

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:32:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498638

Documents (100)

1. [HEZBOLLAH'S CHOICES](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

2. [ADVANTAGE HIZBULLAH](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

3. [Hizbullah guerrillas await fight amid ruin](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

4. [Game point: Hizbullah wins sympathy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

5. [Hizbullah rockets cannot be fired from buildings](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

6. [Disarming Hizbullah is key to Lebanon 's peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

7. [A FACTOR OF STABILITY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

8. [Hezbollah won](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

9. [Middle East crisis: Hizbullah: 'We are winning this war ... Israel couldn't do what it said'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

10. [Israel must defeat Hezbollah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

11. [Eau De Hezbollah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

12. [Hezbollah gains delay ceasefire](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

13. [Should Canada seek talks with Hezbollah?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

14. [Israel and Hezbollah: end game](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

15. [Charity Wins Deep Loyalty For Hezbollah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

16. [*Hezbollah wins by looking strong*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

17. [*Hezbollah's missiles back in Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

18. [*Hezbollah stages a massive 'victory' celebration*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

19. [*Lebanon Army Goes Into Area Hezbollah Rules*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

20. [*Don't fall for Hezbollah's PR campaign*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

21. [*RECONCILING DIFFERENCES*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

22. [*As Hezbollah Seeks Power, Lebanon Is Feeling Edgy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

23. [*A SALUTE TO LEBANESE PEOPLE*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

24. [*Hezbollah's art of propaganda*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

25. [*A strategy against Hezbollah that has backfired badly*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

26. [*A Girl's Life Bound Close To Hezbollah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

27. [*Hezbollah seizes initiative as Israel is racked by doubt*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

28. [*Civilian casualties: Part of Hezbollah's plan*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

29. [*Hezbollah's Prominence Has Many Arabs Worried*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

30. [*Palestinians Seek To Detach From Hezbollah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

31. [*Sweating out the truth in Iran Tehran and Hezbollah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

32. [Israel fights back on Hezbollah Militants said to use civilians as shields](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

33. [Hezbollah: Nowhere and everywhere Services tie region closely to its fighters](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

34. [Arab World Finds Icon In Leader of Hezbollah](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

35. [Hezbollah claims slain protestor as 'martyr'](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

36. [Hezbollah TV station's survival is enigma](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

37. [The prisoners that Hezbollah is fighting for](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

38. [Shiite power grows in Lebanon Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

39. [Shiites may benefit in Lebanon 's crisis Hezbollah is capitalizing on its appeal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

40. [Letters - Israel / US policy has strengthened Hezbollah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

41. [Hezbollah warns Blair: you're not welcome in Beirut](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

42. [Fundraiser won't help Hezbollah: organizers: ICAO to host concert](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

43. [Lebanese singer backs Hezbollah as defender of country's honour](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

44. [Shiite power grows in Lebanon Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

45. [We'll disarm Hezbollah, say French](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

46. [Hezbollah: A 'family' in mourning Death of girl who baked militants' bread shows their role](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

47. [Israelis reject any truce with Hezbollah Security Cabinet approves widening ground offensive.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

48. [*We can't bear pictures of the dead. Hezbollah want to see nothing else*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

49. [*International: Beirut protests reach new height*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

50. [*Hezbollah blames U.S. public for Qana: Says 'no Lebanese can trust an American'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

51. [*THE DEMISE OF HEGEMONIC ORDER*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

52. [*Hezbollah workers rush to help victims rebuild In Lebanese city, group's civilian arm praised for speed, efficiency*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

53. [Durbin: Israel must 'defang' Hezbollah to be successful Illinois senator wants cease-fire as soon as possible](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

54. [Israeli military losing the propaganda war so far](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

55. [Two sides cite gains in tense Mideast Cease-fire calm: Beirut celebrates Hezbollah's declaration of "divine victory." But Israel says it cleaned out a "state within a state."](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

56. [Comment & Debate: Only a negotiated ceasefire can bring a wider settlement: America 's embrace of UN diplomacy over Lebanon is a welcome return to pre-9/11 politics. If it fails, expect more Hizbullahs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

57. [THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS THE LEBANESE PERSPECTIVE Hezbollah rockets ease lingering pain](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

58. [*I know he is alive, says wife of soldier held by Hezbollah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

59. [*World has lost moral bearings in Israel crisis*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

60. [*'If it was not for Nasrallah the Israeli army would have come and killed us all' Despite the death toll, many Lebanese are elated at Hezbollah's victory over Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

61. [*Little to gain from further bloodshed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

62. [*Pause in bombing prompts desperate exodus*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

63. [*Israel 's next confrontation? Hamas is acquiring more weaponry and is training in Hezbollah-style tactics, Israeli officers say.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

64. [*Ceasefire will strike blow to Syria , Iran : Would hamper influence in Mideast; Resolution would see Israel , Hezbollah pull out of Lebanon as UN troops move in*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

65. [*Comment & Debate: For Palestinians' sake, Olmert must emerge with his people's respect: Many outsiders would like to see Israel 's prime minister ousted, but if he were his successor would be more hawkish still*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

66. [*Bombs can't destroy hatred: Israel and the U.S. have done more for Hezbollah in the last three weeks than Iran or Syria ever could*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

67. [*Middle East crisis: Radicalised youth: 'We are ready to fight, we are ready to die'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

68. [USA INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

69. [Today on the web: After Qana](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

70. [Killing of civilians mobilises a new militancy among Lebanon 's youth](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

71. [Crisis in the Middle East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

72. [Lebanese assess their losses](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

73. [Olmert dismisses calls for imminent ceasefire](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Apr 15, 2007

74. [Saturday Comment: The fight reflex: With the ceasefire, the guerrillas are returning to what is left of their homes in Lebanon . But for some, the next battle can't come too soon](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

75. [Blair pledges to restart Middle East peace plan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

76. [Talks aim to secure release of Israeli soldiers in 'swap'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

77. [Debate on the crisis in the Middle East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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

Apr 15, 2007

78. [*Huge popular gathering in Beirut calls on Siniora to resign*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

79. [*IJ WOMEN PROTEST AMENDS TO HUDDOD ORDINANCE*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

80. [*Middle Eastern promises*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
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81. [*Reporters on the Job*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

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82. [*UN 's perilous work in Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

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Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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83. [DEATH AT QANA: The world reacts](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

84. [WOMEN RIGHTS BILL A CONSPIRACY TO PROMOTE VULGARITY, OBSCENITY: SIRAJ-UL-HAQ](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

85. [Israel suspends plans to disband settlements Removal of settlers from some West Bank areas is a casualty of the war with Hezbollah, at least for now.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

86. [Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

87. [Taking flights](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

88. [THE WAR THAT NO ONE WON!](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

89. [PRO- US RULERS HAVE NO PUBLIC SUPPORT: GHINWA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

90. [Has Lebanon 's Cedar revolt come undone?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

91. [Crisis in the Middle East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

92. [Lebanese literally picking up the pieces as they return to their homes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

93. [Crisis in the Middle East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

94. [*Offering Video, Israel Answers Critics on War*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

95. [*ISRAEL 'S CHANCE TO CREATE PEACE*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

96. [*Hi-tech war for hearts and minds rages on all fronts*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

97. [*WHAT IS A PAKISTANI TODAY?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

98. [*No ceasefire imminent*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

99. [Israel offers evidence to critics on war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

100. [Long refugees themselves, Palestinians now play host](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

HEZBOLLAH'S CHOICES

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 16, 2006 Wednesday

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Length: 872 words

Body

Linda, a thirty-something trendy Lebanese woman, stood in front of a building in the heart of Beirut's southern suburb. The apartment building was smashed to the ground. Her apartment was on the sixth floor. Her handbag was distinctly visible in the rubble.

She pointed to her bag. I tried to reach out and pull the bag from the rubble. "Don't touch it," she shouted at me, as tens of other people in this destroyed Shia neighbourhood searched for their homes, shops and cars. "It could be booby-trapped. The authorities have warned us of Israeli toy bombs."

Beirut's southern suburbs, a pre-war Hizbullah stronghold, suddenly came to life yesterday. Hundreds of thousands of its residents were back in their old neighbourhoods for the first time since the war began. In addition, the scenes were unbelievable. It could have been a Hollywood set if it wasn't for real. Entire apartment blocs flattened to the ground, as if smashed by a giant hammer. In addition, the heart of southern Beirut, the real 'Hizbullah country', where tens of Hizbullah office and community buildings once stood, was unrecognisable.

At the road junction leading to the southern suburbs, a Hizbullah van played victory songs on loudspeakers as young activists distributed Hezbollah's yellow flags and posters with Hassan Nasrullah's pictures. The militia's PR machine is amazing. Hizbullah was distributing neatly printed colourful posters especially made for the occasion only seven or eight hours after the ceasefire came into effect. One poster, with the picture of Hezbollah's chief, said in English, "The Divine Victory." Another one read in Arabic, "Allah's promise fulfilled," rhyming with Hizbullah chief's last name, Nasrullah (meaning 'Allah's victory').

Coming back to Linda, who, by the way, is a Lebanese Shia lady, She said something that I thought pointed to Hezbollah's future troubles. I thought no women wore jeans and skin-hugging T-shirts in Hezbollah's stronghold. Linda proved me wrong. "I'm not a Hizbullah supporter," she said, "but I like the party and like Sheikh Hassan Nasrullah. He's a hero."

I asked her, "You've lost everything. Who is going to rebuild your apartment building?" She answered, "Hizbullah. Sayed Nasrullah has pledged Hizbullah will rebuild everything." Truth is, Hizbullah has done just that - rebuild houses destroyed by Israel - after every confrontation between the militia and Israel in the past 25 years. The problem this time is that the militia's entire support base - the people of south Lebanon and the people of south Beirut - are displaced.

There are scores of small villages and hamlets across south Lebanon that has been wiped out by Israeli army. The entire southern population moved to Beirut and elsewhere. In addition, the whole support system that existed in the south, including businesses, jobs and workshops are no more. That's a lot to rebuild. As if this was not enough, Hizbullah - a real winner on the battlefield - is facing a tough political battle that it cannot escape.

HEZBOLLAH'S CHOICES

As of yesterday, it has become very difficult to be Hassan Nasrullah. The Hizbullah chief has to decide which side to take. In addition, he has to decide fast. The government in Beirut wants him to disarm and become just another Lebanese politician, flexing his muscles inside parliament or on television screens, not on the battlefield. However, his two main backers -Syria and Iran - want him to continue playing the role of a thorn in Israel's side. Iran's Foreign Ministry made it clear in a public statement, made by Hamid Reza Asifi, that Tehran opposes disarming Hizbullah. He said it was "illogical and unfair" to do that. In addition, he's right. It's not fair. Hizbullah has won a war against Middle East's most powerful military. He should be dictating terms, not being pushed around.

Problem is, Hezbollah's foreign backers have real agendas and they don't have a sense of humour when it comes to business. Lebanon's former premier, Rafique Harriri, was mysteriously killed when he turned against Syria. A cynical Kuwaiti columnist has suggested that Hizbullah chief knows he can't alienate the Syrians and the Iranians. Not after coming this far. So the challenge before Hassan Nasrullah is simple: His colleagues inside the Lebanese government want him to stick to the deal and disarm his military wing and surrender his south Lebanon stronghold to the Lebanese army. In other words, they want him to voluntarily surrender the only sophisticated fighting machine in Lebanon, in accordance with the UN resolution. Nasrullah's formidable foreign backers don't want him to do that.

A Lebanese cabinet meeting has been postponed that was supposed to discuss steps to disarm Hizbullah. The reason for the postponement is that the two-militia ministers in the government have conveyed to their colleagues that Hizbullah refuses to disarm. Confusion reign supreme in Beirut on the political front. In addition, no new date for the cabinet meeting has been set at the time of writing this report.

Nasrullah's tough choices are saving Lebanon or saving Hizbullah. As thousands of displaced Lebanese families try to return to their homes, the world awaits Hezbollah's decision. In addition, the fingers are crossed.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

ADVANTAGE HIZBULLAH

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Length: 710 words

Byline: S.M. HALI

Body

The relentless pounding of Lebanon by Israeli Defence Forces has gone on for nearly three weeks, killing innocent civilians and children by the hundreds, yet Hizbullah or the Lebanese have shown no signs of battle fatigue nor have they been hounded by the Lebanese nation to return the abducted Israeli soldiers and thus end their misery.

Messer's Bush and Tony Blair, who could have played their part in urging Israel to cease its hostilities, desisted from doing so perhaps in providing time to Israel to exterminate Hizbullah through "clean surgical strikes, sparing innocent women and children". Mr Bush's administration went to the extent of expediting the delivery of satellite and laser-guided precision bombs to Israel to perhaps help the Lebanese civilians escape from the wrath of "Goliath" Israel, which has picked on "David" Lebanon. The simile is painful since for far too long Israel has pretended to be "David" taking on the mighty Arab "Goliath."

It is ironical that even as Israel and its Western allies were condemning Hamas and Hizbullah "terrorists," in Jerusalem a right-wing group of influential Israelis, including the former Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, was celebrating one of the worst acts of terrorism against Britain in a foreign land: the 60th anniversary of the bombing, on July 22, 1946, of the King David Hotel, the headquarters of the British Government's representatives in the region.

The UN Security Council too has been lethargic. The only demur from it came when four UN peacekeepers became targets of Israeli air attacks and when angry Lebanese attacked the UN mission at Beirut to protest the atrocious and merciless bombings by Israel. It finally took the massacre of more than 65 civilians, at least 34 of them children, in another ruthless Israeli air raid on a building in the Lebanese village of Qana, for the world leaders to take notice.

If Israel and its mentors USA and Britain thought Hizbullah would be a turkey shoot, and the citizens of Lebanon would turn against them for bringing misery through their firebrand tactics (the way they did against the Syrians in February-March 2005), they could not be more wrong.

American and Israeli frustration arises from the fact that neither the ceaseless pounding of Gaza nor Lebanon has caused the capitulation of its people. To their consternation, they are witnessing the metamorphosis of a new breed of fighters, who have shed aside their sectarian and religious differences and in unison they are rising like a Phoenix from the ashes of fires set by Israel.

Robert Fisk in his article 'Is Israel losing the war?' answers the question himself by referring to the bloody mauling it received in the Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil, which it claimed to have captured, only to walk into a "devastating ambush" by Hizbullah guerrillas. With 13 Israeli soldiers dead and numerous injured, it managed a hasty retreat.

ADVANTAGE HIZBULLAH

The Asianage in its Op-ed of 26/7 titled 'A crusade gone haywire' does not need to elaborate. The title is self-explanatory; yet it reveals: "America's ruling establishment comprising the government, academics and particularly legislators are terrified of saying anything remotely against Israel, with Senator Hillary Clinton, among others, being in the lead in support of Israel's war aims in Lebanon. Indeed, it took courage for the former US secretary of state, Zbigniew Brzezinski, to criticise Israel by declaring, "You are killing hostages (in Lebanon) in the hope of intimidating the people you want to intimidate."

The rise in the stature of Hizbullah can be gauged from Pepe Escobar's article: 'The spirit of resistance' where he reveals, "According to Jane's Weekly... Hezbollah's moral and political cache could not but rise among peoples and movements worldwide who keep being bombed to oblivion but never had a chance to bomb back."

It is high time that the civilised world took cognisance of the barbaric Israeli aggression, based on the arrogance of power, which has violated all principles of inter-state relations and conduct. The use of brute force as an instrument of policy and international acquiescence in this policy create enormous risks to its small and defenceless neighbours and amounts to state terrorism in its worst manifestation

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

End of Document

Hizbullah guerrillas await fight amid ruin

Christian Science Monitor

August 3, 2006, Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 871 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford

Dateline: SRIFA, LEBANON

Highlight: Two Hizbullah fighters offer a glimpse into their views and guerrilla tactics while awaiting the Israeli army.

Body

Staying in the shadows of this ruined town, Hizbullah fighters Haj Rabieh and Abu Mohammed were unfazed by the ominous whine of an Israeli drone overhead.

"We take our chances and we take our precautions, too," grins Abu Mohammed, whose wiry frame and scraggly beard give him the look of a professor rather than a Hizbullah veteran.

Before the fighting started, both men taught elementary school. They joined the Iranian-backed Shiite guerrillas in the 1980s and spent years fighting Israeli occupation forces. While they haven't seen combat in this three-week-old conflict, they are part of Hizbullah's elaborate network in southern Lebanon, remaining in constant contact by radio with other fighters and security men in villages around Srifa.

Providing a rare glimpse into how Hizbullah operates throughout southern Lebanon, these two Hizbullah men, both in their 40s and using false names to conceal their identities, gave a group of Western reporters a tour of this town's immense destruction while letting slip few, but telling, details of how they operate.

The south, they say, is split into a series of military sectors, the smallest subdivision consisting of two or three neighboring villages. Haj Rabieh pulls from his pocket a small laminated sheet of paper, listing Hizbullah's positions in the area and the code numbers for each fighter.

"I am 103 and Abu Mohammed is 121," says Haj Rabieh, who is stocky, bearded, and wears a baseball cap. A thick ring surrounds his finger inscribed with "O Ali," a reference to the prophet Mohammed's cousin. It's taped over, however, as a precaution against being spotted by Israeli aircraft. "It glints in the sun," he says.

When asked how many Hizbullah fighters are present in the area, Abu Mohammed says, "How many angels are there? We are present in the same numbers." United Nations peacekeepers in south Lebanon estimate there are 800 to 1,000 Hizbullah fighters deployed against Israeli forces, mainly comprised of local residents with deep knowledge of the local terrain that is now a battleground.

Since Israel started shelling southern Lebanon, Hizbullah militants have fired some 1,700 rockets into northern Israel towns, mainly from coastal and eastern sections of southern Lebanon. Wednesday Hizbullah fired over 180 rockets into northern Israel.

Hizbullah guerrillas await fight amid ruin

They justify the rocket attacks into Israel as a part of war, but stress that they do not enjoy bloodshed. "We don't love killing," Abu Mohammed says. "We look at all people as brothers, but we are defending our land and dignity."

They are prepared for a long conflict. "It doesn't matter," says Haj Rabieh. "If it's long, it's long. If it's short, it's short."

Abu Mohammed smiles and says "Victory is coming, coming, coming."

Although neither man has seen action in the current conflict, as it expands and Israeli troops move northward in large numbers, they will be in the frontline. "We are anxiously waiting for it. We are ready to do whatever we are asked to do," Haj Rabieh says.

Abu Mohammed says that Hizbullah's fighters have a "holy guarantee" of victory. "If I am martyred, I am victorious. If I live and we are victorious, then, well, we are victorious," he says.

Hizbullah had six years following Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000 to prepare for this conflict. "Israel cannot forget the humiliation of 2000 because Hizbullah broke the myth of the Israeli army," Haj Rabieh says. "Hizbullah provided the model to any people under occupation that their land can be liberated."

Intense bombing on July 19 and 21 by Israeli jets flattened three neighborhoods in this village just south of the Litani River. When this reporter visited Srifa Saturday, it was estimated that at least 35 bodies were still buried under the rubble.

Although most villages in south Lebanon have been bombed, few have been as heavily hit as Srifa. Its population of 8,000 have fled, leaving only around 50 people, mainly the elderly and infirm who are looked after by the squad of Hizbullah men here.

The deserted streets, some of them strewn with rubble from bombed buildings, and the occasional banging of twisted sheet metal caught in the hot breeze lend Srifa an apocalyptic ambience.

Both men carry walkie-talkies and communicate with other fighters using a simple code based on local and personal knowledge.

"Haj Rabieh once loved a woman in the village," Abu Mohammed says. "I could call him and say 'let's meet at the house of the women who melted your heart.' How can the Israeli enemy understand that?"

The conversation briefly switches to food and Abu Mohammed's favorite dish of zucchini stuffed with rice and meat. Then Haj Rabieh picks up his walkie-talkie and calls No. "47." When a voice answers, he says "God give you strength," then "go, go, go." He taps at the handset, changing the frequency, then asks "47" what he had for lunch.

"Rice and potatoes," comes the tinny-sounding response.

There is sufficient food in Srifa and a generator provides power to pump water from a well.

"We are trying to the best of our ability to help the local people. This is the directive of the secretary-general," says Abu Mohammed, referring to Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbullah's leader.

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Load-Date: August 2, 2006

Game point: Hizbullah wins sympathy

Christian Science Monitor

August 4, 2006, Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 341 words

Byline: Daniel Schorr

Highlight: Israel's risky bombing of suspected **Hizbullah** launching sites killed civilians and swayed public opinion.

Body

History may recall a shift in the Middle East power balance in the three weeks since **Hizbullah**'s provocative cross-border attack on an Israeli Army patrol.

One element in that shift is the discovery that **Hizbullah** has sophisticated weapons that can inflict significant damage, even with Israeli domination of the air. These weapons, including laser-guided antitank artillery, were supplied by the government of Iran, apparently in preparation for this test of will.

Israel, trying strenuously to eliminate hard-to-find, well-dug-in **Hizbullah** launching sites, was drawn into risky bombings that killed civilians, including **women** and children, and spread sympathy and support for the Lebanese insurgents throughout the region and indeed the world.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, speaking for President Bush, found it necessary to exert pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for at least a partial suspension of Israeli airstrikes.

Dr. Rice found that Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora no longer welcomed her. Under pressure from his own citizens, he found it embarrassingly necessary to ask that Rice stay away from Beirut.

Since then, the negotiating scene has shifted to the United Nations Security Council, where argument has raged about what kind of cease-fire can be considered a "sustainable" cease-fire, as mandated by Mr. Bush. On Monday in Miami, Bush repeated a demand that Iran cease its weapons supplies to **Hizbullah**, but he is not in a very good position to enforce his demand, because the tide of public opinion has shifted in the direction of **Hizbullah**.

For Iran, on the other hand, its proxy war in Lebanon must appear to be going well and will undoubtedly embolden the mullahs to take a defiant position in the Security Council debate on sanctions against Iran for its nuclear program. If the July 12 attack on the Israeli patrol was meant to provoke this confrontation, it has been wildly successful.

* Daniel Schorr is the senior news analyst at National Public Radio.

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Load-Date: August 3, 2006

Game point: Hizbullah wins sympathy

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Hizbullah rockets cannot be fired from buildings

The Irish Times

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Qana Bombing; Pg. 9

Length: 543 words

Byline: Tom Clonan

Body

Hizbullah has fired almost 2,000 missiles into Israel over the last fortnight, killing more than 50 Israelis and forcing almost one million into air raid shelters.

Despite this provocation, however, Israel's response has been sharply criticised as "disproportionate" in many quarters. In the aftermath of the deaths of dozens of innocent Lebanese women and children at Qana yesterday, even the US has urged the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) to modify their responses to Hizbullah's attacks.

IDF spokespeople are maintaining that Hizbullah had been mounting missile attacks on Israeli territory from Qana in recent days. The IDF has claimed it targeted the three-storey house in Qana at 1.30am local time in the belief it contained a Hizbullah "asset".

Any investigation into the targeting of this house will have to consider precisely what kind of Hizbullah "asset" could possibly have been hidden in a modest, low-rise building among the narrow streets of a village such as Qana.

The type of missiles being fired by Hizbullah at Israeli cities cannot be fired from within houses, mosques, hospitals or even UN facilities as has been suggested by the IDF. Due to the massive "back-blast" caused by the rocket launchers of these missiles, they can only be fired from open ground. To fire them from within a building would result in the instant death of the missile crew and probable destruction of the missile before launch. Most of the missiles are truck-mounted and are fired - on open ground - from the backs of flat-bedded trucks or larger four-wheel-drive vehicles.

When fired, these missiles generate an enormous flare of light, heat and sound energy - a heat and light signature which is readily detected by IDF target-acquisition systems. Accurate retaliatory fire can be directed at Hizbullah launch sites by IDF aircraft and ground artillery in seconds. Such a reaction would be considered by international military norms to be proportionate and within the general "rules of engagement".

In these circumstances, having fired their missiles, Hizbullah tends to disperse as rapidly as possible. It is unlikely that a flat-bedded truck with a multilaunch rocket-system mounted on it could be easily and rapidly hidden in a village as small as Qana. Nor is it likely that such a truck-mounted weapon or four-wheel-drive vehicle could easily be hidden in a house such as the one targeted by the IDF yesterday.

The pattern and circumstances of the attack are sinister. With no telltale scorch marks from a Hizbullah missile launch visible near the destroyed house, and with no Hizbullah fighters among the dead and injured, the question remains as to what kind of "asset" the IDF could credibly allege to have been contained within the building.

Hizbullah rockets cannot be fired from buildings

The timing of the attack, taking place as it did during a period of relative calm and not in the immediate aftermath of a **Hizbullah** missile launch, speaks of a punitive strike designed simply to kill members of the Shia community from which **Hizbullah** is drawn and receives its moral support. The targeting of unarmed Shia **women** and children would represent a deliberate targeting of innocent civilians for retaliatory or punitive purposes, and may well constitute a war crime.

Tom Clonan is The Irish Times security analyst.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

End of Document

Disarming Hizbullah is key to Lebanon's peace

Christian Science Monitor

August 2, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 772 words

Byline: John Hughes

Dateline: SALT LAKE CITY

Highlight: The Israel-Lebanon crisis should spur efforts for a broader Arab-Israeli peace.

Body

While the world was preoccupied elsewhere, **Hizbullah** quietly accumulated an arsenal of some 10,000 short-range rockets supplied by Syria and Iran. This is not the kind of stockpile that augurs well for peaceful relations of any consequence with neighboring Israel. Nor does it suggest much peaceful inclination on the part of the governing regimes in Syria and Iran.

Firing the Katyusha rockets at Israel at about 100 a day as they have been, **Hizbullah** could keep up this daily barrage for about another 80 days, or well into October.

Think of this as if a renegade group had a base in New Jersey and could hit Manhattan with 100 rockets a day nonstop for three months. Or a similar group across the Potomac could do the same to downtown Washington.

Hizbullah is the provocateur that launched this war. Israel, as Israel predictably does, has responded with considerable force. While the rockets fly from Lebanon into Israel, Israeli artillery and warplanes fire back with shells and bombs. The death and wounded toll on both sides is in the hundreds. Although **Hizbullah** has longer-range and more sophisticated rockets, the short-range Katyushas are fairly primitive and cannot be effectively targeted. Thus they are fired scattershot and do not discriminate between Israeli soldiers and Israeli civilians. Similarly, while the Israelis say they are aiming for **Hizbullah** targets, they have killed innocent civilians, along with some unarmed United Nations observers.

The casualties on both sides have included **women** and children, as was sadly evident in the weekend Israeli bombing of Qana.

It is in almost nobody's interest - perhaps with the exception of Iran - that this devastating bloodletting should continue. But the contestants are in a race against time. Before the guns and rockets are stilled, the Israelis, in the words of the military men, are intent on "degrading" **Hizbullah**'s capability to wreak further harm on their citizens. Meanwhile **Hizbullah**'s soldiers, who have shown surprising tenacity, want to hold in place as much territory as they can along the Lebanese-Israeli border so that they can resume their assault on Israel when circumstances permit.

World opinion demands a ceasefire. Much more essential is a ceasefire that leads to an overall solution. The ideal shape of a solution beyond a cease-fire has already been determined. It is in the language of United Nations Resolution 1559 that requires that **Hizbullah**, the armed militia that the Lebanese government has been unable to tame, is to be disarmed.

Disarming Hizbullah is key to Lebanon 's peace

That would give Lebanon's fragile democracy a chance to survive and gather strength. Hizbullah could make its voice heard in the parliament, where it already has representation, rather than through the barrel of a gun.

International diplomats seem to be leaning toward some multinational force that would be placed along the Lebanon-Israel border, separating Hizbullah and Israeli soldiers. Three major questions must be answered about this force. From what countries will its troops be drawn? With what armament will those troops be equipped? What will be their mission?

If it is simply to attempt to keep the peace in a region where there is no peace, then the mission is pointless. They would merely be preserving an uneasy status quo.

If it is to fulfill UN Resolution 1559 requiring the disarming of Hizbullah, are they to do it themselves, or in concert with Lebanon's own rather ineffective army? What degree of force will be needed? What degree of armament will the troops require? Tanks? Artillery? Aircraft? To whom will the force report? the UN? NATO? The questions are many. And what will be the stance of Syria and Iran, Hizbullah's mentors, while all this takes place? Will they stand idly by on the sidelines?

The complexity of this operation suggests that it should be viewed within a much broader context. It may seem fanciful to suggest that the moment is here to resolve the hostility between Arabs and Jews that has plagued the Middle East for decades. Tempers are too high. The wounds are too deep. But the scenes of senseless violence from Israel and Lebanon that are currently dominating our television screens should surely give impetus to steps in that ultimate direction.

A democratic Lebanon. A Palestinian state and an Israeli state, living side by side in harmony. This is not the stuff of pipe dreams. Difficult though the outlook may seem, they have been within grasp in the past and are worth striving for in the future.

* John Hughes, a former editor of the Monitor, is editor and chief operating officer of the Deseret Morning News.

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Load-Date: August 1, 2006

A FACTOR OF STABILITY

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 20, 2006 Sunday

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Length: 1526 words

Byline: BY SHAMSHAD AHMAD KHAN

Body

With 34 days of savagery, the Israeli military machine enacted this century's first "holocaust" in Lebanon. Thousands of Lebanese, mostly civilians, including women and children, were killed and nearly 40 percent of the country's population was uprooted.

Human misery at the hands of human cruelty was being flashed minute to minute on television screens but the conscience of world community remained in "eternal peace." While this tragedy was being enacted, the world community remained silent if not indifferent. The United Nations was paralysed as ever. Most of the Arab royalties and rulers were upset and sleepless not on Israeli aggression but over Hezbollah's incredible military resilience and growing popular ascendancy.

The tragedy in Lebanon represented a global failure and complacency of the highest order. The Israeli aggression remained unchecked for over a month. Large-scale death and displacement continued unabated. The world business went on as usual. Appeals and calls for ceasefire were being rejected with impunity. The US continued to prevent the UN and others from taking any action to stop the war.

Hypocrisy at its worst was the rule of the game. The US and its Western "co-belligerents" in its "Long War" for global domination and control were seen by most as accomplices in this latest conflagration in the Middle East, which many observers thought was yet another Pentagon war. It was seen to be meant only to target Syria and Iran by "cutting off Hizbullah from Lebanese society."

Western governments had not only turned a blind eye to Israeli aggression but some of them were giving Israel more than a helping hand. They pulled out their own citizens well in time before the invasion, which according to some reports they knew was coming at any time.

There was visible anger among the Lebanese on UN's powerlessness. They felt deserted by the so-called "international community" (self-proclaimed code name for the West or whosoever joins their "fighting coalitions"), which could not have been more complacent by doing nothing to get Israel stop its aggression.

In addition, the "OIC" was no less indifferent. It has always preferred to remain a "spectator of tragedies" in the Muslim world. It was consistent as usual in its inaction and dormancy while another chapter of wanton aggression was being written in blood on a part of its lifeless soul. It stood aghast as an embarrassing symbol of its absolute helplessness and criminal 'laissez faire' on Lebanon.

OIC's meeting at Putrajaya came too late to be taken seriously anywhere in world's influential quarters. It only produced yet another analgesic declaration, which in effect was no more than a whooping hurrah: "Oh, I see!"

A FACTOR OF STABILITY

Muslims all over the world were disgusted with this situation. They were no longer impressed by the familiar rhetorical catchphrases of "solidarity and support" coming out of these conferences with little relevance to the stark realities of the world. OIC has had no role in global decision-making, and has been incapable of securing justice in Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan and now Lebanon.

By all accounts, the destruction in Lebanon has been out of all proportion to the alleged cause of Israeli military action, the capture of two Israeli soldiers. Even the Western observers admit that the rocket shelling of Israeli towns by Hizbullah came after, not before, the Israeli attacks on Lebanon. It will take months if not years for reconstruction and rehabilitation in the devastated Lebanese cities and villages.

The UNSC adopted its resolution 1701 after more than four weeks of havoc in Lebanon. According to Gerald Steinberg, a professor of political science at Bar-Ilan University, "of all of Israel's wars since 1948, this was the one for which Israel was most prepared". Since 2000, in fact, when Hizbullah forced Israel out of occupied southern Lebanon, a major war plan had been in the making. Another report in the San Francisco Chronicle suggests that already in 2005, the Israelis had circulated among selected Washington think tanks and Bush administration officials, a "Three Week War" plan - which was unfolded last month almost to the letter. It took longer than three weeks, and failed.

Interestingly, the war plan, which was reportedly disclosed by an anonymous Israeli army officer, envisaged "the first week to be dedicated to destroy Hezbollah's long-range missiles, bomb its command-and-control centres, and bomb transportation and communication routes." That did happen, at least in theory; but Hizbullah remained intact, and perhaps more resilient and more popular than before.

In the second week, according to the plan, the attacks were to concentrate on individual sites of Hezbollah's "rocket launchers and weapons caches." These attacks took place non-stop rather indiscriminately as was manifested in the Qana massacre. Ground forces were to enter the war in the third week to attack targets identified during reconnaissance missions. That also happened as envisaged.

The plan reportedly did not call for a ground invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon. There was not much to occupy anyway in a country, which had been devastated by indiscriminate Israeli attacks. Bombs had been falling on family homes, roads and dams, ports and airport, factories and industrial sites, civilian trucks and bridges, water reservoirs, electric plants, gas stations, even ambulances.

In war, survival often means victory. Hizbullah has, no doubt, managed to win this war. It will not fade away as a movement of the people whatever the outcome of this latest military bout. Walid Jumblatt, the leader of Lebanon's Druze community, has publicly acknowledged "Lebanon owes its survival to Hizbullah and its leader, Hassan Nasrullah who have defeated the Israelis." According to him, "it was not a question of gaining one more village or losing one more village." "They have defeated the Israelis, but the question now is to whom Nasrullah will offer this victory," he said.

This question goes beyond the state of Lebanon. Israel's inability to claim total victory against Hizbullah is reverberating, as the latter's victory throughout the Arab and Muslim world. With ever-abounding discontent and frustration against their own authoritarian regimes and rulers, Muslims all over the world are now tempted to see Hizbullah as the "epitome" of a new hope for them. It is an iconic symbol of defiance against aggression and injustice and a model of defensive warfare with no parallel anywhere in the Muslim world in recent history.

However, the rulers of the Muslim world are not impressed. They are scared of popular resurgence of the Hizbullah spirit in their own countries. After the Iranian revolution in 1979, this is the first time that the rulers in the Muslim world are feeling the "shivers of fear" in their hearts. They just can't reconcile to the soaring stocks and stature of Hizbullah and its leader Hassan Nasrullah all over the Arab street. Someone has rightly commented that "Hezbollah's moral and political cache could not but rise among peoples and movements worldwide who keep being bombed to oblivion but never had a chance to bomb back."

Most of the rulers in the Muslim world are at the mercy of the US for their own political strength and survival. They have mortgaged to the West not only the security and sovereignty of their countries but also the political and

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economic future of their nations. With few exceptions, most of our countries are all bankrupt politically with no institutions other than the authoritarian rule of all sorts and styles. They may be sovereign juridical but in essence, they are without genuine political and economic independence.

Things will not change unless the Muslim world fixes its fundamentals and puts its house in order. It must regain control of its own destiny and its own resources. Its wealth should be the source of its own strength and well-being. Meanwhile, if anything, the Lebanese crisis with all its ramifications has surprised everyone. In world's eyes, regardless of how and when the guns fell silent, Israel has lost the war. No matter how many Hizbullah fighters were killed, or how many Katyusha rockets destroyed, or how severe the damage to the Lebanese and Hezbollah's infrastructure, what matters in the Arab streets is that for five weeks Hizbullah stood up to the mighty Israeli war machine.

Hezbollah's ability "to resist Israeli military onslaught and to rain thousands of rockets on Israel's urban centres and, as a result, send a million Israelis into bomb shelters" in sharp contrast to the performance of the Arab states during previous conflicts with Israel, introduces altogether a new dimension in the turbulent Middle East situation.

Israel must have learnt many lessons during this war but what it now needs to understand is that there will be no peace in the Middle East until it stops "stealing Arab lands and returns all occupied territories to their original owners, - the Sheba Farms to Lebanon, the Golan Heights to Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem to the Palestinians." The writer is a former foreign secretary.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

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Hezbollah won

Ottawa Citizen

August 21, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 267 words

Byline: Robert Kennedy, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Re: Diplomats plan UN force for south Lebanon amid rift in Lebanese government, Aug, 16.

Let's face it, Hezbollah won. But the bad news for those who believe in peace and prosperity in a divided Lebanon is that their dreams will once again be dashed. Without a doubt, the UN will not only fail to disarm Hezbollah, but Hezbollah will use this time to re-arm, build on its propaganda victory in the Arab world and enhance its bogus status as protector of the Lebanese people. Emboldened, Hezbollah will once again provoke Israel into conflict as its entire existence and status is based on the goal of destroying Israel.

However, this time Israel will not fight another politically correct war. The Israelis will not walk on eggshells, trying to avoid civilian casualties, fearing "world opinion" while Hezbollah hides behind women and children, firing rockets into civilian populations. Unfortunately for many innocent Lebanese, Israel will fight to win a swift and punishing victory as it did in 1967 and in 1973, when it had to fight for its survival against multiple Arab nations. Hezbollah will be defeated at the expense of many innocent Lebanese people.

The Iranian dictator who funds Hezbollah will then learn very quickly that Israel will not be "wiped off the map." And ironically, the only advanced liberal democracy in the Middle East, a tiny nation that remains the only beacon of science, technology, prosperity and human progress in the region, will have to do the very un-liberal democratic thing to protect itself -- fight as barbarically as those who want it destroyed.

Robert Kennedy,

Ottawa

Load-Date: August 21, 2006

Middle East crisis: Hizbullah: 'We are winning this war ... Israel couldn't do what it said'

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 4

Length: 712 words

Byline: Clancy Chassay, Srifa

Body

Hajj Rabia - or code number 103 as he is identified over his two-way radio - was a 40-year-old history teacher during peacetime. Now he launches rockets into Israel. Number 121, Abu Mohammed, is 45 and also teaches history and geography to primary school students. A third fighter, in his late teens, does not introduce himself.

Hajj Rabia offers a tour of destruction in the southern Lebanese village of Srifa, navigating its deserted streets to bombed-out buildings, some scorched black, many reduced to grey rubble.

Ten days ago Israeli warplanes demolished more than 30 houses, burying at least 35 people. About 50 residents, too old or sick to travel, out of a former population of 8,000, now share the village with a unit of **Hizbullah** fighters.

Dressed in a blue checked shirt and Adidas trainers, Hajj Rabia describes how the first strike on Srifa tore a four-storey building in half, killing a Brazilian-Lebanese man, his wife and his two children. Two days later a second attack demolished the neighbourhood of Haret al-Jamma. Hajj Rabia points to a pile of shattered concrete. "There are two children buried under that house, along with an elderly couple and a Syrian labourer," he says.

As he talks, Israeli F-15s swoop overhead, disturbing the steady drone of the unmanned surveillance aircraft circling above. Hajj Rabia stops at the edge of a dusty plain where the flattened remains of 24 homes are muddled together in a mess of crumbled grey concrete. "There are 21 people that we know of buried under these houses. They were sleeping.

"Until now, no corpses have been removed. We tried but we couldn't. Even the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) said it couldn't do anything because Israel forbade them."

Abu Mohammed is also wearing casual clothes: jeans, a lumberjack shirt and a pair of Reeboks. "All our fighters are uniformed and equipped with armour; when we are in the field we dress as soldiers, but when we are with civilians we dress normally," he says.

Inside a small house, the fighters chat with four old **women** who have been unable to leave. "We do what we can for the civilians left behind," says Abu Mohammed. "This is the direction of the secretary general (Hassan Nasrallah, the **Hizbullah** leader)."

Hajj Rabia, who became a militant at 18 after Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, gets on the radio to inquire about lunch. "Hey 47, 47, what's going on commander?" he asks.

Middle East crisis: Hizbullah: 'We are winning this war ... Israel couldn't do what it said'

The commander replies, prompting him to change to another frequency. "Hey commander, what did you have for lunch?" "Rice and potatoes," the commander grumbles back.

Explaining the code system they use. Hajj Rabia pulls a laminated card out of his pocket bearing the list of fighters and locations in his area. Each fighter has a number and there is also a number correlating to their mission and a number for each location in which they operate. The south is split into sectors patrolled by separate units, each responsible for two or three villages.

A ring on Hajj Rabia's right hand has been covered with white tape to stop it glinting in the sun when he is firing rockets. "It has been blessed at many holy sites so I cannot take it off."

There is commotion outside as news comes over the radio that Hizbullah has struck a military airbase in northern Israel. Hajj Rabia leaves the room talking into the radio. He returns minutes later, "We are winning this war," he declares. "The Israelis first said their priority is to destroy Hizbullah . . . and then they shifted and said it is to destroy Hizbullah's weapons. Then they said they would occupy Lebanon up to the Litani river. Then they said they would create a 6km buffer, now they're saying 2km. Israel couldn't defeat Hizbullah, it couldn't do what it set out to do."

Both fighters are keen to stress their reluctance to kill. ""We look on all people as brothers, but we are defending our land," Abu Mohammed says. Asked how Hizbullah could justify attacks on civilian targets in Israel, Hajj Rabia says : "This is war, we have to (fire rockets into Israel); they are hitting us.

Before returning to their positions, both men say they do not fear death. Abu Mohammed describes what he calls a "holy guarantee". "If I am martyred, I am victorious, and if we are victorious in battle, then we are victorious."

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

Israel must defeat Hezbollah

University Wire

August 11, 2006 Friday

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Section: COLUMN

Length: 799 words

Byline: By William Bloom, The Crimson White; **SOURCE:** U. Alabama

Dateline: TUSCALOOSA, Ala.

Body

The mission statement of the Israeli Defense Force begins with a simple sentence that, though succinct, represents Israel's entire defense and foreign policy: "To defend the existence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the State of Israel."

Such a statement acknowledges a well-known fact, a fact often forgotten by Israel's critics. If a nation smaller than New Jersey, surrounded by enemies, and vastly outnumbered were to lose a war, its enemies would mercilessly drive its citizens into the sea.

This is not to suggest that Israel's current war with Hezbollah can or will result in Israel's being wiped from the map. Rather, it suggests why Israel fights and why it must win.

The current Middle Eastern war began when Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers. Rather than an attempt to forward any political ideology, Hezbollah's actions should be seen for what they were: An attempt by Hezbollah's financiers in Iran to move international attention away from Iran's advancing nuclear program and towards a war between Israel and Islamo-fascists.

Whether American society realizes it or not, we are witnessing a proxy war in the Middle East, with Israel representing Western interests while Hezbollah represents the Mullah's of Iran and the Assad regime in Syria. Hezbollah is a terrorist organization whose aim is to obliterate the State of Israel and turn Lebanon into an Islamic Republic in the form of Iran.

To achieve said ends, Hezbollah uses the shield of innocent women and children to carry out terrorist attacks against Israel, cowardly fleeing after firing missiles indiscriminately into Israeli cities with the desire to kill as many civilians as possible in order to break the will of the Israeli populace.

Hezbollah understands the international community and understands completely that said community will focus its attacks upon the accidental killings of Lebanese civilians as opposed to Hezbollah's intentional killing of Israeli civilians.

Israel now faces a shadowy threat that seeks Israel's ultimate destruction and an end to democratic reforms in Lebanon. It is Lebanon, then, that faces the greatest threat in this struggle. Not a threat that comes from an Israeli bomb, but the threat of returning to the vassalage of Syria and its Hezbollah puppets.

Israel must defeat Hezbollah

Last year when former Lebanese Prime Minister and democratic reformer Rafiq Hariri was assassinated in a bombing, the world knew who was responsible: the Assad regime of Syria. Having ruled the whole of Lebanon since 1976, Syria saw Hariri as a potential threat to its rule, crudely eliminating him before he was able to counteract their usurpation of Lebanese liberty.

The assassination ultimately backfired, causing the international community, led by the United States, to remove Syria from Lebanon. Though it removed its army and security forces, Syria left two entities in its stead: Hezbollah and Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, a stooge of the Assad regime.

Though it has enjoyed free parliamentary elections, Lebanon must contend with the combined weight of Hezbollah, whose parliamentary delegation holds the same aims as the Nazi Party in Germany, and Emile Lahoud attempting to undermine and overturn the democratic process the Lebanese now enjoy.

That is why when Israel fights Hezbollah it fights not just for its own security but, rather, the democratic future of Lebanon. There is little doubt that, if they had the military might, the freely elected Lebanese officials would remove Hezbollah from its perch in the south.

Martin Niemoeller, a German pastor during the Second World War, once described his own experience with the Nazis: "In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up."

Never forget that when Hezbollah condemns its enemies, it is always "the Zionist Entity and the American infidels." If the United States now turns its back on Israel and does not give it the time it needs to disarm Hezbollah, the terrorists will again be emboldened as they were with the American withdrawal from Lebanon in 1983, an event Osama bin Laden cites as inspiration for the 9/11 attacks.

Those who would suggest that our geographic distance from the fighting protects us fail to understand our globalized world. For Hezbollah, the city of New York is only a plane ride away.

William Bloom, a sophomore majoring in history and political science, is an SGA senator for the College of Arts and Sciences.

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Eau De Hezbollah

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

January 31, 2007 Wednesday

National Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A18

Length: 1184 words

Byline: ANNIA CIEZADLO in Beirut, The New Republic

Body

Last summer, during the war with Israel, Hezbollah's Al Manar satellite TV channel ran an advertisement featuring Reem Haidar, an attractive Lebanese woman with a special request for Hezbollah leader Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. "I want his cloak that he sweated in while he was defending me, my children, my sisters, and my land," said Haidar, with a toss of her highlighted hair, as martial music played in the background. "I want it so that I can rub some of its sweat on myself and my children. Maybe they can also distribute pieces of it to the people, so that they can soak up some dignity, honour and nobility." In her sunglasses, plunging V-neck and red bandanna, Haidar made quite an impression. Al Manar put the Haidar clip in heavy rotation, and, after the war, she got her wish: Hezbollah presented her with Nasrallah's presumably sweat-soaked clerical robe.

Haidar's desire for the perspiration of Hezbollah's black-turbaned leader may strike Westerners as a little odd (imagine, or perhaps don't, American women clamouring for the sweaty garments of Dick Cheney). But the odour of sanctity is a powerful draw; just as Catholics traditionally believed that the bodies of saints gave off the scent of roses, Shiites believe that the soil of Karbala -- where the martyr Imam Hussein was beheaded -- smells sweet, like musk.

Muslim or Christian, man or woman, everybody wears perfume here in Beirut: Men hawk bootleg couture fragrances on street corners, and stores will custom blend knock-offs of your favorite fragrance while you wait. So, given the cult of Nasrallah and the culture of perfume, perhaps it was inevitable that, sooner or later, Beirut's latest must-have item would invoke the essence of his sweaty robes: the "Perfume of Resistance" -- eau de Hezbollah.

I first smelled the Perfume of Resistance at the opposition sit-in that began occupying downtown Beirut on Dec. 1, 2006, in an attempt to topple the U.S.-backed government. There seemed to be some disagreement about what exactly the smell of the resistance was: Non-Shiites, outraged at seeing Lebanon's permanent underclass occupy its swank city centre, started sending out text messages sneering that the protesters smelled bad. (One suggested that the statue of dead Sunni politician Riad Solh came to life in order to hold its nose.) But, for the Shia faithful and their Christian allies, the sit-in took on the character of an outdoor bazaar, with vendors offering a wide and enticing array of Hezbollah-themed items. It was there, amid all the tchotchkes of resistance- Hezbollah banners, Hezbollah cellphone holders, flashing Hezbollah buttons, lighted crystal Nasrallah paperweights, smiling Nasrallah keychains -- that I spotted the little yellow packets of Nasrallah-themed perfume.

The Attar (literally, essence) of Resistance comes in jasmine, gardenia and tea rose (the latter, because it supposedly found favour with Iranian Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, is rumoured to be Nasrallah's personal pick).

Eau De Hezbollah

The slender vials are packaged in little laminated folders with excerpts from Nasrallah's speeches printed inside. On the front, Nasrallah waves a hortatory hand, with Lebanese and **Hezbollah** flags fluttering behind him, while a missile sinks an Israeli gunboat. On the back, there's a photo collage of lilies and rocket launchers. All this for \$1? Who could resist?

Everybody wanted some. A friend took it to work, only to spend all day fending off co-workers' attempts to swipe it. "I had to take it home at the end of the day," she told me. "They were just waiting for me to leave so they could steal it!" We went back downtown to find more, but the vendor just shrugged; he was sold out. So I set out for the dahiyeh, the sprawling Shia ghetto on the outskirts of Beirut, to track down the perfume's creator.

A voluble, apple-cheeked man with earnest brown eyes and a tuft of silvery hair, Ali Khalil was waiting by the door of his storefront. **Hezbollah** members don't usually shake hands with **female** non-relatives, but Khalil, the 45-year-old Shia entrepreneur who dreamed up the perfume, is a man of commerce and is not a party member. Gripping my hand warmly, he led me inside his tiny shop, which bursted with gewgaws: beaded purses, Furbys, nail polish, clear bra straps, toy cellphones, cap guns, teddy bears, Hello Kitty thermoses, plastic jewelry, temporary tattoos. On display was also a wide selection of bootleg perfumes, from "Veirsache" to "Bolgari." But the Perfume of Resistance is Khalil's baby.

In Lebanon, the word "resistance" often denotes **Hezbollah**'s rockets, missiles, and machine guns, which the United States and Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's government want to take away. But it also has a broader meaning: of popular struggle against Israel, the United States or Western powers. "I don't believe in weapons or arms," says Khalil, who deplores the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. "There are many ways of resisting. Resistance can be a word; it can take many forms." Like perfume.

Khalil's inspiration came on Sept. 22, 2006, five weeks after the end of last summer's war, when **Hezbollah** staged an enormous rally in the bombed-out ruins of the Shia neighborhoods where its offices used to be. After the rally, Khalil ordered 15,000 bottles of perfume and had the packages printed up at a cost of US\$3,000 -- a big financial risk for a small-time capitalist. "Because it had the picture of Sayyid Hassan, I didn't care as much about the expense. I wanted it to look nice," he explains. "It was less a commercial venture than an opportunity to send a message."

Message sent. People bought dozens as gifts for friends overseas. Khalil started to field requests for spinoffs. An Iraqi man asked Khalil if he could make Moqtada Al Sadr perfume.

But, despite the perfume's popularity, you won't find Nasrallah doing product endorsements for Resistance: Both it and its sister line, the Perfume of Victory, are knockoffs. In other words, it isn't actually produced or sanctioned by **Hezbollah**, which presumably has more pressing matters on its collective mind, like bringing down Siniora's government. But **Hezbollah**'s leaders are nothing if not media-savvy; they know free advertising when they see it. Getting ripped off is just another form of viral marketing, and so the group takes an indulgent line on piracy. "Nasrallah is in the public domain; he's not private property," says Hussein Rahhal, **Hezbollah**'s affable spokesman.

The perfume was so successful, in fact, that Khalil went to the Ministry of Trade and copyrighted the idea for 15 years, worried that some unscrupulous businessman with deeper pockets might edge him out. "I'm thinking of expanding," he says thoughtfully. "I'm thinking of doing a deodorant spray." By way of demonstration, he leaps up and grabs a tube of the cologne "Poca Cobanne." He has no shortage of ideas for future Nasrallah knockoffs, including a great plastic cellphone with ?

"But wait, maybe you'd better not write about that," he says, furrowing his brow. "Somebody might read about it and steal my idea." - Annia Ciezadlo is a Beirut-based writer.

Graphic

Eau De Hezbollah

Color Photo :: The label of the new fragrance inspired by Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. ;

Load-Date: January 31, 2007

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Hezbollah gains delay ceasefire

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: FORUM; Pg. A8; Barry Cooper

Length: 792 words

Byline: Barry Cooper, Special to The StarPhoenix

Body

It's difficult to consider the current round of killing in the Middle East without encountering some pretty raw emotions or the subdued emotions of partisanship.

The anguished faces, particularly of old women, cannot but evoke pity at their suffering.

The brutality of all war and the duplicitous stupidity and carnage of these particular events make the temptation of taking sides to separate the good guys from the bad guys all the more appealing.

Even so, behind the violence and pathos, all parties to the conflict have well thought out strategies that can be understood on their own terms.

The first thing to note is that, despite the awful TV images of civilians caught in the gears of military operations, the conflict is limited. Neither Hezbollah nor Israel have used all their capabilities.

The Lebanese army, such as it is, is hardly involved. The Syrian, Iranian, and American forces are yet not involved.

Moreover, the area of military operations, even in Beirut, which has received a lot of media attention, and in northern Israel, which has received about a hundred rockets a day for the past couple of weeks, is also limited.

This is not to say that things could not escalate, but that they haven't yet.

Leaving aside American, French, Syrian, and Iranian strategic interests, all agreeably complex and murky, what do Hezbollah and Israel hope to accomplish, and how? Consider first how the war looks to Hezbollah. It began at their time of choosing, not with the capture of two Israeli soldiers, which was of symbolic not military or political significance, but with the rocket attacks on Haifa.

That is, the strategic initiative lay with Hezbollah, and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) had to fight when and where Hezbollah decided. Moreover, Hezbollah knew Israel would have to respond to their attacks and it knew what the IDF options were. Historically the IDF preferred to fight a mobile war, by-passing fortifications, disrupting logistics from the rear, and so on.

In anticipation, Hezbollah has turned much of southern Lebanon into a complex of well designed bunkers that can serve as defensive fire-bases to meet the IDF and as launch facilities for rockets.

Hezbollah gains delay ceasefire

The intention of Hezbollah is thus to draw the IDF into costly attacks against well prepared facilities. This strategy would also compel the IDF to defend its extended logistical tail and, taking a leaf from Iraq, allow Hezbollah to initiate an insurgency against which Israel could not decline to fight (because of the threat of rocket attacks) nor endure because it would entail extensive long-term casualties.

Because of the length of time it takes to build and equip fortifications and to train people to fire rockets and anti-tank weapons, it seems clear that Hezbollah has been preparing for war with Israel for several years. It is equally obvious that, for Hezbollah, the first two weeks of war developed the way it expected.

Israeli strategic aims have been conditioned by the opening moves by Hezbollah.

Its overriding objective is to destroy the ability of Hezbollah to make war -- initially by stopping the rocket attacks, then by engaging and destroying its deployed forces, and finally by dismantling the Hezbollah infrastructure, and to do all this so thoroughly that Hezbollah will not recover in the near future.

Israel wants to accomplish these goals without occupying Lebanon (again) and without engaging in a counterinsurgency war. It has operational choices, which is what the oft-repeated debate about the effectiveness and dangers of airpower has been about, but the strategic die is cast.

The political objective of Hezbollah is to punish the IDF as no Arab forces have done. This will bring it political influence in Lebanon and among the Palestinians and more importantly will vault it into ideological paramountcy among the jihadists, a prospect pleasing indeed to its patrons in Iran.

The greatest political fear of the Israelis is that their neighbours will improve their technological capability and create an effective culture of war. That is why the audacious kidnappings of IDF soldiers matter -- such tactical prowess is new. So too is the audacity of taking the strategic initiative. Heretofore such operational initiatives have been an IDF monopoly.

By engaging and resisting elite IDF units on the ground and by enduring Israeli air power, Hezbollah has already achieved a significant political victory. In contrast, none of the Israeli objectives have yet been achieved. Thus despite the blood-letting a genuine ceasefire, UN peace-keeping, or the fruits of diplomacy remain remote.

Cooper is a professor of political science at the University of Calgary and director of the Alberta Policy Research Centre of the Fraser Institute.

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

Should Canada seek talks with Hezbollah?

The Toronto Star

August 27, 2006 Sunday

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A16

Length: 498 words

Body

If Canada were to seek talks with Hezbollah, why not, in the name of consistency, extend a hand to Hamas and Al Qaeda? Better yet, we could remove all three from our terror list. No, we should not negotiate with terrorists, no matter what Kofi Annan, or other proponents of the recent ceasefire in the Middle East might like to believe. A ceasefire, by the way, which offers nothing toward fixing any of Lebanon's domestic dilemmas.

Were we to engage in such fecklessness, what would we discuss with Hezbollah? Its stated desire is the eradication of the state of Israel, with a promise that Jewish and Western targets be attacked the world over.

So would we, say, negotiate a reasonable number of attacks per year?

Or, would we talk about allowing Hezbollah to eradicate a certain percentage of Israelis? They are also fans of Islamic law. Would we negotiate an acceptable number of rights women could give up?

But, say some, Hezbollah helps seniors and orphans. It is a safe bet they kill more of the former and create more of the latter than anything else. Yes, Hezbollah has a political wing. But it remains a terror organization. Inside Lebanon, criticizing Hezbollah and its sponsors, Syria and Iran, puts one in danger. What are we telling the moderate Lebanese, who fear speaking out, if we negotiate with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah?

Hezbollah has, over decades, consistently shown us who it is, with attacks in South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Hezbollah terrorists were famous hostage-takers in the 1980s, suicide bombers (including the truck bomb that killed 241 U.S. Marines), and hijackers (the group that hijacked TWA Flight 847 was linked to Hezbollah).

Even were one to romanticize Hezbollah as a "resistance" movement, born of Israel's ill-advised invasion of Lebanon, what "justifications" can currently be given? Israel has not occupied a centimetre of Lebanon since 2000. What, exactly, is Hezbollah resisting? Oh right. I forgot. The continued existence of that pesky Jewish state. Let us not give its goals legitimacy by talking with Nasrallah, or his acolytes.

This past week, Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj amassed his share of headlines.

But the words of one of his travelling companions on the trip to Lebanon, sponsored by the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations, deserve attention. New Democrat Peggy Nash was quoted as saying, "If the political parties in Lebanon who may disagree with Hezbollah, and be opposed to them and their philosophy, can figure out a way to work with Hezbollah and try to get along internally, then perhaps we should take a cue from that."

We should take cues from Lebanese politics? Okay. How about Canada emulate Lebanon's Chronic Political Assassination Syndrome? Or its sectarian violence? Or its civil war?

Should Canada seek talks with Hezbollah?

Instead, let us take a cue from common sense, and not talk with **Hezbollah**, or remove it from any terror list. It took us far too long to put it there.

Rondi Adamson is a Toronto-based writer. (rondi.adamson @ gmail.com)

Load-Date: August 27, 2006

End of Document

Israel and Hezbollah: end game

The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island)

August 3, 2006 Thursday

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A6

Length: 753 words

Byline: Dyer, Gwynne

Body

The kill ratio is becoming a problem: Israel has been killing about 40 Lebanese civilians for every Israel civilian who is killed. They are all being killed by accident, of course, but such a long chain of accidents begins to look like carelessness, and even in Israel and the United States many people are getting uneasy about the slaughter.

Elsewhere, the revulsion at what is happening is almost universal, and the death of so many women and children at Qana has greatly intensified the pressure on Israel and its de facto allies, the United States and Britain, to stop the war.

They are already making tactical concessions to lessen the pressure. Israel "partially suspended" its bombardment of Lebanon for 48 hours, and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice promised to let the United Nations Security Council consider a resolution calling for a ceasefire this week. But Israel's generals still want another 10 days to two weeks of war to batter Hezbollah into submission, and neither Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert or his loyal allies in Washington and London are really willing to override them yet.

The real trick, in terms of keeping American and British public opinion on side, is to blur the sequence of events that led to the war and present it as a desperate Israeli struggle against an unprovoked onslaught by thousands of terrorist rockets. As Prime Minister Tony Blair told the BBC, "It cannot be that Israel stops taking the action it's taking but Hezbollah continue to kill, kidnap, and launch rockets into the north of Israel at the civilian population there."

There was an unprovoked Hezbollah attack on the Israeli army on July 12, seeking to kidnap soldiers who could be held as hostages and eventually exchanged for Lebanese prisoners who have been illegally held in Israel since the latter ended its 18-year military occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000. And no doubt the reason Israel held onto those prisoners in the first place was to have them as hostages in some future prisoner exchange with Hezbollah. That's how the game is played locally.

In the course of grabbing the Israeli hostages on July 12, Hezbollah fired rockets and mortars at the northern Israeli town of Shlomi as a diversion, but nobody was hurt there. And apart from that, no Hezbollah missiles struck Israel that day. Indeed, none had been fired at Israel for at least four years, although there were regular skirmishes between Israeli soldiers and Hezbollah fighters along the frontier. Hezbollah had the rockets, but they were not mad terrorists.

During the following 24 hours, however, Israel launched massive air strikes and artillery bombardments the length and breadth of Lebanon, striking Beirut airport, Lebanese air force bases, the Beirut-Damascus highway, a power

Israel and Hezbollah: end game

station, and all sorts of other non-Hezbollah targets and killing many civilians. And it was only on July 13 that Hezbollah rockets begin to hit cities all across northern Israel.

Nobody has clean hands here. Israel seized on the kidnap operation as the pretext for a massive onslaught aimed at destroying Hezbollah's resources and removing it from southern Lebanon - a perfectly legitimate goal, in line with United Nations resolution 1559, but not one that the UN had envisaged as being accomplished by Israeli bombs. Hezbollah may just have been trying to raise its profile in Lebanon and the wider Arab world with a small but successful operation that humiliated the Israelis - or it may have foreseen the likelihood of a massive Israeli over-reaction, and calculated that it could ride it out and win from it.

Whether that was its intention or not, it probably will ride it out and win. Having fired at least 90 missiles at Israeli cities every day but two since the war began - though they only kill an average of one Israeli a day - Hezbollah launched only two rockets on Monday (probably a crew that didn't get the message to stop in time). If there should be a ceasefire in the next week, it will emerge the victor, since no international peace-keeping force is going to fight the kind of campaign that would be required to dig it and its weapons out of south Lebanon's hills and villages.

And if there is no ceasefire, then the Israeli Defence Force will be granted a further opportunity to demonstrate that it cannot do so either. At least, not at a cost in Israeli soldiers' lives that would be remotely acceptable to the Israeli public.

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

Load-Date: August 3, 2006

Charity Wins Deep Loyalty For Hezbollah

The New York Times

August 6, 2006 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 1; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: CIVILIANS

Length: 1541 words

Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon, Aug. 5

Body

Hezbollah paid for his wife's Caesarean section. It brought olive oil, sugar and nuts when he lost his job and even covered the cost of an operation on his broken nose.

Like many poor Shiites across southern Lebanon, Ahmed Awali, 41, a security guard at an apartment building in this southern city, has received charity from **Hezbollah** for years. He says he is not a member. He does not even know the names of those who helped him.

Hezbollah fighters move like shadows across the mountains of southern Lebanon; its workers in towns and villages, equally as ghostly, have settled deeply into people's lives.

They cover medical bills, offer health insurance, pay school fees and make seed money available for small businesses. They are invisible but omnipresent, providing essential services that the Lebanese government through years of war was incapable of offering.

Their work engenders a deep loyalty among Shiites, who for years were the country's underclass and whose sense of pride and identity are closely intertwined with **Hezbollah**.

Their presence in southern Lebanon is so widespread that any Israeli military advance will do little to extricate the group, which is as much a part of society as its Shiite faith.

"The trees in the south say, 'We are **Hezbollah**.' The stones say, 'We are **Hezbollah**,' " said Issam Jouhair, a car mechanic. "If the people cannot talk, the stones will say it."

Hezbollah is nowhere but everywhere. In this city, the gateway to the fighting and the location of several of southern Lebanon's largest functioning hospitals, clues about its fighters surface daily.

A doctor at one of the hospitals, Jebel Amal, said it currently had about 450 patients. Hospital officials, however, seemed eager to show off a few wounded **women** and children, but would not allow access to any other patients.

On Wednesday, a mass funeral was canceled. Authorities cited the security situation. Minutes later, the sound of rockets being launched swooshed from an area near where the burial was to have been held.

Charity Wins Deep Loyalty For Hezbollah

"Just because I'm sitting here in this cafe doesn't mean I'm not a resistance fighter," said Haidar Fayadh, a cafe owner, who was smoking a water pipe as his patrons sipped tiny plastic cups of coffee near pictures of Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah.

"Everyone has a weapon in his house," he said. "There are doctors, teachers and farmers. Hezbollah is people. People are Hezbollah."

The group is at once highly decentralized and extremely organized. Mr. Awali, whose job as a guard pays \$170 a month, far lower wages than average, ran out of money for food shortly after his second daughter was born. He mentioned this to one of his neighbors, and days later, people with bags of groceries showed up at his tiny one-room apartment.

"They just put it down in the middle of the room and left," said Yusra Haidar, Mr. Awali's wife, sitting on a stoop outside their building, her young daughters, now 6 and 9, eating grapes at her feet.

But it was the health insurance, when Ms. Haidar was facing a difficult pregnancy, that saved the family. They applied for and received the insurance by submitting photographs and filling out paperwork. Someone from Hezbollah -- he did not identify himself -- came to inspect their apartment, and ask about their finances, checking their application.

They were issued a medical card that they can use in any hospital in Lebanon, Mr. Awali said. The \$1,500 needed to pay for Ms. Haidar's Caesarean section was now taken care of. Mr. Fayadh's brother also is covered by the insurance, an alternative to state insurance that the group has made available to poor people for only about \$10 a month.

"This is what Hezbollah does," Mr. Fayadh said, with the Hezbollah station, Al Manar, flashing on the television screen behind him.

Most connections with the group are indirect. Its fighters are a part of the population, and identifying them can be close to impossible. On a mountain road not far from the Israeli border on Tuesday, a beat-up, rust-colored Toyota was parked with its doors open. Several men in ordinary clothes were standing on the road. They were in a hurry. One was carrying what appeared to be a hand-held radio, the trademark Hezbollah talking tool.

"No photo, no photo," he said, walking away from the car.

The next day, the same man, in the same clothes, was standing in a hospital parking as hospital authorities were preparing to bury 88 bodies in a mass grave.

"They are ghosts," said Husam, a thin unemployed man in a black T-shirt who was waiting for coffee at Mr. Fayadh's shop. "Nobody knows them."

Mr. Jouhair, the mechanic, says his son, Wissam, is a medic at the hospital in Bint Jbail, a town that is now largely leveled after Israeli fighter jets bombed it last week. Mr. Jouhair worked to avoid questions about his son, but it seemed clear he had been helping heal wounded fighters.

Hezbollah's help for Mr. Fayadh came in the form of a canceled electricity bill. Some months ago, a bill amounting to thousands of dollars came for his cafe. He could not pay it.

"Hezbollah intervened for me to get the price down," he said, fiddling with his empty plastic cup. "They said, 'This is insulting for the people.' "

The bill came from Beirut. The electric company had sent out bills for a large sum before, something that was particularly frustrating for Mr. Fayadh, who had to transfer his four children from private to public school two years ago, because he could no longer afford the \$1,000 annual fee for each child. He blamed the government of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, which he said was corrupt and arrogant, ignoring the needs of southerners.

Charity Wins Deep Loyalty For Hezbollah

That sentiment is expressed by many here, who see themselves as separate from the Lebanese in the north and center of the country who support a government coalition that is often referred to as March 14, for the day in 2005 when thousands rallied to support them.

"I don't trust them," Mr. Jouhair said, as a Hezbollah station played on a radio under a small tree near his tire changing shop. "They do not represent me."

Hezbollah members also act as silent police, keeping tabs on neighborhoods. Members in cars cruise about, stopping and asking questions at any sign of commotion. Late Friday afternoon, in a suburb of Tyre, men gathered to speak to a visitor and, within minutes, a bearded man in a button-down blue shirt and belted slacks walked up to the group.

"What's going on here?" the man said, squinting in the sun. "What is she asking about?"

Residents identified the man as the Hezbollah security officer in the neighborhood. He carried a hand-held radio and fielded three cellphone calls in the course of a few minutes. He refused to identify himself. When asked about Hezbollah in the area, he replied, "Hezbollah is us, from the smallest child to the oldest man."

The deep attachment to Hezbollah here has its roots in recent Lebanese history. In the Israeli invasion in 1982, Shiites across the south welcomed the Israelis, because they had come to fight the Palestinians, who had made their lives difficult for years. But as the occupation dragged on, Israelis came to be hated by the Shiites here, a feeling that is now passed on to small children growing up in the Lebanese south.

"What is that sound?" said Hani Rai, a neighbor of Mr. Jouhair, directing the attention of his small daughter Sara to the whine of a drone in the sky. "Voices of Israeli planes."

Sara, who is only 3, can already recite a chant glorifying Mr. Nasrallah.

Now, Hezbollah's military branch is separate from its social works, but in its early days it began together, organizing water delivery for people in Dahiya, the Shiite area in south Beirut, the scene of some of some of the most complete destruction in this war.

Several residents who knew Hezbollah members said they were trained and groomed for up to five years before becoming full-fledged members. The military wing is so secretive that sometimes friends and family members do not know a loved one is a part of it.

Mr. Rai said he was stunned to learn that a close friend of his, Muhammad, was a Hezbollah fighter. He learned of his membership only after his killing some years ago. His body was returned to his family in an Israeli military prisoner exchange, Mr. Rai said.

"When he would leave for a mission, he would say, 'I'm going to Beirut,' " he said.

Mr. Rai has also been helped by Hezbollah: It paid for a relative's heart operation.

In Tyre, even in this time of war, the group is still as elusive as ever. On Saturday afternoon, after Hezbollah fought Israeli commandos for several hours here just before dawn, men with serious faces, several of them bearded, walked purposefully through the halls of Hakoumi Hospital. Several stood by a large stack of coffins. One studied a list. Another looked distraught, his hair disheveled, his clothes unkempt. When a reporter approached, they turned and walked in the other direction.

"You are sitting here. Do you see anybody from Hezbollah?" said the hospital director, Dr. Salman Zainedine. "I've been here for a long time. I haven't seen one Hezbollah body in this place."

Graphic

Photos: Ahmed Awali, a security guard, ran out of money after a daughter was born. He told one of his neighbors, and soon bags of groceries arrived.

Haidar Fayadh, left, watched the Hezbollah channel at his cafe in Tyre on Friday. Hezbollah took care of a huge electricity bill he could not pay. (Photographs by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)(pg. 10)

Load-Date: August 6, 2006

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Hezbollah wins by looking strong

The Toronto Star
July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 381 words

Byline: Sally Buzbee, Associated Press

Dateline: CAIRO, Egypt

Body

It's hard to defeat a group of extremists who can mingle among civilian supporters and are pros at propaganda. Israel's military faces the same conundrum the United States has encountered elsewhere - finding that air strikes are costly in civilian deaths and public support, while ground attacks are risky for soldiers.

That does not mean Hezbollah is winning militarily.

But the guerrilla group has so far avoided a knockout by Israel, even as international pressure for a ceasefire has grown. And in the war of perceptions, Hezbollah has only to look strong against Israel and make Israel look bad to win across much of the Arab world, many analysts say.

That was brought into stark focus yesterday when an Israeli air strike flattened a house in southern Lebanon, killing more than 50 people, mostly women and children.

Israel apologized for the deaths and blamed Hezbollah, accusing it of using civilians as human shields.

But the backlash against Israel and its ally America was swift: Lebanese officials reacted in fury and Beirut protesters attacked a UN building and burned American flags. At an emergency UN Security Council meeting, Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was "deeply dismayed" his previous calls for a ceasefire had been ignored.

The United States knows this scenario well from Iraq and elsewhere: Pictures of dead children and women killed in air strikes can hurt support even among friends.

Yet the alternative for Israel, if it wants to push back Hezbollah, is either a full-scale ground war or a lengthy series of smaller-scale incursions to eliminate the group's positions along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

For now, Israel says it has no plans for a big land invasion, still leery from its costly occupation of south Lebanon from 1982 to 2000.

But the smaller incursions have brought relatively high Israeli casualties and low apparent impact: UN observers in south Lebanon say Hezbollah's supply of rockets remains adequate to fight, and most of its leaders have survived.

Hezbollah's strength comes from its ability to hide fighters and weapons - both among the populace and in bunkers and tunnels - who can pop up once the Israelis pass by and fire more missiles toward Israel. That ability springs from its wide support among people in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah wins by looking strong

Analysis

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

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Hezbollah's missiles back in Lebanon

The Sunday Times (London)

November 12, 2006

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; News; Pg. 25

Length: 595 words

Byline: Uzi Mahnaimi, Tel Aviv

Body

FOUR months after Israel launched its onslaught against Hezbollah, the Lebanese guerrillas are back in south Lebanon stronger than ever and armed with more rockets than they had before the conflict, according to Israeli intelligence.

During the month-long war, which began on July 12, Hezbollah fired 200 to 250 rockets a day into Israel, killing 43 civilians and terrorising much of the north of the country.

"Since the ceasefire, additional rockets, weapons and military equipment have reached Hezbollah," said an Israeli intelligence officer. "We assume they now have about 20,000 rockets of all ranges -a bit more than they had before July 12."

Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, has confirmed the Israeli estimate. In a recent interview with al-Manar, the Hezbollah television station, he claimed his organisation had restocked its arsenal and now held at least 30,000 rockets, sufficient for five months of war.

Israeli military intelligence has warned the government that renewed fighting with Hezbollah, which it regards as a terrorist organisation, should be expected as early as next spring.

In response, Israeli forces have taken emergency action. They have postponed a plan to reduce the length of national service -currently 36 months for men and about 24 months for women -and are stepping up production of better armoured tanks.

They are also grouping all special forces into a single new division and are developing laser technology, jointly with the United States, to shoot down Hezbollah's rockets.

On the border with Lebanon it is easy to understand Israeli concerns. A sniper from the Israeli 50th infantry brigade said last week that Hezbollah was active, although its members wore civilian clothes rather than uniforms.

The sniper, a 24-year-old lawyer from New York on national service, watched through his gun sight as a young man carrying an AK-47 assault rifle climbed from a Jeep. "He was walking quickly and all of a sudden he disappeared into a hidden shelter," he said. "Then the guy went back to the Jeep and back to the tunnel, checking how quickly he could get there. Then he climbed into the Jeep and drove away."

He added: "We feel that Hezbollah are constantly there, though we rarely see any weapons."

Hezbollah's missiles back in Lebanon

The Israeli military estimates that at least 5,000 rockets are hidden in secret shelters along the border, which it failed to find before the ceasefire came into effect on August 14.

Iranian-made long-range Zelzal rockets, which could reach Tel Aviv, have been stored in hidden locations. "We're now in a race to locate the new rockets," said a Mossad source.

Tracking down the Iranian rockets was one of Israel's few military successes in the summer. According to sources, the Israeli air force destroyed them on the first night of battle. "We believe **Hezbollah** have learnt their lesson and it will be much harder to locate them next time," said the source.

Israel has not yet found a way to tackle the threat from the short and medium-range rockets. It is developing the Nautilus laser-guided cannon in an attempt to intercept them. "It still remains to be seen if the laser gun will work," said another source. "But it will take up to three years and might be too late for the next war."

Israel is alarmed at the burgeoning self-confidence of Nasrallah and what it perceives as his intention to undermine Lebanon's fragile government and take over the country's politics.

Talks in Beirut to defuse the crisis collapsed yesterday. Nasrallah has set a deadline of tomorrow for his demands to be met or he will stage mass demonstrations.

Load-Date: November 12, 2006

End of Document

Hezbollah stages a massive 'victory' celebration

The International Herald Tribune

September 23, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 683 words

Byline: Michael Slackman and John O'Neil

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Defying Israel and the United States, Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, appeared at a giant "victory" rally Friday and declared that the militant group still possessed 20,000 rockets and would never disarm.

"No army in the world is strong enough to disarm us," he told a cheering crowd that appeared to number in the hundreds of thousands.

Nasrallah's presence was meant to underscore the idea that Hezbollah had triumphed over Israel, which has vowed to kill him. It was the first time he had been seen in public since July 12, when he announced the capture of two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid, the event that precipitated Israel's 34-day invasion of southern Lebanon.

His speech was both a fiery tirade addressed to Israel and the United States and a giddy celebration of Hezbollah's strengthened position within Lebanon since the end of the war.

"During the war, I said we had 11,000 rockets, but it was really more," he told the crowd. "Is it 12,000?" some members of the audience called out.

"Keep counting!" he replied.

"Is it 13?"

"Forget counting!" he said, to hearty laughter. "We haven't even begun rearming, and we have more than 20,000!"

Israeli officials have estimated that Hezbollah has about 10,000 rockets, mostly short-range Katyusha missiles that could not reach Israeli territory if the group is prevented from operating south of the Litani River, the area where a UN-supported peacekeeping force is being deployed under the cease-fire agreement.

At one point in Nasrallah's speech, which was part olive branch, part power-play, he called on the pro-Western governing coalition in Lebanon to step down in favor of a government of national unity one in which Hezbollah would probably hold more than the two cabinet seats it won in elections last spring. He also warned UN peacekeepers not to spy on "the resistance."

Nasrallah congratulated the crowd for what he called a "divine, historic and strategic victory" over the United States as well as Israel, and said the conflict was "an American war" because Washington provided the weapons, planning and diplomatic support that made possible the Israeli assault on Lebanon's infrastructure.

Hezbollah stages a massive 'victory' celebration

When the fighting ended, he said, it was not because of the suffering of the Lebanese or any weakness on the part of Hezbollah, but because "the Zionists realized that if it continued, it would be a catastrophe."

"The Americans agreed to stop the war, not for the women, not for the children of the Lebanese they stopped the war for Israel," he said.

He said the Bush administration had allowed the war to go forward as part of the plan to create "a new Middle East."

"This Middle East was illegitimate," he said, and its defeat has become an inspiration "for people who fight for their freedom and dignity" around the world.

The rally Friday once again demonstrated Hezbollah's organizational abilities, which have allowed it to take the lead in the reconstruction of southern Lebanon, reinforcing the sense that it, rather than the central government, is the dominant force in the country.

Many people at the rally said they had walked to Beirut from southern Lebanon, setting out early in the week.

The vast area in the Beirut suburbs where the event was held was filled with one-piece white plastic chairs that had been set up the day before, with a hat of red, green or white Lebanon's national colors on each chair. Thousands of yellow Hamas flags were waved steadily during the speeches and the martial choral music that preceded Nasrallah's surprise appearance.

Some Lebanese have criticized Hezbollah for its role in the start of the war. Shortly after the cease-fire, Nasrallah said in a televised address that the cross-border raid and capture of the two Israeli soldiers was a miscalculation and that he would not have ordered the raid if he had known how fierce the response from Israel would be.

But on Friday he said that part of the Israeli and U.S. plan had been to set the rest of Lebanon against Hezbollah by inflicting widespread punishment. "They thought that we would be divided," he said.

Load-Date: September 27, 2006

Lebanon Army Goes Into Area Hezbollah Rules

The New York Times

August 17, 2006 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1485 words

Byline: By JOHN KIFNER and ROBERT F. WORTH; Greg Myre contributed reporting from Jerusalem for this article, and Warren Hoge from the United Nations.

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, Thursday, Aug. 17

Body

The Lebanese Army moved into the country's south at dawn on Thursday, a day after the cabinet approved the deployment under a United Nations-mandated cease-fire, but finessed the delicate issue of disarming Hezbollah.

At several points, soldiers crossed the Litani River, about 15 miles north of the Israeli border, into the long-held separate realm of Hezbollah.

A column of more than 100 trucks, troop carriers and jeeps, flying red-and-white Lebanese flags, streamed through a makeshift bridge on the Litani to the town of Merj 'Uyun, Reuters reported. Some vehicles towed artillery pieces, others carried troops and equipment.

Hezbollah fighters were not expected to resist the soldiers, nor to hand over their weapons. Instead, they probably would simply put their weapons into hiding and melt away into the civilian population.

The top Hezbollah field commander in the south, Sheik Nabil Qaouk, said as much on Wednesday.

"Just like in the past, Hezbollah had no visible military presence and there will not be any presence now," Sheik Qaouk told reporters in the hard-hit port city of Tyre.

He praised the army's deployment, but said Hezbollah would maintain its presence without displaying its arms. He added that since Israeli tanks were still in Lebanon, the guerrillas reserved the right to respond accordingly. A Hezbollah representative in Parliament, Hassan Fadlallah, was equally insistent, telling Al Jazeera television that his organization would not pull back over the Litani, that the fate of its arsenal was not open to public debate and that the army deployment had nothing to do with its presence.

Whether this approach would satisfy the terms of the Security Council resolution that calls for the disarming of nongovernment forces, particularly in the eyes of Israel, the United States and potential contributors to an international peacekeeping force, remained in doubt.

In Israel, skepticism about the plan was evident. Still, the Israeli Army said Wednesday that it had started to hand over positions in Lebanon to United Nations troops.

Lebanon Army Goes Into Area Hezbollah Rules

Hezbollah guerrillas, known in Lebanon as "the resistance," have operated in the south for years. They are almost entirely local men hardened by 18 years of Israeli occupation after its 1982 invasion.

During that time, they lived and worked in their native villages, building an elaborate social-service network and extensive underground fortifications and stashes of modern weaponry that astounded Israel in a month of bitter fighting. "No one knew they had these things, not the military, not the intelligence," said an equally astonished Lebanese Army general, speaking privately.

After the vote by the cabinet, which has two **Hezbollah** ministers, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora went on television with a lengthy, sometimes emotional, appeal for unity, expressing a wan hope that **Hezbollah's** arms would somehow disappear. The army deployment, he said, would end a "mentality of statelets."

"There will be a single state," he said, "with the sole decision-making power. There will be no dual authority. There will be no armed presence outside state authority," he said without referring to **Hezbollah** by name. "Any failure to carry out this right will risk our country's becoming the scene of regional and international conflicts."

In Israel there were, to say the least, strong doubts about the plan.

Danny Yatom, a Parliament member who is a former director of the Mossad intelligence service, said, "There is no doubt that **Hezbollah** must follow the decision in its entirety, and it is the responsibility of the Americans and the French as well as the other members of the Security Council and the government of Lebanon to bring about the disarmament of **Hezbollah** and have it driven up north past the Litani."

A Likud member, Yuval Stienmetz, said: "Whoever does not complete the annihilation of the enemy must not be surprised that the enemy does not volunteer to annihilate itself. Israel should have taken over southern Lebanon and cleaned out **Hezbollah** several weeks ago, and unless this is done now, Israel will be forced to do it sometime in the future."

Amid the growing debate in Israel over the handling of the war, Israel's defense minister, Amir Peretz, appointed a panel to investigate how the military and the ministry had performed. The panel will be headed by Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, a former army chief of staff, and will include a number of other retired generals.

Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy of France met in Beirut with Mr. Siniora to discuss the possible composition and dispatch of a strengthened United Nations force. France is expected to form the backbone of the force, but it is still uncertain what other nations will join the effort, which is expected to number about 15,000 troops. Some 45 countries have expressed interest.

In Berlin, the German government said it would not send troops but would provide policing for the Syrian border, naval patrols and engineers to rebuild bombed bridges.

In the hard-hit Shiite suburbs south of Beirut, **Hezbollah** supporters fanned out to assess war damage. Around them, residents and visitors wandered in stunned silence through a charred, bombed-out landscape. Someone had hung a banner with the words "Made in U.S.A." over the ruins of a collapsed building.

Here and there, gunmen could be seen watching over the streets. But the group's army of civilian volunteers and its advance plans for rebuilding were far more apparent.

One man walked down a rubble-strewn street holding a stack of damage assessment forms. He carried a baseball cap with the name and symbol of Jihad al Binaa, the **Hezbollah** reconstruction committee. "This not overnight work," said the volunteer, a 30-year-old architect who declined to give his name. "The work being done now was prepared over the past month, with the collaboration of architects and engineers."

His map included numbers for each building on the small sector he had been assigned. There were forms for each building, with spaces for the names of every resident and a description of damage to the units and needs. Photographs were being taken, to be used as comparison after the rebuilding has been done, he said.

Lebanon Army Goes Into Area Hezbollah Rules

He is one of 250 to 300 architects and engineers already assessing damage, he said, and the group hopes to finish 70 percent of that work in the Dahia, or Shiite suburban area, this week. Then will come the second and third phases, he said, with the group reimbursing residents for damage and starting rebuilding.

The plans also include a strong dose of publicity for Hezbollah. A few blocks away, volunteers had set up a tent and plastic chairs for the news media, and Ghassan Darwish, the group's Beirut information officer, was giving interviews.

The group divided the Dahia into 70 districts, each with two to four buildings in it, Mr. Darwish said. The goal was to get people back into their homes, or into alternative houses, or to give them enough cash to rent another apartment, within 72 hours, he said. In the meantime, a team of architects was being assembled, he said, from Dubai, Qatar, Egypt and Syria as well as Lebanon, to reconstruct the entire Dahia within a year. The money, he said, was coming from "people who hate Israel and believe in the resistance."

"There is contact between us and the government," Mr. Darwish said. "But we won't wait for the bureaucracy. These are the people who protected the resistance, and we believe they have the right to roofs over their heads within 24 hours."

Down the street, Amina Qausan, a 39-year-old shopkeeper in a gray abaya, looked through the ruins of her clothing store. The floor was littered with glass and rubble, and the walls had come down in the back of the shop. The women's dresses she sells were covered with dust.

"There has been no theft, and this is because of the good men of the resistance," she said. "In every place there are people who commit crimes, but with Hezbollah patrolling that cannot happen."

At least 200,000 people have already returned to the Dahia area, said Robin Lodge of the United Nations World Food Program, which is providing aid throughout Lebanon.

Although Hezbollah is aiming to draw new support with its rebuilding campaign, some say the group could suffer as the reality of the war's damage sinks in.

"For the next two or three years, Hezbollah will be like the Salvation Army, tied up in rebuilding," said Michael Young, the opinion editor at The Daily Star, an English-language newspaper published in Beirut. "But the party cannot put Shiites through such trauma again for the foreseeable future, maybe a decade, which means its ability to attack Israel will be limited. The reason Hezbollah is so eager to rebuild is that they know the condition of Shiites today could turn the community against them if it's not dealt with effectively."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Hezbollah supporters swept the rubble yesterday in a southern suburb of Beirut destroyed by Israeli bombs. (Photo by Kevin Frayer/Associated Press)(pg. A16)

Load-Date: August 17, 2006

Don't fall for Hezbollah's PR campaign

University Wire

August 24, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 Daily Trojan via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 627 words

Byline: By Rachel Williams, Daily Trojan; **SOURCE:** USC

Dateline: LOS ANGELES

Body

The most recent conflict taking place in southern Lebanon and in Israel is not a war between two Middle Eastern nations. It is a frustrating war between Israel and a terrorist organization that infiltrated throughout Lebanon beginning in 1982, led by Sheik Ibrahim al-Amin. It is also the same war that our nation is fighting in Iraq, and that the Western world is fighting as a whole: a war against Islamic extremism and terrorism.

Hezbollah, although formed in 1982, officially began its terrorist campaign against Israel in 1985. While **Hezbollah** supporters believe that the terrorist group arose to protect Lebanon from Israeli "occupation," the group has actually proven to be a sort of incurable cancer threatening the Lebanese people.

One of the reasons for Israel even entering Lebanon in the 1980s was because of an attempted assassination of Shlomo Argov, Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom, by terrorists in the Palestinian Liberation Organization from within Lebanon.

Just as Israel's neighbors started this war, they instigated the previous one, too.

With one of **Hezbollah**'s foundational goals the destruction of Israel, the group aimed to turn Lebanon into an Iranian-style Islamic state, and to institute an Islamic revolution within the nation.

In 1992, the current leader of **Hezbollah**, Sheik Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah stated that in Israel, "there is no difference between a soldier and a civilian, for they are all invaders, occupiers and usurpers of the land."

Basically, **Hezbollah** believes any Israeli death, be it a soldier, a nurse or a baby, to be legitimate. **Hezbollah** is also the group behind countless homicide bombings in Israel ever since the group's creation.

Even though **Hezbollah** terrorists initiated this war by capturing Israeli soldiers, and although **Hezbollah** is considered to be a terrorist organization by the United States, Canada and the Netherlands, many people still think Israel is at fault. Since Israel has one of the strongest, most skilled armies in the world, and because audiences around the world see painful photographs of injured people in Lebanon, it is easy to feel angry at the Israeli army or at war in general.

Even more disturbing, however, are the tactics that **Hezbollah** uses against its own civilians to create their image.

Don't fall for Hezbollah's PR campaign

While I am saddened by the photographs that I have recently seen on the front pages of newspapers depicting destroyed buildings and crying Lebanese women, I do not judge this situation based on what I see. Instead, I read beyond the pictures, which is essential to really understand the situation. To judge Israel based on the pictures is what Hezbollah wants: to leave a skewed impression of the real state of affairs.

A major concept necessary to grasping Hezbollah's strategies is that its terrorists dress, look and pose in pictures like civilians. It's quite possible that many of the men photographed in front-page pictures assessing the damage of a destroyed town in Lebanon are in fact members of Hezbollah, or have assisted the group.

Furthermore, they purposefully launched rockets into Israel from within towns so that when Israel retaliates in an attempt to destroy the terrorist group, Israel looks like a ruthless nation, which is the opposite of what it is. Israel, like any nation has the option of doing, defended itself against a cruel and unprovoked attack.

War is messy and horrible no matter what.

Unfortunately, war is necessary against this kind of enemy - a category that includes Hezbollah as equally as it does al-Qaida.

Just as war ended Nazism as a threat to our nation, Israel has been with us in the same fight against terrorism.

Hezbollah's attempt to conceal its face by manipulating the media should not deter us from our goal.

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Load-Date: August 24, 2006

RECONCILING DIFFERENCES

The Nation (AsiaNet)

September 10, 2006 Sunday

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Length: 1158 words

Byline: By Hameed Akhtar Niazi

Body

Every foreign army - including the Israelis - comes to grief in Lebanon. So, how come George Bush and Blair, after their inevitable disasters in Afghanistan and Iraq believe that a NA To-led force is going to survive on the south Lebanese border? The Israelis would obviously enjoy watching its deployment - it will be time for the West to take the casualties - but Hizbullah is likely to view its arrival as a proxy Israeli army. It is, after all, supposed to be a "buffer" force to protect Israel - not, as the Lebanese have quickly noted, to protect Lebanon - and the last NATO army that came to this country was literally blasted out of its mission by suicide bombers. -Robert Fisk

Independence Day in Pakistan coincided with ceasefire (of sorts) in Lebanon. Both occasions called for celebrations. Hizbullah deserves accolades for giving haughty Israel a bloody nose. However, this piece seeks to address the grave dangers that the entire Ummah is currently facing. The sole super-power of the world, the US, blindly supported by UK, has gone berserk.

Justifying its wildly aggressive ventures into the Muslim world on the ground of fighting terrorism, it has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, in defiance of the world opinion in case of Iraq. Its foray into Lebanon through its armed-to-teeth-with-the-latest-US-weaponry Israel has turned out to be as brutal as can be. Israel's invasion of Lebanon is widely believed to be premeditated and is assumed to be aimed at Iran.

American stance that Israel had a right to defend itself is so preposterous that it deserves no comment. Israel has destroyed Lebanon's entire infrastructure, killed about a thousand Lebanese, mostly civilians including women and children, wounded another 3800, and displaced about 900,000 people. That Israel could not succeed in destroying Hizbullah in 33 days speaks volumes about the tenacity of its leadership and limited manpower.

Israeli invasion of Lebanon was highly traumatic for its population. However, it has produced two very positive results. First, it has succeeded in exploding the myth of Israeli army's invincibility. Second, Hezbollah's valiant defence against the armed might of Israel has united Shias and Sunnis (even Christians) as one people. In addition, Sayed Hassan Nasrullah, its leader, is now hero not only of Lebanon but also arguably of the entire Arab world, perhaps of the entire Muslim world.

What is termed terrorism by the Americans is actually the desperate act of the angry but weak and helpless people who otherwise cannot avenge the American atrocities committed against their brothers in faith. Though perfectly understandable this is utterly deplorable, and it certainly is not sanctified by Islam.

Alleged recent planning by some Muslim British youngsters to blow up US aircraft must be viewed in this light. The fact that Bush has termed these poor youngsters "Islamic fascists" is simply laughable. Coming, as it does, from the mouth of the most brutal fascist on this planet, it surely sounds highly strange. Jonathan Cook, a Briton living in

RECONCILING DIFFERENCES

Nazareth, has, in his objective article, titled "Standing with Islamic Fascists" (the News: August 14, 2006) aptly dealt with this issue. He asked as to what would be the reaction of officials at a US airport if he told them "...that I am appalled by the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon and Gaza... (and) ... if I described as nonsense the idea that Hizbullah or the political leaders of Hamas are terrorists".

He went on to explain that "... Hizbullah has acted with restraint for those six years, stockpiling its weapons for the day it knew was coming..." when Israel's "... appetite for conquest and subjugation will return." He wondered how would these officials respond if he told them that Hezbollah's rockets were "...fired in return for Israel's devastating and indiscriminate bombardment of Lebanon," and "... that this war... (was) not really about Lebanon or even about Hizbullah but part of a wider US and Israeli campaign to isolate and pre-emptively attack Iran."

With this perspective in mind, it is for Muslims to ponder as to how to meet the challenge from the West and Israel. Mention may be made here of the violent differences that have emerged between Shias and Sunnis after the Iranian revolution. Adherents of these two sects have been living side by side everywhere through the ages in relative harmony disturbed if at all through occasional manageable incidents. Iranian revolution seems to have somehow upset that harmony. Saddam Hussain was reported to have told the conciliatory committee of Muslim leaders including General Zia during the Iran-Iraq war that Iran was trying to export its revolution to Iraq.

The heightened animosity between Shias and Sunnis in Pakistan during recent years has also been partly attributed to Iran. It can be safely assumed that the present Iranian president, Mr. Mehmoood Ahmedi Nijad, a leader appearing in true Islamic mould, would like to correct this situation. In addition, corrected it must be to forge unity amongst the Muslim nations around the globe.

It is this scribe's firm opinion that the most important task for the Muslims today is to reconcile the differences between Shias and Sunnis wherever it exists. Pakistan and Iraq particularly come to mind in this context. In both these countries, Shias and Sunnis are badly but senselessly bleeding each other. It is for leaders with vision to address the problem.

In case of Iraq, a committee possibly composed of President Mehmoood Ahmedi Nejad of Iran, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, former Turkish Prime Minister Erbakan and former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammad, aided by local leaders of the two sects, should bring about reconciliation between Shias and Sunnis. Mention here may be made of the comments of the retiring British ambassador in Iraq and the top US general in the Middle East, Abizaid that Iraq is degenerating into civil war.

In Pakistan, leaders like Asghar Khan, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan and Syed Fakhar Imam, assisted by effective leaders of both the sects, should accomplish this task. Additionally and most importantly, outstanding Shia and Sunni scholars from various Muslim countries should be required by the aforesaid international committee to congregate in Haram Sharif, Makkah, during the coming Ramadan or Haj to iron out the mostly unfounded differences between Shias and Sunnis and authoritatively pronounce that there is no significant difference between the two sects and no real cause for their adherents to cut each others throats.

Approached sincerely and diligently, this is not an insurmountable task. The other two important issues requiring urgent attention of the Muslims are the promotion of science and technology and democracy in Muslim lands. Concerted effort must be made to achieve these two goals if we have to combat the onslaught of the West. The writer is the President Society of International Development Islamabad.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

As Hezbollah Seeks Power, Lebanon Is Feeling Edgy

The New York Times

November 13, 2006 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 15

Length: 1152 words

Byline: By MICHAEL SLACKMAN; Nada Bakri contributed reporting.

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, Nov. 12

Body

In the upscale center of Beirut, the normally somber atmosphere at the graveside of the assassinated former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, is increasingly tense. His former supporters, long the most powerful constituency in Lebanon, anxiously talk about the wave of Shiite political power washing over the country.

"After the first of the year, I am leaving to Qatar," one woman, Myrtha Hadidi, said Sunday, after she bowed her head and crossed herself in front of the grave. "The situation is very, very dangerous now. I think there will be a war again."

Across town, along the crowded streets of the poor Shiite neighborhood devastated by Israeli bombs during the summer war, there is despair over the destruction, but confidence in the growing power of Lebanon's Shiites.

"I am very optimistic about the future," said Ziad Kamaan, as he prepared to reopen his women's accessory store for the first time since the war ended in September.

Lebanon is in the middle of a political crisis that is not just a matter of jockeying for power, but a fundamental realignment of authority here -- and perhaps in the region. It is seen in the faces of those Sunnis and Christians who visit the Hariri memorial, nervous and drawn, and the confidence of those picking their way through the debris and destruction of the Shiite neighborhood, known as Dahiya.

"Hezbollah gave us dignity and pride; they made us feel like human beings again," said Ali Berro, owner of a small grocery in the neighborhood. "It's true that America and Israel devastated this country, but we will rebuild again, ourselves."

Long in the making, the 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah -- which was waged to crush the group's militia -- seems to have accelerated the rise of Lebanon's Shiites, from their onetime status as the nation's unwanted stepchild to the cusp of political dominance.

As a political party, a militia and social welfare organization, Hezbollah has used the devastation of the war with Israel to help strengthen the allegiance of Shiites, giving out money and services that the government has so far failed to deliver. Though no one knows for sure the size of each group in Lebanon -- there has not been a census since the 1930s -- Shiites are believed to make up more than 30 percent of the population, and by some estimates

As Hezbollah Seeks Power, Lebanon Is Feeling Edgy

have reached a plurality. But it would require a major leap for the Shiites to realize their political goal of dominance - and their efforts to reach it could threaten long-term instability, and perhaps bring armed conflict.

"This war has improved the Shiite identity and self-image," said Judith Palmer Harik, a professor at the American University in Beirut who has studied and written about Hezbollah. "They got something out of this war that was pretty uplifting."

On Saturday, Hezbollah and its main Shiite ally, Amal, provoked a political crisis when their five ministers resigned from the government after talks broke down about giving Hezbollah's alliance more authority.

The stage is now set for a showdown between Hezbollah and its allies, which are aligned with Syria and Iran, and the Sunni, Druze and Christian leaders who control the largest bloc in Parliament and side with the West.

Hezbollah has threatened to stage demonstrations as early as Monday, but Hezbollah officials said Sunday that they were waiting to see how their opposition responded and were considering all options.

The governing coalition is expected to make its counterstrike on Monday. The coalition, led by Saad Hariri, the son of the former prime minister, has tried to tar Hezbollah and Amal as tools of Syria and contends that their ministers resigned to block creation of a tribunal to hear charges in connection with the assassination of Mr. Hariri.

Syrian officials have been implicated in the United Nations investigations. The governing coalition has also charged that Hezbollah wants to control or block the government to prevent it from carrying out the provisions of Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the war with Israel.

The United Nations sent a proposed framework for the court to Lebanon last week, and Prime Minister Fouad Siniora has called a cabinet meeting for Monday to take up the proposal. If Lebanon does not adopt the proposal, the court could still be created by the Security Council, but it would be viewed here as having less legitimacy because it was imposed on the country.

"The hidden plot has been revealed," the governing coalition said in a statement issued Sunday. "It's a Syrian-Iranian plot to launch a coup against the legitimacy, stop the establishment of an international tribunal and foil Resolution 1701."

Mr. Siniora and his allies have said that even without the Shiite members of the cabinet, they could adopt the proposal and have it pass in Parliament. It would, however, probably be rejected by the pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud, who issued his own statement on Sunday saying the "government had lost its constitutional legitimacy and, as a result, any cabinet meeting is anti-constitutional and worthless."

But the maneuvering over the court is one piece of a much larger battle with Hezbollah on the offensive. Hezbollah is insisting that its alliance be given seats in the cabinet, to have veto power over all decisions. One Hezbollah official said the outcome of this fight could jeopardize the delicate system of power sharing between religious communities that was established in the Taif agreement of 1989, which brought an end to 15 years of civil war. "If they want to govern without Shiite ministers, then nothing would prevent a Shiite from running for president in the future," said Tarrad Hamadeh, the Hezbollah minister of labor, who resigned Saturday. "They are messing with the country's future."

In war-torn neighborhoods of the south, in the Bekaa Valley, and in Dahiya, often the only sign of authority is Hezbollah's yellow flag. Hezbollah remains the de facto government within its communities. "We can make a revolution in Lebanon, we can occupy Lebanon, but this is not what we want," said Bilal Naeim, a Hezbollah politburo member who is overseeing the group's relief effort. "We could make a coup d'etat."

Mr. Naeim works out of a large tent that Hezbollah put up in Dahiya to serve as a sort of office for reconstruction and distribution of assistance. Its office was flattened by Israeli bombs, but its work was not stopped. On Sunday, Ali Ahmed Raychouny entered the tent looking for help rebuilding his bookstore. Hezbollah is preparing to give out money for inventory damaged by the war, and since he and his employee and his landlord depend on the income from his bookstore, he wanted to make sure he was on the list.

As Hezbollah Seeks Power, Lebanon Is Feeling Edgy

"I never expect anything from the government of our country," he said. "I have five kids and I support three families. **Hezbollah** is in my blood."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Saad Hariri, right, the son of the slain former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, in Beirut yesterday with the Druse leader Walid Jumblatt, left front. (Photo by Lebanese government)

On Saturday, a Lebanese couple tried to salvage goods from their home, damaged by summer's Israeli raids. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)

Load-Date: November 13, 2006

End of Document

A SALUTE TO LEBANESE PEOPLE

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 16, 2006 Wednesday

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Length: 840 words

Byline: Aziz-ud-Din Ahmad

Body

On July 12 when **Hizbullah** kidnapped two Israeli soldiers from across the border to exchange them with scores of Lebanese languishing in Israeli jails, Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz, Israel's chief of staff, threatened "If the soldiers are not returned, we will turn Lebanon's clock back 20 years."

Speaking five days later on TV, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert put up three demands for the end to Israel's military campaign. He said the offensive would continue till the two captured Israeli soldiers were freed, **Hizbullah** was disarmed and the Lebanese army controlled the South. Tel Aviv in the meanwhile rejected with disdain **Hezbollah's** offer for the exchange of prisoners.

The Israelis expected that ruthless aerial bombardment would turn the public opinion in Lebanon against **Hizbullah** while artillery shells falling on South Lebanon villages would break the morale of the pro-militia local population. Israel had to eat the humble pie as after 34 days of the war as its army failed to achieve any of its objectives and had to agree to a ceasefire. The people of Lebanon have thus not only humiliated Israel but also its chief patron the US.

President Bush condoned Israel's killing of over a thousand unarmed Lebanese men, **women** and children not involved in any military activity. In the middle of the attacks, it refurbished Israel's depleting stock of ammunition including smart bombs that were to be dropped on the civilian population. This was a blatant act terrorism perpetrated jointly by the US and Israel. The Bush administration, backed by Britain, blocked efforts for an immediate halt to the fighting initiated at the UN security council, the G8 summit in St Petersburg and the European foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels. The US continued to provide a window to Israel to inflict maximum damage on **Hizbullah** till it found Israel that was in thick soup.

During her two day visit to the Middle East Condoleeza Rice declined to call for an immediate cease-fire, saying that "we cannot return to a status quo ante, which extremists at any time can break" It is time for a new Middle East, Rice declared. "It is time to say to those who do not want a different kind of Middle East that we will prevail, they will not."

The new Middle East as envisioned by the US was meant to be a region managed by Israel on behalf of Washington. The Arabs were to stop yearning to retrieve the territories lost to Israel. What are more regime changes were to take place to suit the US interests. The American dream has turned sour.

The credit goes to the steadfastness of the Lebanese people. Their will to resist was not broken by the destruction of their homes or the killings of their family members and friends. They patiently faced the air and sea blockade, which denied access to convoys carrying food, and medicines to the war affected areas.

A SALUTE TO LEBANESE PEOPLE

Instead of being marginalised and weakened, as desired by Israel and its patrons, the **Hizbullah** has emerged stronger and gained unprecedented prestige in the Arab world. It has exposed the myth of the Israeli army's invincibility. It has proved that a country in possession of nuclear weapons is powerless when fighting with a guerrilla force supported by the population. Most important of all, it has confirmed that despite having military machinery unparalleled in history the US is not able to enforce its will wherever it likes.

Israeli bragging continued for only a couple of weeks. On July 26, fulminating against **Hizbullah** which had continued to fire rockets on Israeli towns, Olmert declared "We will reach out for them, we will stop them, and we will not hesitate to take the most severe measures against those who are aiming thousands of missiles against innocent civilians for one purpose - to kill them. This is something that we will not be able to tolerate." Now Israel finds itself in a position where it has no option but to put up with a situation not to its liking.

Israel is facing other humiliations also. It had opposed any international force in South Lebanon saying such a force would obstruct its military retaliation capabilities. Olmert's sudden agreement to the deployment of a multinational force reflects a reluctant recognition that Israel cannot defend itself and needs an International force to act as a buffer with **Hizbullah**.

Lebanese families are returning now to their bomb out towns and villages making victory signs. They are brimming with optimism and a will to endure and rebuild. **Hizbullah** could not have fought so well without popular support. Possessing no air cover, artillery or armour, and armed only with assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and antitank missiles, the militia has borne the brunt of the Israeli offensive.

The only aggressive weapon it had on its disposal were the Katyusha rockets, which can be launched by a man who takes it from his house and can be back inside, as a civilian, in 10 minutes. With the support extended by the masses, the militia has defeated a force that considered itself invincible. E-mail: azizuddin@nation.com.pk

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

Hezbollah's art of propaganda

Ottawa Citizen

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14; David Warren

Length: 834 words

Byline: David Warren, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

My reader may be wondering what happened to all the coverage from Qana. As usual, when the liberal media begin to realize they've been had, the story disappears. But it is never properly corrected. We get a few days of blazing headlines and round-the-dial TV coverage of an "Israeli massacre," laden with innuendos, and then -- the fade-out. This will not do.

What happened at Qana was, almost certainly, what happened at Jenin in 2002, what happened on a beach in Gaza a few weeks ago, and what has happened on innumerable other occasions. The Israelis are instantaneously accused and convicted of a monstrous and perhaps intentional act of butchery, by people quite incurious about the facts. Their pathological hatred of "Zionism" is all the proof they need. These are people who seldom bother to shed even crocodile tears when Jews are blown to pieces by suicide bombers, or rockets are fired indiscriminately into their homes; but become tremendously excited when the news breaks that some Israeli retaliation may have gone wrong.

It took several months to clarify what had happened at Jenin -- a staged massacre. It will take several months before something like the true story emerges from Qana. By which time no one will be listening. (The ideologues will continue citing the original lies, regardless.) And yet in both these cases -- Jenin and Qana -- indications of fakery were visible from the beginning.

The Israelis quickly released real-time aerial reconnaissance footage to show Hezbollah firing rockets from between houses in Qana; then pulling the launchers immediately afterwards into civilian buildings. The Israeli military logged three air strikes against Qana in the course of the evening in question, including one next to the houses that were destroyed. So while it was possible that the Israelis had dropped the bombs that killed 54 people - - coincidentally all women and children -- it was, at the worst, unintended "collateral damage" near a valid military target.

The Israelis had extensively leafletted Qana for more than a week before the air strikes, telling civilians to evacuate, and warning just what would happen. Over the same period, Hezbollah pumped 150 Katyusha rockets into northern Israel from in and around this village. Hezbollah are notorious for refusing to allow civilians to evacuate (as United Nations observers have attested), and even preventing their flight at gunpoint. The argument that people could not get out because the Israelis had wrecked the infrastructure is rubbish. Once invited by Hezbollah, journalists got into the village quickly, all the way from Beirut. It follows that Hezbollah bears not some, but all of the moral responsibility for civilian deaths at Qana.

Hezbollah's art of propaganda

But that is to assume that the Israeli air strikes collapsed the houses. That theory begins to crumble, itself, when you look at the times logged for the Israeli air strikes. The houses were reported to have been destroyed more than seven hours after the air strike next to them (the other strikes were about half a kilometre away). And even if they collapsed by delayed effect, why were women and children allowed to spend the night in a building on the point of collapsing?

Now look at the media pictures. Immediately you see several fishy things. For one, the bodies displayed to the media are removed, successively, from a single neat hole in the ruins. There is no evidence of a rescue mission having been mounted, or of a continuing search for bodies elsewhere under the rubble. The battered bodies do not resemble those seen after real explosions and building collapses: their wounds do not look recent. All the blood and gore is on just one body.

Moreover, as bloggers such as "Eureferendum" have demonstrated, by juxtaposing press photos from various newspapers, the men showing off the bodies -- and identified in captions as "Lebanese rescue workers" -- are the same as had been present at previous alleged atrocities. They are obviously not rescue workers, but Hezbollah propaganda agents.

The way they are handling and displaying the bodies is entirely inconsistent with rescue work. For instance, they hold up a dead child's head for the cameras; they point to a pacifier still strung around his neck. But notice: the child's body is covered in plaster dust, but the pacifier is clean. Such evidence of staging is glaring, everywhere.

Obvious questions: Did the victims die at this site? Was the event staged to produce exactly the effect on "world opinion" that was achieved? And in a symbolic location, last used to a similar purpose in 1996?

I do not see how full-time journalists, specializing in the Middle East, can excuse themselves for not asking such questions immediately. I do not see why they cannot spot with their own eyes what bloggers can spot in their photographs and reporting, thousands of miles away.

We know all about Hezbollah. It is for the journalists now to explain what they were doing.

David Warren's column appears Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

A strategy against Hezbollah that has backfired badly

Yorkshire Post

August 1, 2006

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Length: 848 words

Body

Dr Karen Abi-Ezzi is a lecturer in Middle East politics at the University of Bradford's Peace Studies Department.

HEZBOLLAH has called the Israeli bombing of a three-storey building in Qana in south Lebanon a "turning point" in the conflict which started three weeks ago.

An Israeli precision guided bomb landed on a building where civilians had sought shelter. More than 60 people, including 34 children, were killed. Images of childrens' bodies covered in dust and caked in blood being pulled from the rubble have caused protests in Egypt, Iraq, Iran and other Arab countries.

In Beirut, the UN offices were attacked by protesters frustrated by the international community's inaction and apparent indifference 19 days into an Israeli assault on the country. More than 750 people, most of them civilians have been killed and close to a million - out of a total population of three-and-a-half million - have fled their homes, seeking refuge in open parks, schools and universities. Israel launched its attack in response to the capture of two of its soldiers by **Hezbollah** on July 12. Its stated objective was to "turn back the clock in Lebanon by 20 years".

It calculated that civilian suffering wrought by the Israeli onslaught would see people turning against **Hezbollah**. If this is true, it was a huge miscalculation as support for **Hezbollah** both within Lebanon, and across the Middle East and the Muslim world, has in fact increased.

So what is **Hezbollah** and what hopes are there for a way out of this conflict that risks spiralling out of control? **Hezbollah** is an Arabic word which means "Party of God". As a party of God and not an army of God, it is not solely a militia group. It came into being in 1982 in reaction to Israel's invasion of Lebanon and siege of Beirut. Its objective was to force Israel to withdraw from a swathe of land in south Lebanon, on Israel's northern border, an area constituting 10 per cent of Lebanese territory.

Following guerrilla warfare which saw **Hezbollah** develop strategies and execute tactics that proved increasingly costly for Israel, the 22-year occupation ended when Israel suddenly withdrew its troops in May 2000. **Hezbollah** was hailed as a victor not only in Lebanon, but across the Arab world as it succeeded in doing what no other Arab state had achieved - getting Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territory.

Its successes on the battlefield as well as its extensive charity work, providing services to the largest faith group in Lebanon and historically the poorest and most under-privileged sector of society, were translated into political gains when **Hezbollah**, under Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, became a player in the Lebanese political arena in the early 1990s. It now constitutes the largest single bloc in Parliament holding 14 out of 128 seats, including two Cabinet posts.

A strategy against Hezbollah that has backfired badly

The Shiites in Lebanon have always had very close relations with Iran which is a Shiite country. Young Lebanese clerics would go and study in Iran. Stronger links, which superseded the spiritual, were forged particularly after the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 with Hezbollah receiving financial assistance and training from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

The geopolitics of the region have also brought Syria into the equation which, although not a Shiite country, has served as a bridge between Iran and Lebanon.

Hezbollah kidnapped the two soldiers to use as bargaining chips to release some of the 10,000 prisoners in Israeli jails, including 380 children and 109 women, most of whom are held without charge. There was precedent for this calculation with a swap in 2004.

Three weeks ago, however, the rules of the game were suddenly changed with devastating effects. Politically, Israel's calculations seem to have failed. After three weeks of intensive shelling of Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon by land and air, the number of Hezbollah rockets fired into northern Israel has not substantially decreased. Support for Hezbollah has not diminished as Israel had predicted, but has grown across the sectarian divides within Lebanon and beyond. And it is unclear how a disproportionate use of force in Lebanon was ever going to achieve the release of its two captured soldiers.

In addition, the conflict has had wider negative repercussions. Whiffs of double standards were detected following the US ambassador to the UN John Bolton's comment that there was no "moral equivalence" between civilian deaths in Israel and Lebanon. An American blueprint for the region was also hinted at when US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke of "a new Middle East". Such statements have only served to increase anger on the Arab street, anger which has been directed not only at Israel, but also at its staunch backers, the United States and Britain. There was never going to be a military solution to this.

Diplomatically, however, it is unclear how a ceasefire is going to be declared and implemented without Israel losing face. An American call for a ceasefire might be one way out. And there is a glimmer of hope with a call for a UN fortified presence on the border.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

A Girl's Life Bound Close To Hezbollah

The New York Times

August 18, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11; THE MIDEAST CRISIS: CIVILIANS

Length: 1487 words

Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE

Dateline: AINATA, Lebanon, Aug. 17

Body

For Zahra Fadlallah, a serious 17-year-old, Hezbollah was always family. Two of her brothers were fighters. Her mother was an activist. A distant relative is a hard-line Hezbollah member in Parliament.

When the war hit, she stayed in this village to help her mother bake bread for the fighters. Both were killed in an Israeli airstrike in late July. Their bodies were dug out of the rubble this week.

Israel's goal of uprooting Hezbollah from southern Lebanon has frequently been questioned by critics who say the group is deeply woven into society and cannot simply be cut out. An afternoon with the Fadlallah family in this southern Lebanese village shows that the group not only is part of society, but also helps form the shape of life itself.

It has a vast social services network that pays for health care and education, performs weddings and reduces electric bills -- important considerations for Shiites in the south, who are some of the country's poorest citizens.

Israelis, noting that their troops left Lebanon six years ago, say that the southern Lebanese should have no basis for ill will toward them. But this is a culture of long memories, and six years is not a long time for the wounds of the 18-year occupation to heal.

When Zahra was 10, her mother was arrested. She watched while Lebanese working for Israeli authorities put a bag over her mother's head and led her out of the house. Her father was taken on the same day, and Zahra spent three days in the house by herself. Her brothers and sisters, already military age and deeply involved with Hezbollah, had moved to Beirut, north of the Israeli zone. Later, she hid while soldiers searched the house for weapons.

"It made a wound in her," said Ali Fadlallah, one of Zahra's brothers, who spoke in the living room of their family house as mourners came and went through a central hallway.

She had to help care for her father, who returned several days later badly beaten; he was refused admission to the local hospital because he was suspected as a Hezbollah collaborator, Ali said.

Every year in Ainata, villagers hold a poetry reading to commemorate the date that the Israelis withdrew. Zahra was one of the organizers.

A Girl's Life Bound Close To Hezbollah

In 1982, when the Israeli military first came to this area, it was to uproot local Palestinian guerrilla bases. That was a military success in the short term. But the Palestinians were outsiders, and Hezbollah is homegrown. With the end of the war, Hezbollah has emerged militarily diminished but far stronger politically. That new power will make voices like the Fadlallahs' even more important as the weak Lebanese state stumbles ahead.

"Hezbollah is from here," said Zahra's fiancé, a Hezbollah activist who would give only his first name, Fadhi. "It's the families of Ainata. It's not a stranger."

Not every family has a fighter. Hezbollah will not disclose the number of its fighters, but it is believed to be relatively small. Even so, tens of thousands of Shiites across south Lebanon are involved with Hezbollah in other ways. They hang banners and teach religious studies. They help in hospitals. They keep watch in neighborhoods.

The story of Zahra is typical. She was born in 1989, the same year one of her brothers, a fighter named Ahmed, and her older sister, Raja, moved to southern Beirut. Ahmed had joined Hezbollah and had been secretly working against Israeli forces in the south, and the Israeli administration, with a Lebanese staff, had discovered his work.

At that time, Hezbollah members communicated by secret missives, Ali said, and Zahra was the most inventive member of the family when it came to hiding them so they would make it through Israeli checkpoints.

"She had a lot of suggestions," said Ali, sitting in the living room. Photographs of family members standing with Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, hung on the walls. An empty, knee-high artillery shell stood in the corner, holding a spray of artificial flowers.

The occupation squeezed life into uncomfortable shapes, broadly increasing Hezbollah's popular appeal throughout southern Lebanon. The Fadlallah family remained separated until 2000, when the Israelis withdrew. Zahra was 11.

"I didn't see my family for six years," said a high school teacher and Hezbollah member who had come to pay his respects. "That would motivate anybody to want to change things."

Hezbollah views Israel as an enemy, saying that its very existence means that Muslim lands were taken, changing the region forever.

But while Hezbollah's political rhetoric sometimes refers to coming to Jerusalem and routinely refuses to acknowledge Israel as a state -- maps in bookstores here label northern Israel as Palestine -- voices in towns and villages across the south talk not of destroying Israel but of defending themselves from what they see as its aggressiveness.

"All the wars with Israel we were fighting to keep our land only," said Raja, Zahra's older sister, sitting in a black smock and black hijab on the living room couch.

Another brother, Muhamed, said that Israel had taken Muslim lands and that he could never accept it until they were given back. But even he did not see the Palestinians as a cause for Lebanon to invade Israel with the goal of destroying the state.

The high school teacher chimed in: "People of this village don't want anyone to come and take their land. Not Israel, not America, not even Iran."

Iran started Hezbollah in the 1980's, as part of its Islamic revolution. The group is believed to be responsible for the kidnapping of an American reporter, Terry Anderson, and for the bombing of a Marine barracks in 1983. The group later evolved, adopting a more moderate public face under the leadership of Mr. Nasrallah, who took over in 1992 and began deepening the party's social network. Programs started small: at the height of the Lebanese civil war, the group distributed water in hard-hit areas.

A Girl's Life Bound Close To Hezbollah

It was in Hezbollah charity work that Zahra found herself, Raja said. She wanted to become a doctor to help villagers and fighters. She seemed old beyond her years. In her teens, she kept the family finances. She was organized and never lost things.

"If you told her a secret, she would keep it," the teacher said, wearing a Dolce & Gabbana T-shirt and a pair of jeans.

The family kept resisting. Ahmed was killed in 1999 in the village of Haddata fighting Israeli soldiers. The living room where the relatives spoke had several machine guns propped in the corner behind a door. The fields and farmlands leading to the town are singed with black marks from Katyusha rocket launchings, perfectly round like giant cigarette burns.

When the war started, Zahra was planning her wedding. She approached it with her characteristic seriousness. Her purse, found in the crushed basement where she had been hiding when the bomb fell, contained a note she had written to herself, truths she felt she should live by once she became Fadhi's wife.

"Men talk more than women," she wrote in clear Arabic script. "Set priorities. Be frank. Talk everything through."

Even in that part of her life, Hezbollah was present. A photograph of Zahra and Fadhi smiling with her parents, standing next to Mr. Nasrallah in front of green satin-looking curtains, is framed in the living room. It was taken when they were engaged.

Once the airstrikes began and several artillery shells punched through Zahra's bedroom wall, she moved with her mother out of the house into a basement just down the hill. They continued to bake and cook, giving the food to men who then took it to the fighters.

Ali called many times, desperately trying to persuade her to leave the village. She would not. Soon after, telephone contact was lost.

By the end of the war, the house was still standing, relatively undamaged. The basement shelter, however, was smashed beyond recognition. Zahra, her mother and at least three others, including a 5-year-old boy, were killed in the room, according to the Red Cross.

Villagers, who used a 48-hour cease-fire part of the way through the war to get to Beirut, told Zahra's family she had been killed. Another brother, Amir, was killed in Bint Jbail, a neighboring village that is Hezbollah's traditional stronghold. He was working in the hospital there, Raja and Ali said.

On Wednesday, the house breathed a heavy sadness. Early in the afternoon, a new group of relatives arrived from out of town. Embraces were exchanged. Women wailed.

The family waited as the villagers and emergency workers continued to dig. A group of young men had dug a temporary grave on a small, leafy hill for Zahra the day before, but Fadhi had a different idea. He wanted to bury her next to her brother in the fighters' cemetery.

"This is where she should be," he said, looking down at the small plot, a yellow Hezbollah flag stuck through the metal of its gate.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

A Girl's Life Bound Close To Hezbollah

Photos: Raja Fadlallah's mother and sister stayed in the south to feed Hezbollah fighters

they died in an airstrike, and a brother died in Bint Jbail.

Workers searched for bodies in the rubble of a building where at least five people, including 17-year-old Zahra Fadlallah, were killed in an airstrike. (Photographs by Joao Silva for The New York Times)

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End of Document

Hezbollah seizes initiative as Israel is racked by doubt

The Sunday Times (London)

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Byline: Hala Jaber Taibe, southern Lebanon

Body

Militants rebound as the 'heroes' of Lebanon

SOON after 34 days of ferocious fighting in Lebanon came to a sudden halt last Monday, Salim al-Tayeb made his way cautiously to the edge of his village in the south of the country to retrieve the bodies of three Hezbollah comrades-in arms from beneath a heap of rubble.

His friends had been among the last of more than 1,300 people to die in the war and al-Tayeb wanted to make sure they were not left to rot where they lay, as so many others had been.

One by one, he hauled the bodies into the sunshine. Then he bowed his head as a Red Crescent ambulance drove them away.

It was two days before he allowed himself to share in the exultation that swept through Hezbollah ranks at the end of a conflict that many of the men had not expected to survive.

Yet for al-Tayeb, 40, there was a special reason to savour the moment. "I haven't even seen my newborn baby boy," he explained with a smile when I found him feasting on kebab sandwiches at a "victory" lunch laid on by the mayor in Taibe, their village two miles from the border.

Al-Tayeb had just telephoned his wife in Beirut. It was the first time they had spoken since the birth and he admitted shyly that he had said he missed her, loved her and yearned to see her. He had held back tears, he said, for fear of seeming weak to his other children, a girl of eight and a five-year-old son. "All they know is that their father is away working."

A different type of work now awaits al-Tayeb. He is not one of Hezbollah's 2,000 or 3,000 full-time military elite, but serves in its reserves, estimated at between 8,000 and 13,000 strong. For 20 years, he has fought when the need has arisen. But in civilian life he is an engineer and his skills are in urgent demand as Hezbollah launches a new battle to lead the reconstruction of the group's shattered Shi'ite strongholds in south Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut.

The campaign was getting under way in earnest this weekend. Fighters exchanged rocket launchers and military fatigues for bulldozers and brooms as they confronted the destruction they had brought down on Lebanon when they captured two Israeli soldiers during a cross-border raid on July 12.

Hezbollah seizes initiative as Israel is racked by doubt

Far from resenting Hezbollah's provocation, most of those returning to their ruined villages seemed to admire the fighters' resilience in having prevented the mighty Israeli army from rolling effortlessly through south Lebanon as it has in the past.

Despite their grief for family and friends who died and their shock at the heart-stopping scale of the devastation, Hezbollah is rallying them to its cause by offering cash, comfort, professional expertise and slick organisation that less efficient government officials can only marvel at.

In these critical first days after the war, Hezbollah and its financial backers in Tehran have seized the moment. They are appealing those who might have been expected to denounce Hezbollah from the wreckage of their homes. And they are entrenching their support among a growing army of sympathisers.

Iran's money is crucial. Estimates vary widely, but one Hezbollah source said as much as \$1 billion had been made available by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's president; another that the Iranian leader had placed no limit on the money pouring in.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has promised the Lebanese government \$500m and Kuwait another \$300m. But Hezbollah is giving Iran's money directly to the people - a year's rent for a homeless family here, a bundle of notes for some new furniture there, up to \$12,000 per family within 48 hours of registration. The money buys loyalty to the "Party of God" as well as the basic necessities.

The peace, like the war, is shedding new light on the organisation. Hezbollah has been widely portrayed in the West as a ragtag army of terrorist hotheads. Yet it has withstood the Israeli onslaught that was intended to crush it.

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the leader that Israel set out to kill, has not only survived but has also resurrected Hezbollah's operations on the ground within days of the ceasefire. Nasrallah is being praised in Lebanon and across much of the Middle East for having achieved the simple objective he set his group at the start of the conflict: to remain viable.

Nasrallah's declaration of "historic victory", though derided by Israel, has raised questions about the feasibility of enforcing the United Nations resolution that ended the conflict - and about Hezbollah's future role in Lebanon and the wider Middle East.

Security council resolution 1701 envisages that Hezbollah will remove its fighters from southern Lebanon and allow the Lebanese army and a beefed-up UN force to take their place; and that it will surrender its weapons. "Anything less would mean that the resolution is not being implemented," said Mark Regev, Israel's foreign ministry spokesman.

Yet last week Nasrallah vowed that his group would not be disarmed by "intimidation or pressure".

The Lebanese army pressed on with an operation to establish 15,000 soldiers in towns and villages south of the Litani river, an area that has been Hezbollah's preserve for the past 24 years.

But nearly 60% of the soldiers are Shi'ite. Many of them are from the same southern villages as Hezbollah's fighters and support them. Some have brothers and cousins in the organisation.

Mindful that any confrontation would split the army and raise the spectre of civil war, Elias Murr, the defence minister, has declared emphatically that his soldiers have no intention of disarming Hezbollah. "The army is not going to the south to strip Hezbollah of weapons and do the work Israel did not," he said.

Instead, a compromise of "hide and not seek" has been reached: Hezbollah will keep its weapons out of sight so that the army is not obliged to confiscate them.

The United Nations is trying to assemble a force of 15,000 but only the first 3,500 are expected to arrive within the next 10 days and some might take up to a year to arrive. Hezbollah perceives no greater threat from the UN force than it does from the Lebanese army.

Hezbollah seizes initiative as Israel is racked by doubt

Officials point out that it has lived with UN forces for years and expects to cohabit just as comfortably with this one. Apart from Italy, which has offered 2,000 to 3,000 soldiers, the biggest contingents pledged so far are from Muslim Indonesia and Malaysia which, like Hezbollah, do not recognise Israel's right to exist.

The Israelis have protested and the UN's deputy secretary-general, Mark Malloch Brown, called for more European countries to send troops in the first wave.

Although 50 French troops arrived yesterday, Malloch Brown expressed disappointment that France, which originally offered to lead the force, had promised only 200.

Nor does there appear to be any imminent prospect that Hezbollah will release the Israeli soldiers Ehud Goldwasser, 31, and Eldad Regev, 26. Nasrallah said no power on earth would make him set them free unless Lebanese and other Arab prisoners held in Israeli jails were released in return.

As for the demand that Hezbollah be removed from southern Lebanon, the reunions of fighters with their families in villages south of the Litani river last week emphasised the practical difficulties.

On his return to Taibe, Haider Fayad, a lean fighter aged 27 with sparkling green eyes, was embraced first by his mother Hajeh Zainab. In her elation after 35 days apart, she kissed his head, shoulders and chest, crying: "My love, my heart, my eyes."

Then Fayad's wife Fatima appeared, dressed in a black chador. She hugged him fiercely from behind, kissing his back again and again in an unusual display of intimacy. "I love him to bits. I love him to death," she said.

Fayad's four brothers are also in Hezbollah and their mother is proud of what they do. Many of the organisation's fighters are men like these who grew up in the southern villages. They live and work there when not fighting. Their families have been rooted in these villages for generations and intend to remain for generations, whatever any UN resolution might say.

From interviews with fighters in the past few days, three reasons emerged as to why they feel no pressure to leave southern Lebanon, let alone lay down their arms.

The first is their euphoria over what they regard as the triumph of the military tactics they deployed to resist Israel's offensive. They had prepared meticulously, stockpiling ammunition and training highly mobile units of ambush and anti-tank specialists to evade Israeli ground forces while maintaining contact with their commanders. These units proved particularly elusive from the air.

"Every step we made, every rocket we fired was following specific orders from the leadership," said Abu Mohammed, a Hezbollah medic who took part in anti-tank operations. "The Israelis forgot that this is our land. We know every contour of the landscape."

The second reason for Hezbollah's defiance is the reaction of 1m people to having been driven from their homes. Thousands streamed back last week to find entire areas flattened and their houses pancaked and pulverised. Many wept and railed, yet their anger was directed not at Hezbollah for picking the fight with Israel, but at the Israeli forces for wreaking such devastation.

Children summed up the mood as eloquently as anyone. Hassan Mussa, 14, and his 11-year-old brother Hussein, searched the debris of their home in vain for their PlayStation and a new bicycle. "The Israelis must pay us back," Hassan said angrily.

I accompanied Yunis Awdeh, a 47-year-old father of three whose flat in Beirut's southern suburbs had been destroyed, on his journey back to the town of Khiam, where he found the family home in ruins.

Scrambling over the stones, he squeezed himself into what had been the sitting room. "Where are my mother's sofas, where is the bedroom, where are the beds? Look, that was my favourite blanket," he said, pointing to a blue rug outside.

Hezbollah seizes initiative as Israel is racked by doubt

Then he intoned a phrase which is strange to western ears but was repeated over and over again by people who had lost everything: "The sacrifice is worthy of the resistance and Nasrallah's shoes."

The loyalty commanded by the belligerent yet humble Nasrallah constitutes the third reason for Hezbollah's air of resolution. Some fighters cried during a broadcast in which he said he kissed their feet in honour of their bravery on the front lines.

Hezbollah's ability not only to withstand the Israeli attacks but to create mayhem in northern Israel has earned Nasrallah stellar status in much of the Arab world.

Babies are being named after him, jewellery stamped with his face is suddenly in fashion and mobile ringtones can be heard of songs in praise of him.

Hezbollah's performance has emboldened the leaders of Syria to talk of retaking the Golan Heights from Israel and Iran to dismiss the latest international demands for a halt to its nuclear programme. Little wonder that Nasrallah shows no sign of yielding to critics at home or abroad.

One such critic, the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, warned that Hezbollah, which controls 14 of Lebanon's 128 parliamentary seats and two cabinet posts, had achieved a dangerously disproportionate influence that could condemn the south of the country to remain a battleground.

"We don't want Lebanon -or south Lebanon specifically -to be a testing ground for pre-emptive wars by America and Israel against Iran and Syria or the other way around," he said.

For now the fighters' families are celebrating reunions. But if the violence returns, they will not stand in Hezbollah's way. "Our wives understand the men they are married to," said al-Tayeb, the engineer. "In general they are women who have been brought up with the same mentality and ideology: Israel is our enemy, fighting the enemy is a religious and moral duty and martyrdom is an honour."

GAINS AND LOSSES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL HEZBOLLAH

Death toll 157: 40 civilian, 117 military 1,715: 1,150 civilian, 565 military*

Displaced 500,00 973,000

Stated aims To secure return of hostages and drive Hezbollah from southern Lebanon To 'stand steadfast'

Post-war claims 'We dealt a severe blow to Hezbollah's infrastructure and strength and also to the self-confidence of its people and leaders' uEhud Olmert 'We have achieved a strategic, historic victory' uHassan Nasrallah

Public reaction Olmert's approval rating has fallen from 78% to 40% Nasrallah's popularity has risen across the Middle East

* Israeli estimate

Load-Date: August 20, 2006

Civilian casualties: Part of Hezbollah's plan

University Wire

August 4, 2006 Friday

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Byline: By Erol Yayboke, Daily Texan; **SOURCE:** U. Texas

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Body

Disturbing. Awful. Excessive. These are the words widely used to describe the Israeli response to Hezbollah's provocations in northern Israel.

As the carnage continues, the international community grows increasingly weary of the conflict and mounting civilian death toll, much to the delight of Hezbollah. The Islamic militants know that only by winning over the international court of public opinion will Israel stop the offensive, a goal that can be achieved only through widespread images of death and destruction at the hands of the Jews.

Most upsetting is the number of people, including children, caught in the crossfire; at least 29 people died last Sunday in Qana, Lebanon, after Israeli bombers destroyed an apartment building containing mostly refugees from the conflict.

But who is to blame for this tragic loss of life? It was an Israeli plane that destroyed the building acting on orders from Israeli central command stemming from Israeli intelligence -- therefore Israel must be to blame, right? Although these statements are all true, to place sole blame would be narrow-sighted and incomplete.

The Israeli military crossed the border into Lebanon last week, launching a limited ground offensive that could expand to a full-scale invasion, much as it did in the early 1980s. The militants, left with an identity crisis following Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, now have a rejuvenated sense of purpose. The Zionist threat to Islam is now as alive as ever in the eyes of the militants, even if the military might to repel it is not. Fortunately for them, this is a more a battle of wills and of public perception than of bullets and shells.

Modern warfare has changed. Gone are the days when the longest spear prevailed or the most accurate projectiles crippled the organized opposition. The new soldiers fight from caves, apartment buildings and amongst women and children. Alongside Katyusha rockets that comparatively do little more than symbolize persistence and resilience, Hezbollah uses images of death and destruction to invoke sympathy and rage from the international community.

Self-proclaimed mortal enemies of the West, it is the western media that is now its greatest ally. The images are real and often graphic. But they are also more valuable than any Iranian monetary contribution could ever be. Hezbollah knows that the images of destruction will eventually bring an end to the conflict and a psychological victory over the hated Israelis, ostensibly making it the hero of the Arab world.

Civilian casualties: Part of Hezbollah's plan

Innocent lives are lost when they are present in areas of conflict. Despite continued warnings from Israel and an open humanitarian corridor to the north, non-combatants continue to be in harms' way. Hezbollah's leaders know that they cannot win the ideological war without the help of their women and children, whose deaths are deliberately used as weapons against Israeli aggression.

The tactics are working. Arab citizens are rallying behind the anti-Israel cause, and many in the international community, although not the United States, are calling for an immediate cease-fire.

Whether they forcefully keep them there or convince them to do so willingly, Hezbollah treats Lebanese civilians as shields. The militants walk, live and launch rockets at Israel from their midst. They do not wear uniforms, often conceal their weapons and make no concerted effort to keep civilians out of harm's way. Hezbollah understands the strategic need for such casualties in the battle for international public opinion and reaps tremendous benefit from each death.

No, Hezbollah did not kill the children in Qana. But one has to wonder to what lengths it would go to garner the support of the Arab world and paint Israeli generals as reckless "war criminals." To what savage lengths would it go to regain regional power and influence by defeating mighty Israel?

Ultimately it was the forefinger of an Israeli pilot that caused the destruction, but ask yourself: Who is truly to blame?

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Hezbollah's Prominence Has Many Arabs Worried - Correction Appended

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Length: 1686 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Mona el-Naggar contributed reporting from Cairo for this article, and Jad Mouawad from Mukhtara, Lebanon.

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria, Aug. 3

Body

To one Damascus University professor, the faint echo of Israeli bombs exploding in the lower Bekaa Valley brings two fears. He recoils at the destruction he imagines across the border, less than 10 miles from his village home, but deeper down he worries that any Hezbollah triumph will come at the expense of his own Sunni branch of Islam.

"Since the Americans invaded Iraq we have all become aware of the danger from the Shiites," said the professor, who asked not to be identified by name because discussing sectarian rivalry is taboo in Syria, an authoritarian state run by a religious minority. "Ordinary people only think of Hezbollah as fighting against Israeli aggression. But the educated classes think that if Hezbollah controls the region, then the Sunnis will be abused."

Intensifying Sunni-Shiite violence in Iraq in the last couple of years has already raised sectarian awareness across the Middle East in ways not experienced since the Islamic Revolution in Shiite Iran in 1979. The fighting in Lebanon promises to further increase Sunnis' unease about Shiites challenging their dominance.

Mushrooming public support for Hezbollah has overshadowed the issue somewhat, with public anger focused on Israel for the civilian deaths and widespread destruction in Lebanon. Yet sectarian disquiet persists in whispered conversations, on Web sites, in the corridors of government and in mosques.

Governments like those in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, whose initial criticism of Hezbollah proved untenable, use "Shiite" as a euphemism for Iran's waxing regional influence; the religious put more emphasis on doctrinal differences.

Zabadani, a Syrian resort in the pine-shaded mountains facing Lebanon, fills with Arabs from the Persian Gulf each summer. Many interviewed at random along the main street said they supported Hezbollah in its fight with Israel, but some made their distaste for Shiites clear.

"They think they will be the leaders of all Muslims, and I don't want that," said a 45-year-old high school math teacher from Riyadh, who declined to give his name due to the topic's sensitivity. "Hezbollah is Iranian; everyone knows that."

Hezbollah's Prominence Has Many Arabs Worried

He described some of the rituals Shiites perform, including beating and cutting themselves during Ashura to commemorate the battlefield martyrdom of Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson. "This is wrong!" he said, his face contorting in disgust. "I don't want to see all this blood."

The Sunni-Shiite rivalry dates back almost 1,400 years, to Islam's earliest decades. After the Prophet Muhammad died, the group that became the Shiites backed his son-in-law Ali -- Shiite means partisan, as in partisans of Ali -- as his rightful heir. Ali and his sons died in a series of battles lost to the caliph ruling from Damascus.

The Shiites make up about 15 percent of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims. There is little difference between Sunnis and Shiites when it comes to basic rituals like prayer and fasting, but Shiites have a more hierarchical system. Fundamentalist Sunnis label some Shiite practices -- treating dead religious figures as saints, for example -- as blasphemy.

In Saudi Arabia, puritanical Wahhabi Muslims lace their writings with suggestions that being a Christian or a Jew is far preferable to being Shiite -- often referred to as rejectionist, for rejecting the true faith. And they often disparage the Shiite practice of takiya, or sanctioned lying about beliefs, an insurance policy developed during repeated Sunni inquisitions.

One prominent Saudi cleric, Abdullah bin Jibreen, just reissued a fatwa accusing Shiite groups like **Hezbollah** of habitually betraying Sunnis. "It is not appropriate to support this rejectionist party and to fall under its authority, and it is not appropriate to pray for their victory and control," the fatwa read in part.

Arguments raged in Internet chat rooms, including rare public criticism of senior clerics for being too aloof from the Arab struggle against Israel. Mohsen al-Awaji, a well-known Saudi religious activist, said such fatwas seemed as though they "came from another planet."

But some called Iran's Islamic Revolution one of the worst disasters ever visited on Sunni Islam. In Lebanon, Walid Jumblatt, the political leader of the Druze sect, an offshoot of an esoteric branch of Shiite Islam, is among the few who dare voice the belief that **Hezbollah** needlessly brought destruction raining down.

In an interview in his mountain redoubt at Mukhtara, Mr. Jumblatt said **Hezbollah**'s leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, represented the same ideology espoused by Ayatollah Khomeini and Iran's current supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei -- awaiting the return of the Mahdi, or savior, at the end of the world.

"He's part of the Shiite Armageddon," Mr. Jumblatt said of Sheik Nasrallah.

In a televised speech last Saturday, Sheik Nasrallah tried to assuage fears about Shiite dominance. "I say to the Lebanese that none of you should be afraid of the victory of the resistance, but you should be afraid of its defeat," he said. "It will be a victory for every Arab, Muslim, Christian and honorable person in the world who stood against the aggression and defended Lebanon."

He also referred to the sectarian tension, thanking those who confront attempts to sow sedition and tear apart the ranks of Muslims.

Since the beginning of this outbreak of violence, extremist Sunni groups like Al Qaeda have tried to portray their struggle as parallel with **Hezbollah**'s, as a fight against Zionism and the sinful West. But the late Qaeda leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, issued long screeds that labeled all Shiites heretics deserving death for collaborating with the Americans.

Even mainstream Sunni leaders like King Abdullah II of Jordan spoke darkly of a "Shiite crescent" emerging from Iran through the Persian Gulf to Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

The Shiites were last ascendant from the 10th to the 12th century. During much of that period a Shiite dynasty ruled Egypt and a large swath of the region, including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Saladin, the commander who captured Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187, overthrew the dynasty. So the comparisons now springing up between Sheik Nasrallah and Saladin are anathema to Shiites.

Hezbollah's Prominence Has Many Arabs Worried

Modern Egypt lacks any significant population of Shiites and views them with some tolerance.

In a recent newspaper column, Ahmed Fouad Negm, a poet, described an episode at a rally in support of Hezbollah. A clean-cut young man -- the archetype of a secret-police infiltrator -- shouted, "You people, Hassan Nasrallah is a Shiite!"

A woman yelled back in mock horror, "Does that mean he's Christian?"

The security agent, answered, "No, of course he's Muslim."

"So why are you picking on him?" the women responded, prompting widespread snickering.

Egypt's grand mufti, Sheik Ali Gomaa, the country's highest religious authority, issued a statement supporting Hezbollah, while Sheik Youssef Qaradawi, whose program on Al Jazeera makes him one of the Arab world's most influential clerics, defined supporting the guerrillas as a "religious duty."

The Muslim Brotherhood, the Sunni Islamist group founded in Egypt, has been particularly outspoken. Abdel Moneim Abul Fotouh, a member of its guidance office, said that the United States had invaded Iraq to divide Muslims and that it was better to support a Hezbollah-Iranian agenda than an "American-Zionist" one.

"Which one is more dangerous to the Muslim world?" he said in an interview, before attacking "the regimes who tremble before Iran. They are weak and tattered regimes who don't acknowledge the will of their people."

When pressed, though, a vague ambivalence emerges. "Iran would be at the end of our list of enemies, even though it's not an enemy," he said. "Let's combat the American danger on the region before we 'compete' with Iran."

Unease exists in Egypt on a popular level, too. Sheik Khalid al-Guindy runs a well-used dial-a-fatwa service, where the faithful can pose religious questions. Most callers voice frustration over not doing enough to help, but a few raise sectarian doubts, he said.

They ask questions like "Does this mean that the Shiites are the ones who are right and the Sunnis have been mistaken?"

"The problem is that they are looking at the battle as one between Israel and a specific group -- the Shiites," Sheik Guindy said he told his callers. "This is not true. The battle is against Islam specifically and the Arabs generally, and we shouldn't differentiate. I think talking about sectarian differences at this time is one of the greatest sins."

Syria has long adhered to a secular, pan-Arabist viewpoint, not least because a tiny minority of Alawites -- members of a Shiite offshoot -- control the country. Here, even in official news reports about Iraq's sectarian fighting, a bombed mosque is not identified as Shiite or Sunni.

But recently Sheik Mohamed al-Bouti, a populist imam, was allowed to address the differences. The sheik a Sunni cleric, recently interrupted his usual televised Koranic lesson to describe the whispered fears he was hearing at his mosque that a Hezbollah victory would expand the "Shiitization" of the Arab world.

"Oh my followers!" he said. "This is wrong! This is what Israel wants! These sectarian differences will only lead to strife. When there is war, when there is holy jihad, then we have to unify as one Islamic and Arab nation. Hezbollah is fighting on behalf of the whole nation."

Watching the rising tide of Islam, even secular Syrians who support Hezbollah worry that their lifestyle is at risk. Leaving the Arab-Israeli dispute unsettled for decades has opened the door to all manner of religious extremists, they argue.

"The idea of a Shiite crescent is imaginary," said Hunein Nemer, a lawyer and one of the Communist Party members of Syria's rubber-stamp Parliament. "But let me tell you a fact: once this situation lasts for a long time, then the influence of the Islamic groups will grow more and more."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Correction

An article Friday about anxiety among Sunni Muslims over the growing support for the Shiite group **Hezbollah** misstated the circumstances of the death of Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, who was supported by Shiites in the split with Sunnis almost 1,400 years ago. Ali was assassinated by a member of an extremist sect in 661; he was not killed in battle.

Correction-Date: August 7, 2006

Graphic

Photo: Worshipers in Damascus on Monday at the holiest Shiite site in Syria, the shrine of Sayeda Zeinab, a daughter of Iman Ali and Fatima. (Photo by James Hill for The New York Times)

Load-Date: August 4, 2006

Palestinians Seek To Detach From Hezbollah

The Forward

August 11, 2006

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Byline: Ori Nir

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Despite expressing admiration for Hezbollah's ability to strike Israel, Palestinians are working to distance themselves from the Lebanese militia in an effort to end the six-week Israeli onslaught against Gaza.

Israeli forces have pounded Gaza with more than 200 air strikes and 12,000 artillery shells since June 25, when Palestinian militants with ties to Hamas infiltrated Israel, killed two Israeli soldiers and kidnapped a corporal, Gilad Shalit.

During that time, more than 175 Palestinians were killed, including some 40 children and eight women, and more than 620 were injured in Gaza. In addition, the local economy is ruined. More than three quarters of the population in Gaza subsists on international food aid, with an intermittent supply of electricity and water.

Now, as the international community pushes for a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, popular pressure is mounting on the Hamas-led Palestinian government to strike a deal with Israel that would put an end to the suffering in Gaza. According to some critics of Hamas, the crisis underscores the degree to which it is beholden to Syria, which currently provides refuge to leaders of the Palestinian terrorist organization.

"It will be a small yet pleasant surprise for Israelis that criticism of Hamas's military activity and of its policies has grown now, because our casualties have increased and because Hamas is too loyal to Syria," Hasan al-Batal, a leading Palestinian thinker and columnist, told the Forward. Al-Batal, who is a Fatah loyalist and is close to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, added, "There is criticism of Hamas's political ignorance and mulishness as compared to the political shrewdness of Hezbollah's political leadership."

According to Palestinian observers, Palestinians no longer want their cause hitched to Hezbollah's current military fight, because they realize that Hezbollah and its leadership don't have the ability to stand up to Israel's superior military power.

"At first, following the kidnapping of Shalit, when Hezbollah kidnapped the two Israeli soldiers and put up a fight against Israel, Palestinians talked about piggy-backing on Hezbollah's powerful performance," said Samar Assad, executive director of Washington's Palestine Center. Now, however, "there is a Palestinian realization that Israel's conflict in Lebanon will go on for some time. And this is time the Palestinians don't have. So there is a real sense of urgency to get things done and reach an agreement with Israel [promptly]."

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This mood in Palestinian public opinion was mainly the result of Israel's use of overwhelming power, according to Israeli, Palestinian and American analysts.

Right after Hezbollah dragged Israel into war in Lebanon on July 12, an adviser to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told the Web site of the daily Yediot Aharonot: "We are acting [in Gaza] in an unprecedented manner. We are firing hundreds of artillery shells, attacking from the air, sea and land - and the world remains silent."

In addition to its artillery and air strikes against Gaza, the Israeli military has introduced a new method for demanding that Palestinians leave their homes to avoid civilian casualties (military commanders like to call it "magical phone," after an old children's show on Israeli television). An Arabic-speaking Israeli officer calls the land line or the cell phone of a Palestinian who is suspected of hiding weapons in his home. Politely, the stunned Palestinian is told that inhabitants of the home must clear the weapons or clear out before the structure is targeted.

These methods, combined with the ongoing shelling and bombing, have a strong psychological impact on Gazans, said Andrew Whitley, spokesman for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, speaking from the agency's New York headquarters. Gazans are terrified, worn out and constantly concerned about providing the very basics - food, water, medicines and electricity - for their families, Whitley said.

While in Lebanon, Israel still seems far from defeating Hezbollah into submission, in Gaza, militants are "on their knees" and under severe pressure from their constituents to put an end to the suffering, a senior Israeli military officer said this week. Palestinian public pressure is mounting to release the kidnapped Israeli soldier in exchange for a fair prisoner-swap, Israeli military sources said.

Such an agreement, according to Israeli, Palestinian and American sources, is expected to determine the terms of a prisoner exchange as well as a long-term cease-fire that would stop rocket launching from Gaza into Israel and suspend Israeli retaliation.

Last week, several senior Palestinians associated with the Fatah movement said that negotiations toward such an agreement are already under way. Nabil Sha'ath, a Palestinian parliament member who in the past was one of the P.A.'s chief interlocutors with Israel, told reporters in Gaza last week that negotiations have reached an "advanced stage." Israel, he said, will release 700 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Shalit, and agree to a cease-fire in exchange for a cessation of rocket launching into Israel.

Though Hamas officials confirmed that negotiations through a third party were in motion, they were quick to clarify that the kidnappers - members of Hamas and of two unknown Palestinian groups - still insist on the release of about 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, including some 100 who are serving life sentences for murdering Israelis during the past six years. According to Palestinian press reports, negotiations picked up significantly in recent days. Israel and Hamas differ on the number and identity of the prisoners who would be released in exchange for Shalit, Hamas officials were quoted as saying.

Palestinian moderates are putting pressure on Hamas to advance the negotiations by providing Israel with proof that Shalit is alive, but the kidnappers are refusing to do so, Palestinian sources said. Some of Hamas's local leaders are reportedly eager to make a deal, but divisions between Fatah and Hamas, as well as within Hamas, are hindering any quick action.

"Even if Fatah leaders do reach an understanding with Hamas leaders in the West Bank and Gaza [over a deal with Israel], it is not clear whether Hamas leadership in Damascus or the militants on the ground will abide by it," said Peter Gubser, president of American Near East Refugee Aid. Based in Washington, the group runs programs mainly in the West Bank and Gaza.

Hamas keeps bumping into the limits of its ability to govern effectively while refusing to recognize Israel or to disavow terrorism, said Amjad Atallah, founder and president of the Washington-based consulting firm Strategic Assessments Initiative, which works with Abbas's office.

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" Hamas may be democratically elected, but unlike Hezbollah, Hamas doesn't have the ability to effectively fight Israel or to address, on its own, the needs of the public," Atallah said. "So Hamas has an incentive to do its utmost to help bring about an agreement, take credit for releasing prisoners, and then go on to enforce a cease-fire."

An agreement may provide Hamas with a short-lived boost. It will not, however, solve the Islamic fundamentalist movement's chief problem: As long as it maintains an adversarial relationship with Israel, it will receive little cooperation from the world's industrialized countries.

" Hamas is isolated and therefore has hardly any cash flow. Without cash, its ability to govern is very limited," Gubser said. "And as time goes by, Palestinians are realizing just how limited it is."

Graphic

IMAGE

Load-Date: August 11, 2006

End of Document

Sweating out the truth in Iran; Tehran and Hezbollah

The International Herald Tribune

August 25, 2006 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

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Byline: Maziar Bahari

Dateline: TEHRAN

Body

Working as a journalist in Iran embodies the definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over again without getting any results. That's how I felt at the height of the conflict in Lebanon, when I asked officials about Iran's relations with Hezbollah, bearing in mind that posing such questions can be a futile, dangerous and sometimes even lethal exercise.

How was Iran helping Hezbollah? Did Iran really start the war to divert attention from its uranium enrichment program (which it vowed this week to continue)? Was Iran, as Hezbollah's ally, if not patron, willing to put its money where its mouth was and enter the conflict?

Questions, questions. Of course no one answered.

So as a good Iranian, I indulged in fantasy. Fantasizing has become something of a national sport here. Our president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, predicted that the national soccer team would finish third or fourth in the World Cup. He also thinks we can become a nuclear powerhouse, even though we have a hard time manufacturing safety matches or making light bulbs with life expectancies of more than two weeks. (By the way, the soccer team didn't make it out of the first round.)

The setting of my dream was a sauna, where I questioned an imaginary official for five minutes (alas, even our dreams have boundaries here). Why a sauna? For some reason, Iranian officials love going to saunas. Some of the most important decisions in our recent history have been made in saunas. I'm serious.

I politely approach the high-ranking official and give him the impression that he is actually as important as he thinks he is. A bearded man in his early 50s, he usually wears a navy-blue suit and a collarless white shirt buttoned to the neck. He is friendly and polite at first, but then his munificent smile turns to an agitated frown.

Q. How do you support the Lebanese resistance?

A. The Israeli regime has shown it has no concern for human rights and international law. It kills infants and pregnant women.

Q. How do you support the Lebanese resistance?

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A. Americans have double standards. There is one for Israel and another one for the rest of the world. If it were not for America, Israel would never dare to kill innocent Lebanese citizens with such impunity.

Q. How do you support the Lebanese resistance?

A. I just answered you.

Q. No. You didn't. You just repeated the slogans I heard people were chanting in the Palestine Square demonstration yesterday and at Friday prayers two days before that. How does Iran support Hezbollah? Financially? Militarily? Spiritually? How?

The official gets annoyed and looks to his bodyguards to take him away. He wipes the sweat off his face, adjusts his towel and leaves.

It is a silly fantasy, I admit. But the Iranian regime has reached a crossroads in its relationship with the rest of the world, and no one in the government is willing to give the public a straight answer.

There is a vague logic in the absurdity of the events here. But the people in the government tend not to share the obscure reasons behind their decisions with the public during crises. Officials usually leave it to pundits to interpret the government's behavior as they wish.

Using Hezbollah as a threat has always helped Iran in its negotiations with the West. Iran would like to keep it that way. Helping Hezbollah overtly, however, would lead to a direct confrontation with Israel and the United States, while officially staying out of Lebanese affairs means betraying revolutionary ideals the regime pretends to hold dear to its heart. For the moment, Iran is sticking to bombastic rhetoric while doing nothing, to the chagrin of many of its hard-line supporters.

Iran helped create Hezbollah in the early 1980s, it is Hezbollah's most vocal supporter, and before the war it sent the group millions of dollars in cash, medicine and arms.

Does this Iranian aid make Hezbollah Iran's puppet? From all evidence, Hezbollah, to a great extent, makes decisions independently of Iran. Hezbollah is an indigenous Lebanese armed resistance group that owes its popularity to Israeli atrocities, biased American policies and corrupt Lebanese politicians. When the United States and Israel try to portray Hezbollah as an Iranian proxy, they are pointing the finger in the wrong direction.

But Iran definitely uses the threat of its influence over Hezbollah to further its objectives. And its prime objective is the survival of the Islamic regime at any price. The clerics and non-clerics (they are now mostly non-clerics) in power in Iran are not the old revolutionary zealots the Americans tend to imagine. They are pragmatic men who have enjoyed the fruits of power for 27 years and don't want to lose them. In the aftermath of Sept. 11, Iranian statesmen were so scared of American retaliation that for the first time since the revolution, no one chanted "Death to America" in Iran for 10 days.

The regime's rhetoric about the United States and Israel is a remnant of the time when seizing embassies and staging revolutions were in vogue. But now the Islamic Republic has one of the world's younger populations. Most young Iranians I know don't care for their fathers' ideals. They prefer the better things in life, like plasma TVs on which to watch Britney Spears and the exiled Iranian pop diva Googoosh on illegal satellite channels. (No, Mr. Cheney, they don't want the United States to invade their country.) The government spends much of its \$60 billion in annual oil revenue to import goods and keep its youth happy.

The paradoxes of the regime have exposed its hypocrisies. On one hand, the fiery slogans are the *raison d'être* of the Islamic Republic, and on the other, acting openly on those slogans would spell its demise. The most expedient thing to do has been nothing, while continuing to chant.

Until the start of the war in Lebanon, that was just fine. Iran benefited from a series of victories without doing much. First the Americans got rid of the Taliban, Iran's enemy to the east. Then the Americans got rid of Iran's archenemy to the west, Saddam Hussein. Finally, with Americans mired in both countries, the price of oil went through the roof,

Sweating out the truth in Iran Tehran and Hezbollah

and Iran started enriching uranium again, knowing that the West could do nothing. The regime was intoxicated with oil money and regional influence.

But the war in Lebanon has made it impossible for the Islamic Republic to enjoy the same calm. Hezbollah has become a liability for Iran. Weakened, it now needs Iran's petrodollars and rockets to regain its strength. At the same time, Israel and the United States are scrutinizing the transfer of arms and money from Iran to Hezbollah more closely than ever. The next shipment of arms from Iran to Hezbollah may result in direct confrontation with Israel and the United States.

The bearded men in the saunas must be sweating more than usual, even though in public they toast Hezbollah's "victory" with glasses of pomegranate juice. The Islamic Republic is coming to the point where it has to choose: destroy itself by repeating the same old slogans, or come up with new definitions for itself, its friends and foes.

*

Maziar Bahari is a journalist and documentary film maker.

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End of Document

Israel fights back on Hezbollah; Militants said to use civilians as shields

The International Herald Tribune

December 5, 2006 Tuesday

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Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Nada Bakri contributed reporting from Beirut.

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Israel's military, which has been accused of abuses in its war against Hezbollah this summer, has declassified photographs, video and prisoner interrogations to buttress its accusation that Hezbollah systematically fired from civilian neighborhoods in southern Lebanon and took cover in those areas to shield itself from Israeli attack.

Lebanon and international human rights groups have accused Israel of war crimes related to the 34 days of fighting in July and August, saying that Israel fired into populated areas and that civilians accounted for the vast majority of the more than 1,000 Lebanese killed.

Israel says it tried to avoid civilians but Hezbollah fire from civilian areas, itself a war crime, made those areas legitimate targets.

In a new report, an Israeli research group says that Hezbollah stored weapons in mosques, battled Israeli forces from inside empty schools, had its fighters fly white flags while transporting missiles, and launched rockets from sites near United Nations monitoring posts.

The detailed report on the war was produced by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, a private research group headed by Reuven Erlich, a retired colonel in military intelligence, who worked closely with the Israeli military. An advance copy was given to The New York Times by the American Jewish Congress, which provided consultation and translated the study into English.

"This study explains the dilemma facing the Israeli military as it fights an enemy that intentionally operates from civilian areas," Erlich said. "This is the kind of asymmetric warfare we are seeing today. It's not only relevant to Lebanon, but is also what we are seeing in the Gaza Strip and in Iraq."

In Lebanon, a Hezbollah official denied the allegations, saying its military units were based outside towns and villages and entered populated areas only when circumstances required it.

Israel fights back on Hezbollah Militants said to use civilians as shields

"We tried to avoid having to fight among civilian areas, but when Israeli troops entered villages, we were automatically forced to fight them from inside these villages to defend it," said the official, who asked for anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on military matters.

The report includes Israeli Air Force video footage that it says shows several instances of Hezbollah operatives' firing rockets next to residential buildings in southern Lebanon and then being bombed by Israel. The adjacent buildings were presumably damaged, but there is no information on whether civilians were inside.

"The construction of a broad military infrastructure, positioned and hidden in populated areas, was intended to minimize Hezbollah's vulnerability," the report says. "Hezbollah would also gain a propaganda advantage if it could represent Israeli as attacking innocent civilians."

In video from July 23, a truck, presumably from Hezbollah, with a multi-barreled missile launcher is parked in a street, sandwiched between residential buildings. The footage comes from an Israeli missile approaching the truck, and the screen goes fuzzy as the missile slams into the target.

In another video, from the Lebanese village of Barasheet, rockets are seen being fired from a launcher on the back of a truck. The truck then drives a short distance and disappears inside a building. Seconds later, the building itself disappears under a cloud of smoke from an Israeli bomb.

The report says there were many such examples, and that Hezbollah had been preparing for such an engagement for years, embedding its fighters and their weaponry in the Shiite villages in southern Lebanon. When Hezbollah fired its rockets from those areas, Israel faced a choice of attacking, and possibly causing civilian casualties, or refraining from shooting because of the risk, the report said.

During the war, Israel dropped leaflets urging villagers to leave southern Lebanon and also to evacuate Hezbollah strongholds in southern Beirut. Many did flee, but some remained.

Israel's critics charge that the military either fired at civilians or was reckless in its pursuit of Hezbollah.

In one highly publicized Israeli strike on July 30, at least 28 Lebanese civilians, including many women and children, were killed when Israel bombed a residential building in the village of Qana. Israel said it had aimed at a Hezbollah rocket cell that had recently fired from near the building.

In several other instances, Israel bombed vehicle convoys that were trying to leave the combat zone in southern Lebanon, killing many civilians. Human Rights Watch, a New York-based group, said shortly before the war ended that it had documented the deaths of 27 Lebanese civilians killed while trying to flee.

Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, wrote shortly after the war that the Israeli military "seemed to assume that because it gave warnings to civilians to evacuate southern Lebanon, anyone who remained was a Hezbollah fighter.

"But giving warnings, as required by international humanitarian law, does not relieve the attacker of the duty to distinguish between civilians and combatants and to target only combatants," Roth wrote.

Amnesty International said Israel "consistently failed to adopt necessary precautionary measures" and that its forces "carried out indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on a large scale."

The Israeli report defended the Israeli operations, saying "air strikes and ground attacks against Hezbollah targets located in population centers were carried out in accordance with international law, which does not grant immunity to a terrorist organization deliberately hiding behind civilians."

The Israeli report included video footage of three Hezbollah prisoners being questioned by Israeli military personnel.

Israel fights back on Hezbollah Militants said to use civilians as shields

Muhammad Srour, a young Hezbollah fighter, said he had initially received training in Iran and was undergoing further training in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley when the war broke out. He was sent to the frontlines.

Like many Hezbollah fighters, he traveled by motorbike, but they were frequently the targets of Israeli fire. While transporting missiles, hidden in cloth, in and around the southern village of Aita al-Shaab, "I carried a white flag," Srour said.

Hezbollah operated freely from homes in the village, with the permission of residents who had fled. The departing residents either left their doors unlocked or gave their keys to Hezbollah, he said. Srour acknowledged that homes used by Hezbollah were more likely to draw fire.

But, he said, "better that the house is destroyed and the Israelis don't enter and come back to conquer Lebanon."

Another captured fighter, Hussein Suleiman, explained how he set up a rocket firing position on the front porch of a house on the outskirts of Aita al-Shaab.

A third Hezbollah man, Maher Kourani, said group members wore civilian clothes, tried never to show their weapons, and traveled in ordinary civilian cars.

"We use Volvos, Mercedes, BMW. We use Range Rovers too," he said.

The report makes frequent references to Hezbollah using Lebanese civilians as human shields, though it cites only two villages where Hezbollah operatives allegedly prevented residents from leaving. Erlich acknowledged that overall, Hezbollah did not use coercion against Lebanese civilians.

Rather, he said, "Hezbollah was operating inside a supportive population, and cynically used them to further its own goals."

Hezbollah rained about 4,000 rockets on northern Israel, and most Israeli civilians either fled the region or took refuge in bomb shelters.

Overall, more than 1,000 Lebanese were killed, and the vast majority were civilians, according to the Lebanese government. Hezbollah has said that no more than 100 of its fighters were killed. The Israeli report disputes this, claiming that at least 450 and perhaps as many as 650 of the Lebanese dead were from Hezbollah.

Israel suffered 159 deaths, including 41 civilians and 118 military personnel, according to the report.

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Hezbollah: Nowhere and everywhere; Services tie region closely to its fighters

The International Herald Tribune

August 7, 2006 Monday

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Byline: Sabrina Tavernise

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon

Body

Hezbollah paid for his wife's Caesarean section. It brought olive oil, sugar and nuts when he lost his job and even covered the cost of an operation on his broken nose.

Like many poor Shiites across southern Lebanon, Ahmed Awali, 41, a security guard at an apartment building in this southern city, has received charity from Hezbollah for years. He says he is not a member.

He does not even know the names of those who helped him.

Hezbollah fighters move like shadows across the mountains of southern Lebanon; its workers in towns and villages, equally as ghostly, have settled deeply into people's lives.

They pay medical bills, offer health insurance, pay school fees and make money available for small businesses. They are invisible but omnipresent, providing essential services that the Lebanese government, after years of war, was incapable of offering.

Their work engenders a deep loyalty among Shiites here, who for years were the country's underclass and whose sense of pride and identity are closely intertwined with Hezbollah.

Their presence in southern Lebanon is so widespread that any Israeli military advance seems likely to do little to excise the group, which is as much a part of society as its Shiite faith.

"The trees in the south say, 'We are Hezbollah.' The stones say, 'We are Hezbollah,'" said Issam Jouhair, a car mechanic. "If the people cannot talk, the stones will say it."

Hezbollah is nowhere but everywhere. In this city, the gateway to the fighting and the location of several of southern Lebanon's largest functioning hospitals, clues about its fighters surface daily.

A doctor at one of the hospitals, Jebel Amal, said it had about 450 patients. Hospital officials seemed eager to show off a few wounded women and children but would not allow access to other patients.

On Wednesday, a mass funeral was canceled. The authorities cited the security situation. Minutes later came the sound of rockets being launched from an area near where the burial was to have been conducted.

Hezbollah: Nowhere and everywhere Services tie region closely to its fighters

"Just because I'm sitting here in this cafe doesn't mean I'm not a resistance fighter," said Haidar Fayadh, a cafe owner, who was smoking a water pipe as his patrons sipped tiny plastic cups of coffee near pictures of Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah.

"Everyone has a weapon in his house," he said. "There are doctors, teachers and farmers. Hezbollah is people. People are Hezbollah."

The group is at once highly decentralized and extremely organized.

Awali, whose job pays \$170 a month, ran out of money for food shortly after his second daughter was born. He mentioned this to one of his neighbors. Days later, people with bags of groceries showed up at his tiny one-room apartment.

"They just put it down in the middle of the room and left," said Yusra Haidar, Awali's wife, sitting on a stoop outside their building, her young daughters, now 6 and 9, eating grapes at her feet.

But it was the health insurance, when Haidar was facing a difficult pregnancy, that saved the family. The family applied for and received the insurance by submitting photographs and filling out paperwork.

Someone from Hezbollah he did not identify himself came to inspect their apartment, and ask about their finances, checking their application.

They were issued a medical card that they can use in any hospital in Lebanon, Awali said. The \$1,500 needed to pay for Haidar's Caesarean section was taken care of.

The brother of Fayadh, the cafe owner, is also covered by the insurance, an alternative to state insurance that the group has made available to poor people for about \$10 a month

"This is what Hezbollah does," Fayadh said, with the Hezbollah television station, Al Manar, on the screen behind him.

Most connections with the group are indirect. Its fighters are a part of the population, and identifying them can be close to impossible.

On a mountain road not far from the Israeli border Tuesday, a beat-up, rust-colored Toyota was parked with its doors open. Several men in ordinary clothes were standing on the road. They were in a hurry.

One was carrying what appeared to be a hand-held radio, the trademark Hezbollah talking tool.

"No photo, no photo," he said, walking away from the car.

The next day, the same man, in the same clothes, was standing in a hospital parking area as the hospital authorities prepared to bury 88 bodies in a mass grave.

"They are ghosts," said Husam, a thin unemployed man in a black T-shirt who was waiting for coffee at Fayadh's shop. "Nobody knows them."

The deep attachment to Hezbollah has its roots in recent Lebanese history. In the Israeli invasion in 1982, Shiites across the south welcomed the Israelis, because they had come to fight the Palestinians, who had made their lives difficult for years.

But as the occupation dragged on, Israelis came to be hated by the Shiites, a feeling now passed on to small children growing up in the Lebanese south.

"What is that sound?" asked Hani Rai, a neighbor of Jouhair, directing the attention of his small daughter Sara to a drone in the sky. "Voices of Israeli planes."

Hezbollah: Nowhere and everywhere Services tie region closely to its fighters

Sara, who is 3, can already recite a chant glorifying Nasrallah.

Now, **Hezbollah**'s military branch is separate from its social works, but in its early days it was united, organizing water delivery for people in Dahiya, the Shiite area in south Beirut, the scene of some of the most complete destruction in this war.

Several residents who knew **Hezbollah** members said they were trained and groomed for as long as five years before becoming full-fledged members.

The military wing is so secretive that sometimes friends and family members do not know a loved one is a part of it.

Rai said he was stunned to learn that a close friend of his, Muhammad, was a **Hezbollah** fighter. He learned of Muhammad's membership only after the man was killed some years ago. Muhammad's body was returned to his family in an Israeli military prisoner exchange, Rai said. "When he would leave for a mission, he would say, 'I'm going to Beirut,'" Rai said.

Rai has also been helped by **Hezbollah**: It paid for a relative's heart operation.

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Arab World Finds Icon In Leader of Hezbollah

The New York Times

August 7, 2006 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 7; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: POLITICS

Length: 2002 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Hassan M. Fattah contributed reporting from Beirut, Lebanon, for this article.

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria, Aug. 6

Body

The success or failure of any cease-fire in Lebanon will largely hinge on the opinion of one figure: Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah, who has seen his own aura and that of his party enhanced immeasurably by battling the Israeli Army for nearly four weeks.

With Israeli troops operating in southern Lebanon, Sheik Nasrallah can continue fighting on the grounds that he seeks to expel an occupier, much as he did in the years preceding Israel's withdrawal in 2000.

Or he can accept a cease-fire -- perhaps to try to rearm -- and earn the gratitude of Lebanon and much of the world.

Analysts expect some kind of middle outcome, with the large-scale rocket attacks stopping but Hezbollah guerrillas still attacking soldiers so that Israel still feels pain.

In any case, the Arab world has a new icon.

Gone are the empty threats made by President Gamal Abdel Nasser's official radio station during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war to push the Jews into the sea even as Israel seized Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula.

Gone is Saddam Hussein's idle vow to "burn half of Israel," only to launch limited volleys of sputtering Scuds. Gone too are the unfulfilled promises of Yasir Arafat to lead the Palestinians back into Jerusalem.

Now there is Sheik Nasrallah, a 46-year-old Lebanese militia chieftain hiding in a bunker, combining the scripted logic of a clergyman with the steely resolve of a general to completely rewrite the rules of the Arab-Israeli land feud.

"There is the most powerful man in the Middle East," sighed the deputy prime minister of an Arab state, watching one of Sheik Nasrallah's four televised speeches since the war began, during an off-the-record meeting. "He's the only Arab leader who actually does what he says he's going to do."

Days after the current war started, he ended a speech by quietly noting that Hezbollah had just attacked an Israeli warship off Lebanon, a feat considered inconceivable for his group. Those who rushed outside saw a glow visible from the damaged vessel offshore, setting off celebrations around Beirut.

Arab World Finds Icon In Leader of Hezbollah

The departure represented by Sheik Nasrallah -- his black turban marking him as a sayyid, a cleric who can trace his lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad -- has been particularly evident in those speeches. He makes no promises to destroy Israel with its superior military might, but to make it bleed and offer concessions.

"When he says to the people: I am your voice, I am your will, I am your conscience, I am your resistance, he combines both a sense of humility and of being anointed for the task," said Waddah Sharara, a Lebanese sociology professor and a descendant of Shiite clerics. "He's like the circus magician who pulls the rabbit out of his hat and always knows exactly who is his audience."

Some call it his "Disney touch."

In many ways, this war is the moment that Sheik Nasrallah has been preparing for ever since he was first elected to run Hezbollah at age 32 in 1992, after an Israeli rocket incinerated his predecessor.

In his broadcasts he appears tranquil, assured, sincere and well informed, in command of both the facts and the situation, utterly dedicated to his cause and to his men. He is aloof yet tries to lend his secretive, heavily armed organization an air of transparency by sharing battlefield details.

On Thursday, he offered to stop firing missiles if Israel halted its attacks, saying Hezbollah preferred ground combat. Hezbollah's position on any cease-fire, echoed by the Lebanese government, is that none is possible as long as Israeli soldiers remain inside the country.

"He has all the power; the government has no cards in its hand," said Jad al-Akhaoui, the media adviser to a Lebanese cabinet minister. "He keeps saying that he supports the prime minister, but there has been no translation in the field, nothing has stopped. The decision is still Hezbollah's decision."

It is not even clear how such decisions are formulated. Even though Hezbollah has two cabinet ministers, proposals are passed through Nabih Berri, the head of the Amal Party and Hezbollah's onetime rival as the voice of the Shiite Muslim working class.

Lebanese officials said that once Mr. Berri passed on the proposals, nobody was quite sure what happened. Hezbollah officials are either unreachable or mum.

But Sheik Nasrallah is definitely in touch. He gloats over the evident confusion reflected in the Israeli news media about their military offensive. He is known to have read the autobiographies of Israel's prime ministers. He always calls Israel "the Zionist entity," maintaining that all Jewish immigrants should return to their countries of origin and that there should be one Palestine with equality for Muslims, Jews and Christians.

In the past, when Israel advanced into Lebanon against Palestinian fighters, the Palestinians would defend fixed positions, then retreat toward Beirut as each line fell.

Analysts say Sheik Nasrallah's genius was to train hundreds of grass-roots fighters -- school teachers and butchers and truck drivers -- then to use religion to inspire them to fight until death, with a guaranteed spot in heaven.

Sheik Nasrallah outlined some tactics in Thursday's speech.

"It is not our policy to hang on to territory; we do not want all our mujahedeen and youths to be killed defending a post, hill or village," he said, sitting in a studio with the flags of Lebanon and Hezbollah behind him. The idea is to lure elite Israeli soldiers into a trap by having them walk into villages before his guerrillas open fire.

In a world where fathers are known by the name of their eldest son, Sheik Nasrallah is known as Abu Hadi or father of Hadi, after his eldest son, who died in September 1997, age 18, in a firefight with the Israelis. The name instantly reminds everyone of his personal credibility and commitment to the fight.

Arab World Finds Icon In Leader of Hezbollah

On that September day, Sheik Nasrallah was scheduled to deliver a speech in Haret Hreik, the unkempt southern Beirut suburb dense with apartment houses that Israel has just turned largely to rubble. But he said nothing of his loss until the crowd started chanting for him to speak about the "martyrs." He eulogized Hadi as part of a great victory.

In interviews, he said that he would not give his enemies the satisfaction of seeing him weep publicly but that he mourned privately.

He has a daughter and two surviving sons. The eldest, Jawad, around 26, is believed to be fighting in southern Lebanon.

Sheik Nasrallah takes obvious pride in standing up to Israel on the battlefield. All his wartime speeches have been laced with references to restoring lost Arab virility, a big sell in a region long suffering from a sense of impotence. He called the three southern villages where the fiercest clashes erupted "the triangle of heroism, manhood, courage and gallantry."

He can be by turns avuncular and menacing.

Walid Jumblat, the chieftain of the Druse sect and one of Sheik Nasrallah's more outspoken critics, said he found the combination unsettling. "Sometimes the eyes of people betray them," Mr. Jumblat said in an interview in his mountain castle. "When he's calm, he's laughing. He's very nice. But when he's a little bit squeezed, he looks at you in the eyes fiercely with fiery eyes."

In the hierarchical rankings of Shiite Muslim clergy, Sheik Nasrallah is a rather ordinary hojatolislam, one step below an ayatollah, and far below being a mujtahid, or "source of emulation" to be followed as a guide.

Yet the Shiite faithful in Lebanon revere him, both as a religious figure and as a leader who gained for them a modicum of respect in the country's sectarian political system long dominated by Christians and Sunni Muslim barons. Families who evacuated their homes in Beirut's southern suburbs seemed invariably to leave behind an open Koran with Sheik Nasrallah's picture propped up nearby, in the hope that the holy verses would protect their homes and their leader.

He is believed to live modestly and rarely socializes outside Hezbollah's ruling circles. He avoids the telephone for safety reasons, but has met thousands of constituents and dispatches personal messengers to congratulate them for weddings and births.

Aside from Hezbollah's secretive military operations, the state within a state that he helped build with Iranian and expatriate financing includes hospitals, schools and other social services.

Sheik Nasrallah is a powerful orator with a robust command of classical Arabic, yet he makes himself widely understood by using some Lebanese dialect in every speech. He has coined numerous popular phrases, like calling Israel "more feeble than a spider's web."

He comes across as far less dour than most Shiite clerics partly due to his roly-poly figure and slight lisp. But he also -- very unusually -- cracks jokes.

Prof. Nizar Hamzeh, who teaches international relations at the American University of Kuwait and has written a book on Hezbollah, recalled a Nasrallah speech from last year, given while Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in the region. A helicopter happened to clatter overhead at some point while he was criticizing United States meddling, and the sheik quipped, "You might be able to catch a glimpse of her now; I hope she sees us as well." The crowd roared.

He has never pushed hard-line Islamic rules like veils for women in the neighborhoods that Hezbollah controls, which analysts attribute to his exposure to many of Lebanon's 17 sects.

Arab World Finds Icon In Leader of Hezbollah

Born in 1960 in Beirut, Sheik Nasrallah grew up in the Karanteena district of eastern Beirut, a mixed neighborhood of impoverished Christian Armenians, Druse, Palestinians and Shiites.

His father had a small vegetable stand, but the 1975 eruption of the civil war forced the family to flee to their native southern village.

The oldest of nine children and long entranced by the mosque, he decamped for the most famous Shiite hawza, or seminary, in Najaf, Iraq. He fled in 1978 one step ahead of Saddam Hussein's secret police, returning to Lebanon to join Amal, then a new Shiite militia. He became the Bekaa Valley commander in his early 20's.

But he considered the Islamic Revolution in Iran led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1979 to be the real model for Shiites to end their traditional second-class status and moved to Hezbollah as it coalesced in the early 1980's. He studied in a seminary in Qum, Iran, briefly in 1989.

How much a religious figure can appeal to Lebanon's generally cosmopolitan population has never been clear, and it is particularly murky now that he has provoked a war. Some Lebanese say he has sold his soul to Damascus and Tehran.

"I used to think of Nasrallah as the smartest politician in Lebanon, but this last operation changed my mind," said Roula Haddad, a 33-year-old administrative secretary, shopping at the upscale ABC mall in the predominantly Christian Ashrafiyeh neighborhood. "It was a huge mistake and he is solely responsible for all the destruction. He proved that he does not care about Lebanese interests; he revealed his true Iranian skin."

Political analysts said that Lebanon should have seen it coming, but that Sheik Nasrallah proved a rather skillful hypnotist. "Lebanese politics, especially since Nasrallah carved out his role, has become his very own circus," said Professor Sharara, the Lebanese sociologist. "He built this circus on a foundation of pageantry, lies, fear, crazy hopes and unreal dreams."

"He sold Lebanese on the certainty that he would not abandon them, he would not undertake anything that would cause them harm or destruction, and at the same time he instilled fear, fear of himself," Professor Sharara said. "He has known this was going to happen for the past 15 years. How can you believe someone who says, 'Don't worry, I won't do anything,' even while he was building this hellish machine? He knew people would be credulous, would be seduced."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Copies of the Koran, images of Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, and pictures of missile launchers on a desk in a Beirut refugee camp. (Photo by Bryan Denton for The New York Times)

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

Hezbollah claims slain protestor as 'martyr'

The Toronto Star

December 6, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 537 words

Byline: Andrew Mills, SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Nobody had heard of Ahmed Mahmoud before he was shot to death in a street battle Sunday night.

Since then, Hezbollah and its allies have transformed the first "martyr" of their fight to remove the U.S.-backed government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora from power into the centrepiece of their revolution.

Mahmoud, 20, was buried yesterday amid tears, anger and fear that he will not be the only "martyr" of Lebanon's deadlocked power struggle.

Late yesterday, a giant version of what looked to be a high school photo of Mahmoud was hoisted onto a stage at the centre of the tent city now occupying downtown Beirut. A candlelight vigil for the slain Shiite Muslim quickly became a boisterous rally, complete with Hezbollah war hymns, frenzied demonstrators and red-faced politicians invoking his name.

"We won't cry. We won't be sorry," Issam Abu Jamra, an ally of the powerful Christian leader Michel Aoun, screamed into a microphone. "With Ahmed's blood, and the blood of all, we are going to write a free history of Lebanon here in this square of freedom."

Thousands of Shiite Muslims and Christians allied to Hezbollah have rallied nearby for five days now, demanding the government's ouster.

Lebanon's political and sectarian tensions have been growing since November when Siniora rejected demands from the pro-Syrian opposition for a national unity government that would effectively give it veto power on key decisions. Opposition supporters have vowed to camp out downtown until Siniora and his cabinet step down.

But the cabinet, which is dominated by Sunni Muslims, Christians and Druze, refuses to give way. The ministers remain barricaded inside government headquarters, protected by tanks, razor wire and soldiers.

Though the city core has remained peaceful, protestors leaving the demonstration have clashed with government supporters in the largely Sunni neighbourhoods south of downtown.

Mahmoud was killed in just such a clash in the Sunni quarter of Tariq Jedideh Sunday. Details of the battle are unclear, but fighting with rocks and sticks gave way to gunfire. Exactly who the gunmen were remains unknown.

Tensions, especially between Shiites and Sunnis, who largely support Siniora, remain high.

Hezbollah claims slain protestor as 'martyr'

And, despite calls for calm yesterday from Shiite leaders at Mahmoud's funeral, the thousands crowded into the streets seemed to stir things up even more as they watched his coffin pass, shrouded in a Lebanese flag.

Tearful old women threw rice from balconies as hundreds of men in the black fatigues and green baseball caps of the Amal political movement, which Mahmoud belonged to, marched past.

As the procession travelled toward the Two Martyrs Cemetery, Qur'anic verses blared from an ambulance while a marching band struggled through battle hymns. Behind them, a group of young men beat their chests and chanted "Death, death to Siniora!"

Like many at the burial, taxi driver Tyson Keserwan, 33, blames Siniora and his supporters for Mahmoud's death. He fears if Siniora does not step down soon, the two sides will become more entrenched in their positions, leading to more killings. "I don't think they're going to give up easy, and we're not going to give up."

Andrew Mills is a Canadian journalist based in Beirut.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

End of Document

Hezbollah TV station's survival is enigma

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

August 27, 2006 Sunday

FIRST EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 645 words

Byline: By Zeina Karam THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BEIRUT, LEBANON

Body

Its headquarters was leveled, its antennas pounded, its transmissions jammed and website hacked. Yet, throughout 34 days of ferocious fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, the group's Al-Manar TV stayed on the air -- mocking Israeli military power from studios in secret bunkers.

How is a mystery. For security reasons, Al-Manar officials won't say where they located makeshift studios. The station stayed on the air even after its main offices south of Beirut were flattened by Israeli warplanes, beaming out live talk shows with political guests. Newscasts were broadcast on schedule.

Now that the war has ended, Al-Manar's public relations chief, Ibrahim Farhat, said the broadcaster would rebuild its bombed-out headquarters. But its plans have not yet come together about where and how quickly. He said the station was still taking stock of its losses.

During the conflict, which began July 12 after Hezbollah killed three Israeli soldiers and captured two in a cross-border raid, the station routinely aired reports on guerrilla rocket strikes on northern Israel and ground battles with Israeli troops.

Perhaps the most important broadcasts carried exclusive videotaped speeches by Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, who went into hiding when the war began.

And within hours of a U.N.-brokered cease-fire that ended the fighting on Aug. 14, Al-Manar came out of hiding and into the sunshine, its reporters anchoring a live program in the midst of the rubble of destroyed buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs.

"A flame that will not be extinguished," read the new slogan beneath the station's logo that was hoisted on surrounding, bombed-out buildings.

Al-Manar "fought alongside the guerrillas . . . fielding a unique experience of tenacity with great commitment," wrote George Hayek, a TV columnist for Lebanon's leading daily newspaper, An-Nahar. "Its employees were like the soldiers on the battlefield."

Farhat said the station was able to continue broadcasting through the efforts of its employees. "Certainly, there were many difficulties, but the will to confront was bigger and stronger," he told The Associated Press.

Hezbollah TV station's survival is enigma

He said contingency plans to face such a situation were made several years ago, after the U.S. decision in December 2004 to place the station on its list of terrorist organizations. On Wednesday, a Pakistani businessman in New York was arrested and charged with providing satellite broadcasts of Al-Manar to New York-area customers.

Israelis "were trying to silence Al-Manar during peace, we knew it was only a matter of time before they tried to do that by force," Farhat said.

Al-Manar's headquarters in the southern suburbs of Beirut was leveled in an airstrike in the early days of the monthlong war. The TV station went off the air for just a few minutes when hackers broke into its transmissions but has since been broadcasting without stop, despite repeated airstrikes that knocked down transmission towers across the country. Israeli warplanes attacked an Al-Manar antenna just 15 minutes before the cease-fire took hold on Aug. 14.

Since then, the station, which obtained its license from the Lebanese government in 1997 and is watched by many across the Arab world and elsewhere, has been broadcasting live programming from secret bunkers and bombed out areas in south and eastern Lebanon and the southern suburbs, often interviewing women who claim to be the mothers, as well as other relatives, of those killed in the Israeli attacks.

Al-Manar also airs blatant propaganda videos of its fighters -- often firing Katyushas from rocket launchers -- anthems to rally fighters and marches that glorify Hezbollah guerrillas.

Israeli Vice Premier Shimon Peres recently ridiculed Al-Manar's coverage.

"They can sing all the songs they want. We know the realities on the ground," he said in an interview with the pan-Arab Al-Arabiya station.

Load-Date: August 27, 2006

The prisoners that Hezbollah is fighting for

The International Herald Tribune

August 5, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 761 words

Byline: Craig S. Smith

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

When **Hezbollah** guerrillas sneaked into Israel last month to kill and capture Israeli soldiers, setting off the current crisis, their goal was to trade them for a Lebanese man held by Israel.

The prisoner, Samir Kuntar, was part of a cell that in 1979 raided an apartment building in the northern Israeli town of Nahariya, terrorizing the Haran family. Kuntar shot Danny Haran in the head, killing him, while his daughter, Einat, 4, watched. He then smashed the girl's head in with his rifle butt, killing her as well. Haran's wife, Smadar, hid in the attic with their 2-year-old daughter, so afraid the girl would cry out that she accidentally suffocated the girl to death.

After **Hezbollah** made off with two Israeli soldiers in the raid last month, Israel vowed that it would not negotiate for their release.

But the question of prisoners held by Israel nearly all of them Palestinians is the subtext of this crisis and likely to figure in its resolution. It is an issue that animates **Hezbollah** and the Palestinians as much as anything else in their fight with Israel.

Political discourse, billboards, street graffiti and militant songs and manifestoes are all laced with references, sometimes nearly rote, to winning freedom for the prisoners.

The prisoners number about 9,700, about 100 of them **women**, according to a spokeswoman for the Israeli Prison Authority. About 300 are younger than 18, including two girls and a boy of 14, being held in juvenile detention facilities for acts against Israel.

The Israelis say many of them are terrorists if not quite on the scale of Kuntar, then not far from it and some clearly are. But the Palestinians say that others are wrongfully accused and that many have never committed a violent act.

The Hamas movement's military wing, the Qassam Brigades, say they captured Corporal Gilad Shalit as a bargaining chip to win the release of at least some of those prisoners, particularly the **women** and children. It is a move that many Palestinians support.

"We have 10,000 prisoners in jail, and the world cares only for this one Israeli prisoner," said Mohsin Jirjawi, speaking at the Shifa hospital in Gaza, where a nephew wounded in the current fighting was recovering.

The prisoners that Hezbollah is fighting for

He said "all Palestinians" supported Hamas's proposal to trade prisoners with Israel. "And when Israel doesn't respond, our steadfastness grows."

When it followed with its raid last month, Hezbollah said it was acting in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Since 1998, the Palestinian Authority has maintained a Ministry of Prisoners' and Former Prisoners' Affairs, with 300 bureaucrats to keep track of the swelling number of prisoners in Israeli jails and to give allowances and legal aid to the prisoners and their families.

Even its own minister, Wasfi Qabaha, is now in prison, arrested by Israel in the wake of the capture of Shalit.

For the Palestinians, the ripples of distress from every arrest have become an oppressive wave.

Israel has repeatedly said that it will not trade prisoners to free its soldiers. But Israel has traded prisoners many times. In January 2004 it released about 430 prisoners in exchange for Elhanan Tannenbaum, an Israeli businessman kidnapped by Hezbollah four years earlier. The exchange also included the bodies of three Israeli soldiers.

In 1997, Israel freed the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin who was later killed in an Israeli missile strike along with dozens of others in return for two Israeli intelligence agents who had been arrested in Jordan after a failed attempt to kill Hamas's current leader, Khaled Meshal.

"Israel returned prisoners many times in the past, so why is Israel being so stubborn this time?" asked Ikrama Sabri, the mufti of Jerusalem, the highest-ranking Islamic cleric here, in a recent sermon at Al Aksa Mosque.

That kind of talk has given hope to people like Fathiya Sbieh, who said she believes the fighting will mean that she will see her new grandchild soon.

Two months ago, Sbieh watched on TV as her daughter Samar got off a prison bus, her hands and feet shackled, and hobbled into Meir Hospital in Kafr Saba in Israel. She watched again as Samar hobbled out five days later, this time holding her newborn son.

Sbieh says her daughter's only crime was using someone else's identification card to get permission to travel to the West Bank.

But as is common, there is more than one version of the story. Orit Shteltzer, spokeswoman for the Israeli Prisons Authority, said Samar had been convicted of belonging to the Qassam Brigades and had prepared a suicide belt for a would-be bomber.

Load-Date: August 6, 2006

Shiite power grows in Lebanon; Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament

The International Herald Tribune

November 14, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 1062 words

Byline: Michael Slackman

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

In the upscale center of this city, the normally somber atmosphere at the graveside of the slain former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, is increasingly tense. His former supporters, long the most powerful constituency in Lebanon, anxiously talk about the wave of Shiite political power washing over the country.

"After the first of the year, I am leaving to Qatar," one woman, Myrtha Hadidi, said Sunday, after she bowed her head and crossed herself in front of the grave. "The situation is very, very dangerous now. I think there will be a war again."

Across town, along the crowded streets of the poor Shiite neighborhood devastated by Israeli bombs during the summer war, there is despair over the destruction, but confidence in the growing power of Lebanon's Shiites.

"I am very optimistic about the future," said Ziad Kamaan, as he prepared to reopen his women's accessories store for the first time since the war ended in September.

Lebanon is in the middle of a political crisis that is not just a matter of jockeying for power, but a fundamental realignment of authority here and perhaps in the region. It is seen in the faces of those Sunnis and Christians who visit the Hariri memorial, nervous and drawn, and the confidence of those picking their way through the debris and destruction of the Shiite neighborhood of Dahiya.

"Hezbollah gave us dignity and pride, they made us feel like human beings again," said Ali Berro, owner of a small grocery in the neighborhood. "It's true that America and Israel devastated this country, but we will rebuild again, ourselves."

Long in the making, the 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah which was waged to crush the group's militia seems to have accelerated the rise of Lebanon's Shiites, from their onetime status as the nation's unwanted stepchildren to the cusp of political dominance.

As a political party, a militia and social welfare organization, Hezbollah has used the devastation of the war with Israel to help strengthen the allegiance of Shiites, giving out money and services that the government has so far failed to deliver.

Shiite power grows in Lebanon Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament

Though no one knows for sure the size of each group in Lebanon there has not been a census since the 1930s. Shiites are believed to make up more than 30 percent of the population, and by some estimates have reached a plurality. But it would require a major leap for the Shiites to realize their political goal of dominance and their efforts to reach it could bring long-term instability, and perhaps armed conflict.

"This war has improved the Shiite identity and self-image," said Judith Palmer Harik, a professor at the American University in Beirut who has studied and written about Hezbollah. "They got something out of this war that was pretty uplifting."

On Saturday, Hezbollah and its main Shiite ally, Amal, provoked a political crisis when their five ministers resigned from the government after talks broke down about giving Hezbollah's alliance more authority.

The stage is now set for a showdown between Hezbollah and its allies, which are aligned with Syria and Iran, and the Sunni, Druse and Christian leaders who control the largest bloc in Parliament and are aligned with the West. Hezbollah has threatened to stage demonstrations, but Hezbollah officials said Sunday that they were waiting to see how their opposition responded and were considering all options.

The governing coalition, led by Saad Hariri, the son of the slain former prime minister, has tried to brand Hezbollah and Amal as tools of Syria and contends that their ministers resigned to block creation of a tribunal to hear charges in connection with Hariri's assassination.

Syrian officials have been implicated in the UN investigations. The governing coalition has also charged that Hezbollah wants to control or block the government to prevent it from carrying out the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the war with Israel.

The United Nations sent a proposed framework for the court to Lebanon last week, and Prime Minister Fouad Siniora has called a cabinet meeting for Monday to take up the proposal. If Lebanon does not adopt the proposal, the court could still be created by the Security Council, but it would be viewed here as having less legitimacy because it was imposed on the country.

"The hidden plot has been revealed," the governing coalition said in a statement Sunday. "It's a Syrian-Iranian plot to launch a coup against the legitimacy, stop the establishment of an international tribunal and foil Resolution 1701."

Siniora and his allies have said that even without the Shiite members of the cabinet they could adopt the proposal and have it pass in Parliament. But it would probably be rejected by the pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud, who issued his own statement Sunday saying the "government had lost its constitutional legitimacy and, as a result, any cabinet meeting is anti-constitutional and worthless."

But the maneuvering over the court is one piece of a much larger battle, with Hezbollah on the offensive.

Hezbollah insists that its alliance be given seats in the cabinet and that it have veto power over all decisions.

One Hezbollah official said the outcome of the fight could jeopardize the delicate system of power-sharing among the religious communities that was established in the Taif agreement of 1989, which brought an end to 15 years of civil war.

"If they want to govern without Shiite ministers then nothing would prevent a Shiite from running for president in the future," said Tarrad Hamadeh, the Hezbollah minister of labor, who resigned Saturday. "They are messing with the country's future."

In war-torn neighborhoods of the south, in the Bekaa Valley and in Dahiya, often the only sign of authority is Hezbollah's yellow flag. Hezbollah remains the de facto government within its communities.

"We can make a revolution in Lebanon, we can occupy Lebanon, but this is not what we want," said Bilal Naeim, a Hezbollah politburo member. "We could make a coup d'etat."

Shiite power grows in Lebanon Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament

Naeim works in a tent in Dahiya that serves as an office for reconstruction and distribution of Hezbollah assistance. On Sunday, Ali Ahmed Raychouny came in looking for help to rebuild his bookstore. "I never expect anything from the government of our country," he said. "I have five kids and I support three families. Hezbollah is in my blood."

Load-Date: November 14, 2006

End of Document

Shiites may benefit in Lebanon's crisis; Hezbollah is capitalizing on its appeal

The International Herald Tribune

November 14, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 972 words

Byline: Michael Slackman

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Nada Bakri contributed reporting.

*

In the upscale center of Beirut, the normally subdued atmosphere at the graveside of the assassinated former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, is increasingly tense. His former supporters, long the most powerful constituency in Lebanon, anxiously talk about the wave of Shiite political power washing over the country.

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Shiites may benefit in Lebanon 's crisis Hezbollah is capitalizing on its appeal

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On Saturday, Hezbollah and its main Shiite ally, Amal, provoked a political crisis when their five ministers resigned from the government after the breakdown of talks about giving Hezbollah's alliance more authority. A sixth minister aligned with the pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud, quit Monday.

Those resignations have set the stage for a showdown between Hezbollah and its allies, which are aligned with Syria and Iran, and the Sunni, Druse and Christian leaders who control the largest bloc in Parliament and side with the West.

Hezbollah has threatened to stage demonstrations, but Hezbollah officials say they are waiting to see how their opposition responds and are considering all options.

The governing coalition began to make its counterstrike Monday, at a cabinet meeting that went ahead without the six ministers who quit. The remaining ministers voted to approve a United Nations plan for a tribunal to hear charges in connection with the assassination of Hariri in February 2005. The coalition is led by his son, Saad Hariri. He has tried to paint Hezbollah and Amal as tools of Syria and he contends that their ministers resigned in hopes of blocking the creation of the tribunal. Syrian officials have been implicated in the UN investigations.

The governing coalition has also charged that Hezbollah wants to block the government from carrying out the provisions of Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the war with Israel.

"The hidden plot has been revealed," the governing coalition said in a statement Sunday. "It's a Syrian-Iranian plot to launch a coup against the legitimacy, stop the establishment of an international tribunal and foil Resolution 1701."

After the cabinet vote Monday, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora issued a statement calling the move constitutional and saying he was hopeful that the Shiite ministers who had resigned would return to their posts.

But the plan for the tribunal still needs approval by Parliament and it was not clear when the next session of Parliament would be held. It would probably be rejected by Lahoud, who issued his own statement Sunday saying that the "government had lost its constitutional legitimacy and, as a result, any cabinet meeting is anti-constitutional and worthless."

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Load-Date: November 14, 2006

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Letters - Israel/US policy has strengthened Hezbollah

Irish News

August 3, 2006 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 26

Length: 306 words

Body

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon represents a dangerous continuation of the US post 9/11 policy whereby acts of sub-state 'terrorism' are met with wholesale infringement of state sovereignty.

In Afghanistan and Iraq America set the example which Israel is now replicating in Lebanon.

To treat a border incident involving the abduction of two soldiers by Hezbollah as if it were an occasion of war is a gross distortion of well-accepted international law and state practice.

If every such provocation were to be treated in this way, the world would be aflame.

Suppose India had responded to the recent Mumbai train explosions that killed 200 Indian civilians as a Pakistani act of war.

The result would have been a devastating regional conflict, possibly fought with nuclear weapons.

The 'war on terror' has in fact become a Humpty Dumpty world where words mean only what the powerful want them to mean.

So, when Israel says it is destroying Lebanon's 'infrastructure of terror', it really means it is killing women and children.

This Orwellian language may fool some people in the west but it is completely lost on the people who are really suffering.

As a result, the US-UK mistakes in Iraq are being repeated in this crisis, with leaders such as Bush and Blair apparently having learned nothing in the past three years.

The Israeli massacre at Qana and the invasion of their country will inevitably have the opposite effect to what was intended.

Far from crushing Hezbollah, Israel and its western supporters have strengthened it and the majority of Lebanese people will almost certainly vote for them next time, just as the Palestinians elected Hamas earlier this year.

Perhaps if these leaders had copied the approach which was adopted in Northern Ireland, they might be winning 'the war on terror' instead of fomenting it.

BRIAN McCLINTON, Lisburn.

Letters - Israel / US policy has strengthened Hezbollah

Load-Date: August 3, 2006

End of Document

Hezbollah warns Blair: you're not welcome in Beirut

The Times (London)

August 24, 2006, Thursday

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Section: HOME NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 677 words

Byline: Richard Beeston in Beirut and Sam Coates

Body

TONY BLAIR'S peace mission to the Middle East appeared in jeopardy last night after Hezbollah declared that the Prime Minister would not be welcome in Lebanon because of his support for Israel during the war.

A senior member of Hezbollah's politburo has told The Times that Mr Blair should stay away from the country because he was "up to his ears in the blood of Lebanese women and children".

British officials are confident that Mr Blair would be welcomed by the Government of Fouad Siniora, the Prime Minister. But Hezbollah, which has emerged as the real force in the country, has stepped up its attack on Britain in recent days and Mr Blair would risk an angry reception from its supporters if he visits the country.

Dozens of foreign leaders, including the Emir of Qatar and the French Foreign Minister, have been welcomed to Lebanon since fighting began on July 12. But last month Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, was forced to return to Washington after she was told that she would not be welcome in Beirut because of the Bush Administration's support for Israel.

Mr Blair, who is expected to return from holiday in the next few days and is planning to spend the Bank Holiday weekend at Chequers preparing his Middle East mission, now faces a serious dilemma. He can travel to Lebanon and risk facing a hostile reception, or he can bypass Lebanon and restrict his visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories. He would then face the charge that his peace mission has avoided the very country at the centre of the conflict.

Mr Blair has been keen to visit the region since the G8 summit in St Petersburg last month, when he offered to help American peace efforts in a conversation with George Bush, in which the President was overheard to greet the Prime Minister with: "Yo Blair."

When fighting broke out, Britain followed the US by refusing to call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. The policy infuriated many in the Arab world, particularly the Lebanese Shia Muslim community, which took the brunt of Israel's bombardment. One diplomatic source admitted that Britain "got off on the wrong foot" by appearing to support Washington and tacitly allowing the Israeli offensive to run its course.

Last week Britain tried to improve relations when Hilary Benn, the International Development Secretary, made a short visit to Beirut and doubled British aid to £ 12.5 million.

But any hope that Mr Blair might be able to repair the damage was thrown into doubt after Ghaleb Abu Zeynab, a member of Hezbollah's politburo, told The Times that the people of Lebanon did not want Mr Blair's help.

Hezbollah warns Blair: you're not welcome in Beirut

Speaking in an interview at Hezbollah headquarters in the southern suburbs of Beirut, he said: "Blair is not welcome in Lebanon. I am not speaking on behalf of Hezbollah but all the Lebanese people. They do not want someone who cried crocodile tears to visit their country.

"He is up to his ears in the blood of Lebanese women and children. He is not welcome here. He is a killer. He killed a whole nation, not just individuals," he said. "What you see around you (the destruction of the southern suburbs) is the result of Blair's policy. We do not want to see him."

Downing Street said yesterday that the Prime Minister still hoped to visit the region, but no date had yet been agreed. Officials refused to be drawn on which countries he hoped to visit.

Mr Blair indicated before his holiday that he was keen to revive the "road map" for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. He said: "It is my intention to visit the region, in particular Israel and Palestine, over the coming period and to consult those there and of course members of the Quartet on the best way forward."

This is not the first time that Mr Blair has been told to take a back seat in the peace process. Mark Malloch Brown, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, said to the US and Britain that as "the team that led on Iraq" they were poorly placed to take a leading role in diplomatic efforts in Lebanon.

Europe dithers, page 41 timesonline.co.uk/mideast Latest news from the Middle East

Load-Date: August 24, 2006

End of Document

Fundraiser won't help Hezbollah: organizers: ICAO to host concert

The Gazette (Montreal)
November 8, 2006 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 299 words

Byline: JEFF HEINRICH, The Gazette

Body

Money raised at a United Nations agency benefit concert for Lebanon next month won't fund reconstruction efforts by **Hezbollah**, the Shiite Islamist militant group Canada considers a terrorist organization, organizers said yesterday.

About \$40,000 is expected to be raised at the concert, to be held the evening of Dec. 5 at International Civil Aviation Organization headquarters in Montreal.

Organized by ICAO and the Montreal Institute for Mediterranean Studies, the concert's proceeds will go to Oxfam Quebec for projects in Lebanon, which was devastated last summer by bombardment by Israel in a conflict with **Hezbollah**.

A statement yesterday said the money is "intended for affected civil populations, families and children in particular, on request from local charities."

But, organizers stressed, that does not include **Hezbollah**, which does much of the rebuilding work now going on in south Beirut and southern Lebanon.

Instead, Oxfam will use the proceeds to fund **women's** farm co-operatives in the Bekaa Valley, restore microfinancing to craftspeople and tradespeople, and hire young people for temporary jobs in agriculture, transportation and construction.

The \$40,000 is part of \$3 million Oxfam Quebec intends to spend in Lebanon in 2007.

The Concert for Peace in the Middle East, a mix of chamber and choral music, is to take place in ICAO's assembly hall, which seats about 1,000. Tickets are \$50 for adults, \$25 for students.

It will be the first time the UN agency has opened its doors to the public since inaugurating its high-security University St. offices in 1995. ICAO's connection to Lebanon is an old one. From 1976 to 2006, its council president was Assad Kotaite, a Lebanese international lawyer.

For more information, go to: <http://iemmm.over-blog.com/>

jheinrich@thegazette.canwest.com

Fundraiser won't help Hezbollah: organizers: ICAO to host concert

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End of Document

Lebanese singer backs Hezbollah as defender of country's honour

Ottawa Citizen

November 6, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 361 words

Byline: Michael Hirst, The Sunday Telegraph

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT - The Lebanese pop diva Haifa Wehbe may share her name with a historic Israeli port town, but her heart lies with Hezbollah.

The raven-haired former beauty queen has emerged as an unlikely supporter of Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, 46, the militant Shia group's portly firebrand leader.

Arguably the Arab world's leading sex symbol, the singer's style is frowned upon by conservative clerics. In one video, the chartbuster cavorts in outfits that leave little of her ample bosom to the imagination, singing: "Here is the pain, kiss the pain, make it better. When you kiss the pain, the pain is over."

But to Ms. Wehbe, 30, whose brother died fighting Israel in the 1980s, Sheik Nasrallah is a national hero.

"It's a land that has people to defend it, and therefore Nasrallah had a big role in defending Lebanon's honour and border," she said last week.

The man who has won her support appeared for the first time since his "victory" rally in September. In an interview on Hezbollah's al-Manar television channel, he threatened street protests to force early elections in Lebanon if the Islamic group's demands for more parliamentary representation were not met by Nov. 13.

The country's western-backed prime minister, Fouad Siniora, has refused repeated calls for him to step down. And as the war of words escalates, Joe Sarkis, a member of the cabinet, said his Lebanese Forces party was ready to take to the streets to "defend the Lebanese republic."

In an attempt to calm tempers, Lebanon's parliamentary speaker, Nabih Berri, has called rival factions together for round-table talks.

Amid the tension, Lebanon's younger generation has been seeking respite from the sabre-rattling rhetoric.

"Haifa's music offers an escape from the daily tension of Lebanon's politics," said Layale Harb, a tourism student. "She is certainly easier to dance to than Hezbollah war songs."

Lebanese singer backs Hezbollah as defender of country's honour

Ms. Wehbe won a beauty contest at the age of 16, was voted Miss Lebanon in 1995, and found fame across the Arab world as a fashion model. She features in a Pepsi ad with the Arsenal football player, Thierry Henry, and was named, earlier this year, as one of People magazine's 100 most beautiful women.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Ghassan Zoghbi, Reuters; Lebanese singer Haifa Wehbe, a former beauty queen known for her provocative music videos, has emerged as a supporter of Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the firebrand leader of Hezbollah.

Load-Date: November 6, 2006

End of Document

Shiite power grows in Lebanon; Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament

The International Herald Tribune

November 14, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 1033 words

Byline: Michael Slackman

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Nada Bakri contributed reporting.

*

In the upscale center of Beirut, the normally somber atmosphere at the graveside of the assassinated former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, is increasingly tense. His former supporters, long the most powerful constituency in Lebanon, anxiously talk about the wave of Shiite political power washing over the country.

"After the first of the year, I am leaving to Qatar," one woman, Myrtha Hadidi, said Sunday, after she bowed her head and crossed herself in front of the grave. "The situation is very, very dangerous now. I think there will be a war again."

Across town, along the crowded streets of the poor Shiite neighborhood devastated by Israeli bombs during the summer war, there is despair over the destruction, but confidence in the growing power of Lebanon's Shiites.

"I am very optimistic about the future," said Ziad Kamaan, as he prepared to reopen his women's accessory store for the first time since the war ended in September.

Lebanon is in the middle of a political crisis that is not just a matter of jockeying for power, but a fundamental realignment of authority here and perhaps in the region. It is seen in the faces of those Sunnis and Christians who visit the Hariri memorial, nervous and drawn, and the confidence of those picking their way through the debris and destruction of the Shiite neighborhood, known as Dahiya.

"Hezbollah gave us dignity and pride; they made us feel like human beings again," said Ali Berro, owner of a small grocery in the neighborhood. "It's true that America and Israel devastated this country, but we will rebuild again, ourselves."

Long in the making, the 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah which was waged to crush the group's militia seems to have accelerated the rise of Lebanon's Shiites, from their onetime status as the nation's unwanted stepchild to the cusp of political dominance.

Shiite power grows in Lebanon Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament

As a political party, a militia and social welfare organization, **Hezbollah** has used the devastation of the war with Israel to help strengthen the allegiance of Shiites, giving out money and services that the government has so far failed to deliver.

Though no one knows for sure the size of each group in Lebanon there has not been a census since the 1930s Shiites are believed to make up more than 30 percent of the population, and by some estimates have reached a plurality. But it would require a major leap for the Shiites to realize their political goal of dominance and their efforts to reach it could threaten long-term instability, and perhaps bring armed conflict.

"This war has improved the Shiite identity and self-image," said Judith Palmer Harik, a professor at the American University in Beirut who has studied and written about **Hezbollah**. "They got something out of this war that was pretty uplifting."

On Saturday, **Hezbollah** and its main Shiite ally, Amal, provoked a political crisis when their five ministers resigned from the government after the breakdown of talks about giving **Hezbollah**'s alliance more authority. A sixth minister aligned with the pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud, quit Monday.

Those resignations have set the stage for a showdown between **Hezbollah** and its allies, which are aligned with Syria and Iran, and the Sunni, Druse and Christian leaders who control the largest bloc in Parliament and side with the West.

Hezbollah has threatened to stage demonstrations, but **Hezbollah** officials said Sunday that they were waiting to see how their opposition responded and were considering all options.

The governing coalition began to make its counterstrike Monday, at a cabinet meeting that went ahead without the six ministers who quit. The remaining ministers voted to approve a United Nations plan for a tribunal to hear charges in connection with the assassination of Hariri. The coalition is led by his son, Saad Hariri. He has tried to paint **Hezbollah** and Amal as tools of Syria, and he contends that their ministers resigned in hopes of blocking the creation of the tribunal.

Syrian officials have been implicated in the UN investigations. The governing coalition has also charged that **Hezbollah** wants to control or block the government to prevent it from carrying out the provisions of Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the war with Israel. "The hidden plot has been revealed," the governing coalition said in a statement issued Sunday. "It's a Syrian-Iranian plot to launch a coup against the legitimacy, stop the establishment of an international tribunal and foil Resolution 1701."

After the cabinet vote Monday, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora issued a statement calling the move constitutional and saying he was hopeful that the Shiite ministers who had resigned would return to their posts.

But the plan for the tribunal still needs approval by Parliament, and it is not clear when the next session of Parliament will be held. It would probably be rejected by the pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud, who issued his own statement Sunday saying the "government had lost its constitutional legitimacy and, as a result, any cabinet meeting is anti-constitutional and worthless."

But the maneuvering over the court is one piece of a much larger battle, with **Hezbollah** on the offensive.

Hezbollah insists that its alliance be given seats in the cabinet and that it have veto power over all decisions.

One **Hezbollah** official said the outcome of the fight could jeopardize the delicate system of power-sharing among the religious communities that was established in the Taif agreement of 1989, which brought an end to 15 years of civil war.

"If they want to govern without Shiite ministers then nothing would prevent a Shiite from running for president in the future," said Tarrad Hamadeh, the **Hezbollah** minister of labor, who resigned Saturday. "They are messing with the country's future."

Shiite power grows in Lebanon Stage is set for a Hezbollah showdown with Parliament

In war-torn neighborhoods of the south, in the Bekaa Valley and in Dahiya, often the only sign of authority is Hezbollah's yellow flag. Hezbollah remains the de facto government within its communities.

"We can make a revolution in Lebanon, we can occupy Lebanon, but this is not what we want," said Bilal Naeim, a Hezbollah politburo member. "We could make a coup d'etat."

Load-Date: November 14, 2006

End of Document

We'll disarm Hezbollah, say French

Daily Mail (London)

August 26, 2006 Saturday

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Section: ED 1ST; Pg. 12

Length: 584 words

Body

FRANCE vowed to disarm Hezbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon last night after it was chosen to lead the 15,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping mission there.

The announcement by foreign minister Philippe Douste-Blazy came less than 24 hours after President Jacques Chirac bowed to international pressure to contribute 2,000 troops to the force.

France heads the existing U.N. operation in the area and was asked last night by U.N.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan to lead the mission.

Italy, which is contributing 3,000 troops to the enlarged force, will take over in February next year. Mr Douste-Blazy CAMPAIGNERS and parents last night demanded a ban on TV adverts for junk food aimed at children amid warnings that the obesity crisis is deepening.

They want restrictions on commercials for products such as crisps, burgers and fizzy drinks before the 9pm watershed.

Latest statistics are forecasting a rise in the number of dangerously overweight Britons.

By 2010, a third of adults and a fifth of children will be obese, said the Department of Health.

There will be around 12million adults so fat that their health is at risk, made up of one in three men and a quarter of women.

The figures also suggest children are losing the fight against flab, with up to two million aged two to 15 being obese by 2010.

The alarming trends mean the Government is set to miss its target to halt the year-on-year rise in the problem among children under 11 by 2010.

Heart campaigners said drastic action is needed to protect children's health, including a ban on adverts for food high in salt, sugar and fat.

Maura Gillespie, head of policy and public affairs at the British Heart Foundation, said: 'We are demanding restrictions on advertising junk food to children before the 9pm watershed.

'This can only have a positive impact on young people's attitudes to food.'

We'll disarm Hezbollah, say French

She added that a survey of said: 'We think the best solution for disarming Hezbollah is to make an exclusion zone, with the retreat of the Israeli army on one side and the deployment of the Lebanese Army on the other, reinforced by the U.N. troops.' He said Mr Annan had given guarantees for the safety of European troops and the rules of engagement.

The Secretary-General expressed confidence that he could raise 15,000 troops for the peace force last night after several European nations overcame their reluctance to send soldiers. At an emergency meeting of ministers in Brussels, Spain said it was ready to send up to 1,200 troops and Poland pledged a slightly smaller contingent.

Mr Douste-Blazy said that Europe's total contribution would be between 6,500 and 7,000 troops making the Europeans the core of the U.N.

force.

But as deployments began, Mr Chirac said that number was 'completely excessive'.

He added: 'It doesn't really make sense. So what is the right number 4,000, 5,000 or 6,000? I don't know.' U.N. officials want a strong European contingent alongside a sizeable Muslim presence in the expanded peacekeeping force. Malaysia, Indonesia and Nepal have offered troops, while Turkey and Bangladesh are considering doing so.

The truce between Israel and Hezbollah took effect on August 14 after 34 days of fighting which cost the lives of nearly 1,200 people in Lebanon and 157 Israelis.

The popularity of Israeli premier Ehud Olmert has slumped disastrously since the ceasefire.

An opinion poll this week showed two-thirds of Israelis want him to resign over his handling of the war.

Many view the U.N-brokered truce, backed by Mr Olmert, as a failure for Israel.

Load-Date: August 27, 2006

Hezbollah: A 'family' in mourning; Death of girl who baked militants' bread shows their role

The International Herald Tribune

August 18, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1097 words

Byline: Sabrina Tavernise

Dateline: AINATA, Lebanon

Body

For Zahra Fadlallah, a 17-year-old with a serious face, Hezbollah was always family. Two of her brothers were fighters. Her mother was an activist. A distant relative is a hard-line Hezbollah member in Parliament.

When the war hit, relatives say, she stayed in this village to help her mother bake bread for fighters. Both were killed in an Israeli airstrike in late July. Their bodies were dug out this week.

As the fate of the Israeli-Lebanese cease-fire unfolds in coming weeks and months, especially the volatile question of the future of Hezbollah, the Shiite south remains fiercely dedicated to the militia. Indeed, the organization seems so deeply woven into the fabric of society here that it often forms the shape of life itself. It has a vast social network that pays for health care and education, performs weddings and reduces electric bills, a big draw for Shiites in the south, who are some of the country's poorest citizens.

Israelis note that their troops left Lebanon for good six years ago and that southern Lebanese should therefore have no basis for ill will toward them. But this is a culture of long memories, and six years is not a long time for the wounds of the 18-year occupation to heal.

When Zahra was 10, her mother was arrested. She watched while Lebanese working for Israeli authorities put a bag over her head and led her out of the house. Her father was taken on the same day, and she spent three days in the house by herself. Her brothers and sisters, already of military age and deeply involved with Hezbollah, had moved to Beirut, north of the Israeli zone. Later, she hid while Israelis searched the house for weapons.

"It made a wound in her," said Ali Fadlallah, one of Zahra's brothers, who spoke in the living room of their family house as mourners came and went through a central hallway.

She had to help treat her father, who returned several days later badly beaten but was refused admission to the local hospital, Ali said.

Every year in Ainata, villagers hold a poetry reading ceremony to commemorate the date that the Israelis withdrew. Zahra was one of the organizers.

In 1982, when Israel first came to war in this area, it was to uproot local Palestinian guerrilla bases. That was a military success in the short term.

Hezbollah: A 'family' in mourning Death of girl who baked militants' bread shows their role

But the Palestinians were outsiders, and Hezbollah is homegrown. The deep bonds and long memories here would seem to make uprooting Hezbollah Israel's stated goal when the war began last month all but impossible.

Now, after the war has ended, Hezbollah has emerged militarily diminished but far stronger politically. That new power will make voices like the Fadlallahs' even more important as the weak Lebanese state stumbles ahead.

"Hezbollah is from here," said Zahra's fiancé, a Hezbollah activist, who would give only his first name, Fadhi. "It's the families of Ainata. It's not a stranger."

The story of Zahra is typical. She was born in 1989, the same year one of her brothers, a fighter named Ahmed, and her older sister, Raja, moved to southern Beirut. Ahmed had joined Hezbollah and had been secretly working against Israeli forces in the south, and the Israeli administration, staffed by Lebanese, discovered his work.

At that time, Hezbollah members communicated by secret messages, said Ali, and Zahra was the most inventive member of the family when it came to hiding them so they would make it through Israeli checkpoints.

Photographs of family members standing with Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, hung on the walls. An empty, knee-high artillery shell stood in the corner, holding a spray of artificial flowers.

The occupation squeezed life into uncomfortable shapes, broadly increasing Hezbollah's popular appeal throughout southern Lebanon. The Fadlallah family remained separated until 2000, when the Israelis withdrew. Zahra was 11.

"I didn't see my family for six years," said a high school teacher and Hezbollah member who had come to pay his respects. "That would motivate anybody to want to change things."

Hezbollah views Israel as an enemy, saying that its very existence meant that Muslim lands were taken, changing the region forever.

But while Hezbollah's political rhetoric sometimes refers to coming to Jerusalem and routinely refuses to acknowledge Israel as a state maps in bookstores here label northern Israel as Palestine voices in towns and villages across the south talk not of destroying Israel but of defending themselves from what they see as its aggressiveness.

"All the wars with Israel we were fighting to keep our land only," said Raja, Zahra's older sister, sitting in a black smock and black hejab on the living room couch.

The high school teacher chimed in: "People of this village don't want anyone to come and take their land. Not Israel, not America, not even Iran."

Iran started Hezbollah in the 1980s, as part of its Islamic revolution. It is believed to be responsible for the kidnapping of the American reporter Terry Anderson and for the bombing of a barracks of American marines in 1983. But the group evolved, adopting a more moderate public face under the leadership of Nasrallah, who took over the party leadership in 1992.

It began developing its social network. Programs started small: At the height of the Lebanese civil war, it distributed water in hard-hit areas.

It was in Hezbollah charity work that Zahra found herself, Raja said. She wanted to become a doctor to help villagers and fighters. She seemed old beyond her years, Ali said. In her teens, she kept the family finances.

"If you told her a secret, she would keep it," he said, wearing a Dolce & Gabbana T-shirt and a pair of jeans.

The family kept resisting. Zahra's brother Ahmed was killed in 1999 in the village of Haddata fighting Israeli soldiers. The living room where the relatives spoke had several machine guns propped in the corner behind a door. The

Hezbollah: A 'family' in mourning Death of girl who baked militants' bread shows their role

fields and farmlands leading up to the town are singed with black marks from Katyusha rocket launchings, perfectly round like giant cigarette burns.

When the war started, Zahra was planning her wedding. She approached it with her characteristic seriousness. Her purse, found in the crushed basement where she had been hiding when the bomb fell, contained a note she had written to herself, truths she felt she should live by once she became Fadhi's wife.

"Men talk more than women," she wrote in clear Arabic script. "Set priorities. Be frank. Talk everything through."

A photograph of Zahra and Fadhi smiling with her parents, standing next to Nasrallah, is framed in the living room. It was taken on their engagement.

Load-Date: August 27, 2006

End of Document

Israelis reject any truce with Hezbollah Security Cabinet approves widening ground offensive.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 947 words

Byline: By Ravi Nessman and Hamza Hendawi THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel's prime minister declared Monday that there would be no cease-fire with **Hezbollah** guerrillas, apologizing for the deaths of Lebanese civilians but saying "we will not give up on our goal to live a life free of terror." His Security Cabinet approved widening the ground offensive.

Israeli warplanes hit **Hezbollah** fighters battling with soldiers near the border as the guerrillas fired mortars into Israel. But an Israeli suspension of most airstrikes in Lebanon -- and a pause by the guerrillas on rocket attacks in northern Israel -- brought both countries their quietest day since the conflict began three weeks ago.

Lebanese fled north in overflowing trucks and cars. About 200 people -- mostly elderly -- escaped the border town of Bint Jbail, where Israeli troops and **Hezbollah** guerrillas fought their bloodiest clashes. Two residents dropped dead on the road out, one of malnutrition, the other of heart failure.

Some survivors described living on a piece of candy a day and dirty water as the fighting raged.

"All the time I thought of death," said Rimah Bazzi, an American visiting from Dearborn, Mich., who spent weeks hiding with her three children and mother in the house of a local doctor.

The lull was felt across northern Israel, too: In the town of Nahariya, residents who had been hiding in shelters for the better part of three weeks began emerging. Supermarkets were fuller than before and more people were in the streets, walking along the beach and shopping.

But diplomatic efforts to end the crisis faltered, despite increased world pressure for a cease-fire after the devastating strike in Qana.

Israel's Security Cabinet early today approved widening the ground offensive, a participant said, and rejected a cease-fire until an international force is in place in southern Lebanon.

The participant, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters, said Israel's airstrikes would resume "in full force" after a 48-hour suspension expires in another day.

Israelis reject any truce with Hezbollah Security Cabinet approves widening ground offensive.

Thousands of army reserves have been called up in recent days in advance of the decision, which is expected to lead to sending more troops into the border area. Israeli leaders have said they want to carve out a zone about 1 mile wide that would be free of Hezbollah.

Israel called the 48-hour suspension after the Qana attack to give time for an investigation -- though it said its warplanes would still hit urgent Hezbollah targets, and at least three strikes took place Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert apologized for the civilian deaths in Saturday's strike, in which 56 people, mostly women and children, were killed.

"I am sorry from the bottom of my heart for all deaths of children or women in Qana," he said. "We did not search them out. . . . They were not our enemies and we did not look for them."

But he insisted Israel, which began its offensive after Hezbollah snatched two soldiers and killed three others in a cross-border raid July 12, had no choice but to fight.

"There is no cease-fire, there will be no cease-fire," he said. "We are determined to succeed in this struggle. We will not give up on our goal to live a life free of terror."

Near the fighting, grass fires set by shelling blazed into the night sky from the hills outside the Lebanese border town of Marjayoun. U.N. peacekeepers struggled to get trucks full of aid supplies across the Litani River as artillery pounded only a few hills away.

President George W. Bush resisted calls for an immediate halt to fighting, underlining that any peace deal must ensure that Hezbollah is crippled. He said Iran and Syria must stop backing the Shiite militant group with money and weapons.

"As we work with friends and allies, it's important to remember this crisis began with Hezbollah's unprovoked attacks against Israel. Israel is exercising its right to defend itself," Bush said.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice earlier in the day said she expected a U.N. resolution for a cease-fire within a week. But as she headed to Washington after a visit to Jerusalem derailed by the Qana strike, she struck a more pessimistic tone.

"There's a lot of work to do," she told reporters. "You have to get all the work done, you have to get it done urgently."

Hezbollah announced that five of its fighters were killed in the clashes, bringing the group's acknowledged death toll to 43. Israel says dozens more fighters have died.

Israel carried out two other airstrikes. One killed a Lebanese soldier in his car outside Tyre, prompting Israel to express its regrets, saying it had believed the vehicle was carrying a senior Hezbollah official. The other strike hit the main Lebanon-Syria border crossing for the third day in a row.

Hezbollah also claimed to have hit an Israeli warship off the coast of Tyre with a rocket, the second hit it would have scored on a ship. But Israel denied any of its warships were hit Monday.

The guerrilla group did not shoot a single rocket into Israel as of early evening, a remarkable turnaround for an area that had been hit by dozens of missiles each day during the offensive.

At least 524 people have been killed in Lebanon since the fighting began, according to the Health Ministry. Fifty-one Israelis have died, including 33 soldiers and 18 civilians who died in rocket attacks.

Israelis reject any truce with Hezbollah Security Cabinet approves widening ground offensive.

Hendawi reported from Marjayoun, Lebanon. Associated Press writers Tom Wagner in Jerusalem, Mark Lavie in Tel Aviv, Lee Keath in Beirut, Kathy Gannon in Bint Jbail and Katherine Shrader traveling with Rice contributed to this report.

U.N. scraps a meeting of nations that might contribute troops for south Lebanon. A7

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Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - An Israeli gunner prays at an artillery position near the Lebanese border in northern Israel on Monday. The Associated Press

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

End of Document

We can't bear pictures of the dead. Hezbollah want to see nothing else

The Times (London)

August 1, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 17

Length: 1184 words

Byline: David Aaronovitch

Body

AT 6.30am on Sunday, from a two-tree hillock on Hampstead Heath, I stood looking out over London -me, a few feral parakeets and a little black dog. The city was mauve and placid; no sirens, no explosions, no dead children. I had just heard the overnight news from Qana, and I wasn't imagining that I loved my three children any more than the Lebanese man who that night had lost his three.

They'd been given warning to leave their homes, but it seems that the Shalhoubes and the Hashems -the two large families who were wiped out in the bombing just didn't have the money or the ability to make the journey. Even before the events at Qana, David Miliband is said to have asked at a meeting of the Cabinet: "Where will this all end?" On Monday a moderate member of the Lebanese Cabinet told the BBC that the violence was putting Lebanon back years. Ann Clwyd MP -a woman I greatly admire -lent her voice to the call for a quick ceasefire.

How, after all, can this be borne? We should stop it now. There should be no more killing. We should stop it even before Israel has secured its border, even while Hezbollah's military force is still intact. How can you argue with the impulse to save innocent life?

"Asymmetrical warfare" is a term usually employed to describe the deployment of insurgent and terrorist techniques against a massively better-armed adversary. It almost suggests that such an approach is defensible. But there is a second sense in which the phrase might be used. We weedy democrats and life-loving liberals cannot bear what the ideologues of Hamas and Hezbollah find all too bearable. We argue about whether we even want to see the pictures of the dead. They seem to want to look at nothing else.

We understand the problem. Israeli violence may damage the democratic and reform movements in Lebanon and Syria. But Hezbollah's violence, apparently, serves only to strengthen the forces of religious ecstasy. To us, hitting a UN force is a humanitarian outrage. To Hezbollah it's a tactic. To Hezbollah every civilian is a warrior.

Take the Israeli killing of four UN soldiers last week, condemned by Kofi Annan as "deliberate". On July 18 one of the doomed officers e-mailed home to say that Israeli ordnance was landing nearby and that, "this has not been deliberate targeting, but has rather been due to tactical necessity". A retired Canadian general interpreted this for Canadian television. "What he was telling us was Hezbollah soldiers were all over his position and the IDF were targeting them. And that's a favourite trick by people who don't have representation in the UN. They use the UN as shields, knowing that they can't be punished for it."

Reporters from Qana said that, the day after the Israeli attack, "there was little evidence of fighters". But the Israelis have released footage claiming to show rockets being fired at Israel from within the village. Other aerial sequences

We can't bear pictures of the dead. Hezbollah want to see nothing else

clearly depict rocket launchers being fired from behind apartment blocks and launcher trucks being driven to hiding places in garages and under houses. It was this kind of action that prompted Jan Egelund, of the UN, to call upon Hezbollah to stop this "cowardly blending...among women and children". He added: "I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more children and women dead than armed men."

Today, on the website of Hezbollah's own propaganda agency, al-Manar, you can find the boast that on one day at the end of last week: "Islamic resistance fighters launched barrages of rockets at northern Israeli settlements...According to Israeli media, some 20 settlers were injured in today's attacks." "Settlements" is Hezbollah for towns and villages, and "settlers" is Hezbollah for civilians. So when a 240lb Hezbollah rocket slammed into the Israeli countryside last week, it should have prompted the thought that when the Israelis miss their targets they hit civilians and when Hezbollah misses, they don't.

Getting in among the UN positions and the civilians, firing at "settlers" while seeing the other side condemned for its inhumanity, is part of the new asymmetry.

Unfortunately, Hezbollah is pretty good at hitting the soldiers too. If you recall those TV pictures in the 1980s of chaps in keffiyehs blindly firing off their RPGs and Kalashnikovs round a corner and then running like buggery, that has all gone.

Some clue as to how things have changed was offered on Sunday night's Panorama.

Though it was incidental to its story, what the programme showed is how organisations such as Hamas propagandise the children and adults in their care, exulting martyrdom and teaching them to embrace death. We saw schools that celebrate suicide bombers and school computers full of jihadoporn. Had you been watching the evening drama on al-Manar recently you could have seen a Syrian drama series on the Jewish plot to take over the world. One scene was set in a brothel where a Jewish prostitute thinks she is dying from some disease. "I implore you," she tells the Madam, "send me only Christian clients. I don't want any Jew to be infected by me." It's The Forsyte Saga as scripted by Heinrich Himmler.

If that's the cultural you can imagine the political. But just in case you can't, let me help you. Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah (thinks, how exactly did he become leader of Hezbollah?) is a prolific speaker, but is credited with meaning what he says. Nasrallah believes that the Jews "invented the legend of the Nazi atrocities". That Israel "is a cancerous body in the region" that "must be uprooted". More magnanimously: "Let us spare bloodshed. Let the Yemenite Jews return to Yemen, the Moroccan Jews to Morocco, the Ethiopian Jews to Ethiopia, the European Jews to Europe, and the American Jews to America." Though even that is generous because: "Anyone who reads the Koran...sees what acts of madness and slaughter the Jews carried out throughout history...Anyone who reads these texts cannot think of co-existence with them, of peace with them, or about accepting their presence, not only in Palestine of 1948 but even in a small village in Palestine, because they are a cancer."

This is the chap with the long-range missiles (getting longer range) sitting on Israel's northern border. And while Hezbollah might bring out the Lebanese flags for the press in Beirut, in their southern fastnesses the only banners are theirs.

And what do we say, knowing this? That Bad Blair should lean on Worse Bush who should put the squeeze on Murdering Olmert and it'd all be over. That's the new orthodoxy.

God alone knows, the Israelis have, in their history, committed crimes and terrible errors. Sabra and Chatilla, the refusal to recognise for many years that Palestinians actually existed, the brutalities of the occupation, the settling on the West Bank and in Gaza and so on. The Palestinian organisations have their own track record of deceit and murder. Consequently, each slow step towards a peace has been agonising, and now the new asymmetry makes progress almost impossible. As of today, I have no answer.

Read David Aaronovitch's blog: timesonline.co.uk/davidaaronovitch

We can't bear pictures of the dead. Hezbollah want to see nothing else

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

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International: Beirut protests reach new height

The Guardian - Final Edition

December 11, 2006 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 13

Length: 459 words

Byline: Clancy Chassay, Beirut

Body

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators poured into the centre of Beirut yesterday as 10 days of protest for a national unity government in the country threatened to come to a head.

The demonstrators, largely Shia Muslim and Christian, came from across the country to take part in what the army described as the largest mobilisation in Lebanon's history. Many had arrived the night before and joined a sprawling tent city which has been in place for nearly two weeks. Lebanese of all ages, many with their families, waved flags and chanted slogans calling for the resignation of the western-backed government of the prime minister, Fouad Siniora. Veiled Muslim women and fashionably dressed Christian students intermingled while many protesters wore combinations of scarves and caps bearing the emblems of the various Muslim and Christian parties present.

The opposition, spearheaded by Hizbullah, has declared the government ineffective, unrepresentative and corrupt, and seeks inclusion in the cabinet.

"These are the people of Lebanon, not those men in expensive suits sitting in that building," said 32-year-old chef Qasim Fouad, pointing to the government building behind him. "Siniora is Washington's man, not the leader of the Lebanese people. The Arabs and the Americans support him, but what is the point if he has lost the Lebanese people? We will succeed here today; this government will fall."

Addressing the crowds, Sheik Naim Qasim, Hizbullah's second in command after Hassan Nasrallah, said the opposition would stay on the streets for months if necessary. "Does Bush want popular expression in Lebanon? Do the west and the Arabs want to hear the voice of the people in Lebanon? Tell them 'Death to America!' Tell them 'Death to Israel!'"

The Christian opposition leader, Michel Aoun, a former army chief, told Mr Siniora he had days to either accept a national unity government or face actions that would lead to a transitional government and early elections. "What we hope for to day is for them to understand that their era is over," he announced via a broadcast on giant screens.

Political unrest has split the country along dangerous sectarian lines, with most Sunni Muslims supporting the Sunni prime minister and Shiite Muslims backing the militant Hezbollah. Christian factions are split between the two camps.

Mr Siniora, bolstered by support from Washington and much of the EU, as well as pro-western Arab regimes, remained defiant. "What is the great cause for this tense political clamouring and the open sit-ins?" he said. "Is this the ideal way to achieve demands, whatever they are?"

International: Beirut protests reach new height

The army has deployed thousands of troops to the city centre in a move the army commander, Michel Suleiman, says it is unable to sustain indefinitely.

Load-Date: December 13, 2006

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Hezbollah blames U.S. public for Qana: Says 'no Lebanese can trust an American'

Ottawa Citizen

August 19, 2006 Saturday

EARLY Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 286 words

Byline: Adrian Blomfield, The Daily Telegraph

Dateline: QANA, Lebanon

Body

QANA, Lebanon - A senior **Hezbollah** official accused the American people of being complicit in the deaths of Lebanese civilians during a highly charged funeral yesterday for 26 people killed in an Israeli airstrike on the town of Qana.

Relatives of the dead wept as **Hezbollah** pallbearers chanting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" carried coffins covered with the Lebanese flag through the streets of the southern town.

The July 30 missile attack on a block of apartments in Qana caused horror throughout the world, and forced Israel to declare a 48-hour cessation of hostilities during the month-long war, in order to investigate the incident.

Hezbollah did its best to keep the killings in the international limelight by carefully stage-managing the funerals, presided over by Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, the movement's leader in southern Lebanon.

Declaring victory over Israel, he praised Iran for its support of the "Lebanese nation" and lashed out at the U.S. for supplying Israel with weapons.

"American people, you are partners to these massacres --you are partners in this war," he said. "No Lebanese citizen with any dignity will absolve America of this guilt. After this, no Lebanese can trust an American."

His comments represented a departure in the movement's rhetoric and could be interpreted as the tacit sanctioning of attacks on U.S. civilians. However, **Hezbollah** has eschewed attacks outside Israel since it was blamed for bombing Israeli and Jewish targets in Argentina in the 1990s.

Amid yesterday's anti-U.S. rhetoric, the suffering of the bereaved was almost overshadowed. Among about 5,000 mourners, black-clad **women** held pictures of dead children and watched in silence as the noisy procession passed by.

Load-Date: August 19, 2006

Hezbollah blames U.S. public for Qana: Says 'no Lebanese can trust an American'

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THE DEMISE OF HEGEMONIC ORDER

The Nation (AsiaNet)

September 2, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 1130 words

Byline: GENERAL (RETD) MIRZA ASLAM BEG

Body

The power of the powerless has been established beyond doubt. Endowed with firm conviction in the Divine help and by making full preparations for confronting the power-intoxicated enemy, **Hizbullah** has emerged as a formidable force of resistance against the forces of aggression. The defeat of the surrogate superpower - Israel - at the hands of **Hizbullah** is no ordinary feat. In fact, it is a turning point in history, after Afghanistan war of liberation against Soviet occupation.

As a sequel to the defeat of the Soviets, the Islamic Resistance emerged as a patent reality, as admitted by the CIA think tank National Intelligence Council: that around sixty thousand Jihadis from seventy different countries participated in the Afghan Jihad besides the thirty to thirty five thousand Pakistani Jihadis who had joined them, thus adding to their number. They forced retreat on the occupation forces and returned to their respective countries.

Unfortunately, Usama Bin Laden and his associates could not return to their homes as their respective countries cancelled their citizenships. Thus, the only course left to them was to target USA and its assets and allies. When USA launched its offensive on Afghanistan in 2001 and on Iraq in 2003, these very Jihadis returned to join the resistance with the result that in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Islamic resistance is at its peak now. The Lebanon war is an extension of the Islamic Resistance, which has shattered the pride of the Israeli military power at the hands of only 3-4 thousand Jihadis under **Hizbullah**. Thus, the Islamic Resistance has put a limit to the power of USA in Iraq, and the combined forces of Europe - NATO - in Afghanistan.

Hezbollah's military strategy is uniquely distinct in character. The concept of 'positional defence' developed with the full support of the masses through a political movement, is indeed very innovative and for countries like Pakistan, which is facing threats from North and South, is worth emulating. In order to bring in effect this strategy there is the need to dispassionately analyse how it can be made part of Pakistan's military doctrine.

Now it would be difficult for Israel to secure its borders and gain recognition. The strength that Israel possessed is withering away. From a position of weakness, now it may try to acquire some assurances for its security, by other means. Israel, better pay attention to the advice of their famous scholar, Uri Avnery, who says: "Our most basic national interests demand that we extend our hands to the Arab nations that accept us, and act together with them for the rehabilitation of this region."

The mischievous plot to restructure the Middle East and create a greater Israel is now unattainable, as the Islamic Resistance has asserted its élan and vitality. It has successfully contained and curbed the hegemonic powers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon, defining the new contours of the world order and the course of global history. The

THE DEMISE OF HEGEMONIC ORDER

Israeli myth of being an invincible power has been shattered. There is now talk of peace, which clearly indicates how the grandiose notions of power is diminishing.

Consequently, the military power of Lebanon and Hizbullah militia would now complement each other. Hassan Nasrullah is no longer a leader only of Hizbullah. He has now emerged as a symbol of defiance. He accepted the cease-fire, which seemingly was not in the interest of Lebanon and Hizbullah, but it does give a message that Hassan Nasrullah is 'a balanced and peace loving leader'. When UN offered this resolution with respect to cease-fire, neither the President nor the Prime Minister of Lebanon, responded to the proposal, but it was Hassan Nasrullah who pronounced his acceptance of the resolution. This in itself is a testimony that he enjoys the confidence of the people of Lebanon, and is respected as a national leader.

The western mind, which is prone to distorting realities, should reorient its attitudes and behaviour, President Bush, in a fit of anger used indecent language against Islam. He has called it "evil and murderous ideology of Islam," and now has coined the word 'Islamic fascists' for the Islamic Resistance. He believes that the Islamic movement is out to establish 'Islamic political order' in the entire world, which is utterly wrong.

Muslims have never sought to make US, UK or Europe, Islamic. They only seek to be accepted as 'freedom fighters', for Chechnya, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kashmir. They want that Muslim territories be freed from foreign occupation, to bring a halt to the massacre and killing of the innocent Muslim men, women and children.

Because of the ongoing confrontation between the hegemonic powers and the Islamic Resistance, the global order is being transformed into a new structure, which is multi-polar in character. Besides these two confronting forces, there are other contending economic and military powers, seeking their space in the emerging world order. Russia is keen to regain its lost power and prestige. China is indeed emerging as a great power.

East Asia with Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia, is integrating into a global economic power. India is aspiring to become a global power for which it has sought strategic partnership with USA. Similarly, the Latin American countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela are forging unity and cooperation to play a role in the new emerging global order.

The emergence of multi-polar order augurs well for the world because the powerful nations, together, will be able to resolve global issues through consensus. Such decisions are likely to be democratic in nature, based on justice and fair play. The unipolar world order produced wars, occupations, death and destruction and disturbed global peace, whereas the multipolar world order would help maintain balance of power, essential to maintain peace.

Countries will deem it expedient to promote peace and economic cooperation, which will be in harmony with the spirit of globalisation. It is this paradigm that will help humanity to emerge as one global family, besides eliminating the scourge of poverty and deprivations. The dignity of diversity will be preserved. The Islamic ideology will not be in conflict with other ideologies, rather it will co-exist.

One becomes naturally depressed, at the plight of the Muslims in the world, who appear to be under great distress, fear and trepidation. On the other hand, one also sees the brighter side of the picture - the Islamic Resistance, which has maintained global balance, by containing the hegemonic powers, thus paving conditions for world peace. The advice to Muslim Ummah is what Goethe had once said: "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genuine power and magic in it. Begin it now."

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

Hezbollah workers rush to help victims rebuild; In Lebanese city, group's civilian arm praised for speed, efficiency

USA TODAY

August 17, 2006 Thursday

FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7A

Length: 668 words

Byline: Rick Jervis

Body

NABATIYEH, Lebanon -- Two days after agreeing to a cease-fire to end 34 days of fighting with Israeli forces, **Hezbollah** deployed its army of social workers and engineers throughout this southern Lebanese city.

They visited wrecked homes and businesses, surveyed damage, gave compensation estimates and coordinated relief efforts with city officials. "**Hezbollah** workers were here even before the bombing stopped," said Mustafa Badreddine, 50, the mayor. "They have offices here. They have municipal resources. And the people trust them."

The Shiite Muslim militia's network of social workers serving its mostly Shiite following rivals the group's military component. The assistance is a cornerstone of **Hezbollah**'s strategy to gain popular support.

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the group's leader, has pledged to help rebuild the homes lost during the month-long war. He didn't specify the source of the funding. **Hezbollah** also is helping residents coordinate reconstruction efforts with assessments and contractors, Badreddine said.

Nabatiyeh, a city of 60,000 about 35 miles south of Beirut, lost 270 homes and businesses to Israeli airstrikes, the mayor said. Some cinder-block homes were cut in half or had their front walls sheathed off. Others were pounded into thigh-high heaps of jagged concrete.

Zuhair Nahle, 37, a civil servant, was asleep on July 16 when a rocket slammed into his three-story home. He said it sent him flying across the room. He was stunned but otherwise unhurt. Nahle and his family moved to a nearby village to wait out the war with relatives. Four more rocket attacks later in the month reduced his home to rubble, he said.

On Tuesday, the second day of the cease-fire, Nahle said **Hezbollah** workers visited his ruined home, surveyed the damage and promised to call soon to tell him how to receive money for repairs.

As a backhoe chewed through the remains of his home, Nahle said the destruction he suffered was worthwhile. "Sayyed Hassan gave us a victory," he said, referring to Nasrallah's honorary title. "We beat the strongest army in the Middle East. Even if they kill our **women** and children and parents, we will still support him."

Like its military wing, which relies on secrecy to prevent infiltration by outside agents, **Hezbollah** engineers avoid contact with strangers. They were not seen when reporters toured the city.

Hezbollah workers rush to help victims rebuild In Lebanese city, group's civilian arm praised for speed, efficiency

Badreddine explained how they work. He said a team of up to five workers is assigned to a city district. They coordinate efforts with a local contractor and city officials. Workers at the contracting firm declined an interview request. They said only designated Hezbollah leaders are authorized to speak to the news media.

After visiting sites and making assessments, the workers connect residents with contractors, who begin rebuilding, Badreddine said. He said the Hezbollah teams out-hustle and out-finance government officials working on the same task. "The government is waiting for Hezbollah to give them the information," the mayor said. "If you let the government do it, half the money will go into their pockets."

Farther south and closer to the front lines where Hezbollah guerrillas fought Israeli tank divisions last week, Hezbollah's work is heavier. Two-story homes are smashed into piles of rubble, bridges are blasted apart and roads are riddled with 20-foot craters from Israeli rocket strikes. In Srifa, a village just south of the Litani River, entire blocks of concrete homes are leveled.

In nearby El Ghandouriyeh, Jamal Deeb, 40, a taxi driver, said he watched from his balcony last week as Israeli and Hezbollah forces fought in the valley below. He evacuated to a nearby village before his home was destroyed by rockets.

On Wednesday, two Hezbollah workers he had never seen before showed up at his home, surveyed the damage and told him to expect a call soon from a team of engineers, Deeb said.

"Even if there's only a piece of rock left standing in my home, it's no problem," he said. "The most important thing is victory. Praise be to God."

Graphic

PHOTO, B/W, Rick Jervis, USA TODAY

Load-Date: August 17, 2006

Durbin: Israel must 'defang' Hezbollah to be successful; Illinois senator wants cease-fire as soon as possible

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

August 4, 2006 Friday

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Section: ILLINOIS; Pg. b6

Length: 394 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Israel must "defang" **Hezbollah** guerrillas before its fighting in Lebanon can be considered successful, Sen. Dick Durbin told Illinois constituents visiting the Capitol on Thursday.

Durbin, the Senate's second-highest ranking Democrat, said if a terrorist group in a neighboring nation "came across our border and kidnapped two American soldiers and killed eight more soldiers and fired thousands of rockets in the United States, I know that we'd go after them - hammer and tong."

Illinois' freshman senator, Barack Obama, said he for the most part agreed with his fellow Democrat on the fighting in Lebanon.

"I think all of us want to make sure this ends as quickly as possible in terms that create a safe Israel and will assure that Lebanon can thrive," Obama, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told The Associated Press.

"Obviously, Israel needs to be mindful because they are dealing with almost a country that's being held hostage, in Lebanon, that they have to take political considerations and humanitarian considerations into account, even as they insist, appropriately, on their defense," he said.

Durbin described Lebanon as a weak, divided and ineffective nation that has been effectively taken over by **Hezbollah**, the same group responsible for the bombing of the Marine barracks two decades ago that killed more than 200 U.S. soldiers.

"What has to happen here before this can end right is that we have to defang **Hezbollah**," he said, adding, "**Hezbollah** is dedicated to violence and terrorism, dedicated to destroying Israel."

Durbin said he wants a cease-fire as soon as possible and to have it maintained by an international force, but he emphasized that the peacekeepers should not include the U.S. military.

"We would be an incendiary element in the force, if we went in there, because we're clearly identified with Israel's side of the conflict," he said.

Durbin: Israel must 'defang' Hezbollah to be successful Illinois senator wants cease-fire as soon as possible

Even though Israel has generated some criticism from humanitarian groups for attacks on Beirut that have killed women, children and other innocent civilians, Durbin made it clear he holds Hezbollah at least partially to blame because it has placed its fighters in areas populated with noncombatants

Obama said the United States has been so fixed on Iraq and so bogged down there fighting that it's been very difficult for the government to execute "some sort of broader foreign policy."

Graphic

Dick Durbin Barak Obama

Load-Date: August 4, 2006

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Israeli military losing the propaganda war so far

The Irish Times

August 4, 2006 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Opinion; Pg. 16

Length: 1286 words

Body

Israel's war aims in south Lebanon are governed by a race against time, writes Tom Clonan

The Israeli military - like all international armies - can only deploy and manoeuvre at a certain pace. Caught off-guard by Hizbullah's lightning strike on an Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) border patrol - and the unleashing of a continuous barrage of missiles on to northern Israel - Israel's general staff has been hard-pressed in recent weeks to mount a coherent and successful military response.

The initial response by Israel's security cabinet and the IDF was to mount an intense - and seemingly senseless and indiscriminate - bombardment of the whole of Lebanon by air, land and sea. The aerial bombardment failed to stem support for Hizbullah among the Lebanese population and also failed to disrupt Hizbullah's resupply and infiltration routes to the north of Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and Syria. This component of Israel's military strategy has caused a great deal of alarm and dismay among the international community. It has resulted in many hundreds of civilian deaths - particularly of children - and has brought Israel and the IDF into disrepute.

The deaths of innocent Lebanese women and children at Qana, along with the deaths by Israeli fire of unarmed UN observers at Khiam, have played directly into the hands of Hizbullah. Despite Israel's ongoing campaign of aerial and naval bombardment - with so-called precision bombing - Hizbullah rockets continue to strike targets deep within northern Israel on an uninterrupted basis. Under the twin stewardship of Hizbullah's military leadership and its "Media Chief" Hassan Rahal, the "Party of God" - despite its clearly indiscriminate and murderous campaign of missile attacks on Israel - is thus far firmly maintaining the initiative in the propaganda war.

The Israeli military, on the other hand, would appear to be floundering in terms of the PR and propaganda campaign - increasingly essential components of modern warfare. The Israeli government was humiliated earlier this week when prime minister Ehud Olmert's unequivocal statement to the effect that Hizbullah's infrastructure had been "completely destroyed" by the IDF was answered from Lebanon with a massive wave of 200 missile strikes. Israel's spectacular - but largely useless - commando raid in Baalbek also failed to bring the IDF a badly needed propaganda coup in recent days.

With the IDF desperately seeking to win public approval among a domestic and international audience for its clumsy - and thus far inconclusive - military campaign in Lebanon, it would appear by Day 23 of the hostilities to have finally evolved a simple, but highly problematic strategy for containing Hizbullah.

The air campaign conducted by the Israeli Air Force has clearly had little effect on Hizbullah's ability to operate along the border and to launch missile attacks. The general staff of the IDF has therefore had to evolve a strategy for its ground forces which is gradually taking shape by way of incursion into south Lebanon.

Israeli military losing the propaganda war so far

With 15,000 ground troops - approximately three divisions - now mobilised, equipped and deployed to the Lebanese border, the IDF strategy appears deceptively simple. Their objective is ideally to push **Hizbullah** north of the River Litani to a line approximately 25 km away from the Israeli border. Crucially, this would place the majority of **Hizbullah**'s missiles - approximately 10,000 Katyusha rockets with a range of 25 km - out of range of Israeli territory. By creating such a buffer or "security zone", as the IDF is now referring to it, the Israelis would also prevent **Hizbullah** Zelzal-2 missiles from reaching Tel Aviv.

The Israeli capital - and many of Israel's nuclear assets - are located about 120 km south of the Lebanese border.

Hizbullah is believed by the IDF to possess up to 40 Iranian-manufactured Zelzal missiles with a range of 120 km and warheads consisting of 600 kg of high explosives.

A Zelzal missile fired by **Hizbullah** from Naquora, Bint Jubayl or any other Lebanese border village could easily reach Tel Aviv, thus fulfilling Sheikh Nasrallah's threat to "strike south of Haifa".

Such a propaganda "spectacular" for **Hizbullah** might provoke Israel towards wider retaliation, with the escalation and widening of the conflict throughout the region.

The IDF will therefore hope to occupy and "sterilise" a sizeable chunk of south Lebanon - creating a cordon sanitaire north of the Israeli border to the Litani river. This would place **Hizbullah**'s most powerful missiles out of reach of the Israeli capital and confine their range to the less densely populated cities of northern Israel, including Haifa, Tiberias and Nazareth.

At present, the IDF is pushing into Lebanon on two main fronts. The right flank of Israel's offensive is being supported from the Kiryat Shmona area to the east and north of the border with Israel. This west and south facing thrust, consisting of elements from the elite IDF Golani and Nahal Brigades, is attempting to push through the villages of Kafr Kila, At Tyabab and Addaisseh - along an axis of advance just south of Marjayoun, Khiam and the Litani river.

The left flank of Israel's ground incursion is moving north and east into Lebanese territory through Ayt a-Shab, Yarun, Maroun al Ras and Bint Jubayl. The IDF strategy will most likely be to conduct a "Hammer and Anvil" style operation where both thrusts will meet in the central area of south Lebanon - around at-Tiri, Tibnin, and Brashit, where Irish battalions in Unifil were located. This convergence of IDF formations will be designed to prevent **Hizbullah** from withdrawing from the area. Follow-up operations would be designed to move west towards the coastal city of Tyre with the Mediterranean and the Litani forming the western and northern limits of the IDF incursion.

Trapped between IDF units to the south, north and east and by the Mediterranean to the west - in theory - **Hizbullah** would be forced to stand and fight. In this way the IDF would hope to destroy their ground forces and missile infrastructure in detail.

Unfortunately for the IDF, resistance from **Hizbullah** ground positions has been much stiffer than expected, with fierce hand-to-hand combat in the contested villages of Ayt a Shab, Bint Jubayl and Marun al Ras.

Official IDF figures state that six **Hizbullah** fighters were killed in firefights in Ayt a Shab, with the loss of three IDF personnel. Eight IDF soldiers were killed in one ambush alone by **Hizbullah** fighters in Bint Jubayl. Based on such casualty figures and an "exchange ratio" of 2:1 - one IDF soldier killed for every two **Hizbullah** killed in action - the current IDF ground offensive may be slow and costly in terms of human life, both military and civilian.

Estimates on the strength of **Hizbullah** ground forces in Lebanon range between 3,000 and 12,000. The IDF plans to drive them north to the Litani or destroy them in situ may prove problematic.

Israel's defence minister Peretz has stated that the IDF offensive will be shaped and "adapted for the diplomatic window" afforded by the ongoing UN Security Council debate on terms for a ceasefire. Israel knows that it will take the international community some time to reach a consensus on a cessation of hostilities and an even longer time to assemble a multinational rapid reaction force to deploy to Lebanon.

Israeli military losing the propaganda war so far

In the interim, both **Hizbullah** and the IDF will be locked in a desperate struggle to inflict the maximum casualties and damage on the other side. The IDF hopes for a coherent military result may well be denied them in the coming weeks. And if **Hizbullah** succeeds in firing a long-range missile into Tel Aviv, the consequences might be apocalyptic.

Dr Tom Clonan is a security analyst

Load-Date: August 4, 2006

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Two sides cite gains in tense Mideast; Cease-fire calm: Beirut celebrates Hezbollah's declaration of "divine victory." But Israel says it cleaned out a "state within a state."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

Main Edition

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**The Atlanta
Journal-Constitution**

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 864 words

Byline: CRAIG NELSON

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Beirut, Lebanon --- As a U.N.-sponsored cease-fire took hold Monday, both Israel and the militant group **Hezbollah** claimed victory in the 34-day war that killed more than 900 people on both sides of the border.

The mood was celebratory in the Beirut neighborhoods that took the biggest punishment from Israeli forces.

In demolished Shiite neighborhoods of southern Beirut, posters were passed out inscribed "The Divine Victory," alongside the beaming face of **Hezbollah** leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah. The posters were being eagerly grabbed up at a busy traffic circle minutes after the cease-fire took effect Monday morning.

In a televised address Monday, Nasrallah declared the Islamic militant group had achieved a "strategic, historic victory" against Israel.

In Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told lawmakers that the cease-fire agreement had eliminated the "state within a state" run by **Hezbollah** and that Nasrallah was --- as far as Israel was concerned --- a marked man. Thousands of Israeli troops will remain in southern Lebanon until a U.N. force can take over.

But opposition party members also heckled Olmert, claiming the army did not finish the job in Lebanon. Olmert conceded in his remarks that there were "deficiencies" in the way the war was conducted and that "the overall responsibility for this operation lies with me."

The tenuous cease-fire brought calm to the region, but also stoked fears in Beirut that the smallest provocation could resume the fighting as Israel and **Hezbollah** said they retain the right to defend themselves.

Two sides cite gains in tense Mideast Cease-fire calm: Beirut celebrates Hezbollah's declaration of "divine victory." But Israel says it cleaned out a "state wi....

Despite the general peace, six Hezbollah fighters were killed in skirmishes with Israeli forces on Monday, and early today Hezbollah guerrillas fired at least 10 Katyusha rockets that landed in southern Lebanon, the Israeli army said. The army said that no one was injured and none of the rockets crossed the border, so it did not respond.

Roads leading south from Beirut on Monday were packed with Lebanese civilians seeking to return home. Aid agencies also began moving relief supplies into southern Lebanon, which bore the brunt of the conflict.

Israelis were slow to return to their homes in the north as the government warned them to stay away, fearing more rocket attacks from Hezbollah.

In Washington, President Bush expressed optimism that the cease-fire would hold and dismissed Hezbollah's claims of victory.

"Hezbollah attacked Israel," Bush said of the hostilities that began July 12 with a Hezbollah raid inside Israel, kidnapping two soldiers and killing others.

"Hezbollah started the crisis. And Hezbollah suffered a defeat in this crisis," Bush said, adding that Iran and Syria provided Hezbollah with support.

"How can you claim victory when, at one time, you were a state within a state, safe within southern Lebanon, and now you're going to be replaced by a Lebanese army and an international force?" Bush said.

Under the U.N. cease-fire plan, 15,000 soldiers from the Lebanese army --- and an equal number of international peacekeepers --- are to occupy Lebanon south of the Litani River, about 20 miles from the Israeli border, to serve as a buffer between Israel and Hezbollah.

In his televised remarks Monday, Nasrallah rejected suggestions that Hezbollah disarm.

"Who will defend Lebanon in case of a new Israeli offensive?" he asked. "The Lebanese army and international troops are incapable of protecting Lebanon."

In Beirut, amid heaps of rubble and the pancaked walls of high-rise apartment buildings, cars sprouting the flags of Hezbollah and Lebanon circled the devastation, honking their horns, their radios blaring Hezbollah's martial anthems.

After shedding the civilian clothes they had donned for safety during the war, Hezbollah militiamen were back at their posts, brandishing AK-47s and again wearing telltale black pants, black T-shirts and khaki-green ammunition vests. They fired celebratory rounds of gunfire.

Nasrallah, leader of the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah, may now be the toast of many in the wider Arab and Muslim world --- more popular even among Sunni Muslims than al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden.

But it is a far more complicated picture in Lebanon, where it is too early to assess the political gains and costs to his movement.

The faces of several women on Monday spoke of the more complex views about the outcome of the war.

One held a white handkerchief to her mouth in shock and then quietly wept when a relative pointed out what was left of her house, which she had not recognized, even from 30 yards away.

Two other women, clothed in traditional Islamic garb, walked among the debris carrying in plastic bags the belongings they had retrieved from their damaged or destroyed homes.

Their clothes were powdered with dust from their digging. Their eyes were red from crying.

The views of another woman were clear.

Two sides cite gains in tense Mideast Cease-fire calm: Beirut celebrates Hezbollah's declaration of "divine victory." But Israel says it cleaned out a "state wi....

Salina Maki, a 38-year-old mother of three, did not know when she could return to her home Beirut's Dahiya district.

"No matter when we come back, we don't mind living in a tent," she said. "The destruction of Israel is the most important thing.

"God help the resistance and Hassan Nasrallah."

Staff writer Ken Herman (kh Herman@ajc.com) in Washington contributed to this article.

Graphic

Photo: **Hezbollah** leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah's followers depict him as a hero. Israel says he's a marked man.

Photo: BEN CURTIS / Associated PressReturn to ruins: A woman goes back to her damaged house in the nearly deserted village of Yaroun in southern Lebanon. The fighting has devastated much of a country that became a battleground between Israel and **Hezbollah** fighters.

Photo: SEBASTIAN SCHEINER / Associated PressBack to daylight: In Haifa (left), an Israeli family leaves a bomb shelter. Israelis were slow to head home, while Lebanese roads were packed with returning residents.

Photo: CRAIG NELSON / Cox NewspapersOne side's claim: In Beirut (above), children flash the **Hezbollah** message that its fighters came out on top after 34 days of fighting. Israel says it won, a claim backed by President Bush.

Load-Date: August 15, 2006

Comment & Debate: Only a negotiated ceasefire can bring a wider settlement: America's embrace of UN diplomacy over Lebanon is a welcome return to pre-9/11 politics. If it fails, expect more Hizbullahs

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 11, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 35

Length: 1051 words

Byline: Paul Moorcraft

Body

Washington has dumped Tony Blair and its disdain of the UN. America is now working with France, the old colonial power, to shape Lebanese events via the international organisation. Friction between Washington and Paris as well as strong objections from the Arab League are delaying a "first-stage" UN resolution on a ceasefire. Immediate Israeli withdrawal is not in the current text.

The Lebanese government has offered 15,000 troops to replace the Israeli Defence Force and to monitor **Hizbullah** while a robust French-led UN force moves in. The key is to get UN forces in and Israelis out, without letting **Hizbullah** regroup and rearm. A quick-fix solution could allow a rapid-reaction French component to link up with the existing UN forces, as lead components of a Lebanese military intervention. A UN resolution could save face all round, but it is more likely that the fighting will go on.

The IDF is moving into phase three of its operations: a slower, meat-grinder advance that could, depending on diplomacy, accelerate to a big ground push to the Litani river and probably beyond. Despite memories of the previous quagmire, the IDF may stay until all UN troops are in place. Israelis have little faith in the Lebanese army doing what it has been unable to do since 2000.

So generals in Nato should take note. The conflict in Lebanon is inspiring a potent kind of warfare, which could have a profound impact throughout the Middle East. Previously Israel could capture Beirut in seven days; now it has struggled for four weeks to control small villages right on its own border.

Hizbullah is a novel hybrid, combining the sophistication and weaponry of a formal army blended with the near-invisibility of a hit-and-run insurgency. It has dramatically modernised guerrilla tactics, but it also holds territory and seats in the Lebanese parliament and government. **Hizbullah** is responsive to the ayatollahs in Iran but - like Sinn Fein/IRA in Ireland - it has an authentic constituency base, one which was partly created by Israel's 1982 invasion.

Western experts are struggling, not least with naming this new phenomenon. Some call it network warfare. Traditional armies are large, often cumbersome and organised in a strict disciplined hierarchy; networks such as **Hizbullah** have numerous widely dispersed fighters who can improvise quickly, not least in their use of hi-tech communications and propaganda. Israeli special forces are surprised to come up against **Hizbullah** fighters with almost the same quality of equipment - and training - as themselves.

Comment & Debate: Only a negotiated ceasefire can bring a wider settlement: America 's embrace of UN diplomacy over Lebanon is a welcome return to pre-9/11 poli....

Hizbullah has waged a sustained war of attrition against a nation across a state border. To relieve the pressure on Hamas - the fighting continues in Gaza as well - it opened up a second front in the north and maintained a high-tempo war against the regional superpower.

Hizbullah has learned from the Chechens' fight against a much stronger power, Russia. It has challenged state monopolies of force: air and naval power. It withstood the shock-and-awe tactics of bombing from the air by escalating its counterattacks with rockets.

Thinking in the old paradigm, Israel struck at the infrastructure of the Lebanese state with air attacks, only belatedly engaging **Hizbullah** on the ground. This is a massive own goal, not least because it undermines the Arab world's most moderate (and also weakest) government.

Hizbullah has done a lot better than the conventional forces of all the Arab states that have fought against Israel since 1948. It has won a stunning propaganda victory and shattered Israel's deterrence posture.

Hassan Nasrallah, the **Hizbullah** leader, has done what Osama bin Laden could never do: he has united Shias and Sunnis throughout the region, especially the young, in the belief that a Muslim renaissance could come via the gun. Just as Iraq demonstrated the limits of US power, the war on Lebanon displayed Israel's weakness. Radical Islam has been the victor in both conflicts.

Israel will now be far more reluctant to fight Hamas, despite the differences in terrain and organisation. Likewise, the Israeli experience must give the US pause before attacking Iranian forces who will fight just as effectively as their students in **Hizbullah**.

Hizbullah's success will galvanise jihadists from Boston to Bolton to Bombay. The supine political response of the Sunni Arab leaders (who privately loathe Shia success) has played badly in the Arab street. Militant Islam could soon displace the secular despotisms - ironically even the one in Syria that supports **Hizbullah**.

The Lebanese war is a race against time: will **Hizbullah** run out of fighting spirit and rockets before the world - and even the US - runs out of patience with Israeli tactics and forces a ceasefire?

So far, no Islamic fanatic has put unconventional warheads on their Iranian missiles. Whether that remains the case may depend on how long the blood-letting goes on. If diplomats conjure up an intervention army far more successful than the existing ill-fated UN force, a regional war that could include Syria may be avoided.

America's embrace of UN diplomacy is a welcome return to pre-paranoia, pre-9/11 politics. The Middle East may now be treated in a more holistic way. If Lebanon works, the French might be persuaded to repeat the miracle by supervising a UN buffer between Israel and Palestine as the old road map to the two-state solution is finally realised.

But if the UN fails, **Hizbullah**'s deadly hybrid could be replicated across Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. Iran acquires nuclear weapons. America withdraws from Iraq as civil war compels a messy partition. Nato forces succumb to domestic pressure and the Taliban retake Kabul. A **female** Democrat president in Washington reverts to isolation. Such pessimistic probabilities dictate a rapid and orderly western military withdrawal from Arab lands. Whoever rules would sell their oil.

The aspiring French-led diplomacy in Lebanon trumpets the failure of the Anglo-US policy of constructive destabilisation. Only a genuine negotiated ceasefire, allied to a powerful UN intervention force, could - just - lead to a regional settlement.

Dr Paul Moorcraft, a former senior instructor at Sandhurst and the Joint Services Command and Staff College, is director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis paul.moorcraft@cffpa.com

Comment & Debate: Only a negotiated ceasefire can bring a wider settlement: America 's embrace of UN diplomacy over Lebanon is a welcome return to pre-9/11 poli....

Load-Date: August 11, 2006

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**THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS; THE LEBANESE PERSPECTIVE; Hezbollah
rockets ease lingering pain - Correction Appended**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

August 6, 2006 Sunday

Main Edition

 **Correction Appended**

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**The Atlanta
Journal-Constitution**

Section: @ISSUE; Pg. 3E; DATELINE: TYRE, LEBANON

Length: 858 words

Byline: CRAIG NELSON

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Ali Najem was visiting his family on summer vacation from medical school when Hezbollah guerillas killed three soldiers and captured two others in a cross-border raid July 12.

"I was happy," said Najem, 21, a pensive and articulate Shiite Muslim. "People were celebrating."

The seizure of the two soldiers provided more currency, the revelers believed, for purchasing the freedom of the estimated 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails.

The celebration was short-lived as Israel launched a furious counterattack, setting off an escalating spiral of violence.

Since July 16, Najem has lived in a room of the five-story, 80-bed hospital that his father owns and operates on the southern edge of Tyre. There, he helps tend to the wounded.

For several minutes as he spoke to a reporter, the casualties, the bombs and the round-the-clock buzz of Israeli drones overhead all seemed to have gotten to Najem. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he weighed whether to heed his father's advice earlier in the morning to flee.

"I can't imagine leaving my family. I don't know what will happen to them. If I leave and go back to Cairo [University], all that I will do is worry," he said.

Though the war has thrown Najem's future into doubt, he is filled not with despair but with resolve to see Lebanon regain its "dignity" in a new relationship with Israel.

THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS THE LEBANESE PERSPECTIVE Hezbollah rockets ease lingering pain

Like other Hezbollah supporters here, Najem knows that the rockets the guerrilla group showers on Israel daily do not pose a threat to the Jewish state's existence. Still, they act as a salve for festering wounds.

To him, the mere fact that Hezbollah has held its own in the nearly month-long war and that Israelis have tasted fear and discomfort is something of a victory.

After all, according to Najem, Israel has fed the southern part of Lebanon a daily diet of fear and discomfort ever since its pullout six years ago after an 18-year occupation.

Like many who live in Israel's shadow, whether they are southern Lebanese or Palestinians, Najem describes in schoolyard terms the grievances he feels.

"We don't accept anyone coming here and pushing us around. They are not better than us. We are people, too," he says.

He describes the solution to the conflict in equally simple terms: "If Israel respects our dignity, we will respect its dignity."

Beneath the well-worn phrases, there is in Najem a core of bitter, painful experience that inspires them.

It began to unfold when he was asked about the jagged 5-inch scar stretching across his right bicep. When he was 5 years old, Israeli aircraft attacked two cars near his family's apartment in Tyre, and he was hit with a piece of flying debris, he recalled.

It unfolded further when he was asked, "What is the face of Israel in Lebanon?"

He got up from his chair, and without a word walked to a nearby metal cabinet, opened the door and removed a stack of photos from one of the shelves.

"These are victims of the massacre at Qana," he said quietly.

Many Lebanese considered the village a symbol of Israeli cruelty long before 54 civilians, including 37 children, were killed in an Israeli air strike there July 30.

On April 18, 1996, Israeli artillery batteries shelled a U.N. compound in Qana, killing 106 displaced Lebanese, more than half of whom were children.

There was no simple explanation. Three Hezbollah guerrillas had been firing mortars from a position more than 300 yards from the compound. Still, Israel knew where its shells were landing: A videotape later showed that an Israeli surveillance drone was hovering over the U.N. base while the shelling took place.

An Israeli magazine later interviewed members of the Israeli artillery unit responsible for the shelling. It quoted an unidentified army sergeant as telling other members of the unit, "It's a war, in a war these things happen. . . . It's just a bunch of Arabs. Why are you taking it so hard?"

Najem, for one, took it hard.

He was 11, hanging out in the hospital where his father worked, when bodies of many Qana victims were brought in.

"They were spread out on the driveway in front of the hospital, covered by white sheets. People wouldn't stop screaming. I'll never forget a wounded woman whose face was covered in blood. One of her eyes hung from its socket," Najem recalled.

Dismembered limbs, burned flesh and crushed skulls were the themes running through the 29 photos he placed on the desk.

THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS THE LEBANESE PERSPECTIVE Hezbollah rockets ease lingering pain

After they were leafed through, he went silently back to the cabinet, retrieved a rectangular tan box and placed it on the desk.

Inside were 30 pieces of charred and jagged metal shrapnel, some with electronic chips still embedded in them, others with tiny wires protruding from them, and still others with hardened human flesh still attached.

"These came from the body of the wife of one of the administrators here, who was killed last week by an Israeli bomb," he said. "I removed them."

Najem is due to return to Cairo in late September to start his fifth year of medical school.

Eventually, he will continue studying to become a cosmetic surgeon. Instead of sculpting the noses and tucking the tummies of Lebanese women, however, he said he has decided to pursue reconstructive surgery for war victims.

Correction

An article in Sunday's @issue section misstated the number of people killed in an Israeli attack on the Lebanese village of Qana on July 30. Initial reports said that as many as 56 died, but authorities last week revised the number to 28.

Correction-Date: August 8, 2006

Graphic

Photo: Ali Najem, 21-year-old Lebanese medical student.

Photo: TYLER HICKS / New York TimesCoffins are prepared for burial outside a public hospital in Tyre, southern Lebanon. Civilian deaths have accumulated on both sides in the nearly month-old war between Hezbollah and Israel, but the toll has been far higher in Lebanon, partly because of Israel's superior firepower.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

I know he is alive, says wife of soldier held by Hezbollah

The Evening Standard (London)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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London Evening Standard

Section: B MERGE; Pg. 4

Length: 410 words

Byline: VALENTINE LOW

Body

"HE IS alive. I can feel him. I know that he is alive."

As the death toll in the continuing Lebanese conflict approached 600, the wife of one of the Israeli soldiers whose kidnapping triggered the fighting made an emotional appeal today for his return - and spoke of her certainty that he has not already been killed.

Karnit Goldwasser, 30, was in London as part of a tour of Europe and America to highlight the plight of her husband Ehud, 31, who was abducted near the Israel-Lebanon border on 12 July along with another reservist, Elad Regev, 26.

Since then she has not heard a single word to let her know whether he is dead or alive. No messages, no threats, no bargaining demands. She tried sending a letter through the Red Cross, but Hezbollah did not accept it.

She now hopes that by publicising her story she might get some reaction from the kidnappers.

Mrs Goldwasser, who is travelling with her husband's father Shlomo and her own mother Daniela Avni, said: "We came here to appeal for Ehud's and his colleagues' release and we came to bring their story to the whole world.

"We are trying to look for people who know people, who know people who eventually might know Hezbollah and try to convince them to bring us a sign Ehud is still alive, because until now we don't have any sign or any proof he's alive."

Both Ehud and Karnit are studying for masters degrees in environmental engineering at the Israel Institute of Technology. Ehud, like other Israelis, has to do one month a year as a military reserve, and was due to finish the day he was seized.

"He is not a soldier," said Mrs Goldwasser. "He is my husband. We are both students. We have been together for the last nine years. We got married last October.

I know he is alive, says wife of soldier held by Hezbollah

"He likes life. He is not a man of war and fighting... He had a life. He is just 31 years old and that life is waiting for him."

Defending her country's attack on Lebanon, she said: "First of all, Israel needs to defend its citizens."

But added: "I really, really want the killing to be stopped."

"No one in the whole world wants their neighbour or son or husband to be killed."

Mr Goldwasser's father, who is a 59-year-old operations manager for a shipping company, said: "We are not happy when we hear about casualties, about children, women and civilians dying - it scratches our hearts, both for Israeli and Lebanese deaths."

He added: "We didn't come here to give a political message. We are family and the end for us will be when we have Ehud back."

Graphic

PLEA: KARNIT GOLDWASSER IN LONDON, RIGHT, AND PICTURED ABOVE WITH HER HUSBAND EHUD

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

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World has lost moral bearings in Israel crisis

The Irish Times

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 9

Length: 745 words

Byline: Charles Krauthammer

Body

Opinion: What other country, when attacked in an unprovoked aggression across a recognised international frontier, is then put on a countdown clock by the world, given a limited time window in which to fight back, regardless of whether it has restored its own security?

What other country sustains 1,500 indiscriminate rocket attacks into its cities - every one designed to kill, maim and terrorise civilians - and is then vilified by the world when it tries to destroy the enemy's infrastructure and strongholds with precision-guided munitions that sometimes have the unintended but unavoidable consequence of collateral civilian death and suffering?

Hearing the world pass judgment on the Israel-Hizbullah war as it unfolds is to live in an Orwellian moral universe. With a few significant exceptions (the leadership of the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and a very few others), the world - governments, the media, UN bureaucrats - has completely lost its moral bearings.

The word that obviates all thinking and magically inverts victim into aggressor is "disproportionate", as in the universally decried "disproportionate Israeli response".

When the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor, it did not respond with a parallel "proportionate" attack on a Japanese naval base. It launched a four-year campaign that killed millions of Japanese, reduced Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki to a cinder, and turned the Japanese home islands to rubble and ruin. Disproportionate? No. When one is wantonly attacked by an aggressor, one has every right - legal and moral - to carry the fight until the aggressor is disarmed and so disabled that it cannot threaten one's security again. That's what it took with Japan.

Britain was never invaded by Germany in the second World War. Did it respond to the blitz and V-1 and V-2 rockets with "proportionate" aerial bombardment of Germany? Of course not. Churchill orchestrated the greatest land invasion in history that flattened and utterly destroyed Germany, killing untold innocent German women and children in the process.

The perversity of today's international outcry lies in the fact that there is indeed a disproportion in this war, a radical moral asymmetry between Hizbullah and Israel: Hizbullah is deliberately trying to create civilian casualties on both sides while Israel is deliberately trying to minimise civilian casualties, also on both sides.

In perhaps the most blatant terror campaign from the air since the London blitz, Hizbullah is raining rockets on Israeli cities and villages. These rockets are packed with ball bearings that can penetrate automobiles and shred human flesh. They are meant to kill and maim. And they do.

World has lost moral bearings in Israel crisis

But it is a dual campaign. Israeli innocents must die in order for Israel to be terrorised. But Lebanese innocents must also die in order for Israel to be demonised, which is why **Hizbullah** hides its fighters, its rockets, its launchers, its entire infrastructure among civilians. Creating human shields is a war crime. It is also a **Hizbullah** speciality.

On Wednesday, CNN cameras showed destruction in Tyre. What does Israel have against Tyre and its inhabitants? Nothing. But the long-range **Hizbullah** rockets that have been raining terror on Haifa are based in Tyre.

What is Israel to do? Leave untouched the launch sites that are deliberately placed in built-up areas? Had Israel wanted to destroy Lebanese civilian infrastructure, it would have turned out the lights in Beirut in the first hour of the war, destroying the billion-dollar power grid and setting back Lebanon 20 years.

Israel's response to **Hizbullah** has been to use the most precise weaponry and targeting it can. It has no interest, no desire to kill Lebanese civilians. Does anyone imagine that it could not have levelled south Lebanon, to say nothing of Beirut? Instead, it has repeatedly dropped leaflets, issued warnings, sent messages by radio and even phone text to Lebanese villagers to evacuate so they would not be harmed.

Israel knows that these warnings give the **Hizbullah** fighters time to escape and regroup. The notification as to where the next attack is coming has allowed **Hizbullah** to set up elaborate ambushes. The result? Unexpectedly high Israeli infantry casualties. Moral scrupulousness paid in blood. Israeli soldiers die so Lebanese civilians will not, and who does the international community condemn for disregarding civilian life?

letters@charleskrauthammer.com ©The Washington Post Writers Group

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

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'If it was not for Nasrallah the Israeli army would have come and killed us all'
Despite the death toll, many Lebanese are elated at Hezbollah's victory over
Israel

The Sunday Telegraph (LONDON)

August 20, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; International - Middle East Crisis; Pg. 29

Length: 945 words

Byline: COLIN FREEMAN in Nabatieh

Body

EVEN ALLOWING for the special discount given to the families of "martyrs", the **Hezbollah** merchandising store in the town of Nabatieh was making a tidy profit last week.

As at the souvenir outlet of a football club that has unexpectedly won the FA Cup against a mightier opponent, demand for Kalashnikov-emblemed flags, posters and keyrings has rocketed since the month-long war with Israel ended on Monday.

"We're getting a huge amount of trade now, thanks to the victory of the resistance," 20-year-old Susan Bittar, the manager, declared proudly. "One man bought 53 posters just on his own."

As she spoke, a customer snapped up one of her last **Hezbollah** flags, which flap from almost every car in this bomb-cratered southern Lebanese town. Other "must-haves" for motorists include cassettes of rousing **Hezbollah** martial music and recordings of the wartime speeches of the militia's leader, Hassan Nasrallah - even though his monologues exceed the length of a 90-minute tape.

At the back of the shop, hidden in the gloom of power-cuts, another item is selling well - the sombre black funeral cloak worn by local **women** in mourning.

The vast majority of the Lebanese dead were civilians, killed as Israeli jets struck at suspected **Hezbollah** rocket bases. Yet despite the huge human toll that **Hezbollah**'s war has exacted on its own people, the hundreds of wakes that have been held in the past week have felt as much like parties as funerals - testament not just to **Hezbollah**'s cult of martyrdom, but to its sense of victory after stalling Israel's invasion.

Across the southern border towns that make up the sect's heartlands, freshly-painted banners repeat the message: "Beautiful Lebanon defeated Israel". Everyone is made to feel a hero, even those 500,000 people who chose to flee north to Beirut rather than stick it out under the bombardment.

In Tyre, southern Lebanon's capital, carloads of refugees who arrived last week were handed sweets by cheering **Hezbollah** reception parties.

'If it was not for Nasrallah the Israeli army would have come and killed us all' Despite the death toll, many Lebanese are elated at Hezbollah's victory over Is....

"If it were not for Hezbollah, the Israeli army would have been here in the village and killed everybody," said Abu Salim Qassab, 78, a resident of Bazuriyah, on Tyre's outskirts, which basks in reflected glory as Nasrallah's home village.

Last night the ceasefire was looking more precarious following a raid by Israeli commandos on a suspected Hezbollah weapons-smuggling route from Syria. Would the residents be so positive if they feared fighting would break out again? Last week, they were still bullish.

"Even if this happens again I will never leave my house because I have already suffered a lot," said Mr Qassab. While the "victory celebrations" may be sweet, the Hezbollah leadership is already moving to the second part of the battle: reconstruction. Mindful that euphoria will not last long among those left homeless, jobless and bereaved, the party has embarked on a second "jihad", or holy struggle, to rebuild the thousands of homes, shops and farms devastated by the conflict.

The "Office for the Holy Struggle for Reconstruction" opened last week after a broadcast pledge from Nasrallah to build homes "fit for martyrs" across the region.

Hezbollah volunteers have swapped guns for clipboards, touring damaged homes and questioning residents on their needs, be they new window frames or sheep to replace those killed during the fighting. Cheques of up to \$10,000 (pounds 5,300) per home have been promised, allegedly from a multi-billion dollar fund offered by Hezbollah's political and military ally, Iran.

In practice, much of the reconstruction money will come from the Lebanese government and Western donors. Even so, the rebuilding is likely to further entrench southern Lebanon's status as "Nasrallahstan" after years of perceived neglect by Beirut.

Critics, though, say the unquestioning adulation is demanded as well as earned. "Some people here are secretly very unhappy with the way Hezbollah started this war," said one local.

"They are angry at the devastation, and they also reckon that Hezbollah would have lost if they'd had to fight a week longer. But they won't dare say that out loud."

There is little doubt, however, that unlike so many other Arab leaders, Nasrallah does now enjoy genuine popularity; not surprisingly, perhaps, his proud cousins in Bazuriyah view him with almost divine reverence.

Tucked off the town's main drag is the old family estate where Nasrallah spent his teenage years, having fled Beirut with his family during one of Lebanon's civil wars. Locals remember a studious boy whose obsession with Shia Islam won him a place at the seminary in Najaf - one of two "Oxbridges" of the Shia theological world, along with Qom in Iran. Today, though, the religious swot has been transformed into both a feared warmonger and an inspiration for millions of Shias.

"He would sit under the olive tree studying while we played football," said a cousin, who asked to be anonymous. "I am very proud to be his relative and I notice that people respect me just for that. But he is not just a cousin - he is my leader, my model and my symbol."

Israel remains determined to prove that Nasrallah is all too mortal: even though the ceasefire still holds, it considers him a legitimate target for a bunker-buster missile.

If his cousin is to be believed, their prey is beyond their reach. Stepping out of his villa, he wanders to a nearby field where Israeli missiles pulverised five of Nasrallah's uncles' homes. Somehow, a montage of the Hezbollah leader has survived intact.

"You see? The bomb has destroyed everything but the picture," he said. "My cousin is ready to become a martyr at any time, but I think he was chosen for this job by God."

'If it was not for Nasrallah the Israeli army would have come and killed us all' Despite the death toll, many Lebanese are elated at Hezbollah's victory over Is....

Load-Date: August 20, 2006

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Little to gain from further bloodshed

The Irish Times

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 508 words

Body

Reports from Lebanon and Israel indicate that popular opinion in both countries has hardened dramatically in favour of Hizbullah and the Israeli government in their 20-day confrontation with one another. Such attitudes reflect the fact that neither side has won this short and increasingly vicious war. Nor will victory be achieved by either side if fighting continues for another week.

That is why it is imperative that a ceasefire should be agreed immediately. Otherwise there is a grave danger that further atrocities such as the massacre of women and children at Qana in an Israeli airstrike will tip the region by accident or design into a wider war that would be much more difficult to contain.

The Bush administration has already given the Israeli government two extra weeks to destroy or seriously weaken Hizbullah, supported by British prime minister Tony Blair. This was on top of its initial harshly disproportionate response to Hizbullah's provocative and unprovoked kidnap of two soldiers and killing of eight more on July 13th. This has proved to be a much more difficult task than anticipated by the Israeli military.

They substantially underestimated Hizbullah's strength and are now seeking a further two weeks in which to conduct their war. The Qana atrocity may finally have convinced the Bush administration to recognise this reality, refuse the request and seek as favourable ceasefire terms as possible this week through the United Nations. It is high time such realism penetrated US policy-making, since their's is the only pressure Israel recognises and responds to.

Attention is now turning to the mandate and composition of an international force. Should it police a buffer zone, seek to disarm Hizbullah, monitor entry points for that movement's Syrian and Iranian arms supplies and strengthen the ability of the Lebanese army to assert full control of the country? Several of these tasks are much too geared to delivering Israel's war aims by other means. Given the intensity of feeling in Lebanon an international force given such a mandate would rapidly become embroiled in a civil war there.

Policy realism therefore needs to be extended beyond Lebanon to embrace the other regional players in this war. Mr Bush continually calls on Syria and Iran to cease aiding Hizbullah, but he refuses to engage them directly. That does not make sense if a durable political solution to the conflict is to be found by diplomatic rather than military means. The US has sufficient power and leverage in the region to be able to offer favourable terms to both states in return for their co-operation over Hizbullah, if the Bush administration wills it so.

The stark alternative to such an engagement is military confrontation. The longer this crisis has gone on the more worried have states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan become that this could happen. European states must aim to link a fresh effort to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to an Israeli-Lebanese ceasefire. Without that it would be neither durable nor sustained.

Little to gain from further bloodshed

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

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Pause in bombing prompts desperate exodus

The Irish Times

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

Length: 1018 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Nabatiyeh

Body

LEBANON: No one in southern Lebanon believed the US secretary of state's assertion that a "sustainable ceasefire" was possible by the end of this week, certainly not the refugees who clogged the hot, dusty, backroads north of Tyre, jolting through orange groves and banana plantations, desperate to reach the relative safety of Sidon or Beirut before Israel's promised pause in bombing broke down completely.

With grim, expressionless faces, they stood packed in the back of vegetable lorries, rode on top of bedding strapped to the roofs of their cars, sat in an open boot or perched on the edge of a car window.

At the wheel of a battered 1981 van, Hussein Azzaki from Deir Kanoun said he did not know where he was taking his parents, wife and nine children. "We've been terrorised in our house for 20 days," he said. "We just took a few clothes and this car is not so good; I'm afraid it won't make it." As the van waited in the traffic jam at the Qasmieh junction, one of Azzaki's veiled daughters read the Koran.

Israel looks close to reaching its goal of emptying the south of its civilian population, turning the area east of Tyre into a free fire zone. Some Lebanese wondered aloud yesterday whether Israel deliberately killed more than 50 civilians in Qana on Sunday as a warning to frighten away those remaining.

Israel and their enemies in **Hizbullah** give the impression of waiting for a dramatic showdown. I saw only three Lebanese on the empty streets of Qana on Sunday: all had the bearded look of "the resistance". All were smiling. "Who will fight the Israelis if I go?" one said. "I see victory."

"The worst is yet to come," predicted Youssef Kawsarani, the owner of an empty luxury hotel on the much-bombarded road to Nabatiyeh. "The Israelis are absolutely determined to establish a demilitarised zone several kilometres wide along the border. It's purely symbolic, since **Hizbullah** can launch rockets from 70 kilometres away. They haven't even touched **Hizbullah**."

You have to come to Nabatiyeh, Lebanon's largest Shia Muslim city, to see how deeply **Hizbullah** has penetrated Shia civil society, including the middle classes. This war has only increased **Hizbullah**'s prestige; in the wake of Monday's massacre at Qana prime minister Fouad Siniora, a pro-western Sunni Muslim, thanked the guerrilla group for their "sacrifices".

The Bayad neighbourhood in Nabatiyeh has been bombed seven times in three weeks, and now looks more like the surface of the Moon than the middle-class, residential district that it was. Bayad's inhabitants became refugees

Pause in bombing prompts desperate exodus

weeks ago, but some took advantage of the Israeli promise not to fire on cars and returned to retrieve belongings yesterday.

"We are terrorists. All of us are terrorists," Amal Hamdoon, a housewife, said with bitter irony, standing on the steps of her former apartment building. The ruin across the street had been the office of al-Manar, Hizbullah's television station, and a Hizbullah official lived two buildings away.

"My home is destroyed and the ministers and deputies are in palaces," she said. "We're living in a school in Beirut with no water, no milk, no money - not even nappies for the baby." She had come in search of the family's clothing and passports.

Amal Hamdoon and her cousin, Dina, wore tight jeans and sleeveless tops - not the sort of women you'd expect to be Hizbullah supporters. They drove away in a late model Mercedes, with a clean-shaven young man who filmed the devastation of Bayad out of the car window. "We are all with Hassan Nasrallah," he shouted.

A red ambulance from Hizbullah's social welfare agency stopped to check our identity; the group is on the lookout for spies. Four days ago, a German photographer was beaten up when he took pictures of a building hit by a guided missile in Tyre.

Ahmad Haji Ali, an architect, returned to Bayad yesterday to find his office badly damaged. "Of course the bombing's going to start again. We support the resistance, because this is a justified resistance."

The souk in the centre of Nabatiyeh has also been reduced to rubble. "This was a clothing store, a jeweller's, a grocery store . . .," Mahmoud Fakhi, a civil defence worker, said. A six-floor apartment building had collapsed in the shape of a mountain, with a pink-tiled bathroom tethering on the top.

We could hear the Israeli bombardment of Taybé, 27km away. Fakhi worried about the drone that buzzed overhead, so we took shelter in a vegetable shop on the periphery of the destroyed area. "Israel wanted to destroy Lebanon first, then Hizbullah," he said. "There are no Hizbullah in the airport, on the bridges, in the markets."

The smiling Hizbullah men who lurked in doorways or walked casually through town seemed invisible to the journalists and a team from Human Rights Watch (HRW) who visited Qana yesterday. Emaciated dogs, cats and cows, abandoned by their owners, wandered on the empty streets.

The US-based human rights group intends to issue a preliminary report on Israeli war crimes in Lebanon tomorrow.

"What we see in case after case is that Israel is not making an effort to distinguish between civilians and military," said Nabil Houry, HRW's Lebanon representative. "At some point, this lack of distinction amounts to a war crime. Israel says they are taking care to spare civilians. We haven't see any evidence or that."

Lebanese radio reported that Israeli aircraft yesterday dropped leaflets over Shebaa and Kfar Shouba, villages in southeastern Lebanon, ordering residents to leave by 6pm.

"They often give people only two hours to leave," said Peter Bouckaert, the emergency director for HRW. "Twenty-one people were killed at Mar Wahir after the Israelis came to the border with a loudhailer and said they had to leave within two hours."

The Israeli justice minister, Haim Ramon, said last week that anyone left in southern Lebanon must be associated with Hizbullah, implying they were legitimate targets. "What Ramon said is contradictory to the Geneva Convention," Bouckaert said.

"It's a prefabricated excuse to hit civilian homes. It's like Vietnam, where they said, 'If you're dead, you're red'."

Pause in bombing prompts desperate exodus

End of Document

Israel's next confrontation?; Hamas is acquiring more weaponry and is training in Hezbollah-style tactics, Israeli officers say.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

October 22, 2006 Sunday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 896 words

Byline: Ned Warwick, Inquirer Staff Writer

Body

While Israel licks its wounds from its flawed war in Lebanon last summer and as nine commissions investigate the different ways the campaign went awry, Gaza, at the other end of the country, appears at risk of becoming the next major flash point for Israel.

The militant group Hamas, according to the Israeli military and intelligence services, has smuggled large amounts of explosives, and new and more lethal weaponry into Gaza. It is also busy training in **Hezbollah**-style tactics and building defensive positions similar to what were used so effectively in southern Lebanon against the Israeli Defense Force, officials in the IDF and intelligence services said.

After Israel did little to deter **Hezbollah** in southern Lebanon from building into a potent force with intricate defensive systems before the outbreak of violence last summer, it is in no mood to let that happen in Gaza.

"We will not agree for the Gaza Strip to become southern Lebanon," Defense Minister Amir Peretz told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee last week. "We have learned the lessons well."

But how to respond?

"It's a very difficult scenario," said Hirsh Goodman, a senior research associate at the Institute for National Security Studies. "On one hand, Israel is loath to go in with armor forces because we are going to sustain losses... but the flow of arms into such a tinderbox is not good."

Last week, the Israeli military mounted several forays into northern Gaza to try to quell the Qassam rocket attacks that continue to plague Israeli towns a short distance across the border. But, for the first time since Israel left Gaza in the summer of 2005, it also sent troops back to Gaza's border with Egypt. There, along what is called the Philadelphia Corridor, outside Gaza's southern perimeter, the soldiers found a number of tunnels used for weapons smuggling into Gaza.

Among the weapons and explosives being smuggled into Gaza, the Israeli military said, were Russian-made antitank rockets similar to the ones used so lethally by **Hezbollah** in Lebanon.

Israel 's next confrontation? Hamas is acquiring more weaponry and is training in Hezbollah-style tactics, Israeli officers say.

"Hamas is arming, and it is certainly preparing itself for a different [type of] engagement with Israel," Brig. Gen. Yossi Baidatz, from the IDF Intelligence Branch, told a Knesset committee last week.

Hamas denies it is building up its arsenal and preparing for a showdown with Israel.

"We are simply trying to protect ourselves and our women and children from the occupying force Israel," Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said.

"That is all."

But the Israeli media are reporting that a showdown between Israel and Hamas is inevitable. The defense correspondent for the newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth wrote in an analysis: "The incidents these past few days in the Gaza Strip are just the preface to the big bang. Israel is marching headlong, with its eyes wide open and a clear mind, to a head-on clash with the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority."

Ephraim Kam, a former Israeli senior intelligence officer, said the weapons buildup in Gaza began almost as soon as Israel disengaged from the territory. But it was the fighting in southern Lebanon that exposed a level of sophistication by a guerrilla group that Israel had not experienced before.

"Now the concern is the militants are trying to build the same system in Gaza with the help of Hezbollah, Syria and Iran," Kam said, "and that is going to pose a real threat to Israel."

Until now, Hamas has been regarded as nowhere near as capable a fighting force as Hezbollah. Israeli soldiers returning from the fighting in Lebanon were impressed with Hezbollah's discipline, tactics and tenacity. In comparison, Israeli soldiers, who have fought in southern Lebanon and in Gaza, said Hamas fighters usually ran at the first sign of real firepower.

Several experts interviewed said Hamas, despite being a Sunni group, had established ties to Iran and was receiving money and training help from that predominantly Shiite nation.

"Hamas has been evolving for years," said Hirsh Goodman of the Institute for National Security Studies. "Many of its forces were expelled [from Gaza] in the 1990s after a series of bus bombings, and they all ended up in a camp in Lebanon" where they had developed connections with Iran.

"The common thread running from Lebanon to Gaza is Iran," said Dore Gold, a principal foreign-policy adviser to former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and now president of Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, an independent think tank. "It is in Iran's interest to replicate what happened in southern Lebanon in Gaza."

The buildup of weapons and well-trained instructors in Gaza is of such a magnitude, Gold said, "Gaza can be a springboard for war against Israel in the same way as was southern Lebanon."

Not all agree with that assessment.

Boaz Ganor, the executive director of Israel's International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, said the threat of a southern Lebanon-like confrontation in Gaza is exaggerated.

In Gaza, he said, the terrain is not as conducive to guerrilla fighting; Israel's intelligence is better; Israel has more control of the land; and, unlike in southern Lebanon, not everyone on Gaza would support such a cause.

"It would be so simplistic for the terrorists in Gaza to think that what happened in southern Lebanon could happen in Gaza; they could be literally dead wrong," Ganor said.

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Israel 's next confrontation? Hamas is acquiring more weaponry and is training in Hezbollah-style tactics, Israeli officers say.

Load-Date: October 22, 2006

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**Ceasefire will strike blow to Syria, Iran: Would hamper influence in Mideast;
Resolution would see Israel, Hezbollah pull out of Lebanon as UN troops
move in**

The Gazette (Montreal)

August 13, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 617 words

Byline: ALLAN WOODS, CanWest News Service

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

U.S. President George W. Bush said the United Nations resolution to halt the fighting between Israel and Lebanon will stop **Hezbollah** from acting as a "state within a state" and deal a severe blow to the efforts of Syria and Iran to exert influence in the Middle East.

In a statement issued by the White House yesterday, Bush urged the international community to support the resolution - which is to come into effect tomorrow - "and make every effort to bring lasting peace to the region."

The resolution, passed by the UN Security Council on Friday night, will see Israel and **Hezbollah** pull out of southern Lebanon at the same time as Lebanese and UN troops move in to patrol the area and enforce the ceasefire.

"I would hope that within no more than a day or so that there would be a cessation of the hostilities on the ground," U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in an interview with Israeli television yesterday.

UN secretary-general Kofi Annan said in a televised statement last night that the ceasefire would come into effect tomorrow at 8 a.m. local time.

Bush said the resolution "aims to end **Hezbollah**'s attacks on Israel and bring a halt to Israel's offensive military operations. It also calls for an embargo on the supply of arms to militias in Lebanon ... and for the disarming of **Hezbollah** and all other militia groups operating in Lebanon."

He added that the resolution is designed to stop **Hezbollah** from acting outside the reach of the Lebanese government "and put an end to Iran and Syria's efforts to hold the Lebanese people hostage to their own extremist agenda."

The president said "millions have suffered" as a result of this month-long "unwanted war."

The U.S. has been one of Israel's most strident backers throughout the month-long conflict in the Middle East. The Bush administration has been severely criticized for, among other things, shipping weapons to Israel during the

Ceasefire will strike blow to Syria , Iran : Would hamper influence in Mideast; Resolution would see Israel , Hezbollah pull out of Lebanon as UN troops move in

fighting, but the president has defended the actions as a means of supporting the right of a democratic country to defend itself from terrorists.

He also linked Israel's fight against Hezbollah to the global war on terror in his weekly radio address, which focused on the arrest of two dozen people in and around London.

"The terrorists attempt to bring down airplanes full of innocent men, women and children. They kill civilians and U.S. servicemen in Iraq and Afghanistan, and they deliberately hide behind civilians in Lebanon," Bush said. "They are seeking to spread their totalitarian ideology."

But that line of thinking has also earned the U.S. president new critics, coming after his response to the London terror arrests. Bush referred to "Islamic fascists" when talking about fundamentalist Muslims intent on attacking the U.S., and the comments have provoked anger and concern.

"Imagine calling people Muslim fascists?" asked Ramsey Clark, a former U.S. attorney-general under former president Lyndon Johnson, and a controversial political figure in the U.S.

"That's telling a million, a billion, a billion-and-a-half people around the world that you're a fascist. We insult all the other people around the world and we expect them to succumb to what we demand? They won't."

Speaking at a pro-Lebanon rally a stone's throw from the White House yesterday, attended by thousands, Khalid Chahhou, from North Carolina, said Bush's comments do not promote the U.S. government's fight against terrorism.

"All those people here are against terrorism and we are against fascism also, so to classify Muslims and fascists, that's unfair and unjust, and it doesn't make America in the eyes of many Muslims respectful," he said. "If Mr. Bush means by 'fascists' terrorism, then we are all against terrorism."

Graphic

Photo: MUHAMMAD MUHEISEN, AP; An Israeli family sits in a bomb shelter as a warning siren sounds in the northern Israeli town of Akko.;

Photo: MOHAMMED ZAATARI, AP; As the international community raced to turn a UN ceasefire blueprint into action yesterday, the violence between Israel and Hezbollah continued. Above: Lebanese civilians cross a road destroyed by Israeli air strikes near the southern town of Zahrani.

Load-Date: August 13, 2006

Comment & Debate: For Palestinians' sake, Olmert must emerge with his people's respect: Many outsiders would like to see Israel's prime minister ousted, but if he were his successor would be more hawkish still

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 27

Length: 1238 words

Byline: Jonathan Freedland

Body

As anyone with eyes in his head can see, this war has been a calamity for Lebanon. In three weeks, the south of the country has been shredded, roads and bridges pummelled, power plants and airports ripped apart, whole villages razed; even Beirut's famed seashore is now black and slick with oil. A nation lovingly reconstructed after decades of warfare has been smashed. Above all, Lebanon has lost hundreds of people, most of them civilians, including child after child after child. People spoke of "Lebanon's tragedy" in the 1970s and 1980s - and now, in the 21st century, we must speak of it again.

Yet the war has been Israel's calamity, too - morally, militarily, politically. The country set out to destroy, or at least defeat, **Hizbullah**: not a ragtag bunch of bandits, as some western romantics imagine, but a well-resourced, Iranian- and Syrian-backed proxy army that had mounted attacks across Israel's internationally recognised northern border. This is the organisation whose leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has said the handy thing about all the Jews gathering in Israel is that "it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide". So to hit back at **Hizbullah** was legitimate - but that does not make it wise.

For what has been the result? **Hizbullah** has not been defeated, but boosted in Lebanon and beyond. Watch the TV interviews with Beirut sophisticates - some Sunni, some Christian, the kind of people who once resented **Hizbullah**'s cuckoo-in-the-nest takeover of the south of their country. In fluent, US-accented English, they now declare their readiness to "give our blood for **Hizbullah**". Watch the once-moderate Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, refuse even to meet Condoleezza Rice after the carnage of Qana, adopting instead Nasrallah's rhetorical style to denounce Israeli "war crimes". These are people who could once have been model neighbours for Israel; now they are sworn enemies. And that is to say nothing of the brothers and cousins of those killed in Qana and elsewhere, the young Lebanese who, craving revenge, will be **Hizbullah**'s next generation.

That is the long term, but even in the short run the Israeli offensive has not worked. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF), which laid waste to three nations' armies in six days in 1967, have hit **Hizbullah** for three weeks to little effect. For all Israel's might, it could not stop the missiles raining down on its cities. Where once it conquered lands to the north, south and east, now it has failed to take even the humble village of Bint Jbeil.

This scares Israel. For over the past 40 years it has known that, even if it has not won the acceptance of its neighbours, it has at least earned their fear. The Lebanon war of 2006 has badly eroded that "deterrence": now other guerrilla armies will be emboldened to follow **Hizbullah**'s lead, to see if they too can wound the giant.

Comment & Debate: For Palestinians' sake, Olmert must emerge with his people's respect: Many outsiders would like to see Israel's prime minister ousted, but if....

Add to that the damage this war has inflicted on Israel's already battered reputation. There might have been international support for a direct hit, hard, on a target that was unambiguously Hizbullah. But Nasrallah is too smart for that. He embeds his men in villages, next to schools, beside hospitals, close to refugee centres, ensuring that any Hizbullah target is also a civilian target. This is the practice the UN's Jan Egeland had in mind when he lambasted Hizbullah's "cowardly blending . . . among women and children". It may be cowardly, but in the new warfare it also makes macabre sense. For this is a propaganda war as much as a shooting one, and in such a conflict to lose civilians on your own side represents a kind of victory. Put another way, while Qana was a propaganda disaster for Israel, it was a boon for Hizbullah.

So Israel has walked straight into the trap laid by its enemy. It has overreacted with force excessive enough to repel the world, but not sharp or focused enough to remove the threat to its own people. No wonder Jack Straw and half the cabinet have been in rebellion against Tony Blair's refusal to demand an immediate ceasefire - pressure that led to the prime minister's promise yesterday of a grand rethink of British foreign policy.

And yet it's a bit rich to hear Straw, of all people, denounce Israel for reacting disproportionately. Wasn't this the same Jack Straw who loyally served as foreign secretary while Britain joined the US in a war against Iraq that killed civilians, not in their hundreds, as in Lebanon, but in their tens of thousands? Wasn't this same Straw the spirited defender of Britain's role in the invasion of Afghanistan, which cost more than 3,000 civilian lives?

Make no mistake, Israel's current conduct deserves to be deplored. But then, by the same standard, so does the US and British record over the last five years. Indeed Straw and his fellow cabinet rebels should reflect that their government's actions have been both on a larger scale than Israel's - the full-blown invasion of two countries - and with much less provocation. The threat Iraq posed to Britain was utterly imaginary. By contrast, Hizbullah's threat to Israel, in the form of missile attacks, was concrete and right next door.

If, despite that, the carnage in Lebanon feels more immediate and real, that's probably because it has been played out on live television. That option was not so readily available during the US-British invasions of Afghanistan or Iraq. We did not have Fergal Keane on hand to give us poetic accounts of the suffering caused by our bombs. Instead we had correspondents embedded with those firing the missiles - rather than standing alongside those on whom they landed. The statistics alone confirm that we and the Americans caused many, many Qanas. We just rarely saw them.

For now, Israel is keeping up the offensive, promising to resume the air assault today. That decision is a function of failure, not success: Ehud Olmert's government is desperate to get something that looks like a win before the ceasefire is declared. The Israeli press has compared him to a World Cup coach in extra time, in dire need of a goal before the final whistle. Israelis need to know they have not sat in bomb shelters for three weeks, or evacuated their homes, for nothing. And, when negotiations eventually start, Olmert wants to come to the table with a decent hand.

His ideal would be to push Hizbullah northward, to the Litani river. The IDF could then hold that territory until relief came from an international force, which would serve as a buffer between combatants. Better still, Olmert would like Nasrallah's head.

Most outsiders who have watched the past few weeks will probably hope that Olmert fails. If he does he will be finished politically. Israel's hawks are already circling, ready to argue that Lebanon - from which Israel withdrew six years ago - proves the folly of giving back so much as an inch of conquered territory. Nasrallah, they say, has shown that "land for peace" translates into Arabic as "land for war".

If Olmert is discredited he will not be succeeded by a peacenik, ready to do what the region and the world so desperately needs - sit down and thrash out a comprehensive peace between Israel, the Palestinians and its neighbours. No, he will be replaced by Likud and the likes of Binyamin Netanyahu. The great, perverse truth is that those who care about the fate of the Palestinians need Olmert to emerge from this dreadful, dark episode respected, not rejected, by his own people.

Comment & Debate: For Palestinians' sake, Olmert must emerge with his people's respect: Many outsiders would like to see Israel 's prime minister ousted, but if....

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

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Bombs can't destroy hatred: Israel and the U.S. have done more for Hezbollah in the last three weeks than Iran or Syria ever could

Ottawa Citizen

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11; Lisa Van Dusen

Length: 836 words

Byline: Lisa Van Dusen, Citizen Special

Body

It's hard to imagine what more the United States could do to ensure that the new Middle East -- the birth pangs of which we've apparently been witnessing for the past three weeks -- will look like Chechnya with palm trees.

The reason there is no military solution to the problems of the Middle East isn't just that there aren't enough bombs in the world. It's that there is no conceivable outcome that can be achieved militarily that will not make things worse.

The Bush administration, like a drunken tourist who keeps picking the wrong fights in the wrong bars with the wrong locals, is beginning to find this out. After three weeks of cross-border warfare between Israel and **Hezbollah** that hit a predictable bottom Sunday with the killing of dozens of **women** and children in the bombing of Qana, even the more moderate pedestrians in the Arab street are now rooting for **Hezbollah** and its leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah. He can thank Israel and the United States for uniting Lebanese political opinion across parties and sects in a way that truckloads of Iranian rials and Syrian pounds never could.

George W. Bush has been pursuing at least a limited military solution by stalling on a ceasefire for the past three weeks and dealing only with Israel and the Lebanese government. In his news conference last week with the man recently re-christened by Fleet Street as "Yo, Blair," Bush shot down the possibility of negotiations with **Hezbollah** on the grounds that "**Hezbollah** is not a state."

This not only flies in the face of many American-led peace negotiations of the past two decades (at least) that involved non-state actors from the exhaustive Middle East peace process to the Northern Ireland peace process to the Kosovo negotiations at Rambouillet, it ignores the fact that peace negotiations, at least in the past half-century, have tended to involve at least one player whose agenda is actually predicated on its statelessness, whether it's the Kosovo Liberation Army, the Irish Republican Army or the PLO.

Most important in the current context, it represents a radical departure from diplomatic precedent -- right up there with pre-emptive invasions and unsolicited third-party interventions in the name of charitably eliminating domestic irritants -- without any explanation as to how it could possibly make sense on the ground in the Israeli-Palestinian dynamic.

In the West Bank, where Palestinians can still watch television, the news that America will now only negotiate with states must have been greeted with a mixture of dread and resignation. It implies that the perceived strength or

Bombs can't destroy hatred: Israel and the U.S. have done more for Hezbollah in the last three weeks than Iran or Syria ever could

weakness of Mahmoud Abbas as an interlocutor -- the stated impediment to negotiations since the election of Hamas -- really has nothing to do with the viability of talks with the Israelis.

It also shrinks the prospect of that sustainable peace Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice keep talking about to a speck on the horizon given that the major demand of the Palestinians -- a statehood whose legitimacy has been acknowledged by both the American and Israeli governments -- is apparently no longer the aim of diplomacy but a prerequisite for diplomacy.

The alternative to negotiating with non-states that President Bush has presented is to declare support for one side in the conflict, characterize that side's use of force as legitimate based on the grounds of not just history but political status (they stopped using the word democracy in the face of the fact that Hezbollah has democratically elected representatives in the U.S.-supported Lebanese government) and shared, short-term self-interest, and allow a military campaign with the implausible aim of destroying hatred with bombs.

Hezbollah's own implausible aim is the same as it has always been -- the destruction of Israel. It pursues that aim without success with the financial and military support of Iran and Syria because of the moral and political support of a Shia domestic constituency in Lebanon and a following in Arab public opinion elsewhere.

If Israel's justification for war is the elimination of Hezbollah, it has already proven that the conventional defeat of an ideology-based armed political movement fuelled on resentment and fanaticism is no easier in Bint Jbail or Qana than it is in Basra or Kandahar.

A ceasefire and a United Nations Security Council resolution that will establish an international security force along the Israel-Lebanon border might end the hostilities for now but the only way to achieve sustainable peace is to settle the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Anything else that happens in the meantime will only further fuel anti-American sentiment in the region by feeding a suspicion among even moderate Arabs that America is allowing the Israeli government to achieve with bombs the security it cannot muster the political will to negotiate for.

Lisa Van Dusen, a former international news editor in Washington, D.C., and international news writer at ABC News in New York, now lives in Montreal.

Graphic

Photo: Wathiq Khuzaie, Getty Images; UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES: With the killing of dozens of women and children in the bombing of Qana, even the more moderate pedestrians in the Arab streets are now rooting for Hezbollah and its leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Middle East crisis: Radicalised youth: 'We are ready to fight, we are ready to die'

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 9, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 4

Length: 807 words

Byline: Clancy Chassay, Beirut

Body

Eleven-year-old Zahra sits on a desk in a crowded corridor of a west Beirut school and explains eloquently why she believes in the need for resistance.

"All children now want to grow up to fight Israel. It's shameful how we are being treated. What have we as children ever done to them? Nobody cares what happens to us, nobody will do anything if we don't defend ourselves."

Her friend Howra, also 11 and also a refugee from southern Lebanon now living in the school in Zarif, joins in. "Even if a thousand of our fighters are killed we will remain strong. Even with the Israeli technology, we are not afraid of them; we have the strongest fighters in the world."

Estimates of the number of ***Hizbullah*** fighters active in the field range from 1,000 to 10,000, with a potential reserve force as high as 200,000. But the daily killing of civilians has created a new militancy among Lebanon's youth, suggesting that ***Hizbullah*** can now mobilise thousands more.

Those keen to join the battle disregard the mounting number of deaths of Israeli civilians from ***Hizbullah***'s daily barrage of rockets compared to the much higher Lebanese toll.

"We are ready to fight, we are ready to die, we are only waiting for Sayyed Has san (Nasrallah, ***Hizbullah*** leader) to give the word," says Ali from Bint Jbeil, sitting under a tree by a makeshift tent in Sanaya Gardens, one of Beirut's few parks, now a refugee camp.

Lebanon's Shias have borne the brunt of the Israeli onslaught and many of those driven out of the south are eager to return to defend their villages. But it is not just the poor, dispossessed Shias who are eager to fight: the new militancy now cuts across the class divide.

"I have a good education, a good family, good friends, a career, a privileged home - but I am willing to give up all these things to live in dignity," says Hassan, from a wealthy Shia family. He and his equally privileged friends, Firas and Mohammed, attend one of Lebanon's elite universities, and have the opportunity to work overseas.

"We are all students in university, some of us have businesses, but we will give our lives to defend our country," says Mohammed, a 23-year-old political science student.

Middle East crisis: Radicalised youth: 'We are ready to fight, we are ready to die'

Firas, 22, nods. "You only have one thought in your head - how you are going to defend your country, how you are going to defeat Israel." Since the war began, the friends say, their perception of their lives has changed. "We are not thinking about material things any more. We are all willing to give up everything," Mohammed says.

The young men say they are willing to serve the resistance in any way they can. "If they (**Hizbullah**) ask us to hold a gun, we will take up arms. If they ask us to deliver food, we will deliver food. We are just waiting for a signal," Firas says.

In some cases the radicalisation has crossed religious lines. Daisy is a 34-year-old Christian who works in a bank in upmarket district of Beirut. "I feel a great rage burning inside me," she says. "We are all the resistance now. They (**Hizbullah**) are not doing this for Syria, they're not doing this for Iran, they are doing this for Lebanon."

According to Mohammed, some of those keen to join the war have made it south and have been allowed to remain in their villages to defend them. "There is **Hizbullah** in the villages but there are others there as well. You can go back to your village and defend it if you can reach it, but **Hizbullah** will not allow you to accompany them on their operations."

A senior **Hizbullah** member who asked not be named said: "Religiously it is not permitted to waste people's lives by putting them in danger when they are not adequately trained. There are volunteers who help with supplies and other things."

Young **women** are among those eager to volunteer. Sitting with three friends in one of the Zarif school's empty classrooms recently converted into a **women's** prayer room, 21-year-old Sanine says: "As a woman I can help in many non-military ways. I can help the wounded; I can provide food and bring supplies. We all want to help in anyway we can."

Despite ideological differences, many young leftists are also now backing the fight against Israel. They see **Hizbullah** as filling the vacuum left by the largely ineffective Lebanese government and respect what they see as the dedication and competence of the fighters.

Samir, a 21-year-old journalism student and member of the Lebanese communist party, is helping to distribute supplies at the school in Zarif. "Every boy and man here longs to go and fight in the south. We will fight eventually."

Many of the young men who talk seriously about going to fight say they fear death - and the pain felt by the loved ones they might leave behind. But, they add, this is the sacrifice they are willing to make. "We love to live, but we love to live with our heads held high," says Mohammed as Israeli warplanes roar overhead.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

USA INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Length: 1250 words

Byline: AIR MARSHAL (RETD) AYAZ AHMED KHAN

Body

The carnage in Lebanon continues unabated. Beautiful coastal cities and hillside villages have suffered huge devastation from Israeli air attacks. Seven hundred civilians, mostly children have been killed, thousands injured and one million rendered homeless. Israeli pretext is that Hizbullah militants kidnapped two of its soldiers. However, the ferocity of Israeli bombing and total US support to prolong the carnage till Hizbullah is subdued and eliminated indicates that Washington has its own axe to grind.

It is no secret that Hizbullah has been funded by Iran and equipped by Syria since 1980. Hizbullah has created a state within the state of Lebanon. Its open allegiance to Iran and Syria is a thorn in Israel and Washington's side. US have a score to settle with Hizbullah. America is like an elephant, which does not forget. In 1983, in a suicide truck bombing on Marine barracks in Beirut by Hizbullah, 248 US Marines were killed and hundreds more injured. US Marines were immediately withdrawn from Beirut.

Americans have not forgotten the massacre of US Marines by Hizbullah. US antipathy of Iran is also decades old. During 1978-79, 450 United States diplomats were made hostage within the American Embassy in Tehran on the orders of Imam Khomeini. President Carter's effort to free the American hostages by a clandestine night C-130 air operation was a fiasco.

It ended with many US casualties and embarrassment of the Carter Administration. Besides Tehran has snubbed and defied the United States on a regular basis, especially Iran's determination to go nuclear in the face of UN Security Council resolution. Israeli is being stoked by the US to neutralise Hizbullah and end Iran's influence in Lebanon. With this motive, Israel has been armed to the teeth and is being provided "seek and destroy" precision-guided munitions with cluster warheads to cause maximum casualties.

Israel's initial plan was to bomb and occupy Hizbullah concentrations, deep inside Lebanon's northern border. However, in view of strong resistance by Hizbullah and heavy Israeli casualties -about 60 Israeli soldiers dead and 200 injured till date, Israel's revised plan is to occupy and hold two-mile border belt inside Lebanon. It is likely to be long drawn battle, despite total US support for Israel. Israel's defence minister Amer Peretz has stated that, "Israeli military campaign aims at changing the Hizbollah reality on the northern borders. Hizbullah must not be in the future, what it has been in the past. This will take time and more force. We have both in plenty." Israel has always got away with its aggressions because of US support. It is likely to be that way again.

On July 12, 2006, the US House of representatives by an overwhelming margin of 410 to 8 voted to unconditionally endorse Israel's on going air and artillery attacks on Lebanon and Gaza Strip. The US Senate passed similar resolutions defending Israel's right to attack in the interest of national security. US Senate asked both sides to

USA INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON

protect innocent civilian lives and infrastructure. However, the US House of Representatives omitted such a humanitarian suggestion, and praised Israel for "minimizing civilian losses," despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

It is astonishing that while Israeli F-16's are killing Lebanese civilians, and destroying their houses, US Congress is praising Israel, forgetting that as the only superpower US needs to be impartial and even handed. The Senate resolution praised President George Bush for fully supporting and endorsing Israel's war policy. President Bush has blocked international efforts for a cease-fire stating that Israel has the right to protect its security. US total support for Israel and intransigence implies a bloody and prolonged conflict in Lebanon.

The Bush Administration does not think that its wholesale support for Israel has isolated the United States in the international community. The fact is the House and the Senate Resolutions reveal bipartisan consensus on the legitimacy of US policy to fully support Israel despite international protests.

The resolutions that Israeli attacks on Lebanon are legitimate acts of self-defence under Article 51 are in violation of UN Charter, and a mockery of international law. It means that its closest ally and US can ignore international law and inflict unlimited damage on the civilian population and infrastructure (bridges, water system, electricity, roads, and houses) of a small and defenceless Lebanon, which is a pro-Western democracy.

As the battles raged, and as Israeli F-16's kept bombing civilian targets, an urgent meeting between United States, European and Arab diplomats in Rome failed to reach a cease-fire agreement. Condoleezza Rice the United States Secretary of State at the meeting resisted calls for an immediate cease-fire, and argued for a "sustainable cease-fire," with the proviso the Lebanese government must regain sovereignty over southern Lebanon and militias like Hizbullah must be disbanded.

Frustrated and angry Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of Lebanon after his meeting with Condoleezza Rice cried in despair that, "Is the value of human life less in Lebanon than of citizens else where? Are we children of a lesser God? Is an Israeli tear drop worth more than the blood of men, women and children in Lebanon?" Accusing Israel of "barbaric destruction," Fouad vowed to seek justice, announcing that Lebanon would begin legal proceedings for war reparations.

European and Arab governments, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and Javier Solana European Unions foreign policy head, lined up behind Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, and pressed hard for immediate cessation of hostilities, end to attacks and truce on humanitarian grounds. The debate was tense and stormy, but Condoleezza Rice remained unperturbed and totally obdurate, defending United States' refusal for an immediate cease-fire. She curtly stated that, "It does not do anyone any good to raise false hopes about something that is not going to happen.

It will not happen. We need to know that the fields of the Middle East are full of broken cease-fires." She expected the Lebanon problem to be accepted by the UN Security Council for discussion and resolution. It is sad that US the only superpower is stoking the fire in Lebanon, by helping to prolong the battle, whose victims are mostly children and innocent civilians.

In his news conference after the talks, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan gave vent to his rage against Israel. He alleged that Israeli air attacks on UN Observer Post which killed four UN officials were, "deliberate targeting." He said that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert despite receiving ten calls from UN observers did nothing to stop the air attacks that had "continued all day."

Addressing Israeli parliamentarians on July 31, Prime Minister Olmert rejected appeals for cease-fire, stressing that "there will be no cease fire till Israel achieves its objectives". The same day Israel's Security Cabinet in a special meeting decided to resume air strikes, and expand the ground campaign in Lebanon. However, Condoleezza Rice having felt global rage and criticism told newsmen before her departure for Washington that cease-fire, to stop further bloodshed may be necessary.

It is hoped that good sense prevails in Washington and the Bush Administration reconsiders its support for Israeli policy of reprisals, and helps create a conducive environment for a peaceful settlement of the problem.

USA INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

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Today on the web: After Qana

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 2

Length: 287 words

Byline: Ben Rooney

Body

"Setting aside Olmert's crocodile tears, what exactly does he hope to accomplish? Does he seriously expect that the terrorised families of the dead will suddenly say, 'You are right, we are wrong, and we will disavow Hizbullah and force it to disarm'? I do not know what will come out of the third invasion of 2006, but I do know it will not be a pacifist movement." www.moorishgirl.com

>"You say we want to extinguish all terrorists . . . do people do that by bombing shelters??? Bombing shelters filled with children and women???"

CHILDREN FOR GOD'S SAKE . . . CHILDREN!!!!!! Can you hear my screams????? You think by doing that you will eliminate terrorism??? What you are doing triggers more hatred . . . more violence . . . more deaths . . ."

neurotic-iraqi-wife.blogspot.com

>"Those were children, children that Hizbullah locked in the cellar of the building. Don't be fooled, Hizbullah put those children in that place and then fired missiles from that place, from right behind the building. Hizbullah

made them guilty, made them targets, and killed them as sure as if they had personally cut their throats."

thisfuckingwar.blogspot.com

>"The IDF is a very effective killing machine. Its objective is to safeguard the citizens of Israel. It will operate under what it thinks is necessary to achieve those objectives. The value and sanctity of human life beyond the borders of Israel is meaningless, and is irrelevant to the objectives of that organisation."

lebanonheartblogs.blogspot.com

>"The only question is whether the Bush administration has enough saychel (common sense) to realise that Israel has played its last card and that it'd be best to call it quits before far worse things transpire. "

www.richardsilverstein.com

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Today on the web: After Qana

End of Document

Killing of civilians mobilises a new militancy among Lebanon's youth

The Irish Times

August 9, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 8

Length: 738 words

Byline: Clancy Chassay in Beirut

Body

Eleven-year-old Zahra sits on a desk in a crowded corridor of a west Beirut school and explains why she believes in the need for resistance.

"All children now want to grow up to fight Israel. It's shameful how we are being treated. What have we as children ever done to them? Nobody cares what happens to us, nobody will do anything if we don't defend ourselves." Her friend Howra, also 11 and also a refugee from southern Lebanon now living in the school in Zarif, joins in. "Even if a thousand of our fighters are killed, we will remain strong. Even with the Israeli technology, we are not afraid of them; we have the strongest fighters in the world."

Estimates of the number of Hizbullah fighters active in the field range from 1,000 to 10,000, with a potential reserve force as high as 200,000. But the daily killing of civilians has created a new militancy among Lebanon's youth, suggesting that Hizbullah can now mobilise thousands more.

"We are ready to fight, we are ready to die, we are only waiting for Sayyed Hassan [Nasrallah, Hizbullah leader] to give the word," says Ali from Bint Jbeil, sitting under a tree by a makeshift tent in Sanaya Gardens, one of Beirut's few parks, now a refugee camp.

Lebanon's Shias have borne the brunt of the Israeli onslaught and many of those driven out of the south are eager to return to defend their villages. But it is not just the poor, dispossessed Shias who are eager to fight: the new militancy now cuts across the class divide. "I have a good education, a good family, good friends, a career, a privileged home - but I am willing to give up all these things to live in dignity," says Hassan, from a wealthy Shia family.

He and his equally privileged friends, Firas and Mohammed, attend one of Lebanon's elite universities, and have the opportunity to work overseas. "We are all students in university, some of us have businesses, but we will give our lives to defend our country," says Mohammed, a 23-year-old political science student. Firas (22) nods in agreement. "You only have one thought in your head - how you are going to defend your country, how you are going to defeat Israel." Since the war began, the friends say, their perception of their lives has changed. "We are not thinking about material things any more. We are all willing to give up everything," Mohammed says.

The young men say they are willing to serve the resistance in any way they can. "If they [Hizbullah] ask us to hold a gun, we will take up arms. If they ask us to deliver food, we will deliver food. We are just waiting for a signal," Firas says. In some cases the radicalisation has crossed religious lines. Daisy is a 34-year-old Christian who works in a bank in an upmarket district of Beirut. "I feel a great rage burning inside me," she says. "We are all the

Killing of civilians mobilises a new militancy among Lebanon 's youth

resistance now. They [Hizbullah] are not doing this for Syria, they're not doing this for Iran, they are doing this for Lebanon." According to Mohammed, some of those keen to join the war have made it south and have been allowed to remain in their villages to defend them. "There is Hizbullah in the villages but there are others there as well. You can go back to your village and defend it if you can reach it, but Hizbullah will not allow you to accompany them on their operations."

Young women are among those eager to volunteer. Sitting with three friends in one of the Zarif school's empty classrooms recently converted into a women's prayer room, 21-year-old Sanine says: "As a woman I can help in many non-military ways. I can help the wounded; I can provide food and bring supplies. We all want to help in anyway we can."

Despite ideological differences, many young leftists are also now backing the fight against Israel. They see Hizbullah as filling the vacuum left by the largely ineffective Lebanese government and respect what they see as the dedication and competence of the fighters.

Samir, a 21-year-old journalism student and member of the Lebanese communist party, is helping to distribute supplies at the school in Zarif. "Every boy and man here longs to go and fight in the south. We will fight eventually."

Many of the young men who talk seriously about going to fight say they fear death - and the pain felt by the loved ones they might leave behind. But this is the sacrifice they are willing to make. "We love to live, but we love to live with our heads held high," says Mohammed as Israeli warplanes roar overhead.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

Crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times

August 10, 2006 Thursday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 17

Length: 1425 words

Body

Madam, - Labour councillor John McManus (August 1st) is right when he says "there is confusion and some plain bad politics being propagated by some on the left" with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the threat posed by growing Islamic fundamentalists. His colleague, Cllr Aidan Culhane (August 3rd) is also right to acknowledge that "the left is too ambiguous" about those who want to bring the Middle East back to the Middle Ages and that it has failed to come to terms with Islamic fanaticism. However, in fairness, this criticism is not exclusively a malaise of the left. It also applies to some politicians within all of our political parties and to a number of independent TDs and senators.

Trevor Sargent TD, as leader of the Green Party, lumbered into the tragic Israeli-Lebanese conflict with a call last Friday for both diplomatic and trade sanctions against Israel "given the country's refusal to date to call a ceasefire." No such call was made for sanctions on either Iran or Syria for using Hizbullah to provoke the conflict or for funding and arming that organisation's fundamentalist militants.

Mr Sargent's statement was made on a day when more than 230 rockets provided by Iran were fired indiscriminately by Hizbullah fanatics into Israeli cities and towns. The Greens and, apparently, the Joint Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee - whose members are supposed to understand the history and complexities of the conflicts in the Middle East - have adopted the politically unique and disgraceful position of proposing that sanctions be imposed on Israel for defending itself against attack by a fanatical terrorist group committed to its destruction and which to date is responsible for the death of over 100 Israelis and for injuring over 700. Too many members of the Oireachtas are ensnared in Michael D Higgins's world of knee-jerk anti-Americanism and dewy-eyed sentimentality and appeasement when confronted by Islamic fundamentalism.

Joschka Fischer, former German foreign minister and leader of the German Greens for over 20 years got it right in The Irish Times of July 28th when he wrote that "the current war in Lebanon is not a war by the Arab world against Israel: rather it is a war of the region's radical forces - Hamas, Islamic Jihad among the Palestinians, Hizbullah together with Syria and Iran - that fundamentally reject any settlement with Israel". Politicians on this island will have something relevant to contribute to the resolution of the current conflict only when they wake up to this reality.

What we need is better politics. In particular, we need our elected politicians to address the role Iran has played over the past 15 years in sabotaging the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and to understand that the Iranian president's call to wipe Israel off the map is not mere fanciful rhetoric. Perhaps this is something members of the Joint Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee are presently loath to do for fear that if they criticise the Iranian regime that committee's current open invitation for a junket to Tehran might be withdrawn.

Crisis in the Middle East

For now, Iran is apparently a four letter word that members of that Committee dare not utter in criticism. Is it too much to hope that they will have the courage during their autumn visit to Tehran to ask the hard questions and advocate a radical change in Iranian policy? - Yours, etc,

ALAN SHATTER, Upper Ely Place, Dublin 2.

Madam, - As residents of Beirut, we have read your paper's coverage of the situation in Lebanon with both interest and dismay. Allow us to ask some questions that we feel have not been addressed by your coverage and analysis. Where were the Israeli soldiers captured - in Israel or on Lebanese soil? Is the capture and exchange of soldiers an unprecedented outrage or a common practice in the region? Does Hizbullah want to capture soldiers merely because it can or because it wants to free Lebanese men, women, and children who are in Israeli prisons?

How did those first four Israeli soldiers die - in a Hizbullah attack or by hitting a mine? Which came first - the rocket barrage from Hizbullah or the Israeli bombardment? Was the Israeli invasion a legitimate defence of its territory or a plan hatched long before in the infamous "Clean Break" document and in visits to the US in May (Olmert) and June (Netanyahu at the American Enterprise Institute in Colorado)? Does Hizbullah deny the right of Israel to exist or deny the legitimacy of the state of Israel and its apartheid system?

Does Israel believe that the Lebanese army can really take over in the South when any Beiruti knows that Lebanese soldiers are little more than traffic cops with guns? Can the Lebanese army defend Lebanon or, as Noam Chomsky notes, is Hizbullah the only protection it has? What does Israel want more: a 20-mile security zone or precious water from the Litani River? Is Israel a helpless victim of terrorism or a perpetrator of state terrorism? The utter calumny of accusing Hizbullah of using women and children as human shields does not deserve formulation into a rhetorical question.

We look forward to reading your answers. - Yours, etc,

COLLEEN MacDONELL and DOMINIC LARKIN, Beirut, Lebanon (currently in Cork).

Madam, - Further to various letters and columns on Israel's relationship with the US, one might bear in mind that in the short term it may suit US governments' regional strategic goals to support Israel. However, in the medium and long term this is not assured. If access to oil and/or closer links with stridently Islamic, anti-Israel states become the priority, then whither Israel?

The present and future difficulties concerning the continued existence of Israel should not be underestimated. - Yours, etc,

SEAN CASSIDY, Gardiner Street, Dublin 1.

Madam, - The suggestion that I am at odds with my party over Lebanon is not fully correct. I fully support Michael D Higgins's long-standing call for an immediate cessation of violence. The military action being undertaken by Israel is ill-conceived and counter-productive, even taking into account its right to defend itself.

The civilian deaths are an outrage.

Yet Israel's capacity to wage this war seems more than matched by Hizbullah's capacity to fire rockets into Israel. One side, Hizbullah, seems to have done its strategic thinking. The other, Israel, has not. I suspect that had Ariel Sharon remained healthy this war would not be taking place.

That Hizbullah is delighted by the response it has drawn forth from Israel shows its indifference both to Lebanon and to ordinary citizens who want to get on with their day-to-day lives. That the West seems more intent on holding Israel responsible for this particular catastrophe is to ignore those who orchestrated it. Again, it needs to be restated: Israel's over-reaction cannot be allowed to obscure the actions and motives of a group whose world view is fundamentally hostile to all that progressives believe.

Crisis in the Middle East

Finally, Michael D Higgins rails against the charge of anti-Americanism against those who hold his position. I understand his frustration. But when the deputy lord mayor of Dublin, a member of our party, was heard recently on the airwaves telling the elected governor of Florida to go home, is it any wonder that the charge is levelled against us? - Yours, etc,

Cllr AIDAN CULHANE, Meadow Grove, Dundrum, Dublin 16.

Madam, - Stiofán Ó Cléirigh (August 7th) has completely misunderstood my grounds for criticising Martyn Turner's cartoon about the tragedy of Qana (August 4th).

I agree with Mr Ó Cléirigh that the cartoon tried to contrast Christ's gentle kindness to an embarrassed young couple on the occasion of their wedding with the brutality of the Israeli bombing of civilians in Qana. In this Martyn Turner's intentions were good and acceptable, however clumsy his attempt to express them.

The point of my objection was quite a different matter: the irreverent and near-blasphemous depiction of Christ as a figure of fun, gesturing in some kind of silly mumbo-jumbo over the water jars. - Yours, etc,

SEÁN MAC CÁRTHAIGH, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

Madam, - Louis Lentin (August 5th) castigates the Irish Film Institute for rejecting sponsorship from the Israeli embassy. I applaud the IFI.

Is Mr Lentin seriously suggesting that State-sponsored bodies should not make any moral judgment on their potential sponsors? Is he suggesting also that these bodies should not take into account the overwhelming views of their paymasters, namely the taxpayers of Ireland? - Yours, etc,

ALAN McPARTLAND, Grange Court, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

Load-Date: August 10, 2006

Lebanese assess their losses

Christian Science Monitor

August 8, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 971 words

Byline: Scott Peterson Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: BEIRUT, LEBANON

Highlight: On Monday, Arab ministers called for a US-French resolution to be revised more in Lebanon's favor.

Body

Emotional and stunned as he viewed the smoldering ruin that once housed his office, Razwan Bahar made a request for help that served as metaphor Monday for the belated diplomacy swirling around the Israel-Hizbullah war.

"Did you call the fire department?" Bahar asked a young man in a Shiite militia T-shirt, shortly after an Israeli air strike pancaked the building at dawn. "Yes, we did," came the straight reply. "But they are not coming because there is nothing left to save of this building. It has all collapsed."

While Mr. Bahar and others from this Beirut Hizbullah stronghold tallied the cost of the destruction Monday, Arab foreign ministers met downtown. The Lebanese government called for the US and France to revise a draft UN Security Council resolution to require an immediate cease-fire and full withdrawal of 10,000 Israeli troops fighting Hizbullah in southern Lebanon. Arab League foreign ministers agreed to send a delegation to New York.

The US and France had planned to put the resolution to a vote Monday, but that goal slid to Tuesday at the earliest. Since the war erupted July 12, the Security Council has only issued two statements reacting to Israeli attacks on a UN observer post and on civilians in Qana. Lebanese government officials said Monday the Cabinet unanimously approved sending 15,000 Lebanese soldiers to south Lebanon as soon as Israeli troops withdraw.

In fighting Monday, three Israeli soldiers were killed in south Lebanon, the Israeli army said, near the Hizbullah stronghold of Bint Jbail. Hizbullah fired another 160 rockets on northern Israel on Monday, injuring five people, police and rescue services told the Associated Press. Israeli warplanes intensified airstrikes and launched a new commando raid in south Lebanon on Monday, killing at least 28 people in one of the heaviest tolls in days. Lebanon's prime minister, choking back tears, pleaded for a cease-fire but demanded that any U.N.-drafted plan require a full Israeli withdrawal.

The Lebanese death toll included at least five people killed after nightfall in a missile attack on a Beirut suburb considered a Hizbullah stronghold.

Hizbullah also unleashed a new weapon, sending an unmanned aircraft toward the border. The Israelis said the drone had the capacity to carry a powerful explosive warhead guided by a precise targeting system. The Israeli air force shot down the drone over the sea, and naval vessels were sent to recover wreckage to see if it was armed, the military said.

Lebanese assess their losses

President Bush, speaking Monday from his ranch in Crawford, Texas, said that "we all recognize that the violence must stop." He said that the US wants a comprehensive solution that offers a lasting peace, but said that an Israeli withdrawal first would create a "vacuum."

The rising death toll in Lebanon prompted an emotional response. A tearful Siniora said that Israel's bombardment of Lebanon - ignited when Hizbullah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border ambush - has set "our country back decades. We are still in the middle of shock." Siniora said initially that 40 people had died in the village of Houra, though he amended that later to one dead. "If these horrific actions are not state terrorism, then what is state terrorism?" he asked.

The shock has weighed most heavily on Lebanese civilians, who comprise most of the more than 900 who have died in southern Lebanon and Shiite southern districts of Beirut. More than 90 Israelis, most soldiers, have died in rocket attacks on Israel.

"We need to force the Israeli aggressor to stop its aggression, and to withdraw behind the blue line," said Siniora, noting Lebanon's further request for return of Shebaa Farms, exchange prisoners, and provide border-area maps of land mines.

For those standing amid the debris in front of Bahar's office building, the toll on the Israeli side yields little sympathy. A mattress hangs limply across telephone wires; receipts from the medical warehouse on the ground floor flutters in the breeze.

When asked whom he blames for the destruction, Bahar's neighbor, Esam, answers firmly. "The Israelis, of course," he says. "They are barbarians."

That feeling was widely voiced as people gathered belongings in plastic sacks or luggage, and walked, or consoled neighbors.

'This is my home,' said Sermad, who lingered, downcast, in front of the burning rubble, sometimes choking on the smoke. 'The third floor; I don't know where now.'

His refrigerator lay on its side in the street, its door ripped off. He picked up someone else's photo album and leafed through it. Then he saw a closet's worth of children's clothing strewn about and sprinkled with concrete and dust.

"These are their clothes," said the father of four. "These are their school uniforms."

As Sermad mourned, tears flowed between two women. One had just emerged, looking shell-shocked, from the building adjacent to the one destroyed. She shouted "Salim! Salim!" for a nearby male relative.

She found a neighbor, Fadia Dergham, and they hugged. Ms. Dergham had moved out with her sister the day before. "I feel normal," said Dergham. "We were expecting this." "By chance yesterday, we left," said her sister Samia. "And we came back to see this."

But their building was not the only one targeted Monday. Lebanese ambulance workers raced to one building after receiving a call that there might be survivors.

They arrived to find "Scouts of the Islamic Message," a branch of a Hizbullah young men's civil defense unit climbing into crevasses of collapsed buildings.

Scouts crawled down into the rubble hoping for any sign of life. Most of these suburbs have been empty for weeks, so Israeli strikes now cause few casualties.

One medic joked that he and other medics "sleep standing up." But, "any more difficult, I cannot imagine."

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Lebanese assess their losses

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

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Olmert dismisses calls for imminent ceasefire

The Irish Times

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: FRONT PAGE; Pg. 1

Length: 602 words

Byline: Peter Hirschberg in Jerusalem

Body

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert yesterday brushed aside international calls for a halt to Israel's military offensive in Lebanon, declaring there would be no ceasefire in the battle with **Hizbullah**, which entered its 20th day yesterday.

"The fighting continues," Mr Olmert told a meeting of mayors in Tel Aviv. "There is no ceasefire and there will not be any ceasefire in the coming days." Israel's "security cabinet", a body made up of senior ministers, was meeting last night to discuss whether to expand ground operations in south Lebanon.

After Israel agreed to a 48-hour hiatus in its aerial bombing campaign, following the killing of at least 54 civilians, 37 of whom were children, in an air strike on Sunday on the village of Qana, officials in Jerusalem began hinting that the military campaign could be over by the end of the week, with the UN Security Council declaring a ceasefire by Saturday.

Israeli and US officials said the let-up in bombing was to allow for an inquiry into the Qana deaths and to enable residents of south Lebanon trapped in the fighting to travel north.

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, who left Jerusalem yesterday after ceasefire talks with Mr Olmert, strengthened the sense that the fighting was close to ending when she told reporters as she headed back to Washington: "I take with me an emerging consensus on what is necessary for both an urgent ceasefire and lasting settlement. I am convinced we can achieve both this week."

While President Bush said he would push for UN action this week on ending the fighting, but again resisted calling for an immediate ceasefire. He also made clear he did not plan to send US troops to be part of an international force to stabilise the region.

While Israel yesterday scaled back its aerial campaign significantly, **Hizbullah** also refrained from firing rockets into northern Israel. Several mortar shells fell on the northern town of Kiryat Shmona, but did not cause any injuries.

On the ground, however, the Israeli military continued its operations against **Hizbullah** positions some 3km inside Lebanon. And Mr Olmert's speech appeared to indicate that he planned to continue - and possibly even intensify - Israel's offensive.

He warned that Israel still faced "not a small number of days of fighting" until the threat posed by **Hizbullah** on its northern border had been removed. "We should be ready for pain, tears and blood," he said. "Missiles and rockets will still land in Israel in the coming days."

Olmert dismisses calls for imminent ceasefire

Civilians fled battered villages in southern Lebanon, taking advantage of the 48-hour hiatus, and aid convoys headed into the area to deliver supplies. Rescue workers found 49 bodies buried for days in collapsed buildings or inside destroyed vehicles.

The Israeli military said it had launched a new ground incursion into Lebanon in the Aita al-Shaab area. **Hizbullah** said its guerrillas were fiercely resisting the advance.

There were reports last night that Mr Olmert planned to continue Israel's offensive until an international peacekeeping force has been deployed in south Lebanon, with the purpose of keeping **Hizbullah** away from the border.

Such a deployment is at the centre of diplomatic efforts aimed at brokering a ceasefire.

The Israeli leader apologised for the Qana bombing, saying he was "sorry from the bottom of my heart for all deaths of children or **women** in Qana. We did not search them out . . . they were not our enemies and we did not look for them."

Syrian president Bashar al-Assad told the Syrian military yesterday to "raise its readiness", pledging not to abandon support for Lebanese resistance against Israel.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Saturday Comment: The fight reflex: With the ceasefire, the guerrillas are returning to what is left of their homes in Lebanon. But for some, the next battle can't come too soon

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 19, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN SATURDAY COMMENT PAGES; Pg. 23

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Byline: Ghaith Abdul-Ahad

Body

The Muhammad family arrived back at their home in the south of Lebanon three days after the ceasefire. Twenty-five people - women, children of all ages, and their grandmother - were squashed inside two rickety cars piled high with mattresses, food boxes and cooking pots. Pictures of the Hizbullah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, were taped to the back windows. Their house was intact, but there was a look of gloom on everyone's faces. The father sat on the steps and took off his shoes, the children gathered around him quietly as the mother sat in a corner weeping silently. The eldest son of the family, Sheikh Hassan, a very religious young man, had stayed behind in the village to fight. He was a Hizbullah member and this war was his first battle. He wasn't in the house.

Then: "Sheik Hassan, Sheik Hassan," shouted a small boy as he came running up the street. Behind him came a young man with a thick beard and eyebrows, dressed in a clean brown shirt and a baseball cap. His mouth was wide with a big grin, and five boys and girls were pulling his shirt and hands.

The women, his sisters and cousins, jumped on him, kissed him on the forehead and on his cheeks. His fiancée hugged him, held his head and kissed him on the cheek. A taboo for a religious man in times of peace, but today was a day of celebration. Sheik Hassan's grin grew bigger.

"It's OK, it's OK! Nothing happened to me. I was with the brothers here; why did you worry so much?"

A young boy put his face on Sheik Hassan's chest and wept; the elder women ululated and sang: "You made us victorious over the Jews . . ."

Up in the living room, Sheik Hassan started to tell friends and family his stories. "Everyone wanted to fight - the young teenagers would come to us asking for weapons. Hizbullah told them to go, we have enough fighters. They would weep, refusing to leave - we had to give some of them weapons," he recounted.

Sheikh Hassan was one of hundreds of fighters - most of them from Hizbullah, but others from different Shia factions, along with communists and nationalists - who fought against Israeli troops. In the days following the ceasefire, the ones who survived came out to tell their stories.

In the village of Mais al-Jabal, Sheik Hussein, who had been with Hizbullah since he was a young boy, was recruited into a cell with other fighters.

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"We had our weapons ready. They gave me an AK47, and we sat in one of the houses," he said, as a little boy sat next to him, holding his arm and listening attentively. "The Israelis talk about tunnels and caves, but it wasn't like this. They like to exaggerate our strength. We didn't have any tunnels in this town; we stayed in normal houses and waited.

"The most difficult moment in the war came when the Israelis approached the outskirts of the town. Our commander told us: be ready to die. Even with faith and even if you have been raised waiting for martyrdom, it's a difficult moment," he said.

"I thought of the little kids, my sisters, my fiancée. I wrote my will and waited. We considered ourselves as martyrs in waiting."

In the town centre, the traces of the battle were all around: tank tread on the tarmac, shrapnel, shell holes. A graveyard had been pummelled with artillery and ranks of yellow Hizbullah flags stood on ledges facing the last valley before Israel.

"The Israelis had everything in this war: drones, jet fighters, helicopters, and tanks, the Merkavas. Do you know what a Merkava is? The fourth generation of the Merkava?

"But we had God fighting on our side, we had God."

Sheik Hussein's cap fell and a big white bandage appeared on his shaved forehead. "I look around and I see my brothers and I can't believe it - how did we survive? Under all that bombing, we came out alive with few scratches.

"We didn't use suicide bombers at this battle. In each village, there were people waiting to do martyrdom operations, but we didn't need it. If you have a rocket that can do the job, why do you need a man?"

Mustafa started fighting when he was 17. He is now 35. He is a poor Shia, and like many of his generation, he fought against the Palestinians, the Israelis, as well as Christian and other Shia militias in Lebanon's civil war. In his partially destroyed living room, he walked me past the photographs hanging on his wall.

"That's me in Beirut in 1987." He pointed at a picture of himself dressed in jeans and trainers, carrying an M16 rifle. "We were fighting Hizbullah then." He pointed at pictures of other young men, their portraits mixed with those of religious imams and flowers. "This one is my brother, that is my cousin, next to him my father-in-law. They are all martyrs."

Times have changed, and Mustafa, a fighter for Amal, a Shia militia turned political party and a long-time foe of Hizbullah, found himself in a bunker fighting with Hizbullah against Israel.

"I hate them, those Hizbullah, they are arrogant and they believe they are holy because they fought Israel. Look at them walking in the street as if they have liberated Jerusalem," he said. Everywhere around him in the town of Khiam, a few kilometres from the Israeli border, Hizbullah fighters were standing on street corners.

"But if your town is attacked by the Israelis, everyone will fight, whether they are Amal, the communists or the nationalists. They (Hizbullah) don't have the right to monopolise the resistance."

Through the rubble of the town, hopping between boulders of concrete, he started to recount his days in the war.

"This was the worst thing in my life. They bombed non-stop. If you heard the jet, then you were safe, but when you didn't hear it then you knew they would bomb next to you or they will bomb you."

Inside a nearby house, the room where the fighters slept and waited had nothing to do with Shia Islam or militias; it was the room of a teenager. Palm prints decorated the walls, a blue curtain with white stars dangled from the ceiling, and a poster of rapper Nelly was hung high.

Mustafa jumped on the bed. Above him was an Amal flag and a poster of a half-naked woman.

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"We slept here for five days. You don't think of tomorrow, you live each day and when it is finished you say: I survived. I had pressure on my head like someone squeezing my head. Everyone started thinking like everyone else - for example, if you have a headache, all will say I have a headache." After five days, they were spotted and an Israeli air strike flattened the upper levels of the house. "There was silence. I wanted to scream but couldn't. My voice was flat and the men started shouting: allahu akbar, allahu akbar. Smoke and dust filled the room. I couldn't breathe. We ran quickly out of the house, hid under a tree and then went to another house."

Back in the street, he picked up a few bullets and pointed at a mangled car. "This car was filled with ammunition when it was hit - we stored ammo everywhere.

"You get scared after hearing all the bombs and shelling. Sometimes we lose our nerve," he said. "But there is nothing more valuable than your country. You can change your family every few years, you can marry again and have more kids, but your country you have for once and it stays with you."

On Monday, the first day of the ceasefire, on another street corner away from the town centre in Khiam, stood a young **Hizbullah** fighter, with thick beard, wearing a black military uniform covered with dust and a pair of military boots. "I haven't had food since last Thursday," he said. "We had some chocolate bars - we had a chunk in the morning and another chunk at night.

"You know how you wait to see a lover you haven't seen for two or three years? This is how we were, waiting to see the Jews," he said. "I wish that I could have fought them face to face, but they hid in their tanks. They tried to enter Khiam after they got into Marjeyoun. We were waiting for them, and we hit them, not with RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades), because for a heavy Merkava an RPG will just scratch the surface, but with a real anti-tank weapons. I missed the first shot, but they gave me a new position and I hit the second, but it didn't come cheap. My best friend - he was like my brother - was killed two days ago."

He looked tired and drawn, although proud of his role in the battle.

"I am here to see some friends and then go back to my position. You can't trust those Jews," he said as he moved away through the rubble. "Maybe they will try to come back later tonight - who knows?"

Abu Ali, a commander from Amal, is tall, bald and missing two fingers from his left hand. He walked around Khiam inspecting damage and looking for his men. "We don't have the same capabilities as **Hizbullah**, so we had to rely on them for IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and rockets, but we fought together. They didn't consult us when they started the war, but when you see the Israelis it doesn't matter any more.

"On Thursday morning, a column of Israeli tanks tried to come to the town. We were waiting for them in the low lands between Khiam and Marjeyoun. We were four groups of **Hizbullah** and Amal fighters, we fired at them from everywhere, we hit few tanks and they couldn't retrieve them till Sunday night."

Abu Ali is a professional fighter: when the Lebanese civil war ended, he went to Africa, fighting in the jungles between Sierra Leone and Liberia, made some money and came back to his home town after the Israelis withdrew in 2000 with enough money to build a big house. But he never stopped thinking about fighting.

"It's just like when you flirt with a girl. Hitting a tank is the same: you get closer and closer and then you hit. It's not really different from hunting a bird."

As a commander, he had to move around the safe houses telling his fighters to get ready. Sometimes he delivered food. "A car would drive very fast through the town, drop sacks of tinned food and bread at street corners - not at the safe houses themselves - and we would go and collect them, all under the threats of the drones."

In a nearby building, fighters sat around two red plastic tables. One was slicing tomatoes, while two others emptied tuna and sardine cans.

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"We used to sit like this before the war. This is our celebration lunch. We have won this battle, and it's over, but the war is not over - as long as the Israelis are there and we are here, we will fight," said Abu Ali, as he stuffed some tuna into his bread.

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Load-Date: August 19, 2006

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Blair pledges to restart Middle East peace plan

Guardian.com

September 11, 2006

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theguardian

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Highlight: Tony Blair pledged to use his remaining time in office to try to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during a contentious visit to Beirut today, which saw his press conference with Fouad Siniora, the Lebanese prime minister, interrupted by a protester despite high security.

Body

Tony Blair pledged to use his remaining time in office to try to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during a contentious visit to Beirut today, which saw his press conference with Fouad Siniora, the Lebanese prime minister, interrupted by a protester despite high security.

After a morning of meetings with his Lebanese counterpart and parts of the Lebanese cabinet - *Hizbullah* members refused to meet the British PM - Mr Blair told British and Lebanese reporters: "I commit myself during my remaining time in office to bring that [the Middle East peace process] about."

With several hundred people protesting against Mr Blair's visit on the Beirut streets outside, Mr Siniora was polite but guarded in his praise of the British prime minister's role in the summer conflict.

"During the war we were in constant contact and he [Mr Blair] had a certain contribution in certain aspect[s] that reduced the damage that might have been inflicted on Lebanon," he said.

The half-hour press conference in Beirut was interrupted half way through by a *female* protester shouting "Shame on you!" and holding a banner in front of the two men stating "Boycott Israeli apartheid".

She was escorted away, with the Lebanese PM commenting: "This is a democracy which respects all sorts of expression."

Mr Blair, who had a military escort from Beirut airport to the meeting, joked: "I'm used to demonstrations in my own country and elsewhere so I suppose this demonstration sort of makes me feel at home."

Mr Siniora made it clear that during their talks - the first time a British prime minister had visited Lebanon - that he had briefed Mr Blair on the "huge destruction" caused in Lebanon by Israel and that country's "blatant violation" of UN resolution 1701.

He called on Mr Blair and the international community to ensure a "full" Israeli withdrawal, a permanent ceasefire, the release of Lebanese detainees and maps of landmines planted in Lebanon by the Israelis.

Blair pledges to restart Middle East peace plan

The British PM pledged that the UK would provide a total of 40m in reconstruction funds for the country, starting with work on its bridges.

Quizzed about the use of UK airports to transport arms to Israel during the conflict said there had not been any "for many weeks".

He acknowledged there were many in the region who objected to his policy of not calling for an immediate ceasefire, but insisted that there was "never going to be a cessation without a UN resolution and that's what we worked for throughout."

Later, Mr Blair laid a wreath at the tomb of Rafik Hariri, the Lebanese prime minister killed on February 14 in a huge explosion blamed on Syria.

Mr Blair stood for a few moments in silent tribute accompanied by Mr Siniora and Hariri's son, Saad.

Mr Blair suffered a snub ahead of the historic meeting when the speaker of the Lebanese parliament refused to meet him.

Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese parliament, who is close to Hizbullah, had been due to meet Mr Blair.

But Mr Berri, the leader of the Shi'ite Amal party, was thought to have gone to Iran on Saturday for what an aide described as a private visit.

Two members of the Lebanese cabinet - one a member of Hizbullah, the other closely linked - also refused to join talks.

Downing Street played down the gestures, insisting the main point of Mr Blair's visit - the last in a three-day tour of the Middle East - was to meet the Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora.

The two men had spoken "almost daily" in August as the British PM supported the push to a UN resolution to end the Israeli offensive in Lebanon.

"First and foremost we are here to support prime minister Siniora, who has shown great courage and leadership throughout this whole issue," Mr Blair's spokesman said.

The spokesman said Mr Blair was meeting the chairs of parliamentary committees who are linked to radical groups and would have been prepared to meet the Hizbullah ministers.

"We are in a position where the Lebanese government as a whole does recognise Israel so we don't have a problem with the government at all."

This echoes a formulation Mr Blair used yesterday in Ramallah, when he indicated he would be prepared to meet members of Hamas if agreement was reached with the moderate Fatah party to form a government of national unity - providing the government as a whole signed up to conditions including recognition of Israel.

"We are not surprised that Hizbullah are not meeting us, but what people should not do is make the mistake of saying Hizbullah equals Lebanon," Mr Blair's spokesman said.

Some European diplomats, who have voiced scepticism about Mr Blair's visit to the Middle East, look askance at his decision to go to Lebanon.

They argue that Britain has little clout and no tradition in the country and that among world leaders his unpopularity is surpassed only by President Bush and the Israeli premier, Ehud Olmert.

Mr Blair infuriated Muslim opinion - and many of his own MPs - by refusing to demand an immediate ceasefire by Israel in its 34-day assault on Hizbullah positions. Around 1,200 Lebanese and 167 Israelis died in the attacks.

Blair pledges to restart Middle East peace plan

Demonstrations against Mr Blair's visit were expected by Mr Blair's spokesman.

"We will not be surprised if there are demonstrations today in Beirut. Given the events of the past few months, it would be surprising if there weren't," the spokesman said.

But he insisted that the best person to judge whether Mr Blair's visit was useful was Mr Siniora, who had invited him.

Mr Blair's convoy drove past some bomb damage on the way from Beirut airport, but avoided the main **Hizbullah** areas in the south of the city.

The UK has given 22.3m in humanitarian aid to help the reconstruction effort after the July war and 20m towards Unifil, the UN's interim peacekeeping force in the Lebanon.

It has also supplied six emergency bridges and help for "security force reform", and HMS York is patrolling the coast with the permission of the Lebanese government to safeguard against sea blockade.

After the wreath-laying at Hariri's tomb, Mr Blair was due to end his three-day Middle East tour and head back to London.

Load-Date: September 11, 2006

Talks aim to secure release of Israeli soldiers in 'swap'

The Irish Times

November 2, 2006 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 11

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Byline: Michael Jansen

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Mediated discussions involving Hamas, Hizbullah and Israel have been proceeding in parallel - with the aim of securing the release of three Israeli soldiers, captured last summer by Palestinian and Lebanese fighters, in exchange for Arab prisoners held by Israel.

Hamas representatives left Cairo yesterday after two days of talks with Egyptian officials on a prisoner exchange and the formation of a Palestinian national unity government.

The delegation, headed by Imad al-Alami, the group's delegate in Damascus, met Egyptian intelligence chief Oman Suleiman, who has been trying to secure an agreement on prisoners for the past three months.

Hamas is demanding 1,000 Palestinian detainees, including long-term prisoners, women and minors, as the price of freeing Gilad Shalit, seized by Palestinian guerrillas on June 25th on the Gaza border. Hamas holds that once Cpl Shalit is released to a third party, Israel must free a substantial number of the 9,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails while the rest could be released later.

After a meeting with Egyptian foreign minister Ahmad Abu Gheit, Israeli Arab legislator Ahmad Tibi said substantial differences remain between Hamas and Israel on terms for a prisoner swap, although there was a good chance of reaching a deal soon. The head of Hamas's politburo, Khaled Mishaal, plans to travel to Cairo once an agreement is near.

But a Hamas spokesman warned that Israel's ongoing military action in Gaza could have a "negative influence" on the negotiations.

This is unlikely. Hamas seeks to conclude this deal to clear the way for a "hudna", a 10-year ceasefire during which Palestinians and Israelis would have a quiet period to negotiate a permanent settlement.

Hamas has dispatched spokesmen to European capitals to promote this offer and the Washington Post yesterday carried an article on the subject by the prime minister Ismail Haniyeh's senior political adviser, Ahmad Yusif. Mr Haniyeh is expected to discuss a "hudna" during a tour of regional capitals later this month.

Meanwhile Hizbullah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah announced that UN-sponsored talks on a prisoner exchange between his organisation and Israel are taking place.

"They are serious negotiations . . . We have reached the stage of exchanging ideas, or more accurately, exchanging conditions."

Talks aim to secure release of Israeli soldiers in 'swap'

This was the first indication that negotiations are in train. It is widely assumed that the go-between is a German intelligence team which concluded a deal in 2004 for the hand-over of the bodies of three Israeli servicemen and an Israeli businessman seized by **Hizbullah** in 2000 in exchange for Lebanese and Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

A major obstacle is **Hizbullah**'s demand for the release of Samir Kuntar, who killed two Israelis during a 1979 raid into northern Israel.

Load-Date: November 2, 2006

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Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times

August 9, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 1805 words

Body

Madam, - Innocent Lebanese citizens - the old, the poor, men, women and children - continue to be killed in large numbers every day. A million Lebanese civilians have been displaced. Humanitarian laws and the Geneva Conventions are broken with impunity. The aggressive and relentless destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure intensifies by the day.

Israel has also suffered the tragic loss of innocent civilian life, each needless death equally devastating.

What is needed are strong diplomatic efforts, international involvement in the resolution of the conflict, strengthening of the UN peacekeeping forces and a multilateral force in southern Lebanon, political and economic stability for the region and a long-term political settlement. For all, or any, of these to take place, an immediate ceasefire is necessary.

Then, the underlying causes can be dealt with using all the international resources and international involvement that is needed to shift the focus of this conflict from military action and military rhetoric to forging a region where there is political and economic stability and, ultimately, no war. - Yours, etc,

CAROLINE GILL, Brighton Avenue, Foxrock, Dublin 18.

Madam, - Chris Ó Rálaigh (August 7th) writes: "If Israel's aim is to end support for Hizbullah, it would be better off withdrawing from all of Lebanon, all of Palestine and all of Syria."

It is truly hard to imagine how Mr Ó Rálaigh has come to this erroneous conclusion. Has he not seen for himself the devastating consequences of Israel's withdrawal from lands which serve as a buffer against attack from its terrorist neighbours? In 2000 Israel withdrew from Lebanon to internationally recognised borders, relying on United Nations guarantees as embodied in Security Council resolution 1559 which calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. In return it got the terrorist Hizbullah firmly ensconced on its northern border, resulting in the situation today where hundreds of murderous rocket attacks are launched against Israeli civilian targets daily.

A year ago Israel withdrew from Gaza, naively hoping for a peaceful agreement with the Palestinian Authority, only to be confronted with the rise to power of Hamas, which also engages in daily rocket attacks against Israeli towns.

Mr Ó Rálaigh goes on to claim that "without this occupation, support for Hizbullah, and indeed Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other groupings would evaporate." In fact, the history of the region proves exactly the opposite: Israeli withdrawal from any territory is interpreted as a sign of weakness and encourages the terrorist groups Hamas and Hizbullah to make the new borders the front line in their malicious war against the Jewish state. - Yours, etc,

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

BRIAN SMITH,(TCD alumnus),Montreal, Canada.

Madam, - The creation of a new generation of alienated Lebanese will ensure many more insurgents in the future. Israel will have to accept that only a political and not a military solution can provide a lasting peace.

Israel's current invasion of Lebanon - let's dispense with the weasel word "incursion" - is its third, after the previous episodes of 1978 and 1982 as well as the ruthless bombardments of 1996 (Operation "Grapes of Wrath2). The 1978 invasion came in the middle of US-brokered Middle Eastern peace talks and Unifil was created as a way to get the Israelis off the hook and enable them to withdraw, while providing some kind of security to the local population and extending the authority of the Lebanese state down to the border. Unfortunately, the Israelis chose not to leave, setting up their own enclave, arming and equipping a proxy militia and continuing to terrorise the population for over 20 further years. They also instigated attacks, directly and indirectly, on UN forces, while biased pro-Israeli reports in the US media simultaneously derided Unifil in a carefully calibrated propaganda campaign.

The results of the Israelis' actions was negative in every way. Security for their own country was not attained. Their refusal to withdraw fatally weakened the moderate Shia political party Amal, led by secularist lawyer Nabih Berri (from Tibnin, where Irish troops were located) and effectively led to the creation of Hizbullah, which adopted a much harder line. This may have been aided, but was not inspired by, Syria and Iran. Israel found itself, as an unwelcome force of occupation, fighting an increasingly immoral and unacceptable war until it was eventually forced out in 2000.

Thousands died unnecessarily, the vast majority at Israeli hands. Most were Lebanese civilians.

In all of this, there was one oasis of relative peace. Unifil made its area of South Lebanon relatively safe for its inhabitants. The number of attacks on Israel from inside the Unifil area was insignificant and would have been zero if the Israelis had left sooner. Ireland can be proud of its role during these years. Unifil's critics, whether on the left or the right, often spoke from ignorance or malice.

The UN approach then, whatever its flaws, is very different from what is now being proposed. After nearly a month of aggression visited on the civilian population of Lebanon by Israel, there are nearly a million refugees, more than on any previous occasion, and yet more dead and wounded.

All parts of Lebanon have been hit, every community has suffered and the infrastructure of the country has been set back for decades, after a painful campaign of reconstruction. This is not to excuse the actions of Hizbullah in shelling civilians in Israel, but there is simply no comparison in scale or numbers, nor can there be any excuse for the perpetration of war crimes by a sovereign state recognised in international law. Yet it is now proposed that the UN should call for a cessation of hostilities without calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel's occupying forces, and that a UN force should be deployed to attempt what an unrestrained Israeli military, with all its weaponry, could not achieve: disarming Hizbullah.

While the US and UK have no credibility left to lose among open-minded people of all nations, the UN risks dealing itself a mortal blow at the hands of its own Security Council. Why should oppressed peoples anywhere in the world look for justice and fair treatment to a body which now proposes to reward the oppressor? And why should a country with an honourable record of peacekeeping, such as Ireland, risk the lives of its own soldiers and risk its even-handed reputation for the sake of a deal that can only unravel in the one country in the Middle East which is capable of operating as a successful multi-confessional democracy? Unless firm guarantees of immediate departure are offered by the occupying forces, we should have no part in this.

I lived in Lebanon for a number of years in the 1980s and have returned since that time. - Yours, etc,

PIARAS MAC EINRI,Model Farm Road,Cork.

Madam, - I read with great interest your report on the exchange of views between Michael D Higgins TD and Labour councillors John McManus and Aidan Culhane on the conflict in the Lebanon (The Irish Times, August 5th).

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

As the PRO of the UCD Labour Party, the largest Labour branch in Aidan Culhane's Dublin South constituency, I call on him to support the Labour Party position so ably articulated by Michael D Higgins.

Now is the time for an all-out effort to build an alliance for peace and tackle the causes of the conflict that have had such appalling consequences for the civilian population in Lebanon. Theories about clashes of civilisations are a distraction at best and deserve to be exposed and rejected. - Yours, etc,

PAUL DILLON, Milltown, Dublin 6.

Madam, - The term "war", to describe terror and conflict in the Middle East is in many cases not a neutral description. Both sides employ it, not just as a description, but often as a way to excuse the killing of civilians.

The killing of civilians during war is held to be an "unfortunate side effect" (though much less so by Hizbullah). Still, in a war situation, fighting parties are bound by the "rules of war" (unless you happen to win). Inadequate attempts to avoid targeting non-combatants are often explained along the lines of: "well it's a war; what do you expect?".

Still, in the modern world we have come to expect that military action (justified or not) adheres to standards. The Israeli defence forces argue that they do take all necessary precautions to avoid killing civilians. However, the organisation Human Rights Watch begs to differ. In a recent report it states the following: "Since the start of the conflict, Israeli forces have consistently launched artillery and air attacks with limited or dubious military gain but excessive civilian cost. In dozens of attacks, Israeli forces struck an area with no apparent military target. In some cases, the timing and intensity of the attack, the absence of a military target, as well as return strikes on rescuers, suggest that Israeli forces deliberately targeted civilians."

Doubtless, the IDF would reject these claims. Nonetheless, it is evident that we should not take at face value Israel's claims that it is doing its utmost to avoid civilian death and hardship (least of all when it bombs the exit routes). - Yours, etc,

DAVID O'GORMAN, Delgany, Co Wicklow.

Madam, - In this era, with GPS, laser, high-speed data transmission, unmanned aerial vehicles, and high-resolution aircraft photo-reconnaissance, in addition to radio, communications are better than ever, and the tragic incidents of civilian dead in Lebanon are not due to inaccurate Israeli weapons, carelessness, or malice, but to the genocidal Hizbullah engaging in the war crime of locating its weapons among civilians. It is quite clear in international law that Israel is entitled to attack the rocket-firing areas, even if in civilian locations. Some of your correspondents show no recognition of these considerations.

If the Israelis really wanted to cause civilian deaths, with over 1,000 artillery and 14 fighter squadrons they have the capability to do so on a massive scale comparable to the second World War, where Hamburg saw 45,000 dead in one week from July 22nd, 1943. Israel clearly does not do so.

In addition to this issue of "discriminate" force, the issue of "proportionality" has been mentioned by many people. Even if you use the much higher recent Lebanese government claim of 925 dead in Lebanon, quoted on Sky News (giving no breakdown if the Hizbullah element which must be a significant part of any such total), that still equals one person dead for every 9.3 Israeli air force sorties, one dead for every five targets hit, and one dead for every 14 Hizbullah-held Irano-Syrian rockets.

Is that either "indiscriminate", or "disproportionate"? - Yours, etc,

TOM CAREW, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

Huge popular gathering in Beirut calls on Siniora to resign

The Irish Times

December 11, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 674 words

Byline: Michael Jansen in Beirut

Body

LEBANON: Hundreds of thousands of opposition demonstrators flowed into the centre of the Lebanese capital yesterday, filling two wide squares and engulfing a tent encampment set up by protesters 10 days ago.

Since the area has been sealed off by the army, the multitude came on foot. Ranks of men, women, children and babes in pushcarts, bearing or wearing Lebanese flags or the flags of the coalition of parties, called for a national unity government. People swept like rivers along wide avenues and trickled along narrow alleyways, through army barricades, down steps.

It was a powerful, unstoppable current, the largest popular gathering ever staged in Lebanon.

A single Lebanese flag hung limply from the roof of the Serai, the seat of government where prime minister Fouad Siniora and his cabinet have been besieged since industry minister Pierre Gemayel was assassinated late last month. A sea of thousands of waving red, white and green national flags stretched below in the squares, in the streets and on the flyovers which connect east and west Beirut.

The chant, "Siniora out" bounced off the buildings bordering the demonstration and rose to the Serai, enclosed in coils of razor wire and guarded by tanks and well-armed soldiers. Loudspeakers blared the opposition's nationalist theme calling on Shias, Sunnis and Christians to unite so Lebanon could be free.

The first protest tents went up on December 1st. Now there are 9,000 people living permanently in 650 tents pitched in neat ranks in Riad Solh square, named for the country's first prime minister, and at the foot of the hill leading to the Serai.

While security men deployed by Hizbullah, the leading party in the opposition coalition, imposed order, checked for weapons and kept watch for potential troublemakers, protesters greeted each other and chatted. Boys and girls flirted. Vendors sold corn on the cob and nuts and balloons. Children held tight to their parents' hands so they would not get lost in the crush. Protesters, who came from every corner of the country, wore scarves in the colours of the rainbow: yellow for Hizbullah, green for the secular Shia Amal movement, orange for the Maronite Christian Free Patriotic Movement and red for the communists.

Lamiya, a young woman wearing a headscarf who had come from distant Baalbek said: "The government must see what the people want. They want to be represented in the government by parties who can make policy not by parties who simply bow to Siniora and his group."

Huge popular gathering in Beirut calls on Siniora to resign

Assad Zoghby, an engineer with an orange scarf round his neck, observed: "This government must see it has followed wrong economic strategies for the past 15 years."

He gestured towards the luxury blocks and shops built in the city centre under the post-civil war construction programme carried out by billionaire premier Rafiq Hariri, whose assassination in 2005 gave rise to the ongoing crisis. Mr Zoghby said: "The rich get richer while the poor get poorer and the young have no jobs and leave. We need a new kind of government with new financial and economic strategies."

Among the political figures addressing the rally was the deputy leader of **Hizbullah**, Sheikh Naim Qassem, whose appearance on the platform was greeted by a roar of approval.

Mr Siniora responded to the protest by saying that Lebanon could absorb such shocks, indicating he plans to stay in his post.

On Saturday, President Émile Lahoud, who is allied to the opposition, refused to sign the Bill for the creation of an international tribunal to try Lebanese and Syrian intelligence figures accused of being involved in the slaying of Mr Hariri.

The opposition, which supports the tribunal, argues that it has not been consulted on its composition or operating procedures.

A source close to **Hizbullah** said that pressure on Mr Siniora is likely to be stepped up mid-week through short strikes in the port and airport as well as the commercial sector. While **Hizbullah** and its allies have pledged not to resort to violence, there is fear that a single incident could spark a conflagration.

Load-Date: December 11, 2006

IJ WOMEN PROTEST AMENDS TO HUDOOD ORDINANCE

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 16, 2006 Wednesday

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Length: 349 words

Body

KARACHI-A large number of activists of women wing, Jamaat-i-Islami converged at Shamzai Chowk to Noorani Chowk on Wednesday to protest against Israeli atrocities in Lebanon and Palestine and proposed amendment in Hudood Ordinance. Led by the Central Naib Qaima of Jamaat-i-Islami Women Wing Talat Zaheer and MPA Kulsoom Nizamani and others, the protesting women carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans of, 'We all are Hamas, we all are Hizbullah', 'death to America, death to Israel'.

They also yelled slogans against US, Israel and the rulers of Pakistan. On this occasion, it was unanimously agreed that Jihad culture should also be implemented in Pakistan and that every child of the State would sacrifice its life for the sake of Islam and the country.

Addressing the rally, Central Secretary General Jamaat-i-Islami Syed Munawwar Hassan said that people are filled with the sentiments of Jihad and we would continue our struggle for the implementation of Jihad culture in the country. He said it was the great victory of Hizbullah and defeat of Israel, adding, that Hizbullah showed unprecedented resistance, which proved that nation filled with sentiments of Jihad could not be defeated through weapons and modern technology.

He said that due to international pressure Lebanon accepted ceasefire and termed it vindictive step and said that Israel must be pulled out from the region. Syed Munawwar Hassan said that Israel brutalities were not condemned in UN resolution as it had invaded an independent and sovereign State.

Criticising President General Pervez Musharraf, he said he was patronising Israel and supporting US, instead of helping Kashmiris, rulers were talking of CBMs. Speaking on the occasion, Ayesha Munawwar MNA criticised Condoleeza Rice for her views against Jihadis. She further said that Rice must know that women of Islam are with their Muslim brethren and would support the people of Lebanon. Dr Meraj-ul-Huda Siddiqui said that Musharraf was pleading the case of Israel and was defending its view. He said UN has lost its credibility and must be dissolved.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

Middle Eastern promises

Guardian.com

August 2, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1237 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.

Body

COCKTAILS AND NIGHTMARES

If the news from Lebanon is bad, the reports from Afghanistan and Iraq are even worse. Yesterday was "Our Boys' worst day", says the Sun, which implores the government to send British soldiers into war with better kit and weaponry. Four soldiers were killed by insurgents. One of them, Corporal Matthew Cornish, is pictured hugging his two children on the front pages of the Times, the Telegraph, the Mail and the Sun. "BE PROUD," says the Sun, citing Tony Blair's tribute to the men who died.

The Mail, its front page framed in black, has other ideas: "As Mr Blair sips cocktails with rap stars on Sunset Strip and schmoozes America's rich, Beirut burns, 70 die in Iraq and four British soldiers are killed - including this father of two."

The PM's trip to California has not all been spent in the company of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Lord Browne, Snoop Dogg, Rupert Murdoch and Nicole Kidman, as the Times is keen to stress. He gave a speech yesterday calling for a "complete renaissance of our strategy" in the Middle East. It would involve an "even-handed, just and fair" "alliance of moderation" that promoted western values as well as using force to defeat Islamist extremists.

"The Times has learnt that the Foreign Office tried and failed to get Mr Blair to call for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon when he saw Mr Bush last Friday," the paper says. (The Telegraph's Simon Heffer calls on the foreign secretary, Margaret Beckett, to resign.)

Mr Blair's vision appears to be at odds with that of the UN, whose deputy chief tells the FT that the UK should take a back seat over Lebanon. "Later it appeared that UN appeals for a Franco-US rapprochement were bearing fruit, as diplomats said the two countries were close to an agreement on a staged end to the fighting ... But last night Israeli forces were reported to have launched a major operation in the eastern Bekaa valley, deep inside Lebanon, targeting Hizbullah positions with aircraft."

The Guardian confirms that Israel is planning a "massive" ground invasion of Lebanon. Around 6,000 Israeli soldiers are already deployed there, with 15,000 reserve troops on standby. Hizbullah, an Israeli minister said, is "at breaking point".

Middle Eastern promises

The Times has its doubts. The reason why Israel is now moving into Lebanon, the defence expert Charles Heyman tells the paper, is because the strategy of aerial bombardment has failed. "The Hizbullah guerrilla force is still intact," he says. "In the short term the IDF will win its campaign in southern Lebanon. It will chip away at Hizbullah's infrastructure until something that passes for control is imposed. There will be incessant patrolling by Israeli troops on the ground and drones in the sky, supported by good Israeli intelligence.

"But the long-term winners will almost certainly be Hizbullah. The Israelis will withdraw from southern Lebanon at some stage, because they cannot afford to keep a large number of reservists on a war footing indefinitely. Hizbullah will move back, and any UN force that tries to disarm it will become part of the problem. Hizbullah will resist and, after extensive casualties, the UN will likely be forced to withdraw."

- * Israel ready for massive invasion
- * Times: Might in the air will not defeat guerrillas
- * Times: Rethink war on terror - Blair
- * Mail: As Blair schmoozes
- * Sun: Our Boys' worst day
- * FT: Blair urged to take Lebanon back seat

AILING CASTRO, FAILING CUBA

Fidel Castro is ill, perhaps gravely so. "Hopes are rising," says the Times. Hopes - for the Times, at least - that Castro's passing will lead to a different sort of Cuba. What that Cuba should look like, and how much it should change, are nuanced questions that the Independent tackles with relish.

"Dislike the US, and almost certainly you will have a sneaking admiration for the way in which he has withstood its vindictive bullying, for his forging of a distinct national identity which the persecution from Washington has only served to strengthen," says the paper. "You will point to the achievements of the revolution, in health care and education, as proof that American-style liberal capitalism does not have all the answers.

"But that is to ignore the glaring failures of Castro's Cuba - its appalling human rights record, its shackled press, its widespread poverty and long record of economic failure." Fidel's brother Raul, to whom the Cuban leader has "temporarily" transferred power, has instincts even more authoritarian than those of his brother, the paper says. It warns of the upheaval that will follow any move to capitalism, and in particular the anticipated return of thousands of Cubans with a claim on property confiscated during the 1959 revolution.

Seventy-five-year-old Raul, says the Times, may turn out to be "Fidel without the charisma". The head of the armed forces has a "reputation for ruthlessness" acquired during the revolution, when he ordered the execution of 100 Batista military officers.

- * What happens after Fidel Castro?
- * Independent: Viva Fidel?
- * Times: Cuba after Castro

STANDS AND DELIVERY

The new Wembley stadium won't be ready until June 2007 - or will it? The Sun says the "farce" surrounding the venue heightened yesterday when the FA claimed it would be ready in time for the Cup final in June, but the contractors insisted it wouldn't. "What a fiasco," complains the paper. "It's a terrible advert for Britain."

Middle Eastern promises

Meanwhile, Steve McClaren tells the Times that the new England regime will be "different from Sven". The rest of the interview is scarcely more illuminating. For the moment, the paper says, the new manager's prime concern is to distance himself from the Eriksson regime.

* Sun: Wembley to miss Cup Final

* Times: McClaren's in charge

GIRLIE TALK

"Should women have to use a new vocabulary in order to succeed in a male-dominated environment?" asks the FT. The resulting article makes intriguing reading, not least for its lists of "strong" and "weak" phrases. The latter include "I think I am" ("I am" is better), "perhaps", "as soon as possible" ("immediately" is preferable) and "I hope so".

"Powerful, concise messages - whether saying 'No', negotiating a deal, giving feedback or asking for a promotion - are what busy bosses understand and appreciate," the FT says. Women are often unaware of the "80/20 rule": that you should spend four-fifths of your time at work "actually working" and the rest "communicating your achievements and gaining visibility internally and externally".

The FT is tactfully silent on whether the ex-Deutsche Bank employee who has just won more than 800,000 in damages after a "relentless campaign of mean and spiteful behaviour" by her (mostly female) colleagues followed this advice. Helen Green is now embarking on a career as a lecturer in organisational behaviour.

* FT: Ex-City executive wins 817,000 damages

COMING UP ON GUARDIAN UNLIMITED TODAY

A decision which will affect whether the Home Office can deport failed asylum seekers back to Zimbabwe will be published this afternoon.

Israeli warplanes raided a Lebanese army base in south Lebanon today, killing three soldiers, a security official said. Hizbullah said its guerrillas have attacked an Israeli army armoured unit that crossed into Lebanon this morning, destroying two tanks and leaving their crews dead or wounded.

Cadbury Schweppes said today that the salmonella scare which led to the recall of more than one million chocolate bars will cost the firm 20m.

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

Reporters on the Job

Christian Science Monitor

April 6, 2007, Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 359 words

Body

* Harassment in Hijab: After covering the trial of accused Islamist terrorists in Rabat, Morocco (see story), staff writer Jill Carroll swung through Marrakech. While Jill missed many of the city's historic sites, she did manage to see a curious cultural feature that isn't quite unique to Morocco.

"Harassment of women in the street is very common in a lot of countries," says Jill. "Apparently, it's worse in Morocco."

During a meal at a restaurant overlooking the famous Djemaa el Fna square, Jill spotted a man who was decidedly "not the typical tourist." As Jill watched, the nongentleman walked up behind several Moroccan women - all of whom were modestly dressed.

"I saw this woman sort of jump and look behind her," says Jill. "She gave him a dirty look and kept walking."

Jill is no stranger to the type of attention that Western women get in public places. What surprised her was that even modestly dressed Arab women could face such harassment. "It's more expected if the person is dressed inappropriately," Jill says. "People here think that you're inviting it. But these women, they were all dressed head-to-toe in hijab."

* Under Lebanon, Hidden Tunnels: It's no secret that Hizbullah maintained a network of tunnels and bunkers in southern Lebanon before Israel attacked last summer. But finding them is difficult.

"No one had any idea until after the war how extensive and sophisticated this underground network was," says correspondent Nicholas Blanford.

While reporting a story about Hizbullah's rearming efforts (see story), Nick stumbled on the coordinates for one of the bunkers. After several hours of wandering through thick underbrush near the Israeli border, Nick found a manhole cover that opened into a vast tunnel system that had apparently evaded Israel's extensive reconnaissance. "It was almost completely empty, but we found some underground rocket-firing facilities," Nick says. "It was all very complex, and it was quite impressive. It really underlined the dedication of the Hizbullah guys. But they were digging these tunnels without anyone knowing."

- Matt Bradley

Asia Editor

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Reporters on the Job

Load-Date: April 5, 2007

End of Document

UN's perilous work in Lebanon

Christian Science Monitor

August 7, 2006, Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 12

Length: 797 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: DIBIL, SOUTH LEBANON

Highlight: UN troops face danger daily as they deliver much-needed food to people stranded in southern Lebanon.

Body

The villagers cluster eagerly around the white United Nations truck as French soldiers hand down boxes of military rations, enough to feed the residents of this besieged Christian village for a few more days.

After nearly a month of fighting, most of the Muslim villages along Lebanon's border with Israel have been abandoned, their residents joining the north-bound stream of refugees filling schools and parks in and around Beirut. But some 500 residents of Dibil have chosen to stay, a risky decision rooted in a stubborn attachment to their homes and a belief that this Christian village will be spared the worst of the onslaught directed against Israel's Shiite Hizbullah enemy.

"There's no Hizbullah here. All we want is to leave in peace," says Father Youssef Nadaf, the priest of Dibil, looking tired and unshaven, his white priest's collar hanging loosely from his black shirt.

With basic provisions on the verge of running out, these Christian villagers and the few elderly residents still living in the Shiite and Sunni villages along the border are relying on food handouts from the UN Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL). Each day, UNIFIL attempts to dispatch armored convoys into the perilous battle zone east of their headquarters in the coastal village of Naqoura.

"The success of the convoys depends on the goodwill of the Israelis," says General Alain Pellegrini, UNIFIL's commander.

Once clearance is given by the Israeli military, the UN convoy of three trucks with an armored personnel carrier at either end departs from Naqoura, grinding along the narrow border road that winds up a steep brush-covered hillside riddled with Hizbullah dug-outs. Although the hillside is within full view of Israeli positions along the border, multiple air strikes and heavy shelling have not stopped the well-entrenched Hizbullah fighters from continuing to fire rockets into Israel. Even as the convoy was about to leave, two loud bangs and accompanying smoke trails marked the latest rocket barrage from the hill.

The border road technically lies behind Israel's front line. No Israeli soldiers are to be seen, but their tank tracks meander through tobacco fields and traverse the border road, the heavy steel treads ripping up chunks of asphalt. There is evidence, too, of the fierce fighting in the area. A burned out and abandoned tank lies on the side of the road a mile west of Aitta Shaab, its sleek lines blackened and charred, a victim of Hizbullah's anti-armor missiles.

UN 's perilous work in Lebanon

Shelling and air strikes continue uninterrupted, the sharp blast of outgoing artillery rounds from nearby Israeli positions on the border and the crack of exploding shells in the hills, like a giant steel door being slammed shut. Some of the exploding rounds have set fire to the brush, turning wide swaths into blackened wasteland.

Dibil is the first stop for the UNIFIL convoy. Most of the villagers have gathered in the town's center, drawing closer to the stone church with its bright red tiled roof.

"We hear the tanks at night going past the village, but we are too scared to look," says Niveen Zeeni.

She says that the village has run out of flour, milk, and fuel for cars. There is no electricity, the land telephone lines have been cut, and the local cellular network is being jammed along the border.

"All we can do is pray," says Father Nadaf with a hopeless shrug.

If the mood in Dibil is one of resigned anxiety, in Jibbayn, a small Sunni Muslim village 1.5 miles north of the border, it is one of terror and desperation.

"Are you going to Tyre? Please take us with you," pleads one of two women who running from their house toward the UN convoy trundling into the village.

"They have bombed my house. They have destroyed everything and left us with nothing," wailed Mariam Hamza.

They say that the bodies of three people lie under the rubble of a bombed house and ask the UNIFIL troops to help remove them. Their fear is heightened by a barrage of shells exploding nearby and the sharp crack of outgoing artillery rounds from the border.

Israeli troops were operating unseen in the northern half of Jibbayn, blocking the road to Teir Harfa, the last village on the convoy's itinerary. The only other route to Teir Harfa follows a steep potholed track that drops into a deep valley. Warrant Officer Martin Lionel, the convoy commander, purses his lips as he studies the military map, assessing whether the trucks can make the journey. But there are other perils in the valley apart from bad roads. The area is a Hizbullah stronghold and a source of Katyusha rocket fire. Lionel decides against the trip.

"We don't even know if there's anyone left in Teir Harfa," he says, ordering the convoy to return to headquarters in Naqoura. "It's a very bad situation."

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Load-Date: August 6, 2006

DEATH AT QANA: The world reacts

The Irish Times
July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Qana Bombing; Pg. 8

Length: 787 words

Body

The following are a selection of comments made yesterday in the aftermath of the Israeli attack on Qana:

Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora: "There is no place on this sad morning for any discussion other than an immediate and unconditional ceasefire as well as an international investigation into the Israeli massacres in Lebanon ... The persistence of Israel in its heinous crimes against our civilians will not break the will of the Lebanese people."

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert: "I would like to express my deep sorrow at the death of innocent civilians . . . [but] we will not blink in front of Hizbullah and we will not stop the offensive despite the difficult circumstances."

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice: "I think it is time to get to a ceasefire . . . We actually have to try and put one in place . . . We have to try and do our work well so that there will not be more and more and more incidents over many, many more years."

French president Jacques Chirac: "France condemns this unjustified action, which demonstrates more than ever the need for an immediate ceasefire, without which there will only be other such incidents."

Hizbullah statement: "This horrific massacre [at Qana] will not go without a response."

Jordan's King Abdullah: "This criminal aggression is an ugly crime that has been committed by the Israeli forces in the city of Qana that is a gross violation of all international statutes."

British foreign secretary Margaret Beckett: "It is absolutely dreadful, it is quite appalling. Undoubtedly today's events will make things worse, at least in the short term . . . We have repeatedly urged Israel to act proportionately."

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana: "I have talked to the prime minister of Lebanon . . . I have expressed to him my profound dismay and deep sorrow at the attack and the death of innocent civilians in Qana. Nothing can justify that."

Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak: "The Arab Republic of Egypt expresses its profound alarm and its condemnation of the irresponsible Israeli bombing of the Lebanese village of Qana, which resulted in innocent casualties, mostly women and children."

Syrian president Bashar al-Assad: "The massacre committed by Israel in Qana this morning shows the barbarity of this aggressive entity. It constitutes state terrorism committed in front of the eyes and the ears of the world."

DEATH AT QANA: The world reacts

Arab League secretary-general Amr Moussa: "The attacks that Israeli forces are launching, targeting civilians and the Lebanese infrastructure, are another confirmation of Israeli aggressive intentions."

Senior Hamas lawmaker Mushir al-Masri: "In the face of this open war against the Arab and Muslim nations, all options are open, including striking [at] the depth of the Zionist entity."

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi: "The Qana bombing is the outcome of [US secretary of state Condoleezza] Rice's trip to the region. Some American officials should be put on trial for the crimes in Lebanon."

Pope Benedict: "In the name of God, I call on all those responsible for this spiral of violence so that weapons are immediately laid down on all sides."

International Crisis Group analyst Nicholas Pelham: "Major Israeli assaults on Lebanon have ended following a major killing of civilians. [The bombing] makes the pressure for an immediate ceasefire that much greater. But an immediate ceasefire would make it more difficult to negotiate the entry of international forces because the pressure will be on Israel rather than Hizbullah."

UN secretary-general Kofi Annan: "No one disputes Israel's right to defend itself, but by its manner of doing so it has caused, and is causing, death and suffering on a wholly unacceptable scale . . . The most urgent need is to bring the fighting to a halt without further delay . . ."

US ambassador to the UN, John Bolton (speaking outside the UN Security Council chamber): "It says something about the morality and respect for human life of Hizbullah that they would use innocent civilians as shields . . . But that is why as well, in Israel's exercise of its legitimate right to self-defence, they have to take into account this barbaric practice that Hizbullah has and exercise the utmost restraint so that Lebanese civilians are spared the brunt of this conflict."

British UN ambassador Emyr Jones Parry: "It reinforces the need for the violence to end now. That will be achievable through a Security Council resolution which should embody an immediate cessation of hostilities and set out the political basis for resolving this crisis on a longer-term basis . . . There is no reason why such a resolution should not be introduced into the council very quickly and adopted as a matter of urgency."

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

**WOMEN RIGHTS BILL A CONSPIRACY TO PROMOTE VULGARITY,
OBSCENITY: SIRAJ-UL-HAQ**

The Frontier Star

September 4, 2006 Monday

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Length: 228 words

Body

PESHAWAR: The NWFP Senior Minister and Provincial Amir of J.I. Siraj ul Haq has said the women rights bill tabled in the national assembly is in fact a nefarious conspiracy of promoting obscenity and vulgarity in the country while MMA will not allow to plunge its talented youth in the marshes of destruction.

Addressing a seminar about Israeli aggressions on Lebanon and Palestine at Peshawar, he said that failure of Israeli war targets by Hizbullah was in fact a defeat of US aggressive designs and cautioned that America could not be saved from exemplary fate if it continued invading sovereign and weaker states and killing its innocent citizens in cold blood. He said Israeli defeat had also proved that miracles like that of the Islamic history 14 centuries ago could occur and imperial forces could face crushing defeat if Muslim Ummah demonstrated unity and fraternity in their ranks.

Siraj ul Haq said Hizbullah had set a new dimension for Islamic movements in the world and gave them a message to become united to become an unbreakable entity of their globe and expansion forces including America and Israel then could not dare to attack Muslim states and oppress innocent people. He asked Muslim forces to adopt Hizb like strategy to protect entire humanity from aggressions. He regretted that the centre was promoting western culture on behest of alien powers.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

Israel suspends plans to disband settlements; Removal of settlers from some West Bank areas is a casualty of the war with Hezbollah, at least for now.

The Philadelphia Inquirer
August 23, 2006 Wednesday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer
Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 634 words

Byline: Doug Struck, Washington Post

Body

The Israeli government's plan to dismantle some Jewish settlements in the West Bank and redraw the country's borders is being shelved at least temporarily, a casualty of the war in Lebanon, government officials said.

The plan, which propelled Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to victory in March elections and was warmly endorsed by President Bush as a way of resolving Israel's conflict with the Palestinians, is no longer a top priority, Olmert told his ministers last weekend, according to one of his advisers.

Instead, the government must spend its money and efforts in northern Israel to repair the damage from the war against **Hezbollah** guerrillas and strengthen the area in case fighting breaks out again, Olmert said.

"I've decided to invest most of my energy and the government's energy in rehabilitating the north," Olmert said Monday in the northern community of Kiryat Shemona.

Miri Eisin, an adviser to Olmert, said yesterday that "this is a national new priority. It takes precedence for the moment over realignment" of the settlements. "At the moment there will be no withdrawal."

Even without the financial considerations, the plan for unilateral withdrawal from some settlements is dead, other political figures and analysts said. The seizure of Israeli soldiers and the renewed fighting in the Gaza Strip - from which Israel withdrew last year - and in southern Lebanon - from which Israel withdrew in 2000 - have left the Israeli public with little appetite for additional pullouts.

"It's not operative or realistically possible today," said Dan Schueftan, deputy director of national-security studies at the University of Haifa and a proponent of the plan. But he predicted that "inevitably, we will have to come back to it."

Israel suspends plans to disband settlements Removal of settlers from some West Bank areas is a casualty of the war with Hezbollah, at least for now.

Olmert's plan could have required the removal of about 70,000 of the estimated 250,000 West Bank settlers. The exact extent of the proposal was never made public, however, and some in his government talked of evacuating fewer settlers.

The plan has been at the center of political debate in Israel since last August, when then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon dismantled Jewish settlements in Gaza and pulled out the Israeli troops guarding them.

Olmert, who became acting prime minister when Sharon suffered a debilitating stroke in the winter, won the elections in March and formed a government on the promise to extend the withdrawal to outlying Jewish settlements in the West Bank. He sought endorsement for the plan during trips to London and Washington, where Bush embraced it as filled with "bold ideas."

But low-scale clashes with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip intensified this year, and on June 25 an Israeli soldier was seized at an army border outpost by Palestinians who tunneled across from Gaza.

Seventeen days later, two more Israeli soldiers were taken by Hezbollah militia fighters on the Lebanon border, and Israel found itself fighting on two fronts.

On Other Fronts: Blockade Reaffirmed

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday that Israel had no plans to lift its air and sea blockade of Lebanon until an international peacekeeping force took up positions along the Syrian border and at Beirut's airport.

Proposed rules of engagement for an expanded U.N. force in southern Lebanon would allow troops to open fire in self-defense, protect civilians, and back up the Lebanese army in preventing foreign forces or arms from crossing the border, according to a U.N. document obtained yesterday by the Associated Press.

Israeli President Moshe Katsav will face questioning

in a sexual-harassment investigation, police said yesterday after seizing computers and documents in a raid on his official residence. At least two former female employees have accused Katsav of harassing them, police said. Katsav has called the allegations lies.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Load-Date: August 23, 2006

Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?

The Toronto Star

August 20, 2006 Sunday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A08

Length: 1734 words

Body

David Gelberman has thought of himself as a Liberal his whole life, but that has changed, he declares, because of the Prime Minister. "Thank God for Stephen Harper," says Gelberman, 57, his eyes fixed on the television news from Israel.

"It's about time someone had some cojones. Most other politicians are wishy-washy."

There are enthusiastic nods from his customers, smoked meat sandwiches in hand, at Wolfie's Deli, on Sheppard Ave., which Gelberman runs with his wife Gila and father-in-law Wolf Zimmerman. "I was always a Liberal," says Gelberman, looking natty in a straw hat, black shirt and gold jewellery. "I was only a Liberal. Will this affect the way I vote? Absolutely. I will vote Tory from now on."

More nods from the men at the table where he has joined in the conversation. Harper is not so scary, says a customer named Joseph (he declines to give his last name), who organizes trade shows. He too, has been a Liberal supporter. "But I'm going to change that."

On the same day that British investigators exposed a massive terrorist plot to blow up as many as 10 transatlantic flights, the men see even more reason to support Harper and his position that Israel's military action against **Hezbollah** guerrillas was a "measured response."

Harper made his pro-Israel views known quickly, issuing a statement the day after Israel sent its forces into Lebanon. Meanwhile, the Liberals' perspective remained unclear. Five days passed before interim Liberal leader Bill Graham said the government's position was a "grave error," one that threatened Canada's reputation as a peace broker and mediator. Leadership candidates offered a range of opinions.

In the meantime, high-profile Jewish Liberals, including Onex Corp. President Gerry Schwartz, his wife, Indigo Books & Music CEO Heather Reisman, and film producer Robert Lantos, publicly expressed support for Harper's stance and, in the case of the latter two, tore up their party membership cards, if not in fact, then in their minds.

At a July 26 rally in Toronto to support Israel, Lantos received a standing ovation when he thanked Harper for his government's "principled support" and said he was tossing off his "lifelong federal Liberal hat."

But support for Harper among Jews is wider than a few influential business leaders. Across the community there are rumblings of discontent with the Liberals. Whether it's deeper than the rift on the issue of Israel and will lead to a clean break on the part of Jewish voters remains to be seen. As Michael Marzolini, chair of Pollara opinion research, says: "People are not going to do a whole lot of party switching during a leadership campaign. Though once they get their act together ... "

Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?

Historically, Canada's Jewish voters have stood with the Liberal party, voting them in at a rate 20 per cent higher than the national average during the 1970s. That support has fallen in recent years to 8 to 10 per cent above the average. Jewish voters remember that the Liberals under Trudeau appointed Canada's first Jewish cabinet minister, Herb Gray, in 1969, and they have favoured the party's progressive social policies.

For years, left-of-centre parties were at the vanguard of promoting pluralism and religious and ethnic tolerance, says Conrad Winn, head of Compas research firm. But now, he says, "almost everyone accepts these pluralist ideas, and you see a reversal in centuries-old patterns of attitudes toward Jews."

Polls show that instead of showing hostility toward Jews, churchgoers and Christians show the most support for the religious rights of Jews in Canada and also the strongest support for Israel, says Winn. "Right-wing voters are more favourable to Israel and Jews than left-wing liberals."

Which could make the Conservative party more appealing to mainstream Jewish voters - the Tories already find support among observant Jews. And support from figures like David Frum and his sister, Linda, who has held fundraising events for Harper, is well known.

Winn also notes that unlike U.S. President George W. Bush, Stephen Harper is not demonstrably religious, and that makes it easier for Liberals of all faiths to embrace him. "Christian Liberals and Jewish Liberals resemble each other in that they are not terribly comfortable amidst the trappings of religion," he says.

What can't be overstated is the visceral connection between Canadian Jews and Israel. "Israel is our Jewish homeland," says Rabbi Sharon Sobel, executive director of the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism. "It's where Jews can be Jewish ... we send money, our youth, our congregations." Now, Jewish Canadians find their loyalty to Israel has led them to ways of thinking they would not have dreamed possible a decade ago. One of those is entertainment lawyer Michael Levine, who has represented Liberal leadership candidates Bob Rae and Michael Ignatieff, as well as the late Pierre Trudeau.

"I have always been a leftward-leaning liberal ... always believed in the peace process. I represent a kind of secularized, culturally Jewish, not deeply religious person who loves the fact that I live in a civic nationality, not an ethnic nationality, that my neighbours can be Palestinians and Haitians and Chinese and we have grown up together.

"But there is a part of me that cannot forget history - that Jews were massacred by Christian Europe because they did not have a homeland," he continues. "I am profoundly supportive of a Jewish homeland."

Levine asks: "How do you make peace with the one who is trying to destroy you? It leaves me more aggressively in favour of the policies of Israel than I have ever been in my life."

"I hope what you hear is the enormous pain of a person who prefers negotiation and diplomacy and the peace process and who hates taking on an ethnic-nationalistic point of view."

Levine adds he is not changing party loyalties: "I remain a very strong social liberal." But in addition to supporting Harper's position, he's mindful of "the huge political risk he has taken. Jews are a tiny proportion of the population of Canada."

For some, the Conservatives' position on the latest Middle East crisis is an incentive to examine other Tory policies. Rabbi Roy Tanenbaum finds he is revisiting his long-held allegiances toward parties that best reflected his interest in social justice. Traditionally that's been either the Liberals or New Democrats.

"I lean to the left side of the political spectrum," Tanenbaum says. "Today I'm reassessing whether that is the key issue and if it's true that only the left is interested in social justice. There may be aspects of social justice the Conservatives are expressing better."

Meanwhile, the public expressions of support for Harper and/or defections by people like Schwartz, Reisman and Lantos are bound to have an impact on Jewish voters, says Winn. Schwartz has been one of the Liberals' most

Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?

powerful fundraisers, largely responsible for bringing in an unprecedented \$12 million for Paul Martin's leadership campaign in 2003.

Though Jewish voters are small in numbers - Canada's Jewish population is about 380,000 - their loss, if it is that, will be felt in other ways, says Ed Morgan, University of Toronto law professor and president of the Canadian Jewish Congress. "There is intellectual leadership - academics, policy types, the cultural and intellectual influence ... "

Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich, president of the Toronto Board of Rabbis, has made informal comments on the war from the pulpit and has written a letter of thanks to the Prime Minister's Office. He has suggested that others in the Jewish community do the same.

Flanzraich says he has observed in the Jewish community a "sense of distance" from the federal Liberals dating from former prime minister's Jean Chretien's government. "Their position on Israel was one of moral relativism, that neither side was more wrong or right than the other."

In the past, continues Flanzraich, who is also senior rabbi at Beth Sholom Synagogue, there was no "credible national alternative" to the Liberals. What we've seen with the federal Conservatives is a greater sensitivity toward faith communities and recognition that faith communities are a tremendous source of social capital" (such as food banks and out-of-the-cold programs).

"I can tell you, there is an overwhelming appreciation for the Prime Minister's position, that he has articulated a perspective we have long sought."

But not all of Canada's Jewish community or the 150,000 or so who live in the Toronto area, are of one mind on foreign policy, or even on Israel. "They are as divided as the Israeli cabinet," says former Liberal pollster Martin Goldfarb.

Smadar Carmon immigrated to Canada from Israel four years ago. "I came here because I didn't want to be in a country torn by war," says Carmon, a mature student at Humber College. "I actually feel betrayed by (Harper)."

A member of the small organization Jewish Women Against the Occupation, which has an email list of about 300, says of the Prime Minister: "This person does not have any heart and he's definitely not thinking. I'm interested in human rights, and he has to be totally out of touch with human suffering."

She argues that Canada risks losing its reputation as a peacemaker. "It could lead to Canada being attacked like the U.S. and Britain, countries that are war-making."

Another organization, the United Jewish People's Order, has written to Harper saying that Israel's use of force in Lebanon is "morally repugnant," not only because of the disproportionate number of civilian deaths but also because it fuels terrorist acts. "It's nice to see he is supportive of Israel ... but the only response now should be an immediate ceasefire," says David Abramowitz, co-president of the order. "We have to stop the bombing and start talking."

Harper's stand may not prove a tipping point for Jews when it comes to voting in a federal election. Pollster Goldfarb is careful to say that, while he agrees with Harper on Israel, that's as far as it goes. "I'm with him on his stand in the Middle East. It's a principled stand, defending democracy ... I'm not with him on same-sex marriage, softwood lumber, transfer payments, childcare, lots of things, especially domestic issues where Harper is making a mistake ...

"But I think Harper captured the hearts of many Jewish people because, in his defence of Israel, they see someone who understands their own anguish for Israel."

Graphic

Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?

"Thank God for Stephen Harper," says David Gelberman, with his wife Gila, owners of Wolfie's Delicatessen. "It's about time someone had some cojones." Stephen Harper Aaron Lynett TORONTO STAR

Load-Date: August 20, 2006

End of Document

Taking flights

Guardian.com

August 14, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1311 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.

Body

THREAT OF TERROR ATTACK DOWNGRADED

John Reid's overnight decision to downgrade the terror threat rating from critical to severe has come in the nick of time, judging by the Daily Mail's front page. "GET BRITAIN FLYING AGAIN," demands the paper, picturing a disconsolate young woman wrapped in a foil blanket and surrounded by suitcases.

The Times says the British Airports Authority ordered airlines to cut outgoing flights by 30% yesterday "or be banned from using Heathrow altogether". British Airways and the other airlines that use the airport are furious, the paper says.

Cancelled flights and long delays are a victory for the terrorists, the Mail complains. Shouldn't the army have been drafted in to help search passengers? Why was there no contingency plan?

"One suggestion ... is to make more use of 'passenger profiling' at airports. This method, pioneered with great success in Israel, focusses attention on those passengers whose appearance or behaviour arouses suspicion. The Mail finds something unpleasant about profiling, since it inevitably means subjecting innocent young Muslim men to much more stringent checks and questioning than white grandmothers visiting relatives in Canada."

The paper asks passengers queuing at Heathrow what they think of racial profiling. None of them likes it.

The red-tops concentrate on the alleged plot. A cash sum of 19,000 was found at one of the addresses raided in Walthamstow, according to the Sun, and a cache of guns at another. The money is thought to have been intended for the purchase of airline tickets.

"Hate-filled mums willing to sacrifice themselves and their BABIES are being hunted," says the paper. "It emerged as the reason why women at airports were ordered to drink from their babies' bottles before being allowed to board flights."

Terrorist suspects have been taking part in outdoor training courses in Britain's national parks, according to the Guardian.

Taking flights

The Mirror carries an interview with the suspect Donald Stewart-Whyte's first girlfriend. "He'd buy me roses and write me poems," she tells the paper. One of them read "Take life seriously,/ And live well/ not die young/ as i will/ if I follow this path,/ this lonely,/ dark, / off-road path."

"SUSPECTS MOAN: OUR CELLS ARE TOO COLD," splashes the Express. The Telegraph says the current anti-terrorist operation exceeds anything undertaken during the IRA's campaigns. About 24 "major conspiracies" are under investigation and up to 50 more leads are being followed - most of which relate to intelligence-gathering or fundraising for attacks in Britain and Iraq.

* Terror training camps in UK parks

* Mail: Get Britain flying again

* Times: Airlines to cut flights

* Sun: Guns at 'terror' house

* Mirror: My love for terrorist suspect

TENSIONS HIGH AS CEASEFIRE BEGINS

Ceasefire, what ceasefire? Both sides launched "ferocious" last-ditch attacks yesterday, according to the Guardian, and the Independent's Robert Fisk quashes any notion that the war between Israel and Hizbullah came to an end at 6am today. Hizbullah has promised to abide by the ceasefire provided no Israeli troops remain in Lebanon. But they do: 10,000 soldiers are still there, "mopping up" fighters. [The Guardian puts the figure at 30,000.]

"The Israeli army, reeling under Hizbullah's onslaught of the past 24 hours, is now facing the harshest guerrilla war in its history," writes Fisk. "And it is a war it may well lose. ... Thousands of [Hizbullah] members remain alive and armed in the ruined hill villages of southern Lebanon for just this moment."

Tim Hames, on the other hand, thinks Hizbullah is a spent force. "A sizeable proportion of Hizbullah rocket launchers and fighters have been eliminated, while the Israeli army has lost no more than a few tanks and, to its regret, about 100 soldiers," he writes in the Times. "Secondly, Hizbullah has deployed a huge percentage of its missile arsenal to very little advantage. ... Thirdly, the administration in Lebanon, which had ostentatiously refused to send its soldiers to the south of that country for the past six years, has been obliged to pledge to the United Nations that it will now do so. ... If this is a 'defeat', then Israel can afford many similar outcomes." The Independent picks up on a Seymour Hersh report in today's New Yorker that suggests the Bush administration pre-approved the Israeli bombing campaign and even considered it a "demo for Iran".

* Fragile ceasefire in danger

* Independent: Robert Fisk

* Independent: Bush 'saw war in Lebanon as curtain-raiser for attack on Iran'

* Times: Tim Hames

CASTRO RECOVERS TO CELEBRATE 80TH BIRTHDAY

Fidel Castro's 80th birthday message to Cubans yesterday said he was recovering from his intestinal operation and felt "very happy". But the Times says the message also hinted that the country should learn to live without him.

"Whether Fidel Castro recovers, resumes the reins and carries on for another decade or whether we are already witnessing a long goodbye, there seems to be one underlying message from inside Cuba, both from those who support Castro and those who oppose him: this is Cuba's story, and the changes that will inevitably come must come from within and not be imposed from the outside," says Duncan Campbell in the Guardian. "If the Bush administration is really interested in more than score-settling and vote-catching, it should lift the embargo

Taking flights

immediately so that Cuba can, as Churchill imagined, throw open its ports to the commerce of the world and allow US citizens to visit the island and see for themselves whether it is heaven, hell or something else entirely."

* Duncan Campbell

* Times: 'Learn to live without me'

CAMPBELL PROTEST TAINTS UK GOLD MEDAL WIN

"Four British relay gold medallists, so why the long faces?" asks the Independent. Sprinter Darren Campbell turned his face away from the rest of the team in the group photograph at the European championships in Gothenburg and refused to join them on a lap of honour, saying he could not join in because he was "not a hypocrite".

Campbell apparently did not want to share the relay with Dwain Chambers, who has just returned from a two-year doping ban. He felt Chambers' apology was inadequate and not unprompted.

The national performance director and Steve Cram both defended the decision to pick Chambers, but the former European 5,000m champion Brendan Foster and the triple jump world record holder Jonathan Edwards demurred. "UK Athletics are not asking the moral question," Edwards tells the Times.

* Independent: Chambers sparks sprint row

* Times: Medal of dishonour

FLORAL PRINTS AND FLORID PROSE

Tony Blair's and David Cameron's respective choice of holiday shorts is analysed on page three of the Express. The Tory leader wins praise for his cheap pair of florals from Boden; the PM's apparently cost 90. The paper's fashion writer concludes that flowery shorts are acceptable on men, but they should never wear floral shirts. Mr Cameron is seen clutching a copy of Nelson Mandela's autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom.

Meanwhile, the Telegraph indulges in quite its most idolatory royal interview in years. Zara Phillips, who will be riding a horse called Toytown in the World Equestrian Championships, is working 14-hour days clearing out the stables. The horse box in which she sleeps while touring for competitions has just a bunk bed, a television, a fridge full of beer and a stuffed lion called Lennie, it emerges.

* Telegraph: Royal rebel is now riding high

COMING UP ON GUARDIAN UNLIMITED TODAY

The home secretary, John Reid, says "there is still a very serious threat of an attack". Government ministers will tell leading Muslims face-to-face today that they must do more to tackle extremism in their communities.

A flight from London to New York turned back last night when a mobile phone was found on board.

The ceasefire in the fighting in Lebanon appears to be holding.

Load-Date: August 14, 2006

THE WAR THAT NO ONE WON!

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 16, 2006 Wednesday

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Length: 659 words

Byline: NADIYA AAMER

Body

Exodus is defined as a mass departure as far as I remember it. The attempt to return home after the cease-fire shows what it must have been like for the people of South Lebanon when they fled for their lives. The return is even more painful than the evacuation. All they have to return to is rubble. No homes, no food, most of the infrastructure has been carefully destroyed.

One cannot help thinking what was the exact motive of the Israeli government for such devastation. True, inconclusive though this war was, it seems to have served the purpose for Israel and its supporters to damage Lebanon as much as possible. When this goes down in history, it will be remembered as the war where peace keeping forces, food and emergency aid, men women and children were the target. Blatantly, pompously and rigidly! It will also be remembered as the time when we as Muslims did nothing to ease the suffering of other Muslims.

This is how some of us see the war and then there is the greatest of all presidents that the United States could ever have produced who comes up with statements like, 'Hizbullah started the crisis and Hizbullah suffered a defeat in the crisis.' I do not know whether to laugh or cry or maybe just do both at the same time. A catharsis for being born in this time and age tinged with remorse for what my children will have to continue to watch, endure and react to.

The two soldiers, for whom the bell was tolled are still in Hizbullah captive and their deal will be struck later, after the dust has settled and civilians, more than one million displaced, come to terms with a shattered present and a vague future along with an economy that has been completely destroyed. The need to dominate, man's nature, bestial at its best and selfish at its worst, takes him to the lowest levels of humanity and we silently watch the trauma.

One good thing that has come out of this war, if you would forgive my apathy at the use of the term, is that the United States backed delusion that Hizbullah is an Iran-Syria puppet has been shattered. They may want to save their faces and we will allow them that, but the truth is all over the globe. This may be a turning point if taken on carefully by the International community and sustained with seriousness.

After all, all super powers and super troopers have to come to the end of the day (remember a Soviet Union) and when and if that happens, we may have yet a new world order. One that has a place and a space for everyone, no matter what the caste, colour or creed. We are creatures of habit. Give us hate and we weave it back into a complete patchwork quilt that can cover the entire world. Give us love and we can create beauty, order and empathy. What shall we choose, then?

THE WAR THAT NO ONE WON!

Closer to home, although I prefer my nomadic disposition, we grew a year older and less wiser on the 14th of August. Our idea of celebration is loud noise. Period. Add a few accidents on the roads and there you have it. Happy Independence Day Pakistan. I appreciate the simple and short firework show that the polo Ground, Lahore put up that evening. Open to most people (reservations held for good reasons) it was something the children could go to and feel a part of the day's celebrations, because driving on the Mall or Defence road is certainly not my idea of patriotism. The government could consider putting their heart in the celebrations next year, instead of their brains!

A friend of mine told me some days ago, with an air of exaggeration, that the leasing companies are churning out close to thirty five thousand cars a month on the same old and exhausted roads of Lahore. I nodded but in disbelief. It is crowded but it could not be that bad. ' Let the summer holidays end and schools re-open. You will see the rest of the five thousand that are parked in the garage for now!' I could not disagree, as I have a guilt pang stuck in my throat. Credit is so enticing. Really. E-mail: nadiya_aamer@hotmail.com

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

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PRO-US RULERS HAVE NO PUBLIC SUPPORT: GHINWA

The Frontier Star

September 10, 2006 Sunday

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Length: 267 words

Body

PESHAWAR: Chairperson of Pakistan People's Party (Shaheed Bhutto) Ghinwa Bhutto has said that pro-American governments in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Lebanon have no public support, which is the main reason of the US failure to win over the masses.

She was addressing a public meeting at Nimak Mandi Square here on Sunday. She said that the world was going through a change after the defeat of Israel by Hizbullah in Lebanon. She said that the Israel was not defeated by any army, but by public resistance. She added that the Israel had set 7-day deadline for achieving its objects, but it failed to destroy the Hizbullah during its one month-long war.

America was also disappointed with the defeat of Israel, she said, adding that the US could not dare to attack Iran and Syria, but governments there had complete support of their masses, which proved that the real power was the masses not the US. Condemning the murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti, Ghinwa Bhutto said that if the government could hold talks with miscreants in Waziristan, then why the government used forces against its own people. She said that the rulers were afraid of the public power, as the real power was the masses not America, who were struggling against the American policies.

She claimed that after Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto no ruler worked for the welfare of the masses. She said that the PPP (SB) was struggling for the basic rights of the masses in real means. Central general secretary Inayat Hussain, provincial president Mohammad Zahoor Qureshi, also addressed the public meeting and central president of women wing Reema Rafiq.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

Has Lebanon's Cedar revolt come undone?

Christian Science Monitor

January 3, 2007, Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 957 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: BEIRUT, LEBANON

Highlight: *Hizbullah* now occupies the Beirut squares where the 'Cedar Revolution' helped end Syrian dominance in 2005.

Body

Rita Awad was one of Lebanon's "Cedar revolutionaries" when she participated in the mass street demonstrations in spring 2005 that led Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon.

Now, Ms. Awad is back on the street. And in a quirk of Lebanese politics, she is demonstrating alongside pro-Syrian supporters against a government dominated by the leaders that she once rallied behind.

"When the Syrians were here [in the 1990s], we were the only ones fighting, and now we are here fighting the government," says Awad, a member of the Free Patriotic Movement led by Michel Aoun, a retired Christian general and now an ally of the militant Shiite *Hizbullah* party that is spearheading Lebanon's opposition.

While the political landscape has shifted and alliances have changed from two years ago, it's clear that *Hizbullah* has taken a page from the Cedar Revolution's playbook.

It has called thousands of antigovernment protesters to the streets for open-ended protests calling for more government seats for the opposition, or, failing that, fresh elections and an end to the rule of the March 14 coalition, which was swept into power after Syrian troops left the country.

"We are copying their system," says Ali Hamdan, an official with the Amal Movement, the Shiite group allied to *Hizbullah*. "The March 14 [leaders] have to realize that they don't have a monopoly on revolution."

The Cedar Revolution was a reaction of outrage at the assassination of Rafik Hariri, a former prime minister who was killed in a bomb explosion on Valentine's Day 2005. A week later, tens of thousands of Lebanese marched through the streets of Beirut in an unprecedented rally to demand an end to Syrian political and military control.

The revolution was slickly organized with an ad agency that helped shape the campaign, adopting the colors red and white along with a slogan "Independence '05." The protests were notable for attracting a large number of middle-class professionals, people not normally associated with street demonstrations. Christian *women* dressed in chic black dresses stood alongside head-scarved Muslims. A tent city, dubbed "Camp Freedom," was established a few yards from Mr. Hariri's tomb. The month-long demonstrations ended on March 14 with a rally attended by nearly 1 million protesters.

Has Lebanon 's Cedar revolt come undone?

The rallies brought down the pro-Syrian government and eventually forced Damascus to withdraw its troops, signaling the breakup of nearly three decades of Syrian hegemony over Lebanon.

Now, ***Hizbullah*** occupies that public theater. It and other Lebanese opposition launched a street campaign on Dec. 1 with a rally that brought some 800,000 people to Beirut. Rows of white tents sprang up, covering two city squares as protesters vowed to stay put until their demands were met.

Unlike the participants of the Cedar Revolution, the vast majority of the opposition's supporters are drawn from the poor rural areas of south and east Lebanon, lending a class-based distinction to the sit-in. For many, it's the first time they have seen Beirut's city center, whose cobble-stoned streets lined with expensive boutiques, restaurants, and cafes normally cater to the wealthy.

Some Cedar Revolution activists are attempting to counter the political crisis with a campaign dubbed "I love life."

Billboards around the country carry the slogan written in red and white letters in Arabic, English, and French. The campaign, says ad executive and campaigner Elie Khoury, is intended to rally the "politically homeless" and will soon be sending the message overseas. "We want to tell the world that, regardless of whatever they see on their TV screens, the Lebanese want to live and move ahead," he says.

On New Year's Eve, some 15,000 people attended a pop concert organized by the "I love life" campaign. At midnight, the Beirut seafront was lit by a massive fireworks. Not to be outdone, opposition supporters launched their fireworks moments later, bathing downtown Beirut in flashes of color.

The opposition had hoped that the government's resolve would crumble in the opening days of the sit-in. But it has refused to yield and is locked into a war of attrition that has left the country on edge. Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir, the patriarch of the Maronite church, said in a Christmas message that the "anarchy" gripping Lebanon was "a mess unprecedented in Lebanese history."

Some Lebanese analysts say that the opposition's campaign is losing momentum, forcing it either to reach a compromise with the government or step up its actions. Opposition leaders have warned that the campaign could escalate into civil disobedience.

But Ahmad Fatfat, Lebanon's minister of sport and a prominent member of the March 14 coalition, says that the opposition has misunderstood the effect of street protests. "They are using the same tactics, the same mobilization of people," he says. "But this tactic won't solve any the problems. It worked against an external problem like Syria, but it won't work in domestic politics."

The Cedar Revolution succeeded partly because it was backed by the West and leading Arab countries against an isolated Syria. Furthermore, analysts say, Lebanon's political pluralism makes it almost impossible for one group to impose its will on the others, which is why politics here traditionally is one of consensus and dealmaking.

"This is what makes Lebanon different from other Arab countries," says Rami Khouri, director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Relations at the American University of Beirut. "This standoff has two parties with roughly equal support and backed by foreign countries. Both sides are looking for a way out and that will only come about with a negotiated deal."

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Load-Date: January 2, 2007

Crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times

August 5, 2006 Saturday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 13

Length: 982 words

Body

Madam, - Apologists for Israel's actions in Lebanon and Gaza dismiss any concerns about the "proportionality" of the response. They strongly defend Israel's behaviour and draw spurious analogies with the US reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbour or Britain's response to the London Blitz.

If these supporters consider the killing of hundreds of innocent women and children, the targeting of Red Cross ambulances, the blowing up of a UN observation post resulting in the death of four unarmed observers and the destruction of roads, bridges, schools and hospitals to be a "proportionate" response, perhaps they might let us know what they would consider a "disproportionate" response. - Is mise,

TOMAS McBRIDE, Wood Road, Carrigawley, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Madam, - While I agree with your correspondents who wish to see an end to the killing of women and children in Lebanon, I note that most of them offer either no long-term solution or else utterly unrealistic solutions to the current underlying issue: what to do about Hizbullah.

Those who call only for an immediate cessation of "disproportionate" Israeli actions offer nothing by way of security guarantees for Israel. An immediate ceasefire by Israel will indeed end the killing of the Lebanese but will not protect the Israelis.

Others of your correspondents who call for dialogue fail to take account of the need for two parties to conduct a dialogue. For Hizbullah and its patron, the government of Iran, have stated on innumerable occasions that their idea of a solution is the total destruction of the state of Israel. Hizbullah and Iran have no interest in talking to the Israelis as their only solution is the annihilation of the Jewish state, which President Ahmedinijad of Iran, in a monstrous outburst of virulent anti-Semitism, has likened to a tumour on the face of the earth.

Calls have been made to use the Good Friday Agreement as a model upon which to base an agreement between the parties in the Middle East. This, I suggest, is the wrong model as the IRA did not seek the total destruction of the British state, but rather had defined goals which it was prepared to discuss with the British government.

I do not profess to have the answer to the current crisis. But I believe that the Israeli government has a legal and moral duty to do whatever it can to defend its citizens from unrelenting attacks by a group which has no interest in building a future of peaceful coexistence with the Israelis. - Yours, etc,

TREVOR TROY, Plás Connacht, Baile Átha Buí, Co na Mí.

Crisis in the Middle East

Madam, - I listened yesterday to Michael D Higgins discussing this matter on radio with Alan Shatter, and it was evident that the central issue was being missed: what right has a race or a religion to own a state, and to treat non-members as second-class citizens?

There are echoes of the civil rights problem in Northern Ireland. Indeed, some Northern loyalist communities identify with Israel and fly the Israeli flag.

The demolition of the Israel apartheid State is becoming increasingly an objective for its victims and for those who identify with them. The problem is how to develop a political process which will replace it with a democratic state occupying all of Palestine, having equal political rights for all its citizens, whether Jew, Muslim, Christian or whatever, and with workable power-sharing politics.

As long as the state of Israel and the organisations supportive of the Palestinian refugee victims of the 1948 "ethnic cleansing" (Hamas, Hizbullah, etc) think in purely military terms, we have a no-win situation. Somehow there needs to be identified an analogue of the Hume-Adams process, which in the end succeeded on persuading both protagonists that neither could ever win militarily, and a system was set up enabling (we hope) political compromise within which civil society might in the end develop.

To give such a process space to develop, it is important that Israel should exercise restraint, and world pressure be directed at Israel and its US paymaster. How would the world have viewed Britain if in the context of the 30-year war in Ireland the British had retaliated by destroying all Irish infrastructure in response to IRA bombs in England? - Yours, etc,

ROY JOHNSTON, Rathgar, Dublin 6.

Madam, - The Irish Film Institute's rejection of Israeli embassy sponsorship, already in place, for the film Walk on Water directed by Israeli Eytan Fox is totally and utterly wrong. It is not within the IFI's remit to enter the political arena, or indeed the remit of any body of a similar nature in receipt of public funds. Is the IFI now forced to withdraw its August brochure which in relation to Walk on Water contains the phrase "Bought [sic] to you with the assistance of the embassy of Israel"? Who is buying whom? - Yours, etc,

LOUIS LENTIN, Leinster Road, Dublin 6.

A chara, - Brendan McMahon (August 2nd) says that a "quick- fix" ceasefire would benefit only Hizbullah.

I bet if the hundreds of innocent civilians killed in Lebanon could speak now, they would beg to differ. - Is mise,

SIMON Ó TORPAIGH, Hillside, Dalkey, Co Dublin.

Madam, - According to your edition of August 1st, members of Sinn Féin were present at anti-Israeli demonstrations outside the American embassy in Dublin. I find this ironic for two reasons.

First, by rights Sinn Féin should be supporting the Israelis, with whom they have more in common, both historically and in attitude, than the Lebanese or Palestinians.

Secondly, it is hypocritical of Sinn Féin, who spent years making friends with American diplomats and politicians, raising money in the United States, and gaining political credibility, to now criticise American foreign policy and military involvement in the Middle East.

This is a typical case of "biting the hand that feeds you", and a sickening example of the opportunism and hypocrisy of Sinn Féin. - Yours, etc,

JS CAMPBELL, St Luke's, Cork.

Load-Date: August 5, 2006

End of Document

Lebanese literally picking up the pieces as they return to their homes

The Irish Times

August 16, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 8

Length: 967 words

Byline: Michael Jansen in Beirut

Body

The main thoroughfare into Beirut's southern suburbs is Hadi Nasrallah Avenue, named after the eldest son of **Hizbullah** secretary general Hassan Nasrallah. The youth was slain in the 1990s fighting Israel in the south; his brother survived at the front in the four-week war which Israel believed would be a three-day operation.

Beirutis of all sects and stations are driving the length of this road from Shiyyah through Bir Abed to Haret Hreik, the quarter designated the "Dahiyeh", or the neighbourhood. They perform the horror tour in rattletrap cars, shiny Mercedes and BMWs, in buses and lorries and on motorbikes.

At the edge of the road is rubbish, rubble and shattered glass. Dust hangs in the heavy, warm air suffused with the acrid smell of burning. There is moderate damage in Shiyyah - the Israelis brought down only a few blocks of flats here.

At the border of Bir Abed, two men are clearing large pieces of broken glass from the balcony on the third floor of a building blasted when a bomb brought down a block further along the street.

Blasts leave curious patterns on built-up areas. Sometimes all the windows around a bomb site are gone, sometimes none.

At the two-storey shop called Big Sale, plate glass continues to protect the mannequins, while a few buildings along the way householders were slain and injured by flying shards of glass.

Three **women** in headscarves and kaftans ask for a lift to the turning to the airport highway. They are returning to their refuge in the mountains after inspecting their flat.

"Half our house is gone, half is okay," shrugged the eldest, who refused to give her name or to say where they are going. They are suspicious of strangers and soon get out of the taxi.

There are few vehicles piled with the bedding and household goods of returnees. Most of the inhabitants of the Dahiyeh want to see what has happened to their homes before they return.

Unlike villagers, they cannot camp out on top of the rubble, as did the people of Jenin when Israel destroyed part of the town in 2002.

Hizbullah is promising to pay rent for a year until apartment blocks and houses can be rebuilt. Aid agencies estimate that 15,000 houses have been destroyed and 100,000 of the 900,000 displaced made homeless.

Lebanese literally picking up the pieces as they return to their homes

Cars and motorcycles flying Hizbullah flags swing round the ruined bridge at the junction of Hadi Nasrallah Boulevard and the airport road, the heart of the Dahiyeh. One square kilometre of buildings has been pancaked, smashed and reduced to rubble here.

Workers digging out the dead wear masks over nose and mouth. A crane is lifting large chunks of concrete from the block bombed by Israel on the afternoon before the ceasefire took effect. Six families made the mistake of going home too early.

The apartment block where 50 lived and died is a heap of concrete beams and rubble wrapped in yellow police tape bearing the words in English: "The Divine Victim Restricted Area No Trespassing."

Ruins here, in the south, in Baalbek, and along the frontier are littered with unexploded munitions, breached cooking gas cannisters, dangerous chemicals. People ignore the tape to climb onto piles of rubble and take photos or search for belongings in collapsed buildings.

As we turn around, a young woman enveloped in black asks for a ride. Fatmeh has been here throughout the bombing.

"My house is okay," she says, "but nine of my friends died." She points to a tall, pink building where the top storeys were crumbled by a huge bomb.

Kamal Abbas is sweeping up window glass at Organza, a shop selling lengths of cloth. He and his family have also stayed. "I will start work again in a few days." Fadi Brahim, a baker, is cleaning his ovens to bake bread. "I have everything I need - flour, fuel for the generator. All the people are coming back. They must have bread."

A sign on the side of the road reads: "Merci Pour Votre Visite - Haret Hreik". There is no government presence here or in most of the villages in the south, where local councils are spearheading the relief effort. Not even in towns which Israel has flattened like Bint Jbeil, where 7,000 people are homeless.

Although Israel and the US speak of eradicating Hizbullah's "state within a state", this will not happen until Beirut gets its act together and provides the services Hizbullah and the non-governmental organisations of civil society offer.

The Milhem family is fixing a flat tyre on the road to Sidon as car after car whizzes past. We stop and lend a hand. They have been staying at a school in Ashrafiyeh. "Five families decided to to Majdal Slim, so we are also going home. We've had no news from the village," says Aliya. "We want to go today. We can't wait any longer."

I ask if they are related to Hussein Milhem from Tibnin, the base of the Irish contingent when it served with the UN force. I met him at another school. "He's our cousin."

Hussein, his parents, and seven brothers are also on the road. Hussein hopes their house is standing and his computer and schoolbooks are safe. "Without them I have no future because I cannot study."

Looters have been at work in the south - Israelis and others.

Janet Symes of Christian Aid is disappointed because the ceasefire came so late. She warns that some returnees will need to go to "reception centres, schools and mosques" until shelter can be arranged while reconstruction of their homes takes place.

Aid agencies are opening courses in construction. Builders are already in great demand.

The ceasefire now in place must hold. Aid workers say the international community must ensure it sticks and must insist Israel lift its air and sea blockade, which is preventing fuel and aid from flowing into the country.

UN sources claim that "representations" over the blockade are being made "at the highest level" - whatever that means.

Lebanese literally picking up the pieces as they return to their homes

The blockade is still in place.

Load-Date: August 16, 2006

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Crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times

August 19, 2006 Saturday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 617 words

Body

Madam, - Rory Miller and Alan Shatter cite Amnesty International's reports on human rights violations by Syria and Lebanon in support of their argument (Opinion & Analysis, August 15th). Presumably this indicates that they accept Amnesty as an impartial and accurate human rights commentator.

I would add that the many other examples of human destruction around the world - accurately identified by these two writers - are documented and campaigned on, equally impartially, by Amnesty International. In all cases, without exception, we identify the perpetrators and we unequivocally condemn the human rights violations.

Therefore, I will assume that Amnesty's analysis of the most recent conflict in Lebanon and Israel will be accepted in the same spirit.

Hizbullah deliberately targeted residential areas of northern Israel, resulting in 40 civilians being killed and substantial damage to civilian infrastructure. Direct attacks on civilians and indiscriminate attacks are war crimes.

In parallel, over 1,000 Lebanese civilians have been killed by the Israeli Defence Forces. The IDF targeted civilians, failed to respect the principles of proportionality, and ignored the distinction between civilian objects and military objectives, resulting in an extraordinary level of civilian infrastructural damage.

Attacking civilians, civilian objects, and carrying out disproportionate attacks are war crimes.

The Israeli Defence Forces told everyone to leave southern Lebanon, while its bombardment of roads, bridges, telecommunication transmitters, electricity networks, fuel depots, homes, automobiles, even hospitals throughout southern Lebanon forced tens of thousands to leave their homes.

Hundreds of civilians, many of them children, were killed either in their homes or while trying to flee to the larger towns. Thousands of civilians, particularly elderly and disabled people, as well as **women** and children, were trapped in villages in southern Lebanon with no access to medical services, food, electricity or fuel. Humanitarian agencies, including the Red Cross, were prevented from reaching these people.

Your correspondent Lara Marlowe, writing in the same edition, also cited Amnesty, accurately pointing out that our researchers on the ground in Lebanon have found no evidence of the IDF having destroyed any weapons storage facilities of **Hizbullah**.

Both Israel and **Hizbullah** have shown a persistent disregard for the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, and both should be censured by the international community. Everyone should unequivocally condemn the blatant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by both parties. - Yours, etc,

Crisis in the Middle East

SEAN LOVE, Executive Director, Amnesty International (Irish Section), Fleet Street, Dublin 2.

Madam, - Congratulations to Lara Marlowe on her honest and perceptive article of August 15th on the war in Lebanon. It is better to risk being branded "anti-Semitic" than to remain silent in the face of the gross injustice perpetrated by Israel on the innocent women and children of Lebanon.

A special commendation also to Frank McDonald for his article of August 12th highlighting the illegal dispossession of the householders and farmers of Palestine to make way for Israeli settlers. We Irish know well the political legacy of dispossession and plantation.

As one who spent years working as an engineer in Lebanon, I am convinced that this is the root cause of the problems in that area.

It is a pity that the pro-Israel apologists don't address this issue more effectively. To do so would in my view go a long way towards developing a "sustainable solution" to the problem. - Yours, etc,

PAT TAAFFE, Rosbercon, New Ross, Co Wexford.

Load-Date: August 19, 2006

End of Document

Offering Video, Israel Answers Critics on War - Correction Appended

The New York Times
December 5, 2006 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

Correction Appended

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 1712 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE; Nada Bakri contributed reporting from Beirut, Lebanon.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Dec. 4

Body

Israel's military, which has been accused of abuses in its war against Hezbollah this summer, has declassified photographs, video images and prisoner interrogations to buttress its accusation that Hezbollah systematically fired from civilian neighborhoods in southern Lebanon and took cover in those areas to shield itself from attack.

Lebanon and international human rights groups have accused Israel of war crimes in the 34 days of fighting in July and August, saying that Israel fired into populated areas and that civilians accounted for a vast majority of the more than 1,000 Lebanese killed.

Israel says that it tried to avoid civilians, but that Hezbollah fired from civilian areas, itself a war crime, which made those areas legitimate targets.

In a new report, an Israeli research group says Hezbollah stored weapons in mosques, battled Israelis from inside empty schools, flew white flags while transporting missiles and launched rockets near United Nations monitoring posts.

The detailed report on the war was produced by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, a private research group headed by Reuven Erlich, a retired colonel in military intelligence, who worked closely with the Israeli military.

An advance copy was given to The New York Times by the American Jewish Congress, which has itself fought against the use of "human shields," provided consultation and translated the study.

In Lebanon, a Hezbollah official denied the study's allegations, saying its military units were based outside towns and villages and had come into populated areas only when circumstances required it. "We tried to avoid having to fight among civilian areas, but when Israeli troops entered villages, we were automatically forced to fight them from inside these villages to defend it," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on military matters.

Offering Video, Israel Answers Critics on War

Israel's critics charge that its military either singled out civilians or was reckless in its pursuit of Hezbollah. The new report is an attempt to rebut such criticism.

The report includes Israeli Air Force video that it says shows several instances of Hezbollah personnel firing rockets next to residential buildings in southern Lebanon and then being bombed by Israel. The adjacent buildings were presumably damaged, but there is no information on whether civilians were inside.

"This study explains the dilemma facing the Israeli military as it fights an enemy that intentionally operates from civilian areas," Mr. Erlich said. "This is the kind of asymmetric warfare we are seeing today. It's not only relevant to Lebanon, but is also what we are seeing in the Gaza Strip and in Iraq."

The report says: "The construction of a broad military infrastructure, positioned and hidden in populated areas, was intended to minimize Hezbollah's vulnerability. Hezbollah would also gain a propaganda advantage if it could represent Israel as attacking innocent civilians."

In video from July 23, a truck with a multi-barreled missile launcher, presumably from Hezbollah, is parked in a street, sandwiched between residential buildings. The video was transmitted from an Israeli missile approaching the truck. The screen goes fuzzy as the missile slams into the target.

In another video, from a Lebanese village, rockets are seen being fired from a launcher on the back of a truck. The truck then drives a short distance and disappears inside a building. Seconds later, the building itself disappears under a cloud of smoke from an Israeli bomb.

The report says that there were many such examples, and that Hezbollah has been preparing for such an engagement for years, embedding its fighters and their weapons in the Shiite villages of southern Lebanon. When Hezbollah fired its rockets from those areas, Israel faced a choice of attacking, and possibly causing civilian casualties, or refraining from shooting because of the risk, the report said.

Elias Hanna, a retired Lebanese Army general, said of the Israeli allegations, "Of course there are hidden invisible tunnels, bunkers of missile launchers, bunkers of explosive charges amongst civilians."

He added: "You cannot separate the southern society from Hezbollah, because Hezbollah is the society and the society is Hezbollah. Hezbollah is holding this society together through its political, military and economic services. It is providing the welfare for the south."

Asked whether Hezbollah should be seen as responsible for the deaths of Lebanese civilians in the war, he replied: "Of course Hezbollah is responsible. But these people are ready to sacrifice their lives for Hezbollah. If you tell them, 'Your relative died,' they will tell you 'No, he was a martyr.' The party's military preparations from 2000 till 2006 took place in their areas. They were of course done with complete secrecy, but in accordance with the civilians."

During the war, Israel dropped leaflets urging villagers to leave southern Lebanon and also to evacuate from Hezbollah strongholds in southern Beirut. Many did flee, but some remained and among them were hundreds who were killed.

In one highly publicized Israeli strike on July 30, at least 28 Lebanese civilians, including many women and children, were killed when Israel bombed a residential building in the village of Qana. Israel said it struck a Hezbollah rocket cell that had recently fired from near the building.

In several other instances, Israel bombed vehicle convoys that were trying to leave the combat zone in southern Lebanon, killing many civilians. Human Rights Watch, a New York-based advocacy group, said shortly before the war ended that it had documented the deaths of 27 Lebanese civilians killed while trying to flee.

Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, wrote shortly after the war that the Israeli military "seemed to assume that because it gave warnings to civilians to evacuate southern Lebanon, anyone who remained was a Hezbollah fighter."

Offering Video, Israel Answers Critics on War

He wrote, "But giving warnings, as required by international humanitarian law, does not relieve the attacker of the duty to distinguish between civilians and combatants and to target only combatants."

Amnesty International said that Israel "consistently failed to adopt necessary precautionary measures," and that its forces "carried out indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on a large scale."

The group also accused Hezbollah of "serious violations of international humanitarian law" for deliberately attacking Israeli civilians with rockets. But it did not address the accusation that Hezbollah hid its militants among Lebanese civilians.

The Israeli report defended the Israeli operations, saying "airstrikes and ground attacks against Hezbollah targets located in population centers were carried out in accordance with international law, which does not grant immunity to a terrorist organization deliberately hiding behind civilians."

The Israeli report included video of what it said were three Hezbollah prisoners being questioned by Israeli military personnel.

Muhammad Srour, a young Hezbollah fighter, said he had initially received training in Iran and was undergoing further training in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley when the war broke out. He was sent to the front lines.

Like many Hezbollah fighters, he traveled by motorbike, but they were frequently the targets of Israeli forces. While transporting missiles, hidden in cloth, in and around the southern village of Aita al Shaab, "I carried a white flag," Mr. Srour said.

Hezbollah operated freely from homes in the village, with the permission of residents who had fled. The departing residents either left their doors unlocked or gave their keys to Hezbollah, he said. Mr. Srour acknowledged that homes used by Hezbollah were more likely to draw fire.

But, he said, "better that the house is destroyed and the Israelis don't enter and come back to conquer Lebanon."

Another captured fighter, Hussein Suleiman, explained how he had set up a rocket-firing position on the front porch of a house on the outskirts of Aita al Shaab.

A third Hezbollah man, Maher Kourani, said group members had worn civilian clothes, tried never to show their weapons, and traveled in ordinary civilian cars. "We use Volvos, Mercedes, BMW," he said. "We use Range Rovers, too."

The Israeli report makes frequent references to Hezbollah's using Lebanese civilians as human shields, though it cites only two villages where it says Hezbollah prevented residents from leaving. Mr. Erlich acknowledged that over all, Hezbollah did not use coercion against Lebanese civilians.

Rather, he said, "Hezbollah was operating inside a supportive population, and cynically used them to further its own goals."

Hezbollah fired some 4,000 rockets into northern Israel, and most Israeli civilians either fled the region or took refuge in bomb shelters.

Over all, more than 1,000 Lebanese were killed, and a vast majority were civilians, according to the Lebanese government. Hezbollah has said that no more than 100 of its fighters were killed.

The Israeli report disputes this, claiming that at least 450 and perhaps as many as 650 of the Lebanese dead were from Hezbollah.

Israel suffered 159 deaths, including 41 civilians and 118 military personnel, according to the report.

Israel withdrew its troops from southern Lebanon in 2000 after a presence of nearly two decades, much of it spent fighting Hezbollah. There was periodic cross-border shelling in the ensuing years.

Offering Video, Israel Answers Critics on War

The war erupted on July 12 when Hezbollah crossed the border and attacked an Israeli jeep patrol, killing three soldiers and capturing two more, who remain held by Hezbollah, according to the group.

The fighting stopped Aug. 14, shortly after the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which reaffirmed an earlier resolution calling for Lebanese militias to disarm.

Israel says Hezbollah has only hidden its weapons and is being resupplied from its longtime patrons, Syria and Iran. Israel continues to send warplanes on reconnaissance missions over southern Lebanon, despite criticism from the United Nations forces in the region.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Correction

Because of an editing error, a front-page article on Tuesday about an Israeli report that accused Hezbollah militants of using Lebanese civilians as human shields during the war this summer referred imprecisely to how Amnesty International handled the issue. While it was not addressed in Amnesty's Sept. 14 report on the war, it was in a Nov. 21 report, in which the organization acknowledged the presence of Hezbollah fighters and weapons in civilian areas. But it said this was not conclusive evidence of intent to use civilians as human shields.

Correction-Date: December 7, 2006

Graphic

Photos: Photographs from southern Lebanon include, top, a village where Israel says a rocket launcher was kept, before and after an Israeli airstrike. Above, another village where Israel says a rocket launcher was hidden. (Photos by Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies)(pg. A12)

Load-Date: December 5, 2006

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ISRAEL'S CHANCE TO CREATE PEACE

The Australian (Australia)

August 3, 2006 Thursday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Leader; Pg. 11

Length: 615 words

Body

MATP

Dismantling Hezbollah is the best hope for the region

SPEAKING in Rome last week, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora poignantly asked whether, in the present conflict in the Middle East, Lebanese lives were worth less than those of Israelis. While the question was heartfelt, it was misdirected, as it ignored the overarching role of Iran in provoking and maintaining the present conflict through its proxy organisation, Hezbollah. Yet Mr Siniora's broader point about the danger to Lebanese civilians was underscored a few days later by the Israeli strike on the Lebanese village of Qana that tragically killed more than 50 civilians -- mostly children. Here it is not Mr Siniora, but of all people a UN official, whose words best sum up the tragedy.

In the days before Qana, UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland strongly condemned Hezbollah for deaths that were entirely of the terrorist group's own making. Mr Egeland accused Hezbollah of "cowardly blending ... among women and children" and said: "I cannot understand how (Hezbollah) could be proud that there were more women and children hurt than armed militants." The terrible loss of life at Qana proved the bloody truth of his words. For it is Hezbollah that uses civilians as human shields by stationing their weapons in residential neighbourhoods. It is Hezbollah that builds bomb shelters only for its leaders. And it is Hezbollah that uses the civilian deaths that result from its behaviour as propaganda. Had the roles at Qana been reversed, the terrorist organisation would be celebrating and crowing about its power while the boffins of the world community urge the Jewish state to pull back and make peace with their surprisingly effective enemy.

While Mr Egeland was right about Hezbollah, he erred in saying that Israel is using excessive force and violating international law. For at the moment it is only Israel that has power to create an enforceable, lasting peace in the region. And it is only Israel that has the power to enforce UN Resolution 1559, which calls for Hezbollah's eviction from southern Lebanon. An immediate ceasefire, as called for by European and other leaders, would only entrench the status quo ante that existed from 2000 when Hezbollah was allowed to control southern Lebanon, nominally protected by the UN and free to take pot shots at northern Israel. The idea of a UN peacekeeping force able to enforce its own resolutions is as unworkable as it is unimaginable. Over its 28-year life, the \$133million-a-year UNIFIL mission to southern Lebanon has been unable to stop Hezbollah attacks on Israel, such as the one that provoked the present conflict. A UN mission to disarm Hezbollah and dismantle its presence in southern Lebanon would require troops willing, able and authorised to occupy as much as half the country. Even were such a force to be authorised, European and Middle Eastern nations would be highly reluctant to commit personnel. A ceasefire

ISRAEL 'S CHANCE TO CREATE PEACE

enforced by the UN would lead at best to the folding-in of Hezbollah into the Lebanese Army, to the detriment of Lebanon's sovereignty.

In the wake of Qana, Israel was forced to abandon its reliance on air power to dislodge Hezbollah and shift focus to ground operations. On Tuesday, the Israeli cabinet unanimously approved widening the ground war. Later operations were launched in the Hezbollah stronghold (and former Syrian outpost) of Baalbek, more than 100km inside Lebanon, capturing several Hezbollah operatives. The ground operation in Lebanon could be more costly for Israel in the short term, but creating its own buffer against those who would seek to destroy it may be the country's only option.

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

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Hi-tech war for hearts and minds rages on all fronts

The Australian (Australia)

August 4, 2006 Friday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 507 words

Body

AFP

TYRE: Hezbollah's al-Manar television station offers one picture of the Shia guerillas battling Israel across south Lebanon.

"Lebanon, we are your men to liberate the land of the south. Without artillery we won't get it back," goes the theme song to the network's hourly newscast.

Thousands of green flyers dropped on villages by Israeli F-16s offer another view.

A crude caricature of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah hiding behind Lebanese civilians is accompanied by the accusation: "(Lebanon's) protectors are its thieves."

This is the battle for hearts and minds being waged on the internet, television and radio, via telephone calls and text messages, through flyers and media leaks.

With Hezbollah intent on retaining support in the face of the Israeli bombardment, and Israel bent on turning the Lebanese against the Shia group, this may be the decisive front in the conflict, analysts say.

"The public relations war is as significant as the actual military battles on the ground," says Amal Saad, author of a book on Hezbollah and a political science professor at the Lebanese American University.

Israel wants to convince the Lebanese that Hezbollah is the source of their troubles and that if they disarm it they will prosper.

But in the Hezbollah heartland, the guerillas have a firm grip on information. Posters of its leaders, past and present, dangle from every electrical pole and street light; yellow Hezbollah flags and billboards detailing successful attacks on Israel are everywhere.

Here, the Hezbollah spin machine is well oiled and widely trusted. Shirtless out-of-work fishermen lounging dockside, students in sidewalk cafes and housebound old women invariably tune in to al-Manar or its FM counterpart, Nour Radio.

"They have credibility. All the other channels bring out news filled with lies," says Hassan Mahmoud, 24, watching the channel with friends at one of the few cafes still open in the largely abandoned port city of Tyre.

Hi-tech war for hearts and minds rages on all fronts

The satellite channel broadcasts militant anthems, frontline footage of triumphant Hezbollah soldiers, and anti-Israel and anti-US propaganda. It reports hourly that Hezbollah is defeating its Israeli foe and punishing Israeli cities with its rocket barrages.

A steadily increasing counter tracks "the number of Israelis hiding in basements", while Israeli news footage of panicked citizens and buildings destroyed by Hezbollah rockets is recycled during each commercial break.

Israel has made it a priority to silence the Hezbollah messenger by pounding its headquarters from the air, but without success.

Israel did succeed in temporarily replacing an al-Manar satellite broadcast with pictures of fleeing Hezbollah fighters, but with al-Manar transmitting on three separate satellites, only a fraction of viewers noticed the interruption.

Israel also highjacked a local radio station, replacing Arab pop tunes with a grim reminder that a summer of "packed restaurants, crowded beaches, tourism, and foreign investment" was replaced with "blood and destruction", thanks to Hezbollah.

Load-Date: August 3, 2006

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WHAT IS A PAKISTANI TODAY?

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 13, 2006 Sunday

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Length: 635 words

Body

Today is Independence Day. Today, we celebrate the boons of freedom. Today, we look back at the journey this country has made, and we glow with pride. However, maybe not today at least, not me. However, let me explain, before you accuse me of being an unpatriotic member of the BLA/PML (N) (more or less the same thing, isn't it?).

On Friday, after I had offered my prayers, my respected friend Samiullah Malik phoned me from London, just before he went off to offer his. Unusually, this cheerful gentleman was upset. Malik Sahib is an engineering consultant settled in the UK, where he is also active in what is increasingly becoming the 'Muslim community' rather than the Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Arab/Turkish etc communities. He, therefore, has an unusually large number of friends among non-Pakistani Muslims, not just in London, but also all over the UK.

He had been upset by our Chief of Air Staff's remarks about Shaukat Aziz not having to cry as the Lebanese Prime Minister, Fawad Siniora, has had to. Apparently, this has not struck a chord with Malik Sahib's Arab friends. "When you exploded the nuclear bomb, we prayed for your success. Now, when one of our leaders cries, you make jokes about it."

"Siniora might cry, but Lebanon has fought for almost a month. How long has the Pakistan Air Force ever fought?" (Actually, none of Pakistan's wars with India have lasted as long as Hezbollah's present campaign.) "In 1973, it was the Pakistan Air Force which sent us pilots to fly our planes. Now the head of that same air force is making jokes about Arabs in their time of woe."

Malik Sahib has no answers. Frankly, nor do I. How many of us Pakistanis must apologise to how many Arabs before the impression that Pakistanis do not care for Arabs is corrected? Or is the impression correct? Do Pakistanis now feel that the Lebanese are only getting what they deserve? How far has the concept of the Ummah survived? It used to mean one people, one ruler, one state. OK, that is no longer possible in an enlightened and moderate world. Clearly, our leaders know more than those to whom Islam was revealed, which is reassuring. Or perhaps it is not practical any more.

Perhaps now the Ummah merely means to help other Muslims as far as they can, in their distress, in their hardship? However, we were told on national TV some years ago, we have not taken a theka for all the Muslims, and sab sey pehley Pakistan. OK, so that's clear. Sab sey pehley Pakistan, but we should help other Muslims whenever we can, right?

Like we helped the Taliban. Or the foreign fighters whose women and children were being hunted in Waziristan because they wanted to fight Americans. OK, that is because otherwise the USA will destroy Pakistan. Well, it can't because we're not Afghanistan or Iraq, but it would lower our GDP, which is already merely 6.6 percent.

WHAT IS A PAKISTANI TODAY?

By the way, have you noticed the lengthening list of countries, which we are not? We're not Afghanistan, nor Iraq, nor Libya, nor anyone else. Well, we're not Taliban, Al-Qaeda, **Hizbullah**, Kashmiri mujahideen, Palestinian suicide bombers or anything else that involves the least risk of damage to our crisply ironed clothes.

Are we even Pakistanis any more? Pakistan used to be a leader of the Muslim world, envied by all of the puppet rulers, looked down upon by nouveau riche oil-wealthy potentates, but with a special place in the hearts of ordinary Muslims all over the world. We Pakistanis might have been powerless to do anything for our Muslim brothers, but at least we wanted to.

Now, does being Pakistani mean insulting the feelings of other Muslims? Of making fun of their misfortunes? I honour Fawad Siniora for weeping for his country. I wish Yahya Khan had shed a tear in public before resigning. However, no, he maintained a stiff upper lip right to the end.

Load-Date: October 9, 2006

End of Document

No ceasefire imminent

Guardian.com

August 1, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1544 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.

Body

OLMERT: NO CEASEFIRE IMMINENT

Israel moved quickly to dampen down any expectations of an early ceasefire. "The fighting continues. There is no ceasefire and there will not be any ceasefire in the coming days," Ehud Olmert said yesterday, in comments reported by all the papers. The Telegraph says the Israeli PM was criticised by his own generals after offering a 48-hour ceasefire to enable the Lebanese to leave southern Lebanon - a move Hizbullah described as a "deception".

The Guardian says the Israeli PM wants an international force in place before he halts the offensive; the countries that may join the force want a ceasefire before they go in. The result is stalemate.

"Mr Olmert's defiance is rooted in rock-solid domestic support," says the Times. "Polls show 80-95 per cent support for continued strikes, with no evidence that the Qana killings or last week's bombing of a UN observer post caused a flicker of the needle. Overwhelmingly Israelis have internalised their Government's portrayal of the conflict as an existential one: Hizbullah as the proxy of Iran's mullahs, determined to exterminate the Jewish people."

Ian Black, writing in the Guardian, says "doveish" Israelis are aghast at the war: "Israeli doves hate Hizbullah but oppose Olmert's disproportionate response, which looks weak because he is relying only on force ... Some of the agonising now being heard in Israel flows from a flattering self-image that few Palestinians or foreigners would recognise. One successful Hebrew TV drama has a storyline about a pilot who has a nervous breakdown after killing civilians in Gaza while pursuing Hamas suicide bombers. The concept of 'shooting and weeping' has been around since Golda Meir expressed her fury at the Arabs who forced nice Jewish boys to fight and kill ...

"In the background are real worries about Israel's power to see off its enemies, an erosion of the old certainty that it can fight its way to security. And there is unease, not to be underestimated, about the very legitimacy of the Jewish state. If there are answers to these concerns they can only be in redoubled efforts, with whatever help others can give, to find a just settlement with the Palestinians."

Condoleezza Rice acknowledged that she found herself in "dicey circumstances", a remark the Telegraph says indicates that America is making little progress in trying to negotiate a settlement. But, it says, "there were signs that some of Israel's goals were being met. Hizbullah fired only two missiles into Israel yesterday and military sources claimed its rocket launching capacity had been largely destroyed."

No ceasefire imminent

The FT says Israel is deluding itself if it thinks it can destroy Hizbullah. "The prestige of Hizbullah has soared, in Lebanon and in the Arab and Muslim world ... Lebanon, whose 2005 'Cedar Revolution' Washington prematurely and opportunistically banked as a success for its Middle East freedom drive, is being destroyed ... The country could soon be a failed state."

* 'There will not be any ceasefire'

* Ian Black

* How ceasefire hopes foundered

* Telegraph: We will not cease fire, says Israel

SAYING NO TO DRUGS CLASSIFICATIONS

"DRUGS: THE REAL DEAL," splashes the Independent, publishing the "first ranking based upon scientific evidence of harm to both individuals and society. It was devised by government advisers - then ignored by ministers because of its controversial findings."

Predictably, heroin and cocaine come top, with alcohol at number five and tobacco at nine. Cannabis, a class C drug, is at 11, above solvents, LSD (class A), anabolic steroids and ecstasy (also class A), with the stimulant leaf khat at number 20.

The existing drug classifications "owe more to fear than reason", the paper says. The Guardian agrees. "The anomalies are staggering. Last year, for example, fresh magic mushrooms were criminalised and put in the most serious class A. Yet the drug is not addictive and not linked to crime ... With class A status comes a jail term of up to 14 years - as many youngsters have found to their cost. A brutalising spell inside can snuff out a bright future just as surely as any drug, and the adverse effects go beyond the unfortunate individuals caught: the misclassifications fuel a bulging prison population, which is costly for taxpayers and detrimental to the hope of reforming dangerous criminals."

* Class matters

* Independent: Drugs: the real deal

TWO MEN ARRESTED OVER 1967 SCHOOLBOY MURDER

The reopening of a 39-year-old murder case makes the front page of the Mirror. Two men were arrested yesterday over the killing of Keith Lyons, a schoolboy who was stabbed to death on a path near Brighton in 1967, "probably by teenage bullies from a rival school," the paper says. "Now 55 and 56, the suspects have been released on bail pending further inquiries," it reports.

The discovery of the murder weapon - which had been mislaid - under a pile of boxes in a police station basement, together with the use of DNA samples, have enabled police to reopen the case. They have appealed for information about a family who emigrated to Canada soon after the boy's murder.

* 39 years after boy's murder, police arrest two men

* Mirror: Nicked ... after 39 years

REFUSE OFTEN OFFENDS

"110 FINE IF YOU PUT BIN BAGS OUT EARLY," fumes the Mail in one of its threat-not-a-promise splashes. The paper says bin bags left out on the street are "an increasing problem" and councils are considering on-the-spot fines.

No ceasefire imminent

The Conservatives' local government spokesman tells the paper that fridge dumping is a much more serious problem and that "a smelly kipper or yesterday's vindaloo" should not have to be kept inside the house.

* Mail: Fine if you put bin bags out early

ROONEY'S A WINKER TOO

The first encounter between Wayne Rooney and Cristiano Ronaldo since the infamous winking incident intrigues all the papers. The Star says the Manchester United player greeted the "Portuguese winker" with "venom". But everyone else thinks they have made up thanks to a diplomatic lunch hosted by Sir Alex Ferguson.

According to the Sun, Rooney "winked at the World Cup winker" and the rest of the team fell about laughing.

* Sun: They wink, it's all over

UNBAREABLE STRESS

It is August and, despite the efforts of Hizbullah and Ehud Olmert, the silly season is in full swing. Today, the Herald Tribune applies itself to the vexed question of how little a lady on an artificial beach in Paris ought to wear.

Two policeman gaze searchingly at a couple of bikini-clad women lying thigh-to-thigh on a towel. "Nudity and thongs have been banned, but several women said that unwanted stares were already enough to deter them from baring too much. Page 3," says the front-page caption. Well, quite.

"This being France, there are rules for just about every sort of behaviour," reports the paper. "And this being France, even when there are rules, there also may be tolerance when they are broken, particularly when it comes to beach attire."

The monokini - a bikini minus its top half - has been banned, although no fines have yet been issued since the police and security staff have found that sunbathers generally oblige when asked to cover up. "If people want to see breasts, they should go to the Lido or the Moulin RouNo ceasefire imminentaris Plage advises.

"To stop women from wearing thongs, it's just so outrageous," a "tanned and well-oiled Brazilian property manager whose tiny Speedo was rolled down to reveal his buttocks", tells the paper. (Can Speedos be singular?)

A civil servant in a "revealing green bikini" offers some perspective on the issue. "We have so many problems in our country that deciding whether you take off your top or wear a thong is so trivial. What's more important is that people who have to work all summer have a place to sunbathe and feel like they're on vacation. If it's forbidden to be bare, I don't care."

Indeed. If the Wrap only worked 35 hours a week, she would definitely feel as though she were on holiday, beach notwithstanding.

Meanwhile, the Mail carries the cautionary tale of a man who decided his Cillit Bang all-purpose cleaner wasn't up to the job and mixed it with an eggcupful of petrol. "This turned out to be a mistake," the paper reports. "For the cocktail of fluids gave off vapours which were then ignited by the pilot light in his living room boiler." Ronald Cox was unhurt, but his bay window and kitchen ceiling will need to be replaced.

* IHT: Paris beach is all but au naturel

* Mail: The day my house went Cillit Bang!

COMING UP ON GUARDIAN UNLIMITED TODAY

Two British soldiers were killed today when their patrol vehicle came under attack from insurgents in Afghanistan.

No ceasefire imminent

The Israeli army will move deeper into southern Lebanon and hold on to that territory for several weeks, until a multinational force can deploy there, senior Israeli officials said.

Tony Blair has attended a climate-change summit with California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, BP boss Lord Browne and Virgin chief Sir Richard Branson.

The future of the Government's policy of imposing "control orders" on terror suspects when there is insufficient evidence to bring them to trial will be decided by the Court of Appeal this afternoon.

* Apologies for the late arrival of yesterday's Wrap, which was due to technical difficulties at our end.

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Israel offers evidence to critics on war

The International Herald Tribune

December 6, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 1115 words

Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Nada Bakri contributed reporting from Beirut.

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Israel's military, which has been accused of abuses in its war against Hezbollah this summer, has declassified photographs, video and prisoner interrogations to buttress its accusation that Hezbollah systematically fired from civilian neighborhoods in southern Lebanon and took cover in those areas to shield itself from Israeli attack.

Lebanon and international human rights groups have accused Israel of war crimes related to the 34 days of fighting in July and August, saying that Israel fired into populated areas and that civilians accounted for the vast majority of the more than 1,000 Lebanese killed.

Israel says it tried to avoid civilians, but Hezbollah fire from civilian areas, itself a war crime, made those areas legitimate targets.

In a new report, an Israeli research group says that Hezbollah stored weapons in mosques, battled Israeli forces from inside empty schools, had its fighters fly white flags while transporting missiles and launched rockets from sites near United Nations monitoring posts.

The detailed report on the war was produced by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, a private research group headed by Reuven Erlich, a retired colonel in military intelligence, who worked closely with the Israeli military.

An advance copy was given to The New York Times by the American Jewish Congress, which provided consultation and translated the study into English.

"This study explains the dilemma facing the Israeli military as it fights an enemy that intentionally operates from civilian areas," Erlich said. "This is the kind of asymmetric warfare we are seeing today. It's not only relevant to Lebanon, but is also what we are seeing in the Gaza Strip and in Iraq."

In Lebanon, a Hezbollah official denied the allegations, saying its military units were based outside towns and villages and entered populated areas only when circumstances required it.

Israel offers evidence to critics on war

"We tried to avoid having to fight among civilian areas, but when Israeli troops entered villages, we were automatically forced to fight them from inside these villages to defend it," said the official, who asked for anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on military matters.

The report includes Israeli Air Force video footage that it says shows several instances of Hezbollah operatives' firing rockets next to residential buildings in southern Lebanon and then being bombed by Israel.

The adjacent buildings were presumably damaged, but there is no information on whether civilians were inside.

"The construction of a broad military infrastructure, positioned and hidden in populated areas, was intended to minimize Hezbollah's vulnerability," the report says. "Hezbollah would also gain a propaganda advantage if it could represent Israel as attacking innocent civilians."

In video from July 23, a truck, presumably from Hezbollah, with a multibarreled missile launcher is parked in a street, sandwiched between residential buildings.

The footage comes from an Israeli missile approaching the truck, and the screen goes fuzzy as the missile slams into the target.

In another video, from the Lebanese village of Barasheet, rockets are seen being fired from a launcher on the back of a truck.

The truck then drives a short distance and disappears inside a building. Seconds later, the building itself disappears under a cloud of smoke from an Israeli bomb.

The report says that there were many such examples and that Hezbollah had been preparing for such an engagement for years, embedding its fighters and their weaponry in the Shiite villages in southern Lebanon. When Hezbollah fired its rockets from those areas, Israel faced a choice of attacking, and possibly causing civilian casualties, or refraining from shooting because of the risk, the report said.

During the war, Israel dropped leaflets urging villagers to leave southern Lebanon and also to evacuate Hezbollah strongholds in southern Beirut. Many did flee, but some remained.

Critics of Israel's actions charge that the military either fired at civilians or was reckless in its pursuit of Hezbollah.

In one highly publicized Israeli strike on July 30, at least 28 Lebanese civilians, including many women and children, were killed when Israel bombed a residential building in the village of Qana. Israel said it had aimed at a Hezbollah rocket cell that had recently fired from near the building.

In several other instances, Israel bombed vehicle convoys that were trying to leave the combat zone in southern Lebanon, killing many civilians. Human Rights Watch, a group based in New York, said shortly before the war ended that it had documented the deaths of 27 Lebanese civilians killed while trying to flee.

Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, wrote that the Israeli military "seemed to assume that because it gave warnings to civilians to evacuate southern Lebanon, anyone who remained was a Hezbollah fighter. "But giving warnings, as required by international humanitarian law, does not relieve the attacker of the duty to distinguish between civilians and combatants and to target only combatants."

Amnesty International said that Israel "consistently failed to adopt necessary precautionary measures" and that its forces "carried out indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on a large scale."

The Israeli report defended the Israeli operations, saying "airstrikes and ground attacks against Hezbollah targets located in population centers were carried out in accordance with international law, which does not grant immunity to a terrorist organization deliberately hiding behind civilians."

The Israeli report included video of three Hezbollah prisoners being questioned by Israeli military personnel.

Israel offers evidence to critics on war

Muhammad Srour, a young Hezbollah fighter, said he had initially received training in Iran and was undergoing further training in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley when the war broke out. He was sent to the front lines.

Like many Hezbollah fighters, he traveled by motorbike, but they were frequently the targets of Israeli fire.

Hezbollah operated freely from homes in the village, with the permission of residents who had fled. Srour acknowledged that homes used by Hezbollah were more likely to draw fire.

But, he said, "better that the house is destroyed and the Israelis don't enter and come back to conquer Lebanon."

The report makes frequent references to Hezbollah using Lebanese civilians as human shields, though it cites only two villages where Hezbollah operatives allegedly prevented residents from leaving.

Erlich acknowledged that overall, Hezbollah did not use coercion against Lebanese civilians.

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Long refugees themselves, Palestinians now play host

Christian Science Monitor

August 8, 2006, Tuesday

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Length: 606 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: RASHIDIYEH CAMP, LEBANON

Highlight: Palestinians in Lebanon open their camps to fleeing families.

Body

Nearly six decades ago, the Lebanese gave shelter to tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees who fled their homeland when the state of Israel was created. Now some of those refugees' descendants are returning the favor. Hundreds of Lebanese who have abandoned their homes have sought shelter in the Palestinian camps ringing the southern coastal town of Tyre.

The hospitality has its roots in the close ties between the southern Lebanese and the inhabitants of what was Palestine before 1948. Those ties endure in the respect that many Palestinians in Lebanon have for Hizbullah, the Shiite group battling Israeli forces.

"The Palestinians in the camps see a victory for Hizbullah as a victory for themselves," says Sultan Abul-Aynayn, head of the Palestinian Fatah movement in Lebanon and commander of this camp.

Rashidiyeh's Palestinian population of about 17,000 has been joined by as many as 1,000 Lebanese, who have settled into the empty classrooms at Ain al-Qassem school. The Palestinian popular committee that runs the camp provides food three times a day, mattresses, and medicines.

"There was very heavy shelling in Deir Qanoun [two miles southeast] and I just wanted to leave," says Manna Mughniyeh. Wearing a pink shirt and head scarf, she pats the head of her 9-year-old son, Mohammed, and says, "When he hears shelling he runs to me and hugs me tight. Look, his hair is turning gray with fear."

One small classroom has become a temporary kitchen. A woman stands over two caldrons on small gas stoves, stirring a stew of cracked wheat and chickpeas.

"We are doing our humanitarian duty," says Aliya Zumzum, who runs the women's committee overseeing the feeding of the arrivals. "We have been guests in their country for more than 50 years and they have been our guests for only a few weeks."

Ibrahim Shweir arrived a week ago from Mansouri, four miles south, with his wife, wounded in the leg by shrapnel, his four children, and a nephew. A laborer who looks much older than his 54 years, Mr. Shweir says he lost an eye in 1989 from Israeli artillery shelling. His wife was paralyzed in one arm a year later in another Israeli bombardment. "It's painful for the people," he says wearily. "Everybody's had enough."

Long refugees themselves, Palestinians now play host

A head-scarfed teen, identifying herself only as Zeina, disagrees. "No, we haven't," she says. "We will remain steadfast. As long as the resistance is with us, we have nothing to fear."

In one room, Zeinab Mughniyeh stands at the chalkboard copying verses from a Koran. "These are verses we should recite to bring victory," she says.

To the south, in banana plantations and citrus orchards, smoke rises from artillery barrages and airstrikes. The thump of exploding shells is heard every few seconds. Six bangs north of Rashidiyeh signal Katyusha rockets streaking toward Israel.

While people go about their business, the camp is on a war footing. Mr. Abul-Aynayn has donned a military uniform for the first time in 12 years. "When the Israelis enter the camps, we will not be fighting them in civilian clothes," he says. A vast signed photograph of Yasser Arafat hangs on his wall. "When they get here, we won't be any less of an obstacle than Hizbullah."

The echo of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon resonates loudly in the narrow streets here. Then, residents of Rashidiyeh and the other two camps around Tyre put up a stiff defense for several days. "It was a tough battle.... We were kids but we fought them hard," says Abu Shawqi. "God willing, they will come. They're killing our children in the West Bank and Gaza and we are ablaze with eagerness to fight them."

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