would support a new, inclusive government there based on one Iraqi one vote.

At the same time, Mr. Khatami implicitly lauded Lebanese militants considered terrorists by the United States, and cautioned the United States against creating another "crisis" in the region.

"The land of Lebanon holds its head high through the presence of the resistance in this modern age," Mr. Khatami said, referring to the <u>Hezbollah</u> militant organization that confronts Israel at Lebanon's southern border. Yet even while calling such resistance legitimate, Mr. Khatami said violence and terrorism in the name of religion "constitute a great danger."

Mr. Khatami made his comments in a speech before 50,000 people, mainly Shiites, at a stadium. It came on the second day of a three-day visit to Lebanon, the first time after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran that any of its presidents has traveled here.

He has received a glowing welcome from many of Lebanon's Shiites, who identify with him as leader of a Shiite country, even if not all are in favor of a theocracy like Iran's. For those, Mr. Khatami has appeal as a leader on the more reformist end of the Iranian spectrum.

Shiites make up a majority of Iraqis, and Shiite clerics are competing for influence, some seeking a greater place for religion. Iraq also has Sunni Muslims, Christians and ethnic groups including Turkmen and Kurds. "We wish that all Iraqis be represented in a temporary government," Mr. Khatami said, "which will move the country toward a united and free Iraq on the basis of one vote for each Iraqi. And we are ready to cooperate in this respect at the closest possible opportunity."

During the speech, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, sat in the honored guest section of the stadium dais, near Mr. Khatami. In an interview with <u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al Manar television channel today, the sheik said he and the president had met. He said that they did not discuss <u>Hezbollah</u>'s presence on the Israeli border and that Iran and the party stood shoulder to shoulder, along with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians.

AFTEREFFECTS: NEIGHBORS Iran 's Chief, in Lebanon, Urges Quick U.S. Exit From Iraq, but Favors Vote

"The main point is we will not bend and we will not give up our rights," he said.

The United States has demanded <u>Hezbollah</u>'s withdrawal from southern Lebanon and an end to Iranian and Syrian support for <u>Hezbollah</u>, which the Lebanese government embraces as a legitimate resistance force. <u>Hezbollah</u> denies committing terrorist acts, and says its only target is Israel. <u>Hezbollah</u> attacks helped end Israel's 22-year occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000.

"We have noticed that the American pressure has increased on Syria and Lebanon," Mr. Khatami said in his speech, and called for America's rapid withdrawal from Iraq. "We warn the American administration not to create a crisis in the region following that of Iraq."

After an enthusiastic reception on Monday, when thousands of people greeted Mr. Khatami along the route from the airport, his appearance at Camille Chamoun Stadium was equally full of excitement, at least at the outset. The atmosphere was part political rally, part religious revival. But by the end of his speech, at least half of the crowd had drifted away in the heat.

Lebanese special antiterrorist forces provided some security, but <u>Hezbollah</u>'s black-uniformed personnel seemed to be in control, guiding <u>women</u> and men to their separate sections. At one gate, five <u>women</u> in black chadors stood across the staircase, their arms spread to keep out any errant men.

Giant Lebanese and Iranian flags lay on the soccer pitch. A row of portraits of "martyrs" -- young men killed in attacks on Israeli forces -- hung on a bottom railing. A little girl in a frilly white dress stood incongruously nearby. There were splashes of green from flags of the Shiite Amal militia and of red from flags of the Druse's Progressive Socialist Party.

Mr. Khatami appeared in an open army Land Rover and drove a circuit of the stadium, to cheering. A band played martial anthems, with lines like, "Write with your flowing blood: death, death, death, death to Israel." Dignitaries were introduced, and the largest cheer went up for Sheik Nasrallah.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s yellow flags were surprisingly absent. An official of the group said the parties had agreed to display only Lebanese and Iranian flags, but only <u>Hezbollah</u>'s followers had fully obeyed.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: President Mohammad Khatami was awarded an honorary doctorate by Lebanese University yesterday. (Agence France-Presse)

Load-Date: May 14, 2003



Jihad widows keep the faith - MIDDLE EAST MAYHEM

The Australian

October 7, 2003 Tuesday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2003 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD-TYPE- FEATURE; Pg. 7

Length: 1366 words

Byline: Catherine Taylor

Body

The Haifa suicide bomber was a woman. More often, however, <u>women</u> are the ones left behind when a terrorist goes to 'Paradise', writes Catherine Taylor in Beirut

SALAH Ghandour knew he had just hours to live when he sat in front of a home video camera and calmly recorded a message to his wife Maha and their three children.

Ghandour, a <u>Hezbollah</u> guerilla fighter, stares lovingly into the lens as he says goodbye to his family. <u>Hezbollah</u>'s yellow flag -- decorated with a Kalashnikov rifle rising from Arabic script that translates to "Party of God" -- hangs on a wall behind him.

"To my dear wife and the tender mother of my children," he says. "You know where I am going and why I must do this to the enemy. Look after yourself and don't forget to raise my children in the path of (Islam)."

MATP

Shortly after taping this message, Ghandour, 28, got behind the wheel of a white Mercedes sedan packed with 450kg of explosives. While hooked up to a radio link that fed him constant intelligence updates, he drove along a dirt track and watched as an Israeli military convoy drove across Lebanese land.

"The time has come," he told his commander. "Peace be with you. God is great."

Without a hint of uncertainty, Ghandour detonated a bomb that blew him apart and killed 12 Israeli soldiers.

Dozens more were maimed. The attack was captured on a grainy video by a <u>Hezbollah</u> cameraman, as are all suicide bombings. The gruesome 15-minute film that Ghandour left behind is regular evening viewing for Maha and her children. She knows every moment by heart. Maha explains how Ghandour manoeuvred the Mercedes close to two Israeli military trucks. Seconds later an explosion sends flames and debris into the air.

To Israel and several Western countries including Australia, Ghandour was a terrorist. <u>Hezbollah</u>, which draws its ranks from Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslims and is backed by Syria and Iran, is classified by the US State Department as as one of the world's most vicious terrorist organisations.

Yet Maha sees her husband as a freedom fighter who lost his life trying to force Israel from Lebanese land. She believes that his violent death, on May 25, 1995, was an honour.

In death, Ghandour is hailed as a martyr -- the Western term "suicide bomber" is considered offensive -- and honoured for sacrificing his life for his country.

Maha, a dainty woman with pale skin and dark eyes, pulls her black chador closer as she tries to explain her feelings.

"He didn't kill the innocent," she says. "He killed soldiers who were occupying our land and killing our people and so I am proud of what he did to defend our country."

The wives that <u>Hezbollah</u> suicide bombers leave behind face a lifelong struggle to balance emotions of pride in what they see as their husbands' bravery and grief at losing the men they love. Eight years after his death Maha still mourns his loss. "Even though I knew to expect his martyrdom it was a terrible shock. When I heard he was dead I felt as if my own body had been torn apart with sadness," she says.

Their last days together were tortuous for Maha as she slowly began to suspect her husband was preparing for a suicide attack. "Two days before he died I admitted my fears and pleaded with him not to leave us," she says. "I said our baby daughter is only four months old and we still need you.

"But he was short with me and said he loved us but that it was his dream to become a martyr and I had always known this would be his fate. I had no choice; I knew I could not stand in Salah's way.

"When we kissed and said goodbye on that last day I couldn't take my eyes off him. I wanted to burn his image into my mind. As he crossed the car park, my son called him from the balcony. He came back and kissed us all again. When he left the second time, my son called again, but this time Salah kept walking. I think he was crying."

Maha was just 17 when she met Ghandour on a blind date set up by a friend. Within an hour he revealed he had offered to be a suicide bomber for *Hezbollah*. "We sat and talked for hours," Maha says, smiling at the memory.

"He explained that anyone who married him must expect that one day soon he might die. I told him I had always dreamed of becoming the wife of a fighter so in that way I could also contribute to ending the Israeli occupation."

Those who support this fatal fanaticism say the ideology comes from the Koran and point to Mohammad, verse 47:5, which lays out the rewards waiting for those who die in the name of Islam.

"As for those who are slain in the cause of God, He will not allow their works to perish; He will vouchsafe them guidance and ennoble their state; He will admit them to the Paradise He has made known to them."

The culture of martyrdom is ingrained in <u>Hezbollah</u>'s ideology -- it pioneered the technique in the Middle East and continues to inspire Palestinian groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which claimed responsibility for last weekend's Haifa attack by Hanadi Jaradat that killed 19 people.

Unlike Palestinian factions, <u>Hezbollah</u> has always used suicide attacks to target Israeli soldiers, not civilians. Selecting fighters for the task is rigorous, <u>Hezbollah</u> official Hussein Naboulsi says. The men who volunteer to die must approach their commander secretly. They are subjected to annual reviews of their military skill, strength of mind and religious commitment. When a suicide mission is planned, <u>Hezbollah</u> checks the list and chooses a candidate. His -- this group chooses only men -- psychological state is assessed once again.

The man then meets <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Sayyad Hassan Nasrallah for a final blessing and records a farewell video. The selection process is so streamlined, Naboulsi says, that no one has ever lost his nerve. Most, he says, are excited about the task ahead.

<u>Hezbollah</u> has established a social security network that ensures the widows and their children want for nothing. Widows are encouraged to marry again. Many <u>women</u> -- like Maha Ghandour -- marry their husband's brother in keeping with Islamic tradition. Others are sought after by single <u>Hezbollah</u> men who find prestige in marrying the widows.

Jihad widows keep the faith - MIDDLE EAST MAYHEM

Like Maha, Sanaa Zein, 33, also lost her husband in jihad. When the doorbell rings at her modest apartment in Beirut's shabby southern suburbs where most families are <u>Hezbollah</u> members, her five-year-old triplets, Hadi, Hassan and Hiba, squeal with delight. They tumble over each other like puppies and scramble for the door, calling "Papa, Papa".

Their eight-year-old brother Hussein watches quietly, a mixture of impatience and sadness in his eyes. He understands what the triplets are too young to know: their father will not be coming home.

On May 23, 2000, Ali Zein, a part-time fighter with <u>Hezbollah</u>, locked the door of his rental car business, hugged his children, kissed his wife and travelled to the border. It was the day before Israel withdrew from Lebanon. He was not a suicide bomber, but he knew he was unlikely to escape with his life from his secret mission.

Since he joined <u>Hezbollah</u> as a teenager, Zein, who died at 33, had prayed that God would sacrifice him. He died when an Israeli rocket hit the car in which he was travelling home after he completed his mission.

"He used to talk a lot about how he appreciated the sacrifice of the martyrs and how he was also ready to sacrifice his blood and his soul," says Sanaa, adjusting her black Calvin Klein scarf.

"My love for him went beyond the idea that he might die. I knew how much martyrdom meant to him and there were even times when I was afraid that he would die a normal death."

"The Secretary-General strongly deplores the Israeli air strike on Syrian territory.

- UN spokesman Fred Eckhard

"Our response to this seriousescalation will be one of deterrence and it will happen soon in the depths of the criminal Zionist entity."

- Hamas statement

"Violating the sovereignty of a third country complicates further the (peace) process, that's why what happened in Syria cannot be accepted."

- German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder

"Israel is of course entitled to take steps to protect itself from terrorist attack, but these steps should be within international law."

- British Foreign Office statement

Load-Date: October 6, 2003



Get out, half million protesters tell Syria

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 16, 2005 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 14

Length: 362 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Beirut

Body

Lebanon's independence movement has seized back the initiative in its struggle with Syria and the Syrian-backed government by holding the biggest demonstration in the recent history of the Middle East.

Up to 500,000 people crammed into central Beirut on Monday to call for a complete withdrawal of Syrian troops and for a full and independent inquiry into the February 14 murder of former prime minister Rafik Hariri - the event which sparked the present crisis.

The monster rally dwarfed the pro-Syrian demonstration called on Tuesday of last week by <u>Hezbollah</u>, the mainly Shiite Muslim political and paramilitary movement. While <u>Hezbollah</u> packed out central Beirut's Escwa Square, the opposition rally filled to capacity the much larger Martyr's Square where Mr Hariri is buried. Many Lebanese blame his assassination on Syrian agents.

"I am here for freedom," said Noor, a middle-aged Sunni Muslim woman from the southern town of Sidon. "We are Lebanese. Our message to Syria is please go."

Monday's protest was different in both scale and nature to the <u>Hezbollah</u> demonstration, until Monday the biggest show of popular support in modern Middle Eastern history.

Whereas <u>Hezbollah</u> carefully choreographed and policed its show of support, with martial music, warm-up speakers and hundreds of walkie-talkie toting stewards, the opposition rally had a more spontaneous feel.

And while many <u>Hezbollah</u> supporters made a point of showing journalists that they were carrying pistols, Monday's mass rally had a less aggressive demeanour and had a much higher proportion of <u>female</u> participants.

Yet while the rally demonstrated the popular will for an end to Syrian domination, it also revealed the opposition's lack of any recognised leadership.

Mr Hariri, the leader of the Sunni Muslims, is dead, and the most effective surviving opposition leader, Walid Jumblatt of the mainly Druse Progressive Socialist Party, has not visited Beirut since his ally's murder, fearing that he too will be assassinated.

The list of speakers on Monday featured Mr Hariri's sister, Bahiya Hariri, herself an MP, and Marwan Hamade, an opposition MP who narrowly survived an assassination attempt last year.

Graphic

PHOTO: Showing the flag ... demonstrators unfurl a huge Lebanese flag in preparation for the Beirut protest against the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon. Photo: AFP/ Ramzi Haidar

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



Smarter than being a martyr

The Times (London)

March 11, 2005, Friday

Copyright 2005 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Features; 20 Length: 382 words

Byline: Dean Godson

Body

Remember the South Lebanese Army? It was widely dismissed as a bunch of Christian stooges. <u>Hezbollah</u>? Well, they are authentic indigenous freedom fighters who kicked out the imperialistic Zionists and run brilliant clinics and schools for the disempowered Shia of Lebanon. Or at least that's the impression you might derive from such indulgent portrayals as Jonathan Dimbleby's New World War, let alone Robert Fisk's articles.

So what are these authentic indigenous freedom fighters doing holding a demonstration to thank big brother Syria, which has occupied Lebanon for nearly 30 years? Moreover, why are theocrats piping up for a secular regime whose ideology derives from European Fascism?

Part of the answer is some of the top ranks of <u>Hezbollah</u> aren't quite so authentic and indigenous as many think. It has not been lost on many Lebanese that Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the head of <u>Hezbollah</u>, only called for the demonstrations after Bashar Assad, the Syrian President, made his keynote address on Saturday which contained ominous codewords that portend a return to civil strife. He made particular reference to the events of May 17, 1983, an allusion to the peace which Lebanon signed with Israel and which his late father thwarted by physical force.

Nasrallah's address at Tuesday's rally was even more revealing. He defiantly declared that Lebanon is no Ukraine or Georgia -where the US encouraged "people power" that led to regime change. This declaration surely ranks with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's denunciation of democracy as a Western heresy that places man above God.

<u>Hezbollah</u> still has a store of capital for its role in looking after the most disadvantaged of Lebanese society. But its dual-hatted strategy is under stress.

For so long as the South was under Israeli rule, there was no contradiction between its nationalist role and its wider Islamist aspirations. Now that the Zionists are gone, on whose behalf are they still fighting?

That is why so many younger, apolitical Shia -including many <u>women</u> in jeans - attended the anti-Syrian demonstration. Unlike Tuesday's rally, no one needed to be press-ganged into attending. <u>Hezbollah</u>'s cult of death and martyrdom hasn't quite as many takers as it once did. Or as the pre-war French might have said, "mourir pour Damascus?"

Load-Date: March 11, 2005



On the brink of war: Reprisal: Israel sweeps aside Middle East ceasefire: Crucial deal in tatters and six die as tanks roll into Gaza Strip and cabinet frees army to return to policy of assassinations

The Guardian (London)
October 4, 2001

Copyright 2001 Guardian Newspapers Limited

Section: Guardian Home Pages, Pg. 5

Length: 521 words

Byline: Suzanne Goldenberg in Gaza

Body

Israel freed its army to invade Palestinian-ruled territory yesterday, setting aside a ceasefire seen as crucial to Washington's efforts to forge a broad war coalition.

As Israeli gunboats shelled the Gaza Strip, and tanks rolled into a mile-deep strip of Palestinian-ruled territory, killing six people, Israel's security cabinet empowered the army to resume "initiated operations": code for invasions of Palestinian territory and assassinations of activists.

No Israeli official would declare the ceasefire dead, but the defence minister, Binyamin Ben Eliezer, told Israeli television: "We see ourselves free to defend ourselves."

The new army directive came hours after two Palestinian militants went on a shoot ing spree in the Jewish settlement of Elei Sinai in the Gaza Strip, killing two Israelis and injuring more than a dozen.

The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, condemned the attack and promised to punish those responsible - the militants were from the Islamist group, Hamas.

However, after five previous failed ceasefires in the year-long Palestinian revolt, Mr Arafat's words made little impact. Although US officials said Washington had considered sending an envoy to the region, the initiative was put off because of the depths of recrimination on both sides.

"There cannot be a one-sided ceasefire," Gidon Saar, the cabinet secretary, told Israel Radio. "We cannot tie our hands when attacks are being perpetrated without impediment."

Palestinian officials argue the ceasefire collapsed well before Tuesday night's raid. Nineteen Palestinians - including three children - were killed in the first six days of the ceasefire agreed under heavy US pressure by the foreign minister, Shimon Peres, and Mr Arafat.

In addition to the renewed military action, a cabinet spokeswoman, Tsipi Livni, said Israel would not move on to the next stage of the ceasefire agreed six days ago: lifting the siege on Palestinian towns.

The prime minister, Ariel Sharon, banned Mr Peres from meeting Palestinian officials for talks last night, and a joint security meeting was shelved.

On the brink of war: Reprisal: Israel sweeps aside Middle East ceasefire: Crucial deal in tatters and six die as tanks roll into Gaza Strip and cabinet frees ar....

A statement from the Israeli security cabinet meeting called on the international community to declare the Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and the Lebanese <u>Hizbullah</u> guerrillas as terrorist organisations, suggesting Israel will demand a price from Washington for returning to the ceasefire. Other Israeli officials indicated the army would also resume its strategy of assassination if Mr Arafat did not arrest militants, as the ceasefire demands.

Yesterday, six Palestinians were killed as two columns of Israeli tanks rolled into Palestinian-controlled territory in a dawn raid near the Gazan town of Beit Lahiya. Seven Palestinian police posts were destroyed by shells and Israeli armoured bulldozers.

There was also fresh bloodshed on the West Bank. Two Jewish <u>women</u> were shot and wounded by gunmen firing from the Palestinian-controlled ridge of Abu Sneineh.

On the northern frontier, <u>Hizbullah</u> fired mortars on Israeli army positions in the Sheba area of the occupied Golan Heights. Israel retaliated with an artillery bombardment.

Load-Date: October 4, 2001



Iranian Leader Visits Beirut In Show of Shiite Solidarity

The New York Times
May 13, 2003 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2003 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11

Length: 939 words

Byline: By DANIEL J. WAKIN

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, May 12

Body

Sprinkled with rose petals and rice, President Mohammad Khatami of Iran arrived here today to a glowing embrace from the Lebanese government and tens of thousands of chanting and cheering Lebanese Shiites.

His visit was the first by an Iranian president since the 1979 Islamic revolution. It represents a major diplomatic reaction in Islam to the United States military action in Iraq.

Washington will be listening closely to what Mr. Khatami says. The United States says it considers Iran the leading state sponsor of terrorism and has recently raised concerns about whether Tehran is developing nuclear weapons. The United States has demanded that Iran stop supporting militant groups like <u>Hezbollah</u>, which is based in Lebanon.

Nevertheless, Iran and the United States seem to be moving toward a new phase in their often hostile relationship, with Bush administration officials confirming that the two countries have been having secret contacts.

Mr. Khatami moves on to Syria after his three-day visit here.

Many people in the region see his trip as an effort to bolster ties among Mideast countries that appear to be next in line for American wrath. The visit is also a milestone in Iran's growing closeness to Lebanon. The two signed economic agreements today, including provisions for a \$50 million loan from Iran.

The visit was yet another tremor to run through the world of the Shiites, a branch of Islam with longstanding grievances that sees the prospect of Iraq being the first Shiite-run Arab nation.

In Iraq today, Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim returned to Najaf, the holy city, after 23 years of exile in Iran. Page A18.

Ayatollah Hakim has called for an Islamic system of government. Other clerics favor a nontheocratic government, a division of opinion that also exists among Lebanese Shiites, who may be paying some attention to what Mr. Khatami has to say on the subject.

Iranian Leader Visits Beirut In Show of Shiite Solidarity

More immediately, it was a day of joy for the Shiites, who identify closely with the leader of a Shiite nation and who welcome Iranian financial aid and moral support in the fight against Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, where many Shiites live.

"I love him," Abbad al-Azim, 31, said in the crowd awaiting Mr. Khatami's motorcade. "My heart beats for him."

Mr. Khatami's visit was a display of power by <u>Hezbollah</u>, which helped force the Israeli withdrawal in 2000. Iran supplies <u>Hezbollah</u>, United States officials say, and Syria allows materials to pass through its territory. Lebanon holds up <u>Hezbollah</u> as a legitimate force to resist Israel, which occupies a scrap of land bordering the Golan Heights that Lebanon claims.

<u>Hezbollah</u> and its related institutions helped ensure that Mr. Khatami received a major turnout in one of the largest welcomes here since Pope John Paul II's visit almost exactly six years ago. Shiites are estimated to number more than a million of the population of 3.5 million, although there are no recent census figures.

"He's not an ordinary president," said Jihan Tarhini, an English teacher who was with third and fourth graders from Al Mustafa school, which is loosely affiliated with <u>Hezbollah</u>. "He's a Shiite president. He supported the Islamic resistance in the south for liberation. This is the main thing that makes us welcome this president."

Another teacher at the school, Samar Akl, said: "We hate the policy of America. She supports Israel, although they are killing innocent people."

Ms. Akl broke off and rushed to the barricade as the motorcade approached. "I have to see him!" she exclaimed.

Later, she added, "If American politicians had the same policies that Iran and Syria had, we would welcome Bush in the same way."

If so, President Bush would have seen the road from the airport lined with <u>Hezbollah</u>, Iranian and Lebanese flags, which were in the minority, along with huge posters of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader; Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leader of the 1979 revolution; and Mr. Khatami. Groups of schoolgirls in blue smocks and black scarves pressed against the barricades. Occasional clumps of <u>Hezbollah</u> security forces were in black. Many **women** wore the full black chador.

The green flag of Amal, the other main Shiite party, also abounded. As the crowd awaited Mr. Khatami, a loudspeaker at the airport emitted chants, including "Death to Israel."

Some people cried in unison, "Oh God, oh God, please preserve Nasrallah!" referring to the <u>Hezbollah</u> leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, a prominent figure in Lebanon.

After greeting Lebanon's leaders on the tarmac, Mr. Khatami moved to a <u>Hezbollah</u> delegation in the official reception party, a sign of the party's status. During the motorcade to town, he briefly left his car and waved, smiling and holding his fists up like a victorious boxer. The car of President Emile Lahoud of Lebanon followed and drew little notice.

The crowd, estimated by security officials at 30,000, arrived by special buses or walked from the Shiite neighborhoods that dominate southern Beirut. Officials expect additional tens of thousands at a rally on Tuesday at a stadium.

Mr. Khatami did little to calm fears about Iran's efforts to influence Baghdad. In an article today in the Lebanese newspaper As Safir, he said Washington was wrong "to impose an immoral and alien regime." Such a policy "will come back to harm the American people in the long run," he added.

Officials said the trip was made final two months ago, when the military action in Iraq appeared imminent. Many in the region view the trip as a response to the visit of Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, who has returned to the region to work on an Israeli-Palestinian peace plan.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Presidents Mohammad Khatami of Iran, with turban, and Emile Lahoud of Lebanon were greeted with petals yesterday at Beirut airport. (Associated Press)

Load-Date: May 13, 2003



Neoconservatism turning Middle-East into powder keg

University Wire March 8, 2005 Tuesday

Copyright 2005 Montana Kaimin via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN Length: 836 words

Byline: By Matt Singer, Montana Kaimin; SOURCE: U. Montana

Dateline: MISSOULA, Mont.

Body

The neoconservatives are facing a problem they didn't expect:

democracy spreading in the Middle East. This may sound like it fits nicely within the plans of the president, but the so-called "Cedar Revolution" under way in Lebanon, the increased likelihood of open elections in Egypt and the recent election in Iraq pose major foreign policy problems for the United States.

As soon as Lebanese protesters ousted the Syrian-backed government in Beirut, right-wing pundits started their crowing:

Bush's democratic revolution was working. One problem: it wasn't Bush's. Its leaders have cheered the killing of American soldiers. And Bush's own advisers have made clear a democratic tidal wave was not really their intention in invading Iraq.

In fact, elections were not part of the original plan in Iraq. The short time frame on elections in Iraq was a concession to Ayatollah al-Sistani and the insurgency. Al-Sistani's Shia followers have since been quite successful in establishing a parliamentary majority.

Since then, they have been calling for a U.S. withdrawal as well as working on closer ties with Iran. They have also increased fears of establishing Shariah -- Islamic law -- which would pose strict regulations, especially on Iraq's **women**.

Meanwhile, in Lebanon, the major faction opposing withdrawal of Syrian power is the <u>Hezbollah</u> (literally, the "Party of God") and other Shi'ites. <u>Hezbollah</u> is probably a name well-known to Americans.

They are the party responsible for the death of 241 U.S. Marines in Lebanon in 1983. Fingers remain pointed at <u>Hezbollah</u> for anti-semitic terrorism around the world. Yet for many in the Middle East, <u>Hezbollah</u> is a heroic organization, having been the only Arab army to ever defeat Israel in a military conflict.

And at this point, no one sect comprises a majority of the Lebanese population. The CIA World Factbook estimates that about 60 percent of the population is Muslim, while 40 percent is Christian. The Muslims are divided between multiple factions, with a Shia plurality; a small, economically well-to-do Sunni bloc; and the unorthodox Druze making up large factions as well. The Christians largest contingency is the Maronites who have had an uneasy

Neoconservatism turning Middle-East into powder keg

relationship with Muslims at many points, yet there are also Melkites, Armenians, Catholics, and Protestants within the Christian community.

So if you think that democracy in Iraq, with Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish factions looks messy, perhaps a brief history lesson is in order.

Beirut, Lebanon's capital, is synonymous with violent anarchy. And the explosion of violence that occurred in Lebanon in the 1970s is exactly what precipitated the Syrian occupation that so many local leaders are now claiming to oppose.

Even as Druze leaders like Walid Jumblat call for democracy, one needs only read papers months old to see these leaders reveling in the spilling of American blood. More honest perhaps than most is <u>Hezbollah</u>, which strictly opposes the removal of Syrian power in part because it would increase pressure on them to disarm.

But while Syrian withdrawal may set the stage for <u>Hezbollah</u> disarmament, it could also lead to explosive violence in a number of ways. First, let us remember that this is still Beirut, a city with more armed factions than UM has academic departments. Second, one factor currently limiting <u>Hezbollah</u>'s electoral success is anti-Syrian sentiment. If Syria leaves, <u>Hezbollah</u> may actually grow in electoral power. Even if they disarm, their ability to control Lebanon's military would only grow.

And no one should doubt the continued dislike -- perhaps hatred is the proper term -- of Israel among residents of these Arab and Persian nations. Just as full democracy in Iran would not stop the drive for nuclear arms, democracy in Lebanon would not stop the likelihood of state terror against Israel.

Israel, then, is not aided, but possibly endangered, by Islamic republics popping up through the region, especially if they fall, one-by-one, to extreme Shia leaders.

If America can navigate this process of democratization and can convince Israel's Mossad to allow democratization and both nations can figure out how to build security, we'll be much better off. But the coming years are fraught with danger.

The main opposition to the process of democratization has not arisen from racism or cruelty, as many on the right have implied or explicitly stated. Rather, it has arisen from a concern that too many of the right-wingers and hawks in the Bush administration have repeatedly misunderstood the forces they have let loose upon the world.

The Bush administration originally envisioned that by this point, we would basically be withdrawn from Iraq, with a relatively stable chieftain comfortably installed. Fortunately, democracy is emerging in the Middle East. But it is no time to pop the corks or the hangover we experience may be unlike anything we can imagine. Bush has destabilized the Arab and Persian worlds. We'll be dealing with them for a long time.

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Load-Date: March 8, 2005



<u>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR;</u> A visit with Syria's President Assad

The International Herald Tribune
July 18, 2002 Thursday

Copyright 2002 International Herald Tribune

Section: OPINION; Pg. 7

Length: 562 words

Body

Arabs and Americans now suffer from a much greater degree of misunderstanding than they did a century ago when Arab <u>women</u> wrote novels praising the lives of their American peers and encouraging Arab <u>women</u> to follow the American example. We in Syria can only wonder why this gap persists. A telling example of this unfortunate misunderstanding came in the aftermath of Senator Bob Graham's recent trip to the Middle East. He was heading a three-member delegation on an eight-day visit to Syria and Lebanon. As press spokesman for Syria's president, Bashar Assad, I witnessed his meetings with Graham. The conclusion of the meeting on both sides was positive and constructive.International Herald Tribune

But when Graham returned to the United States, he said the utmost priority of the United States was to take out training camps of the Shiite Muslim Lebanese group <u>Hezbollah</u> which he falsely claimed were operating in Syria and in Lebanon. This issue was never discussed between Senator Graham and President Assad, so we wonder how he arrived at this conclusion.

What I do recall vividly was a question by Senator Evan Bayh, another member of the delegation, who asked President Assad about the relationship between *Hezbollah* and Al Qaeda.

President Assad clarified some historical facts. He explained that in 1998 Al Qaeda and the Taliban massacred around 30,000 Shiite Muslims in the Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif, including 12 Iranian diplomats. The Shiite community of the world, to which Hezbollah subscribes, regarded that massacre as the biggest against their coreligionists since the slaying in the year 680 of their founder, Imam Hussein bin Ali. A war was about to break out because of the incident. Therefore, <u>Hezbollah</u> and the Taliban and Al Qaeda became bitter enemies. Any attempt to link the two together is naive and baseless. Syria regards *Hezbollah* or "The Party of God" as a political force in Lebanon that is represented by nine deputies in the Lebanese Parliament. The group has no training camps in Syria and there is no relationship between *Hezbollah* and Syria except through the proper official Syrian stand of supporting any national resistance against occupation and colonization. We believe that Senator Graham knew these facts or at least learned of them. But we wonder why he announced otherwise on NBC. We wonder why he chose to twist the basic facts of the region, mislead American and world public opinion and widen the problem of misunderstanding. The tactical gains for Israel -- which seems to be the focus of American foreign policy -- are not served by alienating the Arab world and Syria. The Middle East was on the verge of a comprehensive peace settlement when Ariel Sharon was elected to power in Israel and dashed all hopes for peaceful coexistence between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Many Jews, the world over, including intellectuals, journalists and writers who enjoy some depth in understanding of the history of the region, have spoken loudly against policies of Sharon. However, American officials insist on describing him as "a man of peace." It is truly regrettable that such a flagrant lack of understanding of the history of the Middle East and the culture of its people can hinder effective and

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; A visit with Syria 's President Assad

constructive actions aimed at achieving peace in the region. * Buthaina Shaaban, Damascus, spokesman for President Bashar Assad

Load-Date: July 18, 2002



Terrorist mobs flag a warning

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

April 9, 2002, Tuesday

Copyright 2002 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: FEATURES-TYPE- FEATURE-COLUMN- OP ED; Pg. 18

Length: 676 words

Byline: PIERS AKERMAN

Body

THE flags of two of the civilised world's most loathed terrorist organisations, Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, flew in downtown Sydney over the weekend as elements of a pro-Palestinian mob rioted outside the Israeli consulate.

Beneath <u>Hezbollah</u>'s yellow banner with its stylised illustration of a Kalashnikov rifle, US and Israeli flags were burned as the crowd chanted: "Jihad"!

On <u>Hezbollah</u>'s English-language website, the introduction makes no bones about the fact that <u>Hezbollah</u> sees "no legitimacy for the existence of Israel".

In Gaza, the leaders of Hamas, the group responsible for most of the suicide bombers' attacks on civilian targets, have been gloating about the success of their murderous campaign.

MATP

According to The New York Times of April 4, they are confident of achieving their goal -- the eradication of Israel as a Jewish state.

And in the editorial pages of the broadsheet newspapers, scholarly lawyers argue about the provisions of the Federal Government's proposed Terrorism Bill, concerned that the civil rights of Australians must be preserved.

How Australian, however, are the supporters of Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u>, both organisations which support religious as opposed to secular states, both organisations which hold peculiar views about the rights of <u>women</u>, the law and education?

By any test, Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u> are undemocratic. By any imaginable test they epitomise terrorism, and by any reasonable test they, and their supporters, should be outlawed in this country.

The Hamas leadership "steering committee", has the capacity to direct the suicide bombers. They broadcast the messages that direct the suicide bombers into action.

Yet, though they cloak their foul business in pretentious religiosity and make much of seeking a truce during the Muslim religious festivals, they also celebrated the deaths of 25 Israeli civilians at a Seder on Passover night in a Netanya hotel and a further 15 in a Haifa cafe as "the most successful" attacks they have ever arranged. That these monsters can find any support for their policies in Australia should be enough to set alarm bells ringing.

Terrorist mobs flag a warning

Fortunately, education in this country is not completely controlled by the ideologists from the teachers' union and there are large numbers of people who care about peace who are willing to challenge the propaganda broadcast by the ABC and SBS on the historical background to the Middle East conflict.

FOR, despite what Hamas and <u>Hezbollah</u> and Fatah and the other terrorist organisations proclaim, the Islamic claim to Jerusalem is rooted in fantasy.

Not only is Jerusalem not mentioned once in the Koran, there was no such religion as Islam when the Jewish and Christian religions claimed the city as one of the keys to their respective faiths.

In a sense, the Palestinians have been party to a great deception by other Arab nations, a deception that is exemplified by the warped fables that are peddled as fact in the Arab-language media.

They talk of the US as the Great Satan, they should talk of the past leaders of Jordan, Syria and Egypt as the Great Liars -- and they should reserve a special place for the greatest impediment to peace in the Middle East, Yasser Arafat, the man who turned down the settlement brokered by former US president Bill Clinton just two years ago.

They must recognise the truth if they are going to find true liberation from the lies they have been peddled.

For all their faults, Australians have tried to build a nation based on truth, and unlike most other countries, they can be justifiably proud of their country's ability to absorb people from many creeds and cultures into the national fabric.

The contribution of those who rioted in Sydney injuring police officers is difficult to define except as violently antipathetic to everything Australia stands for.

While sympathy is felt for all who are homeless, the actions of many in the crowd did little to instil empathy as much as a desire to ensure that a strong national response to terrorism is taken as soon as possible.

akermanp@dailytelegraph.com.au

Load-Date: April 8, 2002



International Briefs; 6 Russians die in attack near Chechnya

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

August 9, 2003 Saturday

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Section: Pg. d6

Length: 618 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia

Body

Gunmen ambushed a Russian military convoy near the border with Chechnya, killing six soldiers and wounding seven, the Russian military said Friday.

The military vehicle came under automatic gunfire Thursday evening near the village of Alkhasty in the Ingushetia region, which borders Chechnya to the west, a duty officer at the Northern Caucasus military command center said.

The gunmen escaped back into the woods after the attack.

Death toll rises as heat wave pounds Europe

PARIS - The death toll inched up Friday from a European heat wave - a stagnant blanket of dry, hot air that has fueled wildfires, dried up river beds and proved devastating to farm animals.

The number of deaths in Spain jumped from 16 to 19, with the latest victims all elderly: two **women** killed by heat stroke and a man who died while doing farm work.

In Portugal, the death toll rose to 15 after another victim died from fires that have burned across more than 400,000 acres in the past two weeks.

Around Europe, about 40 deaths have been blamed on the temperatures.

Paris has sweltered in high temperatures in the French capital, more than 98 degrees, every day this week. The average August temperature in Paris, which has warm but not blistering summers, is 75 degrees.

Hezbollah shells disputed border area

BEIRUT, Lebanon - <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas shelled Israeli positions in a disputed border region for the first time in eight months Friday, drawing Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire and a sharp rebuke from the United States.

<u>Hezbollah</u> said its two-hour attack was in retaliation for the killing of a <u>Hezbollah</u> security official Saturday south of Beirut. **Hezbollah** blamed Israel for killing Ali Hussein Saleh, who died when a bomb tore apart his car.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al-Manar television, quoting unnamed security sources, said the attack resulted in five Israeli casualties, but Israeli military sources said there were none.

International Briefs; 6 Russians die in attack near Chechnya

In response to the attack, American diplomats told Lebanon and Syria - which dominates Lebanon - that the administration was seriously concerned about what a U.S. official described as a "calculated and provocative escalation" by the Shiite militant group. They told the two governments it was important to restrain further attacks.

2 Pakistani women die in fight over cookies

PESHAWAR, Pakistan - A fight over a box of cookies killed two **women** and injured seven others in a remote area of northwestern Pakistan, police said Friday.

The fight broke out Thursday in the small village of Bafa Maira, 160 miles north of Peshawar after a teenage boy snatched a box of cookies from a young girl, said police officer Fiaz Khan, who did not know their exact ages.

The girl ran home crying and complained to her older brother, who went out to fight the boy. The boy later returned armed and accompanied by two friends who stormed into the girl's house and opened fire, killing the girl's mother and grandmother.

Seven other relatives were injured and taken to a hospital, where one woman was in serious condition, Khan said.

Disputes in remote parts of Pakistan often pull in families on both sides, and can result in years of feuding.

Japan typhoon kills 3

TOKYO - A typhoon packing winds of up to 136 miles per hour battered Japan on Friday, snarling traffic, cutting electricity and killing three people.

Three others were missing and dozens of people suffered minor injuries, police and media reports said.

Typhoon Etau had skirted the coast of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, and increased in force, striking the neighboring main islands of Shikoku and Honshu, the nation's Meteorological Agency said. It was directly over southern Tokushima state and swirling toward the northeast, the agency said.

Load-Date: August 10, 2003



PRO-SYRIA PARTY IN BEIRUT HOLDS A HUGE PROTEST

The New York Times

March 9, 2005 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 6; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1331 words

Byline: By HASSAN M. FATTAH; Jad Mouawad contributed reporting for this article.

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, March 8

Body

Shouting anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese poured into central Beirut on Tuesday in a show of strength by the militant Shiite Muslim party <u>Hezbollah</u>, which opposes a withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon.

The enormous crowd, in which many had been bused in from the Shiite slums of southern Beirut, was far larger than the anti-Syrian demonstrations of recent weeks that have drawn broad international support. It offered a defiant challenge to the Lebanese opposition forces that have insisted on Syrian withdrawal and exposed fault lines of class and ideology.

"Today, you decide the future of your nation and your country; today, you answer the world," the <u>Hezbollah</u> leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, said in a rare and surprise appearance. Banners held aloft read: "No to American-Zionist intervention. Yes to Lebanese-Syrian brotherhood."

President Bush, speaking later in Washington, stepped up pressure on Syria to withdraw its 14,000 troops before Lebanon's elections in May, saying the forces of authoritarianism across the Middle East are facing a fast-moving wave of popular opposition. The emergence of democracy in Lebanon, he said, would amount to a ring on "the doors of every Arab regime." [Page A10.]

The participants at the demonstration here represented, by and large, a very different Lebanon from the educated, better-off Christians, Druse and Sunni Muslims who have captured the world's attention since Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister, was assassinated Feb. 14 by a huge car bomb.

While the anti-Syrian opposition movement has been called the Cedar Revolution, a reference to the Lebanese national tree, it has also been called the BMW revolution. The demonstration included far more <u>women</u> with covered heads and many men in traditional dress.

Since the killing of Mr. Hariri, a billionaire who resigned as prime minister to protest Syrian domination of Lebanon, many Lebanese parties have called for the complete withdrawal of Syrian troops, which have been here since 1976.

PRO- SYRIA PARTY IN BEIRUT HOLDS A HUGE PROTEST

Backers of the withdrawal have taken to the streets in demonstrations reminiscent of the events in November in Ukraine, where a rigged election was overturned partly through popular rallies. The Lebanese opposition blames Syria for Mr. Hariri's death, a charge Syria has denied.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, or the Party of God, had remained quiet until Tuesday despite invitations by the opposition to join.

The opposition has been struggling to demonstrate that it is the voice of the majority while becoming a favorite cause of the Bush administration.

"Freedom will prevail in Lebanon," Mr. Bush said Tuesday. "The American people are on your side. Millions across the earth are on your side."

But <u>Hezbollah</u>, which the State Department classifies as a terrorist group, is now Lebanon's best organized political party and maintains a militia of some 20,000 men.

United Nations Resolution 1559, passed in September 2004, calls for both the withdrawal of all foreign forces and the disarmament of Lebanon's militias.

To <u>Hezbollah</u> and its followers, the foreign threat to Lebanon comes not from Syria but from Israel and its ally, the United States. Israel occupied part of southern Lebanon from 1982 until 2000 in order to prevent infiltrations from radical anti-Israel groups. Many Lebanese Shiites say Israel still has designs on their land and that the American-backed democracy movement is simply another form of American imperialism.

"Forget about your dreams of Lebanon," Sheik Nasrallah, the <u>Hezbollah</u> leader, said at the rally, speaking to Israel's leaders. "What you did not win in war, I swear, you will not win with politics."

Speaking to the Bush administration, he said: "You are wrong in your calculations in Lebanon. Lebanon will not be divided. Lebanon is not Somalia; Lebanon is not Ukraine; Lebanon is not Georgia."

Ahmad Moussa, 22, a student at the rally, said: "We're here to defend our liberty and our true sovereignty, the sovereignty of the resistance. The opposition wants to open the door to the Americans and to foreign intervention. We will stop them."

The demonstration was held in Riyadh al Solh Square a few blocks from Martyrs' Square, where the opposition movement has held its demonstrations. The pro-Syrian demonstrators filled the open field in front of United Nations offices in Beirut, and stretched across nearby overpasses, roads and tunnels.

Officially, the demonstration was sponsored by several political parties. But the rally was all <u>Hezbollah</u>, complete with well-designed banners, anthems, crowd control and a secret police infrastructure to ensure that things stayed peaceful.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which has 13 of the 128 seats in the Lebanese Parliament and hopes to expand its power as the country prepares for the May elections, clearly wanted to make a show of strength through the demonstration, challenging the opposition's claim to represent the nation's future.

"I want to show the Americans, the French and the U.N. that we are the majority of the Lebanese and that we have a voice," said Youness Ismail, 26, a restaurant owner from the poor southern suburbs, who had arrived in the square on Tuesday morning. "All they have done is make us promises they never kept, and now they are trying to use the international community to reoccupy us."

Like the opposition movement, the demonstrators waved Lebanese flags and called for national unity, while demanding the truth behind Mr. Hariri's assassination. But the sea of people also raised photos of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, and the Lebanese president, Emile Lahoud, an ally of Syria. Some banners read, "America is the source of terrorism."

PRO- SYRIA PARTY IN BEIRUT HOLDS A HUGE PROTEST

"This is a goodbye party, not a show of support for Syria," said the opposition leader Jibran Tuweini, editor of the Lebanese daily An Nahar. "If they wanted this to be a challenge to us, they would have brought their party's yellow flags. But <u>Hezbollah</u> doesn't want to burn its bridges with anyone because ultimately they will have to return to the Lebanese people once everything is over."

At Martyrs' Square, opposition demonstrators who have been camping out expressed their frustration at the growing demonstration not far away. The roar of the crowd could be heard as the tents rustled in the wind, and many <u>Hezbollah</u> demonstrators walked past the opposition tents pitched at the square. The Lebanese Army showed up in full force to ensure that both groups were kept apart.

"Shame on them -- they are carrying flags and raising pictures of foreign leaders," said Samer Samer, 57, who had brought his two sons to the opposition camp. "They're like us; they want no foreign interference and want the U.S., Israel and France out. But we also want the Syrians out too."

Fears that the growing political tension will lead to a resurgence of violence have grown in recent days as Lebanon's political and sectarian fault lines have re-emerged. Lebanon's rival groups fought a vicious civil war from 1975 to 1990, leaving parts of the country in ruins.

"This is a delicate situation but not a dangerous one," Mr. Tuweini, the opposition leader, insisted as he watched the demonstration on television from his office overlooking Martyrs' Square. "I'm not worried about the unity of the Lebanese, but I am worried that car bombs and assassinations will happen as we try to defend it."

The demonstration came one day after Syria began a redeployment of its forces to the Bakaa region. But Mr. Assad and Mr. Lahoud said in a statement on Monday that a complete withdrawal would await negotiations with a future Lebanese government, raising the likelihood that Syrian soldiers will still be in the country during the elections in May.

On Tuesday, Lebanese officials told The Associated Press that the main Syrian intelligence offices, along with Syrian troops, would be relocated by March 23, when the Arab League is to hold its annual summit meeting in Algeria.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: Demonstrators carried a portrait of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and an anti-American placard in Beirut, Lebanon, yesterday during a pro-Syrian rally organized by the militant Shiite group <u>Hezbollah</u>. (Photo by Hussein Malla/Associated Press)(pg. A1)

Lebanese <u>women</u> cheered while carrying a portrait of Syria's president yesterday at a <u>Hezbollah</u> rally in Beirut. Far more <u>women</u> with head coverings attended than have been present at anti-Syrian rallies earlier. (Photo by Lynsey Addario for The New York Times)

A Lebanese Shiite Muslim journalist watched from a balcony as hundreds of thousands of pro-Syrian demonstrators gathered in Beirut. (Photo by Norbert Schiller for The New York Times)(pg. A8)

Load-Date: March 9, 2005



Thousands in Lebanon hail prisoner exchange

Philadelphia Daily News
JANUARY 30, 2004 Friday 4STAR EDITION

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 24

Length: 366 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Lebanese prisoners released by Israel returned home yesterday to a hero's welcome by tens of thousands of flagwaving people, from <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrilla comrades to veiled <u>women</u> who showered them in rice and rose petals.

Israel also freed about 400 Palestinians to the West Bank and Gaza Strip as part of the German-brokered deal with *Hezbollah*. Delighted relatives greeted the Palestinians and expressed thanks to the Lebanese militant group.

In return, Israel received the bodies of three of its soldiers and won the release of a kidnapped Israeli businessman. Israelis held a memorial service for the three dead, but whisked away Elhanan Tannenbaum, who was kidnapped while reportedly engaged in a shady business deal, for interrogation.

At a mass rally in Beirut that <u>Hezbollah</u> staged to welcome the freed Arabs, the group's leader warned it would kidnap more Israelis to use as bargaining chips if necessary to secure the release of Lebanese prisoners.

Turning to a huge poster of a guerrilla ambush in which the three Israeli soldiers were captured, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah declared: "This is a choice."

At the memorial service at Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv - where the three caskets were covered with Israeli flags and a woman sang mournfully - Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned against more kidnappings.

The complex swap - carried out in two stages in Germany and in the Palestinian territories following months of arduous negotiations - went ahead despite yesterday's bombing of a Jerusalem bus that killed 11 people, including the attacker.

The swap sets the stage for a second phase in which Israel hopes to recover its most famous MIA, air force navigator Ron Arad, and the Arab side seeks the release of more prominent prisoners in Israel.

Israel's keen interest in Arad is tempered by its fear that further engaging the Lebanese militia could encourage kidnappings and bolster the radical brand of Islam espoused by *Hezbollah* and its Iranian patrons.

Thousands in Lebanon hail prisoner exchange

"Israel will not allow any enemy or terror group to turn kidnapping and ransom into a system," Sharon said. "There are means we have not yet used. If, heaven forbid, the circumstances are changed, we will not hesitate to use them." *

Load-Date: August 21, 2005



Rally boosts pro-Syrian forces

The Toronto Star

March 9, 2005 Wednesday

Copyright 2005 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A03

Length: 628 words

Byline: Hassan Fattah, REUTERS NEWS AGENCY; NEW YORK TIMES

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Shouting anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese poured into central Beirut yesterday in a show of strength by the militant Muslim Shiite party <u>Hezbollah</u>, which opposes the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon.

The enormous crowd, in which many had been bused in from the Shiite slums of southern Beirut, was far larger than the anti-Syrian demonstrations of recent weeks that have drawn broad international support. It offered a defiant challenge to the anti-Syrian forces and their foreign backers and exposed fault lines of class and ideology.

"Today, you decide the future of your nation and your country; today you answer the world," <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah said in a rare and surprise appearance. Banners held aloft read: "No to American-Zionist intervention. Yes to Lebanese-Syrian brotherhood."

Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, buoyed by the huge rally in support of his Syrian backers, holds talks with parliamentary deputies today after which he is expected to name a pro-Syrian prime minister.

Syrian troops continued to redeploy overnight to eastern Lebanon in the first stage of a two-phase pullout, security sources told.

The participants at yesterday's demonstration here were, by and large, a very different Lebanon from the educated, better-off Christians and Sunni Muslims who have captured the world's attention since Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister, was assassinated Feb. 14 by a huge car bomb.

While the anti-Syrian opposition movement has been called the Cedar revolution, after the Lebanese national tree, it has also been called the BMW revolution. Yesterday's demonstration included far more <u>women</u> with covered heads and men in traditional dress.

Imad Moustapha, Syria's ambassador to the United Nations, bristled yesterday when CNN's Wolf Blitzer suggested the protest was orchestrated by Syria, saying Syria "doesn't have a single soldier in Beirut."

In fact, thousands of Syrians attended the Beirut rally, many of them spirited across the border in buses. But the stage-managing efforts of Damascus accounted for only a fraction of the enormous turnout, diplomatic sources in the Syrian capital told the Toronto Star's Mitch Potter.

Rally boosts pro- Syrian forces

"Here in Damascus they'll see the march as a triumph and a vindication - but they won't go back on the deal to withdraw their troops," said a Western diplomatic source. "Damascus knows that cancelling the pullout would be a disaster. But they want rallies such as this to show the international community that Lebanon really is the can of worms they've been talking about all along."

Since the killing of Hariri, a billionaire who resigned as prime minister to protest Syrian domination of Lebanon, many Lebanese parties have called for the complete withdrawal of Syrian troops, which have been here since 1976. Backers of the withdrawal have taken to the streets in demonstrations reminiscent of the events in November in Ukraine, where a rigged election was overturned partly through popular rallies.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which means the Party of God, had remained quiet until yesterday despite invitations by the opposition to join.

The opposition has been struggling to demonstrate that it is the voice of the majority while becoming a favourite cause of the Bush administration.

"Freedom will prevail in Lebanon," U.S. President George W. Bush said in Washington yesterday. "The American people are on your side. Millions across the Earth are on your side."

A prominent Syrian political analyst, speaking to the Star on condition of anonymity, said that despite the numbers, the *Hezbollah* rally has no bearing on the inevitable Syrian pullout.

"What has changed is that <u>Hezbollah</u> has finally played its card, and it is the last card on the table," the analyst said.

Graphic

HUSSEIN MALLA ap Up to 500,000 pro-Syrian demonstrators gather in downtown Beirut yesterday for a rally put on by militant group *Hezbollah*. The protest was meant to counter almost daily anti-Syrian protests in Lebanon.

Load-Date: March 9, 2005



Israel warns of 'stealth terrorists'

Sunday Times (London) May 26, 2002, Sunday

Copyright 2002 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Overseas news

Length: 262 words

Byline: Uzi Mahnaimi, Tel Aviv

Body

ISRAELI security sources claim European converts to Islam are being trained by <u>Hezbollah</u>, the Lebanese-based fundamentalist group, to carry out terrorist attacks on the West.

"Stealth terrorists", including Arabs of European appearance, are said to based at a camp near Janta, a village in Lebanon's Bekaa valley.

According to the Israelis, members of Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network are believed to be involved in training. A senior Lebanese intelligence source dismissed this allegation yesterday and Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s leader, described reports of a link with Al-Qaeda as "ludicrous".

Israeli sources said the *Hezbollah* camp was funded and supervised by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

"All airports, ports and land checkpoints are looking for people of Middle Eastern appearance or with Arab names," said one Israeli anti-terror expert. "The system is not geared to spot the 'stealth terrorists': tall, fair-haired, fluent speakers of European languages, whether men or **women**."

The Israeli claims came as Otto Schilly, the German interior minister, said intelligence services had warned that Al-Qaeda terrorists were infiltrating Europe. The FBI claimed terror groups might be planning to use scuba divers to carry out attacks on America. It stressed the warning was based on uncorroborated information and was "nothing to get panicked about".

The FBI was also under pressure over claims by Coleen Rowley, one of its agents, that it had effectively blocked an investigation into Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called "20th hijacker" on September 11.

Load-Date: May 27, 2002



Women: 'Killing is what we do': Private Noa Berman, one of the first Israeli women to serve in combat, is described by her fellow soldiers as a 'natural warrior'. Ewen MacAskill reports

The Guardian (London)
February 12, 2001

Copyright 2001 Guardian Newspapers Limited

Section: Guardian Features Pages, Pg. 9

Length: 554 words

Byline: Ewen MacAskill

Body

Private Noa Berman stands on a lonely outpost on the Golan Heights, Israel's key strategic defensive position in the north of the country. The enemy, Syria, is visible across the flat scrubland. She knows that a Syrian observer probably has his binoculars trained on her, one of the few **women** combat soldiers in the world.

Berman is one of only three <u>women</u> soldiers among 70 men at the base. She joined up in August, training for four months before arriving at the artillery battalion in December.

Berman is 19 and has dreamed of becoming a combat soldier since childhood. "I saw movies about war. There were no <u>women</u> and I wanted to be first to be there. I liked GI Jane when I was 16," she says, referring to the film starring Demi Moore as the first woman to join an elite US military unit.

Israel is far ahead of Britain - and most other countries - in allowing <u>women</u> to serve in frontline units. It is also just about the only country where <u>women</u> are likely to see active combat.

National service is compulsory for everyone in Israel, male and <u>female</u>. But until recently, <u>women</u> have been given jobs well back from the frontline: some working in areas like intelligence, but many others filling in time as secretaries.

Private Berman did not want a soft life behind the lines. Instead, according to Israeli Defence Force terminology, she is a "combat soldier", expected to go out on patrol with the men. Her unit could be swapping shells with enemy artillery at any time and even hand-to-hand fighting is possible, should the base be attacked. In May, during the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, her battalion saw action against <u>Hizbullah</u>, the Islamic fundamentalist guerilla group.

Berman carries her rifle with her all the time, either on her lap or slung over her back. "I have thought about killing people. That is the purpose of the army. That is what we do. The people we kill are against us." Caressing the gunbutt, she says: "At first it was weird and hard to have a gun." She is, says a fellow woman soldier, a "natural warrior".

War is not a new experience for Berman. She was brought up in Kiryat Shmona, the most northerly town in Israel, close to the Lebanese border and frequently under bombardment from Katyusha rockets fired by *Hizbullah*. Both

Women: 'Killing is what we do': Private Noa Berman, one of the first Israeli women to serve in combat, is described by her fellow soldiers as a 'natural warrior....

her mother and father, who had been a sergeant in the army, were supportive of her decision to go into a combat unit.

She had a boyfriend before joining the army, but they have broken up. A factor in the split was that she spent so much time away from home, allowed back only one weekend in two. When she leaves the army, Berman wants to be a psychologist and have children.

She talks about how she and her two *female* comrades dug out their dresses when they went home on leave. There was nothing then to identify them as soldiers, except for the bootmarks round their ankles.

Private Alon Weinstein, 18, who joined the battalion only a week before Berman and her two <u>female</u> colleagues, is relaxing in the sun. How does he find working alongside <u>female</u> soldiers? "I do not think it matters. The commander called us and told us that if there was any trouble with the <u>women</u>, the punishment will be severe. So no one will mess with them. We treat them as soldiers. She is fighting alongside me. She is protecting me and I am protecting her. We are soldiers."

Load-Date: February 12, 2001



In sermon, leading imam of Egypt assails terrorism People who kill innocents in the name of Islam are "liars and charlatans," he tells worshippers.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

July 30, 2005 Saturday

FIVE STAR LATE LIFT EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4 Length: 568 words

Byline: BY LEE KEATH The Associated Press

Dateline: CAIRO, Egypt

Body

Egypt's top Islamic cleric delivered a fierce sermon Friday against terrorism.

The cleric spoke at the main mosque in Sharm el-Sheik, the Red Sea resort struck by deadly bombings a week ago. He is Mohammed Sayyed Tantawi, grand imam of Al-Azhar -- one of the Sunni world's most prestigious institutions.

Even the Lebanese guerrilla group *Hezbollah* says Muslim clerics have to act to curb extremism.

After the continuing bloodshed in Iraq and this month's London bombings, the Sharm el-Sheik attack has deepened what has been a growing debate among Muslims about how Islam should deal with terrorists who act in its name.

Tantawi delivered the sermon at Friday prayers in Sharm el-Sheik's "Peace Mosque." It was packed with hundreds of worshippers still stunned by the bombings, which killed scores of Egyptians and foreign tourists on July 23.

Tantawi told worshippers that "even polytheists who come to Egypt to see its civilization, who didn't come to harm you -- you have to protect them and treat them in a good way."

The cleric used the Arabic word mushrikin -- "polytheists," or those who worship more than one god. In Islam, the term is heavy with negative connotations. The Quran, Islam's holy book, repeatedly denounces mushrikin. It accepts Jews and Christians as fellow monotheists -- worshippers of one god.

Those who killed dozens of innocents "have no justification," Tantawi said. If they claim to be obeying orders of Islam, he said, "They are liars, liars and charlatans, and Islam disavows them."

He said, "The aggressors who blow up themselves, their cars and bombs against innocent men, <u>women</u> and children, will not be given any mercy by God."

Tantawi has emerged as a strong voice against terrorism. Early this month, he condemned Islamic insurgents in Iraq, saying all Iraqis and Arabs should unite to purge Iraq of "their filth and viciousness."

In sermon, leading imam of Egypt assails terrorism People who kill innocents in the name of Islam are "liars and charlatans," he tells worshippers.

Egyptian investigators have been focusing on the likelihood that homegrown Islamic militant cells in the Sinai Peninsula carried out the Sharm el-Sheik bombings. The official death toll stands at 64, but hospitals say bodies still uncounted could bring it to 88.

With every terrorist attack, Arabs and Muslims have been struggling to strike a balance between condemning bloodshed and charging that U.S. policies in Iraq and Israel fuel Islamic militant violence. Debate has focused on whether reform is needed to purge extremist teachings.

In Lebanon, the militant Shiite Muslim <u>Hezbollah</u> said immediately after the Sharm el-Sheik bombings that attacks against innocent people "require a decisive stance by clerics" against violence.

<u>Hezbollah</u> is considered a terrorist organization by the United States, which accuses it of supporting Palestinian militants against Israel. But in Lebanon, <u>Hezbollah</u> is seen as a nationalist force after its long fight against the Israeli soldiers who occupied southern Lebanon until 2000.

The group's stance on violence is becoming more nuanced. It opposes the U.S. military presence in Iraq. But as more of its Iraqi Shiite brethren fall victim in bombings, <u>Hezbollah</u> has grown more vocal in condemning the insurgency in Iraq.

Lebanon's most senior Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, said after the Sharm el-Sheik attacks that all Muslims must condemn such attacks. But in his sermon Friday, he said the "evil phenomenon" of terrorism "stems from the policy of arrogance" by the U.S. and Israel.

Load-Date: July 31, 2005



MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE ISRAELIS; On Border With Lebanon, 'This Family Is Never Scared'

The New York Times

April 6, 2002 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2002 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 1087 words

Byline: By SERGE SCHMEMANN **Dateline:** METULLAH, Israel, April 5

Body

Knowing that the attack would come sooner or later, Israeli soldiers along the Lebanese border stayed well inside their heavily fortified bunkers through the day. Finally, at 7:50 p.m., a barrage of mortar shells and antitank missiles crashed into Israeli posts on Mount Dov. Nobody was injured.

Within minutes, Israeli jets swooped past and fired rockets around the Lebanese villages of Kfar Shouba and Kfar Shaba, taking care not to strike inside the villages, though that was where the shelling came from. So there, too, the probability was that nobody was hurt.

It was the fifth straight day this had happened. And it brought one day closer the day Israel would conclude it had no choice but to strike back. When it does, the Israelis made clear that it would not strike against <u>Hezbollah</u>, the militant Shiite movement in Lebanon, but against Syria, on the premise, as an army major explained, that if your neighbor's dog bites you, you go after the neighbor. The retaliation would be big, he said, as Israeli retaliations always are.

And that would achieve exactly what <u>Hezbollah</u> counted on, drawing Israel into a new front while it is deeply engaged in a fight against the Palestinians, further undermining relations with Arab states, drawing an international outcry, and raising more questions at home about the wisdom of last year's unilateral withdrawal from the buffer zone Israel had occupied for 18 years in southern Lebanon.

The Noy family not only heard this evening's attack, they saw it. Living 250 yards from the Lebanese border in this northernmost Israeli city, they had a ringside seat for the flashes and thuds on Mount Dov, across the valley under the majestic, snow-capped Mount Hermon.

But they did not get into the shelter that every Israeli home is required to have, as they did when <u>Hezbollah</u> regularly sent Katyusha rockets into the Israeli north. Frankly, added Aliz Noy, a businessman who divides his time between here and Tel Aviv, "we didn't go into the shelter then, either."

His daughter-in-law, Irit Noy, with a newborn in her arms, cut in forcefully: "I was scared," she said. "They were not scared. This family is never scared."

MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE ISRAELIS On Border With Lebanon, 'This Family Is Never Scared'

But she stayed at the dinner table, too. Though Katyushas have also landed again, most recently last Tuesday, near here, most attacks have been either against army posts, or by infiltrators.

Those, Mr. Noy said, did make him worry. On March 12, for example, infiltrators used a ladderlike device to get over the border fence and killed six Israelis. "You never know when they're going to cross the border," he said. "Even today, we took the S.U.V. for a nice trip, but we felt it's better to take a gun."

But the greatest danger was not in the attacks, Mr. Noy said. "They're doing their best to open another front over the past three weeks," he said. "They're doing this to provoke Israel. And they will."

His son, Amir, echoing a tenet deeply imbedded in the Israeli consciousness, said, "When we're passive, the chances are far higher of more attacks."

"When there's pressure on them, things are far safer," he added.

The topic of the father's concern, and the reasoning behind the son's reaction, have become a major issue in the press, the military and the government since cross-border attacks sharply escalated last month.

Though Israel has struck back each time, as it did this evening, the strikes have been largely symbolic. The restraint was not out of any military fear of fighting on two fronts, the army insisted. It was simply that Israel did not need the political handicap of tangling with Syria.

Since the March 12 attack near Kibbutz Metsuba, Israel has repeatedly warned Syria to rein in <u>Hezbollah</u>, and asked various intermediaries to intercede.

At the same time, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer summoned the security cabinet to a meeting Wednesday to weigh the options.

On Thursday, Mr. Sharon made an unadvertised tour of the Northern Command, emphasizing in meetings that <u>Hezbollah</u> was operating with Syrian and Iranian backing. Israel also charged that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command was involved.

The warnings have not gone unheeded. Today, the Lebanese Army was reported to have arrested six members of the Popular Front for possession of surface-to-surface missiles. But while that was viewed as a message from Beirut that it was against the attacks, it also underscored Lebanon's reluctance, or inability, to curb *Hezbollah*.

For the Israeli government, the renewed threats have also revived questions about the wisdom of Prime Minister Ehud Barak's unilateral pullout from its 11-mile deep buffer zone in southern Lebanon in May 2000. It was heralded then as bold statesmanship, but it also enabled *Hezbollah* to claim victory. And it moved the threat of attack right up against Israeli cities, towns and farms.

Near the Menara Kibbutz, a few miles to the south, a new Israeli post stood on a hilltop off the main road, which snaked parallel to the electrified fence of the border. From outside, the massive concrete bulwarks resembled one of the medieval Crusader forts in the region, except for the forest of antennas and dishes.

Across the fence, <u>Hezbollah</u> flags waved over a more primitive bunker. Up against the fence was a large billboard with gruesome pictures of mangled Israeli soldiers and the legend "Sharon, don't forget your soldiers still in Lebanon."

Down the hill, at another army base, a dozen <u>female</u> soldiers gazed at television screens while controlling remote cameras along the border fence. A poster on the wall carried a picture of a woman in uniform, Tali Ben Armon, who was credited with spotting several guerrillas moving toward the border. Soon after, she was killed in a bus bombing.

Further down in the valley, members of the Gadot Kibbutz were finishing their dinner. They had all heard the thumps of the attack and because it was the Sabbath, they knew it was not a training exercise.

MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE ISRAELIS On Border With Lebanon, 'This Family Is Never Scared'

"We grew up with this type of activity," said Amatzia Shlomi. "It's not like 1967, when we got 300 shells in the kibbutz. Before '67, the kibbutz was completely wiped out twice by shelling." Nowadays, he said, there might be missiles fired into the region, but not aimed at the kibbutz.

His fear, like Mr. Noy's, was that Israel was being dragged into something it did not want. "Their job is to provoke us, and it's easy to do with Ariel Sharon in power," Mr. Shlomi said. "The whole situation is very complicated and unresolvable. I don't see an end to it."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Israeli soldiers prepared 155-millimeter artillery shells yesterday on the northern border, where <u>Hezbollah</u> has shelled army posts for five days. (Reuters)

Load-Date: April 6, 2002



Turkey's town of terrorists

The Times (London)

December 8, 2003, Monday

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Section: Features; Times2; 18

Length: 1112 words **Byline:** Suna Erdem

Body

TO HELP FIGHT KURDISH REBELS, THE TURKISH SECURITY FORCES FOSTERED THE CONSERVATISM THAT LED TO THE ISTANBUL BOMBS, SAYS SUNA ERDEM

IN THE southeastern Turkish village of Yenibaslar, the family of Mesut Cabuk have been accepting visits of condolence. The aunt and mother-in-law of the Turkish Islamist suicide bomber slam the door on any "outsiders". Outside, nobody will speak much. This conservative village, near the charmless town of Bingol, is a secretive place.

Two <u>women</u> covered head-to-toe in shapeless black sheet-like garments flit by and disappear into the narrow lanes. "Ninjas!" spits my driver, citing the term of derision that many secularist Turks use to describe these Islamist <u>women</u>. This disgust is shared even by many devout residents of conservative southeast Turkey.

The Islamic headscarf is common here, but, as my driver says: "Where does it say in the Koran that they have to do that?"

Twenty miles away lies Bingol, where the mother of Azad Ekinci flits from house to house, trying to escape the attention brought on by her son's suspected role as mastermind in an Islamist terror cell that launched four suicide bombs on Istanbul on November 15 and 20 (picture, right). A close friend of Mesut, the zealous Azad apparently used Bingol as a base for a life of activism that reportedly included stints as a Muslim fighter in places such as Chechnya and Bosnia. Many living in the area are Shafi Muslims, who are stricter than Turkey's majority Sunni Muslims.

More often than in other parts of southeastern Turkey, men refused to shake my hand because it is considered "unclean" to touch a woman before prayers. Bingol, the conservative heart of the region, was the starting point for the militant Islamist Sheikh Said rebellion against the newly formed secular Turkish republic in the 1920s. This is where the Turkish <u>Hezbollah</u> militants - no relation to their Arab namesake - had their base in the 1990s and where the <u>Hezbollah</u> leader Huseyin Velioglu was killed in January 2000.

Small wonder, say Istanbul's modern-minded chattering classes, that this town bred at least two suicide bombers and a terrorist leader.

However, the truth is more complicated.

Bingol is home to many religious conservatives, it is true. But, once persuaded to talk, the tight-lipped locals tell of how the security forces fostered this conservatism and developed the <u>Hezbollah</u> militia as a tool in the struggle against Kurdish separatism in the 1990s. The story of Islamists used against an enemy and then abandoned only to

Turkey 's town of terrorists

wreak greater terror holds parallels with the relationship between the US and Osama bin Laden during Afghanistan's fight against the Soviet Union.

Bingol was particularly crucial as it was on the route that the Kurdish separatist PKK had to take when travelling between northern Iraq, where they had training camps, and the Turkish province of Tunceli, where they had almost impenetrable mountain hideouts.

"There was no Turkish <u>Hezbollah</u> before the PKK became a problem - there's no doubt about it, the state created, or at least supported, Hezb- ollah," says a local activist. Locals say that the <u>Hezbollah</u> militants would identify poor families and "help" them as a prelude to bringing them into the fold. "They would go to people and say, 'Don't you dare help your poor relatives - we're going to do that'," says Selahattin Koc, who owns a Turkish bath. "I know the police knew all of them but they did nothing because they were in partnership." Bingol residents say that at one point fanatical <u>Hezbollah</u> supporters took over mosques in the region, scaring away the state-appointed imams, who were too afraid even to enter. Some claim that the state even supplied arms for the group, although this has not been proved.

"If you are fighting a serious threat you become more tolerant of a group that is closer to you," explains a terrorism expert, Nihat Ali Ozcan. "The Americans are facing the same problem now in Iraq - they need to find someone to collaborate with. But this will just be a tactical collaboration and who knows what the consequences will be?"

When, in 1999, the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured and the group lost its strength to the extent that the state of emergency has now been lifted, there was no more need for the <u>Hezbollah</u>, and security forces began to swoop on Islamist militants.

Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish Prime Minister, says that this was a matter of priorities for past governments. "You deal with the biggest threat first," he says. "Governments at the time had their set of priorities." The turnaround led to the capture of some leading activists, but drove many others underground - possibly, like Ekinci, to associate with much more terrible organisations.

Believed to be the head of the cell that unleashed the four Istanbul attacks, Ekinci, the son of a murdered left-wing activist, had been given explosives training in Tora Bora in Afghanistan - where al-Qaeda had a strong presence. He has been linked by the media to <u>Hezbollah</u>, but his relatives say that he became contemptuous of a group he felt to be the puppet of the state, and had more sympathy for Muslim fighters abroad.

What made the area easier to manipulate by radical groups was its poverty. For young people it was especially bad, yet escaping to big cities was not the answer.

"I used to be a shepherd but I decided to try Istanbul, like many others out of school," says Ferhat Koser, 24. "When you get there all sorts of people come up to you and say, 'I'm from Bingol, let's be friends', and then they get you involved in things - this could be the mafia, it could be drugs, it could be terrorism.

We're not very well educated and are easily tricked." In this environment, arguments can be persuasive.

Ekinci met Gokhan Elaltuntas in Bingol. Elaltuntas was not typical - the son of a well-off established local family, he was hoping to go to university and had money. But he was naive and appears to have been seduced by the arguments of Ekinci, a calm, clever talker, according to relatives, who had educated himself well in the theories of Islam. When Elaltuntas's family sent him to Istanbul after the May earthquake, partly so that he would be far from the likes of Ekinci, he was alone and even easier prey. He eventually blew himself up outside a synagogue.

For some of the town elders, any attention, however unwelcome the cause, is an improvement for this backwater.

"Don't get me wrong - they killed people, destroyed God's creations, and for that I condemn them utterly," says Feyzi Koc, a restaurant owner. "But at least this might mean that the state will pay us attention and do something about the problems here."

Turkey 's town of terrorists

Load-Date: December 8, 2003



OUR PARTNER SYRIA? GIVE ME A BREAK

Daily News (New York)

November 15, 2001 Thursday

SPORTS FINAL EDITION

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 43

Length: 470 words

Byline: BY RICHARD CHESNOFF

Body

The Taliban may be on the run, but the battle is far from over. So I wonder if you were as relieved as I was to learn that Syria has joined President Bush's global coalition against terrorism. I mean, who better to have at your side during a war on terrorism than one of the world's most steadfast sponsors of terrorism?

The list of terror gangs that Syria still sponsors and/or hosts is truly impressive: Hamas, <u>Hezbollah</u>, Islamic Jihad, the Kurdish Liberation Front, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - you name 'em, they got 'em. Take it from this longtime visitor to Damascus: there are so many terrorists hanging around that local hotel lobbies resemble the bar scene in "Star Wars."

Times and attitudes do change. Who would have believed a decade ago that Russia and China would become part of the global alliance? But there are limits to the political stretch of imagination.

And any lingering doubts about Syria's real attitude toward state-sponsored terrorism were dispelled during British Prime Minister Tony Blair's recent visit to Damascus. After an appeal by Blair for an end to Palestinian terrorism, Syrian President Bashar Assad actually compared Hamas and Islamic Jihad to World War II's French Resistance. As I recall, France's freedom fighters targeted Nazi soldiers and Vichy collaborators - not <u>women</u> and children in pizza parlors.

If they weren't still a threat to peace in the Mideast, the Syrians would almost be a sick joke. For example, Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass has actually blamed the Sept. 11 attacks on Israel. At a meeting with delegates from the British Royal College of Defense Studies, Tlass said the Mossad, Israel's secret service, planned the bombings as part of a "Jewish conspiracy" to embarrass the Islamic world. The Mossad, Tlass told his flabbergasted visitors, gave thousands of Jewish World Trade Center workers advance warning not to go to work on Sept. 11.

But Syria's high jinks go way beyond such nuttiness. It still occupies major chunks of neighboring Lebanon. It controls the movements of the <u>Hezbollah</u> terrorist movement. It continues to facilitate Iranian arms shipments to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s gangs in southern Lebanon. And it calls the shots when <u>Hezbollah</u> decides to lob rockets into Israeli homes.

OUR PARTNER SYRIA? GIVE ME A BREAK

Syria is not our only unlikely "ally" in the war on terrorism. What about our new buddies in Iran? And how about Palestinian dictator Yasser Arafat, the granddaddy of all modern terrorists? Arafat has personally manipulated the current intifadeh that has all but wrecked the Mideast peace process, leaving scores of civilians, including Americans, dead or injured.

It proves again that you have to be even more careful about choosing your coalition partners than you do about choosing your friends.

E-mail: rzc@att.net

Stanley Crouch's column will appear tomorrow.

Load-Date: December 19, 2006



Israel-Lebanon tensions heating up

Deseret News (Salt Lake City)

April 8, 2002, Monday

Copyright 2002 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Section: WIRE;

Length: 492 words

Byline: By Hussein Malla Associated Press writer

Body

KFAR CHOUBA, Lebanon -- After a sharp escalation in guerrilla attacks and Israeli airstrikes, U.S. and U.N. diplomats have warned Israel and Lebanon of the dangers of reviving the war along their border.

Israel on Monday called up additional reserve units to serve near the border. A day earlier, cross-border fighting between the Israeli army and Lebanese guerrillas injured seven soldiers and sent residents of northern Israel into bomb shelters for an hour.

Violence along a front that has been largely dormant since Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 has erupted as Israeli soldiers battle Palestinians on the West Bank.

In New York, the U.N. Security Council in a statement Sunday night expressed concern at violations of the U.N.-drawn boundary between Israel and Lebanon, which Syria and Lebanon don't recognize.

Syria's U.N. Ambassador Mikhail Wehbe accused Israel of "terrorizing" the Lebanese people by repeatedly violating their airspace, which he said was "provoking the resistance." He called on Israel to withdraw from the Chebaa Farms area, from which Israel did not withdraw when it pulled out of Lebanon.

The United Nations pronounced Israel's 18-year occupation of Lebanon over, saying Chebaa Farms was Syrian, not Lebanese, and that disputes over it should be worked out between Syria and Israel. Lebanon, backed by Syria, considers Chebaa Farms its territory, and Lebanon's <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas, who fought against Israeli forces during the occupation, have vowed to liberate it.

In a fifth straight day of clashes, <u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas opened fire on several Israeli outposts in Chebaa Farms, which is along Lebanon's border with the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights. Smoke billowed from at least one Israeli outpost. Israeli jets and artillery retaliated against suspected <u>Hezbollah</u> hideouts.

In Jerusalem, an Israeli army statement said a number of rockets were fired at Israeli positions in the Golan Heights, targeting villages and army bases. Four <u>women</u> soldiers were injured, one seriously, in the village of Avivim. rescue workers said.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon blamed Iran and Syria, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s backers, and said Israel gave warnings through diplomatic channels. "We made clear that this ould perhaps lead to a very big outbreak."

The Israeli military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz, warned that Israel is prepared to hit back at the centers of power in Lebanon.

Israel - Lebanon tensions heating up

Israel has in the past targeted Syrian army positions and Lebanese infrastructure. Syria is the main power-broker in Lebanon and has about 25,000 troops stationed here.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's representative in Lebanon appealed for an end to "violations," urging the Lebanese government to act and Israel to show restraint.

"No reasonable person can believe that this can continue without a substantial danger. We are in a very dangerous moment in a very tense region," Staffan de Mistura told a news conference in Beirut.

Load-Date: April 8, 2002



Middle East four are shown the carrot and stick

The Guardian (London) - Final Edition February 4, 2005

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Section: Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 17

Length: 679 words

Body

Four Middle East countries were singled out by Mr Bush in his state of the union speech. Two, Iran and Syria, were criticised for their terrorist connections, and two, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, were urged to make greater progress towards democracy. Brian Whitaker looks at what lies behind the comments

Iran

"Iran remains the world's primary state sponsor of terror - pursuing nuclear weapons while depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve"

Iran could be the next target for US military action, mainly because of suspicions that it is trying to develop nuclear weapons. Along with Syria, Iran provides support for <u>Hizbullah</u>, the militant Shia organisation in Lebanon. The US is also unhappy about its influence on Shia Muslims in neighbouring Iraq.

Although dominated by hardline clergy, Iran has developed a form of Islamic democracy where elections are fiercely contested. It is one of the few countries in the Middle East where voters have changed the political complexion of a parliament.

As it was for prewar Iraq, the Bush administration's policy is partly driven by exiled opposition groups in the US and Israeli security concerns. Neoconservatives have long claimed that Iran is ripe for a popular insurrection. This may explain Mr Bush's message to the Iranian people in his speech: "As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you."

Syria

"Syria still allows its territory, and parts of Lebanon, to be used by terrorists who seek to destroy every chance of peace in the region"

Syria is a co-sponsor of <u>Hizbullah</u> and hosts a number of radical Palestinian groups, particularly those who share Syria's dislike of the late Yasser Arafat. Syrian support for these groups is motivated largely by continuing Israeli occupation of its territory in the Golan Heights - a factor rarely acknowledged in American rhetoric.

Syria has also been accused by the US of complicating the situation in neighbouring Iraq by helping insurgents - or at least turning a blind eye to their activities by failing to control the border effectively.

Middle East four are shown the carrot and stick

Syrian forces helped bring stability to Lebanon after the civil war but about 14,000 soldiers remain, and many Lebanese believe they have outstayed their welcome. Syria also meddles in Lebanese politics and persuaded its parliament to extend the term of President Emile Lahoud, an ally of Damascus.

Saudi Arabia

"The government of Saudi Arabia can demonstrate its leadership in the region by expanding the role of its people in determining their future"

A gentle nudge from Mr Bush for the kingdom that sits on a quarter of the world's known oil reserves and obligingly turns its taps on and off to help stabilise prices. Saudi cooperation against al-Qaida is also vital.

The kingdom grants few rights to <u>women</u> and has one of the worst human rights records in the Middle East. In the past its leadership role has included spreading the reactionary Wahhabi brand of Islam to nearby countries.

Crown Prince Abdullah, the de facto ruler, has urged reform but progress is slow in the face of resistance from ultra-conservatives, especially the clerics. The first elections for 40 years, for municipal councils, are due to start next week.

Egypt

"The great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East"

Egypt was the first Arab country to make peace with Israel and is now playing a crucial role in smoothing the way for Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. It therefore qualifies for carrot rather than stick. Egypt also gets credit on the anti-terrorism front for waging a long battle against Islamist militants, often with scant regard for human rights.

President Hosni Mubarak, who is 76 and has been in power for 23 years, is expected to seek a fifth term this year in a yes-or-no referendum. Many Egyptians believe his son, Gamal, is being groomed as his eventual successor Egyptian parliamentary elections have often been marred by allegations of ballot box stuffing and intervention by the security forces.

Leader comment, page 25

Load-Date: February 4, 2005



Report: Israeli military kill woman, wound 3 children; Gaza Strip:Bombing on the Lebanon border injures 2 soldiers

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

December 9, 2002 Monday

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Section: Pg. a5

Length: 632 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian woman and wounded her three children and a second woman in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, witnesses said. Israel denied the report.

The violence in Gaza followed a rare bombing on the Israel-Lebanon border, seriously wounding two soldiers, and Israeli tank movements in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military said soldiers shot at armed Palestinians trying to infiltrate a Jewish settlement. The military spokesman's office said it had no information that **women** or children were shot.

The military said soldiers saw a group of Palestinians, some of them armed, approaching the settlement of Rafiah Yam. The soldiers opened fire on the Palestinians and saw Palestinians take four wounded away, while two others escaped, the military said.

But a Palestinian witness, Samir Abu Shahin, said Israeli soldiers opened fire at the Tel Sultan refugee camp, which is near the settlement.

"The woman and her family were walking in the middle of the street, and I saw her fall, and blood covering her body, and not far from her, the two children also fell."

The woman, Nahla Aqel, 40, died of a bullet wound in the neck, Shahin said. Her 4-year-old son and 14-year-old daughter were critically wounded, and another woman was also badly wounded, he said. Doctors said a 7-year-old child of the slain woman was also hurt, though they did not say if it was a son or a daughter.

Clashes have become a daily occurrence in Gaza. Late Thursday, Israeli forces entered the Bureij camp, looking for a suspected militant, clashing with armed Palestinians. Ten Palestinians were killed, including several civilians.

The growing tension comes as Israel prepares for next month's election in which a public angry and disillusioned with years of failed peace efforts is expected to grant a renewed mandate to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his hawkish Likud Party, which was choosing its candidates for parliament, the Knesset, on Sunday.

Likud's 2,940-member central committee was meeting in Tel Aviv to vote for candidates according to a complicated formula designed to yield a party list containing both regional representation and nationally contested spots.

Report: Israeli military kill woman, wound 3 children; Gaza Strip:Bombing on the Lebanon border injures 2 soldiers

The results could influence not just the makeup of Likud's Knesset faction but also the next Cabinet, since the party is expected to be the main component of the next government. Top vote-getters in Sunday's internal vote are seen as likely to be awarded the most coveted ministries.

Sharon and Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are slotted in the first two places on the list. Opinion polls show the party is likely to win close to 40 out of the 120 Knesset seats. The general election is set for Jan. 28.

Early Sunday, two Israeli soldiers were seriously wounded when a bomb went off on the Israel-Lebanon border.

The bomb blast broke the calm in an area that has seen little violence since Israel pulled its forces out of south Lebanon in May 2000 after an 18-year war against *Hezbollah* guerrillas.

A jeep on routine patrol along the western part of the border ran over an explosive device. One of the soldiers lost both his legs, doctors said.

Though Israel withdrew its forces behind a border drawn by the United Nations, <u>Hezbollah</u> insists that a small section in the eastern sector belongs to Lebanon but was given to Israel. Guerrillas have frequently attacked Israeli forces there.

Israel blamed <u>Hezbollah</u> for Sunday's bombing. Maj. Gen. Benny Gantz, commander in the border area, said Lebanon must crack down on the guerrillas.

"Lebanon has to choose between living in peace (with Israel) and living with extremist, fundamentalist terrorist groups who live with different game rules," he said.

In Beirut, Sheik Hassan Ezzeddine, <u>Hezbollah</u>'s media chief, said "<u>Hezbollah</u> has no links whatsoever to Sunday's explosion near the border."

Load-Date: December 9, 2002



Two faces of protest

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

March 9, 2005, Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 07

Length: 676 words

Byline: By Frances Z. Brown

Highlight: After days of demonstrations by a young urban crowd, a pro-Syrian throng answers in force.

Body

Four layers of Lebanese troops surround Beirut's Martyrs' Square. Inside their shield are the urbane young Lebanese whose nine days of passionate anti-Syria protest have galvanized world attention.

But Tuesday, on the other side of those troops, the protesters were answered. At least half a million demonstrators heeded the call of militant <u>Hizbullah</u> leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and demonstrated in support of Syria's influence, if not its troops.

The throng - bused in en masse from southern Lebanon, Baalbek, the Bekaa Valley, and reportedly Syria - waved Lebanon's cedar. Like their Martyrs Square counterparts, they carried signs proclaiming "We want the truth" (about former prime minister Rafik Hariri's death).

But beyond these trappings of solidarity, the cultural gap is immense.

The Martyrs Square protesters might feel at home in Greenwich Village. In Riad el Sol Square the hijab of the <u>women</u> speaks to the crowd's conservative roots. While the young protesters in Martyrs Square articulate - in fluent English or French - the revolutionary influences of Ukraine, the crowds outside speak exclusively Arabic, out of pride and necessity.

To an American observer, well-versed in the language of red state and blue state, the four police barriers around Martyr's Square highlight the immense divide between two Lebanons.

Outside the barricades, Nasser Hussein carries a sign in Arabic: "Thanks Syria and Assad." A weak economy is his concern. "Syria gives stability," he says. Thousands traveled from Baalbek, he says, because the sheikh gave the word, and "we love that man."

Just a short distance away, inside the barricades, Rony Chidiac, a Christian student organizer, insists dialogue is possible. Still, he says, "[Those other protests are] stupid. They're busing people in from Syria. It will blow over."

For the past few days, life inside Martyrs Square has been business as usual. The tent city still stands. Guitars strum and coffee sellers call. Protesters chat over newspapers and agree one thing: No one is satisfied with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's promises.

The protesters are skeptical that Saturday's speech vowing to withdraw from Lebanon signified real news. They have no more faith in the vague pledges their own president, Emile Lahoud. And so each day there are new

Two faces of protest

immigrants, more blue tarp riggings for shelter, more kak stalls for crunchy bread, and more tents distributing "independence" stickers.

Today, I dodge a remote-controlled toy car carrying a small Lebanese flag, whose driver could be any one of the hordes of children with families, walking by Hariri's grave site, or borrowing pens from me to write patriotic grafitti on the walls of the square.

Each evening, a dance party erupts. People of all ages, carrying Lebanese flags of all sizes, stream into the square. Convertibles swarm by, honking horns, as I chat with new acquaintances. After two years in Lebanon, I analyze the family name and hometown of new friends to determine whether they are Maronite, Orthodox, Sunni, or Druze. Nearly everyone _ except Shiites - seems to be represented. The Lebanese national Anthem comes on - kulohnah lil-wataan - "the country belongs to all of us"-and for once, I believe it.

By daybreak, the crowd shrinks to its core, young people who wear dreadlocks, nose rings, and tattoos. They quote Pink Floyd. These students have, improbably, become the country's most stalwart activists and patriots. They vow to continue sleeping in the square until all Syrian troops withdraw. But the <u>Hizbullah</u> demonstration makes them wary; there's anxiety that Lebanon's famous tinderbox could again ignite.

Just before the demonstration, four trucks filled with Lebanese soldiers drive by. In this country that is tired of soldiers, the Bohemian-looking students put down their guitars and cheer.

Outside, however, the country currently belongs to Nasrallah: The crowd roars as he begins to speak and seethes as he shouts anti-Israeli slogans. For the crowd outside, Syria isn't the problem.

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Load-Date: March 8, 2005



Israel sets up Iran as next target for the US

Guardian Weekly February 13, 2002

Copyright 2002 Guardian Publication, Ltd.

Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS; Analysis; Pg. 4

Length: 1071 words **Byline:** David Hirst

Highlight: Washington convinced that nuclear monopoly of its Middle East ally must be preserved at all costs

Body

The United States campaign in Afghanistan is winding down, but who will be its next big target in the "war on terror" remains in the realm of conjecture. Of the three chief members of the "axis of evil" that George Bush identified last week in his state of the union address -- Iraq, Iran and North Korea -- he dedicated most of his wrath and spoke most threateningly of that hardiest of Washington's villains, Saddam Hussein.

Yet, if Israel gets its way, the next target could be Iran. President Bush was forthright in his address: he told Tehran to stop harbouring al-Qaida terrorists and added the threat that, if it did not, he would deal with Iran "in diplomatic ways, initially".

Israel has long cast the Islamic republic as its gravest long-term threat, the "rogue state" at its most menacing, combining sponsorship of international terror, nuclear ambitions, ideological objection to a Jewish state and unflagging determination to sabotage the Middle East peace process.

Israel classifies Iran as one of those "far" threats -- Iraq being another -- that distinguish it from the "near" ones: the Palestinians and neighbouring Arab states. As the peace process progressed, the near threats were steadily being eroded. A benefit of the 1993 Oslo accord was said to be that it would fortify Israel for its eventual showdown with its far enemies. The closer their weapons of mass destruction programmes come to completion, the more compelling the need for Israel -- determined to preserve its regional nuclear monopoly -- to eliminate them.

For a long time the strategy of enlisting the growing Arab peace camp against Iran and Islamic extremism from afar seemed to be working. Committed, under Oslo, to fight all forms of Palestinian violence against Israel, the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, came to blows with Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and the anathemas he hurled at Iran, their ideological mentor, were all but indistinguishable from Israel's.

But now both threats have converged, malignantly, as never before. This, for Israel, was the deeper meaning of the Karine-A affair, the 50-tonne shipment of Iranian-supplied arms destined for Gaza that it seized last month. It was a "most dangerous axis", said the Israeli chief of staff, which threatened to "change the face" of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle.

As well as supplying arms and finance, Iran, the Israelis say, is developing a supervisory role over the Palestinian "terror" by the exploitation of its existing assets in the arena, mainly the Lebanese <u>Hizbullah</u>, and its new ones, a direct link with Mr Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, and a recently created Palestinian *Hizbullah* of its own.

Had the Karine-A cargo made it to Gaza, and thence to the West Bank, it could have made at least a dent in Israel's enormous military superiority. The Palestinians would no longer have been entirely helpless in the face of Israeli armoured incursions into their self-rule areas. The weapons would also have brought whole population centres within range.

Though Mr Arafat and Iran denied any part in the arms shipment, there were compelling reasons why these friends-turned-enemies should have resumed their collaboration of old. Mr Arafat's desperate need is obvious. The growing violence of the conflict and the complete failure of any country to come to the Palestinians' aid present a golden opportunity for the Islamic republic, at least for the conservative, clerical wing of its leadership. This wing has exclusive, unaccountable control over underground aspects of foreign policy, such as support for Islamist "revolutionaries" such as *Hizbullah* and Hamas.

Iran's president, Mohammad Khatami, and most of the reformist camp may seek to dilute the extreme anti-Israeli orthodoxy, but Tehran's foreign policy is very much an area of competition between the country's rival political wings.

The simplest way to thwart the growth of such a Palestinian-Iranian alliance would be to deny it its essential raison d'etre by restoring a peace process that has some prospect of success. But it has become clear that peace is just what the Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon, does not want: Palestinian violence serves him much better.

For him, the Karine-A incident provided further, dramatic justification for the undeclared but ill-disguised agenda he is pursuing in the name of retaliation and self-defence -- to destroy the notion of self-determination on any portion of Palestinian territory.

But the Israelis took particular alarm at the words of the former Iranian president, Hashimi Rafsanjani, who said recently that, if Israel continues "its hellish policy of expanding its nuclear arsenal, it will eventually draw the Islamic world into the race. Then it will be Israel, a small and illegitimate country, which will lose out and be destroyed."

Impressing on the United States the gravity of the Iranian threat is a continuous Israeli preoccupation. It "must understand", said the Israeli defence minister, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, "that this is not only a threat to Israel, but to the whole world". Tehran would have a nuclear bomb within three years and was developing missiles which could target any point in Europe.

There is no issue on which the Israelis, through their extraordinary influence in Congress and elsewhere, have proved better able to shape US policies than this one.

Quite simply, said one analyst, James Bill, the US "views Iran through spectacles manufactured in Israel". For Mr Bush, the weapons of mass destruction-cum-missile peril is regaining ground on that of the post-September 11 terrorist one. And in that department Iran clearly outweighs President Saddam.

It has long been a built-in, unquestioned US assumption that Israel has a right to preserve its nuclear monopoly and to pre-empt any regional power's efforts to challenge it. This is a unique indulgence by a superpower of its favourite protege.

Yet Israel often hints that the US is not indulgent enough. And a touch of blackmail about what might happen if Israel does not get its way is apt to come with the hint. Thus a leading columnist, Nahum Barnea, wrote in Yediot Aharanot that on a visit to Washington this month Mr Ben-Elizier will try to persuade the administration that, Iran being "the real strategic threat", they must "deal with it diplomatically or militarily, or both. If they don't, Israel will have to do it alone."

Washington Post, page 32

Graphic

Photo, Iranian <u>women</u> pass under posters attacking the US and Israel in front of the former American embassy in Tehran, Hasan Sarbakhshian/AP

Load-Date: February 19, 2002



Middle East crisis: The toll after two weeks of mayhem: The victims on both sides

The Guardian (London)
April 13, 2002

Copyright 2002 Guardian Newspapers Limited

Section: Guardian Home Pages, Pg. 5

Length: 682 words

Body

DEATHS PALESTINIAN

Up to 200 confirmed dead, according to Palestinian Red Crescent. Others estimate 500 Palestinians have been killed. Israeli military claims 15 of those killed were key fugitives

Israeli

Military said 28 soldiers have been killed, including 13 in ambush in Jenin. Twenty-seven Israeli civilians killed

SUICIDE BOMBINGS

Twenty-four killed in two separate attacks in Haifa, two die in Kiryat Yovel attack and bomber dies in explosions at Jerusalem, Efrat and Tel Aviv. Scores injured in attacks

WOUNDED PALESTINIAN

The Red Crescent has logged 337 wounded

ISRAEL ARMY LISTS ITS WOUNDED AS 149 ARRESTS

Military has arrested 4,185 Palestinians, 60 of them said to be known fugitives and 30 wanted for killings. Thousands still in custody. Twenty-eight Palestine Red Crescent paramedics have reportedly been arrested while carrying out their work. Seven were still in army custody on Thursday.

ARMS

Army said it seized 1,338 Kalashnikov assault rifles, 709 long rifles, 387 sniper rifles, 31 M-16s, 770 pistols, 49 anti-tank grenades and five launchers, three mortars, 30 machine guns, 97 bombs and 65lb of explosives. It also said it found 19 explosives laboratories

ARIEL SHARON

'The government of Israel has thus decided . . . to embark on Operation Defensive Shield, which has one goal: uprooting the terrorist infrastructure which Arafat built to continue attacking us'

YASSER ARAFAT

Middle East crisis: The toll after two weeks of mayhem: The victims on both sides

'May God give me the honour of becoming a martyr in this holy land . . . Despite all that we're facing now, we will not surrender'

KFAR SHOUBA

April 8

Hizbullah guerillas attack Israeli troops occupying the foothills of the Golan Heights

TULKAREM

April 1

Israeli troops, tanks and helicopters advance into the town. Masked gunmen kill eight men suspected of collaborating with Israel. Three others killed in Qalqilya and Bethlehem.

April 9

Israeli tanks and armoured cars withdraw. Tanks remain in a cordon around the town.

RAMALLAH

March 29

Israeli tanks and troops enter the town, encircling Yasser Arafat's HQ. They have remained there ever since. Ein Beit Elma refugee camp close to the town is raided with fierce fighting.

JERUSALEM

April 1

Suicide bomber blows himself up in a car injuring a police officer. Israeli police have been involved in standoffs with stone-throwing Palestinian youths.

April 11

A suicide bomber kills six and wounds more than 60 at a city centre bus stop.

LEBANESE BORDER

April 3

Hizbullah shells Israeli posts and attacks Sheba'a Farms border zone.

April 10

More than a dozen rockets and mortars fired at the Golan Heights and northern Israel. Israeli warplanes strike back.

JENIN

April 3

Tanks appear on the streets and helicopters hover overhead. Three gunmen and civilian woman killed.

April 8

Helicopter gunships pound refugee camp.

Middle East crisis: The toll after two weeks of mayhem: The victims on both sides

April 9

Thirteen Israeli reservists killed and several injured in suspected ambush in the town. Fighting rages where dozens of gunmen remain holed up in a small area in the eastern part of the camp.

April 10

300 refugee camp resident residents, including fighters, <u>women</u> and children surrender. Palestinian leader claims Israeli force in control of city. Palestinians claim death toll could be as many as 250.

NABLUS

April 3

150 tanks and armoured vehicles poised around city.

April 8

Israeli forces use helicopter gunships and tanks to battle gunmen in alleyways, claiming to have killed more than 30 armed Palestinians. Two Israeli soldiers wounded.

April 9

Israeli troops take control of the densely populated old town. Military claims to have found 16 bomb-making labs in Nablus.

April 10

Rescue workers retrieve 14 bodies of Palestinians. At least 60 Palestinians are reliably reported to have been killed.

BETHLEHEM

March 30

Armoured columns enter town.

April 3

Palestinian gunmen and civilian shot dead in Manger Square. About 200 Palestinians holed up in Church of the Nativity. Israeli troops surround church and exchange fire.

April 8

A Palestinian police officer trying to extinguish a fire is killed by an Israeli sniper.

April 10

Armenian priest shot and seriously wounded in besieged Church of the Nativity.

Load-Date: April 13, 2002



<u>U.S., Syria, Israel compose volatile triangle;</u> <u>The United States has long had a rocky relationship with Syria and has turned up rhetoric. Israel drives much of the contention.</u>

Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)
April 20, 2003, Sunday, Metro Edition

Copyright 2003 Star Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 15A

Length: 1625 words

Byline: Eric Black; Staff Writer

Body

Whether one views Syria as a rogue nation or as a wrongly accused next target of the United States can depend largely on what one takes to be the key facts of Syria's conduct over recent decades and recent days.

U.S. officials say Syria sponsors terrorism, has aided Iraq and has chemical weapons. While there are some grounds for those claims, there also is evidence to counterbalance those allegations, experts say.

Take, for example, Syria's affiliation with terrorists. Syria supports <u>Hezbollah</u> and Hamas, which the United States considers terrorist organizations. But Abu Abbas, mastermind of the Achille Lauro cruise ship hijacking, was turned back at the Syrian border when he tried to escape Iraq this month, and he is now in U.S. custody. And Syria was helpful in the U.S.-led campaign against Al-Qaida even before Sept. 11.

Syria's young leader, 37-year-old Bashar al-Assad, reflects the difficulty of categorizing the country. He took over in 2000, after his father, Gen. Hafez al-Assad, died of a heart attack, ending his 30 years as Syria's dictator.

The first months of young Assad's rule included several experiments in liberalization _ release of political prisoners, a fledgling independent media _ which led the period called the "Damascus spring." But the experiments were soon curtailed, and Syria remains a one-party autocracy.

Some analysts, such as British Mideast scholar Raymond Hinnebusch, author of "Syria: Revolution from Above," said the United States should nurture the younger Assad's moderate reformist secular impulses. But by threatening war against Syria, Washington is likely to make reform seem too risky, Hinnebusch said.

But Patrick Clawson of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy said Assad's recent conduct shows he has already made his decision. Instead of leading a wave of reform, Clawson said, Assad is positioning himself as the leader of the radical rejectionist anti-Israel anti-American front within the Arab world.

Syria's foreign policy has long been characterized by unrelenting hostility to Israel. Like all Arab states, Syria opposed the 1948 creation of Israel. Syria played a large and provocative role in the crisis that led to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. During that six-day war, Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria and has occupied it ever since.

Syria participated in the 1973 Arab attack on Israel. Since then, it has led the Arab world's denunciation of Egypt and Jordan when those states recognized Israel.

U.S., Syria, Israel compose volatile triangle; The United States has long had a rocky relationship with Syria and has turned up rhetoric. Israel drives much o....

The Syrian Cabinet alleged last week that all of Washington's recent tough talk toward Syria was "a response to Israeli stimulus and a service to [Israel's] goals and expansive greed."

Caesar Farah of the University of Minnesota also embraced this explanation. "Washington is picking on Assad because [Deputy Defense Secretary Paul] Wolfowitz and [Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld think he's a threat to Israel," Farrah said. This view is widely held in the Arab world, Farah added, and "any Arab leaders who follow the American line will have a day of reckoning with the Arab people."

Terrorism

Syria, like Iraq, emerged from the breakup of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. In the early 20th century it was controlled by France. Syria has been independent since World War II, except for 1958 to 1961, when it voluntarily merged with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic. That experiment in pan-Arabism ended as the result of one of many Syrian coups of the period. The coups ended in 1970, when Gen. Hafez al-Assad seized power.

Syria has maintained troops in Lebanon since 1976, when it intervened in the Lebanese civil war. Some foreign policy analysts, especially in Israel and the United States, view Syria as essentially controlling Lebanon, and they hold Syria accountable for the long guerrilla war waged across the Lebanese-Israeli border by <u>Hezbollah</u>. That's a key reason why the United States lists Syria as one of the world's six state sponsors of terrorism. Syria says <u>Hezbollah</u> militants are legitimate resistance fighters against Israeli occupation.

Clawson said that among the most provocative Syrian moves of recent weeks was allowing armed <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters to cross through Syria into Iraq at a time when <u>Hezbollah</u>-controlled media called for the killing of U.S. soldiers there. Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer suggests that Assad is laying the groundwork for a guerrilla war to drive U.S. troops out of Iraq.

"Sound far-fetched?" Krauthammer asked in his Friday column. "Then you have forgotten your history. Syria did precisely that to the United States 20 years ago in Lebanon. It was Syrian-supported <u>Hezbollah</u> terrorists who blew up the Marine barracks, killing 241 and driving America out of Lebanon."

But political scientist Martin Sampson of the University of Minnesota said many commentators exaggerate the degree of Syria's control over Lebanon and especially over <u>Hezbollah</u>, which gets money and arms from Iran.

"It's one thing to support <u>Hezbollah</u>, which Syria does," Sampson said, and another thing to control the spigot that turns <u>Hezbollah</u> on or off." He said some of the demands that Washington is making on Syria _ such as that it get <u>Hezbollah</u> to stop attacking Israel _ are beyond Syria's capabilities, perhaps by design.

Saddam's enemy

Iraq and Syria are the two nations ruled over in recent decades by the Baath Party. But that common ground did nothing to promote friendship between Hafez Assad and Saddam Hussein, who hated and opposed each other at every turn. Syria angered the Arab world by siding with Iran during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. In the 1991 Gulf War, Syria contributed 17,000 troops and 300 tanks to the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq.

In 1998, Syria began a rapprochement with Iraq, consisting mostly of trade opportunities, which probably included some smuggling across the Syria-Iraq border. This week the United States closed a pipeline that had been carrying Iraqi oil into Syria in violation of United Nations sanctions against Iraq.

When asked last week to back up U.S. allegations that Syria is pursuing weapons of mass destruction, Rumsfeld said the United States has evidence of Syrian chemical weapons tests within the past 15 months. White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer read aloud from a 2002 CIA report alleging that Syria had "sought CW [chemical weapon] related precursors and expertise from foreign sources during the reporting period" and that "Damascus already held a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin, but apparently is trying to develop more toxic and persistent nerve agents."

U.S., Syria, Israel compose volatile triangle; The United States has long had a rocky relationship with Syria and has turned up rhetoric. Israel drives much o....

Hans Blix, the chief U.N. weapons inspector, challenged Washington to present any evidence it has to back up its claims.

Syria has denied that it has such weapons. It says that it favors getting all weapons of mass destruction out of the Middle East, but that such an effort must include Israel's nuclear weapons. Syria sponsored a U.N. resolution to that effect last week.

Syria and its sympathizers point out that Washington isn't demanding that Israel get rid of its weapons of mass destruction, which, although Israel won't confirm it, are universally believed to include a nuclear arsenal.

A growing chorus of Arab commentators cites this as evidence that U.S. policy in the region is defined by a double standard that always favors Israel.

Even Hinnebusch, the British scholar who generally portrays Syria as a moderate state, said, "Syria does have its own chemical weapons as a deterrent against the big Israeli nuclear arsenal."

But Clawson, of the pro-Israel Washington Institute, said Syria's logic was circular and disingenuous. Israel, Clawson said, has long announced a readiness to embrace the goal of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction when it has peace and recognition from its neighbors. But Syria has been a leader in rejecting Israel's right to exist, he said, so it should understand why its U.N. proposal is hypocritical and unacceptable.

Sampson of the University of Minnesota suggested that Assad has other priorities than Syria's relations with either Israel or the United States _ namely the possibility that sectarian strife in Iraq might set off a rebellion in his country.

In both Iraq and Syria, minority groups have controlled the government. In Iraq, the Sunni Arab minority oppressed the Shiite majority. In Syria, about three-quarters of the population is Sunni, but the Assad family are members of the small Alawite sect, related to but different from Shiism.

If, in the chaos of postwar Iraq, the Shiite majority starts rioting against its former Sunni oppressors, Sampson said, it may spark heightened sectarian sentiments in Syria. That could set off an uprising of Syria's majority Sunnis against the continuation of Assad's Alawite rule.

"Viewed from Damascus, I think the threat from the Americans is at best number two on the list of your worries at the moment," he said.

_ Eric Black is at eblack@startribune.com.

Syria

- Recent history: When the Ottoman Empire was broken up during World War I, Syria was administered by France until independence in 1946. Syria lost the Golan Heights to Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Since 1976, Syrian troops have been stationed in Lebanon, ostensibly in a peacekeeping capacity.
- Size: 71,498 sq. mi. (slightly larger than North Dakota)
- Population: 17.2 million (July 2002)
- Ethnic groups: Arab 90.3%, Kurds, Armenians, and other 9.7%
- Literacy: male, 85.7%; *female*, 55.8% (1997)
- Government: republic under military regime since March 1963
- Exports: crude oil 68%, textiles 7%, fruits and vegetables 6%, raw cotton 4% (1998)

U.S., Syria, Israel compose volatile triangle; The United States has long had a rocky relationship with Syria and has turned up rhetoric. Israel drives much o....

Source: CIA World Factbook 2002

Graphic

MAP; PHOTO

Load-Date: April 21, 2003



Israel releases prison-swap list

The Australian

January 28, 2004 Wednesday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 244 words

Body

JERUSALEM: Israeli officials yesterday released the names of prisoners to be freed in a swap with Lebanese <u>Hezbollah</u> guerillas, after soldiers started exhuming the bodies of Lebanese fighters to be returned as part of the deal.

The list includes 371 Palestinian prisoners, 60 Palestinians being held without trial and 31 Lebanese. APThe Lebanese include the two most prominent inmates to be freed -- guerilla leaders Mustafa Dirani and Sheik Abdel Karim Obeid, abducted from south Lebanon in 1994 and 1989 respectively.

In tomorrow's exchange, Israel will turn over the bodies and release the 462 prisoners in return for a captive Israeli businessman and three soldiers, snatched on the Lebanese border in 2000. The Israeli public remained split over the lopsided exchange, with many feeling it would boost <u>Hezbollah</u>'s status and reward its tactic of kidnapping Israelis to secure release for its fighters.

After the exchange, the sides are to open talks to obtain information on missing Israeli airman Ron Arad, who was shot down over Lebanon in 1986 and captured alive.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian militant group Hamas yesterday released pictures of its first <u>female</u> suicide bomber, Reem Salah al-Rayashi, with her children four days before she blew herself up at a Gaza border crossing on January 14. Rayashi, who had said she had wanted to carry out an attack "where parts of my body can fly all over", had also said: "Only God knows how much I love (my children)".

Load-Date: January 27, 2004



Democracy and its consequences

The Philadelphia Inquirer

MARCH 9, 2005 Wednesday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A19

Length: 731 words **Byline:** Trudy Rubin

Body

The contrasting television scenes from the Middle East yesterday were riveting. CNN showed hundreds of thousands of demonstrators pouring into Beirut streets just as President Bush delivered another impassioned call for democracy in the Middle East.

But this biggest Beirut demonstration so far didn't echo the President's call for Syria to leave the country. These were Lebanese Shiite supporters of the militant group <u>Hezbollah</u>, and they opposed a swift Syrian pullout or any intervention in Lebanon by the United States or Israel.

In these contradictory TV scenes lies an important caution about the march to democracy in the Middle East.

Yes, it is thrilling to imagine that this democracy-averse region is finally getting the message that change is needed. Yes, the President deserves full credit for pushing democracy, especially after January's Iraqi elections, when he seems to have decided to press longtime Arab authoritarian allies such as Egypt.

But the contrasting TV images should serve warning that Mideast elections won't always produce pro-American governments or advance peace.

In yesterday's speech, President Bush insisted "the Lebanese people have the right to determine their future, free from domination by a foreign power." He meant Syria, of course, which has more than 14,000 troops and thousands of intelligence agents occupying their smaller neighbor.

Yesterday's demonstrators, however, were challenging U.S. domination. If Lebanese elections are held on schedule this spring, the Islamist, anti-Israel <u>Hezbollah</u> - labeled a terrorist group by the United States - will no doubt be one of the major winners.

Lebanese Shiites - the largest of the country's religious and ethnic groups - aren't against democracy, nor do they necessarily want a long-term Syrian presence. But they admire <u>Hezbollah</u> for its charitable role and for forcing Israeli troops out of Lebanon.

Democracy and its consequences

The demonstrators made clear that **Hezbollah** will play a major role in Lebanon's politics, whether the United States likes it or not. The other Lebanese groups that have been demonstrating - for democracy - will accept this.

If promoting Mideast democracy is to be the major Bush theme, it is crucial that the administration - and the U.S. public - not harbor illusions about what lies ahead.

Until now, U.S. support for Mideast elections seemed limited to those in which the results would not challenge U.S. interests.

The classic case occurred in 1991 in Algeria, where the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was on the verge of winning parliamentary elections. Algerians were convulsed over whether the FIS would respect democratic rules or use the elections to impose an Islamic state. They never found out; the Algerian military made a coup, which the United States supported, and a decade of civil war followed.

During the 1990s, fear lingered that Mideast democracy would produce anti-American Islamic states. Authoritarian regimes were seen as a necessary bulwark against terrorism, especially after 9/11.

Iraq was thought to be a convenient exception: The Bush team expected to find a secular, middle-class society. When these expectations proved wrong, U.S. officials repeatedly postponed direct elections from fear of a Shiite Islamist victory, until pressure from Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani forced them to set a date for a ballot.

Moderate Shiite religious parties did indeed win a majority, raising questions about the future role of Islam in Iraqi society and about women's rights. But in Iraq, Shiite religious parties aren't calling for an Islamic state, and secular parties will balance the religious trend.

But would the President accept election results in other Arab countries if anti-American Islamists prove to be a strong political force? Liberal democrats are a marginal group in most Mideast countries, and Islamists have strong public support in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia - and Syria.

Representative Arab politics will evolve only when those societies work through their own political contradictions and all factions accept democratic rules. This will not happen soon, and the process may not be pretty. Arab publics will be watching to see whether President Bush lives up to his own message and accepts the path of Arab democracy - wherever it leads.

Contact columnist Trudy Rubin at 215-854-5823 or trubin@phillynews.com. Read her recent work at http://go.philly.com/trudyrubin.

Notes

Worldview

Graphic

CARTOON: (PAUL LACHINE)

Load-Date: September 8, 2005



Tens of thousands in Lebanon march to back Palestinians

Deseret News (Salt Lake City) September 28, 2002, Saturday

Copyright 2002 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Section: WIRE;

Length: 245 words

Body

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) -- Chanting "death to Israel" and "death to America," tens of thousands of Lebanese marched Friday through the streets of Beirut in support of Palestinians' third year of uprising.

Smaller anti-Israel demonstrations were held in other Arab capitals, too, with speakers condemning the United States' backing of Israel and for leading attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the war on terrorism.

"No matter how much the world changes after Sept. 11, 'death to America' will remain our echoing slogan," the leader of the militant *Hezbollah* group, sheik Hassan Nasrallah, said in his fiery address in Beirut.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, which is on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations, called for Friday's demonstration, which was attended by several Lebanese and Palestinian officials.

The black-turbaned Nasrallah urged Arabs and Muslims to support the Palestinian uprising, which, he said, "is heading toward victory."

Echoing warnings made at other demonstrations, he also charged that any American attack on Iraq would be followed by attacks on Iran, Syria and other Arab states.

About 400 to 500 worshippers chanted "God is greater than America" at Cairo's Al-Azhar mosque, the most respected theological center in the Muslim world, in a prelude to a larger demo planned for Saturday.

In Syria, more than 500 people marched silently through Damascus, while about 1,000 bearded men and veiled **women** chanted "death to Israel" in a peaceful but noisy rally in Jordan.

Load-Date: September 28, 2002



Briefly

Hamilton Spectator (Ontario, Canada)

December 12, 2002 Thursday Final Edition

Copyright 2002 Metroland Media Group Ltd

Section: CANADA & WORLD; Pg. B02; Brief

Length: 688 words

Body

ONTARIO

Hezbollah social wing banned

OTTAWA -- Solicitor General Wayne Easter said Canada banned the social wing of the pro-Palestinian group *Hezbollah* yesterday because it has been involved in terrorism.

<u>Hezbollah</u> was one of three groups added to Canada's list of terrorist entities, along with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and Aum Shinrikyo.

<u>Hezbollah</u>'s military wing has long been banned in Canada, but its charitable arm was permitted to continue operating.

Meningitis kills Kanata child

KANATA, Ont. -- Ottawa's chief medical officer of health has confirmed a Kanata child has died of meningitis. The Hamilton Spectator

Dr. Robert Cushman says the six-year-old girl was taken to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario on Monday night and died a short time later.

Officials believe it's an isolated case. But they are checking pupils at the girl's school as a precaution.

CANADA

Prince Edward plans visit

REGINA -- Saskatchewan Premier Lorne Calvert announced yesterday that Prince Edward and his wife Sophie Rhys-Jones will visit the province next June.

Prince Edward and his wife Sophie attended an international youth gathering in Toronto earlier this year. Edward last visited Saskatchewan in 1994.

The royal couple's visit to Canada follows a visit by the Queen who travelled across Canada earlier this year. Prince Charles, Edward's older brother, visited Saskatchewan last year.

Banned evidence on Internet

Briefly

VANCOUVER -- A Vancouver newspaper reported yesterday that the joint Vancouver police-RCMP Missing <u>Women's</u> task force is considering launching a formal investigation into U.S. Internet news reports that detail banned evidence about the case of accused serial killer Robert Pickton.

RCMP Constable Catherine Galliford said Tuesday that investigators will look at the reports on the Web sites of two American media outlets.

Port Coquitlam provincial court judge David Stone last week ordered a ban on publication of evidence at the preliminary hearing for Pickton, who is charged with killing 15 <u>women</u> who disappeared from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

WORLD

Mussels worry archeologists

CHICAGO -- Already the bane of biologists and industrialists, the exotic zebra mussel is now upsetting Great Lakes archeologists.

The tiny shellfish has attached in thick layers to ancient lake bed trees and wooden shipwrecks, jeopardizing both scientific and historic treasures of the deep, said Michael Chrzastowski of the Illinois State Geological Survey.

Chrzastowski fears for undiscovered forests that, if left undisturbed by mussels, could help trace the lakes' geologic history and water levels. "If those sites are being colonized by zebra mussels, they may be destroyed before we ever discover them," he said.

Tower of Pisa suicide plunge

ROME -- An Italian woman plunged to her death from near the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa yesterday in an apparent suicide. Police said tourists watched in horror.

The woman, 61, came from the hamlet of San Giuliano, near Pisa, purchased a visitor's ticket and then left her purse and identity documents in one of the downstairs lockers.

When she had climbed to the highest tier of the 55-metre-tall monument, the woman jumped.

Police said the woman had been suffering from an illness for a long time.

British PM defends his wife

LONDON -- More than a week into a messy political row over Cherie Blair's dealings with an Australian con man, Prime Minister Tony Blair came to his wife's defence yesterday.

He accused the media of building a scandal from "a whole mountain of distortion and half-truths."

Blair praised the long and emotional televised statement his wife made Tuesday, in which she acknowledged making mistakes in her dealings with ex-convict Peter Foster -- who helped her buy two apartments in the western city of Bristol -- but denied doing anything wrong.

The affair became a political headache for the Blairs last week when the prime minister's office first denied, then confirmed, Foster's involvement in the purchases.

He came in contact with Cherie Blair through his girlfriend, Carole Caplin, a friend and adviser to the prime minister's wife.

-- Hamilton Spectator wire services

Load-Date: December 12, 2002



WHAT IN THE WEIRD

MX (Melbourne, Australia) April 21, 2004 Wednesday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 12

Length: 289 words

Body

GAME HAS MISSION OF DEATH

A GAME show on a Middle Eastern TV channel has contestants battling for points to enable them to step towards Jerusalem on a virtual map.

The Mission is being shown on the satellite channel al-Manar, which belongs to the Lebanese militant group **Hezbollah**.

Questions range from the date of the French Revolution to the names of suicide bombers. Should a contestant successfully reach Jerusalem, the show plays a favourite <u>Hezbollah</u> song which declares "Jerusalem is ours and we are coming to it".

NOSE CUT OVER RENT SPITE

A NIGERIAN landlord said he did not remember biting off the nose of his tenant during a minor altercation.

Abuja businessman Chukwu Christian said he defended himself against severe physical attacks by the tenant at his Apo village house, but memory loss meant he could not give police an accurate account of the brawl that left his 24-year-old tenant with pieces of his nose missing.

NAKED DINING COPS A SERVE

A JAPANESE restaurant which served sushi on the body of two near-naked <u>women</u> has been fined for breaching social morality in the south-west Chinese city of Kunming.

The Hefengcun Huaishi restaurant was fined \$320 for launching a promotional "feast on a beauty's body". Authorities ruled the two **women** didn't have the required health certificates for food handlers.

LICORICE AVOIDS BLACK BAN

A GERMAN court has dismissed a legal suit lodged by a woman with an uncontrollable desire for licorice against a company she claimed was responsible for her addiction.

The court in the western city of Bonn ruled that sweets manufacturer Haribo was under no special obligation to list glycyrrhizin, an active compound in licorice root blamed for the woman's problem, on its product packaging.

Load-Date: April 21, 2004

WHAT IN THE WEIRD



Update

Hobart Mercury (Australia) January 22, 2004 Thursday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD; Pg. 21

Length: 285 words

Body

Hezbollah hit

ISRAELI warplanes struck <u>Hezbollah</u> bases in southern Lebanon yesterday, a day after the guerilla group killed an Israeli soldier on the countries' border. Israel said the bases had been used for organising attacks.

Blitz on hoons

BRITISH police were given new powers yesterday to crack down on anti-social behaviour, including the right to shut drug dens within 48 hours and disperse groups of people in trouble hotspots.

Scarf tangle

FRANCE'S plan to bar religious symbols from state schools slid into confusion yesterday after Education Minister Luc Ferry said a looming ban on Muslim veils could also outlaw beards and some bandannas if they were judged to be signs of faith.

Jacko accuser

WILLIAM Dickerman, a former attorney for the mother of Michael Jackson's cancer-stricken accuser said yesterday the boy was in very poor health and his family was in seclusion and paying little attention to the case.

Lucky dog

SUSIE, a staffordshire bull terrier, was left \$47,500 in the will of a London widow. Ruby Hughes, 85, also left \$214,000 to a rescue group for the breed.

Future queen

PRINCESS Mette-Marit, wife of Norway's Crown Prince Haakon, gave birth yesterday to a girl, who is destined to become the country's first *female* monarch in about 600 years.

Mammoth find

AN unusually well-preserved skull of an Ice Age mammal estimated to be 50,000 years old has been found in a gravel pit in Cotswold Water Park, southern England.

Boris tries TV

Update

FORMER tennis champ Boris Becker, 36, will try his luck as a TV talk show host on German sports station DSF beginning in March.

Iran protest

SEVERAL Iranian cabinet ministers resigned yesterday in protest at the ban on thousands of prospective election candidates.

Load-Date: January 21, 2004



Prosecutors in Turkey question 18 suspects in suicide bombings

The Columbian (Vancouver, WA.) November 27, 2003, Thursday

Copyright 2003 The Columbian Publishing Co.

Section: World/Nation; Pg. a6

Length: 300 words

Byline: SELCAN HACAOGLU, Associated Press writer

Body

ISTANBUL, Turkey - Turkish prosecutors questioned 18 more suspects in the recent string of Istanbul suicide bombings.

Meanwhile, police seized bombmaking materials while raiding houses and offices believed to have been used by Islamic militants, reports said Wednesday.

The 18 suspects, including four <u>women</u>, were escorted into a security court handling terrorism cases. Three <u>women</u> wore full-length black chadors uncommon in downtown Istanbul, while the other wore an Islamic-style head scarf.

Police carried one woman's baby into the court.

On Tuesday, private CNN-Turk TV said the group included one Turk with Swedish citizenship.

Police also raided several houses and offices allegedly used by militants and confiscated materials used to make bombs, including chemicals and wires, the daily Vatan reported. It was not clear when the raids occurred.

A total of 57 people, including four attackers, were killed by the Nov. 15 bombings of two synagogues and the Nov. 20 bombings of the British Consulate and a British bank.

Turkish officials have said all four suicide bombers were Turkish nationals. Newspapers have said some of them may have trained in al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan or Iran.

Fifteen suspected accomplices were charged with attempting to overthrow the constitutional order or helping illegal organizations. No trial date was set.

There have been at least three claims of responsibility for the bombings alleging to be from al-Qaida, but Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said investigators had not reached any conclusions.

Police also are investigating possible links between the bombers and <u>Hezbollah</u>, an illegal Islamic group that is different from the Lebanon-based group with the same name. Three of the suicide bombers were from the southeastern town of Bingol, a hotbed of <u>Hezbollah</u>.

Load-Date: November 28, 2003



PEACE WITH SYRIA WOULD MEAN LOSS OF GOLAN, SHARON SAYS/ PRIME MINISTER SAYS HE HAS ORDERED REVIEW OF SEPARATION BARRIER

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

January 20, 2004 Tuesday Five Star Late Lift Edition

Copyright 2004 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 492 words

Byline: Josef Federman/ The Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Addressing two of Israel's thorniest issues, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told lawmakers Monday that peace with Syria would require a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and said he had ordered a review of the West Bank separation barrier.

Sharon's comments to Parliament's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee were seen as an unprecedented admission. In the past, right-wing Israeli governments insisted that a peace deal could be reached without a withdrawal from the strategic plateau captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

Sharon was asked by a lawmaker if now is a good time to renew talks with Syria, said Sharon's spokesman, Raanan Gissin.

"No one should have any illusions. The price of peace with Syria is leaving the Golan Heights," Gissin quoted the prime minister as saying.

Ran Cohen, a committee member from the left-wing Meretz Party, said Sharon had suggested that such a pullback would be too much for Israel to bear.

Sharon's meeting with the parliamentary committee came at a sensitive time.

Israel is preparing to defend the security barrier next month before the World Court in The Hague, Netherlands. The government also is considering how to react to offers by Syrian President Bashar Assad to restart peace talks, which broke down in 2000.

The Syrian president has said talks must resume where they broke off under Sharon's predecessor, Ehud Barak. But Sharon wants to start from scratch and also has demanded that Syria crack down on militant groups.

Meanwhile, Israel blamed Syria for an attack by <u>Hezbollah</u> militants on Monday at the Israeli-Lebanese border that killed one Israeli soldier and wounded two.

Syria is widely believed to support *Hezbollah*.

PEACE WITH SYRIA WOULD MEAN LOSS OF GOLAN, SHARON SAYS/ PRIME MINISTER SAYS HE HAS ORDERED REVIEW OF SEPARATION BARRIER

In a broadcast by <u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al Manar Television, the militant group said a bulldozer that was attacked had crossed the border into Lebanon. But Israeli Maj. Gen. Benny Gantz said the bulldozer was clearing land on the Israeli side.

At Monday's meeting, Sharon also said he had asked governmental committees to review the separation barrier, a senior official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the government had asked committees to study possible changes in the route as well as technical means of easing movement for Palestinians.

Israel says the 440-mile barrier, which is one-quarter built, protects against suicide bombers and other attackers. But the barrier has severely disrupted the lives of tens of thousand of Palestinians, separating them from their farmland, jobs, hospitals and schools.

Also Monday, the founder of the Islamic militant group Hamas said it would increasingly recruit <u>female</u> suicide bombers. Last week, Hamas sent its first <u>female</u> assailant, a 22-year-old woman who blew herself up at the Gaza-Israel crossing and killed four Israeli border guards.

Sheik Ahmed Yassin said in Gaza that <u>women</u> must step up and fulfill their "obligations." He suggested that male bombers were increasingly being held back by Israeli security measures.

Load-Date: January 20, 2004



Sharon: Golan withdrawal key to peace

The Columbian (Vancouver, WA.)
January 20, 2004, Tuesday

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Section: World/Nation; Pg. a3

Length: 470 words

Byline: JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press writer

Body

JERUSALEM -- Addressing two of Israel's thorniest issues, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told lawmakers Monday that peace with Syria would require a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and ordered a review of the contentious West Bank separation barrier.

Sharon's comments on the Golan, made to parliament's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee, were an unprecedented admission by the career hard-liner. In the past, right-wing Israeli governments insisted a peace deal could be reached without a withdrawal from the strategic plateau captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

The prime minister did not tell the closed-door meeting whether he was willing to pay what he defined as the price for peace. However, one committee member said it was clear from the context that Sharon is not ready to return the Golan in exchange for a peace deal.

Also Monday, the Hamas founder announced a change in strategy, saying the Islamic militant group would increasingly recruit <u>female</u> suicide bombers. Last week, Hamas sent its first <u>female</u> assailant, a 22-year-old woman who blew herself up at the Gaza-Israel crossing and killed four Israeli border guards.

Sheik Ahmed Yassin told reporters in Gaza there had not been a need in the past for <u>women</u> to carry out bombings. Now, he said, <u>women</u> must step up and fulfill their "obligations." He suggested male bombers were increasingly being held back by Israeli security measures.

Sharon's meeting with the parliamentary committee came at a sensitive time.

Israel is preparing to defend the security barrier next month before the world court in The Hague, Netherlands. The government is also considering how to react to offers by Syrian President Bashar Assad to restart peace talks, which broke down in 2000.

In an interview published Monday in the London-based newspaper Asharq al-Awsat, Assad appeared pessimistic about the chances of talks with Sharon.

"From the beginning and until this moment, the U.S. administration did not wish to throw itself into the peace process. As for Sharon ... it is hard for him to succeed on a peace platform," Assad said.

The Syrian president has said talks must resume where they broke off under Sharon's predecessor, Ehud Barak. But Sharon wants to start from scratch and also has demanded that Syria crack down on militant groups.

Sharon: Golan withdrawal key to peace

Meanwhile, Israel blamed Syria for an attack by <u>Hezbollah</u> militants on Monday at the Israeli-Lebanese border that killed one Israeli soldier and wounded two others, one of them seriously.

Syria is widely believed to support *Hezbollah*.

In a broadcast by <u>Hezbollah</u>'s Al Manar Television, the militant group said the bulldozer had crossed the border into Lebanon, but Israeli commander Maj. Gen. Benny Gantz denied their accusation.

Gantz, told The Associated Press the bulldozer was clearing land on the Israeli side when it was attacked.

Graphic

Spiritual leader of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, is pushed in his wheelchair through a crowd of students by bodyguards before speaking to students outside his home in Gaza City on Monday.

Load-Date: January 20, 2004



Terrorism campaign mired in the swamp of politics

The Ottawa Citizen
October 8, 2001 Monday
Final EDITION

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Section: NEWS,; George Jonas; Column

Length: 776 words

Byline: George Jonas

Body

The way to eliminate mosquitoes is to drain the swamp -- which has been a metaphor of choice recently for commentators on terrorism. The trouble is, draining swamps is complicated. Even detecting swamps can be difficult.

Some swamps stay undrained or undetected because of wishful thinking, some because of cherished liberties, and some because of the requirements of realpolitik. Realpolitik includes the perceived need for coalition building in the Middle East. It resulted in such an obvious candidate as <u>Hezbollah</u>, among others, not making U.S. President George W. Bush's list of 27 terrorist organizations released last month. By any definition, <u>Hezbollah</u> (Party of God) has engaged in terrorist acts -- e.g., bombing and shelling non-combatants. But it has also received support from countries the Bush administration has proposed to enlist in its coalition against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, such as Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and some of the smaller Gulf states.

The Ottawa Citizen

For a while it seemed that being enlisted by Bush would suit some of these countries. Last week, at least, it looked as if the safest place for supporters of terrorism, occasional or regular, might be within the anti-terrorist coalition built by the U.S. By this week the situation had changed, with several Mideast states, from Saudi Arabia to Syria, getting cold feet. Joining the U.S. coalition may require them to surrender some domestic militants, which they're afraid, as well as reluctant, to do. Some may still join the anti-terrorist alliance for tactical reasons and, for similar tactical reasons, the coalition may accept them. It's too early to tell who will be fooling whom.

The next hurdle in swamp detection is wishful thinking, exemplified by Israel's foreign minister, Shimon Peres. The Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahro-noth quotes him saying that "Arafat accepts Israel's existence." In an interview, he draws a distinction between Arafat and Hamas, Islamic Jihad and <u>Hezbollah</u>. "(Arafat) wants to speak to us and wants to be accepted in the West," Peres suggests. "They (Hamas, Islamic Jihad and <u>Hezbollah</u>) will want to establish a single state between Iraq and the Mediterranean."

Peres is right about Islamist militants, but wishful in relation to the PLO leader. If Arafat had ever accepted Israel's existence, the Oslo accords would be a reality by now. Peace would probably elude the region even then, because, whatever Arafat accepts, forces of militant Islam reject the Jewish state. They reject most moderate Arab states as well, from Egypt to Jordan. What they like is Islamist theocracies.

Terrorism campaign mired in the swamp of politics

This brings us to another problem. The most menacing part of the swamp isn't the training camps where terrorists learn to shoot, make bombs

or fly suicide missions, but the religious schools where tens

of thousands are being in-

doctrinated into a holy war against the infidel. Some of the madrassahs (Koranic schools) were set up by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI) in the 1980s. According to United Press International's Arnaud de Borchgrave, "at the time, (Pakistani intelligence) calculated the madrassahs would provide long-term protection against communist ideology and what was then the fear of future Soviet expansion into Pakistan." By now these institutions have become instruments of indoctrination for future Islamist terrorists.

"The more promising students are encouraged either to extend their eight-year course by two more years to qualify for the title of mufti or mullah," writes de Borchgrave, "or to go on to Afghanistan for training in bin Laden's facilities."

For finding climates in which terrorism flourishes, however, it's unnecessary to go as far as the Middle East. Last week Canadian feminist leader and UBC professor Sunera Thobani explained to cheering supporters at a three-day conference that "the path of U.S. foreign policy is soaked in blood." The conference, called <u>Women</u>'s Resistance: From Victimization to Criminalization, was supported by Canada's taxpayers to the tune of \$80,000, and attended by Hedi Fry, federal secretary of state for the status of <u>women</u>.

"The American nation which Bush is invoking is a people which is bloodthirsty, vengeful and calling for blood," offered Thobani to her audience. "They don't care whose blood it is, they want blood. And that has to be confronted."

Thobani's words are protected, as they should be, by our cherished liberties. Still, when looking for breeding grounds of hate, the U.S. coalition won't have to look far. Canada isn't funding any mosquitoes, but we sure help fund the swamp.

George Jonas is a Citizen columnist.

Load-Date: October 8, 2001



Ottawa's selective deportation policy

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

November 22, 2004 Monday

National Edition

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Section: EDITORIALS; Pg. A15

Length: 572 words **Byline:** National Post

Body

The federal government is practising a dangerous double standard regarding unsuccessful refugee claimants from the Middle East. Both the refugee determination board and the immigration department routinely refuse to deport back to the region failed claimants -- including suspected terrorists -- who face torture in their countries of origin. Syrians, Lebanese, Tunisians, Iranians and others, even some with suspected connections to al-Qaeda, have all been granted safe haven here. There is one exception: former members of the South Lebanon Army, Israel's ally in the fight against the Shiite terror organization *Hezbollah* along Israel's northern border.

Last week, another seven former SLA soldiers were ordered out of Canada as soon as possible, even though they face certain arrest by <u>Hezbollah</u>, almost certain torture and possible death if they are returned to Lebanon. The excuse for this duplicitous treatment seems to be a highly subjective ruling by the refugee board that Israel committed "crimes against humanity" in South Lebanon. Since the SLA helped them, SLA veterans are "war criminals" according to the board, and handing them over to their enemies -- even to an outlawed, anti-Western terror organization such as <u>Hezbollah</u> -- is of no concern to Canada.

There were no angels in the Lebanese civil war. The SLA, for instance, ran the al-Khiam Detention Centre where Amnesty International insisted, year after year, there was "systematic torture and ill-treatment."

But the SLA was not a participant in the infamous Sabra and Shatila refugee camp massacres in 1982 that killed between 35 and 100 Palestinian <u>women</u> and children (and 200 to 300 PLO terrorists). The Israeli public inquiry into the incident determined the SLA was nowhere near the camps at the time. The Christian Phalange militia were the culprits. Still, the SLA could hardly be confused with the Boy Scouts.

It disbanded after Israel withdrew its own troops from southern Lebanon in 2000.

But if Ottawa were applying its deportation policies consistently, the SLA's misbehaviour should be beside the point. The federal government and its arms-length refugee board have both repeatedly made clear their determination not to give up deportees to brutal governments with records of prisoner abuse. Just last November, Hassan Almrei was spared deportation to Syria because of "undisputed evidence" of that country's poor human rights record. Almrei is an alleged member of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

He is one of a handful of Syrians whose applications to remain in Canada as refugees were rejected after the alleged suffering of Maher Arar was made public, but who were permitted to stay anyway to shelter them from abuse in their home country.

Ottawa's selective deportation policy

Why do the rights of SLA veterans in Canada seem to matter far less to federal immigration functionaries than those of suspected terrorists, or even of Romanian strippers? Israel has never been convicted of crimes against humanity for its neglect in the Sabra and Shatila massacre, nor for any other of its actions in South Lebanon, or those of its proxies such as the SLA. So how can Ottawa act as though it has when dealing with refugees from the SLA? And even if Israel and the SLA were guilty of war crimes, that should not make SLA refugees any less worthy of protection against deportation to regimes that are likely to torture and kill them than claimants with likely ties to terrorist organizations.

Load-Date: November 22, 2004



The Times (London)
October 11, 2001, Thursday

Copyright 2001 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Overseas news

Length: 535 words

Body

THE FBI's most wanted list concerns five terrorist attacks and names 22 fugitives wanted for them.

World Trade Centre bombing, February 26, 1993: Six people died and more than 1,000 were injured. American officials blamed a loose confederation of terrorists rather than accept evidence pointing to Iraqi sponsorship.

Wanted in connection: Abdul Rahman Yasin. Born to Iraqi parents in America, reported to be in Baghdad.

Plot to bomb Manila Air aircraft in the Far East, January 1995: Ramzi Yousef, who bombed the World Trade Centre in 1993, went on the run and hatched a plot to blow up airliners flying from the Pacific Rim to America. Imprisoned in US.

Wanted: Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, June 25 1996: Lorry bomb at US servicemen's accommodation complex killed 19 and injured more than 300. The Washington Post has suggested the US shied away from confronting Iran's role.

Wanted: Ahmed Ibrahim al-Mughassil; Ali Saed bin Ali al-Houri; Ibrahim Salih Mohammed al-Yacoub; Abdelkarim Hussein Mohammed al-Nasser.

Bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, August 7 1998: A truck bomb killed 213 people and injured 4,500 in Nairobi while a simultaneous identical attack killed 11 in Dar es Salaam.

Wanted: Osama bin Laden. Last seen broadcasting threats on television from an unknown cave; Muhammad Atef: responsible for the detailed planning of the September 11 attacks. Last seen in the cave; Ayman Zawahiri: bin Laden adviser. In the cave; Fazul Abdullah Mohammed: A native of the Comoros Islands, believed to have trained in Afghanistan with bin Laden; Mustafa Muhammed Fadhil: Used to be seen at a juice bar in Tanzania with the man who prepared the explosives for the bomb; Fahid Muhammad Ali Msalam: Met Fadhil in Tanzania in the fortnight before the atrocity; Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani: A Tanzanian who bought the lorry used in the bombing; Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan: Helped to buy both trucks for the bombings; Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah: Head of al-Qaeda's media committee; Anas al-Liby: When Special Branch raided this asylum-seeker's flat in Manchester, they found a dossier on terrorism including a guide to hijacking. The 37-year-old computer specialist from Libya is suspected of having vanished into Afghanistan; Saif al-Adel: A senior member of al-Qaeda, he is believed to have schooled some of the suicide hijackers in Afghanistan; Ahmed Mohammed Hamed Ali; Muhsin Musa Matwalli Atwah.

Hijacking of TWA 847, June 14, 1985: A US Navy diver was killed during the 17-day hijacking of the Athens-to-Rome flight containing 150 passengers, mostly Americans.

Wanted: Imad Mugniyeh: <u>Hezbollah</u> chief who was once the world's leading anti-American terrorist, a Lebanese who organised suicide bombings and the kidnapping of Terry Waite and the Beirut hostages. Regarded in Washington as an instrument of Iranian Intelligence and last heard of in Iran; Hassan Izz-al-Din: <u>Hezbollah</u> member; Ali Atwa: <u>Hezbollah</u> terrorist who intended to join the hijackers but failed to get on the plane at Athens. After telling Greek investigators that a pistol was smuggled on board inside a fish, he was freed in Algiers in exchange for the release of the <u>women</u>, children and Greeks.

Load-Date: October 11, 2001



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Load-Date: October 18, 2001



LEBANON

The Toronto Star

April 15, 2001, Sunday, Edition 1

Copyright 2001 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS

Length: 321 words

Body

<u>Hezbollah</u> guerrillas hit an Israeli tank in the Golan Heights with a rocket yesterday, killing a soldier, wounding three others and prompting Israeli air strikes on southern Lebanon. The

<u>Hezbollah</u> rocket destroyed the Israeli tank in the Shebaa Farms area, a disputed zone in the Israeli-occupied Golan. In retaliation, Israeli jets bombed targets in south Lebanon, with one strike near the border and another just inside Lebanon.

United States An experienced Canadian skydiver died after making a high-speed turn too close to the ground, crashing into the pavement at a skydiving centre in DeLand, Fla. Stephane Drapeau, 30, from Beloeil, Que., was making a routine jump until he made the tricky turn at an extremely low altitude on Friday. Police said the case is being treated as an accident.

IMMUNITY FOR DENISE RICH Democratic donor Denise Rich has struck an immunity deal with prosecutors investigating Bill Clinton's pardon of her ex-husband, fugitive financier Marc Rich, Time magazine reported on its Web site yesterday. In addition, U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White has subpoenaed the former president's brother, Roger Clinton, to appear before a grand jury this week to discuss his role in an alleged pardon swindle.

SPY PLANE CREW RETURNS The U.S. spy plane crew members who were held in China for 11 days arrived at their home base yesterday, greeted by thousands

of well-wishers. The 21 men and three <u>women</u> left Hawaii in a military passenger jet, which touched down in Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Wash., five hours later. An estimated 7,000 people waited to cheer the crew.

LEBANON

Northern Ireland Out of concerns over foot-and-mouth disease, a Protestant marching group cancelled an annual parade yesterday that has sparked violence in the past when it wound through Roman Catholic neighbourhoods. The announcement came after a second case of the disease was discovered in County Tyrone.

From The Star's wire services

Load-Date: April 15, 2001



SIX ISRAELI SOLDIERS ARE WOUNDED IN CLASHES NEAR LEBANESE BORDER

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

April 8, 2002 Monday Five Star Lift Edition

Copyright 2002 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 305 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israeli civilians were ordered into bomb shelters for an hour Sunday in attacks that injured six Israeli soldiers along the Lebanese border.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said the clashes "could perhaps lead to a very big outbreak" as Israel responded with tanks, artillery and airstrikes.

Lebanese witnesses said *Hezbollah* guerrillas fired a shoulder-launched missile at an Israeli jet.

The fighting has raised fears of a new front opening up in the Mideast conflict, as Israel presses its military offensive in Palestinian cities.

The Israeli military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz, warned that Israel was prepared to hit back at "the centers of power" in Lebanon. "When red lines are crossed, we will know how to act," he said.

Guerrillas opened fire on several Israeli villages and army bases from Lebanon, the military said in Jerusalem.

Four <u>women</u> soldiers were injured, one seriously, at an army post next to the village of Avivim, rescue workers said.

In other attacks, rifle fire was aimed at an army position near Kibbutz Manara, a collective farming community in the Galilee panhandle, a strip of Israeli territory bordering Lebanon. No Israeli injuries were reported, and troops returned fire, the army said.

Also, rockets were fired at Israeli military posts in the Golan Heights, near the Lebanon border. Two soldiers were injured, an army statement said.

A <u>Hezbollah</u> statement issued in Beirut, Lebanon, said the group's fighters had targeted six Israeli military outposts in "fierce confrontations" in the Chebaa Farms area.

It said the guerrillas had "scored direct hits."

Israel retaliated with tank and artillery fire, the Israeli military said.

SIX ISRAELI SOLDIERS ARE WOUNDED IN CLASHES NEAR LEBANESE BORDER

Lebanese security officials said that Israeli gunners had fired about 30 artillery shells and that Israeli jets also had fired at least four missiles in several sorties.

Notes

CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Load-Date: April 8, 2002



Mystery over Iran hostage payments provokes another French scandal

Guardian Weekly January 23, 2002

Copyright 2002 Guardian Publication, Ltd.

Section: LE MONDE; Pg. 29

Length: 856 words

Byline: Herve Gattegno and Fabrice Lhomme

Body

A fresh scandal that may indirectly affect President Jacques Chirac's chances of re-election in May erupted on January 3 when the newspaper L'Est Republicain revealed that Marie-Daniele Faure, a senior aide to Chirac's former interior minister, Charles Pasqua, and Christiane Marchiani; wife of Pasqua's right-hand man, Jean-Charles Marchiani, had been charged with money-laundering and influence-peddling.

Both <u>women</u> are suspected of having received part of a ransom allegedly paid out by the Chirac government to obtain the release, in 1987 and 1988, of five French hostages held by *Hizbullah* militia groups in Lebanon.

The money is believed to have come from the Swiss bank account of Iskandar Safa who, with his brother Akhram, played a key role in the negotiations that led to the hostages' release. Although the Safa brothers hail from a Maronite Christian family in Lebanon, they had close contacts in the Shia community.

Jean-Charles Marchiani was put in charge of the hostage problem by Pasqua, then Chirac's interior minister, in 1986. He asked Iskandar Safa, with whom he had had business contacts, to find out about the hostage-takers. It was apparently thanks to information provided by the Safas that the French authorities were able to trace back the chain of command from the *Hizbullah* militia in Lebanon to their "spiritual" master in Iran, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri.

That discovery led to government-level contacts between Iran and France and the hostages' eventual release. But the negotiations hinged on more than just the hostage issue: Iran insisted on a resolution to the Eurodif dispute between the two countries. In 1974 the Shah of Iran had lent \$ 210m to the French Atomic Energy Commission to help the European consortium, Eurodif, to finance the construction of a uranium-enriching plant. Iran promised to order two nuclear power stations from France.

The project was dropped by the regime that came to power in Iran after the Islamic revolution of 1979. The breach of the agreement resulted in the French government refusing to repay the loan from Iran. The Eurodif dispute was finally settled -- and the hostages released -- in 1991, when France paid Iran \$ 1.24bn.

Whether a ransom was paid is another matter. Christian Prouteau, head of President Francois Mitterrand's antiterrorist unit at the time, claims that a "hidden ransom" was paid to Iran, and that the amount, which is "difficult to calculate", was included in the Eurodif settlement.

A recently revealed memo sent by the DST, the French secret service, to the police department in January 2001 would seem to confirm that a ransom was paid and that part of it found its way into Safa's Paris bank account.

Mystery over Iran hostage payments provokes another French scandal

Marchiani has told Le Monde: "At no point did the hostage-takers make the slightest ransom demand, which in any case would never have been satisfied -- France's policy has always been to refuse that kind of blackmail. I solemnly call on President Chirac to demand an explanation from the government, so as to defend the good name of all those who, on a voluntary basis like myself, took considerable risks in order to bring our compatriots home. The president should force the interior minister, Daniel Vaillant, to say on whose orders and with what aim the DST's defamatory memo was passed on to the judicial authorities."

Safa, who was served with an international arrest warrant by the French fraud squad on December 17, but had left the country nine days earlier, has told Le Monde that he does not deny his involvement in the hostages' release, but claims no ransom was paid. He fears he has become "the hostage of a political scandal".

Why had he got involved in trying to secure the hostages' release? "Out of patriotism as a Lebanese, and out of humanity . . . but certainly not for money. My brother and I didn't even ask to be reimbursed for all the costs we incurred . . . The only thing I misappropriated was my own time for a whole year."

Pasqua has also hotly denied that a ransom was paid. He talks of "manipulation" and openly alleges that a "secret unit" was set up by Prime Minister Lionel Jospin to engineer the charges against Faure and Christiane Marchiani. Jospin's office vigorously denies that the government had a hand in the case at any time.

Although there is no firm evidence yet that a ransom was actually paid, or that part of it was misappropriated, mystery still surrounds some cash payments, which the fraud squad regards as suspicious. It has discovered that between December 1995 and January 2001, 13.9m franes in cash (\$ 2.4m) was withdrawn from an account with Credit Commercial de France in Paris that was funded by a Swiss account in Safa's name.

The money was withdrawn either by Isam Abbas or Mohamad al Sayes, both employees of Safa. Al Sayes, who is Safa's chauffeur, and who was arrested and charged last October with complicity in money-laundering, says that he delivered envelopes to Faure and Christiane Marchiani. "The envelopes were always sealed, but you could feel they contained banknotes," he says. "But I never delivered envelopes directly to Pasqua." *January 4, 6-7 and 8*

Load-Date: January 29, 2002



Israel put on alert as spy chief predicts worsening onslaught

The Times (London)

January 24, 2002, Thursday

Copyright 2002 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Overseas news

Length: 301 words

Byline: Christopher Walker in Jerusalem

Body

ISRAELI cities were on maximum alert for terrorist reprisals yesterday after the Army's intelligence chief warned parliament to expect attacks "the likes of which we have not seen before".

In Jerusalem, two <u>women</u> died from their wounds overnight after a Palestinian terrorist opened fire in the main commercial thoroughfare, wounding 14 others.

Hundreds of heavily armed soldiers and police on patrol later often outnumbered ordinary pedestrians on the streets.

One of the <u>women</u>, cut down during the height of the Tuesday afternoon rush hour, was identified as Sarah Hamberger, 78. The other, whose name was not released, was 56. "Security officials are preparing for an all-out escalation by terrorists, and all arms of the security forces have been placed on heightened alert," Israel Radio reported. Violence spread to Israel's northern border with Lebanon, where Iranian-backed <u>Hezbollah</u> fighters fired at Israeli positions in the disputed Shebaa Farms region for the first time since October. Israel retaliated with shellfire and attacks by jet aircraft in which at least six air-to-surface missiles were fired on suspected <u>Hezbollah</u> positions. Ehud Olmert, Jerusalem's right-wing Mayor, said: "This is a war. It is a painful war. We are going to win this war, but it will not be easy and it will not be in a short time."

The Israeli prediction of growing violence came from Major-General Aharon Zeevi-Farkash, after a Hamas declaration of "all-out war" on Tuesday. He told Knesset deputies: "The coming period will see more serious terror attacks than we have been used to up to now in cities throughout Israel."

General Zeevi-Farkash, the new chief of military Intelligence, who has been in his role for less than a month, refused to go into more detail about the type of terror attacks being planned.

Load-Date: January 24, 2002



<u>WEST BANK ATTACKS WIDEN;</u> ISRAELI TANKS ENTER NABLUS, OTHER CITIES

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

April 4, 2002 Thursday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2002 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD,

Length: 1079 words

Byline: LEE HOCKSTADER, THE WASHINGTON POST

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Long columns of Israeli tanks and armored vehicles lumbered into Nablus in the northern West Bank last night, firing their cannons against Palestinian resistance, while about 40 miles to the south scores of Palestinian gunmen remained holed up inside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem's Manger Square.

The massive assault on Nablus, a city of about 100,000 and a focal point of Palestinian militant groups, was the latest step in a methodical, six-day-old military offensive undertaken by Israel to destroy what Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has called the Palestinians' terrorist infrastructure. At the same time, a second front intensified farther north, where gunners from Lebanon's Shiite Muslim <u>Hezbollah</u> movement exchanged artillery and mortar fire for a second day with Israeli troops in a disputed enclave at the intersection of the Israeli, Syrian and Lebanese borders.

U.S. and other efforts to arrange a truce between Israel and the Palestinians, or even to contain the violence, have been eclipsed by the Israeli offensive and a string of deadly Palestinian suicide bombings. Palestinians have set off seven of the bombs over the last seven days, but none were reported yesterday.

The United States sought Israel's permission earlier this week for its presidential envoy to the Middle East, Anthony Zinni, to visit Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in his besieged compound in the West Bank city of Ramallah. The Israeli defense minister, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, rejected the request, although Israeli officials said the decision might be reviewed. Zinni has not spoken with Arafat since Saturday.

"The policy of the government is that he will remain in total isolation," said Raanan Gissin, a spokesman for Sharon.

Israel's refusal angered American officials, who are under mounting criticism in the United States and abroad for having done too little to halt the escalating conflict. "We should be able to see whomever we want to see," said one official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Sharon convened his key ministers to consider Israel's response to <u>Hezbollah</u>'s action along the border. Syria, a main backer of <u>Hezbollah</u>, redeployed thousands of its troops stationed in Lebanon eastward to positions in the Bekaa Valley that would be less vulnerable to airstrikes. Israeli warplanes struck <u>Hezbollah</u> sites in southern Lebanon last night but has refrained so far from attacking Syrian targets.

WEST BANK ATTACKS WIDEN: ISRAELI TANKS ENTER NABLUS, OTHER CITIES

The United States warned Syria and Lebanon to restrain *Hezbollah* or risk severe deterioration of the situation.

The standoff at the Church of the Nativity, which is surrounded by Israeli troops, dragged through its second night as the army negotiated for the surrender of what it said were more than 200 gunmen and terrorists inside.

"We're trying to find a way to make this have a happy end with no damage to the church," said Lt. Col. Olivier Rafowicz, an army spokesman. "If they would just come out from the church, we'll arrest them if they're connected to terror."

Dozens of Israeli tanks streamed into Nablus, the major Palestinian city in the northern West Bank. They attacked from two directions in what Israeli officials acknowledged was a large-scale operation designed to suppress resistance from Islamic and other Palestinian forces, for whom Nablus is a stronghold.

It was not clear whether Israeli forces were also attacking the Balata refugee camp just east of Nablus, another base for militant groups including the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which sprang from Arafat's Fatah movement.

The al-Aqsa Brigades have carried out many of the suicide bombings and other attacks against Israelis this year. Yet when Israeli forces attacked Balata about a month ago, most of the al-Aqsa militants managed to escape. This time, Israeli officials say they are determined to arrest or kill Palestinian fighters and other wanted men.

Large Israeli forces also reinforced their reoccupation of Jenin, north of Nablus, and entered Salfit, south of Nablus. In fighting in Jenin and its adjacent refugee camp, one Israeli soldier was killed and several others were slightly injured. Six Palestinians were reported killed, including gunmen and a 30-year-old **female** doctor.

After six days of their largest military offensive in 18 months of fighting, Israeli forces again control most of the major Palestinian population centers in the West Bank that were returned to Palestinian administration in the mid-1990s -- Nablus, Ramallah, Qalqiliyah, Tulkarem, Bethlehem and Jenin -- as well as a number of smaller towns.

Hundreds of tanks and tens of thousands of troops are involved, and Israel appears on a war footing, its citizenry grim and determined. In the West Bank, the Palestinian economy has collapsed, nearly all large-scale commerce and trade is at a halt and the mood is desperate.

"We hate you," said Ahmed Abdel Rahman, a senior Arafat aide who addressed Israelis in an interview with Qatarbased al-Jazeera satellite television. "You should take your tanks and your soldiers and your settlers and get out. The air hates you, the land hates you, the trees hate you, there is no purpose in you staying on this land."

Arafat, confined by Israeli troops to a single floor of his headquarters in Ramallah, continued to strike a defiant note. He told al-Jazeera that he would rather die than be forced into exile as Sharon has proposed.

"Is this my homeland or his homeland?" the Palestinian leader said. "We are rooted here from before the time of Abraham our prophet." Asked about the possibility of Palestinian surrender, Arafat said: "God forbid! I told you, brother: Martyr, martyr, martyr!"

Nonetheless, there were increasing signs that his eight-year-old Palestinian Authority is crumbling.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, known as Hamas, criticized Arafat's security chief in the West Bank, Jibril Rajoub, accusing him of knuckling under to Israeli forces.

As fighting raged around the West Bank, Israel was generally unified in support of the offensive, but there have been some expressions of dissent.

Yesterday, several groups including Israelis, Palestinians and Europeans gathered by the busload at the Al-Aram gate in East Jerusalem, a muddy outpost about three miles south of Ramallah. Despite heavy rain, it was one of the larger demonstrations mustered in recent weeks by Israel's battered peace camp, which has found it difficult to preach tolerance and nonviolence in the face of the suicide bombings and Israeli attacks in the West Bank.

Graphic

PHOTO: Goran Tomasevic/Reuters: A soldier beats back Israeli peace activists at a checkpoint outside Jerusalem yesterday. The demonstrators were trying to deliver humanitarian supplies to the besieged West Bank town of Ramallah.

PHOTO: Magnus Johansson/Reuters: Israeli soldiers enter Bethlehem's city center yesterday.

PHOTO: With an M-16 on his shoulder and an olive branch in his hand, an Israeli soldier mans a checkpoint between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

MAP: Associated Press; ESRI: (Troop movement continues)

Load-Date: April 6, 2002



Tough to drain terrorism's breeding grounds

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)
October 4, 2001 Thursday Final Edition

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Section: Local; George Jonas; Pg. A15; Opinion

Length: 791 words

Byline: George Jonas

Body

The way to eliminate mosquitoes is to drain the swamp -- which was a metaphor of choice for commentators on terrorism last week. The trouble is that draining swamps is complicated. Even detecting swamps can be difficult.

Some swamps stay undrained or undetected because of wishful thinking, some because of cherished liberties and some because of the requirements of realpolitik.

Special to The StarPhoenix

Realpolitik includes the perceived need for coalition-building in the Middle East. It resulted in such an obvious organization of terrorism as <u>Hezbollah</u>, among others, not making U.S. President George W. Bush's list of 27 terrorist organizations released last week.

By any definition, <u>Hezbollah</u> (Party of God) has engaged in terrorist acts, e.g. bombing and shelling non-combatants. However, it has also received support from countries the Bush administration has proposed to enlist in its coalition against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, such as Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and some of the smaller Gulf states.

For a while, it seemed that being enlisted by Bush would suit some of these countries. Last week, at least, it looked as if the safest place for supporters of terrorism, occasional or regular, might be within the anti-terrorist coalition built by the U.S.

By this week, the situation has changed, with several Mideast states, from Saudi Arabia to Syria, getting cold feet. Joining the U.S. coalition may require them to surrender some domestic militants, which they're afraid, as well as reluctant, to do.

Some Mideast states may still join the anti-terrorist alliance for tactical reasons and, for similar tactical reasons, the coalition may accept them. It's too early to tell who will be fooling whom.

The next hurdle in swamp detection is wishful thinking, exemplified by Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. The Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahronoth quotes Peres this week as saying that "Arafat accepts Israel's existence."

In an interview, Peres draws a distinction between Palestinian Authority chairperson Yasser Arafat, and Hamas, Islamic Jihad and <u>Hezbollah</u>. " [Arafat] wants to speak to us and wants to be accepted in the West," Peres suggests. "They [Hamas, Islamic Jihad and <u>Hezbollah</u>] will want to establish a single state between Iraq and the Mediterranean."

Tough to drain terrorism's breeding grounds

Peres is right about Islamist militants, but wishful in relation to the PLO leader. If Arafat had ever accepted Israel's existence, the Oslo accords would be a reality by now.

Peace would probably elude the region even then because, whatever Arafat accepts, forces of militant Islam reject the Jewish state. Never mind the Jewish state; they reject most moderate Arab states as well, from Egypt to Jordan. What they like is Islamist theocracies.

This brings us to another problem. The most menacing part of the swamp isn't the training camps where terrorists learn to shoot, make bombs or fly suicide missions. The most menacing part is the religious schools where tens of thousands are being indoctrinated into a holy war against the infidel.

Some of the madrassas -- Koranic schools -- were set up by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency in the 1980s. According to UPI's Arnaud de Borchgrave, "at the time, [Pakistani intelligence] calculated the madrassas would provide long-term protection against communist ideology and what was then the fear of future Soviet expansion into Pakistan." By now, these institutions have become instruments of indoctrination for future Islamist terrorists.

"The more promising students are encouraged either to extend their eight-year course by two more years to qualify for the title of mufti or mullah," writes de Borchgrave, "or to go on to Afghanistan for training in bin Laden's facilities."

For finding climates in which terrorism flourishes, however, it's unnecessary to go as far as the Middle East. This week, Canadian feminist leader and UBC professor Sunera Thobani explained to cheering supporters at a three-day conference that "the path of U.S. foreign policy is soaked in blood."

The conference, called <u>Women</u>'s Resistance: From Victimization to Criminalization, was supported by Canada's taxpayers to the tune of \$80,000 and attended by federal Secretary of State for the Status of **Women** Hedy Fry.

"The American nation which Bush is invoking is a people which is bloodthirsty, vengeful and calling for blood," offered Thobani to her audience. "They don't care whose blood it is, they want blood. And that has to be confronted."

Thobani's words are protected, as they should be, by our cherished liberties. Still, when looking for breeding grounds of hate, the U.S. coalition won't have to look far. Canada isn't funding any mosquitoes, but we sure help funding the swamp.

Load-Date: March 29, 2002



Hate's breeding grounds

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)
October 5, 2001 Friday Final Edition

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Section: Editorial; GEORGE JONAS; Pg. A6; Column

Length: 803 words

Byline: George Jonas

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Southam News

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Graphic

GEORGE JONAS

Load-Date: March 29, 2002



South America Region Under Watch for Signs of Terrorists

The New York Times

December 15, 2002 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 1; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 32

Length: 1607 words

Byline: By LARRY ROHTER

Dateline: CIUDAD DEL ESTE, Paraguay

Body

The Triple Frontier where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet has long been South America's busiest contraband and smuggling center, a corrupt, chaotic place where just about anything from drugs and arms to pirated software and bootleg whisky are available to anyone who can pay the price.

Its reputation has brought the area under close surveillance by the police and foreign intelligence services for decades. But since the Sept. 11 attacks, the Triple Frontier has been transformed into a sort of Casablanca, a center of intrigue scrutinized more intensely than ever for its suspected links to Islamic terrorists.

Argentine and American officials describe the area, with its large Arab immigrant population, as teeming with Islamic extremists and their sympathizers, and they say those businesses have raised or laundered more than \$50 million in recent years for terrorist groups. Their Brazilian and Paraguayan counterparts are more ambivalent, however, and say they need more evidence that the area has been used by terror groups in the past as a financing, logistical and recreation center.

In a sign of increased United States attention, the State Department's counterterrorism coordinator, Cofer Black, is scheduled to visit the Triple Frontier on Dec. 18.

In such a hotbed, the authorities say that nearly as plentiful as Islamic extremists since Sept. 11 are the spies and intelligence agents of a half dozen countries -- from China to the Middle East to the United States. "There are so many of us now that we are bumping into each other," a senior Argentine official said last month.

The question on nearly everyone's mind, especially after a map of the region was recovered from a Qaeda safehouse in Kabul, Afghanistan, is whether Osama bin Laden's operatives are also among those operating here. Acting on what they say was a tip from the United States last July, the Paraguayan police arrested a pair of Lebanese men, Ali Nizar Darhoug and Muhammad Daoud Yassine, who are uncle and nephew and were said to be raising funds for Al Qaeda.

Paraguay has no antiterrorism law, and Mr. Yassine was released and is reported to have left the country. Mr. Darhoug, owner of a perfume store and a pharmacy, is being held on tax evasion charges. "So far, nobody has been able to prove a single thing against me," he said after a bail hearing here late last month. "I'm not accused of terrorism and I'm not involved in terrorism."

South America Region Under Watch for Signs of Terrorists

Early this year, the frequently sensationalist Paraguayan press reported that Al Qaeda and other Islamic terrorist groups had set up training camps; and, more recently, they have also talked of a secret terrorist summit meeting here. Intelligence officials monitoring the region are skeptical of such reports, though they acknowledge that Islamic fundamentalists are indoctrinating the region's young Muslim residents in extremist ideology.

But intelligence officials do say they have noticed worrisome signs that Islamic extremists are fanning out, especially to nearby countries that have established Arab or Muslim communities. Mentioned most often are Iquique, Chile; Guayaquil, Ecuador; and Maracaibo, Venezuela. At the same time, a parallel dispersion to smaller towns within the region also seems to be taking place. A recent Argentine intelligence report mentions Uruguaiana, a Brazilian town on the border with Argentina south of here, and Cascavel, also in Brazil, as well as Pedro Juan Caballero in Paraguay, as places where Muslim merchants with suspicious connections have surfaced.

What worries them most, intelligence officials say, are signs that Islamic extremists are also gravitating toward Sao Paulo, a bustling city of 18 million that is home to the largest concentration of Brazil's estimated 1.5 million Muslims -- an ideal hiding place for anyone intent on being overlooked.

Officials say the Triple Frontier has been used for years both to collect and launder money for terrorist groups and for mafias, as well as providing a haven for fugitives.

More than 20,000 Middle Eastern immigrants, most from Lebanon and Syria, live in the area. Many operate small businesses on the Paraguayan side, but the most successful commute daily across the bridge from homes in Foz do Iguacu, a tidy Brazilian city of 250,000 where neighborhoods are dotted with halal butcher shops and <u>women</u> walk in headscarves. There are a pair of Islamic schools there, four Arab language cable television stations and a gleaming mosque with a gold-tinted roof on Palestine Street.

Terrorists sought in the Middle East have been sent to the Triple Frontier to hide out in comfort, using fake passports or other documents manufactured in some of the same local workshops that also make phony credit cards, intelligence officials say.

<u>Hezbollah</u>, the Iranian-backed terrorist group, appears to be the dominant group in the area. But according to a recent Argentine intelligence report, "support activities" on behalf of Hamas, Amal and the Party for Islamic Unification have also been detected, and there is also evidence that Egypt's Islamic Brotherhood has used the area as a haven.

Since 1999, two men said by Egyptian authorities to have been central figures in the terrorist attack in Luxor that killed 58 tourists -- El Said Hassan Mokhles and Muhammad Ibrahim Soliman -- have been arrested here and are in custody.

In June, the Brazilian police also apprehended Assad Ahmad Barakat, a Lebanese businessman who is said to have been a <u>Hezbollah</u> enforcer and money launderer. The Paraguayan police raided his electronics store less than a month after the Sept. 11 attacks, but Mr. Barakat fled across the border to Brasilia, where he is fighting extradition.

Local officials say that money Mr. Barakat took from merchants was forwarded by local banks through the United States and Canada to *Hezbollah* accounts.

When the Paraguayan authorities first raided Mr. Barakat's shop, among the items they found was a letter from <u>Hezbollah</u> acknowledging receipt of \$3,535,149 from Mr. Barakat in 2000. One of Mr. Barakat's employees, Sobhi Fayad, is in custody on charges of having illegally transferred hundreds of thousands of dollars to the United States.

But Muhammad Youssef Abdallah, a Lebanese businessman who is the founder and caretaker of the main downtown mosque here, says the Triple Frontier is the victim of an unfair image stemming solely from its large Arab population.

"We have nothing to do with <u>Hezbollah</u> here, and <u>Hezbollah</u> doesn't need money from the people here," Mr. Abdallah said in an interview in a 19th-floor office above the mosque, from which all three countries were visible.

South America Region Under Watch for Signs of Terrorists

"Their money comes from Iran, so they don't need to take anything from hungry merchants in a far-off place like this."

There are also indications that Islamic terrorist groups may have been using the Triple Frontier as part of a clandestine communications networks. In little more than a year, the Brazilian police have shut down a dozen telephone switching operations here and in other nearby cities, which experts say could be used to evade American satellites monitoring telephone traffic.

In October last year, for instance, the police in Maringa, about 125 miles to the east, detained a 33-year-old unemployed waiter who said he had been hired in Foz do Iguacu by a Lebanese businessman to rent a house and install telephone lines to switch telephone calls to and from the Middle East. Phone records indicate that much of the traffic involved countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

"I would get an international call, and the person would ask in English to call another number," the waiter, Ederaldo dos Santos, told the Brazilian newsmagazine Epoca.

Of the three countries that converge here, only Argentina has been attacked by Islamic terrorist groups. The Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires was blown up in 1992, killing 28 people, and in 1994, the main Jewish community center in the Argentine capital was also destroyed, killing 86 people in what is still the world's worst anti-Semitic attack since the end of World War II.

According to the secret testimony of a defector from Iran's intelligence agency, offered to Argentine investigators during interrogations in 1998 and 2000, both bombings were organized by the Iranian Embassy in Buenos Aires. But Argentine intelligence and police reports have concluded that at least part of the planning took place in the Triple Frontier and involved a pair of Lebanese immigrants who still live and work here.

Based on an examination of telephone records, Argentine investigators found "evidence of coordination between the Triple Frontier area and 'sleeper cells' in Buenos Aires," in the words of a confidential government report obtained by The New York Times. Two main centers of activity were cited: the principal mosque in Foz do Iguacu and a travel agency there operated by Mr. Abdallah and the man who was then his partner, Farouk Omairi.

Mr. Abdallah acknowledged the phone traffic but said his former partner, Mr. Omairi, was responsible for all calls that were made to Iran or the Iranian Embassy and that none of the contacts with Iranian officials had to do with the terrorist attack. "He was trying to put together a business deal to sell them chicken," Mr. Abdallah said.

In a separate interview, however, Mr. Omairi, who now runs another travel agency in Foz do Iguacu, said, "This is all news to me. I don't remember having talked with anybody like that, and I don't know anything about any attack. Everybody is always picking on the Triple Frontier. Just because you're Lebanese doesn't mean you're involved with *Hezbollah*."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: A mosque in Foz do Iguacu, Brazil, a city in a region that has drawn many immigrants from the Middle East. (Walter Astrada/Sudacaphotos, for The New York Times) Map of Paraguay highlighting Ciudad Del Este: Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, is a center of international intrigue.

Load-Date: December 15, 2002



The endorsement no one wants

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

September 28, 2004 Tuesday

National Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. A18; David Frum

Length: 828 words

Byline: David Frum, National Post

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

WASHINGTON - In the basement of my house in Washington, D.C., is a stockpile of batteries, bottles of water, dried foods and so on. We readied the stockpile a little over three years ago, when we, like most Washingtonians, expected another terrorist attack at any moment.

Since then, the capital city has been hit by anthrax and the Washington sniper -- but not by mass-casualty terrorism. And my family, again like most Washingtonians, began gradually to relax. The batteries grew old; the water bottles got dusty.

Now, suddenly, the city is worrying again. Over the past year, al-Qaeda has discovered that cunningly timed terror can be used as a political weapon against democratic leaders.

The March 11 terror attacks in Madrid toppled a conservative terror-fighting government in Spain.

Terror attacks in southeast Asia have given ammunition to critics of Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who faces the voters on Oct. 9. Senator John Kerry's sister Diane boldly intervened in the Australian election in mid-September, telling The Australian newspaper: "We are endangering the Australians now by this wanton disregard for international law and multilateral channels."

The terrorist kidnapping -- and threatened decapitation -- of British engineer Kenneth Bigley has energized anti-Blair dissidents in the British Labour party, which held its annual conference just this past weekend.

But the grand prize in world politics is the U.S. presidential election. Will al-Qaeda -- or some other terror group -- attempt to influence the outcome through violence?

The Kerry camp sputters with outrage at the very question. To suggest that al-Qaeda might want to defeat George Bush is to imply that al-Qaeda would prefer John Kerry -- and that's one foreign endorsement that Kerry would rather not have. (Bad enough that he has already received Kim Jong II's: Since March, Kerry's speeches have been lavishly praised and rebroadcast on Radio Pyongyang -- as if the poor people of North Korea had not suffered enough.)

The Kerry camp has a point. It's doubtful that the murderers of al-Qaeda prefer one infidel leader to another, or even that they have a clear idea of the policy differences between the two men. But you don't have to believe that

The endorsement no one wants

al-Qaeda favors Kerry to understand that it would dearly love to force Bush from power. A terror attack on the United States that upended a U.S. election would display al-Qaeda's reach and power more vividly than any terrorist action since 9/11 itself.

And certainly there are terror groups that have good reason to prefer Kerry to Bush. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice has declared that an Iranian nuclear weapon would be absolutely unacceptable to the Bush administration. John Kerry and his running-mate John Edwards have both stated their willingness to negotiate the issue.

So Iran has a powerful motive to favour Kerry over Bush -- and Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terror. The Lebanese Shiite group <u>Hezbollah</u> is an operating subsidiary of the Iranian government. <u>Hezbollah</u> has already proven its ability to strike U.S. forces: It organized the attack on the Khobar Towers barracks in Saudi Arabia in 1996, an attack that killed 19 American service personnel. <u>Hezbollah</u> has proven too that its reach can extend across the world: <u>Hezbollah</u> attacked the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 and the city's Jewish community center in 1994. The two atrocities together killed 116 people, the worst international terror attack in the Western Hemisphere until 9/11.

Do U.S. authorities fear a terrorist attempt in the next five weeks? Security has certainly stiffened in Washington. Cordons now surround Capitol Hill: Every vehicle approaching within half a dozen blocks of Congress is halted and examined before it can pass. In New York, the police are heavily visible near the bridges and tunnels that the blind sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman plotted to target in 1993.

In the topsy-turvy world of modern terrorism, the extra security is a good sign: Mass-casualty terrorism is a difficult business for the terrorist to execute. If the defenders can raise the odds against the terrorist at even a few critical chokepoints, the already considerable difficulties facing him rise to the insurmountable.

Here's the great imponderable question: If anything does happen, will it favour Bush or Kerry? My guess, based only on instinct, is: Kerry. Bush claims to have made the country safer since 9/11. That claim may account for Bush's surging support among <u>women</u> voters. Yesterday's Washington Post/ABC poll is only the latest to show Bush running ahead of Kerry among <u>women</u>. Bush's claim, however, depends on continued counter-terrorist success every minute of every hour of every day from here to the election.

Well, so far so good. We Washingtonians continue to commute downtown, eat in restaurants, ride on trains, fly on planes. Still, I know this: I'm buying new batteries and fresh water for my emergency cooler.

Load-Date: September 28, 2004



<u>UK fears return to the bad old days in Iran: Ahmadinejad's victory spells</u> <u>trouble for nuclear talks, western engagement, and women's rights, say</u> <u>diplomats: Hardline at home and abroad</u>

The Guardian (London) - Final Edition
June 27, 2005

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Section: Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 14

Length: 370 words **Byline:** Robert Tait

Body

How much power will the new president have?

Mr Ahmadinejad is subordinate to supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Under the Islamic republic's system of velayat-e faqih (leadership of the supreme jurist), Mr Khamenei, with the constitutional watchdog, the guardian council, has final say in crucial fields, such as foreign policy, the armed forces, intelligence, the judiciary, and police. Unlike outgoing reformist president, Mohammed Khatami, this may not lead to political deadlock. As a religious hardliner, Mr Ahmadinejad is thought to have Mr Khamenei's backing.

Parliament, the Majlis, is run by hardliners, so the legislative and executive arms will run in harmony.

Is Mr Ahmadinejad the staunch anti-reformer his background suggests?

Throughout the campaign, his status as the hardline candidate was never in question. Unlike the liberalising instincts of the reformers, Mr Ahmadinejad is frequently defined by his infamous remark that Iran "did not have a revolution in order to have a democracy".

He has sought to strike a conciliatory note. In the run-up to Friday's poll, his aides insisted there would be no new regulations on private behaviour. Mr Ahmadinejad's popular base, however, is the basij, thehardline volunteers whose members help enforce the nation's Islamic laws.

How will his election affect ties with the US and the wider Middle East?

Renewed ties with America are unlikely. In contrast to his defeated opponent, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who talked of rapprochement, he belongs to a firmly anti-US camp. "Relations with the United States are not a cure for our ills," he has said.

While he is thought to know little about foreign policy, his election could signal a more sharply ideological approach to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which Iran opposes. US officials also fear a bolstering of Iranian support for groups such as *Hizbullah*.

Will his election affect the dispute over Iran's nuclear programme?

UK fears return to the bad old days in Iran : Ahmadinejad's victory spells trouble for nuclear talks, western engagement, and women's rights, say diplomats: Har....

Mr Khamenei has the final say. But the president-elect is a staunch supporter of a right to nuclear power and it could signal a more belligerent negotiating stance.

Western diplomats also fear he belongs to a hardline faction that believes Iran should have a nuclear bomb.

Load-Date: June 27, 2005



<u>Lebanon is back on U.S. radar Divisions, threats lie beneath shiny surface of</u> <u>re-emerging nation</u>

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)
September 25, 2005 Sunday
FOURTH EDITION

Copyright 2005 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc. **Section:** NEWSWATCH; Pg. B1

Length: 1422 words

Byline: By Jon Sawyer POST-DISPATCH WASHINGTON BUREAU

Dateline: BEIRUT, LEBANON

Body

The scene in New York this past week was carefully choreographed, as the United States, Europe and the United Nations joined to pledge help for Lebanon as it tries to reinvigorate its democracy and shed its quarter-century domination by Syria.

In Beirut, the scene was rather more chaotic.

The leader of the militant *Hezbollah* resistance group declared "open war" against foreign "hegemony."

Politicians across the board assailed the New York meetings as signs of capitulation to foreign pressure, especially on the sensitive issue of disarming *Hezbollah*.

Prime Minister Fouad Siniora continued to press for the immediate resignation of President Emile Lahoud, the pro-Syrian leader whose top aides have been implicated in the assassination last February of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

The outcome of the people-power "Cedar Revolution" that erupted after Hariri's death remains far from clear -- and so, too, the repercussions of deeper U.S. engagement in Lebanon, a country that touches volatile interests from Iran and Syria to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

"They are interfering here, and they are entering again into a minefield," said Sheikh Nabil Kawook, commander of <u>Hezbollah</u> forces in southern Lebanon. "They are getting again into the Lebanese quagmire."

The sleek new restaurants of downtown Beirut are far removed from the carnage of the 1970s and 1980s. Christian, Shiite and Sunni militias fought a savage war then that was further complicated by the presence of Palestinian refugees, an Israeli occupying army in the south and, briefly, U.S. troops, who were driven out after a <u>Hezbollah</u>-linked attack killing 242 Marines and sailors that marked the debut of suicide bombing as a force in international politics.

Two decades later, Lebanon is a place of promise but also paradox and peril, at once the most Western-oriented of any Middle Eastern country but also subject to its own religious divisions and the often-demonstrated aggression of

Lebanon is back on U.S. radar Divisions, threats lie beneath shiny surface of re-emerging nation

its neighbors. In the impoverished and deeply religious Shiite villages of southern Lebanon, basic government services are provided by <u>Hezbollah</u>, the group designated as terrorist by the U.S. government and credited with driving Israeli occupation forces out of the country in 2000.

North of Beirut, the far more prosperous suburbs hugging the hills above the Mediterranean Sea remain almost exclusively Christian.

A nation divided

In between lies Beirut itself, a welter of contradictions.

Go down to the swank new downtown, built near the no-man's-land that divided Christian and Muslim communities during the war, and you'll find rich Saudi businessmen and stylish <u>women</u> in skin-tight clothes whiling away evenings in sidewalk cafes.

Drive a couple of miles south and the scene abruptly shifts, to teeming neighborhoods of jerry-built apartments patrolled by <u>Hezbollah</u> guards. In the same area, sprawling beyond its initial lines, is the Sabra and Shatila camp for Palestinians. This is where at least 800 residents were slaughtered in 1982 when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, then defense minister, unleashed an allied Christian militia. Two decades later, some 300,000 Palestinians remain, still denied basic political and civil rights.

Data on the Palestinian population are fairly accurate, thanks to the presence of U.N. relief agencies and Palestinian organizations. The same cannot be said for the country as whole. The population is believed to total some 4 million, but no census has been conducted since 1932.

The division then was roughly 50-50 between Christians and Muslims, and the country's political structure reflects that still, even though independent experts say Christians' share of the population has dropped since to only a third. Seats in the parliament are still evenly divided. Only Christians can be elected president while the job of prime minister is reserved for Sunni Muslims and that of speaker of the parliament goes to Shiites.

The murder of Hariri in February sparked public demonstrations nearly a million strong and demands for both justice and true democracy. Progress since has been substantial: the withdrawal of Syrian troops, election of a reform government, the beginning of a U.N.-backed investigation into Hariri's killing that has already produced the arrests of four senior military and security officials.

"We prefer peace"

How far the reformers would actually go remains much in question.

Listen, for example, to Ghattas Khoury, a leader of the Cedar Revolution and close associate to Saad Hariri, son of the late prime minister. Khoury, a Christian, talks with passion about creating a nonsectarian state where officials are chosen on the basis of "good citizenship" rather than religious faith.

But not anytime soon, he hastens to add.

"Not in 10 years," he says. "Maybe in 30."

Khoury also warned against pressure for faster change from U.S. or other outside interests. "The world should not look at us as an experimental field," he said. "We are not guinea pigs for democracy in the world."

Lebanese also chafe at U.S. talk of developments as part of a grander, pan-Middle East project of democratization. Representatives of most Lebanese factions were always skeptical of such rhetoric; in the wake of the U.S. war on Iraq, such sentiments are broader still.

Lebanon is back on U.S. radar Divisions, threats lie beneath shiny surface of re-emerging nation

Yusuf al-Yemeni, 42, is a Lebanese carpenter who has lived for 15 years in Sabra and Shatila, where he crafts billiard and foosball tables in an open-air shop. He has a brother in Detroit, Palestinian in-laws and a keen sense of vulnerability to events beyond this street.

"I'm involved in politics, as is everyone in this situation," al-Yemeni said. "We've experienced the era of turmoil. We prefer to live in peace."

At first, al-Yemeni offers a show of support to President George W. Bush -- "he chops the head of any tyrant in the world" -- but then adds that "Bush might be a tyrant as well."

On the wall of the shop, he has mounted a poster that shows an American GI holding a wad of Iraqi currency. Underneath, in Arabic, the slogan reads, "They stole the oil -- and the money, too."

Helping bin Laden?

A few blocks from al-Yemeni's shop is the Beirut headquarters of Hamas, the militant Palestinian resistance group that the State Department has designated a terrorist group since 1993.

Usamah Hamdan, the Lebanese representative of Hamas, noted in an interview Thursday that Hamas has recently sought to moderate its stance. Earlier this year, it imposed a pause in attacks on Israelis; it also announced its intent to compete in Palestinian elections for the first time.

Hamdan said that as of March, Hamas also had initiated "an indirect channel" with former U.S. officials aimed at softening Bush administration opposition to a greater Hamas role in the Palestinian government.

"I hope something positive will come of this," Hamdan said. "I believe we have to try, and we are trying hard."

But the task is much harder, he said, in the wake of the U.S.-led war on Iraq -- a war that he said has greatly increased both hostility toward the United States and support for the al-Qaida Islamist organization of Osama bin Laden.

In February 2003, just before the Iraq war, Hamdan told the Post-Dispatch in an interview in Beirut that Hamas renounced bin Laden and his cause. "We think that his actions were more harmful to Muslims than any action by anyone anywhere."

Last week, Hamdan said Hamas' view hadn't changed. The organization publicly denounced the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he noted, and every attack associated with al-Qaida since.

What has changed, he said, is the attitude of rank-and-file Hamas members, and of the broader Muslim public -- as evidenced, he said, in opposition to Hamas attempts at direct negotiation with American representatives.

"The normal people say 'No, you are talking to the government which is supporting the Israelis, who are killing our people. You are talking to the government which occupies Iraq, which killed 200,000 people. You are talking to the government which is against all the region."

Hamdan said that in his view, U.S. policies over the past three years have played into bin Laden's hands.

"They helped him a lot," he said, "in developing his support among the people and in bringing the people closer to believing that there is no way to deal with the Americans except for the Osama bin Laden way."

Reporter Jon Sawyer writes about foreign policy and is the chief of the Post-Dispatch's Washington bureau. He traveled to Lebanon on a reporting trip sponsored by the Reuters and Stanley foundations.

Notes

Middle East "minefield"?

Graphic

MAP

MAP - MIDDLE EAST MINE FIELD PHOTO BY Jon Sawyer | Post-Dispatch - Yusuf al-Yemeni, 42, puts the finishing touches on a foosball table at his carpentry shop in Sabra and Shatila, the Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut where a number of Lebanese now live as well. Al-Yemeni, like many Lebanese, has mixed view about U.S. policies in the region. PHOTO - Hamdan Hamas representative in Lebanon

Load-Date: September 26, 2005



LEBANESE TV STATION MAKES NO DISGUISE OF ITS HATRED FOR ISRAEL - Correction Appended

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

Correction Appended

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1; PROFILE; LEBANON; AL-MANAR TELEVISION

Length: 1262 words

Byline: Jon Sawyer Post-Dispatch Washington Bureau Chief

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

The most notorious television station in the Middle East mixes straightforward news and entertainment with equally straightforward calls for the destruction of Israel.

"We show the killing and massacre and displacement of innocent people, thousands of them a year, by a bunch of guerrillas and soldiers who call themselves Israelis," said Ibrahim Mousawy, chief editor for English-language news at al-Manar Television, based in Lebanon.

"Because we show those images, we are called terrorists," he added. "But if we are terrorists, then all Arabs are."

Al-Jazeera, the Quatar-based Arab satellite channel, made its name internationally after the 9-11 attack on the United States, thanks to its extraordinary access to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. Al-Manar is betting on a similar breakthrough moment, with the United States poised for war against Iraq at a time when Arab resentment against the United States and Israel is already at fever pitch.

The difference is that while al-Jazeera claims to play by the rules of objective journalism, al-Manar ("lighthouse," in Arabic) is a proud partisan. Al-Jazeera regularly includes Israeli officials in its broadcasts. Al-Manar never would.

"It's an enemy state," Mousawy said. "Why would you put spokesmen for an enemy state on the air?"

Al-Manar's offerings include "Spider's House," a children's show aimed at highlighting Israel's vulnerabilities - "apparently strong, like a spider, but easy to defeat." "Blood and the Rifle" glorifies the lives and deaths of suicide bombers and "Terrorists" documents a century's worth of alleged Zionist aggression against Arabs.

Yet the most unnerving aspect of a visit to al-Manar's headquarters, a six-story modern building in south Beirut, is how mainstream a place the station appears to be.

In a basement control room, technicians adjust the sound levels on "Ring, Ring Bell," a Sesame Street-style children's show that features a clown, a puppet and clanging trash cans.

Upstairs, two young <u>women</u>, their heads covered, sit together at an editing console as they mark videotape for a feature on what the hajj has meant for Muslims making the pilgrimage to Mecca.

LEBANESE TV STATION MAKES NO DISGUISE OF ITS HATRED FOR ISRAEL

Down the hall, an editor scrolls through wire service dispatches from around the world, typing voice-overs for a daily half-hour news summary that's broadcast in English.

Al-Manar's programming most of the day is professionally produced and free of politics. The station's sports show ranks first in the country, for example, and its serialization of the life of the Virgin Mary scored big ratings during Ramadan last fall. (In the Muslim tradition, Jesus is considered an important teacher.)

Broadcasts of its daily English-language news summary sampled over the past week showed no obvious ideological spin, and coverage was broad, from follow-ups on the explosion of space shuttle Columbia to updates on Secretary of State Colin Powell's speech to the U.N. Security Council.

The news summary ends on a jaunty note. "That's it for now," the announcer says. "Thanks for watching, and have a nice day."

Objective truth?

Avi Jorisch, a fellow at the pro-Israel Washington Institute for Near East Policy, has spent the past year studying the parts of al-Manar programming that aren't so nice. He calls the station technically sophisticated - and deadly dangerous.

Jorisch cites the "patriotic" music videos that hammer away at core themes of <u>Hezbollah</u>, the militant Shiite resistance group that set up al-Manar in 1990 and that in 2000 expanded its broadcasts to 24 hours a day. Videos that extol suicide bombers are a regular, as is a focus on Israel's 'slaughter' of Palestinian <u>women</u> and children. "Death to Israel" is a frequent theme. So is anti-Americanism, as in a video called "America owes blood to all humanity" that features the Statue of Liberty with a death's skull for a head.

President George W. Bush's administration chose after the 9-11 terrorist attacks to engage al-Jazeera directly, arranging for U.S. officials to appear on the station and defend U.S. policies. Jorisch said that given al-Manar's bias, it would be absurd to try anything similar with the Lebanese station.

What should American policy toward al-Manar be?

"What I would do," says Jorisch, "is bomb the station."

In Lebanon and across the region, however, many people - common viewers and high-level government officials alike - say that al-Manar is simply reporting what looks to them like objective truth.

This is a country that remains technically at war with Israel, a country that endured a 22-year partial occupation by Israel, a country that is subjected still to the near daily sound blasts of Israeli F-16 fighter jets as they make mock bombing runs, illegally, over Lebanese territory.

"What you see on al-Manar simply reflects the mood of Arab public opinion," said Madwan Hamadi, a Cabinet member in Lebanon's government and also a director of An Nahar, the country's major newspaper. "People are outraged by these double standards that allow Israelis to go on killing people while rejecting the U.S. government's most timid moves toward a solution."

It doesn't hurt that al-Manar is also the broadcast voice of <u>Hezbollah</u>, or "party of God," the militant Shiite resistance group that is on the State Department's list of international terrorist organizations. Most Lebanese see <u>Hezbollah</u> as the group responsible for driving Israeli occupation troops out of southern Lebanon, in May 2000, and at the same time creating a network of hospitals, schools and businesses, among them al-Manar.

Donkey in a minefield

Ali Shaib, 32, is one of al-Manar's star reporters. He is based in southern Lebanon and made his name covering *Hezbollah*'s suicide attacks on Israeli troops.

LEBANESE TV STATION MAKES NO DISGUISE OF ITS HATRED FOR ISRAEL

Shaib has a knack for catching the interest of his viewers, as in a story last year on a donkey that wandered into a minefield and then stubbornly refused to come out. Shaib's story on community efforts to rescue the donkey won a prize in European news media competition. The donkey fared less well; it was killed after stepping on a live mine.

"I felt that I achieved something all the same," Shaib said. "I gave the world a message, that we still have these land mines "which targeted not only farmers and their children but also animals "and that they are the result of the Israeli occupation."

He went back last week to do a follow-up, reporting on the U.N.-sponsored campaign to clear out the miles of minefields that the Israelis had left behind near an abandoned village called Abasiya. On Friday, the crew, most of them from Zimbabwe, were carefully marking the locations of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, pausing several times during "explosion windows" to blow them up.

Crew chief Sikhawuliso Sibanda says that in this section alone, within site of the border and an Israeli town just beyond, the team has destroyed nearly 28,000 mines over the past nine months. Another 7,000 mines remain to be destroyed in this section, Sibanda says, and then the team will move on to one of an estimated 1,000 additional minefields left to be cleared.

As the Zimbabweans proceed gingerly through an unmarked section of the field, wearing bright-orange protective yokes to cover their fronts and helmets with heavy plastic shields, Shaib tracks their every move. This is the sort of coverage, he says, that is al-Manar's basic mission.

"You can see how wide this belt of land mines is," Shaib says. "You see how it goes right across the border, and some areas much farther away from the border than here.

"If we concentrate on things like this, in our coverage, is it not right?"

Notes

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Correction

This story on the Lebanese television station al-Manar misquoted Avi Jorisch, a research fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy who has studied al-Manar's programming and its links to the alleged terrorist organization *Hezbollah*. The article quoted Jorisch as suggesting that the United States should bomb the station. In fact, Jorisch characterized bombing the station as one of a range of possible U.S. options, but he said, "I will not advocate one or the other."

Correction-Date: February 27, 2003

Graphic

PHOTO; Color Photos by GABRIEL B. TAIT /POST-DISPATCH; (1) Hiba Haidoro (left) writes her text as Amal Cheib edits video Friday for a morning program at the al-Manar station in Beirut, Lebanon. Al-Manar is considered the mouthpiece for *Hezbollah*.; (2) Ali Shaib, 32, a television journalist with al-Manar, films a Lebanese family who work near a minefield. Shaib and his assistant, Tarek Zarrour, are working on a land mine clearing program on the Israel-Lebanon border.

LEBANESE TV STATION MAKES NO DISGUISE OF ITS HATRED FOR ISRAEL

Load-Date: February 27, 2003



Blast disrupts Israeli calm; 1st suicide attack since Nov.

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Byline: GAVIN RABINOWITZ Associated Press

Dateline: TEL AVIV, Israel

Body

A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowd of young Israelis waiting outside a nightclub near Tel Aviv's beachfront promenade, killing at least four other people, wounding dozens and shattering an informal Mideast truce.

The blast, just before midnight yesterday, ended several weeks of calm and presented the first serious test to the unofficial cease-fire declared by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on Feb. 8 at a dramatic summit in Egypt.

Israeli officials indicated the attack would not derail the tentative peace efforts. But the bombing put new pressure on Abbas to take action against militants, who have not formally accepted the truce.

The Palestinians must "do much more to prevent such attacks," said Gideon Ezra, the Israeli public security minister. Despite the violence, he said contacts with the Palestinians should continue.

There was no official claim of responsibility. But Palestinian officials and militant leaders said the Lebanese guerrilla group *Hezbollah* had orchestrated the attack.

Abbas pledged to track down those responsible, accusing them of trying to derail the peace process.

"The Palestinian Authority will not stand silent in the face of this act of sabotage," Abbas said in a statement after holding an emergency meeting early today with his security chiefs. "We will follow and track down those responsible and they will be punished accordingly."

Palestinian security officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Israeli army identified the bomber as Abdullah Badran, 21, a university student. Israeli officials arrested five people, the officials said, including two of Badran's brothers and the local imam.

Blast disrupts Israeli calm; 1st suicide attack since Nov.

Israeli troops also imposed a curfew on the West Bank village of Deir al Ghusun today, the apparent home of Badran, the Palestinian officials said.

The Israeli army said troops had carried out an arrest raid and that a curfew had temporarily been imposed but gave no further details.

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz was to convene a meeting of security chiefs later today to discuss an Israeli response, Israeli Army Radio reported.

In Washington, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice condemned the attack "in the strongest possible terms" and said it is essential that Palestinian leaders take "immediate, credible steps" to find those responsible.

Rice took note of the Palestinian condemnation of the attack. "We now must see actions that send a clear message that terror will not be tolerated." she said.

<u>Hezbollah</u> has emerged as the biggest threat to the fragile Israeli-Palestinian truce, offering West Bank gunmen thousands of dollars to attack Israelis. The group, which is backed by Iran and Syria, has hundreds of West Bank gunmen on its payroll, according to Palestinian security officials.

Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the largest Palestinian militant groups, all denied involvement, saying they were respecting the recent calm.

However, a senior Al Aqsa commander said one of its members had been recruited by <u>Hezbollah</u> to carry out the attack. The commander spoke on condition of anonymity.

The bombing occurred at the Stage, a nightclub located near Tel Aviv's seaside promenade, as about 20 to 30 people were waiting to enter the club. The area was especially busy on a mild weekend night.

Tel Aviv police Chief David Tzur said security guards outside the club spotted the bomber and didn't allow him in. "The impact, if he would have gone inside, would have been tragic," he said.

He said four people were killed and dozens wounded. At least one of the dead was <u>female</u>. Israeli police said about 50 people were wounded, more than 10 of them seriously.

Israeli police spokesman Gil Kleiman said the blast was exceptionally powerful.

The explosion ripped off the front of the nightclub, shattering windows of nearby restaurants and blackening cars.

It was the first suicide bombing since the cease-fire declaration, as well as the first such attack since the death of longtime Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Nov. 11. The last suicide bombing killed three people in a Tel Aviv market on Nov. 1. *

Graphic

PHOTO;

Associated Press

Israeli police inspect the scene of an explosion outside a nightclub near Tel Aviv's beach front promenade late last night.

Load-Date: September 7, 2005



Middle Eastern Freedom

University Wire April 29, 2005 Friday

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Byline: By Jeff Carnes, Badger Herald; SOURCE: U. Wisconsin

Dateline: MADISON, Wis.

Body

With the last Syrian troops pulling out of Lebanon Tuesday, it seems that there is a movement in the Middle East toward democracy. Considering the municipal elections in Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti government allowing **women** to vote in local elections for the first time, democracy may be taking hold in the region. While there is room for hope, these steps toward full democratic movements are only the first tentative steps toward a large-scale expansion of democracy in the Middle East.

The final pullout of Syrian troops signals Lebanon may be on the road to full sovereignty outside the sphere of Syrian influence.

Due to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and international pressure, Syria pulled out its troops. While the overt presence of Syria troops in the Bekaa Valley and Syrian intelligence in Beirut may be over, it is still unknown what Syria's future intentions are in Lebanon. What will Syria's new role be in Lebanon? Even former Lebanese President Amin Gemayel stated Syria has infiltrated most of the national institutions in Lebanon and that "Syria was creating a creeping annexation policy and it won't be very easy to get rid of the consequences of this hegemony." Syria and Lebanon do not even have formal diplomatic relations.

With the parliamentary elections tentatively scheduled for May 29, there are signs of hope for Lebanon establishing its full sovereignty. The Lebanese opposition, which transcended religious lines, was able to bring international pressure on Syria to withdraw. With the upcoming election in Lebanon, the Lebanese people may be able to free themselves from Syrian control.

In Kuwait, there was another sign of hope for democracy. On April 19, the Kuwaiti parliament voted to allow <u>women</u> to vote and stand in Kuwaiti parliamentary elections. While there is disagreement from some of the Islamist and tribal members of parliament about allowing full suffrage for Kuwaiti <u>women</u>, this is a first step toward democracy in the Middle East.

While there are some definite signs in the Middle East that democracy may take hold, there are also some signs that democracy is only in its infancy. In the first Saudi municipal elections this month, candidates on a "golden list," a group of candidates backed by conservative Muslim clerics, won in landslide victories. Even in Jedda, a city considered to be liberal by Saudi standards, the seven candidates on this list won seats. While the losers in this election claim that clerics gave those on the informally circulated lists illegal support, the elections in Saudi Arabia show how much of a force the religious establishment is in Saudi politics. Even the elections in Saudi were largely

Middle Eastern Freedom

ceremonial: only half of the officials in the municipal governments consist of elected officials (half are appointed officials) and have little real power in the Saudi government.

Even in the upcoming Lebanese elections, the pro-Syrian <u>Hezbollah</u> may take control. There is no guarantee that the Lebanese people will throw off Syrian influence. While the United States considers <u>Hezbollah</u> to be a terrorist group, many Lebanese people consider it to be a legitimate resistance movement. <u>Hezbollah</u>, which the United States accuses of exporting terrorism, may become a genuine governing force in the Middle East.

There is hope for democracy in the Middle East. Due to the tragedy of Hariri's assassination, Lebanon was able to push Syrian troops and intelligence agents out and have the potential to establish its full autonomy. Kuwait has taken the first steps toward <u>women</u>'s suffrage. There are also signs that democracy may have negative results. The Muslim clerical establishment of Saudi Arabia was able to get its approved candidates into local government seats, and the parliamentary elections in Lebanon may result in a terrorist organization gaining legitimacy on the international stage. As the Middle East begins to experiment with democracy, there is no guarantee that democracy will take hold, and there are certainly no guarantees that there will be no setbacks. While we in the United States can hope for democracy to take hold, individual countries will have to decide what path they will take in their own futures.

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Load-Date: April 29, 2005