

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:40:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498878

Documents (100)

1. [6 killed in Lebanon clashes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

2. [Italian peacekeepers tread softly in wounded land](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

3. [Amnesty report blames conditions in PA on Israel . Half of 330 Palestinians killed in '07 were civilians. IDF says Hamas bears direct responsibility. NGO Monitor: Report ignores context of Palestinian terror](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

4. [Guff on Gaza as US show goes on](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

5. [World datelines](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

6. [Another one of Beirut's many unrequited lovers](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

7. [Rockets fired from Lebanon hit northern Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

8. [CNN "\(EURO\)sÃ„Ã´s Soledad O"\(EURO\)sÃ„Ã´Brien talks diversity on TV, behind the scenes and in our lives Oct. 14 at Langford](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

9. [RAUNCH WEAKENS COMICAL STRENGTHS OF 'ZOHAN' STRENGTHS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

10. [Olmert will lose, but party may win; No sure victory for Netanyahu](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

11. [*New fight rips at a fragile 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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

12. [*Firebrand Muslim cleric steps down*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

13. [*Who will guard human rights at the UN ?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

14. [*GreenGuide's Critical View*](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

15. [*Store thieves flee to Canada Security experts say the country is inheriting crime in wake of U.S. crackdown on organized shoplifting*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

16. [Former Israeli PM hits comeback trail](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

17. [Cartoon sends student editors to jail POLITICS- IRAN : Campus Cartoons Trigger Wave of Suppression](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

18. [Faux purses fund terrorism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

19. [Olmert faces new sleaze charges](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

20. [Hilali makes way for new mufti](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

21. [*New Israeli PM feels heat; Livni has six weeks to form coalition*](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

22. [*MR. CHERTOFF'S DEEPEST FEARS. Terrorists trying to enter U.S. from Canada*](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

23. [*Former Israeli PM hits comeback trail*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

24. [*Business Community concerned over CM Position*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

25. [*MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

26. [Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

27. [Defiant Hamas hits Israel with dozens of rockets](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

28. [ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

29. [Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

30. [Hamas missiles barrage Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

31. [*Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

32. [*Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

33. [*Conflict in the Mideast Hamas hits back at Israel with rockets*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

34. [*Horror on flipside of the fence*](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

35. [*A Town Under Fire Becomes a Symbol for Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

36. [*Under a 7-year attack, Israeli town's identity is formed*](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

37. [Few tears will be shed over Bush's departure](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

38. [Hated 'peacemaker'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

39. [Suicide attack on troops](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

40. [U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: THIRD DISTRICT Candidates debate how best to handle Iran 's nuclear threat, support Israel Several hundred people turned out to hear the candidates' views on foreign policy and to question the candidates.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

41. [US slammed for holding kids](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

42. [Boy stole dad's dollars](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

43. [Provincial Iraqi governor escapes injury in suicide blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

44. [Gangs - situation normal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

45. [Israel defiant as Gaza toll soars](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

46. [Israel turns 60, still yearning for the peace that never comes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

47. [*Leaders may be dead*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

48. [*Mentally ill bombers used*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

49. [*Israelis leave a trail of debris in Gaza Ceasefire allows aid to flow into battle zone*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

50. [*Israeli attacks take toll in Gaza; More than 60 dead in retaliation for Hamas rockets*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

51. [*The Thursday Column - Christmas has ended - so should Gaza siege*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

52. [Leading article: Gaza ground assault: When victory is a hollow word](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

53. [Mentally ill bombers used](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

54. [Bush tempers criticism on stalled Mideast democracy, claims Iran poses danger](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

55. [Israeli forces kill 60 in bloodiest day yet seen in Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

56. [Explosives Found at Paris Department Store](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

57. [*Detainee speaks of prison time, U.S. - Iran relations*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

58. [*Rudd's quest for true blue Muslims*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

59. [*LTTE targeting impoverished Lankans - British Magazine*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

60. [*Rudd's quest for true blue Muslims*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

61. [*Fresh troops for Somalia*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

62. [*Nod for women bishops*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

63. [BOOKS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

64. [Share ideas, trio urges](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

65. [Deal on judges now near](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

66. [Gandhi a myth, say Brits](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

67. [Activists condemn Israel](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

68. [*Israeli leader busy forging new coalition; Netanyahu demands quick election*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

69. [*Israel defiant as Gaza toll soars*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

70. [*Israel ushers in Jewish New Year amid tensions along its borders*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

71. [*Turkey moves to lift head scarf ban*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

72. [*Iraqi governor unhurt in suicide bomb attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

73. [Protest was not an example of love and 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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

74. [Fears mount for refugees caught in Lebanon siege; Muslim extremists accused of shooting at fleeing civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

75. [Foreign residents flee as bombardment continues](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

76. [Caramel teases out feminine truths](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

77. [Pakistanis harvest the sun](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

Jan 31, 2009

78. [*Angola slated over Muslims*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

79. [*DIGEST*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

80. [*Fresh troops for Somalia*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

81. [*Wisconsin women victims of discrimination*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

82. [*Presidential candidates debate in N.H.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

83. [Briefs](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

84. [DIGEST](#)

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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

85. [Beheading threat in Kenya](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

86. [Charities plead for Lebanon ceasefire](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

87. [Tuesday - Critic's View](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

88. [INSIDE THE TIMES: May 15, 2008](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

89. [News Summary](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

90. [The Sergei connection](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

91. [There is a harsh crackdown on 'bad hijab' \(improper dressing\) this year IRAN : Dress Code Row - Another Ahmadinejad Failure](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

92. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

93. [A day at Shefayim - ESRA celebrates 30 years](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to
Jan 31, 2009

94. [IDF likely to expand Gaza op before cease-fire is imposed. Army impatient for government to decide on next move. Commander of Izzadin Kassam's rocket division killed in strike. Gilad to Cairo tomorrow to seal Egyptian commitment to stop smuggling](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to
Jan 31, 2009

95. [Diaspora gets a different taste at Israel 's 60th](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to
Jan 31, 2009

96. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to
Jan 31, 2009

97. [Guardian Weekly: Books: A deadly embrace: Fawaz A Gerges reads three books that consider how past US policy haunts Iraq 's present: The Strategy and Ideology Of Martyrdom by Mohammed M Hafez US Institute of Peace 285pp \\$17.50 A Poisonous Affair: America , Iraq , and the Gassing of Halabja by Joost R Hiltermann Cambridge University 314pp \\$29 Merchant of Death: Money, Guns, Planes, and the Man Who Makes War Possible by Douglas Farah and Stephen Braun Wiley 308pp \\$25.95](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to
Jan 31, 2009

98. [*The great Winograd expectation*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

99. [*One-sided reality of combat in Israeli- Palestinian conflict*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

100. [*Letters*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

6 killed in Lebanon clashes

The Star (South Africa)

June 23, 2008 Monday

e4 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 662 words

Body

Tripoli - Sectarian fighting raged for a second day in north Lebanon today. Security sources said six people have been killed and 48 wounded in the clashes in Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city. This is despite a Qatari-brokered ceasefire agreement between Sunni supporters of the government and Alawite gunmen close to the Hezbollah-led opposition.

Taipei - Taiwan today began its annual computer-simulated war games that anticipate an invasion by China, despite warming ties between the island and its mainland rival. According to reports, the scenario envisions the Taiwan military battling Chinese invaders on the ground, according to the reports. Hankuang means Chinese glory. The war games will last five days.

Los Angeles - Comedian George Carlin, who died of heart failure at a Los Angeles hospital yesterday, is seen in one of his performances. The counter-culture hero was famed for his routines about drugs and dirty words.

Tokyo - Japanese police today searched for a female stabber who lightly injured three women in attacks at a crowded train station in the western city of Osaka. Local police issued a public plea for information on the suspect and released pictures of her. The images show a middle-aged woman in a black dress and shoulder-length hair, her face obscured by a large sun hat.

London - Councils risk alienating the public with the "overzealous" use of special surveillance powers designed to stop serious crime, the Local Government Association said today. Chairperson Simon Milton wrote to every council warning them that they risk being stripped of their powers by the government if they use them to tackle lesser offences such as littering or dog fouling.

Kuala Lumpur - A Sri Lankan businessman jailed four years ago for allegedly supplying nuclear weapon components to Libya has been freed and is no longer a threat to national security, a Cabinet minister said today. The case drew additional attention as he was alleged to have deceived a company partly owned by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's son to procure the components.

Paris - Fourteen non-EU nationals without visas or work permits escaped from a Paris immigrant detention centre after a fire that was deliberately set, police said today, revising earlier figures of 50 detainees. Following a fresh roll-call, police said of the 249 people held at the Vincennes centre at the time the fire broke out at the weekend only 14 were missing and believed to have escaped.

33 Sri Lankan rebels killed

6 killed in Lebanon clashes

Colombo - The Sri Lankan military says fighting in the embattled northern region has killed 33 ethnic Tamil rebels and six government soldiers. A spokesperson says the latest round of battles took place in the Mannar, Vavuniya, Welioya and Jaffna areas in northern Sri Lanka yesterday. In the worst fighting, army troops captured six rebel bunkers in Vavuniya, he said.

Islamabad - Suspected pro-Taliban militants have abducted 16 security personnel in Pakistan's tribal area bordering Afghanistan, officials said today. The law enforcers from tribal police were seized during a raid on two check posts by militants in the tribal district of Khyber Agency yesterday. "The insurgents exchanged fire with the security forces for more than one hour."

Canberra - Australia today said it would consider uranium sales to India if New Delhi was able to strike a landmark nuclear pact with the US and satisfy international concerns about safeguards. The government was closely watching so-called "123" negotiations, although it would not sell yellowcake to countries that had not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a senior official said.

Jakarta - A member of the world's most threatened rhinoceros species is seriously ill in Indonesia, a forestry official said yesterday. Torgamba, a male Sumatran rhino living in Lampung province on Sumatra island, is suffering from chronic kidney problems and anaemia, ministry spokesperson Masyud said. "Torgamba is 28 years old, quite old for a rhino."

Load-Date: June 23, 2008

End of Document

Italian peacekeepers tread softly in wounded land

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

December 3, 2007 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1072 words

Byline: Rebecca Murray

Body

"We have to put boots on the ground, but at the same time we want to conquer hearts and minds," says Lieutenant Colonel Nicola Tereano, the young, charismatic base commander for the Italian peacekeepers in Zibqin, South Lebanon. Tereano leans back in his chair and sips espresso outside the base cafe.

TYRE: "We have to put boots on the ground, but at the same time we want to conquer hearts and minds," says Lieutenant Colonel Nicola Tereano, the young, charismatic base commander for the Italian peacekeepers in Zibqin, South Lebanon.

Tereano leans back in his chair and sips espresso outside the base cafe, a mandatory stop for all soldiers craving a taste of home. "Without the approval of the population we cannot fulfill our duty - it's impossible," he explains. "So the main task is to accomplish the mission as well as do activities with the community. Any other way is a risk to us."

Zibqin is a small, isolated farming town of 1,500 people perched on a rugged hilltop with breathtaking views of Tyre and the Mediterranean Sea below. Just a few miles from the Israeli border, the rubble and billboards commemorating Zibqin's "martyrs" tell of the town's long embattled history with its southern neighbor.

Last summer, Zibqin suffered a devastating blow when a bomb killed 12 members of the same family sitting down to breakfast at the start of the 34-day war with Israel. Sixty percent of the town's homes were subsequently destroyed by the bombardment, while thousands of cluster munitions now contaminate its agricultural fields.

Although **Hizbullah** gave those with damaged property up to \$10,000 in spending money after the cease-fire, residents complain that the long-term reconstruction aid promised by Premier Fouad Siniora's government has yet to materialize, forcing many to emigrate to Beirut, Africa, the Americas or the Gulf, unable to afford the expensive cost of rebuilding their homes and finding work.

"The first day back after the war was really very bad - there was a smell of death," recalls Fatima Bazzi, a schoolteacher living in a small cinderblock home with her family near the Italian base on the town's outskirts. "Now many people have moved away," she adds softly. "Before I had a lot of friends, but we've been apart for a whole year and our relationship has changed."

Italian peacekeepers tread softly in wounded land

Tereano and his "Savoia Cavalleria" regiment of 150 men arrived in Zibqin one month ago, part of an ongoing six-month rotation. They are members of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), initially established in 1978 and upgraded by Security Council Resolution 1701 to an expanded, more militarized presence below the Litani River at the end of last year's war.

With lead contributions by Italy, France, Spain and Germany, there are now 14,000 peacekeepers supporting the Lebanese Army enforcing the peace in the South.

Tereano's men patrol the area in light armored vehicles watching for illicit arms, provide security for the border demarcation with Israel, record daily flyover violations by Israeli jets, and put great store in maintaining community relations.

"The Italian unit is the best at doing this," former long-time UNIFIL adviser Timur Goksel told Inter Press. "They believe that going after hearts and minds provides security for the troops - it brings intelligence and warnings."

However, the roadside bombing that killed six Spanish troops on June 24 exacted a toll on community relations as peacekeepers throughout Lebanon's South retreated behind tall blast walls and armored patrols.

"UNIFIL is in a dilemma," explains Goksel. "On one hand as a military, they have to be seen as taking measures. However, this comes at a cost. Peacekeepers need to maintain relations with people as a stabilizer. You cannot do this by staying behind fences and in armored cars."

With the bitter winter rains approaching, rising fuel costs dominate the conversation at the Bazzi home while the television broadcasts the latest news about Beirut's political crises. This family is no stranger to hardship. Fatima and her sister Somaya teach to help support the family, while their ailing father had to destroy cluster bombs before harvesting his fields of olives and tobacco for minimal profit.

Fatima's grandparents moved in last summer after the bombing destroyed their house, while her older sibling had her legs blown off by another Israeli bomb, 15 years earlier.

The family's favorite pastime is spending evenings on their front porch, smoking argeleh and greeting neighbors, as the Italian patrols periodically pass by.

"The Nepalese were here until 2000. They acted like civilians and wanted to help everybody," recalls Somaya fondly.

"Italian UNIFIL doesn't talk to anyone, they just drive by in their vehicles," she continues, echoing a common refrain voiced by many in the community. "We don't feel a change, and Israeli fighters are still daily in the sky."

Tereano, in consultation with Zibqin's mayor, is working to reverse this perception. After a local woman and her child, with a cut, bleeding hand, was denied emergency medical care at the base's gate, the Italians listened to the community's subsequent indignation, apologized, and established a Friday morning first aid clinic in town.

Tereano is now looking to form a football team with the town's kids, a health forum for women and foot patrols with an interpreter along the town's main road.

"The risk at the moment is very low for the Italian contingents," he says. "Here in the village you can feel it - the situation is calm."

While the national political crisis overshadows daily life for Lebanese everywhere, Goksel dismisses rumors that UNIFIL will pull out of the South anytime soon. "They will continue to stress their relationship with the Lebanese Army, and be careful not to get involved in local politics," he says. "By next August [the date for mandate renewal talks] the government will have sorted itself out."

"We have good relations with the Italians," affirms Zibqin's mukhtar Raef Bazzi, whose job includes settling community disputes. Noting that cluster bomb removal is his primary concern, he is enthusiastic for the Italian's

Italian peacekeepers tread softly in wounded land

upcoming projects and hopes that emergency medical care on the base, road maintenance and increased interaction with the Italians happens.

"It's known that all the South loves UNIFIL and treats them like members of their own family. If something happens to them, it's not from the South but from the outside," he says.

Load-Date: October 22, 2008

End of Document

Amnesty report blames conditions in PA on Israel. Half of 330 Palestinians killed in '07 were civilians. IDF says Hamas bears direct responsibility. NGO Monitor: Report ignores context of Palestinian terror

The Jerusalem Post

May 29, 2008 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 1107 words

Byline: JONNY PAUL, Jerusalem Post correspondent

Body

LONDON - Israel and the Palestinian Authority came in for sharp criticism in Amnesty International's annual report "The State of the World's Human Rights," released on Wednesday.

The report documented human rights abuses in 150 countries and territories around the world during 2007.

The PA section of the 380-page report highlighted the interfactional violence between Fatah and Hamas forces, accusing both factions of "grave human rights violations including arbitrary detention and torture."

However, it said the deteriorating economic conditions for Palestinians were exacerbated by Israel's "further tightening of their blockade on the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)."

Frequent IDF attacks on Palestinian civil infrastructure is cited as another cause of the deterioration.

"Economic and social problems caused by decades of Israeli occupation, military attacks, stifling blockades and punitive economic measures in the OPT grew more severe," it said.

According to the report, more than 330 Palestinians - half of them civilians and including young children - were killed in Israeli attacks, mostly in the Gaza Strip, in the first four months of 2008.

Kassam rockets were described as "homemade" in the report. It said the rocket attacks had killed two Israeli civilians and wounded several others. It also mentioned that indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians, in which 13 Israelis were killed, had resulted in the "lowest annual fatality figure since the outbreak of the intifada in 2000."

However, the Jerusalem-based organization NGO Monitor said the context of the Palestinian campaign of terror against Israel was absent in the report.

"The report states that 'suicide bombings and shooting attacks almost ceased,' implying a fall in the occurrence of these human rights violations. This absurdly ignores the frequent attacks thwarted by Israeli forces, using checkpoints - which are condemned by Amnesty - and other means," the group said in a statement.

Amnesty report blames conditions in PA on Israel . Half of 330 Palestinians killed in '07 were civilians. IDF says Hamas bears direct responsibility. NGO Monitor....

NGO Monitor analyzed Amnesty's Middle East coverage in 2007 and said that the report presented a "gross distortion of the conflict, selectively report[ed] events to remove the context of terrorism and ignore[d] human rights issues not related to its political agenda, while repeating un- sourced and anecdotal claims."

In 2007, Amnesty singled out Israel for more condemnation than Syria, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Lebanon and Algeria, and more items were published on Israel than on Hamas, Hizbullah and the PA combined, NGO Monitor said.

"If detailed reports are used as an indicator, Amnesty ranks Israel and Iraq as equally the worst human rights abusers in the Middle East," the organization continued.

The latest Amnesty report also blamed Israel for the deaths of 40 Gaza residents, who it said died as a result of Israel refusing to allow medical supplies into Gaza or to let patients in urgent need of medical attention leave.

Following last year's Annapolis peace summit, Israel has not lifted movement restrictions in the territories, the report continued.

"Despite US-led efforts to achieve a resolution of the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict following talks at Annapolis in 2007, the Israeli authorities continued to build the 700-km. wall/fence, to expand illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, to demolish Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and elsewhere, and more than 500 military roadblocks continued to restrict or impede the movement of Palestinians between towns and villages throughout the West Bank," it claimed.

In response to the report's criticism, the IDF said it was doing its utmost to minimize harm to uninvolved Palestinian civilians in its struggle against terrorism.

"Terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, operate from population centers, deliberately exploiting women and children as human shields, and as such bear direct responsibility for the harm caused to civilians on both sides," said the army.

The IDF went on to emphasize that in recent years, there had been a significant decline in the number of uninvolved civilians hurt in the fighting, due to the relentless efforts of the IDF.

In response to the condemnation of checkpoints, the army said it had been conducting regular security assessments on crossings and checkpoints, and that an extensive plan to ease restrictions had been implemented by the IDF and the Civil Administration.

Regarding the Palestinian territories, the Amnesty report said that in the first half of 2007, 300 Palestinians were killed in interfactional fighting. It claimed that when Hamas seized power in Gaza in June 2007, lawlessness, unlawful killings and abductions decreased significantly.

"Members of PA security forces and armed groups affiliated to Fatah and Hamas carried out unlawful killings and abductions of rivals with impunity," it said.

Both Israel and the PA were accused of unlawful detentions and unfair trials.

"Thousands of Palestinians, including scores of children, were detained by Israeli forces in the OPT. Among those detained were dozens of former ministers in the Hamas-led PA government and Hamas parliamentarians and mayors who were seemingly held to exert pressure on Hamas to release [kidnapped IDF soldier Cpl.] Gilad Shalit," the report said.

After Hamas seized Gaza, the report added, some 1,500 people were detained. Most were released after 48 hours but were required to sign pledges promising to not participate in protests or other forms of opposition. Both Israel and the Palestinians were also accused of using torture.

Amnesty report blames conditions in PA on Israel . Half of 330 Palestinians killed in '07 were civilians. IDF says Hamas bears direct responsibility. NGO Monito....

Many of those detained by Palestinian authorities alleged they had been tortured by being beaten, tied in painful positions and threatened. Some were told they would be shot in the legs.

Tariq Muhammad Asour, a former policeman, was detained by Hamas in June. He was beaten for six hours with metal wires, sticks and a shovel and had nails driven into his shins with a hammer, according to the report.

Published to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the UN's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the report's main focus was the broken promises of governments that in the past six decades "have shown more interest in the abuse of power or in the pursuit of political self-interest than respecting the rights of those they lead." Amnesty challenged world leaders to apologize for these human rights failures and to recommit themselves to concrete action to bring about change.

"The human rights flash points in Darfur, Zimbabwe, Gaza, Iraq and Myanmar demand immediate action," said Irene Khan, the organization's secretary-general. "Injustice, inequality and impunity are the hallmarks of our world today."

Graphic

Photo: AN IDF soldier gives a drink of water to blindfolded Palestinian detainees on the Gaza border yesterday. (Credit: Ariel Schalit/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Guff on Gaza as US show goes on

Canberra Times (Australia)

January 21, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 11

Length: 589 words

Byline: ROBERT FISK

Body

It's a wrap, a doddle, an Israeli ceasefire just in time for Barack Obama to have a squeaky-clean inauguration with all the world looking at the streets of Washington, DC, rather than the rubble of Gaza.

America's Condoleezza Rice and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni thought their new arms- monitoring agreement reached without a single Arab being involved would work. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki- moon welcomed the unilateral truce. The great and the good gathered for a Sharm el-Sheikh summit. Only Hamas itself was not consulted. Which led, of course, to a few wrinkles in the plan.

First, before declaring its own ceasefire, Hamas fired off more rockets at Israel, proving that Israel's primary war aim to stop the missiles had failed. Then Egypt shrugged off the deal because no one was going to set up electronic surveillance equipment on its soil.

And not one European leader travelling to the region suggested the survivors might be helped if Israel, the European Union and the United States ended the food and fuel siege of Gaza.

After killing hundreds of women and children, Israel was the good guy again, by declaring a unilateral ceasefire that Hamas was certain to break. But Obama will be smiling. Was not this the reason, after all, why Israel suddenly wanted a truce?

Egypt's objections may be theatre the US spent the equivalent of about \$A40 million last year training Egyptian security men to stop arms smuggling into Gaza and since the US bails out Egypt's economy, ignores the corruption of its regime and goes on backing Hosni Mubarak, there's sure to be a "compromise" very soon.

And Hamas has had its claws cut. Israel's informers in Gaza handed over the locations of its homes and hideouts and the Government of Gaza must be wondering if they can ever close down the spy rings. Hamas thought its militia was the Hezbollah a serious error and the world would eventually come to its aid. The world (though not its pompous leaders) felt enormous pity for the Palestinians, but not for the cynical men of Hamas who staged a coup in Gaza in 2007 which killed 151 Palestinians. As usual, European statesmen appeared hopelessly out of touch with their own electorates.

And history was quite forgotten.

Guff on Gaza as US show goes on

The Hamas rockets were the result of the food and fuel siege; Israel broke Hamas's own truce on November 4 and 17. Forgotten is the fact Hamas won the 2006 elections, although Israel has killed a clutch of the victors.

And there'll be little time for the peacemakers of Sharm el-Sheikh to reflect on the three UN schools targeted by the Israelis and the slaughter of the civilians inside.

Poor old Ban Ki-moon. He tried to make his voice heard just before the ceasefire, saying Israel's troops had acted "outrageously" and should be "punished" for the third school killing. Some hope. At a Beirut media conference, he admitted he had failed to get a call through to Livni to complain.

It was pathetic. When I asked him if he would consider a UN war crimes tribunal in Gaza, he said this would not be for him to "determine". But only a few journalists bothered to listen and his officials were quickly folding up the UN flag on the table.

What no one noticed was that the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting on Sunday night was opening on the 90th anniversary to the day of the opening of the 1919 Paris peace conference which created the modern Middle East. One of its main topics was "the borders of Palestine". There followed the Versailles Treaty. And we know what happened then.

The rest really is history. Independent

Load-Date: October 11, 2011

End of Document

World datelines

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

May 19, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 654 words

Body

Afghanistan: Chief targeted

KANDAHAR -- A suicide bomber blew himself up next to a police convoy in southern Afghanistan on Sunday, killing four civilians and wounding eight other people, an official said.

A U.S.-coalition member and another civilian died in a separate roadside blast, also in the south.

The suicide bomber was targeting the district police chief in Musa Qala in Helmand province, but instead killed four civilians, said provincial police chief Mohammad Hussein Andiwal. Eight other people, including five policemen were wounded, he said. The police chief was not harmed, Andiwal said.

Cuba: U.S. funding dissent

HAVANA -- Cuba has documented proof that U.S. officials on the island are delivering private funds to political dissidents in order to undermine the communist government, Cuban officials said Sunday.

Although Cuba has accused U.S. officials of funneling federal funds to dissidents before -- a charge Washington has repeatedly denied -- Sunday's accusation is the first to suggest American diplomats are acting as couriers to deliver privately donated cash, outside Washington's auditing oversight.

Egypt: Bin Laden speaks again

CAIRO -- Osama bin Laden released a new message on Sunday denouncing Arab leaders for sacrificing the Palestinians and saying the head of the Shiite militant group Hezbollah did not really have the strength to take on Israel.

In his second audio message in three days focusing on the Palestinians, the al-Qaida leader said the only way to liberate Palestine is to fight the Arab regimes that are protecting Israel. And he called on Muslim militants in Egypt to help break the blockade of Gaza.

Bin Laden said Muslims should ignore the Islamic prohibition against raising arms against fellow Muslims, claiming it was legitimate to rise up against leaders who are not governing according to Islamic law.

Italy: Health risks assessed

ROME -- The U.S. military in Naples is sampling tap water and soil for pesticides and other pollutants because of worries that tons of uncollected garbage poses a health risk for its personnel based in the city.

World datelines

Samples were taken earlier this month from sinks and yards of residences used by Navy and civilian military employees, Navy spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Wendy Snyder said Sunday.

The samples were sent to Germany for laboratory analyses, and the results are expected later this month or in early June. Snyder said Navy personnel had been anxious about possible health effects, although no link has been found so far to such complaints as rash or itchy eyes, Snyder said.

Kuwait: Hardliners make gains

KUWAIT CITY -- Muslim hardliners made strong gains in Kuwait's parliamentary elections while **female** candidates failed once again to win any seats, official results showed Sunday.

Religious conservatives, both Sunnis and Shiites, gained two seats to hold 24 -- nearly half of the 50-member parliament, according to results read on state-owned Kuwait Television.

Westernized liberals kept their four seats and came close to sending the first woman to the parliament of this small, oil-rich U.S. ally.

Myanmar: Leaders sees camps

YANGON -- The leader of Myanmar's ruling junta made his first visit to a refugee camp Sunday, patting the heads of babies and shaking hands with cyclone survivors, amid growing international criticism over the government's handling of the crisis.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, rebuffed so far in attempts to discuss the situation with the junta's leaders, announced he would go to the disaster zone Wednesday to try to ramp up aid efforts.

A senior British official hinted a breakthrough may also be near that would allow foreign military ships to join the relief effort, but warnings grew of a potential second wave of death among children hard-hit by the lack of fresh water and proper shelter. At least 78,000 people were killed in the May 2-3 storm and another 56,000 are missing.

DESERET NEWS, MONDAY, MAY 19, 2008

Load-Date: May 19, 2008

Another one of Beirut's many unrequited lovers

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

October 11, 2008 Saturday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 984 words

Byline: Olivia Snaije

Body

Beirut is a city that gets under one's skin. It was a favorite with Arab intellectuals before the 1975-1990 Civil War, but the city today has taken on a veritable persona, obtaining an almost cult-like status with writers and artists obsessed with its kaleidoscopic existence, its insouciance, and its propensity for violence.

LONDON: Beirut is a city that gets under one's skin. It was a favorite with Arab intellectuals before the 1975-1990 Civil War, but the city today has taken on a veritable persona, obtaining an almost cult-like status with writers and artists obsessed with its kaleidoscopic existence, its insouciance, and its propensity for violence. One of these artists is London-born Lebanese Zena al-Khalil, who is also a writer and a curator.

Khalil, 32, grew up in Nigeria. She moved to Beirut at 18 to explore the city and her Lebanese identity. While studying graphic design at AUB, the city began to obsess her, providing an unending source of inspiration for her work. Over the past 10 years, her relationship with the city has evolved from a more shy, introspective flirtation, to a full-fledged, passionate affair.

Khalil's first solo exhibit in London has just opened and is aptly called "Maybe one day Beirut will love me back ..."

"My work is kind of like taking a walk down Hamra Street," says Khalil, who lives not far from the famous Beirut commercial drag. Despite having lived there for 14 years now, she continues to react to, delight in and absorb the city's endless visual barrage of street culture, whether in the form of billboards for lingerie juxtaposed with posters of Hizbullah martyrs or in dollar shops selling cheap war toys made in China, all of which become material for her work.

The 20 portraits in London are Khalil's synthesis and reworking of the civil war she never lived. Her mind-boggling array of doodads, including plastic flowers and soldiers, beads, beer-bottle labels, dolls and cheap fabrics, are affixed with pushpins because, as Khalil says in her catalogue, "In some warped conceptual vein, I didn't really want anything to be permanent. In many ways, these pieces are re-writing history. The idea of them being able to be totally reconstructed was intriguing for me."

Khalil, like many other returnees, initially felt like an outsider in Lebanon because she hadn't lived through the Civil War. For those who dreamed only of fleeing the conflict and didn't have a choice, this may seem ironic, but in Lebanon, having lived through the Civil War is a badge that some Lebanese proudly wear.

Another one of Beirut's many unrequited lovers

In a forthcoming book written in English, "Beirut I love you," published in hardback in November by Saqi books, Khalil writes of a friend: "He represented a Beirut I always wanted, but could never have. He lived through the war ..."

She has since gotten her own share of war experience: She was in Lebanon during the Israeli onslaught in the summer of 2006, during which time posts from her blog, Beirut Update, were reprinted in major newspapers in the West.

Khalil began working with images of war on March 20, 2003, the day the US-led invasion of Iraq began. "I was in my studio and the TV was on, everything was live," she said.

She became fascinated by soldiers in general, and contemplated on how young men react when thrown into the melee of warfare. She began to use the themes of machismo and weapons in a show in Germany last winter called "But I Can't Let Go." For the London exhibit she takes these themes further, using well-known photojournalistic shots from the Civil War such as Pierre Perrin's photograph for Gamma-Liaison of two fighters dressed carefully for their roles, one draped in weapons, naked from the waist up wearing a sleeveless vest with a fringe and a cap with a skull on it, the other wearing shades and striking a pose leaning on his machine gun. Khalil meticulously adorns her macho figures with plastic flowers, cheap necklaces, toy soldiers and silver butterflies, making them look ridiculous and at the same time highlighting how menacing they were and how powerful they obviously felt.

One of the exceptions to this all-male parade is her use of an image of a young **female** Phalangist fighter firing her weapon, clad in jeans and a tank top. Khalil sticks a pink keffiyeh on her and encircles her with daisies and roses, titling the portrait "Don't call me Baby." Using the same image in a separate piece, Khalil positions the **female** fighter as a backdrop for pink plastic machine guns, the ubiquitous keffiyeh and a sprinkling of trinkets.

As with her past work, the color pink is ever-present.

"I've been working with pink for 10 years," says Khalil. "Pink represents my generation. It's superficial, it's very materialistic, it's all about having, rather than experiencing."

Khalil is situated on the younger, pop end of the spectrum of the many Lebanese artists who work on the subject of the Civil War, such as Rabih Mroue, Walid Raad or Paula Yacoub. Her work is a very public self-examination of what it can mean to be a Beiruti. One can picture Khalil as a sponge, absorbing the onslaught of contradictions and stimuli in Beirut, which she then digests and transforms into mixed media art works. Her intense longing to connect to Beirut is raw and sincere, as is her questioning of Lebanon's complicated social order, be it gender, religion or its relationship to violence.

Khalil was in Norway for work when the street clashes began last May. She was distressed to be far from Beirut. She wonders in her new book: "How was it that in this beautiful place, tranquil and serene, all I could think about was being thrown into an insecure and violent place? When I could have calm waters and rolling green hills, I wanted stress and concrete. But was it really that? Beirut had to be more than that. It is a lot more than that. "

"Maybe one day Beirut will love me back ..." is up at the Flawless Gallery in London until October 19

Load-Date: October 10, 2008

Rockets fired from Lebanon hit northern Israel

Guardian.com

January 8, 2009

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theguardian

Length: 620 words

Highlight: Israeli forces return fire after four rockets land near Nahariya, raising fears Gaza conflict could spread

Body

At least four rockets were fired from Lebanon into northern Israel today, leading the Israeli army to return fire and raising fears that the conflict in Gaza could spread.

The exchanges came as Israeli air strikes destroyed several houses in the town of Rafah, on Gaza's southern border, today after what Palestinians said was one of the heaviest nights of bombing since the conflict began 13 days ago.

Intense artillery strikes, along with waves of aerial bombardment, were reported across the Gaza Strip.

Israeli tanks were seen moving in southern Gaza and leaflets were dropped near the border with Egypt warning residents to leave the area "because Hamas uses your houses to hide and smuggle military weapons".

Around 5,000 Palestinians fled their homes and took refuge in two UN schools that had been set up as shelters.

For the first time, the conflict widened to northern Israel, where four katyusha rockets fired from southern Lebanon landed near the town of Nahariya, injuring two people.

The Israeli military fired back at the point from which the rockets were launched.

Military officials said they were concerned about attacks by the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Two years ago, Israel fought a heavy, month-long war in Lebanon that claimed hundreds of lives.

As international negotiations to bring about a ceasefire in Gaza continued haltingly, the death toll among Palestinians rose to at least 688, with around 3,000 injured.

Palestinian health officials were reported as saying that around one-third of the dead were civilians, with 219 children and 89 women killed. Ten Israelis, three of them civilians, have died. Heavy fighting was reported near Khan Yunis, in southern Gaza, and in Jabalia, to the north, earlier today. At least one person was killed and 10 injured.

Despite days of intensive Israeli attacks, Palestinian militants were still able to fire rockets, hitting the city of Be'er Sheva overnight and Ashkelon and Ashdod this morning.

Rockets fired from Lebanon hit northern Israel

The Israeli military said it had captured 120 suspected Hamas fighters and had bombed the houses of two Hamas militants, in Rafah and Khan Yunis, overnight.

A total of around 60 sites were hit overnight, including, the military said, a mosque used to store weapons, 15 smuggling tunnels in the south, several rocket-launching areas and buildings housing weapons. It said several gunmen were also hit.

The UN security council has yet to reach an agreement on a ceasefire resolution, although the US has supported an initial deal outlined by France and Egypt. Although the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, said both Israel and the Palestinian Authority - which is based in the occupied West Bank and is run by Hamas's bitter rival, Fatah - had accepted the deal, Israel said there was agreement on broad principles but there had yet to be an agreed plan for practical action.

Israel wants Hamas to halt all rocket firing into southern Israel and has called for an international arms embargo on the Islamist movement.

Hamas, which did not seem to be part of the French deal, wants an end to Israel's months-long economic blockade of Gaza.

The British foreign secretary, David Miliband, who was at the UN in New York, said: "I have seen the first glimmerings of the possibility of a ceasefire ... it's far too early to say we can get a breakthrough."

Yesterday, the Israeli cabinet agreed to continue with the fighting at the same time as it considered the ceasefire proposals.

Military planners have prepared for even more intense operations in Gaza in which Israeli soldiers would push deep into the crowded urban areas of the strip to attack Hamas gunmen.

Thousands of Israeli reservists have been called up and would be ready by Friday, Israeli defence officials said.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009

**CNN's Soledad O'Brien talks diversity on TV,
behind the scenes and in our lives Oct. 14 at Langford**

Inside Vandy: Vanderbilt University

September 30, 2008 Tuesday

University Wire

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 623 words

Byline: Tim Ghianni

Body

Soledad O'Brien, anchor and special correspondent for CNN's Special Investigations Unit, will deliver a talk, "Diversity: OnTV, Behind the Scenes and in Our Lives," 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 14, in Langford Auditorium at Vanderbilt University.

The lecture is part of the North Star Leadership Series sponsored by the Office of Leadership Development and Intercultural Affairs at Vanderbilt.

General admission tickets are \$10 for the public and are available through Ticketmaster at www.ticketmaster.com, at the Sarratt Student Center box office on Vanderbilt's campus and at the door. Tickets are free to Vanderbilt students, faculty and staff at the Sarratt box office. Only one free ticket may be picked up per person with Vanderbilt identification card. Tickets are \$5 for non-Vanderbilt students with valid school or university identification - these tickets are also available at the Sarratt box office.

For CNN's Special Investigations Unit, O'Brien reports hour-long documentaries throughout the year and files in-depth series on ongoing and breaking news stories for all major CNN programs. She also covers political news as part of CNN's political team.

Most recently, she reported for CNN Presents: Black in America, an on-air and digital initiative revealing the current state of black America 40 years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The program features six hours of documentaries and weekly reports about the real lives behind the stereotypes, statistics and identity politics that frequently frame the national dialogue about black America.

O'Brien joined CNN in July 2003 as the co-anchor of the network's flagship morning program, American Morning. Her reporting following Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in Phuket, Thailand, earned her numerous awards and critical acclaim.

She also covered the London terrorism attacks in July 2005 as well as the late count of Ohio's contested electoral votes in November 2004. Earlier that fall, she anchored the live coverage of the burial of Yasser Arafat. In fall 2003, O'Brien was the only broadcast journalist permitted to travel with first lady Laura Bush on her trip to Moscow.

O'Brien came to CNN from NBC News where she had anchored the network's Weekend Today since July 1999. During that time, she contributed reports for the weekday Today show and weekend editions of NBC Nightly News.

CNN "Soledad O'Brien talks diversity on TV, behind the scenes and in our lives
Oct.14 at Langford

and covered such notable stories as John F.Kennedy Jr.'s plane crash and the school shootings in Colorado and Oregon. In 2003, she covered the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster and later anchored NBC's weekend coverage of the war in Iraq. Additionally, in 1998, she traveled to Cuba to cover Pope John Paul II's historic visit.

In 2007, O'Brien garnered a Gracie Allen Award for her reporting from Cyprus on the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict as well as her reports from the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. The NAACP honored her with its President's Award in recognition of her humanitarian efforts and journalistic excellence, and this year she received the first "Soledad O'Brien Freedom's Voice Award" created in her honor by Community Voices at the Morehouse School of Medicine. The award, which will be given each year, honors mid-career professionals who serve as catalysts for social change within their fields.

O'Brien was part of the coverage teams that earned CNN a George Foster Peabody Award for its Katrina coverage and an Alfred I. duPont Award for its coverage of the tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia. In 2006, the National Urban League awarded her its Women of Power award. She is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

She is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in English and American literature.

-- Vanderbilt University News Service

Load-Date: January 18, 2018

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RAUNCH WEAKENS COMICAL STRENGTHS OF 'ZOHAN' STRENGTHS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

June 6, 2008 Friday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT; MOVIE REVIEW; Pg. C-1

Length: 549 words

Byline: Barbara Vancheri, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Body

It could be called the Judd Apatow Game (patent pending). Every time a character in one of his movies doffs his clothes, or references his private parts, you could take a drink. Doesn't have to be beer, could be water or lemonade.

Let's just say "You Don't Mess With the Zohan," directed by Dennis Dugan and written by star Adam Sandler, Robert Smigel and Apatow, would leave you well-hydrated.

It doesn't take long for a shot of Sandler's (or his body double's) bare backside, just the first of many in this PG-13 rated comedy about an Israeli commando who fakes his death so he can pursue his dream of styling hair in New York.

The concept is daffy in a funny, fresh way, but the middle of the movie panders for laughs by turning Zohan (Sandler) into a sex machine who provides a little something extra during or after the color, cut and blow drying. See the middle-age or elderly women line up outside the salon for the services of Scrappy Coco, the fake name Zohan uses.

In Israel, Zohan was a top commando who nabbed a Palestinian terrorist named Phantom (John Turturro). "You're like Rembrandt with a grenade," Zohan's father marvels.

But what Zohan really wants to do is to cut and style hair, which leads his parents to ask if he's gay, using a derogatory Yiddish term. He is not, by any means, but he's weary of the endless fighting and just wants to make people "silky smooth."

While chasing the Phantom, he fakes his death and stows away on a plane to America. After arriving in New York, he heads for his dream workplace -- a Paul Mitchell salon -- where he is ridiculed for his out-of-date hairstyle and disco fever.

He eventually lands at a small, struggling salon owned by, of all people, a Palestinian, Dalia (Emmanuelle Chriqui, Eric's girlfriend on HBO's "Entourage"), but he may not be able to keep his real identity a secret.

"You Don't Mess With the Zohan," directed by Dugan ("I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry," "The Benchwarmers"), starts and finishes strong with some sharp observations about ethnic animosity and stereotypes.

RAUNCH WEAKENS COMICAL STRENGTHS OF 'ZOHAN' STRENGTHS

In between, you can watch for a parade of former "Saturday Night Live" stars and other recognizable faces in cameos or supporting roles, as with Rob Schneider, who plays a Palestinian cabby named Salim. It's the best part he's had in a long time.

Sandler, who worked out with a Navy SEAL for four months, looks physically fit enough for his feats of strength and adopts an accent as thick as hummus, which goes with any and all food groups and occasions according to this movie.

Sandler and Turturro, especially, look like they're having a great time although at almost two hours, the movie could have benefited from some tightening, toning down the almost nonstop raunch (seemingly aimed at young men) and eliminating one singer's appearance and album plug.

It's all pretty silly, including the "Hezbollah hot line," but Zohan's superhuman soldiering, the Middle Eastern tensions and the immigrant experience -- there's an amusing bit about electronic stores -- take a back seat to the Jewish James Bond's sexual healing.

So, age permitting, break out the beer. To drink or cry into.

'YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN'

* Critic's Call: Two Stars

* Starring: Adam Sandler, John Turturro

* Rating: PG-13 for crude and sexual content throughout, language and nudity.

Notes

Movies are rated on a scale from one (bomb) to four (classic) stars./ Post-Gazette movie editor Barbara Vancheri can be reached at bvancheri@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1632.

Load-Date: June 7, 2008

Olmert will lose, but party may win; No sure victory for Netanyahu

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

June 30, 2008 Monday

National Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A11; Matthew Fisher !@AKW=Comment

Length: 618 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, National Post

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -While Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert twists in the wind, his political future miraculously catching every favourable breeze, his Cabinet plots openly against him, and his most likely replacement sits not so quietly fuming while waiting to pounce.

Former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party will win enough seats to lead the next government if Olmert's coalition collapses and fresh elections have to be held. It is precisely because of this likelihood that the Prime Minister has been able to keep his awkward coalition together despite lurching from crisis to crisis, including the botched war against Hezbollah two years ago.

Many deputies who back the government, including those who belong to Olmert's Kadima Movement, are terrified of an early election because they are certain to lose their jobs and certain that Netanyahu would return to the Knesset with far more than the 12 seats Likud has now.

Something that could upset this calculation is if Olmert leaves office in such a way that Kadima chooses a new leader -- most likely foreign minister Tzipi Livni, who is unusually popular in a country that intensely dislikes most of its politicians -- before elections are held. This seemed impossible until this week, but this scenario might actually play out now because Olmert, pushed mightily by antsy Labour coalition partners and some Kadima members, has reluctantly agreed to a party leadership primary in September.

If Livni wins that ballot, it could spoil Netanyahu's apparent destiny. Although he was prime minister from 1996 to 1999, the Likud leader has held a long apprenticeship in a string of major Cabinet portfolios and has been the prohibitive favourite to be the next prime minister for years.

However, Netanyahu's electability comes with an important caveat. Voters back Netanyahu far more because they dislike Olmert -- who is arguably the most unpopular democratically elected official in the world-- than because they like him or his political agenda.

In fact, there are stark differences between what most of the Israeli public and Netanyahu think about key issues. Although voters harbour grave doubts about whether any good will come of them, they have generally supported the current U. S.-backed peace talks, whose stated goal is a solution that would create a Palestinian state and oblige tens of thousands of Jewish settlers to leave the West Bank.

Olmert will lose, but party may win; No sure victory for Netanyahu

Netanyahu has rejected these positions, preferring the status quo that settlers have demanded and that Palestinians find so unacceptable. He has also been adamant that Jerusalem must remain Israel's undivided capital, which is part of the current peace-talks agenda.

Furthermore, Netanyahu's stridently pro-business policies are out of sync with voters in a country where kibbutzes have withered, but support for their collectivist ideals and for generous social programs to help the less fortunate remain strong.

Netanyahu's patrons and his rigid positions have created an opportunity for Livni, if only Olmert can be pushed aside. Like Olmert, Livni -- who comes from a family that played a prominent role in defeating the British in Mandate Palestine -- is a pragmatist. Unlike Netanyahu, who does not think that this is the time to be negotiating with any of the Palestinian factions, she talks with the secular, Fatah-led Palestinian Authority on an almost daily basis.

Perhaps because she is a newer face, Livni is arguably more popular now than either Olmert or Netanyahu. Pollsters are agreed that if Livni wins Kadima's leadership from Olmert, she has a good chance to pip the long-time front-runner for prime minister, Netanyahu, in an election and become Israel's first **female** leader since Golda Meir.

Load-Date: June 30, 2008

End of Document

New fight rips at a fragile Lebanon

Christian Science Monitor

May 22, 2007, Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 1

Length: 1011 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: NEAR NAHR AL-BARED PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP, Lebanon

Body

The Lebanese Army continued to shell this refugee camp just north of Tripoli on Monday in the second day of its fight against a shadowy Islamic faction known as Fatah al-Islam.

The violence, the worst internal strife since the 1975-90 civil war, began early Sunday when Palestinian militants stormed the entrance of the seaside camp, home to 40,000 refugees, and overran Army positions. At least 71 people have been killed.

Lebanon may be confronting a prolonged siege with the group, which some say is linked to Al Qaeda. But it is also facing a larger battle as its fragile government struggles to maintain power in the wake of last summer's war and battles an opposition movement led by Syrian-backed **Hizbullah**.

In divided Lebanon, many have contradictory views of the true identity of Fatah al-Islam, which declared its existence late last year when it split from Fatah al-Intifada, a pro-Damascus Palestinian faction, and seized two of its bases in the seaside Nahr al-Bared camp. Is it an affiliate of Al Qaeda or a tool of Syrian military intelligence - or both?

The Lebanese government has vowed to crush the group once and for all, but says it will continue to abide by a longstanding agreement that prevents the state from entering Lebanon's 12 established Palestinian refugee camps.

"We have hermetically sealed them inside Nahr al-Bared, and we will use political and popular means and the Army to get rid of Fatah al-Islam," says Marwan Hamade, minister of telecommunications and leading anti-Syrian politician.

Palestinian factions have offered their support for the government's moves and have undertaken precautions to prevent any fighting in other refugee camps.

Fatah al-Islam is viewed with deep suspicion by other more moderate Palestinian groups, which should help ensure that the violence in Nahr al-Bared remains localized, analysts say.

After members of the group stormed the Army posts on Sunday, other militants deployed in central Tripoli to assist allies, some wanted by the Lebanese authorities on suspicion of carrying out a bank robbery a day earlier in the coastal town of Amioun, south of Tripoli.

New fight rips at a fragile Lebanon

Hundreds of Army reinforcements converged on Tripoli as a series of street battles broke out with the heavily armed militants.

Further fraying the nerves of the Lebanese, a large bomb exploded in a car park in eastern Beirut, killing one woman and wounding 12 on Sunday.

The government and its supporters in the anti-Syrian March 14 alliance accuse Syria of triggering the upsurge of violence. They say it's a Syrian reaction to the imminent adoption by the United Nations Security Council of an international tribunal to judge the killers of Rafik Hariri, a former Lebanese prime minister whose murder in February 2005 is widely blamed on Damascus.

Syria has denied any involvement in Mr. Hariri's death.

The tribunal lies at the heart of the six-month political crisis in Lebanon that has left the country politically and economically deadlocked.

The creation of the tribunal, the result of an agreement between the UN and the Lebanese government, depended on the formal approval of the Lebanese parliament. But Nabih Berri, Lebanon's parliamentary speaker, has refused to have a parliamentary session to allow a vote to proceed. Last week, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora asked the UN Security Council to push the tribunal through. The UN Security Council can bypass Lebanese parliamentary approval by adopting the tribunal under Chapter 7 of the UN charter.

The government says it believes that once the tribunal is a fait accompli, the pro-Syrian Lebanese opposition will agree to resolve other outstanding issues.

"Some are worried that if the tribunal comes in then bad things will happen to the country," says Mohammed Chatah, senior adviser to Siniora. "But we take the view that decoupling the international tribunal from other strategic issues in Lebanon will allow for progress in resolving these other issues."

But that may be wishful thinking, analysts say, pointing to the violence in north Lebanon and the bomb attack in Beirut.

Anti-Syrian politicians maintain that Fatah al-Islam is composed of Al Qaeda-linked militants and is controlled by Syrian military intelligence to carry out destabilizing acts in Lebanon.

"Palestinian Islamist groups in Lebanon have always had ties to Syrian intelligence. Many of them were trained in Syria and fought in Iraq before coming to Lebanon," says Radwan al-Sayyed, a professor of Islamic law and an adviser to Mr. Siniora.

The group has been accused of a double bus bombing in the Christian town of Ain Alaq in February that left three people dead. It has also been accused of several bank robberies, including Saturday's robbery in Amioun.

The group's leader, Shaker al-Absi, told the New York Times in March he wanted to spread Al Qaeda's message and was training fighters in the camp. He was in custody in Syria until last fall but had been released.

Fatah al-Islam declared itself last year when it split from Fatah al-Intifada, a pro-Damascus Palestinian faction, and seized two of its bases in the Nahr al-Bared camp.

Mr. Absi, a veteran Palestinian fighter who fought in Iraq alongside Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, says the group has nothing to do with Syrian intelligence and is devoted to the Palestinian cause.

According to Islamist sources in Tripoli, the group is receiving funds from supporters in the city who belong to the austere Salafi branch of Sunni Islam. Fatah al-Islam has been using the funds to build a base of popular support in Nahr al-Bared by offering services, say sources.

New fight rips at a fragile Lebanon

"They marry widows or very poor women to give them a home. They are good people who follow an Islamic way of life," says Suleiman Abdullah, a sympathizer.

As for the claim that the group is linked to Al Qaeda, Sheikh Ibrahim Salih, a prominent Salafist cleric in Tripoli was dismissive.

"Al Qaeda is an ideology only. It is an ideology of opposition to America and Israel and to live an Islamic life," he says. "We all believe in that, therefore we are all Al Qaeda."

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Load-Date: May 21, 2007

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Firebrand Muslim cleric steps down

Herald Sun (Australia)

June 11, 2007 Monday

FIRST Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 605 words

Byline: SAM EDMUND

Body

OUTSPOKEN cleric Sheik Taj el-Din al-Hilaly, who infamously suggested scantily dressed women invited rape, has stood down as the leader of Australia's Muslims.

Muslim leaders had been under pressure to sack the firebrand, but the Sheik quit after a four-hour closed meeting at the Preston Mosque yesterday.

Sheik Hilaly refused to comment as he was ushered to a waiting car for a return flight to Sydney.

But the Council of Islamic Jurisprudence and Research later said the Sheik "gracefully declined" to accept another term.

Prominent Melbourne cleric Sheik Fehmi Naji el-Imam, regarded as a moderate Islamic leader, was named his successor.

Sheik Imam -- a member of Prime Minister John Howard's hand-picked Muslim Community Reference Group -- immediately distanced himself from his predecessor and appealed for a fair go.

"We are here to stay so we want to have a very nice relationship with everybody and for everybody to have a nice relationship with us," he said.

"We extend a hand to you, you extend a hand to us. Give us a fair go, we will give you a fair go."

The shake-up was welcomed by Australia's peak body of Islamic councils, which branded Sheik Hilaly outspoken and Sydney-centric.

But one of the Sheik's closest supporters declared he was still the best man for the job.

Keysar Trad, who has often served as spokesman for Sheik Hilaly, said many would be surprised by the change.

"I am quite disappointed," he said. "(Sheik Hilaly) is the man for the job and we shouldn't settle for anyone else.

"His own position was white-anted by so-called Muslim community leaders."

Firebrand Muslim cleric steps down

Sheik Hilaly's comments last year when he likened scantily dressed women to uncovered meat sparked widespread calls for his sacking.

CONTINUED page 2

FROM page 1

Sheik Hilaly also was scorned for praising jihadists for fighting against coalition forces and has been accused of mishandling charity money raised after last year's Israel-Hezbollah war.

He snatched headlines again this year when he declared himself "more Aussie than (John) Howard", labelling the Prime Minister a dictator and saying Australian Muslims were more entitled to the country than those with a convict heritage.

Sheik Imam, who migrated from Lebanon in 1949, will hold a meeting with Muslim leaders in the coming weeks to formulate his plan for the future.

"I'm not controversial," he said.

"We are to express ourselves in a way that, not only to please you, but to say the truth.

"Maybe that sometimes hurts.

"We are part of this community in Australia. We are all Australian.

"In Australia there are many different nationalities, religions and cultures so we live with all this and we want to have a united body which works together."

Asked why he thought Sheik Hilaly was walking away from the job, Sheik Imam said: "Maybe he had had enough, I don't know.

He had got to the stage where he wanted to leave, he said.

The Labor Party last night said Sheik Hilaly had failed to serve the interests of the Islamic community.

"Every religion has the right to choose their own leader and Labor respects that right for all religions," a spokesman for Labor leader Kevin Rudd said.

"However, in recent times it has become obvious that Sheik Hilaly was not serving the interests of the Islamic community or the community more generally by remaining in his position."

Australian Federation of Islamic Councils president Ikebal Patel paid tribute to Sheik Hilaly's term as mufti and said ill-health prevented him from continuing.

"His health hasn't been the best in the last year or two and that certainly has been putting a lot of pressure on him," Mr Patel said.

Editorial, Page 18

Load-Date: June 10, 2007

Who will guard human rights at the UN?

The Jerusalem Post
July 15, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 1049 words

Byline: HILLEL NEUER

Highlight: The writer is executive director of the Geneva-based UN Watch, currently visiting Jerusalem.

Body

Word from the 38th floor of United Nations headquarters in New York is that Secretary-General Ban Ki- Moon is in the final stages of filling the newly vacant - and globally influential - post of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. To find the right person, Ban must ask his candidates tough questions.

More than anything, the UN rights chief must be a person of moral clarity, courage and principle, ready to take on powerful political forces in defending victims of gross violations around the world. He or she must guard the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - the dream of Eleanor Roosevelt that now marks its 60th anniversary - from those who trample them in places like Harare, Teheran or Pyongyang. It's a tall order.

Who's in the running? According to The New York Times, Luis Alfonso de Alba, Mexico's envoy to the UN in Geneva, is a leading candidate. UN insiders report that, among others, Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey is also vigorously campaigning.

While Mexico and Switzerland have the right to nominate diplomats and politicians of their choice, Ban has the duty to question their records.

To seal a \$28 billion gas deal, Calmy-Rey recently visited with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. As world leaders attempt to shun the fanatical regime - the head of which denies the Holocaust, incites to the elimination of a UN member state and illegally pursues the nuclear capability to carry this out - Calmy-Rey chose to pose smilingly with Ahmadinejad, while wearing the Islamic headscarf.

"What disappointed me was Calmy-Rey's attitude during her visit," said Shirin Ebadi, the Iranian Nobel Peace Prize laureate and women's rights advocate. "She knew about the human rights situation in Iran; I even had the chance to speak to her about it beforehand. But once there she never mentioned the human rights situation in Iran, nor met any human rights defenders, not even myself. The only thing of interest to her was the business deal."

Calmy-Rey's strongest endorser is her longtime political confidante from Geneva, Jean Ziegler, the 1989 co-founder of the Muammar Gaddafi Human Rights Prize, whom she recently named as a senior adviser to the UN's discredited Human Rights Council.

Is she to be the world's designated champion of human rights?

THEN THERE is De Alba. He invokes his qualifications as the inaugural president of the Human Rights Council in 2006-2007. Yet this was a period of unprecedented decline. Reform turned into regression.

Who will guard human rights at the UN ?

While the chair is not responsible for the votes of member states, Ban must probe the Mexican diplomat's actions in the areas under his discretion.

What did De Alba do to check the council's dark inclinations, as opposed to appeasing them? The record shows that on De Alba's watch, the new council gave a pass, time and again, to the world's worst abusers. Its resolutions praised Sudan - despite the unrelenting atrocities in Darfur - for "cooperation." When De Alba named an "independent" inquiry panel on Darfur in 2007, why did he defer to the powerful Arab, Islamic and African alliances that support the Khartoum regime, picking government representatives of sympathetic allies, instead of an all-expert panel?

"We were surprised by the method employed by [De Alba]," French UN Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert said at the time. "We missed a good chance to send independent personalities... This is not a good message."

On what basis did De Alba give assurances that Sudan would cooperate with this Darfur mission - when in fact the regime blocked its entry and attacked its report?

History will record that under De Alba's tenure, the council granted effective impunity to all of the world's worst human rights violators. Instead, it targeted Israel in every single one its condemnatory resolutions -10 in one year. From July to November 2007, the council called three special sessions against Israel, legitimizing terrorism committed by Hamas and Hizbullah. The Arab-initiated exercises were so extreme and one-sided that even frequent critics of Israel, both among member states and organizations such as Amnesty International, decried their bias. So why did De Alba defend the sessions as "completely justified"?

The culmination of De Alba's term was his negotiated reform proposal of June 2007, which he labeled "a great diplomatic success... a decision of historic dimensions." In fact, his package eliminated the council's protective mandates for human rights victims in Belarus and Cuba, and instituted a "review" of remaining mandates, which has already resulted in ending the investigation of abuses in the Congo, where four million have died. De Alba's package also included an Algerian-sponsored "Code of Conduct" for independent human rights experts, designed solely to intimidate them from criticizing repressive regimes.

Why did De Alba defend this package, saying, "The end result was highly positive"? In the words of The Wall Street Journal, "Council president Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico drafted a set of rules that mock the institution's very mission." How he adopted these rules was even worse. De Alba trampled basic due process by pushing his package through in the middle of the night, in the wee hours of June 19, 2007, famously denying Canada its right to vote and challenge the package.

I TOO experienced the Mexican representative's justice when taking the council floor, on behalf of UN Watch, to challenge the council's record. De Alba's response was simply to reject my speech as "inadmissible." He threatened to strike any similar remarks from the record. The episode, seen 300,000 times on YouTube, earned him the rebuke of leading newspapers and blogs around the world.

Though De Alba did not initiate the council's worst distortions of the language and idea of human rights, he gave it cover, repeatedly hailing the council, among other things, as "very open." By contrast, his successor, Ambassador Doru Costea of Romania, publicly questioned the forum's balance and credibility.

As the council continues its downward spiral, imposing, in the name of Islamic sensitivities, ominous restrictions on freedom of speech within council debates as well as around the world, an independent, principled and courageous voice in Geneva's inner sanctum is more necessary than ever.

Graphic

Who will guard human rights at the UN ?

Photo: MICHELINE CALMY-REY visiting with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in April to seal a \$28 billion gas deal. Human rights didn't interest her then. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

GreenGuide's Critical View

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

July 3, 2007 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 17

Length: 587 words

Byline: Debi Enker, Brad Newsome, Scott Murray

Body

FREE TO AIR

Cutting Edge: Years of Blood

SBS, 8.30pm

THIS two-part account of a bloody chapter in recent Middle East history begins and ends in 2006, with Israel's invasion of Lebanon following attacks by Hezbollah and the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. In between, the documentary, produced and directed by Dan Setton, focuses on the second Palestinian intifada in 2000 and its aftermath, and on the cycle of violence in Gaza and the West Bank. On the battle-scarred streets overseen by the Palestinian Authority and at the sites of suicide bombings in Israel, the images captured are confronting: gunfights, bleeding bodies filmed where they have fallen, the shock and grief of survivors. Setton also gains access to a range of highly placed government, military and diplomatic officials who offer their perspectives. The picture that emerges is a sad history of hostility and mistrust, an inexorable pattern of vicious attack inevitably followed by more aggressive counterattack. SBS will screen the first chapter at 8.30pm, the second at 10pm. -- DEBI ENKER

Desperately Keeping Sheila

SBS, 7.30pm

IN 2004, SBS decided to do its bit to help the rural crisis by producing a dating game show. There was a shortage of women in the outback and men who lived on the land were lonely, so SBS announced it would "redress the balance" with Desperately Seeking Sheila. The reality-TV series transported an array of eligible Australian and British women to Perth to meet a selection of keen bachelors. The idea was that some of these hopefuls might break the romance drought. There were high hopes and breathless accounts of first impressions, and several optimistic couples emerged from the process. With this companion piece, SBS returns to WA to see how the couples are faring. The hour-long offering looks at what happens after people make a commitment to each other: at the compromises involved, at how they cope with disappointment, at the trust and intimacy that can come with facing adversity together. -- DEBI ENKER

PAY TV

Your Money or Your Wife

Lifestyle, 8pm

AS SOCIETY struggles to come to terms with frightening new addictions such as crystal meth and World of Warcraft, it's reassuring to know that some of the old ones are ticking along just fine. In this slick British series, the evil habit is buying stuff on credit, and Cesarina Holm-Kander, a formidable corporate finance troubleshooter, is the woman who puts a stop to it. Tonight she lays down the law to Kerri, a 22-year-old model who has managed to rack up some £41,000 (\$A97,000) in debt. Cesarina sends Kerri out to give away thousands of pounds in cash to impress on her the amount of money she is wasting in interest. Then there is an eBay auction of some of Kerri's designer gear, lessons in cooking supermarket food instead of letting it rot while you eat takeaways, and a sting operation to see if Kerri will buy a £1000 pug puppy. -- BRAD NEWSOME

MOVIES

Wedding Crashers (2005)

Movie One, 8.30pm

DAVID Dobkin's Wedding Crashers was one of the biggest movies of 2005. The story of two divorce mediators with a fetish for weddings, it is often hilarious and intermittently touching. It opens with a long montage of John (Owen Wilson) and Jeremy (Vince Vaughn) gatecrashing various functions with the sole purpose of bedding as many women as possible. The Australian press rightly made much of the kooky performance by Isla Fisher, while others may feel inspired to pledge their loyalty to the Rachel McAdams (above, with Owen Wilson) fan club. -- SCOTT MURRAY

Load-Date: July 19, 2007

Store thieves flee to Canada; Security experts say the country is inheriting crime in wake of U.S. crackdown on organized shoplifting

The Toronto Star
June 5, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: BUSINESS; Pg. B01

Length: 606 words

Byline: Dana Flavelle, Toronto Star

Body

The same professional shoplifter who was working the Gap chain of casual clothing stores in Texas moved into Toronto last year.

The head of security for the American stores recognized the man after his arrest outside a Gap store in Canada, the audience at a retail conference heard yesterday.

The story illustrates a growing problem for Canadian retailers. Ever since the United States Congress authorized a crackdown on organized retail crime, more of it has been turning up here.

Such crime cost North American retailers \$37.4 billion (U.S.) last year, said Frank Muscato, head of security for Walgreens Ltd., a leading U.S. drugstore chain.

Canada's share is an estimated \$3 billion to \$4 billion, though the actual size is unknown.

"We're not talking about 'Little Johnny' going in and stealing something," said Rita Estwick, head of the Retail Council of Canada's organized crime task force.

The task force is charged with identifying the scope and nature of the problem in Canada and coming up with solutions.

Findings so far show that most Canadian retailers - 84 per cent at last count - report being victims of some form of organized retail crime within the past year. The broad definition includes everything from identity theft to shoplifting.

It's more than a financial headache, Estwick said. In some cases, it's a safety and security risk, for both consumers and employees.

In February, a Wal-Mart greeter in a Vaughan store was attacked after asking a man leaving the store with baby formula to provide proof of purchase.

The man was later arrested for shoplifting.

Canadian retailers have always had problems with "shrink," said Estwick, using the industry term for unexplained shortages of products, whether it's due to suppliers shorting orders, theft by customers and staff or simple store errors.

Store thieves flee to Canada Security experts say the country is inheriting crime in wake of U.S. crackdown on organized shoplifting

"What's evident is the number of cases tied to organized crime is increasing," Estwick said.

Organized crime rings can be as simple as teams of shoplifters who work together, one "boosting" the merchandise, another acting as a lookout, a third person driving the van and a fourth "fencing" the goods through flea markets or second-hand stores, she said.

Others are far more sophisticated, including groups that steal entire truckloads of merchandise and use the proceeds to finance terrorist groups, Estwick said. Often these groups are tied to other crime groups that may be involved in making counterfeit ID or money-laundering, she said.

In March, the RCMP helped U.S. authorities arrest three Ottawa men and two Quebecers for allegedly selling counterfeit Viagra and smuggling cigarettes to finance Hezbollah.

Some crime rings import thieves from other countries, setting the people up in different cities. Pregnant women steal baby formula, hiding the goods under foil-lined baby blankets that prevent the security tags from triggering the store's alarm system.

"They're here today, in Toronto," Muscato said.

Muscato has been instrumental in working with other U.S. retailers to develop effective responses to the problem, both at the store level and in the political arena.

At Walgreens, for example, the store protects the most commonly shoplifted items, such as sunglasses, baby formula, razor blades and chewing gum, by putting them behind glass doors that beep when opened.

Or the items are racked in a way that limits the customer's reach to one item at a time.

The U.S. retailer also helped persuade Congress to pass laws with tougher penalties for professional shoplifters.

Despite the retailers' efforts, "organized retail crime is skyrocketing the U.S.," Muscato said.

"We have a significant task ahead of us," Estwick agreed.

Load-Date: June 5, 2007

Former Israeli PM hits comeback trail

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

May 30, 2007 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 9

Length: 556 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Jerusalem

Body

THE former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak has taken a step towards an unlikely political comeback with a first-round victory in primaries to become the new leader of the Labour Party.

The former general and army chief of staff, who ruled Israel from 1999 to 2001, won 36 per cent of the poll, just short of the 40 per cent needed for outright victory. He goes head-to-head in two weeks against the second-placed candidate, the former spy chief and naval admiral Ami Ayalon, who won 31 per cent of the poll of Labour's 104,000 members.

Apart from deciding the leadership of the fairly dovish Labour Party, the primaries have crucial implications for the coalition Government of the Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, in which Labour is the second biggest party.

In the run-up to the poll, Mr Barak, 65, and Mr Ayalon, 61, sought to gain support by saying they did not wish to serve in cabinet under Mr Olmert, who is desperately unpopular over his role in last year's botched war against the Lebanese militia **Hezbollah**.

But both candidates have also left themselves room to serve under Mr Olmert should it prove opportune. A Labour walk-out from government might only prompt Mr Olmert to replace the party's 19 Knesset votes by courting parties on the far right.

Alternatively, Labour's resignation from the coalition might trigger early elections in which all of the government parties, including Mr Olmert's Kadima and the far-right Yisrael Beiteinu, are threatened by the former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's resurgent Likud party.

Monday's Labour primaries also signal the political eclipse of the current party leader, Amir Peretz, who is Defence Minister in Mr Olmert's coalition cabinet.

Like Mr Olmert, Mr Peretz has been heavily criticised by the security establishment, media and public over his role in last year's Lebanon war.

Mr Peretz was the first Sephardic (non-European) Jew to lead the traditionally Ashkenazi (European) Labour Party, and the first Israeli defence minister to come from outside the country's powerful military establishment.

Former Israeli PM hits comeback trail

He had already said he would stand down after the leadership primaries and seek instead a financial or social cabinet seat to press on with his original campaign for reforms to help the poor.

Although he came third in the primary with 22 per cent of the poll, the former trade union leader still commands enough support among the party's blue-collar sector to push the new leader for a role in cabinet - should Labour stay in coalition.

Mr Barak came to power in 1991 after defeating the then prime minister, Mr Netanyahu, a leading hawk, with a promise to find a final peace settlement with the Palestinians.

His premiership collapsed after crucial peace talks at Camp David ended in failure and the second Palestinian uprising broke out. Like Mr Netanyahu before him, Mr Barak retired from politics for several years to amass a fortune in business and on the lucrative American speakers' circuit.

Mr Olmert, meanwhile, has nominated another former prime minister, Shimon Peres, as Kadima's candidate for the largely ceremonial presidency.

The incumbent, President Moshe Katsav, is approaching the end of his seven-year term but has already been forced to stand down temporarily to fight efforts to prosecute him for the alleged rape and sexual assault of several former **female** employees.

Graphic

TWO PHOTOS: Head to head ... Ehud Barak, left, and Ami Ayalon.

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Cartoon sends student editors to jail; POLITICS-IRAN: Campus Cartoons Trigger Wave of Suppression

IPS (Latin America)

May 14, 2007 Monday

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Length: 1079 words

Byline: Kimia Sanati

Body

A joint-statement by the student editors denying involvement and stating that the newspapers were forged was not enough to stop the arrests. The students claimed that names and logos were misused to publish insulting and blasphemous material as part of an elaborately staged plot to begin the crackdown.

At least seven AUT students are currently languishing in prison. All student publications have been banned by authorities at the university which has been the scene of protest gatherings by hard line student militia of the university and outside groups, gatherings of the accused student union's supporters and occasional clashes between the two groups, an AUT student told IPS on the condition of anonymity.

A spokesman for the judiciary initially said five people who had been involved in the publication and distribution of the bulletins had been arrested and that 'there were no students among them,' the independent Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA) reported. Two of the editors of the four bulletins were arrested later.

Hard line students, mainly affiliates of the militia, are allegedly supported by the university's chancellor and security setup. They have been demanding punishment over the article and the cartoon and a 'cultural revolution' to purge Iranian universities of dissident students.

For years the hard line establishment has tried to subdue students of AUT with very little success. The university has always been a scene of active political debate and new ideas so dangerous to the establishment; a student activist from the university told IPS on the condition of anonymity.

Just a few months ago President Ahmadinejad was booed and his picture was burned by angry students here while he was making an address on the occasion of the Students Day. Hardliners have since been awaiting a chance to retaliate. The university chancellor is an Ahmadinejad man, he is just applying the government policies in the university and giving every support to hard line militia students; she added.

Established in 1958, AUT has an overall strength of 7,000 students, most of them in 14 engineering departments, five research centres and an associated university complex located at Tafresh, a town outside Tehran.

Restrictions imposed on university students' activities and their social freedom, pressure on student unions and frequent arresting of student activists, pressure on non-conformist or politically minded professors and mismanagement of affairs by government-appointed chancellors has brought about great discontent and frequent unrest in various Iranian universities since President Ahmadinejad took over August 2005.

Cartoon sends student editors to jail POLITICS- IRAN : Campus Cartoons Trigger Wave of Suppression

After several years of disillusionment with reform prospects, the student movement in Iran has over the past year been gaining momentum again. Hardliners are greatly troubled by the radical student movement and like the women's movement and that of workers' associations, consider it a huge threat to their power and hegemony, an analyst in Tehran who asked not to be named told IPS.

I believe there were several motives behind the scheme which largely failed due to accused student bodies' condemnation of blasphemous cartoons and remarks and their ability to avoid the trap set for them. If students hadn't acted wisely, insulting the prophet and Imams could be used as a very good excuse to crack down on them, the analyst said.

Since early April, a large number of students, including 15 in Mazandaran university and three in AUT, have been arrested, tens have been summoned to their universities' disciplinary committees and several student activists, including the secretary of the Islamic Association of Students of Allameh Tabatabaie, one of Tehran's largest universities, have been barred by their universities' authorities from entering the campus.

Certain people who were humiliated in the past are now taking revenge and students must be alert and not provide them with excuses, Mehdi Karrubi, prominent reformist leader of Etemad Melli Party and former parliament speaker, was reported by ILNA as saying at a meeting with Mazandaran University student activists who are now free on bail.

Mazandaran University students were arrested following unrest and a sit-in on Apr. 14 while protesting the arrest of a student activist and suspension of three more by the university. Protestors had been demanding freedom for student activities.

On May 7-8, AUT students cancelled all classes and held elections to the Islamic Association's central council despite efforts to scuttle them.

The militia students tried to stop the elections and with the help of university security people tried to take away the ballot boxes, but students made a human wall to protect the ballot boxes. There was a shortage of ballot papers and the boxes were sealed and removed to a safe place later, one of the students told IPS.

The university security people who are naturally given authority and backing by the chancellor even attacked union offices in one of the faculties. They thought they could find ballot boxes there but failed to find them. They destroyed union property and later made an attack on a girls' resting hall, searched everyone's bags and broke the lockers, he said.

In a separate incident, a 70-year-old professor of Tehran University, famous as the 'father of animation art in Iran', was expelled from the university last week for allegedly 'insulting a female student's Islamic veil'. Hardliners known as Hizbullah have staged several gatherings in front of the university and in other universities and posted the professor's photo on walls with threats of assassinating him on their websites since then, Iranian news agencies reported.

The incident provided an excuse for hardliners to claim that moral corruption is prevailing in universities and there is need for purging them. They have been crying out for a cultural revolution again and the danger is serious, a professor of Tehran University told IPS on the condition of anonymity.

Cultural revolution has seriously been on the hardliners' agenda since they gained total control of all state bodies a little less than two years ago when Ahmadinejad took over from Khatami. Even if there isn't an extensive purge of dissidents in universities, they can expel the leading student activists and faculty to subdue the others, the professor said. © 2007 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: May 14, 2007

End of Document

Faux purses fund terrorism

University Wire

September 11, 2007 Tuesday

Copyright 2007 The Daily Aztec via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 612 words

Byline: By Conor Shapiro, The Daily Aztec; **SOURCE:** San Diego State U.

Dateline: SAN DIEGO

Body

When you're around any college campus it's easy to spot a young woman carrying a handbag.

Purses are stylish, comfortable to wear and carry all the contents a woman will use that day. Some of the more affluent women purchase authentic, designer handbags for status and quality reasons. Others can't afford the astronomical price and decide to buy a knock-off, which is an artificial replication of the original. Why buy a genuine bag when a fake one could pass as an original?

Well, that phony bag may have a direct result in funding America's worst enemy: terrorism.

"Ronald K. Noble, the secretary general of Interpol, told the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations that profits from the sale of counterfeit goods have gone to groups associated with Hezbollah, the Shiite terrorist group, paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland and FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia," according to a recent article in The New York Times.

However, the corruption resulting from these cheap prices doesn't end there. Mock purses are sold for cheap; therefore they must be produced even cheaper. They are inexpensive products that generally come from exceptionally discounted labor -- see Wal-Mart.

Dana Thomas, author and correspondent for Newsweek, saw this calamity firsthand. On a trip to China, she witnessed police raid a factory that produced counterfeit handbags. "Inside, we found two dozen children, ages 8 to 13, gluing and sewing together fake luxury-brand handbags," Thomas wrote. "The police confiscated everything, arrested the owner and sent the children out. Some punched their timecards, hoping to still get paid."

Those cute little handbags are coming from sweatshops for preteens. And, as if the problem couldn't possibly get any worse, 750,000 American jobs are lost because of counterfeit merchandise, according to the "International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition." There is no statistic that measures total job loss across the globe, although it is positively much higher.

Fortunately, groups like the IACC are working diligently to help alleviate this problem. Many companies have jumped on board with the IACC because their products are often the ones being imitated. Coach, Adidas, Burberry and Estee Lauder are just some of the many organizations joining to fight this travesty. The IACC promotes legislation and regulations to eliminate piracy, which has an innumerable amount of negative effects.

Faux purses fund terrorism

In a nutshell, the low-priced handbags subsidize foreign child labor, which causes massive job loss in America, as well as other industrialized countries. Oh, and the remaining profits fund terrorists who fight Americans and our allies.

So what can we as consumers do to end this cycle of fraud? First, we must stop purchasing any product that is conspicuously low-priced. If the retailer works out of a small kiosk and is selling a Coach bag for \$10, it's probably a counterfeit.

Second, we must enlighten our friends and family about this quandary. Like so many other battles today, until this issue gets the adequate attention it's warranted, people will ignorantly continue to buy bogus handbags.

Finally, we must join with organizations like the IACC and its sponsors to reduce the amount of counterfeit material in the world. An astounding 5 to 7 percent of world trade is dealt in counterfeits. Let's shrink it to 3 percent over our lifetime. Each one of us has the responsibility.

Being a conscientious citizen requires being a mindful consumer. Piracy is illegal and although buying pirated goods might save dollars immediately, its roaring karma will catch up with all of us in the end.

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Load-Date: September 11, 2007

Olmert faces new sleaze charges

The Times (London)

September 25, 2007, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 39

Length: 626 words

Byline: James Hider in Jerusalem

Body

A criminal investigation was ordered yesterday into allegations that Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, bought a luxury home on the cheap in return for political favours.

The latest scandal to hit Israeli politics broke only months after rape accusations forced Moshe Katsav to step down as President when he admitted lesser charges of sexual harassment and obstruction of justice.

Mr Olmert's office denied that, while Mayor of Jerusalem, he had accepted a "significant discount" on a house in a plush area of the city in return for granting construction permits to the company selling him the property. "We are certain that the Olmert family's purchase of the Cremieux Street home was clean and pure," a statement issued by the Prime Minister's office said. "This is a needless investigation."

The criminal investigation was announced as Mr Olmert was beginning to regain some standing in opinion polls. His popularity slumped over his leadership during last year's Lebanon war, when the army failed to crush the **Hezbollah** guerrilla group, which had kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and killed several more.

Menachem Mazuz, the Attorney-General who pursued the Katsav case, asked police to open the investigation after the State Comptroller found that Mr Olmert acquired the house at \$330,000 below market value. In return, he allegedly expedited contracts for the same company to allow the removal of a historic building in Jerusalem, clearing the way for residential development.

The inquiry is one of several scandals involving the Prime Minister, who came to power after Ariel Sharon -himself the focus of investigations into alleged financial wrongdoing -suffered a massive stroke last year. Police are already looking into whether Mr Olmert used his position as Finance Minister to favour friends while privatising Israel's second-largest bank in 2005. Mr Olmert has denied any culpability in that case too.

Mr Mazuz is considering a third investigation into whether Mr Olmert used his position as Trade and Industry Minister in 2003 to appoint cronies to a government-funded business and to secure state funding for his former law partner's business venture.

Public confidence in the Israeli political establishment was already rocked by the rape charges against Mr Katsav this year. Mr Mazuz dropped the charges -the most serious levelled at an Israeli president, and which carried a potential jail sentence of 20 years -after Mr Katsav agreed to a plea bargain that helped him to avoid prison time but forced him to step down.

Olmert faces new sleaze charges

Even if Mr Olmert weathers the latest scandal, he is expected to face a rough ride next year when a final official report into the conduct of the Lebanon war is released by the Winograd committee. Critics accuse him of having blundered into the war with no real plan or clear goals.

FALL FROM GRACE

* Haim Ramon The former Israeli Justice Minister is awaiting the verdict of a trial for sexual misconduct. He is accused of having kissed a ***female*** soldier against her will while she guarded a government building. Having initially denied that the kiss took place, he now says she initiated it

* Shula Zaken Ehud Olmert's private secretary and political aide was questioned along with 20 others by police in January over suspicions of involvement in a scheme granting illegal tax breaks to businesses in return for payoffs

* Omri Sharon The son of the former Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, was jailed after pleading guilty in 2005 to lying under oath and falsifying financial records to conceal illegal campaign funds raised for his father in 1999

* Moshe Katsav Besides facing charges of sexual harassment, the former President is being investigated over allegations of wire-tapping, police say

Sources: Times archives; Global Integrity

Load-Date: September 25, 2007

Hilali makes way for new mufti

The Australian (Australia)

June 11, 2007 Monday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 3

Length: 588 words

Byline: Richard Kerbaj

Body

MATP

A 79-YEAR-OLD Lebanese-born cleric who had a stroke last year has been elected the nation's new mufti after the controversial Taj Din al-Hilali quit yesterday.

Sheik Hilali was initially reappointed mufti by the nation's imams, but decided to relinquish the position to prominent Melbourne-based cleric Fehmi Nagi al-Imam.

Sheik Fehmi, spiritual head of Preston Mosque in Melbourne's north, is a former senior member of John Howard's Muslim Community Reference Group.

The imam, who is also the general secretary of the Victorian Board of Imams, battled ill-health last year following the stroke. But a family member yesterday told The Australian the cleric, who speaks fluent English, has made a full recovery.

Sheik Hilali's one-time spokesman, Keysar Trad, yesterday accused the national imams council of caving in to public pressure by appointing Sheik Fehmi as mufti -- the most senior Islamic spiritual leader.

"It is a decision made purely to pander to public opinion," said the president of the Australian Islamic Friendship Association.

He said Sheik Hilali was wrong to step down from a position he had held since 1989. "I don't know who advised him to do that but it was totally not my advice," Mr Trad said.

The Australian first reported last year that powerful Muslim leaders were working to undermine Sheik Hilali and replace him with Sheik Fehmi, who is considered a moderate.

The Muslim community yesterday welcomed the move by the Australian National Imams Council to appoint him mufti for the next two years.

Australia's leading **female** Islamic spiritual leader, Aziza Abdel-Halim, said Sheik Fehmi would best serve the community and promote its values to mainstream Australia.

Hilali makes way for new mufti

"It's wonderful that Sheik Fehmi was elected," she said. "He is the most appropriate and enlightened person to have. He's always been a person who has spread peace and harmony and defended the rights of women and youth in our community."

Sydney-based Muslim leader Jamal Rifi said Sheik Fehmi's appointment heralded a turning point for the nation's Muslim community, which has come under constant pressure at the hands of Egyptian-born Sheik Hilali.

"I think it is a turning point for our community," Dr Rifi said. "Sheik Fehmi is the voice of moderation."

Community sources yesterday said a deal was struck by the national imams council and Sheik Hilali to have him resign. He was given a three-month grace period as mufti in March.

Sheik Hilali sparked international outrage in October after The Australian exposed his Ramadan sermon in which he compared scantily dressed women to uncovered meat and joked about the notorious Sydney gang rapes.

He was also criticised by his community and political leaders for saying Australia belonged more to Muslims than Anglo-Saxons who came to the country in shackles.

And in April, the Australian Federal Police launched an investigation into the cleric after The Australian revealed Sheik Hilali had been accused by his community of mismanaging Australian-raised donations and allegedly giving them to supporters of the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah. The AFP later cleared Sheik Hilali of any wrongdoing.

Khalil Shami, a powerful Sydney-based imam and outspoken critic of Sheik Hilali, said his resignation was a blessing but questioned Sheik Fehmi's capacity to fill the position.

He said the sheik's age would limit his ability to fulfil the duties of mufti. "It is great that he got elected," Sheik Shami said. "But he couldn't function as a mufti; his age and health are an issue."

Load-Date: June 10, 2007

End of Document

New Israeli PM feels heat; Livni has six weeks to form coalition

Windsor Star (Ontario)

September 19, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 574 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - With only six weeks to forge a new coalition in Israel or face national elections, Tzipi Livni will have little time to savour winning the Kadima leadership early Thursday.

To succeed the disgraced Ehud Olmert and become Israel's 13th prime minister, the former secret agent, lawyer and serving foreign minister must win over 32 members of Israel's incredibly Byzantine Knesset in order to form a coalition with Kadima's 29 deputies.

"The national mission we have is to quickly create stability," Livni told reporters in Tel Aviv before returning to Jerusalem. "This responsibility is not just mine but inside Kadima and members of the Knesset."

The process of wooing potential coalition partners and millions of Israeli voters began within hours of the official announcement of her narrow victory.

Whether Livni is successful at building a coalition or not, at some point between next February and 2010 she must face an election against Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of Likud and a hardliner who has very different views about the peace process between Israel and Palestine.

"It should not be left up to registered Kadima voters alone" to decide who the next prime minister is, Netanyahu said Thursday, in demanding that Livni call a snap election. "The people should decide who will lead them. Anyone who fears the people's choice is not fit to lead."

Netanyahu, who was prime minister from 1996 to 1999, lost power after a series of scandals but returned to lead the Likud in late 2005. Well known for his blunt one liners, he lampooned Kadima supporters this week as being similar to people who invested in Lehman Brothers, the failed U.S. financial giant.

No matter what Netanyahu wants, it is extremely unlikely that Livni will go to the polls for at least several months, if she can avoid doing so by forming a new coalition.

Aside from devoting herself to this task, she must explain to anxious Israelis why she would be the best person to confront the threat represented by Iran's nuclear ambitions. She must also handle smaller but potentially bloody tests from Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon and explain what her red lines are concerning the

New Israeli PM feels heat; Livni has six weeks to form coalition

future of Jerusalem and Palestinian demands that millions of refugees be allowed to return to where they once lived.

A greater Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River is an ideology that Livni imbibed as the daughter of Zionist parents who fought the British to create the Jewish state. But a few years ago she did an about-face. Facing with a rapidly growing Palestinian population living within Israel and the territories, she became a believer in a two-state solution.

But her position on Iran, Hamas, Gaza and the peace talks are not why Livni got elected as the new leader of Kadima. Nor was it because she closely identified herself with **women's** issues as U.S. presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton did. The fact that she is a woman barely figured in her leadership campaign.

Kadima members backed the stylish, modestly dressed 50-year-old mother of two because she is squeaky clean in a political culture that has become the subject of derision.

Serious allegations, charges and convictions have been levied against a string of major political figures including former president Moshe Katsav, former prime minister Ariel Sharon and the incumbent, Olmert, who, police have alleged, received hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal campaign donations.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Tzipi Livni ;

Load-Date: September 25, 2008

End of Document

MR. CHERTOFF'S DEEPEST FEARS. Terrorists trying to enter U.S. from Canada

Daily News (New York)

February 10, 2008 Sunday

SPORTS FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 12

Length: 572 words

Byline: BY JAMES GORDON MEEK DAILY NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU

Body

AMERICA'S TOP counterterror official says "more than a dozen" people tied to Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and other extremists have tried to infiltrate the U.S. since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

But they weren't caught swimming the Rio Grande from Mexico, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff told the Daily News in a recent interview.

"More Canada than Mexico, to be honest with you," he said.

Chertoff talked exclusively to The News in his Gulfstream jet on a trip from Washington to New York City last week.

"It's been much more than a dozen" who tried to enter the U.S. from Canada, he said, but they were stopped for links to "a mix" of terror groups through finances, family or spy intercepts.

"Do I know they were coming in on a mission as opposed to something else? That I can't necessarily tell you," he said.

Immigration officers have detected an increasing number of Middle Easterners and South Asians illegally entering from Mexico, but they "all seem to be, at this point, refugees," he said.

Stopping Mexican illegals from entering the country is a hot political issue - with Chertoff caught in the middle. Immigration critics often claim Al Qaeda will exploit illicit pipelines.

But Chertoff insisted, "I don't see any imminent threat" of terrorists infiltrating from Mexico.

He gave a wide-ranging interview close to the fifth anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security, which President Bush created after a Democratic outcry over 9/11 failures.

MR. CHERTOFF'S DEEPEST FEARS. Terrorists trying to enter U.S. from Canada

Bush picked Chertoff as the department's second leader because of his resume: federal prosecutor hired by Rudy Giuliani; counsel to ex-Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) in the Whitewater probe of the Clintons; criminal division chief at the Justice Department after 9/11; U.S. appeals court judge.

Reminded of the 1990s Clinton probe, Chertoff smiled dismissively. "A long time ago," he said.

His current job is much more vital - preventing the next attack - and he's deeply worried about Europe as a platform.

"That is in the near term what worries me the most - Europe," Chertoff said.

In the past year, he's tried to tighten checks on European visitors entering the U.S. Asked about a recent exclusive in The News on Al Qaeda training white Anglo-looking European recruits, Chertoff said, "They're looking for people who don't fit a particular image of what a terrorist looks like."

Yet many wonder why women and kids get searched in airports.

Chertoff said a disrupted 2006 Al Qaeda plot to bomb U.S.-bound jets from London - which was "comparable to a potential 9/11" - involved a mother using an infant to conceal liquid explosives.

Chertoff said a major success has been decimating Al Qaeda in Iraq. But he finds it "worrying" that Osama Bin Laden's group has regenerated in Pakistan and merged with groups in North Africa. When Al Qaeda trainer Abu Laith al-Libi was killed recently by the CIA, eight Al Qaeda franchises from Somalia, Algeria, Palestine and Iraq eulogized him.

Politically, Chertoff's worst moment was in 2005, for failing to rush to New Orleans to take charge after Hurricane Katrina. In a lengthy mea culpa, he admitted blowing it.

"There are things I could have done or said a little bit better," Chertoff said. "I was not a politician - you need to visibly and tangibly show people you care."

Proof he had learned his lesson came a few days after the interview when deadly tornadoes struck Tennessee - he was on the ground within 24 hours.

jmeek@nydailynews.com

Graphic

Michael Chertoff

Load-Date: February 11, 2008

Former Israeli PM hits comeback trail

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

May 30, 2007 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 9

Length: 556 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Jerusalem

Body

THE former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak has taken a step towards an unlikely political comeback with a first-round victory in primaries to become the new leader of the Labour Party.

The former general and army chief of staff, who ruled Israel from 1999 to 2001, won 36 per cent of the poll, just short of the 40 per cent needed for outright victory. He goes head-to-head in two weeks against the second-placed candidate, the former spy chief and naval admiral Ami Ayalon, who won 31 per cent of the poll of Labour's 104,000 members.

Apart from deciding the leadership of the fairly dovish Labour Party, the primaries have crucial implications for the coalition Government of the Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, in which Labour is the second biggest party.

In the run-up to the poll, Mr Barak, 65, and Mr Ayalon, 61, sought to gain support by saying they did not wish to serve in cabinet under Mr Olmert, who is desperately unpopular over his role in last year's botched war against the Lebanese militia **Hezbollah**.

But both candidates have also left themselves room to serve under Mr Olmert should it prove opportune. A Labour walk-out from government might only prompt Mr Olmert to replace the party's 19 Knesset votes by courting parties on the far right.

Alternatively, Labour's resignation from the coalition might trigger early elections in which all of the government parties, including Mr Olmert's Kadima and the far-right Yisrael Beiteinu, are threatened by the former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's resurgent Likud party.

Monday's Labour primaries also signal the political eclipse of the current party leader, Amir Peretz, who is Defence Minister in Mr Olmert's coalition cabinet.

Like Mr Olmert, Mr Peretz has been heavily criticised by the security establishment, media and public over his role in last year's Lebanon war.

Mr Peretz was the first Sephardic (non-European) Jew to lead the traditionally Ashkenazi (European) Labour Party, and the first Israeli defence minister to come from outside the country's powerful military establishment.

Former Israeli PM hits comeback trail

He had already said he would stand down after the leadership primaries and seek instead a financial or social cabinet seat to press on with his original campaign for reforms to help the poor.

Although he came third in the primary with 22 per cent of the poll, the former trade union leader still commands enough support among the party's blue-collar sector to push the new leader for a role in cabinet - should Labour stay in coalition.

Mr Barak came to power in 1991 after defeating the then prime minister, Mr Netanyahu, a leading hawk, with a promise to find a final peace settlement with the Palestinians.

His premiership collapsed after crucial peace talks at Camp David ended in failure and the second Palestinian uprising broke out. Like Mr Netanyahu before him, Mr Barak retired from politics for several years to amass a fortune in business and on the lucrative American speakers' circuit.

Mr Olmert, meanwhile, has nominated another former prime minister, Shimon Peres, as Kadima's candidate for the largely ceremonial presidency.

The incumbent, President Moshe Katsav, is approaching the end of his seven-year term but has already been forced to stand down temporarily to fight efforts to prosecute him for the alleged rape and sexual assault of several former **female** employees.

Graphic

TWO PHOTOS: Head to head ... Ehud Barak, left, and Ami Ayalon.

Load-Date: July 16, 2007

Business Community concerned over CM Position

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 16, 2008 Friday 2:53 PM EST

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Length: 1051 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 16 -- The business community has expressed concern over who is to be appointed as the Chief Minister of the Eastern Province. "As the Pillayan faction is reported to be armed, it is definitely not a positive sign. However, he did contest the elections" Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Chairman Mahen Dayananda said while adding that opposing parties have complained to the Elections Commissioner about flaws in the Eastern PC polls, which is a sign for concern.

President of the Federation of the Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (FCCISL) Nawaz Rajabdeen stated that people should not consider Pillayan as a terrorist when allowing him to sort out the problems in the east. "If you consider him a terrorist and draw differences, then you create animosity" Rajabdeen affirmed. He pointed out that if there are internal conflicts in the east, it would not be a peaceful environment for the locals.

Rajabdeen further observed that although all politicians have their own personal agendas, they should set aside their differences and support the people. "How many politicians visited the area when the tsunami hit? But for the Eastern polls all of them went there and promised various things," he noted.

The UPFA won the election, with the Chief Minister's position falling vacant for either L.A.M Hizbullah or Pillaiyan. Despite entering the democratic process, the TMVP faction still carry arms claiming it is for personal security purposes.

Infrastructure essential

"Infrastructure leaves much to be desired. Electricity, water and basic requirements are some of the necessities that are in need of immediate action," Dayananda said. He divulged that the Chamber had been supporting the East with financial assistance through their regional chambers particularly Batticaloa. "We will continue to support them and if all goes well on a structured framework a noticeable change will occur in the economy with the East contributing. It will definitely be converted into a realm of possibility."

Rajabdeen in the meantime claimed that the private sector was positive about the elections in the East so long as development takes place.

They had established several 'Back to Business' initiatives in the aftermath of the tsunami which had assisted those victimised entrepreneurs to get back on their feet. It was revealed that now that the elections have been held, the FCCISL is examining the possibility of commencing a similar project to this as well in addition to a project to boost the livelihood of women. Rajabdeen furthermore conveyed that if a conducive environment remained, investments

Business Community concerned over CM Position

were bound to increase. "Poverty alleviation is a priority. The government must think of this and also regional development and should especially support the agro based industry," he stated.

Tourism foresees boost in benefits

Sri Lanka Tourism is anticipating a bright future with the Eastern Province contributing. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Chairman Renton De Alwis stated that the country should not rush-in for international tourism and that we should first boost the local tourism sector. When questioned if revenue from tourism will increase due to the recent political developments in the East, he said "Certainly it would increase but not as direct revenue to the government but as benefits to the local community."

He added that even before the elections, the government was attempting to promote tourism but now further stability was evident in the area. Delving into the programmes they intend to conduct in the area, Alwis said that they are going to build an exquisite resort in Pasikuda with the help of seven investors and the Institute of Architects. Sri Lanka Tourism plans to revive the areas of Kalkuda, Nilaweli and Arugam Bay. Other plans include steps to overcome the issue of shortage in accommodation through measures such as recreational vehicle parks (Caravans).

"The East can help reduce the economic imbalance"- Trade Minister

Commenting on the impact of the recent elections, the Minister of Trade Bandula Gunewardena said "Business people cannot control terrorism, which is a huge obstacle to conduct business and trade." According to Gunewardena, the elections were of high importance as it enabled the removal of terrorism, which was a high risk factor in the region. Liberating the East from LTTE control has opened avenues for the initiation of development projects relating to infrastructure and healthcare the Minister added. "Now the people have an opportunity to address their own issues. The 'Nagenahira Navodaya' programme of the National Task Force can now confer its power to the Provincial Councils because of election," he added.

The province is rich in natural resources and contributes to the industries of agriculture and fisheries. "If utilized properly the region can contribute to the increment of the country's GDP, and work towards achieving a balance in the economic development," the minister opined.

Entrepreneurs don't see any significant change for the future

Although the ground situation doesn't look as favourable, Anwer*, an entrepreneur from Trincomalee said the elections have not expressed the voice of the people. "It was a government election. Initiated by them and finally carried according to their own advantage. Tamils are not happy with the result," he said. Anwer divulged the plight of large scale businessmen who have to pay bribes to the TMVP in order to continue their business. "The Stuffing of ballot boxes and obstructing voters were issues for us at the election but we are more worried about the consequences that will follow the election," he said adding that the fear instilled in traders and civilians by the armed personnel have restricted the movements of the public. "How can there be a change when the same government that ruled before the election will continue to rule hereafter?"

In contrast was Haroun* from Batticaloa who is engaged in the agricultural sector said "we are happy that the elections were finally held in the East after two decades. This will give us an opportunity to address several regional problems which have long been neglected by the central government," he added. His optimism comes with hopes of expanding his business in the future.

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Business Community concerned over CM Position

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MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS

The New York Times
December 28, 2008 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1390 words

Byline: By TAGHREED EL-KHODARY and ETHAN BRONNER; Taghreed El-Khodary reported from Gaza, and Ethan Bronner from Jerusalem. Isabel Kershner contributed reporting from Netivot, Israel, and Robert Pear from Crawford, Tex.

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Waves of Israeli airstrikes destroyed Hamas security facilities in Gaza on Saturday in a crushing response to the group's rocket fire, killing more than 225 -- the highest one-day toll in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades.

Israeli military officials said the airstrikes, which went on into the night, were the start of what could be days or even months of an effort to force Hamas to end its rocket barrages into southern Israel. The operation could include ground forces, a senior Israeli security official said.

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead were security officers for Hamas, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people had been wounded in the attacks.

After the initial airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, where an emergency was declared. Thousands of Israelis hurried into bomb shelters amid the hail of rockets, including some longer-range models that reached farther north than ever before. One man was killed in the town of Netivot, the first death from rocket fire since it intensified a week ago, and four were wounded.

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's use of force and also called on Hamas to end the rocket fire. But in strong terms, the Bush administration blamed Hamas for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, ever since a rocky cease-fire between Israel and Hamas fully collapsed a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks in large numbers against Israel and isolated Israeli operations here.

Still, there was a shocking quality to Saturday's attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, women were shopping at the outdoor market, and children were emerging from school.

The center of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing, and women shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that

MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS

family members could identify them. The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre." Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel. "We say in all confidence that even if we are hung on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine," he said.

In Damascus, Syria, Hamas's supreme leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al Jazeera television that he was calling for a new Palestinian intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks within Israel for the first time since 2005. Hamas, he said, had accepted "all the peaceful options, but without results."

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defense minister and chairman of the Labor Party, said the military operation in Gaza would expand and deepen as necessary, adding, "There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and this is the time for fighting."

"We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets," said a top Israeli security official, briefing a group of reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity.

"Right now, we have to hit Hamas hard to stop the launching," he added. "I don't see any other way for Hamas to change its behavior. Hamas is not just a terrorist organization. It actually rules Gaza and is well supported by Iran with some of its leadership in Syria."

Hamas had in recent weeks let it be known that it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking because of its coming elections. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Mr. Barak not to react, because the public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near Gaza.

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game because Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with work here increasingly scarce because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology. One of the biggest tolls on Saturday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 people were killed.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is widely viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged much stronger politically.

The Arab League initially called an emergency meeting for Sunday in Cairo with all the foreign ministers from the member states, but later postponed it to Wednesday to give ministers time to respond.

Governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago in the aftermath of its election victory in the Palestinian Parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority angrily condemned the Israeli airstrikes. Egypt, worried about possible efforts by Palestinians to enter the country, has set up machine guns along the Gaza border. But on

MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS

Saturday it temporarily opened the Rafah border crossing in order to allow the wounded to be brought to Egyptian hospitals.

In the West Bank and in some Arab parts of Jerusalem and Israel, Palestinians threw stones, causing some injuries.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honor previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has sought to isolate Hamas by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked nearly all but humanitarian aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for about 10 days in reaction to daily rocket fire.

Opening the routes to commerce was Hamas's main goal in its cease-fire with Israel, just as ending the rocket fire was Israel's central aim. But while rocket fire did go down drastically in the fall to 15 to 20 a month from hundreds a month, Israel said it would not permit trade to begin again because the rocket fire had not completely stopped and because Hamas continued to smuggle weapons from Egypt through desert tunnels. Hamas said this was a violation of the agreement, a sign of Israel's real intentions and cause for further rocket fire. On Wednesday, some 70 rockets hit Israel over 24 hours, in a distinct increase in intensity.

The United Nations Security Council met late Saturday night to discuss the situation.

Envoys of the 15-nation council were discussing what diplomats said was a Russian-drafted statement calling for a halt to Israeli military operations in Gaza as well as a halt to rocket attacks upon Israel, Reuters reported.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: An injured Palestinian was helped from the rubble after an Israeli airstrike hit Rafah in the Gaza Strip on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HATEM OMAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS)(A1)

Palestinians in Gaza City on Saturday gathered around the bodies of people killed by Israeli airstrikes, launched in response to recent Hamas rocket attacks. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAHMUD HAMS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

A relative of a victim wept outside a hospital in Gaza City after the Israeli airstrikes, which hit Hamas security facilities. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ABID KATIB/GETTY IMAGES)(A10)

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel

The Bismarck Tribune

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1411 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK and JASON KEYSER Associated Press Writers

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that Hamas still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza.

Three Israelis were killed and two seriously wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the U.N. said the total included at least 62 civilians.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of Hamas field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against Hamas" and allied militants.

Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable.

In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously - the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents.

Another Israeli was killed and one seriously wounded by a rocket strike in the Negev desert community of Nahal Oz, closer to the Gaza border. Earlier, a missile killed a construction worker in the city of Ashkelon. In all, four Israelis were dead since the Gaza offensive began Saturday, bringing to 19 the number of people killed in attacks from Gaza since the beginning of the year.

The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at Hamas' foundation. Israeli aircraft staged five separate strikes on the houses of field operatives, though there was no confirmation that any of them were killed.

A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike envelops the image.

One Israeli attack targeted a house in the Jebaliya refugee camp, killing seven people, but the Hamas activist was not there, Hamas security and relatives said. Another hit the Jebaliya home of Abdel-Karim Jaber, a Hamas political figure who is a senior administrator at Gaza's Islamic University. He was not at home and it wasn't immediately clear if anyone was hurt in the strike.

Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel

In another air assault, an Islamic Jihad commander was killed as he was walking near his house, said Abu Hamza, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad's military wing.

Israel's airstrikes on more than 320 sites since midday Saturday reduced dozens of buildings to rubble, overwhelmed hospitals with wounded and filled Gaza's deserted streets with smoke and fire. The military said Israeli naval vessels had also bombarded targets from the sea.

On Monday, aircraft pulverized a house next to the home of Hamas Premier Ismail Haniyeh, a security compound and a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group - all symbols of Hamas strength in the coastal territory it has ruled since June 2007.

Israel's offensive has rattled the Middle East and capitals around the world, triggering street protests and fiery speeches by adversaries of Israel like the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the day's biggest outpouring of anger, tens of thousands of Hezbollah's supporters stood in a pouring rain in a Beirut square to condemn Israel.

Stone-throwing clashes broke out in about a half-dozen spots in the Palestinians' West Bank territory as well as in several Arab-populated areas inside Israel. Israeli police and soldiers fired rubber bullets and tear gas at rioting youths, but it did not appear anyone was injured.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel's offensive as excessive and demanded an immediate cease-fire. He said key international and regional players - including foreign ministers of the Arab League nations holding an emergency meeting Wednesday - must "act swiftly and decisively to bring an early end to this impasse."

The U.S. government said it was "vigorously engaged" in trying to restore a cease-fire.

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe defended the Israeli response, but added that the Bush administration was urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza.

With Israeli troops and tanks massing on the Gaza border, Defense Minister Ehud Barak told parliament he wanted to strike a devastating blow against Hamas. However, later he indicated a ground assault was not inevitable, issuing a warning that he was giving Hamas a last chance to halt its rocket fire.

Short of reoccupying Gaza, however, it was unlikely any amount of Israeli firepower could completely snuff out militant rocket attacks. Past operations all failed to do so.

The Cabinet's decision over the weekend to call up 6,500 reserve soldiers could be a pressure tactic. Military experts noted no full combat units had been mobilized and said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion.

For the first time, Israel also hit one of a series of tunnels prepared by Hamas along the border with Israel for use in attacks on invading ground troops, several Israeli TV networks said. One tunnel was packed with explosives and several militants inside were killed, Channel 1 said.

Most of those killed in three days of airstrikes were Hamas members. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of Hamas security forces were among the dead.

But the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees expressed concern about civilian casualties. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive.

In New York, U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said his agency had not been able to determine a precise number of civilian casualties, but knew of at least 62 women and children killed. He said 1,400 people had been injured.

Eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two separate Israeli airstrikes Sunday night, Palestinian medics said.

Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel

Holmes said he was very worried about a shortage of humanitarian supplies in Gaza.

"Because of the effective blockade that's been in place for many months now, and because of the increasing tightening of this blockade in recent weeks around Gaza, stocks of vital items are either very low or nonexistent, and that's particularly the case, for example, with wheat flour," he said.

Israel opened one of Gaza's border crossings Monday to allow several ambulances and 62 trucks carrying medical supplies and food to cross.

"Obviously these supplies are better than nothing, but they remain wholly inadequate," Holmes said, saying that his agency needed 100 truckloads of flour every day to meet needs.

In Gaza, some families left their apartments next to institutions linked to Hamas, fearing they could be targeted. Suad Abu Wadi, 42, kept her six children close to her on mattresses in her Gaza City living room. Her husband sat with them, chain-smoking. Abu Wadi said he had not said a word since seeing their neighbor carrying the body of his child, killed in an airstrike Saturday.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said 364 Palestinians had died and more than 1,400 wounded. Some of the injured were being taken to private clinics and even homes, he said.

Egyptian officials said ambulances were ferrying wounded Gazans to hospitals in Egypt from Gaza's Rafah border crossing. Tariq al-Mahlawi, Egypt's deputy health minister, said 32 patients had been brought in by nightfall and that 500 beds were ready to treat Palestinians.

Around mid-afternoon, ambulances ferried the wounded from Gaza toward the crossing in the border town of Rafah, where over a dozen Egyptian ambulances waited to take over the casualties.

Despite Israel's battering attacks, sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day as more than 40 rockets and mortar rounds rained down.

Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza.

Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said.

(Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Jason Keyser in Jerusalem, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Deb Riechmann in Crawford, Texas, and Omar Sinan in Rafah, Egypt, contributed to this report.)

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

Defiant Hamas hits Israel with dozens of rockets

The Bismarck Tribune

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1520 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK and JASON KEYSER Associated Press Writers

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that Hamas still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza.

Four Israelis, including a soldier, were killed and eight wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the U.N. said the total included at least 62 civilians.

Early today, Israeli aircraft dropped at least 16 bombs on five Hamas government buildings in a Gaza City complex, destroying them, setting fires and sending rubble flying for hundreds of yards, witnesses said. Rescue workers said 40 people were injured.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of Hamas field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against Hamas" and allied militants.

Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable.

In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously - the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents.

The military said an Israeli soldier was killed later in a mortar strike, the first soldier to be killed in the conflict. Five others were wounded, one seriously, according to a military statement.

Earlier Monday, an Israeli was killed and one seriously wounded by a rocket strike in the Negev desert community of Nahal Oz, closer to the Gaza border. A rocket also killed an Israeli construction worker in the city of Ashkelon. In all, five Israelis have been killed since the Gaza offensive began Saturday, bringing to 19 the number killed in rocket attacks from Gaza this year.

Early today, Hamas released a statement saying its squads had fired 43 homemade rockets, 17 longer-range Grads and six mortar shells at Israel. Other militant groups also fired rockets at Israel.

The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at Hamas' foundation. Israeli aircraft staged five separate strikes on the houses of field operatives, though there was no confirmation that any of them were killed.

Defiant Hamas hits Israel with dozens of rockets

A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike envelops the image.

One Israeli attack targeted a house in the Jebaliya refugee camp, killing seven people, but the Hamas activist was not there, Hamas security and relatives said. Another hit the Jebaliya home of Abdel-Karim Jaber, a Hamas political figure who is a senior administrator at Gaza's Islamic University. He was not at home and it wasn't immediately clear if anyone was hurt in the strike.

In another air assault, an Islamic Jihad commander was killed as he was walking near his house, said Abu Hamza, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad's military wing.

Israel's airstrikes on more than 325 sites since midday Saturday reduced dozens of buildings to rubble, overwhelmed hospitals with wounded and filled Gaza's deserted streets with smoke and fire. The military said Israeli naval vessels had also bombarded targets from the sea.

On Monday, aircraft pulverized a house next to the home of Hamas Premier Ismail Haniyeh, a security compound and a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group - all symbols of Hamas strength in the coastal territory it has ruled since June 2007.

Israel's offensive has rattled the Middle East and capitals around the world, triggering street protests and fiery speeches by adversaries of Israel like the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the day's biggest outpouring of anger, tens of thousands of Hezbollah's supporters stood in a pouring rain in a Beirut square to condemn Israel.

Stone-throwing clashes broke out in about a half-dozen spots in the Palestinians' West Bank territory as well as in several Arab-populated areas inside Israel. Israeli police and soldiers fired rubber bullets and tear gas at rioting youths, but it did not appear anyone was injured.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel's offensive as excessive and demanded an immediate cease-fire. He said key international and regional players - including foreign ministers of the Arab League nations holding an emergency meeting Wednesday - must "act swiftly and decisively to bring an early end to this impasse."

The U.S. government said it was "vigorously engaged" in trying to restore a cease-fire.

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe defended the Israeli response, but added that the Bush administration was urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza.

With Israeli troops and tanks massing on the Gaza border, Defense Minister Ehud Barak told parliament he wanted to strike a devastating blow against Hamas. However, later he indicated a ground assault was not inevitable, issuing a warning that he was giving Hamas a last chance to halt its rocket fire.

Short of reoccupying Gaza, however, it was unlikely any amount of Israeli firepower could completely snuff out militant rocket attacks. Past operations all failed to do so.

The Cabinet's decision over the weekend to call up 6,500 reserve soldiers could be a pressure tactic. Military experts noted no full combat units had been mobilized and said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion.

For the first time, Israel also hit one of a series of tunnels prepared by Hamas along the border with Israel for use in attacks on invading ground troops, several Israeli TV networks said. One tunnel was packed with explosives and several militants inside were killed, Channel 1 said.

Most of those killed in three days of airstrikes were Hamas members. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of Hamas security forces were among the dead.

Defiant Hamas hits Israel with dozens of rockets

But the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees expressed concern about civilian casualties. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive.

In New York, U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said his agency had not been able to determine a precise number of civilian casualties, but knew of at least 62 women and children killed. He said 1,400 people had been injured.

Eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two separate Israeli airstrikes Sunday night, Palestinian medics said.

Holmes said he was very worried about a shortage of humanitarian supplies in Gaza.

"Because of the effective blockade that's been in place for many months now, and because of the increasing tightening of this blockade in recent weeks around Gaza, stocks of vital items are either very low or nonexistent, and that's particularly the case, for example, with wheat flour," he said.

Israel opened one of Gaza's border crossings Monday to allow several ambulances and 62 trucks carrying medical supplies and food to cross.

"Obviously these supplies are better than nothing, but they remain wholly inadequate," Holmes said, saying that his agency needed 100 truckloads of flour every day to meet needs.

In Gaza, some families left their apartments next to institutions linked to Hamas, fearing they could be targeted. Suad Abu Wadi, 42, kept her six children close to her on mattresses in her Gaza City living room. Her husband sat with them, chain-smoking. Abu Wadi said he had not said a word since seeing their neighbor carrying the body of his child, killed in an airstrike Saturday.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said 364 Palestinians had died and more than 1,400 wounded. Some of the injured were being taken to private clinics and even homes, he said.

Egyptian officials said ambulances were ferrying wounded Gazans to hospitals in Egypt from Gaza's Rafah border crossing. Tariq al-Mahlawi, Egypt's deputy health minister, said 32 patients had been brought in by nightfall and that 500 beds were ready to treat Palestinians.

Around mid-afternoon, ambulances ferried the wounded from Gaza toward the crossing in the border town of Rafah, where over a dozen Egyptian ambulances waited to take over the casualties.

Despite Israel's battering attacks, sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day as more than 40 rockets and mortar rounds rained down.

Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza.

Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said.

(Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Jason Keyser in Jerusalem, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Deb Riechmann in Crawford, Texas, and Omar Sinan in Rafah, Egypt, contributed to this report.)

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD; AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

December 28, 2008 Sunday

TWO STAR EDITION

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 1393 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Ethan Bronner, The New York Times

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Waves of Israeli airstrikes destroyed Hamas security facilities in Gaza yesterday in a crushing response to the group's rocket fire, killing more than 225 -- the highest one-day toll in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades.

Israeli military officials said the airstrikes, which went on into the night, were the start of what could be days or even months of an effort to force Hamas to end its rocket barrages into southern Israel. The operation could include ground forces, a senior Israeli security official said.

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead were security officers for Hamas, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people were wounded in the attacks.

After the initial airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, where an emergency was declared. Thousands of Israelis hurried into bomb shelters amid the hail of rockets, including some longer-range models that reached farther north than ever before. One man was killed in the town of Netivot and four were wounded.

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's use of force and also called on Hamas to end the rocket fire. But in strong terms, the Bush administration blamed Hamas for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, ever since a rocky cease-fire between Israel and Hamas fully collapsed a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks in large numbers against Israel and isolated Israeli operations here.

Still, there was a shocking quality to yesterday's attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, women were shopping at the outdoor market, and children were emerging from school.

The center of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing, and women shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that family members could identify them. The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre." Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel. "We say in all confidence that even if we are hanged on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine," he said.

In Damascus, Syria, Hamas' supreme leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al-Jazeera television that he was calling for a new Palestinian intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks within Israel for the first time since 2005. Hamas, he said, had accepted "all the peaceful options, but without results."

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defense minister and chairman of the Labor Party, said the military operation in Gaza would expand and deepen as necessary, adding, "There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and this is the time for fighting." He said he was withdrawing from campaigning for Israel's February elections to focus on the operation.

"We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets," said the top Israeli security official, briefing a group of reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity.

"Right now, we have to hit Hamas hard to stop the launching," he added. "I don't see any other way for Hamas to change its behavior. Hamas is not just a terrorist organization. It actually rules Gaza and is well supported by Iran with some of its leadership in Syria."

Hamas had in recent weeks let it be known that because of the coming elections it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Mr. Barak not to react, because the public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near the Gaza border.

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game since Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with work here increasingly scarce because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology. One of the biggest tolls yesterday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 were killed.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is widely viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged much stronger politically.

The Arab League initially called an emergency meeting for today in Cairo with all the foreign ministers from the member states but later postponed it to Wednesday to give ministers time to respond.

Governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago in the aftermath of its election victory in the Palestinian parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority angrily condemned the Israeli airstrikes. Egypt, worried about possible efforts by Palestinians to enter the country, has set up machine guns along the Gaza border. But yesterday it temporarily opened the Rafah border crossing in order to allow the wounded to be brought to Egyptian hospitals for treatment.

ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS

In the West Bank and in some Arab parts of Jerusalem and Israel, Palestinians threw stones, causing some injuries.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honor previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has sought to isolate Hamas by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked nearly all but humanitarian aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for about 10 days in reaction to daily rocket fire.

Opening the routes to commerce was Hamas' main goal in its cease-fire with Israel, just as ending the rocket fire was Israel's central aim. But while rocket fire did go down drastically in the fall to 15 to 20 a month from hundreds a month, Israel said it would not permit trade to begin again because the rocket fire had not completely stopped and because Hamas continued to smuggle weapons from Egypt through desert tunnels. Hamas said this was a violation of the agreement, a sign of Israel's real intentions and cause for further rocket fire.

On Wednesday, some 70 rockets hit Israel over 24 hours, in a distinct upsurge of intensity.

The rockets that flew into southern Israel yesterday left the streets of cities like Netivot, a hardscrabble town of immigrants, nearly deserted. Inside a public shelter, parents worked to keep restless children occupied. The man killed by a rocket was hit by shrapnel as he stood in the entrance to his building, next door to where the rocket hit.

Graphic

PHOTO: Thaer Al-Hasani/Associated Press: An injured Hamas security force officer crawls as he waits for assistance at the site of an Israeli missile strike at the security headquarters in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: Hatem Omar/Associated Press: Palestinians carry a body from the rubble following an Israeli missile strike in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC: New York Times: (Shifa Hospital)

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

Israel presses its attack on Gaza; Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded; Hamas vows revenge

The International Herald Tribune

December 29, 2008 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1479 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israeli airstrikes against Palestinian facilities in Gaza continued Sunday for a second day and the death toll rose to more than 280 as Israel retaliated for rocket fire from the area with its most severe campaign against Palestinian militants in decades.

The Palestinian groups again launched barrages of rockets and mortars into Israel on Sunday, extending their reach further than before, and the Israeli government approved the emergency call-up of thousands of army reservists in preparation for a possible ground operation.

Speaking before the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, Defense Minister Ehud Barak said the army "will deepen and broaden its actions as needed" and "will continue to act in Gaza."

Among the 30 or more targets hit Saturday and Sunday were the main security compound and prison in Gaza City known as the Saraya; metal workshops; Hamas military posts; and the house of a chemistry professor from Islamic University. The Hamas-owned Al Aqsa television station was also struck, as was a mosque that the Israelis said was housing armed men and was being used as a "terrorist operation center."

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead in Gaza were security officers for Hamas, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people had been wounded in the attacks.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Sunday that "the patience, determination and stamina" of the residents of Israel would, in the end, determine the success of the military campaign.

Two rockets fell in the vicinity of the Israeli port of Ashdod, 40 kilometers, or 25 miles, north of Gaza, a military spokeswoman said. Others hit the coastal city of Ashkelon. Some Israelis were lightly wounded by shrapnel.

Israeli military officials said their airstrikes, which began Saturday morning, were the start of what could be days or even months of an effort to force Hamas to end its rocket barrages. After the first airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, sending thousands of Israelis into bomb shelters. One man was killed Saturday in the town of Netivot.

Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's assault and called on Hamas to end the rocket fire. But the Bush administration blamed Hamas for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, a fierce rival of Hamas, urged the Islamic group to renew a truce with Israel that collapsed last week, news services reported.

In New York on Sunday, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement expressing concern about the escalation of the conflict and calling on both parties for an immediate end to all violence. The statement came after the 15-member council met for more than four hours in closed session.

The Associated Press reported that the top UN human rights official had said that Israel's response to the firing of rockets was "disproportionate." The UN high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, said she was distressed at the enormous loss of life in Gaza and called on Israel to end collective punishment and the targeting of civilians.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, even before the rocky cease-fire between Israel and Hamas fully collapsed more than a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks against Israel and some Israeli operations in Gaza.

The Israeli Army said that Palestinian militants had fired more than 300 rockets and mortars into Israel over the past week, and 10 times that number in the past year.

Still, there was a shocking quality to the Saturday attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, women were shopping at an outdoor market and children were emerging from school.

The center of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing and women shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that family members could identify them. The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre."

Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel. "We say in all confidence that even if we are hung on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine," he said.

In Damascus, Hamas's leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al Jazeera television that he was calling for a new intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks for the first time since 2005. Hamas, he said, had accepted "all the peaceful options, but without results."

A top Israeli security official, meanwhile, briefing reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity, said: "We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets."

He added: "Right now, we have to hit Hamas hard to stop the launching. I don't see any other way for Hamas to change its behavior."

Hamas had made it known in recent weeks that it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking because of its coming elections. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Barak not to react. The Israeli public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near Gaza.

Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game because Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with jobs increasingly scarce in Gaza because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology. One of the biggest tolls Saturday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 people were killed.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is widely viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged much stronger politically.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, dominated by Abbas's Fatah movement, called a one-day commercial strike throughout the West Bank and urged Palestinians to take to the streets in peaceful protests.

Governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago after its victory in elections for the Palestinian Parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honor previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has tried to isolate Hamas by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for 10 days in reaction to rocket fire.

Opening the routes to commerce was Hamas's main goal in its truce with Israel, just as ending the rocket fire was Israel's aim. But while rocket firings did go down to 15 to 20 a month from hundreds a month, Israel said it would not permit trade to begin because the rocket fire had not completely stopped and because Hamas continued to smuggle weapons from Egypt through desert tunnels.

Hamas said that was a violation of the agreement, a sign of Israel's real intentions and cause for further rocket fire. On Wednesday alone, about 70 rockets from Gaza hit Israel.

Load-Date: December 31, 2008

Hamas missiles barrage Israel

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1523 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that Hamas still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza.

Four Israelis, including a soldier, were killed and eight wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the United Nations said the total included at least 62 civilians.

Early Tuesday, Israeli aircraft dropped at least 16 bombs on five Hamas government buildings in a Gaza City complex, destroying them, setting fires and sending rubble flying for hundreds of yards, witnesses said. Rescue workers said 40 people were injured.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of Hamas field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against Hamas" and allied militants.

Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable.

In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously -- the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents.

The military said an Israeli soldier was killed later in a mortar strike, the first soldier to be killed in the conflict. Five others were wounded, one seriously, according to a military statement.

Earlier Monday, an Israeli was killed and one seriously wounded by a rocket strike in the Negev desert community of Nahal Oz, closer to the Gaza border. A rocket also killed an Israeli construction worker in the city of Ashkelon. In all, five Israelis have been killed since the Gaza offensive began Saturday, bringing to 19 the number killed in rocket attacks from Gaza this year.

Early Tuesday, Hamas released a statement saying its squads had fired 43 homemade rockets, 17 longer-range Grads and six mortar shells at Israel. Other militant groups also fired rockets at Israel.

The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at Hamas' foundation. Israeli aircraft staged five separate strikes on the houses of field operatives, though there was no confirmation that any of them were killed.

Hamas missiles barrage Israel

A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike envelops the image.

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U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel's offensive as excessive and demanded an immediate cease-fire. He said key international and regional players -- including foreign ministers of the Arab League nations holding an emergency meeting Wednesday -- must "act swiftly and decisively to bring an early end to this impasse."

The U.S. government said it was "vigorously engaged" in trying to restore a cease-fire.

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe defended the Israeli response but added that the Bush administration was urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza.

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Short of reoccupying Gaza, however, it was unlikely any amount of Israeli firepower could completely snuff out militant rocket attacks. Past operations all failed to do so.

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For the first time, Israel also hit one of a series of tunnels prepared by Hamas along the border with Israel for use in attacks on invading ground troops, several Israeli TV networks said. One tunnel was packed with explosives and several militants inside were killed, Channel 1 said.

Most of those killed in three days of airstrikes were Hamas members. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of Hamas security forces were among the dead.

Hamis missiles barrage Israel

But the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees expressed concern about civilian casualties. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive.

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Around mid-afternoon, ambulances ferried the wounded from Gaza toward the crossing in the border town of Rafah, where over a dozen Egyptian ambulances waited to take over the casualties.

Despite Israel's battering attacks, sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day as more than 40 rockets and mortar rounds rained down.

Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza.

Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said. Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Jason Keyser in Jerusalem, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Deb Riechmann in Crawford, Texas, and Omar Sinan in Rafah, Egypt, contributed to this report.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: A; Pg. 5

Length: 1504 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) - Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that Hamas still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza. Four Israelis, including a soldier, were killed and four were wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the U.N. said the total included at least 62 civilians. Early Tuesday, Israeli aircraft dropped at least 16 bombs on five Hamas government buildings in a Gaza City complex, destroying them, setting fires and sending rubble flying for hundreds of yards, witnesses said. Rescue workers said 40 people were injured.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of Hamas field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against Hamas" and allied militants. Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable. In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously - the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents. The military said an Israeli soldier was killed later in a mortar strike, the first soldier to be killed in the conflict. Five others were wounded, one seriously, according to a military statement. Earlier Monday, an Israeli was killed and one seriously wounded by a rocket strike in the Negev desert community of Nahal Oz, closer to the Gaza border. A rocket also killed an Israeli construction worker in the city of Ashkelon. In all, five Israelis have been killed since the Gaza offensive began Saturday, bringing to 19 the number killed in rocket attacks from Gaza this year. Early Tuesday, Hamas released a statement saying its squads had fired 43 homemade rockets, 17 longer-range Grad and six mortar shells at Israel. Other militant groups also fired rockets at Israel. The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at Hamas' foundation. A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike enveloped the image. One Israeli attack targeted a house in the Jebaliya refugee camp, killing seven people, but the Hamas activist was not there, Hamas security and relatives said. Another hit the Jebaliya home of Abdel-Karim Jaber, a Hamas political figure who is a senior administrator at Gaza's Islamic University. He was not at home and it wasn't immediately clear if anyone was hurt in the strike. In another air assault, an Islamic Jihad commander was killed as he was walking near his house, said Abu Hamza, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad's military wing. Israel's airstrikes on more than 325 sites since midday Saturday reduced dozens of buildings to rubble, overwhelmed hospitals with wounded and filled Gaza's deserted streets with smoke and fire. The military said Israeli naval vessels had also bombarded targets from the sea. On Monday, aircraft pulverized a house next to the home of Hamas Premier Ismail Haniyeh, a security compound and a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group - all symbols of Hamas strength in the coastal territory it has ruled since June 2007. Israel's offensive has rattled the Middle East and capitals around the world,

Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks

triggering street protests and fiery speeches by adversaries of Israel like the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the day's biggest outpouring of anger, tens of thousands of Hezbollah's supporters stood in a pouring rain in a Beirut square to condemn Israel. Stone-throwing clashes broke out in about a half-dozen spots in the Palestinians' West Bank territory as well as in several Arab-populated areas inside Israel. Israeli police and soldiers fired rubber bullets and tear gas at rioting youths, but it did not appear anyone was injured. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel's offensive as excessive and demanded an immediate cease-fire. He said key international and regional players - including foreign ministers of the Arab League nations holding an emergency meeting Wednesday - must "act swiftly and decisively to bring an early end to this impasse." The U.S. government said it was "vigorously engaged" in trying to restore a cease-fire. White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe defended the Israeli response, but added that the Bush administration was urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza. With Israeli troops and tanks massing on the Gaza border, Defense Minister Ehud Barak told parliament he wanted to strike a devastating blow against Hamas. However, later he indicated a ground assault was not inevitable, issuing a warning that he was giving Hamas a last chance to halt its rocket fire. Short of reoccupying Gaza, however, it was unlikely any amount of Israeli firepower could completely snuff out militant rocket attacks. Past operations all failed to do so. The Cabinet's decision over the weekend to call up 6,500 reserve soldiers could be a pressure tactic. Military experts noted no full combat units had been mobilized and said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion. For the first time, Israel also hit one of a series of tunnels prepared by Hamas along the border with Israel for use in attacks on invading ground troops, several Israeli TV networks said. One tunnel was packed with explosives and several militants inside were killed, Channel 1 said. Most of those killed in three days of airstrikes were Hamas members. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of Hamas security forces were among the dead. But the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees expressed concern about civilian casualties. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive. In New York, U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said his agency had not been able to determine a precise number of civilian casualties, but knew of at least 62 women and children killed. He said 1,400 people had been injured. Eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two separate Israeli airstrikes Sunday night, Palestinian medics said. Holmes said he was very worried about a shortage of humanitarian supplies in Gaza. "Because of the effective blockade that's been in place for many months now, and because of the increasing tightening of this blockade in recent weeks around Gaza, stocks of vital items are either very low or nonexistent, and that's particularly the case, for example, with wheat flour," he said. Israel opened one of Gaza's border crossings Monday to allow several ambulances and 62 trucks carrying medical supplies and food to cross. "Obviously these supplies are better than nothing, but they remain wholly inadequate," Holmes said, saying that his agency needed 100 truckloads of flour every day to meet needs. In Gaza, some families left their apartments next to institutions linked to Hamas, fearing they could be targeted. Suad Abu Wadi, 42, kept her six children close to her on mattresses in her Gaza City living room. Her husband sat with them, chain-smoking. Abu Wadi said he had not said a word since seeing their neighbor carrying the body of his child, killed in an airstrike Saturday. Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said 364 Palestinians had died and more than 1,400 wounded. Some of the injured were being taken to private clinics and even homes, he said. Egyptian officials said ambulances were ferrying wounded Gazans to hospitals in Egypt from Gaza's Rafah border crossing. Tariq al-Mahlawi, Egypt's deputy health minister, said 32 patients had been brought in by nightfall and that 500 beds were ready to treat Palestinians. Around mid-afternoon, ambulances ferried the wounded from Gaza toward the crossing in the border town of Rafah, where over a dozen Egyptian ambulances waited to take over the casualties. Despite Israel's battering attacks, sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day as more than 40 rockets and mortar rounds rained down. Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza. Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said. --- Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Jason Keyser in Jerusalem, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Deb Riechmann in Crawford, Texas, and Omar Sinan in Rafah, Egypt, contributed to this report.

Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks

End of Document

Israel presses its attack on Gaza; Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded; Hamas vows revenge

The International Herald Tribune

December 29, 2008 Monday

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Length: 1479 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israeli airstrikes against Palestinian facilities in Gaza continued Sunday for a second day and the death toll rose to more than 280 as Israel retaliated for rocket fire from the area with its most severe campaign against Palestinian militants in decades.

The Palestinian groups again launched barrages of rockets and mortars into Israel on Sunday, extending their reach further than before, and the Israeli government approved the emergency call-up of thousands of army reservists in preparation for a possible ground operation.

Speaking before the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, Defense Minister Ehud Barak said the army "will deepen and broaden its actions as needed" and "will continue to act in Gaza."

Among the 30 or more targets hit Saturday and Sunday were the main security compound and prison in Gaza City known as the Saraya; metal workshops; Hamas military posts; and the house of a chemistry professor from Islamic University. The Hamas-owned Al Aqsa television station was also struck, as was a mosque that the Israelis said was housing armed men and was being used as a "terrorist operation center."

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead in Gaza were security officers for Hamas, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people had been wounded in the attacks.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Sunday that "the patience, determination and stamina" of the residents of Israel would, in the end, determine the success of the military campaign.

Two rockets fell in the vicinity of the Israeli port of Ashdod, 40 kilometers, or 25 miles, north of Gaza, a military spokeswoman said. Others hit the coastal city of Ashkelon. Some Israelis were lightly wounded by shrapnel.

Israeli military officials said their airstrikes, which began Saturday morning, were the start of what could be days or even months of an effort to force Hamas to end its rocket barrages. After the first airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, sending thousands of Israelis into bomb shelters. One man was killed Saturday in the town of Netivot.

Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's assault and called on Hamas to end the rocket fire. But the Bush administration blamed Hamas for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, a fierce rival of Hamas, urged the Islamic group to renew a truce with Israel that collapsed last week, news services reported.

In New York on Sunday, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement expressing concern about the escalation of the conflict and calling on both parties for an immediate end to all violence. The statement came after the 15-member council met for more than four hours in closed session.

The Associated Press reported that the top UN human rights official had said that Israel's response to the firing of rockets was "disproportionate." The UN high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, said she was distressed at the enormous loss of life in Gaza and called on Israel to end collective punishment and the targeting of civilians.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, even before the rocky cease-fire between Israel and Hamas fully collapsed more than a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks against Israel and some Israeli operations in Gaza.

The Israeli Army said that Palestinian militants had fired more than 300 rockets and mortars into Israel over the past week, and 10 times that number in the past year.

Still, there was a shocking quality to the Saturday attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, women were shopping at an outdoor market and children were emerging from school.

The center of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing and women shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that family members could identify them. The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre."

Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel. "We say in all confidence that even if we are hung on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine," he said.

In Damascus, Hamas's leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al Jazeera television that he was calling for a new intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks for the first time since 2005. Hamas, he said, had accepted "all the peaceful options, but without results."

A top Israeli security official, meanwhile, briefing reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity, said: "We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets."

He added: "Right now, we have to hit Hamas hard to stop the launching. I don't see any other way for Hamas to change its behavior."

Hamas had made it known in recent weeks that it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking because of its coming elections. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Barak not to react. The Israeli public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near Gaza.

Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game because Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with jobs increasingly scarce in Gaza because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology. One of the biggest tolls Saturday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 people were killed.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is widely viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged much stronger politically.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, dominated by Abbas's Fatah movement, called a one-day commercial strike throughout the West Bank and urged Palestinians to take to the streets in peaceful protests.

Governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago after its victory in elections for the Palestinian Parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honor previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has tried to isolate Hamas by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for 10 days in reaction to rocket fire.

Opening the routes to commerce was Hamas's main goal in its truce with Israel, just as ending the rocket fire was Israel's aim. But while rocket firings did go down to 15 to 20 a month from hundreds a month, Israel said it would not permit trade to begin because the rocket fire had not completely stopped and because Hamas continued to smuggle weapons from Egypt through desert tunnels.

Hamas said that was a violation of the agreement, a sign of Israel's real intentions and cause for further rocket fire. On Wednesday alone, about 70 rockets from Gaza hit Israel.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

Conflict in the Mideast; Hamas hits back at Israel with rockets

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

December 30, 2008, Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. P1A

Length: 1487 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser, The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that Hamas still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza.

Four Israelis, including a soldier, were killed and eight wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the U.N. said the total included at least 62 civilians.

Early today, Israeli aircraft dropped at least 16 bombs on five Hamas government buildings in a Gaza City complex, destroying them, setting fires and sending rubble flying FOR hundreds of yards, witnesses said. Rescue workers said 40 people were injured.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of Hamas field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against Hamas" and allied militants.

Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable.

In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously - the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents.

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Early today, Hamas released a statement saying its squads had fired 43 homemade rockets, 17 longer-range Grads and six mortar shells at Israel. Other militant groups also fired rockets at Israel.

The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at Hamas' foundation. Israeli aircraft staged five separate strikes on the houses of field operatives, though there was no confirmation that any of them were killed.

Conflict in the Mideast Hamas hits back at Israel with rockets

A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike envelops the image.

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Conflict in the Mideast Hamas hits back at Israel with rockets

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Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza.

Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

Horror on flipside of the fence

Weekend Australian

February 2, 2008 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 26

Length: 1464 words

Byline: Kylie Baxter

Body

Kylie Baxter says there are wildly different interpretations of the conflict in the 'plucky country'

ISRAEL is a country marked by vibrant diversity, compelling historical significance and great physical beauty, and journalists, even senior ones, suffer from a serious myopia when it comes to covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Greg Sheridan ('Deep inside the plucky country', Inquirer, January 19) is absolutely right on these two counts.

His article drew together the hallowed national ground of Australia's fallen soldiers in the Middle East, the introduced gum trees and the very land of Israel. In short, it encouraged us, and our foreign policy makers, to remember that Israelis are just like us, people deserving to live in freedom and security in their own land.

I was also in the hotly contested Holy Land in recent weeks: in fact, Sheridan and I physically could have crossed paths on our visits. But the differences in what we took from that experience are profound. Sheridan rightly points out that Israeli society is often sidestepped in Western media coverage. He goes on to offer a compelling account of a tiny, besieged national community facing murderous terrorists while attempting to live a normal existence.

This is true. But it is also a narrative that ignores the experience of millions of Palestinians who have not taken up arms against Israel and who suffer, collectively, for the actions of those who have.

The abhorrent killing of civilians is a feature of this complex conflict, and Sheridan legitimately draws attention to it. However, it is also imperative to acknowledge that it is both Palestinian and Israeli civilians who die. Indeed, it is Palestinian civilians who die in vastly greater numbers.

The 'wrongly labelled' wall that is 'mostly a fence', according to Sheridan, looked pretty much like a wall from the window of my car. Some sections have been covered in graffiti by the population it seeks to contain. 'To exist is to resist' is probably one of the more powerful statements.

In the places where it is a fence, the motion sensors, watch towers and electrified wire firmly distinguish it from the images of white pickets in the popular Western interpretation of a fence.

It is inarguable that Israel's two major withdrawals, from southern Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005, have failed to bring peace. But the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah is a cross-border war with its origins in a 20-year Israeli occupation of sovereign Lebanese territory.

Horror on flipside of the fence

Hezbollah's existence is in significant part an outcome of that occupation. Israel's unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip is an entirely different scenario. The desperation of the people of Gaza as they broke through concrete walls in search of food and fuel in recent days is only the most dramatic representation of an ongoing Israeli policy designed to squeeze the civilian population of this tiny, overcrowded piece of land.

In several years of teaching Middle Eastern politics in Australian universities I have tried hard to dispel the "media legend" of the Israeli settler as a gun-slinging fanatic on a hilltop. Sheridan is completely right in asserting that such caricatures depict the absolute, if extremely volatile, minority.

Settlers move on to Palestinian land for cheaper housing, lifestyle choices and schools. However, it is just as important to note they are encouraged into the West Bank by decades of sustained government policy specifically aimed at entrenching Israeli settlement as a "fact on the ground" in direct contravention of UN resolutions, international opinion and Israel's own commitments under the international peace process from the Oslo accords onwards.

The settlers are people just like us. They want to go to school, have careers and raise families without the threat of violence. Funnily enough, they are also just like another group of people, the Palestinians.

Sadly, the Israeli-Palestinian issue is one in which Western observers are forced to come down in one camp or the other. Professionally, I have actively attempted to avoid this, perhaps foolishly believing that my status as an Australian offered me to think about, teach and write on this complex issue with a shred of objectivity and even-handedness.

I was in Israel in the confronting and frightening year of 2001, undertaking a course at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and trying to come to terms with security measures that, to a born and bred Melburnian, seemed incomprehensible. Thankfully, I left Israel only hours before one of the devastating terrorist attacks that necessitated them.

In the weeks that followed, the overseas students' cafeteria where I had passed the long hot hours of an Israeli summer was also bombed, and scores of students from across the world died in horrific circumstances. As a 23-year-old, these experiences greatly tempered my world view and, more specifically, my view of politics in this region.

I support an independent and viable Palestinian state as a requirement of both pragmatic need and historical justice. But spending time among Israelis who were literally terrified that a bomb was going to explode at any moment gave me some minuscule insight into what living in fear does to the politics of a community. Thus, it was with great interest and quiet trepidation that I returned to Jerusalem this year.

Tourism has nearly returned to the pre-Intifada levels. The streets, even in East Jerusalem, effectively a no-go zone in 2001, are quiet and safe, and the military presence is subdued. Israel itself is flourishing but there is a cost, and it is paid by those with whom Israel seeks to make peace.

Bethlehem is a case in point. As a site of Christian pilgrimage, this town is firmly on the tourist map. As the tour buses approach the wall they are greeted by huge multilingual signs urging them to travel in peace. There are no such signs at the separate crossing point for locals. The checkpoint for Palestinians resembles a giant cattle grid.

The 19-year-old female Israeli soldier sitting behind the reinforced screen on my visit was chewing gum and talking on her mobile phone as she gestured at people three times her age to approach the glass in an orderly fashion and hold up their ID cards. Once she has finished entering their ID numbers into the computer that assured her they had the right to cross Israel's wall, she motioned them towards the machine to be electronically fingerprinted.

Nablus is another experience, infinitely more depressing. This city, covered in our media solely in the context of curfews and armed conflict, has a proud history of intellectual learning. Al-Najah University attempts to maintain this tradition. But the reality of life in an open-air cage is taking its toll. The sadness with which academics educate the young, knowing that the best chance they will have to use their skills is far from their homeland, is palpable.

Horror on flipside of the fence

After years of occupation, too many in this generation, the very ones who will be needed to lead a future Palestinian state to prosperity, want to be anywhere other than Palestine. As I was shown around the still bustling old city and the refugee camps that ring the city, it was clear my student guides were well versed in telling their stories to interested Westerners.

Like many young Palestinians, none of them had met an Israeli who was not holding a weapon. I heard of the impact of the near constant night-time Israeli incursions into the camps and the historic old city itself. As I listened to the oft-told account of how one 19-year-old's decision to take a shortcut to class resulted in a bullet in the knee, I understood how far I was from home.

I also reflected on how much these young men were full of the same bravado and aspirations that anyone who has spent time in an undergraduate classroom anywhere on the planet would recognise. In short, they too are just like us.

Sheridan and I saw different things in our respective experiences in the Holy Land. I share his summation that the killing of a Jewish settler by two Palestinian gunmen who simply waited for a victim is a reprehensible crime. But the killing of more than 30 civilians in Gaza in the days that followed the publication of his article also needs to be humanised.

Kylie Baxter is a researcher at the National Centre for Excellence of Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne. She is the co-author of the forthcoming text *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Rise of Anti-Americanism* (Routledge, 2008).

Greg Sheridan writes: In my article referred to above, I suggested that at the height of this decade's Intifada, terrorists had killed 1500 Israelis in a single year. That figure is mistaken. From September 2000 to the end of 2005, Palestinian terrorists killed 1100 Israelis.

Load-Date: February 1, 2008

A Town Under Fire Becomes a Symbol for Israel

The New York Times

April 5, 2008 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1375 words

Byline: By ETHAN BRONNER

Dateline: SDEROT, Israel

Body

This long neglected immigrant town a mile from Gaza, pounded by Palestinian rockets for the past seven years, is taking on a new identity, edging into the center of Zionist consciousness as a symbol of the nation's unofficial motto: "Never Again."

Like the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, Sderot is now a must-see stop for those who support Israel or are being urged to do so. Several groups have set up offices to arrange visits to a damaged home or a trauma center. Foreign diplomats have been bused here by the government; a United Nations officer says he has brought top officials here five times; Senator John McCain came last month; Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton, residents say, cannot be far behind.

Israelis and their supporters are lining up to volunteer. Money is pouring in for bomb shelters, social services and an Orthodox religious seminary.

"For years, the government and others thought of Sderot not as a national problem but a local one," Mayor Eli Moyal said, just before the ribbon-cutting for an elegant first aid and ambulance center built with money donated largely by American Jews. "They now understand that if Sderot falls, Israel falls."

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A Town Under Fire Becomes a Symbol for Israel

Surrounded by orange groves and wheat fields, guarded above by a military blimp that sets off an alert with each rocket launched from Gaza, Sderot has been a tough place to live. There have been days when more than 50 rockets have landed in or near the town, bringing panic, destruction and occasionally death to a town of 20,000 that is heavily populated with Israeli minority groups -- Moroccans, refugees from Central Asia and Ethiopians. Panic is widespread. Businesses have closed. Three thousand residents have left.

Residents have grown accustomed to -- though hardly comfortable with -- the constant sound of a townwide alert known as "Code Red," produced when the blimp detects an incoming rocket. Once the alarm has gone off, there is 20 seconds to get to a shelter before the rocket hits. Given such a short warning, kindergartners are kept inside all day rather than risk their failing to move quickly.

Hundreds of rockets are on grim display in the courtyard of the police station. The town itself, while typical of many its size in Israel, is now pockmarked with rocket holes and shelters and has developed a fierce black humor about its predicament, with sculptures made of rockets in a number of places.

A sense of pride in Sderot's gritty refusal to yield and an interest in finding ways to protect and enhance the town have spread rapidly. World WIZO, a Zionist women's group, found that Sderot campaigns elicit visceral support from donors.

"We printed T-shirts saying 'Sderot Needs You.' In one day, we raised \$1 million," said Helena Glaser, the group's president, as she toured Sderot.

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That same afternoon, a busload of Jewish fund-raisers were inspecting new care centers they had sponsored, passing some of the dozens of bomb shelters, some of them donated by evangelical Christians; a rabbi was going over plans for a \$5 million seminary, financed mostly from abroad.

For people who live and work here, all the attention, especially from wealthy outsiders, can seem overwhelming. Several said they were unable to get anything done.

"It has gotten out of hand," said Dror Marsha, the director of the local volunteer center. "It has become a trend -- a good trend -- but I can't handle it. We have 1,000 volunteers a month now." Two years ago, he said, the number was 200.

Among the projects donated by evangelical groups are some of the nearly 80 small shelters and bus stops that double as shelters as well as a set of "resilience centers" to coordinate social services. Run by the Israel Trauma Coalition, a project of the UJA-Federation of New York, the resilience centers send social workers on house calls, provide training for single parents and offer workshops for the elderly and new immigrants.

Apart from the donations and support from the outside, another big change in Sderot in the past year has been economic, and the surprising reason for that is the Israeli evacuation of Gaza. Until 2005, there was an industrial park just inside Gaza of companies jointly owned by Israelis and Palestinians. With the withdrawal, the companies relocated to Sderot and employed locals, bringing the city's unemployment rate from a crushing 20 percent in the late 1990s to a near national low of 3.5 percent, according to Shalom Halevy, a municipal spokesman.

Still, 30 percent of Sderot's population show symptoms of stress, five times as many as in similar populations in Israel, according to studies carried out by Marc Gelkopf of Haifa University. Many families sleep in one room together for fear of missing an alarm.

As much as Sderot is a symbol, it is also a kind of Rorschach test -- a screen onto which various political factions project their hopes and fears. For the right, it is evidence that only force will stop the rockets; for the left it is evidence that force is not the answer and that the rockets cannot be stopped without a new approach.

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<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: Money is pouring into Sderot for bomb shelters and social services. Some shelters have been donated by evangelical Christians.(PHOTOGRAPH BY RINA CASTELNUOVO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator John McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, visited the town and its rocket display last month.(PHOTOGRAPH BY URIEL SINAI/GETTY IMAGES)(pg. A8) MAP: Sderot is heavily populated with Israeli minority groups. Map details area of GAZA STRIP (pg. A8)

Load-Date: April 5, 2008

Under a 7-year attack, Israeli town's identity is formed

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

April 6, 2008 Sunday

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Length: 1355 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner New York Times News Service

Body

SDEROT, Israel -- This long-neglected immigrant town a mile from Gaza, pounded by Palestinian rockets for the past seven years, is taking on a new identity, edging into the center of Zionist consciousness as a symbol of the nation's unofficial motto: "Never Again."

Like the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, Sderot is now a must-see stop for those who support Israel or are being urged to do so. Several groups have set up offices to arrange visits to a damaged home or a trauma center. Foreign diplomats have been bused here by the government; a U.N. officer says he has brought top officials here five times; Sen. John McCain came last month; Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton, residents say, cannot be far behind.

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Few tears will be shed over Bush's departure

Sunday Independent (Ireland)

December 28, 2008

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Sunday Independent

Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 1475 words

Body

It is hard to imagine that many people will be looking back on the Bush Junior years with nostalgia. It is clear that President-Elect Obama will have his work cut out to address the enormity of the financial and economic problems currently engulfing the United States, and therefore by contagion the rest of the world. It may be because of this that he has decided to make someone as high-profile and charismatic as Hillary Clinton his Secretary of State. She can shoulder the external responsibilities in large measure while he concentrates on the domestic agenda, which is very largely why he has been elected. We Europeans are fooling ourselves if we think that Barack Obama was elected because Americans were uneasy about the unpopularity of the United States and its government abroad.

Yet however daunting the domestic prospect, the challenges to the world order left behind by the Bush years are truly formidable. Paradoxically the war on terror has been highly successful in one area, the area which matters most to Americans. There has been no attack on the United States homeland since September 11, 2001. Not many of us would have bet on that outcome. But according to the Bush administration's own doctrine, in its national security strategy of September 2002, it claimed to be fighting a war against terrorists 'of global reach'. In the name of this war two countries have been invaded and occupied. This declaration of war has given the terrorists the oxygen of publicity they crave and elevated criminals into soldiers for a cause. And, as those of us who live in these islands know only too well, terrorism didn't start on 9/11. And as it is a tactic, not an end in itself, is unlikely if ever to go away. Hence, how do you gauge that you have won the war on terror?

On another level, when I said that George Bush was al-Qaeda's best recruiting sergeant a few years ago, I was expressing a fairly banal thought. As the inquiries into 9/11 comprehensively demonstrated, Saddam Hussein and Iraq were not involved in the terror attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. Nor was al-Qaeda present in Iraq until after the US-led invasion of 2003. Now the jihadi genie is well and truly out of the bottle. The countless deaths of Iraqis and US and other allied soldiers at al-Qaeda's hands since the invasion are just one of the tragically unintended consequences of the Iraq war.

For many women in Iraq there has been a terrible price to pay in terms of their personal liberties: bullied, beaten and even killed for such crimes against morality as wearing Western clothes, Iraqi women must wonder why an invasion in the name of freedom and democracy should have deprived them of some of their most basic human rights.

Elsewhere along the so-called arc of instability, there is precious little satisfaction to be gained at the Bush administration's performance. Afghanistan, that other major war theatre, is proving evermore intractable as the

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Taliban and al-Qaeda reorganise and rearm from their safe havens in the tribal lands in Pakistan, where the new Prime Minister has been no more successful than General Musharraf in keeping control.

Hardly surprising when the real power in the land is the Pakistan intelligence service, the ISI, which effectively created the Taliban back in the Nineties. Afghanistan outside Kabul is in desperate straits with an alienated population, not only against the US and Nato forces, but against the Karzai government seen as increasingly ineffective and corrupt. And opium production has never been higher.

One of the main beneficiaries of the war in Iraq has been Iran, which now emerges as the regional superpower thanks to the installation in Baghdad of a pro-Iranian Shia-dominated government and all this at the hands of the "great Satan" as the Iranians call the United States. It must seem too good to be true to the mullahs. A government as divided and incompetent as the current one in Iran, which has alienated so much of its population, could be expected by now to have been significantly weakened. Yet the militaristic rhetoric coming out of Washington has united the country in a predictable way under the banner of Iranian nationalism and its right to develop nuclear power.

Nobody I know thinks that the Iranian government will stop at peaceful uses of nuclear power; on the other hand, can they be entirely blamed for wanting to develop nuclear weapons when so many of their neighbours or near-neighbours have done so? Iraq was certainly on this track in the Nineties. Israel, India and Pakistan are all nuclear states. Syria has ambitions in that direction. Why should Iran be the one out of step? That is of course the view in Tehran. For the rest of us, non-proliferation and the dramatic reduction of all nuclear arsenals remains the preferred option. It seems at this stage unlikely that the Bush administration will feel up to launching or condoning a military strike on Iran. The days of the neo-cons' quip "everyone wants to go to Baghdad, real men want to go to Tehran" quoted in Newsweek before the invasion seem long gone. But Obama/Clinton will have to give Iran a very high priority in their foreign policy programme. Talking to the Iranians rather than threatening to bomb them might be a good place to start.

Others in Bush's Axis of Evil to be "dealt with", as his former Ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, put it, included Syria and North Korea. Syria's capacity for trouble-making through Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon remains legendary, though France and Britain have recently shown signs of wanting to encourage Syria to behave more constructively. But the festering sore of Palestine has remained neglected and aggravated by Bush's partisan approach so clearly illustrated by the US administration's looking on benignly while the ill-judged Israeli operation in 2006 in Lebanon strengthened Hezbollah.

To be fair to President Bush, there has been some modest success with the curtailment of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme. It looks as though North Korea has disabled part of its facilities, and only six weeks ago the United States removed North Korea from its list of state-sponsors of terrorism. So the Axis of Evil now boils down to just Iran.

But there are increasing problems with what President Reagan used to describe as the Empire of Evil. Post-Soviet Russia has been mishandled by more than just one US president. But the result is a Russia determined to reclaim first-class status after the humiliations of the Nineties and is increasingly self-confident and aggressive, particularly in its own backyard. The disastrous attempt by Georgia's Washington-backed President Mikheil Saakashvili on South Ossetia last summer prompted a predictably robust, not to say brutal, Russian reaction. Yet it is hard to believe that Saakashvili would have acted without a green light from a senior figure within the Bush administration.

In one area at least the Bush legacy will be looked at kindly. He has accelerated dramatically efforts to combat HIV/Aids and malaria in Africa, and by the time he leaves office President Bush will have doubled the level of assistance to Africa to \$8bn. Besides that, his President's Malaria Initiative of 2005 and his emergency plan for Aids relief is estimated to have reached 25 million people in sub-Saharan Africa.

If the horizontal issue of HIV/Aids and malaria has been a relative success area, another horizontal issue has been a spectacular failure, namely climate change. President Bush appears to be as much in denial over climate change as President Mbeki of South Africa was over HIV/Aids. The default unilateralist stance of the Bush administration, which could be seen in its reaction to the International Criminal Court where he refused to sign up, or in his rejection

Few tears will be shed over Bush's departure

of the Kyoto Agreement, has been one of the main causes of friction with European allies who look to the US to take a lead in these areas. The new administration's ambassadorial appointment to the United Nations will be an interesting litmus test. Appointing John Bolton as the Ambassador to the United Nations, as Bush did, was like making Richard Dawkins the Minister for Religious Affairs.

If the current international financial turmoil shows us anything, it is how none of us can be insulated from seemingly remote events. Who earlier than 18 months ago had ever heard of a sub-prime loan? As Obama struggles with reforming the Bretton Woods institutions -- the monetary management system -- and the world recession, the new Secretary of State will have a whole series of toxic issues to deal with. She will, however, enjoy an initial surge of goodwill as a reaction to bleak disillusionment with the Bush years.

Sir Ivor Roberts, a former Ambassador to Ireland, Italy and Yugoslavia, is President of Trinity College, Oxford

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Hated 'peacemaker'

The Advertiser (Australia)
September 26, 2007 Wednesday
State Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 19

Length: 1512 words

Byline: JOHN DANISZEWSKI and NAHAL TOOSI

Body

If Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad hoped to convince Americans he is peaceful and moderate he was not particularly successful. JOHN DANISZEWSKI and

NAHAL TOOSI report.

IN his outward persona at least, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad went to the United States to lessen hostility toward himself and to defend Iran, not to rabble-rouse and provoke hatred.

Whether he succeeded remains an open question. The hardline Iranian leader's PR visit to the United States has had an inauspicious start. Protesters have followed his every move since he landed in New York on the weekend, and as he waited to give a much-publicised address to a forum at Columbia University, he was introduced as a "petty and cruel dictator" by its head.

He has been a controversial and often reviled figure in the West since being elected president in 2005, the head of a country dubbed by US President George W Bush part of "the axis of evil".

His visit comes as tensions between the U.S. and Iran are stretched to breaking point. His aim seems to be to present himself to Americans as a rational leader rather than a dangerous, hardline radical.

Speaking to the often hostile forum at the elite Columbia University, ahead of an address to the United Nations today, he sought to present his country as a reasonable seeker of peace and justice.

He denied that Iran holds violent intentions against the America, Israel or any of its immediate neighbours. Instead, its main foreign policy aims are "peace and viable security for the whole world".

Mr Ahmadinejad argued that his administration respected reason and science, despite reported crackdowns on intellectuals. He also denied accusations that Iran was providing weapons to insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, or that it was breaking international law by developing nuclear weapons.

But, as with any world leader, Mr Ahmadinejad's words cannot just be accepted at face value. Leaders are judged by their actions more than interviews.

Hated 'peacemaker'

Given the Iranian Government's record - taking U.S. hostages in 1979, supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon, the arrest of intellectuals, hosting demonstrations calling for "Death to America" and Mr Ahmadinejad's reported call for Israel's elimination - he found a mostly unreceptive audience.

He soon found himself drawn into the type of rhetoric that has alienated Western audiences in the past.

He defended Holocaust revisionists and raised questions about who carried out the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. He provoked derisive laughter by responding to a question about Iran's execution of homosexuals by saying: "In Iran we don't have homosexuals like in your country . . . I don't know who's told you that we have this."

When Ahmadinejad, speaking in Farsi, tried to crack a joke, it drew no laughter. although maybe it was lost in translation.

"Let me tell a joke here," he said. "I think the politicians who are after atomic bombs, or testing them, making them, politically they are backward, retarded."

The crowd seemed uncertain how to react. Some applauded that pacifist sentiment, others seemed befuddled by the insensitive use of the word retarded.

Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer, also in New York for the United Nations General Assembly, ridiculed the Iranian leader's comments on homosexuals and rejected his claims of peace.

"We have a whole series of concerns about Iran," he said. "We have concerns about their support for Hamas and Hezbollah and their opposition to the Middle East peace process . . . We have concerns about their support for militias in Iraq, we have some concerns about possible Iranian activity in Afghanistan and we have concerns about their nuclear program, and we have concerns about human rights in Iran.

"So there is a long list of strikes against the regime of President Ahmadinejad and it's a regime that causes us a good deal of concern."

MR Ahmadinejad is due to address the UN today, and agreed to talk directly to a U.S. audience amid rising strains and talk of war between the two nations.

However, the invitation to speak at Columbia angered many because of Iran's human rights record under his reign. Before leaving Iran, Mr Ahmadinejad said the American people had been denied "correct information", and his visit would give them a chance to hear a different voice.

U.S. President George W. Bush said he was not sure whether he would have offered the Iranian the Columbia podium, "but nevertheless, it speaks volumes about really the greatness of America. We're confident enough to let a person come and express his views. I just hope he tells everybody the truth".

During the forum, Mr Ahmadinejad drew occasional applause, such as when he bemoaned the plight of the Palestinians. He said the problems in the Middle East, including Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon, could be solved through dialogue, goodwill and free elections.

But he often declined to offer straightforward answers to questions, responding instead with his own questions or statements about history and justice.

There was notably no bashing of the "Great Satan" and he was also somewhat muted in his discussion of Israel, although he always referred to it as "the Zionist regime" rather than by its name.

He appeared to rule out a first strike against Israel saying Iran had a defensive, not offensive, military policy, and he also played down reports that the U.S. was prepared for military action if diplomatic efforts to get Iran to abandon nuclear enrichment activities failed.

Hated 'peacemaker'

"I believe that some of the talk in this regard arises first of all from anger. Secondly, it serves the electoral purposes domestically in this country.

"Third, it serves as a cover for policy failures over Iraq."

In his most aggressive comments, he said Israel believes in "expansionist policies" and that U.S. actions in Iraq had been "misguided" and all about oil.

On the nuclear issue, he said the problems between Iran and some Western countries were strictly political, and that most of the world believed Iran had the legal right to develop nuclear technology for civilian purposes.

The U.S. and key European nations have been pushing for new sanctions against Iran for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment. Iran insists the program is for civilian energy production but the U.S. and its allies fear it is a cover to produce nuclear weapons.

HE rejected U.S. military evidence that Iran is providing weapons and training to Shi'ite militants in Iraq. The weapons, in particular, include explosively formed penetrators, or EFPs, armour-piercing roadside bombs that have killed hundreds of U.S. troops in recent months.

"Why would we want to do that?" he declared. "This would really be inappropriate for us. We are friends with both Iraq and Afghanistan. Insecurity in Iraq and Afghanistan undermines our own national security; it basically goes against what we believe."

He urged the U.S. "to change its path altogether" in Iraq and let the elected government run the country, and claimed Iran had made proposals to U.S. politicians over Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine that were all based on seeking peace in the region.

About the internet

AHMADINEJAD: In our country there are tens of millions of people who are

connected to the internet. They have access to it. So if you re talking about immoral

- like access perhaps to immoral sites, well, you would agree with me that those

sites are harmful for society. Nobody can really allow access to those. But our people

are the freest people in the world, the most aware people in the world, the most

enlightened, so to say.

REALITY CHECK: Iranians generally

have access to mainstream Websites,

including U.S. media and government

sites. But according to Reporters Without

Borders, Iran today filters 10 million immoral sites. In addition to pornographic

sites, some dealing with religion and politics

are targeted and since last year censors have

concentrated on online publications dealing

with womens rights.

Hated 'peacemaker'

About Women

AHMADINEJAD: The freest women in the world are the women in Iran.

REALITY CHECK: Women enjoy more rights in Iran than in some other Middle Eastern countries, but far fewer than those enjoyed in the West. Women can drive, vote, own property and run for any public office except the presidency. However, they have to by law cover their hair, avoid body-hugging clothing on pain of arrest and fine by a court. The court testimony of two women is equal to that of one man and women can't get a passport for foreign travel without the permission of their father.

Girls are considered adults at the age of 9 while boys become adults at 15. If a man and a woman are injured in an accident, the man gets double the punitive damages.

About Homosexuals

AHMADINEJAD: In Iran, we don't have homosexuals like in your country. We don't have that in our country. In Iran, we do not have this phenomenon.

REALITY CHECK: Mahmoud Asgari, 16, and Ayaz Marhoni, 18, were hanged publicly in 1995 in the city of Mashhad on charges of raping younger boys. They said before their executions that they were not aware that homosexual acts were punishable by death.

Load-Date: September 25, 2007

Suicide attack on troops

The Star (South Africa)

April 09, 2008 Wednesday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 671 words

Body

Mogadishu - A car yesterday rammed into a building where Burundian peacekeepers are based in the Somali capital in an apparent suicide, causing a huge explosion and wounding seven people - including two AU soldiers. The military wing of Somalia's Islamic group claimed responsibility for the attack. A Burundian soldier said the car exploded before it got into the complex.

Maarab - Lebanese leader Samir Geagea said yesterday he expected Syria to try to kill more leaders of his anti-Damascus governing coalition, blaming it for previous assassinations. Geagea, one of Lebanon's main Christian leaders, also said he saw no end in sight to a political conflict between the US-backed governing alliance and opposition factions led by Hezbollah, backed by Syria and Iran.

Jerusalem - Israeli ex-president Moshe Katsav yesterday told a court he wanted to annul a plea deal and fight to demonstrate his innocence on sexual harassment charges. Katsav, who arrived with his wife Gita, is the country's highest-ranking former official to go on trial.

Havana - President Raul Castro's government will close more than half of Cuba's family doctor offices and boost staffing at the rest in a major reform of its vaunted free healthcare system. The overhaul of one of the pillars of the health system came in response to public complaints, sources said, and was another step by Castro to improve life since he succeeded his ailing elder brother, Fidel.

Vatican City - The Vatican's No 2 official yesterday said Pope Benedict recognised the damage and pain caused by the clergy sex-abuse crisis scandal and would seek to heal wounds during his US pilgrimage next week. Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone also said he was aware of threats from Islamic extremists but said the Vatican had faith in the US security services.

Tehran - Iran had defeated its Western foes and had begun installing 6 000 new centrifuges at its uranium enrichment plant, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said yesterday, defying the West, which fears Tehran is trying to build nuclear bombs. Reacting, France suggested that major powers might have to toughen sanctions on the Islamic republic.

Paris - Riot police yesterday sprayed teargas at protesters lobbing bottles and stones in a second march in a week by thousands of Paris high school pupils. They marched in solidarity with their teachers and in anger at a government cost-saving reform that will cut 8 800 teaching jobs in the next school year, part of a broader attempt by President Nicolas Sarkozy to cut costs and bureaucracy.

Suicide attack on troops

Washington - US first lady Laura Bush has conferred an award honouring the women of military-ruled Myanmar in their battle to restore democracy and human rights. "We pay tribute to the people of Burma - especially the women, who have inspired the world with their grace and courage in the face of brutality," she said, speaking on behalf of NGO Vital Voices Global Partnership.

Malabo - China has withdrawn more than 400 of its workers from Equatorial Guinea after two Chinese labourers were killed and four injured in a clash with security forces during a strike last month. China chartered flights at the weekend to fly home the labourers. Equatorial Guinea has imposed a news blackout on the incident, but the tightly controlled media have ignored it.

Madinat Zayed, United Arab Emirates - Dubai's crown prince, Sheik Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, has bought a camel for a record \$2,7-million (R21-million) during a desert festival in Abu Dhabi. It was one of 16 camels in the beauty contest that aims to preserve the nomadic way of life in the oil-rich Gulf. More than 17 000 camels were registered for the carnival.

Dodoma - Tanzania's first albino MP was sworn in yesterday as part of the government efforts to protect the rights of albinos, who have been targeted by witchdoctors. On April 2, President Jakaya Kikwete introduced a series of measures aimed at protecting albinos from traditional sorcerers who sometimes murder and mutilate them for good luck.

Load-Date: April 9, 2008

End of Document

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: THIRD DISTRICT; Candidates debate how best to handle Iran's nuclear threat, support Israel; Several hundred people turned out to hear the candidates' views on foreign policy and to question the candidates.

Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

September 23, 2008 Tuesday

Metro Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5B

Length: 621 words

Byline: MARK BRUNSWICK, STAFF WRITER

Body

The three candidates vying to succeed retiring U.S. Rep. Jim Ramstad faced intensive questioning Monday on U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding the Middle East and Israel, at the third debate in Minnesota's Third Congressional District race.

Each sought to distinguish his position on how best to deal with the threat of Iran gaining nuclear weapons and on Arab-Israeli relations.

Republican Erik Paulsen, a seven-term member of the state House and its former majority leader, faces DFLer Ashwin Madia, an attorney and Iraq war veteran, and Independence Party candidate David Dillon, a family business owner. Madia and Dillon are first-time office-seekers.

The debate, held at Bet Shalom Congregation in Minnetonka and coordinated by the Jewish Community Relations Council, was attended by several hundred people.

Iran and issues related to the Middle East were the first topics of discussion. Paulsen characterized Iran as "a serious threat" and, as he has in the past, criticized Madia for statements the DFLer has made that Paulsen said did not sufficiently recognize the threat. Paulsen said that no strategy should be taken off the table but that economic sanctions should be explored first.

"Iran is a threat, not only to Israel, it's a threat to the United States and it's the most important threat globally," Paulsen said.

Calling Iran "a menace that needs to be dealt with," Madia said the United States should defer to Israel on the threat Iran poses to Israel, but he also advocated using "every tool in our toolbox" before exploring a military option.

"As a Marine, when someone says threat, you attack. I'm not there yet," Madia said.

Dillon said that diplomatic talks have not worked and that it is time to demand divestiture and other economic sanctions with a country "that has been doing a land-office business with other countries."

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: THIRD DISTRICT Candidates debate how best to handle Iran 's nuclear threat, support Israel Several hundred people turned out to hear th....

Madia said the United States has been the only country to have credibility in Arab-Israeli relations but blamed the Bush administration for dropping the ball as Iran threatens Israel from the east, and Hamas and Hezbollah pose threats to it as well.

Paulsen pledged to be "a consistent vote for foreign aid to Israel" and said the United States should recognize that Israel has the right to decide how to defend itself.

"Israel is the one who is facing the daily rocket fire. Israel is faced by the Iranian threat. The United States must stand firm to give strong support to Israel," Paulsen said.

Dillon said some sort of Palestinian state should be recognized but in a way that both parties can find viable.

In the contest to succeed Ramstad, a Republican who is retiring after nine terms, the candidates are seeking to represent a moderate western Hennepin County district that is the most affluent of Minnesota's eight congressional districts.

The three candidates bring something unique to the field: At one time they were all Republicans. Madia acknowledges voting for George Bush in the 2000 presidential election but says he became disenchanted with how the war in Iraq was handled and voted for Democrat John Kerry in 2004. Dillon, who grew up in a DFL activist family, describes himself as a onetime Republican who now sees the two-party system as broken.

Mark Brunswick - 651-222-1636

UPCOMING THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT DEBATES AND FORUMS:

- Consortium for People with Disabilities forum; Oct. 16, 6:30 p.m., Minnetonka Community Center, Minnetonka.
- Televised debate, Oct. 17, 8 p.m., KSTP, Channel 5. Sponsored by League of Women Voters.
- Radio debate, Oct. 27, 11 a.m., MPR's "Midday" program.

NOTE: A Third District candidate forum sponsored by the Minnesota Senior Federation and scheduled for Wednesday morning at Plymouth Creek Center in Plymouth has been postponed.

Graphic

PHOTO

Load-Date: September 29, 2008

US slammed for holding kids

Pretoria News (South Africa)

May 22, 2008 Thursday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 14

Length: 671 words

Body

Baghdad - Hundreds of children held by US forces in Iraq should be given immediate access to lawyers and have their cases reviewed promptly by an independent judicial body, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. US military authorities were holding 513 Iraqi children as of May 12 as "imperative threats to security". Since March 2003, 2 400 children have been detained - most for months.

London - A man and a woman have been charged with child neglect after reports that a 7-year-old girl starved to death in Birmingham. Khyra Ishaq was taken to hospital on Saturday where she was pronounced dead, police said yesterday. Her five brothers or sisters were also taken to hospital. The maximum sentence for neglect under the Children and Young Persons Act is 10 years in prison.

Phnom Penh - Khieu Samphan, the former Khmer Rouge head of state in Cambodia, was taken to hospital with high blood pressure yesterday. The 76-year-old is on trial before a UN-backed genocide tribunal in the Cambodian capital for alleged war and human rights atrocities.

Doha, Qatar - Rival Lebanese leaders clinched a deal yesterday to end an 18-month political feud that exploded into deadly sectarian fighting and threatened to plunge the nation into all-out civil war. The agreement will see the election of a president for Lebanon on Sunday and the creation of a unity government in which the **Hezbollah**-led opposition will have the power of veto.

Washington - President George Bush is changing US policy to allow Americans to send cellphones to relatives in Cuba after an easing of restrictions on phone use there, a National Security Council official said yesterday. However, the council's senior director for western hemisphere affairs, Dan Fisk, stressed that Bush was not abandoning the decades-old US trade embargo against Havana.

Peshawar - Pakistan's government yesterday promised to "gradually" pull out troops from the north-western valley of Swat after signing a peace agreement with Taliban militants. It was agreed that Islamic law will be enforced and girls will be allowed to go to school. The deal was done a day after the US advised its ally against negotiating with militants who could now regroup for new attacks.

Athens - Police have carried out raids across Greece and arrested 12 people in a crackdown on the distribution of child porn over the Internet. Greater Athens police chief Grigoris Balakos said arrests were made in nine Greek cities and towns, mostly for downloading the pornographic material. Nine other people were being investigated. Police seized 50 hard drives and dozens of disks.

US slammed for holding kids

Nyakeo - A rampaging mob in western Kenya burnt 15 women accused of witchcraft to death, a local official and villagers said yesterday. "This is unacceptable. People must not take the law into their own hands simply because they suspected someone," said Mwangi Ngunyi, the head of Nyamaiya district. "We will hunt the suspects down."

Madrid - French police have arrested a suspected Basque rebel leader in a "major blow" to the guerrilla group and its bombing campaign in Spain. Francisco Javier Lopez Pena (49), who was on the run for more than 20 years and was also known as Thierry, was arrested with three other suspected ETA leaders in the French city of Bordeaux on Tuesday.

Djerba - Thousands of Jews from around the world are arriving on the Tunisian island of Djerba for an annual pilgrimage to Africa's oldest synagogue, believed to be 2 500 years old. The Jewish community in Tunisia is still one of the largest in the Arab world but its numbers have dropped from 10 000 on independence from France in 1956 to around 1 500 today.

Lilongwe - Malawi's announcement that it has foiled a fourth coup bid in four years is fuelling suspicions of government paranoia and doubts over chances for a political deal crucial to donor funding. President Bingu wa Mutharika's decision to quit the United Democratic Front, which sponsored him as a candidate, is at the root of fighting over a constitutional provision preventing floor crossing.

Load-Date: May 21, 2008

End of Document

Boy stole dad's dollars

The Star (South Africa)

March 31, 2008 Monday

e4 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 697 words

Body

Jakarta - Indonesian police were today searching for a 9-year-old boy who ran away from his home in Jakarta with more than \$10 000 (about R80 000) of his father's cash. The boy reportedly bought a Playstation and a cellphone after enlisting the help of a shopping centre security guard to change dollars into Indonesian rupiah. He did go to school the next day but has been missing since Thursday.

Jakarta - Hardline Muslims today called for the death of a Dutch legislator for producing a film critical of their faith. Police stood guard as 40 demonstrators from the Islamic Defenders Front rallied outside the Dutch embassy. A spokesperson for the IDF said he had yet to see the film, but nevertheless called on the government to sever all diplomatic links with the Netherlands.

Canberra - An Australian judge will investigate the country's worst naval tragedy following the discovery this month of HMAS Sydney, 66 years after it was attacked and sunk by a German ship. All 645 crew aboard the Sydney were killed after the 30-minute battle off the northern coast of Western Australia in November 1941.

Damascus - The exiled leader of Hamas, Khaled Mashaal, says that Israel exaggerates the Palestinian militant group's military strength and accuses the Jewish state of seeking to spark a war against Hamas and the Lebanese guerrilla force **Hezbollah**. Mashaal said in an interview yesterday that Hamas' military capability is "humble" but effective because the group's will is so great.

Beijing - Chinese police have arrested a teacher linked to the rape and sexual assault of 16 girls, more than a year after he went on the run, the Beijing Times reported today. Huang Shiming was accused of raping six girls aged between 8 and 11, and was accused of sexually assaulting 10 others. He was identified in the southern province of Guangdong and will soon face trial.

Seoul - A South Korean court sentenced a disgraced former university professor to 18 months in jail today for faking her Yale doctorate and embezzling official museum funds, a court said. Shin Jeong-ah (36) was convicted for using her fake degree to become an art history professor at Dongguk University and acquire financial support for an art museum where she was working.

Luanda - Angolan rescuers brought out seven more bodies from the rubble of a collapsed police criminal investigation headquarters, bringing the death toll to 15, state media said today. The victims - all **women** - were found in the **women's** detection unit, which was the worst hit when the seven-storey building collapsed in the capital Luanda on Saturday, injuring more than 150 others.

Boy stole dad's dollars

Wellington - The world's largest species of flightless parrot is edging back from extinction with five new chicks hatched in New Zealand in recent weeks and two more on the way, wildlife officials said today. The latest births of kakapos brought the population of the rare bird to just 91. The kakapo, which is native to New Zealand, last bred in 2005, when four chicks were produced.

Istanbul - Members of Turkey's top court are expected to decide whether to hear a case for a ban on Turkey's Islamic-rooted ruling party. The 11-member Constitutional Court was scheduled to convene today to discuss the argument for the dissolution of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's party on grounds that it is trying to scrap secular principles enshrined in the country's constitution.

Baghdad - Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, which houses Iraq's government and the US embassy, appeared to be under rocket or mortar attack today, according to witnesses. A siren wailed inside the US-protected compound and a recorded voice warned people to take cover amid the sound of explosions. A dust storm enveloping the city made it difficult to see where the missiles were landing.

Lima - Visitors are increasingly vandalising the ruins of Peru's famed Sacsayhuaman fortress, leaving behind what authorities say is an unusual accumulation of graffiti from the likes of soccer fans and lovers. Photos published in Peru's El Comercio newspaper yesterday show the ancient ruins scrawled with "AL", for the Alianza Lima soccer club, along with initials inside hearts and signatures.

Load-Date: March 31, 2008

End of Document

Provincial Iraqi governor escapes injury in suicide blast

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

August 13, 2008, Wednesday

Copyright 2008 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P10A

Length: 654 words

Byline: Robert H. Reid, The Associated Press

Body

BAGHDAD - A **female** suicide bomber blasted an Iraqi convoy north of Baghdad on Tuesday, killing two people but narrowly missing a provincial governor in the second suicide attack by a woman in Diyala province in as many days.

Gov. Raad Rashid al-Tamimi ordered an indefinite curfew in Diyala's provincial capital of Baqouba, where the attack occurred.

It happened a day after Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government announced a weeklong suspension of military operations in Diyala to give militants a chance to surrender.

Al-Tamimi and the commander of Iraqi ground forces, Gen. Ali Ghaidan, were traveling to a meeting of the provincial council in Baqouba when the woman detonated her explosives as the vehicles approached, U.S. and Iraqi officials said.

Neither the governor nor the general was injured, they said.

The attack could have been more devastating, but the attacker triggered her explosives prematurely - possibly because she feared guards had spotted her, officials said.

On Monday, a **female** suicide bomber struck a checkpoint at a market in Baqouba, killing one policeman and wounding 14 other people, including nine police.

Also Tuesday, the U.S. military announced that an American Marine was killed by small arms fire in Anbar province. Two other Marines were wounded in the Sunday attack, the military said.

Diyala, stretching northeast from Baghdad to the Iranian border, has proven among the most difficult of Iraq's 18 provinces to pacify, in part because of its complex mixture of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds.

The Islamic State of Iraq, an al-Qaida front organization, declared Baqouba as its capital after Sunni extremists shifted operations from Anbar province following a revolt by Sunni Arab tribes there.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of al-Qaida in Iraq, was killed in Diyala by a U.S. airstrike in June 2006.

Many Sunnis in Diyala feel disenfranchised. Shiites hold a disproportionate share of power, including the governorship, because many Sunnis boycotted the last provincial election in January 2005.

Provincial Iraqi governor escapes injury in suicide blast

A bill to hold new provincial elections failed to win parliamentary approval this month because of a dispute over power-sharing in the northern Iraqi oil center of Kirkuk.

Al-Maliki launched a military operation in Diyala last month, hoping to replicate successes against Shiite and Sunni militants in Baghdad, the southern city of Basra and the northern city of Mosul.

On Monday, the Iraqi Defense Ministry said military operations would stop in Diyala for a week "to give gunmen a chance to surrender." U.S. military spokesman Col. Jerry O'Hara said U.S. and other multinational forces would comply with the directive.

Military operations were continuing elsewhere.

The U.S. military said American soldiers in Baghdad captured nine people linked to the Hezbollah Brigades, a Shiite extremist group that the U.S. believes is backed by Iran - a charge the Iranians deny.

A U.S. statement said the militants were seized in a series of raids in the north of the capital on Monday and Tuesday.

One of those apprehended was believed to control a militant cell in Basra and was involved in smuggling weapons and fighters from Iran, the U.S. statement said.

U.S. troops also detained 12 people believed linked to al-Qaida in Iraq, a Sunni group, during raids in the Baghdad area and Mosul, 225 miles northwest of the capital.

American troops also handed over a patrol base to the Iraqi army in Latifiyah, 20 miles south of Baghdad.

U.S. officials said the handover signaled greater confidence in the Iraqis to control the area, once known as the Triangle of Death because of frequent attacks by Sunni extremists against Shiite civilians and U.S. troops.

Also Tuesday, the speaker of Iraq's parliament, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, flew to Jordan for treatment of high blood pressure and heart problems, his office said. Al-Mashhadani, a Sunni Arab, was hospitalized in July after fainting during a parliament session.

Load-Date: August 13, 2008

Gangs - situation normal

Taranaki Daily News (New Zealand)

May 26, 2008 Monday

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Section: FEATURES; OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 704 words

Byline: DE BUEGER John

Body

They have been around for millennia and are not going anywhere soon

WITH TV so awful that one is reduced to playing cards or reading, I watch little after the News and Close Up. One fascinating programme though was Ross Kemp on Gangs.

How he managed to weasel his way into the inner sanctums of these fine, upstanding gentlemen without getting shot was impressive. Clive James once observed that getting in anywhere was easy if you had a BBC camera crew in tow, but gangs are different. Looking and dressing like typical recruitment material must have helped.

The over-riding impression was that whether in San Salvador, Cape Town or Poland there was little difference between one group of thugs and the next -and that they weren't very old.

Despite claiming that they were fighting for their families, most eked out drug-fuelled lives in depressing hellholes.

Few gang bosses make it past their 30s, and in the likes of Central America/ Columbia, life expectancy is really short. These boys were seriously tooled-up, and exchanges with their arch-nemeses usually involved high-velocity lead. Both sides had long forgotten why gang "X", who ruled the roost in the next block, were such deadly enemies, or even what the original transgression was that had caused such mutual hatred.

Like Mt Everest - it was there, because it was there - and that's just the way things are round here.

Their dismal mindset reminded me of 40+ years ago when I went to Tripoli, Lebanon, to commission an oil refinery unit. A blood-feud raged between villagers at the top of the hill and those on the plain below.

This vendetta had waxed hot and cold for hundreds of years, and no one had the slightest idea why.

One was left with the lasting impression that despite the warmth of their hospitality, they were all mad.

In my youthful ignorance, this analysis was probably simplistic and racist, but little did I realise how perceptive it was - in that only countries that had seriously lost the plot would allow immigration from such a flawed gene pool. Sydney has a time-bomb with third generation Lebanese who will not integrate and Europe is at it wit's end trying to resolve the disastrous multicultural experiment inflicted on them by liberal-left twits. (Meanwhile, surprise, surprise, Hezbollah still battles it out in on the streets of Tripoli today.)

Gangs - situation normal

Viewers of Ross Kemp's gangs, sitting comfortably in their leafy suburbs, will probably have breathed sighs of relief on reflecting that, after all, they are all far, far away.

To disavow themselves of any such misconceptions, they need to watch the programme shot in New Zealand, which TVNZ is prevented from showing. Our lads are right up there with the best of them.

Western civilisation has a major problem. Not only hare-brained, liberal wets think that current society is the natural state of mankind - your average Joe Blow in the street is equally deluded.

A further ingrained fantasy is that gangs are a rare aberration caused by poverty, and childhood abuse due to transient fathers taking no part in the lives of their young male offspring.

This viewpoint might be partly right on the latter point, but couldn't be more wrong on the former.

For millennia, homosapiens existed in roving tribal bands. When numbers increased beyond the limits of local resources, surplus young males were forcibly evicted. Boys' gangs - Viking raiders, Genghis Khan's hordes, etc-all set out to either seek virgin territory, or steal somebody else's by slaughter.

Leafy suburbs and police forces are recent innovations. Violent interplay between gender-balanced tribes and boys' gangs is "situation normal", and furthermore - however distasteful this truth is to Helen Clark's beloved sisterhood - long term, successful civilised societies have all been based on the traditional patriarchal family.

With plunging negative social statistics as Helengrad's main legacy, middle New Zealand seems to have finally grasped that the sisterhood has been waging undeclared war on the family for years - that childless-by-choice women and lesbians are unfit to dictate how children should be bought up, and that prospects for this country are dire unless the damage they have inflicted is reversed.

Load-Date: May 27, 2008

Israel defiant as Gaza toll soars

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 680 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT, GAZA-ISRAEL BORDER, With AGENCIES

Body

ISRAEL forces inched closer to central Gaza City last night as Hamas fighters tried to lure them into a dangerous urban conflict where they would be more exposed to ambush raids.

As the number of Palestinians killed since the start of the operation 11 days ago soared towards 550, Israeli leaders continued to reject international demands for a ceasefire, saying they would press ahead until the goal of destroying Hamas' military capacities had been achieved.

The main goals of Israel's ground operation are to prevent the launch of rockets into Israel, to destroy all of Hamas' ammunition stores and finally to apprehend or kill as many Hamas fighters as possible.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who has criticised Israel's military offensive, was scheduled to meet Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem overnight, Melbourne time, to try to negotiate a halt to the fighting.

According to the United Nations' Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 20 per cent of those killed and 40 per cent of the 2400 injured since the start of the operation are women and children.

One Israeli soldier was killed on Sunday, another was seriously wounded and more than 30 others have sustained moderate injuries.

Hamas fighters continued to launch Qassam rockets and mortar shells into Israel yesterday, hitting several populated areas but causing no further deaths. Four Israelis have been killed since the start of the offensive.

With Gaza's dwindling fuel supplies almost at an end, the UN agency believes that almost all of the 1.5 million residents are now living without any electricity, while 70 per cent have no access to running water.

The UN also fears that fighting in northern Gaza could lead to the city of Beit Lahiya being flooded by 3 million cubic metres of raw sewage if the main waste water pond is broken.

All hospitals in northern Gaza have been without mains electricity for 48 hours, and are now entirely dependent on back-up generators, which hospital authorities warn are close to collapse. The loss of power means that Gaza's telephone network is also near collapse.

Israeli defence officials appear pleased with the progress of the operation, believing that the large bombardment that accompanied the troops as they entered Gaza had severely diminished Hamas' ability to return fire.

Israel defiant as Gaza toll soars

A military official told The Age that the Gaza operation - the deepest Israeli thrust into Gaza since it unilaterally withdrew from the coastal territory more than three years ago - was progressing "cautiously and according to plan".

The official said the forces were moving slowly in order to minimise the chances of soldiers being kidnapped or killed in ambushes.

"This is a very dangerous type of warfare. Many of the buildings we have entered have various traps installed, so we must not be in a hurry," the official said.

According to reports in the Israeli media, the defence force was putting into practice painful lessons learned from Israel's 2006 war in Lebanon.

"The IDF has no intention of staying in one spot, but rather plans to keep in constant movement with manoeuvres around Jabalya, Sajaiya, as well as the launching areas of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya, without necessarily entering the built-up area as the terrorists want them to," one security source told the newspaper Maariv.

"We will not make ourselves sitting ducks and we will continue hitting the terrorists."

Military officials are also encouraged that they have not yet encountered some of the more sophisticated weaponry that Hamas was believed to have smuggled into Gaza, perhaps indicating that its arms stockpiles had been severely reduced by seven days of aerial and naval bombing.

Israel's Director of Military Intelligence, Major-General Amos Yadlin, warned last night that the Lebanese paramilitary force **Hezbollah** could open a second front against Israel, firing rockets into the country within days.

Meanwhile, Egypt called for the creation of humanitarian corridors into Gaza to allow food and medicine to be brought in, as air strikes forced the closure of its Rafah crossing. -- With AGENCIES

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: A man carries his wounded child into a Gaza hospital as Israeli male soldiers bear a comrade to his grave and **women** soldiers grieve. PICTURES: AFP, AP

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

Israel turns 60, still yearning for the peace that never comes

The Salt Lake Tribune

May 15, 2008 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Columnists

Length: 636 words

Byline: By William Tumpowsky

Body

This is a birthday celebration. Sixty years is a long time. At 60 some people are preparing to retire, but for nations it is still a childhood. States are spawned from the depths of political upheaval to assert independence in the spirit of hope for a better life. It is a beautiful promise.

Sixty years ago, on May 14, 1948, British troops marched out of the Holy Land and the fledgling State of Israel under United Nations resolution began what was to become a 60-year struggle for survival. To some of us, this is a day of joy. To others, the day is known as the "Naqba," which translates as catastrophe, a catastrophe that must be avenged.

Before the dust from departing British jeeps had even settled, the new State of Israel was threatened with annihilation from forces within and without. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq mobilized and attacked. Most Palestinians left to join the hostile forces and became refugees. Jews throughout the Islamic world were subjected to massacres, expulsions and loss of rights and property. Israel did not respond in kind. The Palestinians who remained were given citizenship.

Like it or not, Israel is the only democracy in the region. If we exclude Europe and Turkey, there is a radius of thousands of miles of dictatorships and autocracies. Her legal system is independent of the forces of politics and fear and is a beacon of justice. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, who has written extensively on the Arab-Israeli conflict, states, "No other nation with such high standards of morality has ever been regarded as so immoral by so many members of the media, academia and the intellectual elite."

Every nation and people owe something to the world. Please consider the region and then think of universities, contributions to science, the environment, literature and art. Israel is second only to the United States in technology innovation. Your cell phones were invented in Israel. Lifesaving medical technology and agricultural innovations begin the list of gifts.

Yet, there is no nation in history that has so many enemies. These foes and critics do not argue borders or policies; they wish for Israel to die. Israel wishes for peace, and that is not rhetoric.

Gaza was granted Palestinian leadership with this wish in mind. Control was then given to Hamas, and they intend to exterminate Israel. How many thousands of Palestinians have since died in regional infighting? Who does not believe Iran is building nuclear weapons? Who does not believe that Syria is doing the same?

Israel turns 60, still yearning for the peace that never comes

These are not imaginary weapons of mass destruction. The promise of genocide for Israel is well documented. Hamas, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, attack civilian targets in uncontested regions, not in protest but to send a message. It is a promise of annihilation. When Israel defends herself, there can be no victory.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir said, "We can perhaps forgive you for killing our children but we cannot forgive you for making us kill your children." Yet by design, women and children are used as shields and willing volunteers to wrap themselves in explosives to "martyr" themselves by taking innocent life. Jews are the target. We are accused of ritual killings, and are blamed for 9-11. Al-Qaida was actually offended by Iran's assertion that Jews were responsible. They are very proud of it.

The world has felt terror and death at the hands of those who fight for Islamic supremacy. Yet Israel and Jews are blamed. Will it stop with us? Can there be peace if supremacy is the goal?

It's a birthday. Join us in this celebration. We have a wish, one wish; peace.

* WILLIAM TUMPOWSKY is the president of the United Jewish Federation of Utah and a member of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Utah. He is former president of Temple Har Shalom in Park City.

Load-Date: May 15, 2008

End of Document

Leaders may be dead

The Star (South Africa)

April 17, 2008 Thursday

e3 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 704 words

Body

Malabo - At least four people were killed and seven were missing after a plane crashed into the Atlantic Ocean off the Equatorial Guinea island of Annobon. There was no confirmation of earlier reports from airport sources that leaders of the West African country's ruling party, including government ministers due to begin campaigning tomorrow ahead of May 4 elections, were on board.

Nairobi - A threat to behead anyone driving or taking public transport in parts of the Kenyan capital - part of a campaign of terror waged by a notorious criminal gang - kept minibuses stalled yesterday. Two people were injured overnight in a minibus attack and drivers largely stayed off eastern Nairobi roads, forcing commuters to walk for kilometres to get to work.

Berlin - Psychologists are setting up Germany's first advice bureau for stalkers, and are counting on police to refer "clients" who cannot stop themselves from molesting other adults. The Stop Stalking office opens next week and will employ five psychologists and social workers, who will offer up to 16 counselling sessions to help stalkers realise how damaging their obsession is.

Dnipropetrovsk - Three Ukrainian ex-schoolmates have been charged with 21 murders, two attempted murders and four armed assaults during a four-month rampage. The men were under 20 at the time. Their killing spree last year included a pregnant woman and a 14 year-old boy. The three said they filmed the attacks on video as "souvenirs for their old age".

London - Plans for a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Leicester were approved yesterday. City council chiefs gave the green light for the £20 000 (R312 000) statue off Belgrave Road, dubbed the Golden Mile for its South Asian jewellery shops and Diwali lights. Leicester has the highest proportion of ethnic Indian residents in the UK. The monument will be paid for by local charity Samanvaya Parivar.

Beirut - Lebanon's **Hezbollah** yesterday slammed the international community for failing to act in the face of what it called repeated incursions by Israeli troops "in front of everyone, including UN troops". Israel routinely violates Lebanese airspace, ignoring a UN resolution, and at the weekend Israeli soldiers made a brief incursion into the country near the disputed Shebaa Farms territory.

Gaza City - Firefighters hose down the car of Reuters news agency cameraman Fadal Shana yesterday after an Israeli strike in Gaza City which killed Shana and two young bystanders. Shana (23) had stepped from his car to film an Israeli tank dug in several hundred metres away. Video from his camera showed the tank opening fire. Two seconds after the shot raised dust around the tank's gun, the tape went blank - seemingly when Shana was hit.

Leaders may be dead

Washington - The Supreme Court yesterday rejected by a 7-2 vote a challenge to the lethal three-drug cocktail used in most US executions, clearing the way for a resumption of capital punishment halted since September. Two Kentucky death row inmates had argued the cocktail method violated the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment by inflicting needless pain and suffering.

Berlin - Germany has a new export - jobless Germans. Plagued by high unemployment because of reunification and rigid labour laws, it has been helping its skilled and less-skilled jobless workers match up with foreign employers searching for manpower. Germany's unemployment rate in February was 8% (about 3,6-million people) - one percentage point higher than the Eurozone average.

Kuala Lumpur - Pirate attacks rose worldwide in the first quarter of the year, with Nigeria overtaking Indonesia as the country worst plagued by sea bandits. India and Somalia tied for second place. Seafarers suffered 49 attacks between January and last month around the world, up 20% from the 41 recorded in the same period last year, the International Maritime Bureau said yesterday.

Kabul - An Afghan legislative committee has drafted a bill seeking to introduce Taliban-style Islamic morality codes banning women from wearing make-up in public or dancing in public and forbidding boys from wearing female fashions such as bracelets. The draft needs approval by both chambers of parliament and President Hamid Karzai signature to become law.

Load-Date: April 17, 2008

End of Document

Mentally ill bombers used

Pretoria News (South Africa)

February 07, 2008 Thursday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 681 words

Body

Baghdad - Two mentally disabled women strapped with remote-control explosives - and possibly used as unwitting suicide bombers - brought carnage to two bazaars at the weekend. In co-ordinated blasts in the Iraqi capital they killed at least 99 people and wounded more than 100 in the deadliest day since Washington flooded the capital with extra troops a few months ago.

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Mentally ill bombers used

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Athens - Nine British troops serving in Cyprus have been arrested and charged after allegedly smashing up a pub and attacking locals in the resort of Ayia Napa. Police said about 20 soldiers burst into the pub and wreaked havoc. British Forces Cyprus has confirmed that the nine soldiers are back in barracks. Britain keeps a total of around 3 000 troops at two military bases on the divided island.

Peshawar - Pakistani police have arrested a teenager in North West Frontier Province who reportedly confessed to plotting a suicide attack to kill a cleric who leads an Islamist political party. An intelligence official said yesterday the 16-year-old boy "was caught with a vest and explosives" and admitted that Fazl-ur-Rehman - believed to have angered militants in Islamabad - was his target.

Load-Date: February 3, 2008

End of Document

Israelis leave a trail of debris in Gaza; Ceasefire allows aid to flow into battle zone

The Herald (Glasgow)

January 19, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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The Herald

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 602 words

Byline: CAROLYN CHURCHILL

Body

AS Israeli tanks rolled out of Gaza, infantry soldiers walked across the border, their guns and packs slung over their shoulders. The withdrawal left scenes of destruction in its wake, with buildings flattened and dozens of bodies recovered from the rubble.

Ahead of the offer of a temporary ceasefire by Hamas, militant rockets peppered southern Israel. Thirteen Israelis died during the offensive, including four killed by rocket fire, but despite the barrage, government spokesman Mark Regev said Israel's ceasefire offer stood.

In Damascus, Moussa Abu Marzouk, Hamas' deputy leader, told Syrian TV that the ceasefire would last a week to give Israel time to withdraw and open all Gaza border crossings to let humanitarian aid into the embattled seaside territory.

"We, the Palestinian resistance factions, declare a ceasefire from our side in Gaza and we confirm our stance that the enemy's troops must withdraw from Gaza within a week, " he said.

Hamas, which rejects Israel's right to exist, violently seized control of Gaza in June 2007, provoking a harsh Israeli blockade that has deepened destitution in the territory and confined 1.4 million Palestinians to the tiny coastal strip. Egypt has also kept its border with Gaza largely sealed.

Israel mounted the offensive three weeks ago and since then more than 1200 Palestinians - more than half of them civilians - have been killed. Yesterday, survivors loaded vans and donkey carts with mattresses and ventured out to see what was left of their homes .

Women sat weeping amid the ruins of their houses, hiding their faces, many too distressed to speak. Others sifted through the debris to gather cherished belongings in plastic bags.

One held a necklace. "This is all that's left, " she said.

Israelis leave a trail of debris in Gaza Ceasefire allows aid to flow into battle zone

Children tried to salvage schoolbags and torn notebooks. Shereen Abed-Rabbo, a 12-year-old girl, returned to her home to find it reduced to rubble. Among her destroyed belongings was a torn Koran, she said.

"This is forbidden, this is the book of God. God will punish them very harshly when he sees his book was torn into pieces."

In Gaza City, the Shahadeh family was preparing to return home to the hard-hit northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya.

"I've been told that the devils have left, " said Riyadh Shahadeh, referring to the Israelis. "I'm going back to see how I'm going to start again. I don't know what happened to my house. I am going back there with a heart full of fear because I am not sure if the area is secure or not, but I have no other option."

Hamas, eager to show it still controls Gaza despite the Israeli onslaught, sent policemen back on to the streets .

Municipal bulldozers pushed aside crushed cars and fallen chunks of concrete from the streets, but nothing could conceal the scale of destruction wrought by Israel's military machine.

Ambulances negotiated roads to recover bodies that had lain for days in rubble in Beit Lahiya and open areas to the north. Hamas police said about 95 bodies, mostly of militants, had been found .

In southern Israel, residents who have endured rocket attacks for eight years accused the government of stopping the offensive too soon. Israel declared the ceasefire before reaching a long-term solution to the problem of arms smuggling into Gaza, one of the war's declared aims.

The head of a parents' association in the town of Sderot faulted the government for not reaching an agreement directly with Hamas .

"It's an offensive that ended without achieving its aims, " Batya Katar said.

"All the weapons went through Egypt. What's happened there? The weapons will continue to come in through the tunnels and by sea."

Graphic

LOSS: A Palestinian woman shouts out in despair in front of her house, which was destroyed during Israel's offensive in Jabalya. RECRUITS: A rally of around 300 newly sworn-in Hezbollah 'Fighters for Gaza' in the southern Lebanese town of Qana. TALKS: Prime Minister Gordon Brown in Sharm El Sheikh. RETURN: Israeli soldiers greet each other as they come back across the border early yesterday after a combat mission in Gaza .
Picture: Yannis Behrakis/Reuters

Load-Date: January 19, 2009

Israeli attacks take toll in Gaza; More than 60 dead in retaliation for Hamas rockets

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

March 2, 2008 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 604 words

Byline: Nidal al-Mughrabi, Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israeli forces killed 61 people in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, the bloodiest day for Palestinians since an uprising against Israeli occupation began in 2000.

Israel, which lost two soldiers, seemed ready to press home its fiercest air and ground assault since it pulled troops back to the borders of the coastal enclave in 2005.

It blamed Hamas rockets for provoking four days of fighting, in which dozens of civilians have been among the 96 Palestinians killed.

The UN Security Council prepared to meet in emergency session.

A UN official in Gaza appealed for international action to end the "inhuman suffering" of its 1.5 million people and said killing women and children would not help Israel.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a sworn enemy of Hamas, the Islamist terrorist group which took control of Gaza from his forces in June, called the attack "more than a holocaust." Aides to Abbas said fighting could wreck new U.S.-backed peace talks.

Israeli officials said Palestinian chief negotiator Ahmed Qurie called his Israeli counterpart, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, to call off a meeting due on Monday. But Abbas's aides said no decision to suspend the process had been taken.

At least 30 of the dead were civilians, among them women and children, said Palestinian doctors who worked round the clock.

Two Israeli soldiers were killed and seven wounded, the army said -- its first deaths in Gaza since October.

As troops backed by tanks pushed deep into areas from where rockets are fired, they met heavy gunfire and landmines, residents said.

Israeli attacks take toll in Gaza; More than 60 dead in retaliation for Hamas rockets

Another 48 rockets hit Israel, wounding several people. An Israeli civilian was killed on Wednesday, the first since May.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Israel was "not happy" civilians were being hurt, but blamed Hamas for firing rockets from built-up areas and said it would "pay the price." U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is due to visit Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert this week.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said: "If Israeli aggression continues, it will bury the peace process in the rubble." A spokesman for Israel's chief negotiator said: "What Israel is doing in Gaza is fighting terror and it will be continued." At least 30 gunmen were killed, medical staff and Hamas said. Among targets was the empty office of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, whom Abbas fired as his prime minister after the Islamists routed his western-backed forces in Gaza.

Medical staff said four people living nearby were wounded.

"Uncle, I don't want to die. I want my dad," a child screamed as doctors tried to treat burn wounds across her body in Gaza's main Shifa hospital. The girl had been in a house which the Israeli army said was used to store and make weapons.

One of the dead civilians was a mother who was preparing breakfast for her children when she was hit by gunfire, relatives and medical workers said. One missile slammed into a crowd of Palestinians, killing four civilians, medics said.

In Damascus, exiled Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal said: "I say to the Zionist leaders, if they decided to raid Gaza, they will be fought not by dozens . . . but by 1.5 million people." A senior UN official in Gaza, John Ging, appealed to world leaders to stop the fighting: "Killing Palestinian women and children will not bring security to the people of Israel," said Ging.

He also said Hamas's rocket fire would not achieve Palestinians' goals.

Daily rocket fire for months has put Olmert under pressure from voters to act. But the government, chastened by a costly war against Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon in 2006, is wary of an outright invasion of Gaza.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Said Khatib, AFP-Getty Images; A Palestinian medical worker rushes a baby to hospital in Gaza City on Saturday. ;

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

The Thursday Column - Christmas has ended - so should Gaza siege

Irish News

January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 660 words

Byline: Jim Gibney

Body

The reoccupation by Israel of the Gaza Strip and the slaughter of its Palestinian inhabitants form one of the most shameful episodes, among a long list of others, for the international community since the state of Israel was set up in 1948.

For the past three weeks the United Nations and the European Union watched with indifference as Israeli bombs rained down on Palestinians and Palestinians fired rockets into Israel.

As I write more than 600 Palestinians and five Israelis have been killed. Entire families are being wiped out in Gaza. In the bombing of a mosque near the town of Jabaliya, five sisters were killed and in the rubble of a home in the town of Zeitoun 14 members of the same family were found dead.

In the early days of the invasion an estimated 70 Palestinian children were killed. The reoccupation of Gaza, which the Israelis were forced to evacuate more than two years ago, follows almost two years of a siege by the Israelis of the territory which has reduced it to a wasteland with more than a million people being denied food, water, electricity, medication and other essentials.

The two-year punitive siege of Gaza and its people, which Hamas claims provoked reprisal rocket attacks on Israel, the aerial bombardment and the reoccupation of Gaza by the Israelis, however short or long, are an indictment of the international community for refusing to resolve this conflict and do justice to the Palestinians.

It is also an indictment of a feeble foreign policy by western powers, including the EU, who permit the US and Israel to set the terms under which a permanent solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are to be brokered.

This invasion by Israel is all the more appalling because it is believed that the invasion is being driven by internal politics in advance of Israel's general election in February.

In other words, bombs are raining down on Gaza killing hundreds of people as part of a pre-election macho popularity contest between the leaders of Israeli political parties seeking to form the next government.

One such contestant in the election is Israel's foreign minister Tzipi Livni. She told the world's media last week: "There is no humanitarian crisis and therefore no need for a humanitarian truce."

In another interview she said that Israel was upholding the democratic values of the western world.

The Thursday Column - Christmas has ended - so should Gaza siege

What perverted logic is at work here? Dropping bombs, denying children, women and men the basic needs to live as human beings are considered to be 'democratic values' by a possible prime minister.

Other reasons are offered up for Israel's invasion - collective punishment of Palestinians for daring to elect Hamas as their government in 2006; revenge for the defeat of Israeli forces by Hezbollah when they were forced out of Lebanon the same year; a warning to Iran over its support for Hamas and its regional ambitions; a test for the incoming US president Barack Obama; and of course the rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza.

Whichever reason is the correct one the people of Palestine and Israel are once again plunged into a cycle of war with all the human misery accompanying it.

The central issue in this war and all wars for more than 60 years between the Palestinians and Israelis is the failure to agree a settlement that would secure and protect a state for the Palestinians and a state for the Israelis.

Hamas, Fatah and the Israelis are all part of the problem - they have to be part of the solution.

Isolating Hamas and treating them as if they are a Palestinian version of al-Qaida is wrong and should cease.

President-elect Barack Obama will be in office this month.

A durable settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict should receive his undivided attention until it has been achieved.

Belfast's international wall has a new message from renowned painter Danny Devenney: 'Happy war, Christmas is over' - a play on John Lennon's peace song Happy Christmas (War is Over).

Christmas is over and so should the war be.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009

Leading article: Gaza ground assault: When victory is a hollow word

The Guardian - Final Edition

January 5, 2009 Monday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN LEADER PAGES; Pg. 30

Length: 655 words

Body

There was only one certainty as Israel's tanks and thousands of troops this weekend launched their biggest assault on Gaza for four years: the number of civilian casualties will rise exponentially. Israel may phone, text, drop leaflets and fire warning missiles at Gazans trapped in their homes, but the reality is that there is nowhere for 1.5m people to run. Gaza is a ghetto from which there is no escape.

Just before the ground offensive was launched on Saturday, Israel lobbed a shell into Palestine Square, Gaza City's main shopping area and five Palestinians were killed. Earlier, they flattened the American International School, the one private school in the strip, which itself had been attacked by militants. Another air strike destroyed a mosque in Beit Hanoun during evening prayers killing around a dozen Palestinians. Yesterday afternoon a mother and her four children were killed by an air strike in Gaza City. As Israeli forces battled last night on the outskirts of Gaza City, the killing of innocent Palestinians continued.

The last time the tanks rolled into Gaza in February and March last year, more than half the Palestinian casualties were civilian, according to Human Rights Watch. That pattern is now set to be repeated. After a week's aerial bombardment, the death toll already stands at nearly 500, of which approximately 70 are children and 27 women, according to independent Palestinian sources. Of the 2,650 Gazans injured, more than 270 are women and 650 children. So much for Israel's claim that their targets are Hamas militants. Even if you stretch the term to include policemen, this is a "surgical" operation in which civilians will die in their hundreds.

There are, however, many uncertainties. The ghost of Israel's humiliation at the hands of Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006 hangs over this enterprise and Israel will want to exorcise it. Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza have about 15,000 men under arms, of which only 1,000 men form a trained core in the form of Iz al-Din al-Qassam. It is doubtful whether a force of this size could inflict the sort of military casualties Israel suffered in Lebanon. Israel will judge the success of its operation on the extent to which it will have depleted Hamas's command structure, as well as its ability to launch rockets. But even if the Israeli army succeeds in its aims and destroys Hamas both as an army and as an organisation, it will have also destroyed the last remnants of government in the strip. Israel would have fought its way back to where it was in 1994, before the advent of the Palestinian authority, and back in direct control of Gaza. That is plainly not what it wants, because it would mean re-assuming control of 1.5 million Gazans as well. Putting a proxy Palestinian government in place would be just as fraught. Destroying the infrastructure of Hamas's rule in Gaza would also wreck the effective government on which any future ceasefire would depend. To take one small but relevant example, half of Gaza's ambulances have already been destroyed.

Leading article: Gaza ground assault: When victory is a hollow word

Hamas is more than just a guerrilla army. It is a political movement as well. As such, Hamas will have been seen to have borne the brunt of the occupier's might and Hamas's claim to assume the leadership of the Palestinian national movement will have been enhanced as a result. If the United Nations stands by as the ground operation continues, Fatah in the West Bank will increasingly be seen by the Palestinian street as a Vichy regime, fit only for collaboration. The disunity among the Palestinian factions seen last week in the West Bank should not be misinterpreted as acquiescence. There is real anger too, of the worst sort - anger without effective leadership. There is only one way out of the political trap which Israeli forces are now entering, and that is an immediate ceasefire. It would enhance Hamas's credibility, but not as much as a total military victory might.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

End of Document

Mentally ill bombers used

The Star (South Africa)

February 04, 2008 Monday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 681 words

Body

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Load-Date: February 3, 2008

End of Document

Bush tempers criticism on stalled Mideast democracy, claims Iran poses danger

Prince Rupert Daily News (British Columbia)

January 14, 2008 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 14

Length: 648 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates

Body

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) -- U.S. President George W. Bush gently nudged authoritarian Arab allies Sunday to satisfy frustrated desires for democracy in the Middle East and saved his harshest criticism for Iran, branding it "the world's leading state-sponsor of terror."

Speaking in this Persian Gulf country, just 250 kilometres from the shores of Iran, Bush said Tehran threatens countries everywhere and that the United States was "rallying friends around the world to confront this danger before it is too late."

The warning about Iran was much tougher than Bush's admonition about spreading democracy in the Middle East, which had been billed as the central theme of his speech.

In a region of autocratic rulers, Bush did not single out any country for criticism. He spoke about democracy in a deeply undemocratic country, the U.A.E., where an elite of royal rulers makes virtually all the decisions. Large numbers of foreign resident workers have few legal or human rights, including no right to protest working conditions.

"To the people of the Middle East: We hear your cries for justice," Bush said. "We share your desire for a free and prosperous future. And as you struggle to find your voice and make your way in this world, the United States will stand with you."

Usually averse to sightseeing, Bush rode out into the sand dunes to the desert encampment of Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan. He let Bush hold one of his prize falcons. Later, Bush returned to his suite in the opulent Emirates Palace Hotel, constructed at a cost of more than \$3 billion and reputed to be the most expensive hotel ever built.

The next stop on Bush's eight-day journey is the neighbouring emirate of Dubai, part of the U.A.E., where the government has declared a public holiday Monday to avoid traffic chaos during the tour.

He will then go to Saudi Arabia, where King Abdullah, has tried to push some reforms on education and women's rights, and there have been limited municipal council elections. But he has been cautious and limited in his efforts,

Bush tempers criticism on stalled Mideast democracy, claims Iran poses danger

apparently hampered by others in the royal family worried that fast changes could upset the country's conservative clerics and citizens.

In Egypt, the last country Bush planned to visit, the democracy effort has stalled badly. The opposition candidate, Ayman Nour, who ran against longtime President Hosni Mubarak in the first multiparty elections, remains jailed on what many critics view as trumped-up criminal fraud charges.

Bush's blistering words about Iran appeared intended to reassure Arab allies about U.S. readiness to confront Tehran. There have been doubts about Washington's intentions because of a new U.S. intelligence report that said Iran had stopped pursuing nuclear weapons in 2003.

Bush appeared to put the danger posed by Iran on par with that from al-Qaida, which the U.S. national intelligence director, Mike McConnell has said is America's greatest threat.

"One cause of instability is the extremists supported and embodied by the regime that sits in Tehran," Bush said. "Iran is today the world's leading state sponsor of terror.

Bush said Iran funds militant groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad and sends arms to the Taliban in Afghanistan and Shiite extremists in Iraq. "The other major cause of instability is the extremists embodied by al-Qaida and its affiliates," he said.

His words brought a stern response from Iran's foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, to end what he called U.S. meddling.

"Mr. Bush has tried unsuccessfully to undermine our relations with the countries of the region. We believe his mission has totally failed. We have making strides in building ties with the region, politically, economically and even in security," Mottaki told the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera television. "It is much better if the Americans had stopped intervening in the region's affair."

Graphic

Photo: Susan Walsh, Associated Press; RALLYING CALL: President Bush delivers his speech at the Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi, Sunday. ;

Load-Date: January 14, 2008

Israeli forces kill 60 in bloodiest day yet seen in Gaza

Sunday Independent (Ireland)

March 2, 2008

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Independent.ie 

Section: WORLD NEWS; Middle East

Length: 661 words

Body

Israeli forces killed 60 people in the Gaza Strip yesterday, many of them children, in the bloodiest day for Palestinians since an uprising against Israeli occupation began in 2000.

Israel, which lost two soldiers, seemed ready to press home its fiercest assault since it pulled troops back to the borders of the coastal enclave in 2005.

It blamed Hamas Islamist rocket fire on Israel for provoking four days of fighting, in which dozens of civilians have been among the 95 Palestinians killed.

The UN Security Council prepared to meet in New York and a UN official in Gaza appealed for international action to end the "inhuman suffering" of its 1.5 million people.

A day after an Israeli official warned Gazans of a "shoah" -- which typically means holocaust -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a sworn enemy of Gaza's Hamas rulers, called it "more than a holocaust".

Aides said it may wreck peace talks that were revived after collapsing in 2000.

At least 30 of the dead were civilians, among them women and children, said Palestinian doctors.

Two Israeli soldiers were also killed and seven wounded, the army said -- its first deaths in Gaza since October.

Dozens of Hamas rockets hit Israeli border areas, wounding several people. An Israeli civilian was killed on Wednesday, the first since May.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Israel was "not happy" civilians were being hurt but blamed Hamas for firing rockets from built-up areas and said it would "pay the price".

His deputy Matan Vilnai earlier said Gaza faced a "shoah" -- a holocaust or catastrophe. On Saturday, he said: "As long as events escalate the chances we will use greater force increase."

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visits Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert this week.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat warned: "If Israeli aggression continues, it will bury the peace process."

Israeli forces kill 60 in bloodiest day yet seen in Gaza

A spokesman for Israel's chief negotiator said: "What Israel is doing in Gaza is fighting terror and it will be continued."

More than 48 rockets and mortars landed on Saturday.

Of the 60 killed, 30 were fighters, according to hospital staff and Hamas, which routed Mr Abbas's Western-backed forces in Gaza in June.

"Uncle, I don't want to die. I want my dad," a toddler screamed as doctors tried to treat burn wounds across her body in Gaza's main Shifa hospital.

The girl was injured in a house which the Israeli army said was used to store and make weapons.

One of the dead civilians was a mother who was preparing breakfast for her children when hit by gunfire, relatives and medical workers said. One missile slammed into a crowd of Palestinians, killing four civilians, medics said.

In Damascus, exiled Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal said: "I say to the Zionist leaders, if they decided to raid Gaza, they will be fought not by dozens. . . but by 1.5 million people."

A senior UN official in Gaza, John Ging, appealed to world leaders to interrupt their weekend to stop the fighting: "Killing Palestinian women and children will not bring security to the people of Israel," he said, cautioning Israeli commanders about the risk of committing war crimes.

He also said Hamas's rocket fire would not achieve Palestinians' goals.

Palestinians said Israelis made their biggest and deepest incursion into Gaza in the 30 months since Israel pulled out settlers and troops after 38 years of occupation.

It has since imposed a blockade on Gaza's borders, drawing international complaints it is abusing its role as occupying power.

Daily rocket fire for months has put Mr Olmert under pressure from voters to act. But the government, chastened by a costly war against Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon in 2006, is wary of an outright invasion of the densely populated coastal region.

Mr Olmert's deputy, Vice Premier Haim Ramon, said: "We need to act with all our might, but without taking steps that will hurt us more than help us -- by which I mean reoccupying Gaza."

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

Explosives Found at Paris Department Store

The New York Times

December 17, 2008 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 665 words

Byline: By KATRIN BENNHOLD and BASIL KATZ; Meg Bortin and Caroline Brothers contributed reporting.

Dateline: PARIS

Body

A package of dynamite planted in a luxury Paris department store was found and removed by the police on Tuesday, rattling the nerves of Parisians at the height of the Christmas shopping season.

The store, Printemps, on the elegant Boulevard Haussmann, was just beginning to fill up with shoppers at 11 a.m. on Tuesday when the police swooped in, acting on a tip from a French news agency. They discovered five sticks of dynamite bound together with a cord in a restroom on the third floor of the men's store. There was no detonator with the dynamite, French officials said.

A previously unknown group calling itself the Afghan Revolutionary Front said in a warning mailed to Agence France-Presse that it had planted the explosives in the store. It demanded the withdrawal of French troops from Afghanistan and warned that it would strike again if President Nicolas Sarkozy did not bring the troops home by the end of February.

Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie and the mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, rushed to the scene, where bomb-squad vans on the cordoned-off boulevard looked eerily out of place against a backdrop of colorful Christmas lights.

"For the moment, we have found sticks of dynamite in just one location," Ms. Alliot-Marie told reporters. She said the dynamite was "relatively old" and had no detonator, adding, "From what we know so far, this was not a device that was intended to explode."

Mr. Sarkozy, speaking from the eastern French city of Strasbourg, said security officials were analyzing the explosives.

"Vigilance against terrorism is the only possible option," he said in a live television broadcast.

Security had recently been tightened in parts of Paris, as it is every year around Christmas. Gerard Gachet, a spokesman for Ms. Alliot-Marie, said the ministry had deployed an additional 1,500 police officers in the Haussmann district only last week.

Printemps, with three separate buildings, is one of the grand department stores of Paris, rivaling Macy's in New York in size. It is famous for its elaborate and creative decorations and lighting displays at Christmastime.

Explosives Found at Paris Department Store

Though people left the building quickly on Tuesday, there was little sense of panic during the evacuation, in part because shoppers and employees were initially told it was for a "technical incident." But as the police barriers were lifted and most parts of the store reopened, a sense of unease spread as Parisians recalled a wave of explosions in shopping areas in 1985 and 1986 that killed seven people and injured dozens.

Leonie Jean-Julien, 52, a seamstress in the women's store, was working at Printemps in December 1985 when Hezbollah bombs exploded on the ground floor there and in the Galeries Lafayette department store.

"Since 1985, I take this seriously," she said.

Outside Printemps, there was a sense of defiance and frustration among shoppers and tourists who found themselves waiting on sidewalks in near-freezing weather.

"They want us to be afraid, but we can't stop our lives," said Veronique Nicolas, 53, who was one of the first people back in the store when it reopened shortly after 2 p.m.

An editor at Agence France-Presse, Andre Birukoff, said that in addition to the letter received Tuesday, the news agency had received an earlier warning that an attack on Printemps was imminent.

He said that one of the agency's journalists had received an anonymous telephone call on Dec. 10 warning that there would soon be an explosion at the department store. The caller broke off before identifying himself or giving any other information.

In its statement to the agency on Tuesday, the Afghan Revolutionary Front said, "Send the message to your president that he needs to withdraw his troops from our country before the end of February 2009, or else we will act again in your capitalist department stores, and this time with no warning."

France has about 3,000 troops deployed with the NATO-led force in Afghanistan.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Members of a French bomb squad searched the Printemps department store in Paris on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCOIS MORI/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Load-Date: December 17, 2008

Detainee speaks of prison time, U.S.-Iran relations

University Wire

March 28, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 The Rebel Yell via U-Wire

Length: 670 words

Byline: By Mark Skinner, The Rebel Yell; **SOURCE:** UNLV

Dateline: LAS VEGAS

Body

UNLV campus security patrolled the upper floors of the Student Union with dogs on Monday as more than 300 people entered a conference room to attend a lecture by Haleh Esfandiari entitled "Iran-U.S. Relations: A View from Prison."

Esfandiari, the director of the Middle East program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, shared with attendees her experience being held prisoner in Iran.

"The 105 days I spent in solitary confinement in prison in Tehran gave me plenty of time to ponder the relation between the two countries and manner in which each side perceives the other," she said.

Esfandiari's story of imprisonment began on Dec. 30, 2006. While visiting her 93-year-old mother in Iran, her Iranian passport was stolen by knife-wielding thugs.

When she went to have it replaced, she noticed that something was wrong.

"The questions were at first routine but very soon became hostile and unfriendly," she recalled.

She quickly realized that she had been targeted by Iran's Ministry of Intelligence.

Esfandiari explained how frightened she was.

"Take it from me," she said. "These interrogators are not men with whom you would wish to spend up to eight hours a day for days and weeks and months."

Her interrogators questioned her extensively on the Wilson Center and other organizations she had been a part of.

Prior to her work at the Wilson Center, Esfandiari was a professor at Oxford and Princeton. In Iran, she was also a renowned journalist, cultural promoter and secretary general of the Women's Organization of Iran.

The questioning, she said, suggested that the Iranian government is convinced that the U.S. is trying to overthrow Iran through a "soft revolution" with student and women's movements.

She speculated that her detention might have been an attempt to intimidate and curtail such organizations.

Detainee speaks of prison time, U.S. - Iran relations

According to Esfandiari, the biggest strain on U.S.-Iranian relations has been Iran's recent nuclear ambitions, which the country contends are strictly for peaceful purposes. Iran has refused to accept outside reliance on nuclear technology.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nation's nuclear watchdog, has claimed that Iran's nuclear program is insufficiently transparent.

"It is striking that, while Iran's trade with Italy and Germany has declined 10 to 20 percent over the past years, trade with China has increased many fold," Esfandiari said.

Russia, she added, also plays a role.

"Iran is the one major country in the region on which Russia can rely," Esfandiari said. "It is hardly surprising that Iran and Russia have become strategic allies."

All of these factors have resulted in giving Iranians the political resources to resist UN sanctions.

"The Iranians have been able to divide the U.S. and the European Union on the nuclear issue, in part because China and Russia have proven larger allies."

Despite previous UN sanctions, Iran has been able to develop missile capability and considerable influence in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

According to Esfandiari, Iran is "unlikely to reconsider support for Hezbollah."

She said she believes Iran will continue its nuclear ambitions.

"Anyone who assumes Iran will back off from pursuing its nuclear program in the face of publicly denounced sanctions and threats simply doesn't understand the mindset of the Iranian leadership."

She concluded: "One must conclude that the policy of sanctions and isolation has not worked. One can argue that maybe it would make a lot more sense for the two countries to talk to each other."

The presentation was part of the Peace in the Desert, a lecture series put on by the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution within the William S. Boyd School of Law.

According to Michael Saltman, who founded the center with wife Sonja, the lecture series is designed to address topics from Darfur and the Middle East to local water disputes.

"The only way to settle things, like [Esfandiari] said, is negotiation," Saltman said. "The law school is a perfect venue."

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Load-Date: March 28, 2008

Rudd's quest for true blue Muslims

The Australian (Australia)

March 11, 2008 Tuesday

N - Canberra Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 686 words

Byline: Richard Kerbaj

Body

SPORTING figures, academics and mainstream Muslims will besought out by the Rudd Government to help recast the overly religious image of Islamic Australia.

A new-look Muslim advisory body is being considered in a bid to help dismantle the stereotypical picture of Islam, despite infighting -- fuelled by ideological rivalries and conflicting egos -- racking the former government's board.

And the Rudd Government will also consider reviving the Council for Multicultural Australia -- featuring leaders from a cross-section of ethnic backgrounds, including the Jewish and Muslim communities.

The previous government abolished the trouble-plagued Muslim advisory board -- set up by John Howard after the London terrorist attacks in 2005 -- and the multicultural council after their terms ended in 2006.

But Labor is intent on recasting the two bodies, shifting the focus from the spiritual leaders the Howard government courted -- at times with disastrous results -- to everyday Muslims.

In the Rudd Government's first statement on Muslims, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs Laurie Ferguson told The Australian yesterday it was time to tackle the myths surrounding Islam, arguing religious leaders were not representative of the mainstream Muslim community.

“We can't prescribe how the Islamic community is to organise itself,” Mr Ferguson said. “But we certainly must make sure that the fact there are international tensions and terrorist issues doesn't kind of stereotype the whole community in Australia.

“A lot of it is about symbolism; it's about who gets promoted and who gets identified and who gets an option to be seen by Australian society.

“Australia has produced (Muslim) academics, business types, sporting types and it's often not celebrated enough.”

Mr Ferguson said the idea that all Muslims were religious was a “misconception” he wanted debunked. “The whole spectre of Muslims is women in hijabs and other stereotypical characteristics and I think there is not enough opportunity to see a difference,” he said. “There's a need to have Muslims involved in parents groups, sporting clubs, political parties ... tuckshops.”

Rudd's quest for true blue Muslims

The Muslim reference board was shelved by then parliamentary secretary for immigration Andrew Robb in 2006 after a troubled 12 months. The high-profile group failed to fulfil key tasks such as setting up an imams board to bring spiritual leaders together and had numerous setbacks after one of its senior members, Taj Din al-Hilali, labelled it ``still-born".

Another spiritual leader -- Fehmi Naji el-Imam, who has since replaced Sheik Hilali as the mufti of Australia -- embarrassed the government by declaring his support for Islamic militants during the Hezbollah-Israel war in 2006.

Mr Ferguson said a broader body would be considered.

``We would always seek to have the broadest representation in any national committees established," he said.

``There's a belief that, per se, Muslims are always more religious than other groups.

``But I know a lot of Muslim youth in my electorate that are totally irreligious, or its marginal to their existence and they don't spend a lot of time thinking about the Koran."

It is believed the reference board being considered would include six members -- three men and three women -- plus a chairperson. Academics, sporting stars and community leaders are being sought.

Asked whether sporting identities such as rugby league star Hazem El Masri, from the Canterbury Bulldogs, would be considered, Mr Ferguson said it was too early to say. ``But El Masri has been a real role model in Sydney," he said.

Mr Ferguson stressed the importance of questioning and addressing factors contributing to the radicalisation of young Muslims.

``There's certainly always a threat by some forces who see people outside of the system angry with life and frustrated with employment that you've always got to be aware of that," he said.

Mr Ferguson said while spiritual Muslim leaders played a role in promoting harmony between the community and wider Australia, he was eager to endorse Australian-born and -educated imams who spoke fluent English.

Load-Date: March 10, 2008

LTTE targeting impoverished Lankans - British Magazine

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 2, 2008 Wednesday 3:43 PM EST

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Length: 626 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 2 - The widely circulated Observer magazine distributed with the Observer newspaper in a four page in-depth article said by targeting innocent civilians the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are fast losing whatever sympathies they had earlier.

The magazine in an article entitled, 'Lost in Paradise' said the Tigers "are going for the softest targets of all, the impoverished working people of Sri Lanka."

Referring to Sri Lanka's North, the magazine said: "Here are not only the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) but their offshoot, the Black Tigers, the suicide squads. According to Jane's information Group, between 1980-2000 the Tigers had carried out a total of 168 suicide attacks on civilian and military targets, easily exceeding those in the same period by Hezbollah and Hamas combined.

And now today, thwarted on their attacks on the government and the military, they are going for the softest targets of all, the impoverished working people of Sri Lanka.

"For all those decades of suicide practice, you'd think they might be getting the hang of it by now. But in Colombo's Fort Railway Station, a few weeks before my visit, it all went wrong again.

A female suicide bomber coming off a train from the South was spotted acting oddly by police-too many clothes for the cloying heat - and fled from the turnstile back into the station. By platform three she sat down and exploded. She took 11 others with her....The 11 dead included half a high school baseball team, and 92 were injured," wrote Observer staffer, Euan Ferguson.

Founded in 1791, the Liberal Democratic leaning left of center publication with a circulation of 455,000 also referred to an incident where the Tigers were not that successful in blowing up the impoverished working civilians: "One passenger, Indrani Fernando, saw a suspicious bag left under a seat near the back. 'When no one claimed it I told the crew and shouted at people to get off,' she says.

The bus halted in a middle of a junction and everyone filed off and began walking away, rather quickly and the police were called. Twenty seconds after the driver and conductor had climbed off, the bomb exploded.

Ten passers-by were injured, among them children. Indrani later took a congratulatory call from, President Mahinda Rajapaksa, thanking her for her vigilance. I go to see the bus, towed two miles away. The carcass is eviscerated, skeletal: no one would have survived."

LTTE targeting impoverished Lankans - British Magazine

How the Tigers have increasingly started targeting unarmed civilians Ferguson further wrote: "Just before I arrived in Sri Lanka, another bus had been blown up a couple of kilometers outside Dambulla, an ancient holy rest stop on the journey to the East.

The 18 killed were almost all pilgrims and included children. In the remote Southern town of Buttala the rebels had recently failed to kill most of the passengers on a bus with a simple bomb; so they gunned down 32 of them as they fled, in flames."

"Desperate tactics have been adopted by the Tigers, but there are increasing signs that by targeting innocent civilians they are fast losing whatever sympathies they once had within the majority Sinhalese population."

The writer who has returned to the country after the devastating Boxing Day tsunami calls Sri Lanka one of the most kind places on earth despite the violence:

"This is one of the kindest countries on earth. Smiles, genuine, empathetic, as natural as waterfall.

Even when I was here following the tsunami, I was struck repeatedly by the welcomes from those who had nothing, both the majority Sinhalese and Tamils. And, still you can head south from Colombo without a care in the world, take a breezy taxi to the beaches and beauty of Galle."

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 16, 2008

Rudd's quest for true blue Muslims

The Australian (Australia)

March 11, 2008 Tuesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 687 words

Byline: Richard Kerbaj

Body

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Load-Date: March 10, 2008

Fresh troops for Somalia

Pretoria News (South Africa)

January 21, 2008 Monday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 667 words

Body

Bujumbura - The last members of the first battalion of Burundian soldiers to be deployed in Somalia as part of an AU peacekeeping force were due in Mogadishu yesterday. The 210 soldiers - the final element in a deployment of 850 - were delayed for several months due to lack of supplies. Burundi will deploy a total of 1 700 soldiers alongside about 1 600 Ugandans already in Somalia.

Islamabad - Pakistani artillery and helicopter gunships yesterday pounded militant positions close to the Afghan border, an extremist stronghold where a rebel leader blamed for the assassination of Benazir Bhutto is believed to be hiding. The strikes came after authorities said they had arrested a 15-year-old boy alleged to have been involved in the December 27 assassination.

Istanbul - A bull camel is knocked down by its rival as the owners and tether holders prepare to separate the animals near Izmir yesterday. The annual camel wrestling tournament is a traditional sport in western Turkey, in which two male camels wrestle after a ***female*** camel in heat is led before them.

Luanda - Angolan rescue workers yesterday completed the task of retrieving the bodies of the 13 victims of a plane crash in mountains near the country's second largest city, Huambo. An inquiry has been opened to determine the cause of Saturday's crash, which occurred in "absolutely terrible weather". A top businessman and two young children were among the dead.

Jerusalem - Israeli ministers yesterday cursed ***Hezbollah*** chief Hassan Nasrallah as a "sewage rat who will continue digging his holes" for boasting in Lebanon at the weekend that his militia had the body parts of Israeli soldiers abandoned on the battlefield in Lebanon in 2006. The Israeli army slammed the comments as "a cruel and cynical move".

Maseru - Veteran British pop star Elton John has donated 120 motorbikes to help doctors and nurses do their rounds in Lesotho, the pony nation. John, accompanied by partner David Furnish, took time out on Saturday from a tour of SA to visit Lesotho for the handover ceremony. The donation forms part of the Riders for Health Programme funded by the singer's Aids foundation.

Tokyo - An 18-year-old Japanese man has admitted killing three members of his family before burning them. The eldest son in the family of four was arrested for stabbing his 43-year-old mother, 15-year-old brother and 13-year-old sister with a survival knife at their apartment in the city of Hachinohe. The teenager then set the apartment alight with the bodies inside

Fresh troops for Somalia

Buenos Aires - Argentine police have seized 1,2 tons of cocaine destined to be smuggled into Spain by a drug gang led by a retired Argentinian military intelligence officer. Eighteen people were arrested. The bust disrupted a \$67-million (R470-million) operation, making it one of Argentina's most significant in the fight against drug trafficking.

Beijing - China's capital faces a tough task curbing its notorious air pollution ahead of the Olympics in August, mayor Guo Jinlong told the city's legislature yesterday. "The task of bringing environmental pollution and traffic congestion under control remain arduous," he said, blaming worsening population pressures and inadequate city governance for the poor air quality.

Kabul - Afghanistan's leading media rights groups yesterday dismissed as baseless allegations of blasphemy against a journalist, saying "reading an article is not a sin". Conservative religious clerics have demanded the death penalty for 23-year-old Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh, arrested in October after distributing at his university an article downloaded from the Internet about women in Islam.

Rome - A septuagenarian drove 120km down the wrong side of a motorway in northern Italy yesterday, terrifying other motorists. Police managed to stop the 71-year-old, who seemed disoriented and appeared to be unaware he was even on the motorway. In trying to stop the man, two officers were slightly injured. He then went on his way, only to collide with another car later.

Load-Date: January 20, 2008

End of Document

Nod for women bishops

The Star (South Africa)

July 08, 2008 Tuesday

e3 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 705 words

Body

London - The Church of England voted last night to allow the ordination of women bishops after a divisive debate which pitched conservatives against liberals, a report said. More than 1 300 clergy had threatened to leave the church if its general synod voted for the move. The synod earlier rejected compromise measures designed to accommodate those who could not accept women bishops.

London - A 14-year-old boy stabbed nearly three weeks ago in south London has died in hospital, taking the toll of teenagers killed by knives in the British capital this year to 14. David Idowu was also the 19th teenager to die a violent death in the English capital this year. Conservative Party leader David Cameron yesterday said anyone convicted of a knife crime should expect a jail term.

Chicago - The Emmy-winning daughter of "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin, who died in 2006, is getting her own doll. The 25cm Bindi Irwin rubber doll sports khakis, puffy pigtails and hiking boots, and comes with binoculars, a camera and other outback gear, as well as a cockatoo, wombat and python. A talking version of the Bindi doll uses such phrases as, "Crikey! Let's go help wildlife" and "You can make the world a better place".

Brazzaville - Protesters disrupted the burial of a Congolese former minister yesterday, hurling stones at mourners - among them the prime minister - because they believed the dead man had been "possessed". A government spokesperson said the demonstrators believed Jean-Pierre Tchicaya (73) "did not die of natural causes". The former minister died in Paris, where he was living .

London - A 33-year-old man turned himself in to police in London yesterday in connection with the brutal murder of two French students and was later taken to hospital. Gabriel Ferez and Laurent Bonomo, both 23, were killed on June 29. Their bound and battered bodies were found in a burnt-out flat in London. They had been repeatedly knifed - one 200 times, the other 50 times.

Moscow - A Russian soldier shot dead three colleagues and wounded another yesterday before killing himself with his machinegun. The private ran away from his guard post and opened fire at other soldiers when they tried to detain him, killing three. A fourth was taken to hospital with serious wounds. A report in May said more than 300 Russian soldiers committed suicide last year.

New York - Victims of bombings and rocket attacks in Israel yesterday sued several Lebanese banks for helping to fund Hezbollah militants, who the lawsuit said orchestrated the attacks. The lawsuit seeks damages from the banks for more than 50 Israeli citizens injured or relatives of those killed by missile attacks fired at Israeli targets during the 34-day war in July and August 2006.

Nod for women bishops

Vienna - Austria's governing coalition collapsed yesterday and a snap election looked set for September after conservatives declared they could no longer work with the Social Democrats of Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer. Accused of poor leadership and unpopular within his own ranks, Gusenbauer said he would not seek re-election as Austrian chancellor.

London - British police yesterday agreed to hand over 81 pieces of evidence in the case of missing Madeleine McCann to her parents to allow private investigators working for the family to examine it. Madeleine disappeared in Portugal 14 months ago. In return, Kate and Gerry McCann dropped a bid in the UK courts to force disclosure of information held by police in Leicestershire, where they live.

Hong Kong - The billionaire owner of kung fu idol Bruce Lee's final home hopes to build a museum to the martial arts legend, giving in to public calls to prevent the sale of the luxury house in a Hong Kong suburb for millions of dollars. Lee died in mysterious circumstance at the age of 32 in 1973. Hotel and property tycoon Yu Panglin (86) has undertaken to raise capital for the memorial.

Chicago - Ringo Starr yesterday held a "peace and love" fest on a rainy Chicago pavement to mark his 68th birthday "What could be wrong? Peace and love. What a great birthday gift," the former Beatle said. "It's a happening." Some wellwishers got close enough to catch a glimpse of Starr, clad in black and wearing purple glasses, with his wife Barbara nearby.

Load-Date: July 8, 2008

End of Document

BOOKS

The Daily Telegraph (Australia)

July 28, 2007 Saturday

Weekend Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 21

Length: 681 words

Byline: RAY CHESTERTON, LISA POWER, LORETTA HALL, DAVE BULLARD, REBECCA GREEN, MAUREEN SHELLEY

Body

COME BACK

* Claire and Mia Fontaine

* \$29.99, HarperCollins

Claire Fontaine was a successful screenwriter in Los Angeles when she came home to find her teenage daughter Mia missing. For Claire it was the beginning of a nightmare. For Mia it was a return to a seedy, drug-filled world she had secretly inhabited for a year. Claire's unrelenting passion to reclaim Mia, no matter what she has done, no matter where she may be, is a compelling tale

of a distraught mother's commitment and an inspiration to parents in similar situations.

RAY CHESTERTON

VODKA DOESN'T FREEZE

* Leah Giarratano

* \$32.95, Random House

Members of a paedophile ring deeply entrenched in Sydney's underbelly are suddenly attacked. Two of them are bashed to death and there is an avalanche of suspects from grown-up victims to family members of boys who've been seduced. Det Sgt Jill Jackson, herself a kidnap victim as a child and haunted by her own memories, is investigating the murders. She is not helped by the reluctance of her police colleagues to lend a hand.

RC

DEATH OF A DISSIDENT

* Alex Goldfarb and Marina Litvinenko

* \$49.95, Simon and Schuster

BOOKS

Alexander Litvinenko died a public death in extreme agony. A former KGB operative who fell foul of the new Russia, he is believed to have been killed by another agent, Alexander Lugovoy. The Russians refuse to extradite Lugovoy to England to help with murder inquiries. This book is a helpful backgrounder to the new Russian presence but is light on facts about the murder. Litvinenko's death comes in the final 32 pages.

LISA POWER

ANTARCTICA: A DIFFERENT ADVENTURE

* Jason Kimberley

* \$39.95, Hardy Grant

Photographer and writer Jason Kimberley takes us on a journey of beauty and majesty in his recreation of the Antarctic trips made by early explorers. With two colleagues Kimberley spent 16 days hauling sledges through snowstorms and temperatures as low as -45C. His odyssey allowed him to observe the damage looming through climate change to this fragile ecosystem.

RC

THE GYPSY TEAROOM

* Nicky Pellegrino

* Hachette Livre, \$32.95

Readers are transported to a south Italian seaside village, then distracted from the meandering plot by the book's many food references. Peppered with morsels about meals, recipes and market produce, The Gypsy Tearoom will appeal to those foodie romantics looking for an easy read with a little intrigue. The atmospheric novel is about a young, naive widow and her search for happiness in a village full of narrow-minded, superstitious residents.

LORETTA HALL

STRIKE BACK

* Chris Ryan

* \$32.95, Random House

Another fast-paced thriller from Chris Ryan, who writes some of the best beach-holiday books around. The plot concerns a TV news reporter who's kidnapped by Hezbollah. Our hero, John Porter, thinks he can get to the man behind it but the former SAS trooper is living the life of a bum on the streets of London and his credibility is zero. Ryan still writes a gripping novel -- this is his 23rd -- but is in danger of losing the realism that has been one of his strengths.

DAVE BULLARD

PRETTY LITTLE LIARS

* Sara Shepard

* \$19.95, Hachette Livre

If I had a teenage daughter I'd buy her this book. It has strong, interesting female characters and a great plot. Alison, 13, disappears and her friends fall out among themselves. Fast forward three years and Ali is still missing, but someone is sending strange texts to her old friends that hint at a dark secret they share. There is a confusing number of characters and an incomplete ending but Pretty Little Liars is sexy, sassy, modern and very readable.

BOOKS

REBECCA GREEN

STALKED

* Chris Smith

* \$24.95, New Holland

This is the story of a young woman stalked by her former boyfriend. Defying apprehended violence orders and charges of assault, he phoned her, sent her flowers and letters, came to her house and place of work and followed her on visits to friends and restaurants. Even her parents started to believe their daughter was having a mental breakdown rather than being stalked. It was six months before the man was videotaped in a balaclava jumping the fence to the woman's house.

MAUREEN SHELLEY

Load-Date: July 27, 2007

End of Document

Share ideas, trio urges

Windsor Star (Ontario)

November 15, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 627 words

Byline: Dalson Chen, Windsor Star

Body

Religious communities in Windsor need to talk to each other to dispel their concerns, stereotypes and misunderstandings, says a trio of U.S. women who each hold different faiths.

"We're certainly not politicians, we're not theologians and we're not academics. But that's precisely the point," said Ranya Idliby, 42, a Muslim.

About 300 people filled the Freed-Orman Centre Wednesday night to hear Ranya speak with Suzanne Oliver, a Christian, and Priscilla Warner, a Jew.

The three women -- all mothers from the New York City area -- are co-authors of a bestselling book of memoirs called *The Faith Club*, that documents their attempts to find common spiritual ground.

Now in its fifth edition, the book encourages readers to create "faith clubs" in their own communities, and promotes interfaith dialogue and tolerance in a post 9-11 world.

Since the book's publication, the three women have spoken in about 40 cities across the U.S., but Wednesday's event was their first visit to Canada as *The Faith Club*.

Oliver, 42, said she was "amazed by the diversity walking through the door" of the University of Windsor's Freed-Orman Centre.

Warner said that in other communities they've visited, audiences have wondered where they can find other religious groups to talk to. "You guys clearly don't have to look very far," she said. "I feel like I'm in New York."

Strangers to each other when they first started meeting, the women originally sought to create a children's book about religious diversity.

Idliby started the project in response to the alienation her Muslim children were experiencing in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center.

According to Oliver, the trio's initial encounters weren't easy.

"It was our differences that came to the fore with remarkable speed," she said.

Share ideas, trio urges

Right away, between Oliver and Warner, there was a "crucifixion crisis," with the two women arguing about Jesus and his death.

And thinking of Idliby, a Muslim, Oliver couldn't help wondering how a female could believe in a religion Oliver considered oppressive to women.

Warner said 9-11 threw her into "one long low-grade state of panic."

As the women talked, they realized their discussions could form the basis of a more mature book about religious tolerance. The final work is the outcome of 21/2 years of dialogue.

"This dialogue very much started in the privacy of our homes, on the floors of our living rooms," Oliver said.

The authors were brought to Windsor by an interfaith women's group that was established about 18 months ago.

Remy Boulbol, a research assistant with the University of Windsor's centre for religion and culture, said The Faith Club was widely read by the group's 20 or so members.

Boulbol said a few incidents in Windsor -- such as a January lecture series at Campbell Baptist Church entitled The Deadly Threat of Islam, and the summer appearance of a pro-Hezbollah billboard on Wyandotte Street -- have given the group plenty to discuss.

"I think we have a lot of potential to be a really great example of what a diversified city looks like," Boulbol said.

"If we don't learn how to talk to each other, and also to listen, then we defeat the whole purpose of what this country is about."

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

The Human Rights Office of the University of Windsor invites the public to celebrate diversity of religion in Windsor and the world beyond with an information fair on Nov. 22.

To be held in the CAW Student Centre from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Golden Rules for Peace fair will commemorate the 26th year of the United Nations declaration to eliminate all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief.

The educational event will feature representatives of religion-based student and community groups providing information about their beliefs.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Tyler Brownbridge, Windsor Star; THREE WOMEN, THREE FAITHS: Authors Suzanne Oliver, left, Ranya Idliby and Priscilla Warner presented ideas on their three faiths Wednesday to a full house at the University of Windsor's Freed Orman Centre. ;

Load-Date: November 15, 2007

Deal on judges now near

The Star (South Africa)

May 08, 2008 Thursday

e4 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 678 words

Body

Islamabad - Pakistan's ruling parties appear closer to resolving a dispute about how to reinstate judges fired by President Pervez Musharraf. Law Minister Farooq Naek said yesterday that representatives of the coalition's two leading parties have come up with a draft parliamentary resolution aimed at reinstating the judges. He said the parties' leaders needed to approve it before it heads to parliament.

Beirut - Shi'ite supporters of Iranian-backed Hezbollah and Sunni supporters of the Lebanon government have clashed for a second straight day. The rival sides exchanged gunfire in the village of Saadnayel in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley today. There was no immediate word on casualties. In Beirut, residents woke up to burning tyres and roadblocks today.

Crowning glory

Geneva - This early 19th-century tiara set with diamonds is expected to fetch up to e64 000 (about R740 000) at a Christie's sale in Geneva, Switzerland, next week. The inner circumference measures about 370mm. The piece may also be worn as four brooches.

Moscow - Vladimir Putin was to be confirmed as prime minister of Russia today, a day after his aide Dmitry Medvedev became president in a power shift that raises questions over who will really be in charge. Putin's move to the premiership after eight years as president will complete a carefully choreographed scheme in which his trusted protege Medvedev succeeded him as president.

Tokyo - Japan has thanked Yemen for securing the release of two Japanese women taken hostage by tribesmen. "We are truly grateful to the Yemeni government which helped in an early resolution," Vice Foreign Minister Itsunori Onodera told reporters today. The women were seized yesterday as they travelled by road to the site of the ancient Marib Dam, a major tourist attraction.

Kuala Lumpur - A Malaysian religious court has granted a woman her wish to formally renounce Islam, a decision described by her lawyer as a landmark case that could enable many others to leave the faith. Siti Fatimah Tan Abdullah, an ethnic Chinese woman, fought a two-year court battle to convert back to Buddhism. She had converted to Islam in 1998 to marry her Muslim lover at the time.

Puerto Montt - Chile has evacuated the last of a small group of military personnel and civilians from the vicinity of an erupting volcano in southern Patagonia after it spat a surge of fiery material this morning. Thousands of people

Deal on judges now near

have been evacuated from within a 50km radius of Chaiten volcano, south of Santiago. The volcano has showered towns as far away as Argentina in ash.

Sydney - Pressure was mounting on Pope Benedict XVI today to apologise for sexual and physical abuse allegedly committed by priests in Australia when he visits the country in July. As victim groups and a Catholic bishop called for him to say sorry for the abuse during his visit to attend World Youth Day in Sydney, the Daily Telegraph reported that an apology was being planned.

Port-au-Prince - Haiti took a step toward installing a new government yesterday as the Senate ratified nominee Ericq Pierre for prime minister, more than a month after violent protests over rising food prices that brought down Jacques Edouard Alexis' government. Pierre's appointment will not become final until he is approved by the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house in Haiti's parliament.

Cali - A Colombian judge has handed down a 54-year prison sentence to a cashiered army lieutenant colonel convicted of ordering the massacre of 10 elite anti-drug police officers in an ambush. Judge Edmundo Lopez also slapped sentences of 52 years on the unit's second-in-command and 50 years each on the other 13 soldiers participating in the May 22 2006 slaughter.

Daisetta - A large sinkhole has swallowed up oilfield equipment and some vehicles in south-eastern Texas and continued to grow. There were no reports of injuries or home damage yesterday. Television news footage showed a tractor, oilfield equipment and telephone poles falling into the sinkhole as it grew. The sinkhole was believed to be at least 180m long and 45m deep.

Load-Date: May 8, 2008

End of Document

Gandhi a myth, say Brits

The Star (South Africa)

February 04, 2008 Monday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 676 words

Body

London - Britons are losing their grip on reality, according to a new poll which showed that nearly a quarter thought Winston Churchill was a myth while most reckoned Sherlock Holmes was real. The survey also found 23% believed Crimean War nurse Florence Nightingale did not actually exist and many believed Indian political leader Mahatma Gandhi was a myth.

London - The English capital became a "low emission zone" today with the launch of a campaign to cut traffic pollution and improve the air quality - the worst in Britain. The £49-million (R705-million) scheme uses a network of cameras to monitor emissions of large diesel lorries. Small commercial vehicles will be covered later. Those exceeding EU exhaust limits will be heavily fined.

Paris - France's new first lady, Carla Sarkozy, kisses President Nicolas Sarkozy at a café terrace in the gardens of the Versailles Chateau near Paris yesterday. Sarkozy and supermodel-turned-singer Carla Bruni were married at the Élysée Palace on Saturday.

Lisbon - Portuguese investigators acted hastily in naming the parents of British girl Madeleine McCann as formal suspects in her disappearance last year, Alipio Ribeiro, head of the Portuguese police's detective branch, told Radio Renascenca yesterday. "Perhaps there should have been a different evaluation. I have no doubt about this," Ribeiro said. No one has been charged.

Colombo - A woman suicide bomber attacked a train at Colombo's main rail station yesterday, killing at least 11 and injuring more than 100 others on the eve of Sri Lanka's independence day celebrations. The blast near a suburban train as it arrived at the Fort terminal came just hours after six people were hurt in a handgrenade attack at Sri Lanka's main zoo on the outskirts of Colombo.

London - A British Muslim MP yesterday welcomed the government's decision to investigate a report that police bugged conversations he had with a constituent in prison. The Sunday Times said the Metropolitan Police's anti-terrorist squad used a hidden electronic listening device to record two conversations Sadiq Khan had in 2005 and 2006 with Babar Ahmad, facing deportation to the US.

Madrid - Spain has protested to the Vatican over a veiled appeal from Catholic bishops for voters to shun the ruling Socialists in elections next month. It called the hierarchy "fundamentalist and neo-conservative". Bishops last week said voters should not back parties that supported gay marriage or social reforms the church frowns on, or negotiations with armed Basque militants.

Gandhi a myth, say Brits

Ottawa - The deaths of four UN military observers during Israeli clashes with Hezbollah in Lebanon two years ago were preventable. A Canadian Forces board of inquiry has found that the bombing of a UN compound by Israeli aircraft, killing the four, was "tragic and preventable" and the result of errors by the Israel Defence Force. The compound was also hit by artillery shells.

Athens - Nine British troops serving in Cyprus have been arrested and charged after allegedly smashing up a pub and attacking locals in the resort of Ayia Napa. Police said about 20 soldiers burst into the pub and wreaked havoc. British Forces Cyprus has confirmed that the nine soldiers are back in barracks. Britain keeps a total of around 3 000 troops at two military bases on the divided island.

Bucharest - About 500 people belonging to 20 civil groups protested in Bucharest yesterday against a Constitutional Court ruling that the opening of Romania's secret-police archives was unconstitutional. As a result, the body that studies the Securitate files to identify informers under the former regime cannot pass verdicts on suspected high-profile collaborators.

London - British women had facelifts and men had tummy tucks and "man boobs" removed in record numbers last year. According to the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, 32 453 surgical procedures were carried out - a 12,2% increase on 2006. For men, nose jobs was most popular (716 procedures), with liposuction second (582) and eyelid surgery third (558 operations).

Load-Date: February 3, 2008

Activists condemn Israel

The Star (South Africa)

September 06, 2007 Thursday

e4 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 687 words

Body

Jerusalem - Indiscriminate Israeli shelling caused most of the Lebanese civilian deaths in last year's war, Human Rights Watch said today. The findings, in a new report by the New York-based group, challenged Israel's argument that Hezbollah guerrillas were to blame for fighting within Lebanese towns and villages during the 34-day conflict in July and August 2006.

Katmandu - Nepal's state run airline sacrificed two goats earlier this week, hoping it would please the gods and resolve technical problems with a troubled jet, officials said today. One of the airline's two Boeing 757 aircraft has been grounded for maintenance since last month. The other jet has suffered technical problems that forced the airline to cancel several flights, stranding passengers.

Tokyo - The first boy born into Japan's royal family in more than four decades and third in line to the throne, Hisahito celebrated his first birthday today with a low-key visit to his imperial grandparents. Hisahito's birth halted debate over whether to change Japan's males-only imperial succession law to allow females to ascend the throne, much to the joy of many conservatives.

Washington - More than 25 celebrities including actors Jim Carrey, Dustin Hoffman and Robin Williams today urged the UN to help win freedom for Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The stars signed a letter calling on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to intervene to win freedom for the Nobel laureate, who has spent most of the past 17 years in prison or under house arrest.

Hong Kong - Hong Kong police evacuated hundreds of people from a densely populated area of the main island before detonating a World War 2 bomb discovered during construction work, local media reported. The 180kg bomb, believed to be the second largest found in Hong Kong, was dug up by construction workers at North Point in the east of Hong Kong island yesterday.

Moscow - Kazakhstan today announced the suspension of satellite launches by Proton rocket from the Baikonur space centre after the failed launch of a Japanese telecommunications satellite, Interfax news agency reported. "A failed launch of a Proton-M means automatic suspension of such launches from Baikonur until all the circumstances are cleared up," a state official said.

Kuala Lumpur - Animal rights groups in Malaysia have condemned a competition that challenges Kuala Lumpur residents to nab hundreds of stray dogs, saying it is cruel and dangerous. The Selayang Municipal Council in the north of the capital has offered 39 000 ringgit (about R79 000) in prize money to residents who catch the most dogs over the next six months, reports said today.

Activists condemn Israel

Buenos Aires - An executive of the multinational food giant Nestle was seriously wounded when a letter bomb exploded in his hands at the firm's base near the Argentine capital yesterday, police said. Cosme Veneziale (48), a manager in the firm's technical department at the office north of Buenos Aires, was admitted to hospital after the explosion. The package sent to him contained a book.

Yangon - Hundreds of Buddhist monks have taken about 20 members of Myanmar's security forces hostage inside their monastery, one day after clashes broke out at an anti-junta protest, residents said today. The security forces came to the monastery to apologise for the violence yesterday in the central town of Pakokku, about 500km north of the country's commercial capital Yangon.

Suva - Fiji's military-led government re-imposed a state of emergency today, accusing the prime minister who was ousted in a coup last year of seeking to "destabilise" the South Pacific nation. Self-named interim Prime Minister Commodore Frank Bainimarama - who seized power in a bloodless December 5 2006 coup - said month-long emergency regulations took effect today.

Beijing - China has banned sexually explicit television shows, such as those featuring sex toys and contraceptives, as it tries to clean up its airwaves and imbue socialist values. The order follows the axing of controversial Beautiful Makeover, a reality programme in the southern province of Guangdong showing plastic surgery operations.

Load-Date: September 6, 2007

End of Document

Israeli leader busy forging new coalition; Netanyahu demands quick election

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

September 19, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A17

Length: 671 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- With only six weeks to forge a new coalition in Israel or face national elections, Tzipi Livni will have little time to savour winning the Kadima leadership early Thursday.

To succeed the disgraced Ehud Olmert and become Israel's 13th prime minister, the former secret agent, lawyer and serving foreign minister must win over 32 members of Israel's incredibly Byzantine Knesset in order to form a coalition with Kadima's 29 deputies.

"The national mission we have is to quickly create stability," Livni told reporters in Tel Aviv before returning to Jerusalem. "This responsibility is not just mine but inside Kadima and members of the Knesset."

The process of wooing potential coalition partners and millions of Israeli voters began within hours of the official announcement of her narrow victory.

Whether Livni is successful at building a coalition or not, at some point between next February and 2010 she must face an election against Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of Likud and a hardliner who has very different views about the peace process between Israel and Palestine.

"It should not be left up to registered Kadima voters alone" to decide who the next prime minister is, Netanyahu said Thursday, in demanding that Livni call a snap election. "The people should decide who will lead them. Anyone who fears the people's choice is not fit to lead."

Netanyahu, who was prime minister from 1996 to 1999, lost power after a series of scandals but returned to lead the Likud in late 2005. Well known for his blunt one liners, he lampooned Kadima supporters this week as being similar to people who invested in Lehman Brothers, the failed U.S. financial giant.

No matter what Netanyahu wants, it is extremely unlikely that Livni will go to the polls for at least several months, if she can avoid doing so by forming a new coalition.

Aside from devoting herself to this task, she must explain to anxious Israelis why she would be the best person to confront the threat represented by Iran's nuclear ambitions. She must also handle smaller but potentially bloody tests from Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon and explain what her red lines are concerning the future of Jerusalem and Palestinian demands that millions of refugees be allowed to return to where they once

Israeli leader busy forging new coalition; Netanyahu demands quick election

lived. The Fatah-led Palestinian Authority, which has been discussing a U.S.-backed peace deal with Livni since last fall, had little to say about the Kadima leadership race throughout the campaign.

"At the end of the day we want to make peace with all Israelis, not with this party or that party or that person or this person," chief negotiator Sayed Erekat told the BBC on Thursday. "I hope that once the dust settles down in Israel, whether they are going to form a government of national unity, a new one, or have early elections, that we will stay the course of peace and negotiation."

A greater Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River is an ideology that Livni imbibed as the daughter of Zionist parents who fought the British to create the Jewish state. But a few years ago she did an about-face. Facing with a rapidly growing Palestinian population living within Israel and the territories, she became a believer in a two-state solution.

But her position on Iran, Hamas, Gaza and the peace talks are not why Livni got elected as the new leader of Kadima. Nor was it because she closely identified herself with women's issues as U.S. presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton did. The fact that she is a woman barely figured in her leadership campaign.

Kadima members backed the stylish, modestly dressed 50-year-old mother of two because she is squeaky clean in a political culture that has become the subject of derision. Serious allegations, charges and convictions have been levied against a string of major political figures including former president Moshe Katsav, former prime minister Ariel Sharon and the incumbent, Olmert, who, police have alleged, received hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal campaign donations.

Load-Date: September 19, 2008

End of Document

Israel defiant as Gaza toll soars

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

Second Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 676 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT, GAZA-ISRAEL BORDER with AGENCIES

Body

ISRAELI forces inched closer to central Gaza City last night as Hamas fighters tried to lure them into a dangerous urban conflict where they would be more exposed to ambushes.

As the number of Palestinians killed since the start of the operation 11 days ago soared towards 550, Israeli leaders continued to reject international demands for a ceasefire, saying they would press ahead until the goal of destroying Hamas' military capabilities had been achieved.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak said that while Hamas had sustained a "hard blow", the offensive in Gaza would continue. "We still haven't reached our objectives," he told Israeli MPs.

The main goals of Israel's ground operation in Gaza are to stop the launch of rockets into Israel, to destroy Hamas' ammunition stores and to apprehend or kill as many Hamas fighters as possible.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who has criticised Israel's military offensive, was due to meet Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem overnight, Melbourne time, to try to negotiate a halt to the fighting.

Hamas also announced it had accepted an invitation from Egypt to send a delegation there for ceasefire negotiations.

As the ground offensive in Gaza intensified, the United Nations' Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs said 20 per cent of those killed and 40 per cent of the 2400 injured since the start of the operation were women and children.

Hamas fighters continued to launch Qassam rockets and mortar shells into Israel yesterday, hitting several populated areas but causing no further deaths.

Another 14 Palestinians, including five children, were reported to have been killed in Israeli strikes yesterday.

With Gaza's dwindling fuel supplies almost at an end, the UN agency believes that almost all of the 1.5 million residents are now living without electricity, while 70 per cent have no access to running water.

The UN also fears that fighting in northern Gaza could lead to the city of Beit Lahiya being flooded by 3 million cubic metres of sewage if the main waste water pond is broken.

Israel defiant as Gaza toll soars

All hospitals in northern Gaza have been without mains electricity for 48 hours, and are now dependent on back-up generators, which hospital authorities warn are close to collapse.

Israeli defence officials appear pleased with the progress of the operation, believing the large bombardment that accompanied the troops as they entered Gaza had severely diminished Hamas' ability to return fire.

A military official told The Age that the operation - the deepest Israeli thrust into Gaza since it withdrew from the coastal territory in 2005 - was progressing "cautiously and according to plan".

The official said the forces were moving slowly in order to minimise the chances of soldiers being kidnapped or killed in ambushes.

According to reports in the Israeli media, the defence force was putting into practice painful lessons learned from Israel's 2006 war in Lebanon.

"The IDF has no intention of staying in one spot, but rather plans to keep in constant movement... without necessarily entering the built-up area as the terrorists want them to," one security source told the newspaper Maariv.

"We will not make ourselves sitting ducks and we will continue hitting the terrorists."

Military officials are also encouraged that they have not encountered sophisticated weaponry that Hamas was believed to have smuggled into Gaza, possibly indicating that its arms stockpiles had been severely reduced.

But Mahmud Zahar, a top Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, vowed last night that the Islamists were heading to victory. "Victory is coming, God willing," he said in an address on Hamas's Al-Aqsa television.

Israel's Director of Military Intelligence, Major-General Amos Yadlin, also warned that the Lebanese paramilitary force **Hezbollah** could open a second front against Israel, firing rockets into the country within days.

Meanwhile, Egypt called for the creation of humanitarian corridors into Gaza to allow food and medicine to be brought in, as air strikes forced the closure of its Rafah crossing. -- With AGENCIES

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: A man carries his wounded child into a Gaza hospital as Israeli soldiers bear a comrade to his grave and others grieve. PICTURES: AFP, AP

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

Israel ushers in Jewish New Year amid tensions along its borders

thespec.com

September 13, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: CANADA/WORLD; Pg. A06

Length: 672 words

Byline: Sean Gaffney, The Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israelis ushered in the Jewish New Year last evening amid new fears of war after fresh rocket attacks by Palestinian militants in Gaza and reports of an Israeli air strike against Syria.

The Rosh Hashana holiday, followed 10 days later by Yom Kippur -- the Day of Atonement -- is traditionally a time for taking stock of spiritual and cultural values, and Israelis were in a thoughtful mood in the hours before the start of the holiday, which began at sunset. At the lively, open air Mahane Yehuda market in downtown Jerusalem, where shoppers scrambled to stock up on food before the two-day holiday, some Israelis expressed discontent with the government and frustration with the continued conflict with the Palestinians.

"I don't think you'll find any Israeli who's optimistic," said Ari Boudershem, 47, owner of the Emil coffee shop. "It's not in our nature."

Boudershem said holiday business was better than last year, which was marred by an inconclusive summer war with the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon. But he said he saw rough times ahead and "maybe a war."

Jewish families celebrate Rosh Hashana by eating apples and honey and other traditional foods symbolizing sweetness and prosperity.

The holiday this year falls on the same day as the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. So as Jews sit down for festive family dinners, Muslim families will also gather for a special meal ahead of their month of sunrise-to-sunset fasting.

In a routine measure, the Israeli military ordered a closure of Israel's borders with the West Bank and Gaza over the holiday, when packed synagogues, beaches and parks in Israel are seen as being particularly vulnerable to attack.

On Tuesday, a Palestinian rocket from Gaza struck an army base in southern Israel, wounding 40 soldiers, one critically. Israel's government has ruled out a large-scale military retaliation, a decision some Israelis questioned.

"Israeli authorities are apparently concerned that a military incursion into Hamas-controlled Gaza could undermine fledgling peace talks with the western-backed Fatah movement in control of the West Bank.

Israel ushers in Jewish New Year amid tensions along its borders

In a three-hour meeting Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pledged to set up high-level working groups to outline a final peace deal before a proposed international conference in November.

Israelis also expressed concern about Syrian accusations, confirmed by Washington, that Israeli warplanes struck deep into Syrian territory last week. The wall-to-wall silence on the reports from the normally voluble Israeli government has fuelled worries about possible war as Israelis struggle to figure out what the planes were doing in Syria.

A poll published in the Maariv newspaper yesterday showed Olmert's approval rating was 3.2 on a scale of 10.

Two **women** -- Parliament Speaker Dalia Itzik and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni -- emerged as Israel's most popular politicians, with grades of 6.3 and 6.1, respectively.

The poll was conducted among 489 Israelis and had a margin of error of 4.4 percentage points.

Israel's population remained largely stable, with a total of 7.11 million citizens, compared with 6.99 million the year before, according to government data released Tuesday.

The Central Bureau of Statistics said the Jewish population at the end of 2006 was 5.39 million, versus 5.31 million in 2005, while there were 1.41 million Arab Israelis, compared with 1.38 million a year earlier. The Jewish year of 5768 also marks a year of agricultural sabbatical, known in Hebrew as "shmita."

The commandment requires Jewish farmers in Israel to let their fields rest every seventh year, just as Jews are required to rest every seventh day. In the past, the sabbatical prodded the Jewish state into strange arrangements with Palestinian farmers, and forced Jewish farmers and rabbis to devise creative loopholes that allow field work to continue without violating the letter of the law.

Israeli police stand near a rocket fired by Palestinian militants on a field near the city of Sderot yesterday.

Graphic

Photo: Amir Cohen, Reuters ,

Load-Date: September 13, 2007

Turkey moves to lift head scarf ban

The International Herald Tribune

February 11, 2008 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 641 words

Byline: Sabrina Tavernise - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: ISTANBUL

Body

Sebnem Arsu contributed reporting.

*

The Turkish Parliament has taken a major step toward lifting a ban against women's head scarves at universities, setting the stage for a final showdown with the country's secular elite over where Islam fits in the building of an open society.

Turkish lawmakers voted overwhelmingly Saturday in favor of a measure supported by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to change the Constitution in a way they say would guarantee all citizens the right to go to college regardless of how they dress.

The authorities imposed the ban in the late 1990s, arguing that the growing number of covered women in colleges threatened secularism, a founding principle of modern Turkey.

Secular opposition lawmakers voted against the change, with about a fifth of all votes cast. Crowds of secular Turks backed them on the streets of the capital, Ankara, chanting that secularism - and women's right to resist being forced to wear head scarves by family members or the religious authorities - was under threat and demanding that the government step down.

"This decision will bring further pressure on women," said Nesrin Baytok, a deputy from the opposition secular party, during the debate in Parliament. "It will ultimately bring us Hezbollah terror, Al Qaeda terror and fundamentalism."

Another deputy from that party, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, said the group would take the amendments to the Constitutional Court, a pro-secular institution that is very likely to rule against Erdogan. That process must wait until the changes are approved by the president and published in the official state newspaper, which could take two weeks.

The head scarf ban, and the push to repeal it by Erdogan's governing party, has become one of the most emotional issues in Turkey. It pits a rising, increasingly wealthy middle class of observant Turks against a secular elite backed by the military and the judiciary.

Turkey moves to lift head scarf ban

"It's all about power," said Jenny White, a professor of anthropology at Boston University. "It's about who gets to decide what Turkey's image and emblematic lifestyle will be. Islam is the lightning rod for all the fears and concerns." Many secular Turks are concerned that Erdogan's Justice and Development Party will impose its own conservative values on Turkey.

"It's been presented as a liberty to cover the head, but in practice, it is going to evolve into a ban on uncovered hair," said Sami Turk, a former justice minister, speaking on NTV television.

The tensions are rooted in its recent past, when vast numbers of migrants from the country's more observant heartland moved to cities, starting in the 1950s, in a process that changed Turkey into an urban society.

But it remained divided by class, and when many covered women, now wealthier, began entering universities and taking public sector jobs, the secular elite legally banned them the scarves. Now, Erdogan is trying to lift the ban and the debate has been highly emotional.

"I will entrust liver to a cat, but won't entrust secularism to you," Deniz Baykal, the head of the secular opposition party, said last week, according to Today's Zaman, an English-language daily newspaper.

Turkey is entering uncharted waters in its attempts to balance liberal democracy, Islam and secularism, and Western models do not show the way.

"It's not like a Sikh policeman wearing a turban under his helmet in England," said Murat Belge, a professor at Bilgi University in Istanbul. In Britain, Sikhs are a tiny minority. In Turkey, he said, those asking for more rights are the majority. That majority, many secularists believe, are using the veil as a first step toward a repressive Islamic state.

But White, writing in a Turkish newspaper on Friday, said the veil's political meaning was in the eye of the beholder. "Meaning," she wrote, "is in our heads, not on our heads."

Load-Date: March 3, 2008

Iraqi governor unhurt in suicide bomb attack

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

August 13, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 682 words

Byline: Robert H. Reid Associated Press

Body

BAGHDAD -- A **female** suicide bomber blasted an Iraqi convoy north of Baghdad on Tuesday, killing two people but narrowly missing a provincial governor in the second suicide attack by a woman in Diyala province in as many days.

Gov. Raad Rashid al-Tamimi ordered an indefinite curfew in Diyala's provincial capital of Baqouba, where the attack occurred.

It happened a day after Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government announced a weeklong suspension of military operations in Diyala to give militants a chance to surrender.

Al-Tamimi and the commander of Iraqi ground forces, Gen. Ali Ghaidan, were traveling to a meeting of the provincial council in Baqouba when the woman detonated her explosives as the vehicles approached, U.S. and Iraqi officials said.

Neither the governor nor the general was injured, they said.

The attack could have been more devastating, but the attacker triggered her explosives prematurely -- possibly because she feared guards had spotted her, officials said.

Iraqi police initially said the bomber was a man. But the U.S. military in northern Iraq said American soldiers at the site had confirmed the attacker was a woman.

On Monday, a **female** suicide bomber struck a checkpoint at a market in Baqouba, killing one policeman and wounding 14 other people, including nine police.

Also Tuesday, the U.S. military announced that an American Marine was killed by small arms fire in Anbar province. Two other Marines were wounded in the Sunday attack, the military said.

Diyala, stretching northeast from Baghdad to the Iranian border, has proven among the most difficult of Iraq's 18 provinces to pacify, in part because of its complex mixture of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds.

The Islamic State of Iraq, an al-Qaida front organization, declared Baqouba as its capital after Sunni extremists shifted operations from Anbar province following a revolt by Sunni Arab tribes there.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of al-Qaida in Iraq, was killed in Diyala by a U.S. airstrike in June 2006.

Iraqi governor unhurt in suicide bomb attack

Many Sunnis in Diyala feel disenfranchised. Shiites hold a disproportionate share of power, including the governorship, because many Sunnis boycotted the last provincial election in January 2005.

A bill to hold new provincial elections failed to win parliamentary approval this month because of a dispute over power-sharing in the northern Iraqi oil center of Kirkuk.

Al-Maliki launched a military operation in Diyala last month, hoping to replicate successes against Shiite and Sunni militants in Baghdad, the southern city of Basra and the northern city of Mosul.

On Monday, the Iraqi Defense Ministry said military operations would stop in Diyala for a week "to give gunmen a chance to surrender." U.S. military spokesman Col. Jerry O'Hara said U.S. and other multinational forces would comply with the directive.

Military operations were continuing elsewhere.

The U.S. military said American soldiers in Baghdad captured nine people linked to the Hezbollah Brigades, a Shiite extremist group that the U.S. believes is backed by Iran -- a charge the Iranians deny.

A U.S. statement said the militants were seized in a series of raids in the north of the capital on Monday and Tuesday.

One of those apprehended was believed to control a militant cell in Basra and was involved in smuggling weapons and fighters from Iran, the U.S. statement said.

U.S. troops also detained 12 people believed linked to al-Qaida in Iraq, a Sunni group, during raids in the Baghdad area and Mosul, 225 miles northwest of the capital.

American troops also handed over a patrol base to the Iraqi army in Latifiyah, 20 miles south of Baghdad.

U.S. officials said the handover signaled greater confidence in the Iraqis to control the area, once known as the Triangle of Death because of frequent attacks by Sunni extremists against Shiite civilians and U.S. troops.

Also Tuesday, the speaker of Iraq's parliament, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, flew to Jordan for treatment of high blood pressure and heart problems, his office said. Al-Mashhadani, a Sunni Arab, was hospitalized in July after fainting during a parliament session.

Load-Date: August 13, 2008

Protest was not an example of love and peace

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

January 15, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A15

Length: 656 words

Byline: Dr. Marvin Levant, For The Calgary Herald

Body

Calgary Imam Syed Soharwardy's fairy tale rendition (Letter: Made in Canada, Herald, Jan. 7) of the pro-Hamas rally at Glenmore Landing could not have been the same event I photographed and recorded on Jan. 2.

Muslim Council of Calgary chairman Nagah Hage exhorted his flock of 175, including infants and teens, in both Arabic and English. Between the tirades that demonized Israel, comparing Jews to the Nazis, Hage whipped up the crowd by calling the Jewish state "barbaric, ruthless and arrogant" and led the crowd in a chant that said: "Olmert-Hitler, you're the same, the only difference is the name."

The demonization of Israel was portrayed in venomous placards and banners carried by children and parents. Israel was accused of "ethnic cleansing", "committing a holocaust", and of "outright murder". There were even swastikas on display--ironic, considering.

I am sure this anti-Semitic chorus was loud enough to be heard across the street at the Calgary Jewish Centre. The most egregious placard of all equated Jews with Nazis--a disgusting display anytime, but particularly tasteless, given that the Jewish community's Holocaust memorial was a block away.

They chanted: "Stephen Harper, hear us say, Jerusalem will be ours one day." In other words, the rally really wasn't about Gaza -- it was about Hamas's stated plans to conquer Israel.

The crowd also turned on the lone Israeli supporter standing off to one side. This Christian Zionist's homemade poster read: "Canada supports Israel's right to security and self-defence." He also carried a small Israeli flag. This set the crowd aflame. A few tried to lunge for him but were held back by another protester who told the lone Israeli defender he should be grateful he hadn't been physically attacked, though he did have a boot thrown at him.

When the crowd approached the Israel supporter a second time, eight police officers had to stand in front of him to protect him. So the crowd went back to chanting "killers of children and women"--and they didn't mean Hamas, who use civilians as human shields.

For two full hours this disgrace continued--all on the mall's private property. Parking and business access was blocked, and many customers were clearly repelled by the Nazi symbols on the crowd's posters, and the chants. When one shop owner asked the police to clear the crowd because customers couldn't reach her shop, the response was "they would leave it alone and let it play out", as it was the "lesser of two evils".

Protest was not an example of love and peace

Some of the mob didn't just go to the mall. They actually had the temerity to park at the Calgary Jewish Centre -- adjacent to the Holocaust memorial there--despite the private parking sign. I suppose if conquering Jerusalem is your goal, trespassing on Jewish property in Calgary is no big deal.

In his letter to the Herald, Soharwardy claimed some protesters "parked their cars in front of houses, most probably Jewish" and that "some of the (Jewish) onlookers even smiled". Back in reality, there are no houses between the Jewish Centre and Glenmore Landing. The closest Jewish home is three blocks away. Perhaps what Soharwardy saw were the grimaces or shocked expressions of other home owners, when faced with posters with swastikas on them.

Soharwardy then gives a back-handed compliment to non-existent Jews for not attacking the verbally and visually violent crowd. "Isn't Canada wonderful!" he exults. He's thrilled this kind of bigotry can be proclaimed in Calgary with impunity.

As the crowd was departing, some passed in front of an orthodox rabbi, on his way to the nearby synagogue for the Jewish Sabbath.

The mob unfurled a flag of Hezbollah--a criminal terrorist organization, under Canadian law--and cursed him while making violent gestures and spitting.

Soharwardy's "fairy tale" is a nightmare. This is the true face of the protest.

Dr. Marvin Levant Is A Retired Calgary Radiologist Who Witnessed The Recent Pro-Hamas Protest At Glenmore Landing.

Graphic

Photo: Courtesy, Marvin Levant; An example of protest signs at an anti-Israel rally at Glenmore Landing on Jan. 2. ;

Load-Date: January 15, 2009

**Fears mount for refugees caught in Lebanon siege; Muslim extremists
accused of shooting at fleeing civilians**

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

May 27, 2007 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 609 words

Byline: Michel Moutot, Agence France-Presse

Dateline: NAHR AL-BARED, Lebanon

Body

NAHR AL-BARED, Lebanon - Fears for thousands of civilians caught in the Lebanese army's siege of Islamist militants grew today as those brave enough to escape told harrowing tales of survival.

The United Nations made an urgent appeal for the safety of children among an estimated 10,000 mainly Palestinian civilians caught in the crossfire at the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp, where the Islamist gunmen are holed up.

Lebanese troops encircled the camp a week ago, when fighting broke out with Fatah al-Islam militants that has killed 78 people, forced thousands to flee and trapped thousands more in unbearable conditions.

Residents told AFP how they dodged sniper fire from Fatah al-Islam, a shadowy Sunni Muslim extremist group which has been accused of targeting fleeing civilians to keep the camp's population as human shields.

"We put the **women** and children in front of us so they (Fatah al-Islam) wouldn't shoot at us," said Kassem Rabih, 50, after he escaped Saturday.

"It took a lot of courage," said Manal Aamer, 25.

"The children were terrorized, some were so scared that they first refused to go ahead. We walked on traces of blood."

Nadia Jaffar, 45, clutched the last of her heart medication as she reached safety.

"Bullets whistled past as we left the house," she said, adding that she had no choice but to leave. "We had nothing left to eat or drink."

Fatah al-Islam leader Shaker Abssi claimed the group's fight was with "Jews and Americans" and not the Lebanese.

In a statement aired Saturday on Al-Jazeera television, he said his group was "not a threat to the security of Lebanon" and accused an unidentified "third party" of starting the hostilities.

Fears mount for refugees caught in Lebanon siege; Muslim extremists accused of shooting at fleeing civilians

The UN children's agency UNICEF called on all sides Saturday to protect trapped civilians, including children it said had been through "unspeakable trauma."

"An estimated 10,000 civilians remain in the embattled camp with only sporadic humanitarian support during very brief ceasefire periods," it said.

The Lebanese army has accused Fatah al-Islam fighters, including many non-Palestinian Arabs who have fought U.S. troops in Iraq, of firing on civilians to prevent them leaving the camp.

A Palestinian faction commander inside the camp supported the accusation.

"It's Fatah al-Islam who are climbing onto the rooftops to fire at or near civilians to prevent them leaving," said Abu Imad al-Wanni, regional commander of the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"They know that as long as the civilians are there, the army will not be able to launch a full-scale assault," he said.

Defence Minister Elias Murr has said last-ditch talks are underway to reach a negotiated solution to the worst internal strife since Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war.

He has not specified who is brokering the talks but reports said mainstream Palestinian factions were trying to break the deadlock.

By long-standing convention, the army does not enter Lebanon's 12 Palestinian refugee camps, leaving security to the Palestinian factions.

As the siege continued, more U.S. planes full of military aid arrived in Lebanon after Congress approved a massive seven-fold boost in military support for the country.

Fatah al-Islam spokesman Abu Salim Taha, speaking to AFP by telephone from Nahr al-Bared, warned that if American "arms are used against our group, we will respond with non-conventional attacks in different parts of Lebanon."

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, who heads Lebanon's opposition, has warned the western-backed government of Prime Minister Fuad Siniora against turning the siege into a new front in the U.S.-led "war on terror."

Siniora said Nasrallah should have condemned Fatah al-Islam instead.

Graphic

Photo: The Associated Press; An ambulance full of **women** and children extracted from Nahr el-Bared refugee camp arrives at the Safad hospital in the Bedawi refugee camp in Lebanon on Saturday. ;

Load-Date: May 27, 2007

Foreign residents flee as bombardment continues

Irish News

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 12

Length: 677 words

Body

Israel bowed to international pressure yesterday to allow hundreds of Palestinians with foreign passports to leave besieged Gaza. But it kept up attacks for a sixth day, including bombing a mosque it claimed was used to store weapons and destroying the homes of more than a dozen Hamas operatives.

Israel has been building up artillery, armour and infantry on Gaza's border in an indication the week-old air assault against its Hamas rulers could soon expand with a ground incursion.

International calls for a ceasefire have been growing and French President Nicolas Sarkozy is expected in the region next week.

There was no slowdown in violence yesterday, with Israel attacking new targets and Palestinians firing at least 30 rockets into southern Israel.

Israel managed to open its border with Gaza to allow nearly 300 Palestinians with foreign passports to flee.

Many of the evacuees were foreign-born women married to Palestinians and their children.

Spouses who did not hold foreign citizenship were not allowed out.

The Israeli foreign ministry said most of the evacuees were Russian or Eastern European.

Israel launched the bombing campaign last Saturday in a bid to halt weeks of intensifying Palestinian rocket fire from Gaza.

It has dealt a heavy blow to Hamas but failed to halt the rockets.

New attacks yesterday struck homes in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon, wounding four Israelis.

After destroying Hamas' security compounds, Israel turned its attention to the group's leadership.

Planes hit around 20 houses believed to belong to Hamas militants and members of other armed groups.

The Israelis either warned residents by phone or fired a warning missile to try to reduce civilian casualties.

Israeli planes also dropped leaflets east of Gaza giving a confidential phone number and email address for people to report locations of rocket squads.

It used similar tactics during its 2006 war against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Foreign residents flee as bombardment continues

Most of the targeted homes belonged to activist leaders and appeared to be empty at the time but one man was killed in a strike in the Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza.

Separate airstrikes killed five other Palestinians - including a teenage boy east of Gaza City and three children - two brothers and their cousin - who were playing in southern Gaza.

More than 400 Gazans have been killed and 1,700 wounded in the Israeli campaign, Gaza health officials said.

The number of combatants and civilians killed is unclear but Hamas has said around half of the dead are members of its security forces and the UN has said more than 60 are civilians, 34 of them children.

Three Israeli civilians and one soldier have also died in the rocket attacks, which have reached deeper into Israel than ever before, bringing an eighth of Israel's population of seven million within rocket range.

The mosque destroyed yesterday was known as a Hamas stronghold and the army said it was used to store weapons.

It also was identified with Nizar Rayan, the Hamas militant leader killed yesterday when Israel dropped a one-ton bomb on his home.

Israel's military said the homes of Hamas leaders are being used to store missiles and other weapons and the hit on Rayan's house triggered secondary explosions from the stockpile there.

While keeping up the military pressure, Israel has offered a small opening for intense diplomatic efforts, saying it would consider a halt to the fighting.

But it has attached the strict condition that international monitors enforce the truce.

The fighting follows a six-month truce that was repeatedly violated by Palestinian rocket and mortar fire.

Concerned about protests, Israeli police stepped up security and restricted access to Friday prayers at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque, barring all males under 50 from entering.

Prayers in Jerusalem ended without incident, though in a nearby east Jerusalem district youths clashed with anti-riot police on horseback.

Jerusalem's mufti Mohammed Hussein said a mere 3,000 Palestinians attended prayers because of tough restrictions, which barred all males under the age of 50 from entering.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

Caramel teases out feminine truths

Ottawa Citizen

February 8, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: ARTS; Pg. D3

Length: 634 words

Byline: Katherine Monk, Canwest News Service

Dateline: TORONTO

Body

TORONTO - Nadine Labaki calls her new film *Caramel* a "love letter to Beirut." It's a great tag line that conjures high drama and oozes heartfelt sentiment, but it may sound a little odd considering the film takes place in the middle of a hair salon.

"I think it doesn't matter where this movie is set," says Labaki during a recent interview in Toronto, where her film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival last fall. The movie opens today at the ByTowne Cinema.

"What matters is that you feel the warm-hearted quality of the people. What matters is that you see how people who may be very different manage to live together, and accept each other for what they are. What matters is that you see Beirut as one society in the Middle East where people of different religious faiths can live together in harmony."

To be more precise, the people in Labaki's film aren't just tolerating one another -- but often grooming, trimming, tinting and detangling each other, and in the process, transforming their own lives.

Hair as a symbol of change has been around as long as the Bible, and has teased out certain truths about self-image -- and particularly feminine self-esteem -- ever since the Victorians decided hair should be kept under wraps lest it beckon the onlooker into the clutches of lust and sin.

"For me, the significance of the hair is a way to talk about beauty. Hair does have a cultural significance, but for me, it was more about how the women in this salon feel about themselves, and how the changes to their hair reflect the larger changes in their lives."

For instance, most of the women in the salon are undergoing personal problems. From extra-marital affairs to the surgical restoration of one's "virginal state," the women who traipse in and out of the hair parlour have plenty on their personal plates.

Even Labaki, who stars in the film as well as directs, plays a woman trying to figure out if second fiddle is good enough, and enlists the advice of the surrounding hens to guide her through an emotional maze.

In many ways, the movie has the relaxed and familiar tone of a post-Rosie episode of *The View*, but Labaki insists this isn't just a chick flick.

Caramel teases out feminine truths

"This is about people who are in the middle of changing their lives. Just because they are women doesn't mean only women will understand the problems they face. These are universal stories of change and growth," says Labaki.

"This is about learning to love yourself and being strong in the face of change."

Labaki says she's not making any political statements about Islam, head scarves or any other religious rites on the subject of hair in Caramel.

"That is too heavy," she says. "This is a comedy, really. Also, it's about women and how the world sees them -- as a whole. This is where the problem lies. Many people have an idea of what women should be. It doesn't matter which society they are a member of -- be it Lebanese, or American, or Canadian. The problem is many cultures have prescribed ideas of how women should look... without even thinking of the woman as an individual with her own rights and desires."

Labaki says she's lived on both sides of the East-West cultural divide. When war broke out between Israel and Hezbollah militants in 2006, she fled for safe ground in Canada and made her home in Montreal for two years.

She says it was the time away from Beirut that really brought Caramel into focus as a story about her city, and its unique place in the world as a country that embraces all forms of religious expression.

"I think my city is a bit like a laboratory," she says. "It's a living experiment in how we can all live together. The Lebanese people have struggled to make it this way. It wasn't easy for us, but now, we want to share it with the world," she says.

"It would give so much pain a purpose."

Load-Date: February 8, 2008

Pakistanis harvest the sun

The Star (South Africa)

May 15, 2008 Thursday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 706 words

Body

Islamabad - Pakistan is switching to daylight saving time next month to reduce the impact of acute power shortages in the country. Electricity supplies to homes, businesses and factories across Pakistan have been cut for several hours a day over the past few months as the country grapples with a 4 000MW power deficit. Clocks will be moved forward an hour, to GMT+6, on June 1.

Nairobi - Kenyan officials backed by armed police have forced thousands of Kenyans displaced by post-election violence to leave a refugee camp, Doctors Without Borders said yesterday. The government is anxious for displaced farmers to return home and plant crops. Kenya faces a severe shortfall of the staple corn because many farmers' homes and fields were burnt in the violence.

New York - Benefits Supervisor Sleeping, a nude by British artist Lucian Freud, has sold for more than \$34-million (R255-million) in New York. The 1995 oil is now the most expensive work ever by a living artist. The Christie's sale beat the record held by Hanging Heart, by American artist Jeff Koons, which fetched \$23,4-million at Sotheby's in New York late last year.

Beirut - ***Hezbollah*** supporters fired into the air in Beirut yesterday when Lebanon's government cancelled measures that angered the Iranian-backed movement and triggered the worst internal conflict since the country's 1975-90 civil war. The step was in line with a request by the Lebanese army to preserve civil peace and promote an Arab League mediation effort to end Lebanon's crisis.

Vatican City - Italy's top appeals court has reversed the acquittal of two senior Vatican Radio officials implicated in alleged electromagnetic pollution by the station's transmitters. They will now be tried again. In 2001, residents from Cesano, north of Rome, took the radio to court, saying its transmitters caused leukaemia. Death from the cancer was three times that of other areas.

Port Harcourt - Gunmen in Nigeria's Niger Delta have hijacked a supply ship working for US oil giant Chevron and are demanding a ransom for the release of the vessel and its crew. The 11-person crew includes two foreign nationals - one Portuguese and one Ukrainian. The hijack is the latest in a series of militant attacks and sabotage in recent weeks and seriously affected oil production.

Legutiano - A powerful car bomb blamed on Basque separatist group ETA exploded outside a barracks housing police and their families in northern Spain yesterday, killing one officer and injuring four others. The government described it as an attempted massacre. It was the first fatal attack in two months to be pinned on ETA, which reverted to violence in 2006 when peace talks stalled.

Pakistanis harvest the sun

Vienna - Investigators yesterday discovered the bodies of five people after a man turned up at a police station and calmly explained he had killed his family to spare them the shame of his financial ruin. His wife and 7-year-old daughter were found in their Vienna home - they had been bludgeoned with an axe. The bodies of his parents and father-in-law were found at their homes in Upper Austria.

Khartoum - Tens of thousands of Sudanese descended on the streets of Khartoum yesterday, shouting nationalist slogans to denounce a Darfur rebel attack on the capital which killed more than 200 people. Dressed in military fatigues, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir led the crowd in chants against the rebels and their leader, Khalil Ibrahim. Supporters of opposition parties joined the rally.

Yangon - Myanmar tightened access to its cyclone disaster zone yesterday, turning back foreigners and ignoring pleas to accept outside experts who could save countless lives before time runs out. Meanwhile, heavy rains and another powerful storm are posing a serious threat to relief operations in the cyclone-devastated delta. The UN has warned of a possible "second wave of deaths".

London - "Yorkshire Ripper" Peter Sutcliffe has begun a legal challenge to win freedom, on the grounds that the government failed to set the exact length of his sentence. Sutcliffe (61) was jailed for life in 1981 for the murders of 13 women over five years in one of Britain's most notorious criminal cases. He is in Broadmoor secure hospital in Berkshire, being treated for mental illness.

Load-Date: May 15, 2008

End of Document

Angola slated over Muslims

The Star (South Africa)

November 29, 2007 Thursday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 701 words

Body

Geneva - Muslims lack key religious rights in Angola and are stigmatised in the media and by government officials because of a perceived link to international terrorism and crime. A UN report yesterday said the authorities had temporarily closed some mosques last year. The conditions at a detention centre were "deplorable", with Muslims having no access to an imam or religious books.

Cairo - An Egyptian court has sentenced a police captain and two plainclothes informants to seven years for torturing a man to death, in what appears to be increasing government intolerance of police brutality. The marathon hearing lasted more than 10 hours and resulted in the unusually tough verdict. Three weeks ago, two officers got three years for sodomising a minibus driver after his arrest.

Tokyo - A humanoid robot has her teeth checked by a dentist at Japan's largest robot convention in Tokyo yesterday. The life-size dental training robot, dubbed Simroid, for "simulator humanoid", has realistic skin, eyes, and a mouth that can be fitted with replica teeth that trainees practise drilling. It cries in pain when the drilling goes wrong.

Aiken - A bank teller in South Carolina in the US had a million reasons to deny this transaction. Police say a man offered a \$1-million (R7-million) bill and tried to open an account. The employee refused and called police while the man started to curse at bank workers. Police later found the man had bought several cartons of cigarettes from a nearby grocery store with a stolen cheque.

N'Djamena - A group of Chadian rebels yesterday warned an EU peacekeeping force bound for Chad not to side with President Idriss Deby, saying they would fight it as a foreign occupation army if it did so. The warning followed the biggest battle in months in eastern Chad between Deby's forces and fighters from another major insurgent group, in which hundreds were said to be killed.

Beirut - Opposition to Lebanese army chief General Michel Suleiman becoming president has been dropped, bringing him a step closer to being the new head of state and ending Lebanon's year-long political crisis. All sides - including ***Hezbollah*** - appear to view him, at least for now, as a relatively neutral player who can guarantee that no side in Lebanon's fractured politics dominates the other.

Brussels - Nato wants Muslim Arab nations in North Africa and the Middle East to join its military force in Afghanistan to help train Afghan army units for the fight against the Taliban, US General John Craddock, supreme allied commander for operations, said yesterday. Muslim nations, concerned they could be fighting fellow Muslims, have been reluctant to send troops.

Angola slated over Muslims

Boston - They save lives and speed diagnosis but the 62-million CT scans done in the US each year may soon be responsible for 2% of all cancers. Two Columbia University researchers said yesterday that because doctors underestimated the radiation risk from computed CT scans, they might be ordering too many. A typical CT scan can deliver 50 to 100 times more radiation than a conventional x-ray.

Chicago - A white man convicted of killing a Hmong immigrant while hunting squirrels has been sentenced to 71 years in jail in a racially charged case. James Nichols was found guilty of shooting and stabbing Cha Vang in a public hunting ground in rural Wisconsin in January and trying to hide his body. Ethnic Hmongs began emigrating to the US from Laos and Thailand after the Vietnam War.

London - Princess Diana saw her lover Dodi al-Fayed dying when she opened her eyes after their limousine crashed in a Paris road tunnel, the inquest was told yesterday. French policeman Sebastien Dorzee, the first member of the emergency services to reach the scene of the crash in 1997, said Diana could see Dodi just in front of her. She mumbled "My God" when she realised what had happened.

Montbeliard - French police have detained a 68-year-old retired "drag queen" performer after the murders of 18 mainly gay men over three decades. The performer was being held in Montbeliard along with a male former lover who is a suspected accomplice. He worked as a **female** impersonator in a string of cabarets in France and Germany until he retired in 1992

Load-Date: November 29, 2007

End of Document

DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 13, 2008 Tuesday

SECOND EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 599 words

Body

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

President, governors commit to recall votes

President Evo Morales committed himself and Bolivia's nine governors on Monday to face recall votes on Aug. 10, gambling that his unfinished term will survive a referendum whose peculiar rules tilt in the populist leader's favor.

Morales originally proposed the recall vote in December amid a fierce battle over his proposed draft constitution that would increase the political power of Bolivia's long-oppressed indigenous majority. Bolivia's lower house of Congress approved it. But the idea went nowhere until last week, when it was suddenly revived by the opposition-controlled Senate.

Morales immediately accepted his foes' challenge in a nationally televised address and signed the bill on Monday.

MOSCOW

Putin fills new Cabinet with Kremlin loyalists

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin named his new Cabinet on Monday, bringing in loyalists from the Kremlin in what was seen as an effort to shift the center of power to his new place of work.

He also left several prominent ministers untouched, including Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin.

President Dmitry Medvedev, Putin's hand-picked successor who was inaugurated last week, quickly approved the appointments.

BEIRUT, LEBANON

Fighting shifts to north; more than 50 are dead

Fighting between pro- and anti-government factions jumped to Lebanon's north Monday, but a grim calm hung over the nearly empty streets of Beirut.

DIGEST

As black-clad Shiite militants of Hezbollah carried their latest dead to burial, so did the families and friends of civilians caught in the middle of combat that has routed Sunni factions supporting the Western-allied government from Muslim west Beirut.

More than 50 people were confirmed dead since fighting erupted Wednesday - first in Beirut, then in the mountains overlooking the city and on Monday in the northern city of Tripoli. It is the worst sectarian violence to wrack Lebanon since a 15-year civil war ended in 1990.

JERUSALEM

Militants fire rocket, killing Israeli woman, 75

A rocket fired by Palestinian militants killed a 75-year-old Israeli woman Monday, just as an Egyptian mediator was winding up truce talks in Israel.

The rocket hit a house in the village of Yesha, about four miles from the Gaza Strip. As recently as Friday, a fatal rocket attack drew reprisal Israeli airstrikes that killed five Palestinians in Gaza.

AMMAN, JORDAN

Brothers, parents charged in death of woman, 22

A man who is suspected of drowning his 22-year-old sister for having an extramarital affair was charged Monday with premeditated murder, a judicial official said.

The unidentified woman's brother beat her with the help of his family Saturday and then took her to the Dead Sea where he drowned her, said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

The state prosecutor also charged the woman's parents and another brother Monday with assisting in the murder, the official said.

An average of 20 Jordanian women are killed by relatives every year in so-called honor killings in this tribal-dominated society.

KHARTOUM, SUDAN

Rebel leader vows to keep up offensive

Darfur's most-wanted rebel leader vowed Monday to keep up his offensive against the Sudanese government, saying he can exhaust the military by fighting it all across Africa's largest nation.

In a telephone interview with The Associated Press, Khalil Ibrahim said the military success of the Justice and Equality Movement is easy to explain. "We are more spread out, and we move fast."

FROM NEWS SERVICES

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - A woman weeps during a mass funeral Monday for Bosnian Muslims in the town of Bratunac. Thousands attended a funeral of 41 men, women and children from the eastern Bosnian town killed by Serb forces at the

DIGEST

beginning of the country's 1992-95 war. The bodies were found and exhumed from mass grave sites last year and identified by DNA. The Associated Press

Load-Date: May 13, 2008

End of Document

Fresh troops for Somalia

The Star (South Africa)

January 21, 2008 Monday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 672 words

Body

Bujumbura - The last members of the first battalion of Burundian soldiers to be deployed in Somalia as part of an AU peacekeeping force were due in Mogadishu yesterday. The 210 soldiers - the final element in a deployment of 850 - were delayed for several months due to lack of supplies. Burundi will deploy a total of 1 700 soldiers alongside about 1 600 Ugandans already in Somalia.

Islamabad - Pakistani artillery and helicopter gunships yesterday pounded militant positions close to the Afghan border, an extremist stronghold where a rebel leader blamed for the assassination of Benazir Bhutto is believed to be hiding. The strikes came after authorities said they had arrested a 15-year-old boy alleged to have been involved in the December 27 assassination.

Istanbul - A bull camel is knocked down by its rival as the owners and tether holders prepare to separate the animals near Izmir yesterday. The annual camel wrestling tournament is a traditional sport in western Turkey, in which two male camels wrestle after a ***female*** camel in heat is led before them.

Luanda - Angolan rescue workers yesterday completed the task of retrieving the bodies of the 13 victims of a plane crash in mountains near the country's second largest city, Huambo. An inquiry has been opened to determine the cause of Saturday's crash, which occurred in "absolutely terrible weather". A top businessman and two young children were among the dead.

Jerusalem - Israeli ministers yesterday cursed ***Hezbollah*** chief Hassan Nasrallah as a "sewage rat who will continue digging his holes" for boasting in Lebanon at the weekend that his militia had the body parts of Israeli soldiers abandoned on the battlefield in Lebanon in 2006. The Israeli army slammed the comments as "a cruel and cynical move".

Maseru - Veteran British pop star Elton John has donated 120 motorbikes to help doctors and nurses do their rounds in Lesotho, the pony nation. John, accompanied by partner David Furnish, took time out on Saturday from a tour of SA to visit Lesotho for the handover ceremony. The donation forms part of the Riders for Health Programme funded by the singer's Aids foundation.

Tokyo - An 18-year-old Japanese man has admitted killing three members of his family before burning them. The eldest son in the family of four was arrested for stabbing his 43-year-old mother, 15-year-old brother and 13-year-old sister with a survival knife at their apartment in the city of Hachinohe. The teenager then set the apartment alight with the bodies inside

Fresh troops for Somalia

Buenos Aires - Argentine police have seized 1,2 tons of cocaine destined to be smuggled into Spain by a drug gang led by a retired Argentinian military intelligence officer. Eighteen people were arrested. The bust disrupted a \$67-million (R470-million) operation, making it one of Argentina's most significant in the fight against drug trafficking.

Kabul - Afghanistan's leading media rights groups yesterday dismissed as baseless allegations of blasphemy against a journalist, saying "reading an article is not a sin". Conservative religious clerics have demanded the death penalty for 23-year-old Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh, arrested in October after distributing at his university an article downloaded from the Internet about women in Islam.

Chicago - Pregnant women who drink two or more cups of coffee a day have twice the risk of having a miscarriage as those who avoid caffeine. "Women who are pregnant or are actively seeking to become pregnant should stop drinking coffee for three months or hopefully throughout pregnancy," said Dr De-Kun Li, whose study appears in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Vatican City - More than 100 000 people yesterday came out to support Pope Benedict after protests by scientists forced him to cancel a university speech last week. The crowd in St Peter's Square roared with approval when the pope said: "I encourage all of you, dear academics, to always be respectful of the opinions of others, to seek the truth and the good with an open and responsible mind."

Load-Date: January 21, 2008

Wisconsin women victims of discrimination

University Wire

November 15, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 Badger Herald via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 715 words

Byline: By Carla Dogan, Badger Herald; **SOURCE:** U. Wisconsin

Dateline: MADISON, Wis.

Body

Discrimination is a word deserving of the negative connotation it typically carries. We know profiling is a detriment to society simply because of the ridiculous situations in which profiling occurs. For example, Nov. 2, Congressional Quarterly Politics reported the FBI had tracked sales of falafel in San Francisco in 2005 and 2006 in the hopes of identifying possible members of Hezbollah on U.S. soil - allegations that the FBI has neither confirmed nor denied. Buying falafel, it would seem, is the new "having nail clippers in an airport" or "driving while black."

Similarly, proposed employment rights of transgender persons have been sacrificed due to their perceived unpopularity in the latest version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Of course, when a job can be performed equally well by a man or a woman, it is absurd to think a person with one foot in both worlds will not pass muster, and the bill should have reflected that. It is clear the picture of equality painted by the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment is not the present reality, but rather an idealistic goal.

However, complete egalitarianism would be an irresponsible way to analyze our society, and we know it. On Nov. 5, an extensive report titled "The Status of Girls in Wisconsin" was released in Milwaukee -- a joint effort by Alverno College, the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Women's Council and the Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee. This compilation of surveys and statistics made the necessary distinction between the behavior and living conditions of girls ages 10 to 19 living in Wisconsin and that of their male counterparts. It should be noted that were discrimination truly extinguishable, we would believe we are beyond a point in history where such surveys are necessary.

In this data on health, education, socializing, violence, criminal activity, use of technology and other areas, we can find plenty of examples in which Wisconsin girls do not enjoy parity. In standardized tests in English and math, Wisconsin girls have been shown to test better than boys on the former, and worse on the latter. Comparable results have been found on tests nationwide, yet it is taboo to suggest that any factor outside of socialization contributed to the differences. Former Harvard president Larry Summers stepped down from his position after doing just that. But Summers' resignation will not help resolve the differences between girls' math scores and boys'. Focusing extra effort on Wisconsin girls' math studies will.

Frankly, social change is most efficiently achieved through targeting demographics. We already do this in ways we don't even realize. For instance, we don't have special seats on buses and subways for little people or people who are extremely large. Public transportation only targets the demographic of average-sized people when solving the social problem of commuting around town, and by doing so, does the greatest good.

Wisconsin women victims of discrimination

In the same way, if the government of Wisconsin wants to see the greatest reduction in teen pregnancies by the time the next "Status of Girls" report is released, efforts and resources must be concentrated on those cities, rural counties and ethnic groups with the highest rates of teen parenthood. A light sprinkling of sex education funding around the entire state will not have nearly the same effect.

Complete political correctness leads to waste of resources and idealistic nonsense. Endless time and money is spent on frivolous litigation from people who follow nondiscrimination laws to their natural conclusion. Hypothetically, reason says any blind person who somehow passes a driver's examination is legally entitled to a driver's license. On the other hand, demographic profiling is a step backward toward the denial of constitutional and human rights. Endless time and money will be wasted on lawsuits trying to win back the rights we lost in the name of, say, homeland security. Thus, we need to find a middle ground. We are suffering from an imperfect picture of practical discrimination. If we ever hope to tackle political gray areas like affirmative action and immigration quotas, we will wish our tangled web of laws did not mandate the spending of tax dollars on token gestures of equality.

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Load-Date: November 15, 2007

End of Document

Presidential candidates debate in N.H.

University Wire

September 27, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 Massachusetts Daily Collegian via U-Wire

Length: 673 words

Byline: By Derrick Perkins, Massachusetts Daily Collegian; **SOURCE:** U. Massachusetts

Dateline: HANOVER, N.H.

Body

Differences over the Iraq War and Middle East policy dominated the Democratic Presidential Candidates Debate on Wednesday night, overshadowing domestic issues and questions of leadership ability in the run-up to the primaries.

While all the candidates supported the withdrawal of American servicemen and women in some fashion, former senator John Edwards criticized the phased withdrawal proposed by Senator Hillary Clinton.

"There are differences between us, and those differences need to be made aware. Good people have differences about this issue," Edwards said. "I heard Senator Clinton say on Sunday that she wants to continue combat missions in Iraq. To me, that's a continuation of the war. I do not think we should continue combat missions in Iraq."

The first to challenge Clinton in the debate, Edwards pledged to reduce the number of soldiers from 100,000 to around 50,000 immediately following his election as president, if troop levels remain at the amount projected by the Pentagon.

Clinton defended her statements, saying the continued threat of terrorism and the security of humanitarian aid workers required some continued military presence.

"There may be a continuing counter-terrorism mission, which, if it still exists, will be aimed at al-Qaida in Iraq," Clinton said. "It may require combat, special operations forces or some other form of that. But the vast majority of our combat troops should be out."

Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico challenged the assertions made by the other candidates that it is necessary to maintain American troops in Iraq and criticized Clinton's praise of the democratically-controlled Congress' effort to end the war.

"I have a fundamental difference with Senator Obama, Senator Edwards and Senator Clinton," he said. "Their position basically is changing the mission; my position in bringing all troops out of Iraq is to end the war."

According to Richardson, American troops could be completely withdrawn in one year by moving quickly through Kuwait and Turkey and abandoning light equipment in Iraq. Richardson said the presence of soldiers in the region is a destabilizing force and argued that diplomacy with Syria, Iran and other regional players was the only way to end the conflict.

Senator Barack Obama agreed that diplomacy was the only solution to the problems facing the United States in the Middle East, arguing for face-to-face diplomacy as the only way to stabilize the region.

Presidential candidates debate in N.H.

"We've got to talk to our enemies and not just our friends," Obama said. He added that the next president will have to engage in "personal diplomacy," although candidates and audience members alike differ on what that means.

Edwards differed slightly in opinion, instead calling for a policy of "sticks and carrots" for the Iranian people. Edwards praised Senators Joseph Biden and Christopher Dodd for voting against a resolution passed in the Senate on Wednesday which, according to Edwards, labeled the Iranian Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organization.

He criticized Clinton for voting in favor of the resolution and not learning her lesson for voting to use force in Iraq.

"I voted for this war in Iraq, and I was wrong to vote for this war. And I accept responsibility for that. Senator Clinton also voted for this war," Edwards said. "I have no intention of giving George Bush the authority to take the first step on a road to war with Iran."

The candidates arrived at a general consensus that diplomacy would ultimately bring an end to the strife in Iraq and stabilize the region. Both Richardson and Obama stressed the importance of bringing in other members of the international community to reduce tensions within the region.

"It's called diplomacy. It's called negotiation. It's called talking to Iran and Syria and trying to work out differences," he said. "You've got Hamas on one side, you've got Hezbollah, you've got Iran wanting to build nuclear weapons. But you do it through diplomacy. You do it through a Middle East peace process."

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Load-Date: September 27, 2007

End of Document

Briefs

The Philadelphia Daily News

April 30, 2007 Monday

4STAR Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; DN National News; Pg. 13

Length: 697 words

Body

Iran will join talks on Iraq;

Condi doesn't rule out chat

BAGHDAD - Iran agreed yesterday to join the U.S. and other countries at a conference on Iraq this week, raising hopes the government in Tehran would help stabilize its violent neighbor and stem the flow of guns and bombs over the border.

Iraq's other neighbors as well as Egypt, Bahrain and representatives of the five permanent U.N. Security Council members have agreed to attend the meeting Thursday and Friday in the Egyptian resort of Sharm El-Sheik. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will also attend and did not rule out sideline talks with the Iranians.

Iraqi police reported at least 52 people were killed or found dead yesterday, a relatively low figure in recent weeks.

Britain said one of its soldiers was shot to death yesterday while on patrol in Basra, bringing to 146 the number of British troops killed in Iraq since the 2003 invasion - 12 of them this month.

In Baghdad, U.S. forces fired an artillery barrage in southern Baghdad yesterday morning, apparently directed at Sunni militant neighborhoods along the city's southern rim.

Elsewhere in Iraq, the death toll from a suicide car bomb attack in the Shiite holy city of Karbala rose to 68 as residents dug through the debris of heavily damaged shops.

Angry Afghanis block road

to protest six civilian deaths

KABUL - A raid by American and Afghan troops on a suspected bomb-making compound before dawn yesterday killed six people, including two women, and wounded two children in eastern Afghanistan, Afghan officials said.

Hundreds of angry villagers brought the bodies of victims onto the main Kabul-to-Pakistan highway nearby and demonstrated for more than five hours, chanting "Death to America," Afghan police said.

Briefs

Col. Ghafoor Khan, spokesman for the police chief in Nangarhar Province, where the raid occurred, said the people who were killed or wounded were all civilians. "Six civilians, including two women, were killed in this incident, and eight others were detained by coalition forces," he said in a telephone interview.

But the U.S. military, while it confirmed the raid and the death toll, said four of the dead were militants, and that a teenage girl and a younger girl were wounded in cross-fire.

Popularity at 3 percent, Olmert awaits report on Lebanon war

JERUSALEM - On the eve of the publication of an official report on the Israeli government's failings during last summer's war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, the main topic of public debate is whether Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will be able to hang onto power.

Support for Olmert has been shaky since the war, which many Israelis consider to have been a failure. Polls show his approval ratings between 2 and 3 percent.

Yesterday, a senior official told the *New York Times* that Olmert didn't intend to resign. But the official said that could change if the report said Olmert bore "personal responsibility" for failures in the war.

The interim report, prepared by a government-appointed committee headed by Eliyahu Winograd, a retired judge, was to be made public this afternoon. It is widely expected to contain harsh criticism of the decision-making process leading up to the war and the performance of the prime minister; the defense minister, Amir Peretz; and the wartime army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz. Halutz resigned in January, and Peretz has said he will leave the Defense Ministry late next month or soon after.

Also yesterday. . .

Seven Chinese oil workers and two Africans kidnapped last week during a rebel attack on a Chinese oil field in Ethiopia near the Somali border were released yesterday and led to safety by the Red Cross.

The death toll from a suicide bombing that targeted Pakistan's top security official rose to 28. Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao was left spattered in blood but only slightly injured in the attack Saturday in a town near his home village in North West Frontier Province.

At least 700,000 Turks marched in Istanbul yesterday against the possible election of an observant Muslim as president, a conflict pitting Turkey's religiously oriented ruling party against the secular military and civilian establishment. *

- Daily News wire services

Load-Date: June 13, 2007

DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 13, 2008 Tuesday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 602 words

Body

KISHOREGANJ, BANGLADESH

Dozens perish as ferry sinks in severe storm

A crowded ferry sank in a tropical storm in northern Bangladesh, killing at least 36 people and leaving 50 more missing, officials said today.

The death toll from the accident late Monday could rise because some of those missing were feared trapped inside the sunken ferry, an official said.

At least 150 people were aboard the MV Chanpur when it was caught in the storm and sank in the Ghorautra River.

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

President, governors commit to recall votes

President Evo Morales committed himself and Bolivia's nine governors on Monday to face recall votes on Aug. 10, gambling that his unfinished term will survive a referendum whose peculiar rules tilt in the populist leader's favor.

Morales originally proposed the recall vote in December amid a fierce battle over his proposed draft constitution that would increase the political power of Bolivia's indigenous majority. Bolivia's lower house of Congress approved it. But the idea went nowhere until last week, when it was suddenly revived by the opposition-controlled Senate.

Morales immediately accepted his foes' challenge in a nationally televised address and signed the bill on Monday.

MOSCOW

Putin fills new Cabinet with Kremlin loyalists

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin named his new Cabinet on Monday, bringing in loyalists from the Kremlin in what was seen as an effort to shift the center of power to his new place of work.

He also left several prominent ministers untouched, including Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin.

DIGEST

President Dmitry Medvedev, Putin's hand-picked successor who was inaugurated last week, quickly approved the appointments.

BEIRUT, LEBANON

Fighting shifts to north; more than 50 are dead

Fighting between pro- and anti-government factions jumped to Lebanon's north Monday, but a grim calm hung over the nearly empty streets of Beirut.

As black-clad Shiite militants of Hezbollah carried their latest dead to burial, so did the families and friends of civilians caught in the middle of combat that has routed Sunni factions supporting the Western-allied government from Muslim west Beirut.

More than 50 people were confirmed dead since fighting erupted Wednesday - first in Beirut, then in the mountains overlooking the city and on Monday in the northern city of Tripoli. It is the worst sectarian violence to wrack Lebanon since a 15-year civil war ended in 1990.

JERUSALEM

Militants fire rocket, killing Israeli woman, 75

A rocket fired by Palestinian militants killed a 75-year-old Israeli woman Monday, just as an Egyptian mediator was winding up truce talks in Israel.

The rocket hit a house in the village of Yesha, about four miles from the Gaza Strip. As recently as Friday, a fatal rocket attack drew reprisal Israeli airstrikes that killed five Palestinians in Gaza.

AMMAN, JORDAN

Brothers, parents charged in death of woman, 22

A man who is suspected of drowning his 22-year-old sister for having an extramarital affair was charged Monday with premeditated murder, a judicial official said.

The unidentified woman's brother beat her with the help of his family Saturday and then took her to the Dead Sea where he drowned her, said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

The state prosecutor also charged the woman's parents and another brother Monday with assisting in the murder, the official said.

An average of 20 Jordanian women are killed by relatives every year in so-called honor killings in this tribal-dominated society.

FROM NEWS SERVICES

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - A woman weeps at a mass funeral Monday for Bosnian Muslims in the town of Bratunac. Thousands attended a funeral of 41 men, women and children from the eastern Bosnian town killed by Serb forces at the

DIGEST

beginning of the country's 1992-95 war. The bodies were found and exhumed from mass grave sites last year and identified by DNA. The Associated Press

Load-Date: May 13, 2008

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Beheading threat in Kenya

Pretoria News (South Africa)

April 17, 2008 Thursday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 12

Length: 699 words

Body

Nairobi - A threat to behead anyone driving or taking public transport in parts of the Kenyan capital - part of a campaign of terror waged by a notorious criminal gang - kept minibuses stalled yesterday. Two people were injured overnight in a minibus attack and drivers largely stayed off eastern Nairobi roads, forcing commuters to walk for kilometres to get to work.

Berlin - Psychologists are setting up Germany's first advice bureau for stalkers, and are counting on police to refer "clients" who cannot stop themselves from molesting other adults. The Stop Stalking office opens next week and will employ five psychologists and social workers, who will offer up to 16 counselling sessions to help stalkers realise how damaging their obsession is.

Washington - Pope Benedict yesterday urged US President George Bush to use "patient diplomacy to resolve conflicts", but did not mention the Iraq war, to which the Vatican is strongly opposed. He backed international efforts to make the UN "an ever more effective voice for the legitimate aspirations of all the world's peoples" and said the need for global solidarity was as urgent as ever.

Gibraltar - Animal rights groups have expressed outrage over a plan by Gibraltar to cull its famous Barbary apes, which pose a hazard as they roam the town in search of food. The government plans to cull 25 of the simians, whose population has exploded to about 200. The mischievous primates climb over cars and pull out antennas, open rubbish bags and rifle through handbags left unattended.

Kassel - German prosecutors have called for life imprisonment for a farmer accused of murdering his parents and feeding his dead neighbour to his pigs. They said the 32 year-old crept up behind his father in the cowshed and beat him to death, and strangled his mother in her sleep four years later. He also admitted freezing the body of his 73-year-old neighbour so he could collect the man's pension.

Beirut - Lebanon's ***Hezbollah*** yesterday slammed the international community for failing to act in the face of what it called repeated incursions by Israeli troops "in front of everyone, including UN troops". Israel routinely violates Lebanese airspace, ignoring a UN resolution, and at the weekend Israeli soldiers made a brief incursion into the country near the disputed Shebaa Farms territory.

London - A man takes photographs of a display of James Bond books on display at the "For Your Eyes Only, Ian Fleming and James Bond" exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London yesterday. The exhibition celebrates the centenary of Ian Fleming's birth and is the first major showing devoted to the life and work of the man who created the world's most famous secret agent.

Beheading threat in Kenya

Berlin - Germany has a new export - jobless Germans. Plagued by high unemployment because of reunification and rigid labour laws, it has been helping its skilled and less-skilled jobless workers match up with foreign employers searching for manpower. Germany's unemployment rate in February was 8% (about 3,6-million people) - one percentage point higher than the Eurozone average.

Kuala Lumpur - Pirate attacks rose worldwide in the first quarter of the year, with Nigeria overtaking Indonesia as the country worst plagued by sea bandits. India and Somalia tied for second place. Seafarers suffered 49 attacks between January and last month around the world, up 20% from the 41 recorded in the same period last year, the International Maritime Bureau said yesterday.

Kabul - An Afghan legislative committee has drafted a bill seeking to introduce Taliban-style Islamic morality codes banning women from wearing make-up in public or dancing in public and forbidding boys from wearing female fashions such as bracelets. The draft needs approval by both chambers of parliament and President Hamid Karzai signature to become law.

Sydney - A senior Australian politician was mocked yesterday for being driven 400m in a two-car convoy to sign an agreement aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. "Normally I'd walk," said Victoria state Premier John Brumby, "but on this occasion I needed to be briefed on a couple of issues and I needed to make a phone call, and it was just the way it worked out."

Load-Date: April 16, 2008

End of Document

Charities plead for Lebanon ceasefire

Daily Mail (London)

May 22, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: ED IRE; Pg. 2

Length: 632 words

Byline: MATTHEW KALMAN

Body

AID agencies pleaded for a ceasefire last night as fierce fighting surrounded a refugee camp in north Lebanon for a second day, leaving scores dead.

Black smoke billowed from the Nahr al-Bared camp, home to 40,000 Palestinians, as Lebanese tanks shelled positions held by fighters of an al-Qaeda inspired group, Fatah al-Islam, who hit back with machine guns and grenades.

The fighting, near Tripoli, has killed more than 70 people, many of them civilians, in Lebanon's worst internal violence since the 1975-90 civil war.

It showed how fragile security remains in Lebanon, racked by political and sectarian tensions since last year's Israeli-Hezbollah war in the south and by a series of unsolved assassinations before and after Syria pulled its troops out in 2005.

The battle was an unprecedented showdown between the Lebanese army and militant groups that have arisen in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camps.

Lebanese officials said Fatah al-Islam has been planning attacks on European cities and training jihadists to kill troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. A senior member of the group killed in the fighting, Saddam el Hajdib, was wanted in Germany for a failed train bombing in Cologne in July last year.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent have appealed for a truce to allow a humanitarian corridor to be established.

Food and water are running out in the camp.

And tensions mounted further in the region as Israel pounded the Gaza Strip with airstrikes yesterday in response to weeks of rocket attacks from Palestinian fanatics.

Women belonging to the military wing of Palestine's ruling Hamas party have vowed to blow themselves up in attacks on Israeli soldiers if the Gaza Strip is invaded.

'If the Israelis try to invade northern Gaza Strip, we will defend our land and our homes,' one of the women declared as the group gathered at the Jabalya refugee camp north of Gaza City.

Charities plead for Lebanon ceasefire

'We will turn our bodies into living bombs against the Israeli army,' she added and demanded revenge against Israeli 'crimes' carried out against the Palestinians.

A day earlier rival militants of Islamic Jihad released a video in which dozens of women said they were 'eagerly awaiting' the chance to become suicide bombers.

One said she would like to be the first to commit suicide on behalf of the Palestinian resistance.

Meanwhile at least 12 Palestinian rockets were fired at Israel yesterday, the military and Israeli media said, bringing the total over the last week to more than 150.

In the town of Sderot a woman of 35 was killed when a rocket hit her car yesterday evening. At least 14 other people have been injured by the homemade rockets over the past week, according to medical officials.

Sderot has been particularly hard hit and yesterday's strike came during a meeting in the city between Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana. Thousands of residents have fled the city.

'No nation would tolerate the consistent rocketing of its citizens, and neither will Israel,' said David Baker, an Israeli government spokesman. We will continue to take whatever steps are necessary to bring these attacks to an end and prevent terror from being inflicted upon the residents of Sderot and the western Negev.' Hamas militants went underground, fearing more Israeli reprisals similar to the attack on a house on Sunday which killed eight relatives of a Hamas legislator. They were instructed by their leaders to avoid using mobile phones or travelling by car.

More than 40 Palestinians have been killed since Israel decided last week to start responding to the rocket attacks. There were calls among politicians yesterday to start targeting the political leaders of Hamas.

Travellers to Israel have been warned against going within three miles of the Gaza Strip because of the attacks.

Graphic

SISTERS OF WAR: HAMAS VOLUNTEERS IN A CHILLING CALL TO ARMS

Load-Date: May 22, 2007

Tuesday - Critic's View

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

June 28, 2007 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: GREEN GUIDE; Preview; Pg. 46

Length: 655 words

Byline: Debi Enker

Body

Cutting Edge: Years of Blood

SBS, 8.30pm

This two-part account of a bloody chapter in recent Middle East history begins and ends in 2006, with Israel's invasion of Lebanon following attacks by Hezbollah and the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. In between, the documentary, produced and directed by Dan Setton, focuses on the second Palestinian intifada in 2000 and its aftermath, and on the cycle of violence in Gaza and the West Bank. Essentially a chronology of key events, Setton's film operates at two levels, his cameras at work on the front lines as well as in the offices of power. On the battle-scarred streets overseen by the Palestinian Authority and at the sites of suicide bombings in Israel, the images captured are confronting: gunfights, bleeding bodies filmed where they've fallen, the shock and grief of survivors.

Setton also gains access to a range of highly placed government, military and diplomatic officials who offer their perspectives on events, on the impact of the suicide bombings in Israel, on the unforeseen consequences of the Israeli strategy of targeted killings of suspected terrorists in the occupied territories, on the isolation and diminishing influence of Yasser Arafat and his Fatah party, alongside the rising power of Hamas. Interviewees include Yasser Abed-Rabbo, the Palestinian Minister of Information, General Moshe Yaalon, chief of staff in the Israeli army from 2002-2005, Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, Dan Kurtzer, the US ambassador to Israel 2001-2005, and Terje Larsen, the UN's envoy to the Middle East. The picture that emerges is a sad history of hostility and mistrust, an inexorable pattern of vicious attack inevitably followed by more aggressive counterattack. SBS will screen the first chapter at 8.30pm then the second at 10pm.

Desperately Keeping Sheila

SBS, 7.30pm

In 2004, SBS decided to do its bit to help the rural crisis by producing a dating game show. There was a shortage of women in the outback and men who lived on the land were lonely, so SBS announced it would "redress the balance" with Desperately Seeking Sheila. The reality-TV series transported an array of eligible Australian and British women to Perth to meet a selection of keen bachelors, a few of them farmers. The idea was that some of these hopefuls might decide to get together and break the romance drought. There were high hopes and breathless accounts of first impressions, and several optimistic couples emerged from the process. Channel Nine liked the

idea so much it recently announced its intention to make its own version, *The Farmer Wants a Wife*. With this companion piece, SBS returns to WA to see how the couples are faring; in many ways, this is a more interesting exercise. Instead of dwelling on corny dating rituals and taking an interest in people's discomfort, nervousness or fanciful expectations, this hour-long offering looks at what happens after people make a commitment to each other: at the compromises involved, at how they cope with disappointment, at the trust and intimacy that can come with facing adversity together. So find out what happened to Ian the yabby farmer and Katy the photographer, to Mike and Ali, and to Shane, who decided to try Nicky after being burned by Georgia. But also find out what happens when the candlelight dinners end and real life begins.

NCIS

Channel Ten, 8.30pm

Currently one of Ten's most popular programs, NCIS has lightened up a lot. What began as a rather dour account of the work of the naval crime investigation squad four seasons along features a lot more humour. There's playful banter between the team members and a certain relish in their eccentricity even as the businesslike boss Gibbs (Mark Harmon) continues to lead his team with no-nonsense precision. "Cover Story", a clumsy riff on the place where true crime meets fiction, fits the pattern of lightening up the show, although it's hardly a standout episode.

Graphic

PHOTO: Years of Blood captures images of the shock and grief of survivors of the Middle East's recent troubles.

Load-Date: July 19, 2007

End of Document

INSIDE THE TIMES: May 15, 2008

The New York Times

May 15, 2008 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 2341 words

Body

FOREIGN

ITALIAN TRIAL OF C.I.A OPERATIVES BEGINS WITH TORTURE TESTIMONY

A long-delayed trial moved forward in Milan against C.I.A. operatives and former top Italian intelligence officials over the disappearance of a radical Muslim cleric in 2003. Testimony in the case also began, as the cleric's wife offered details of her husband's abduction, saying he was repeatedly tortured. The Bush administration has not commented on whether it was responsible for the cleric's disappearance but has said it will not extradite the Americans charged in the case. Page A10

ATTACKS DURING BUSH VISIT

President Bush's trip to Israel to celebrate the country's 60th birthday was marred by violence. Four Palestinians were killed, including two militants, and nine were wounded in a series of Israeli Army strikes and incursions into Gaza, said medics and witnesses there. A rocket that the police said was launched from northern Gaza badly wounded an Israeli woman and her 2-year-old daughter. Page A6

SUICIDE ATTACKS BY TEENS IN IRAQ

Two suicide bombers described as teenagers carried out attacks Wednesday in suburban Baghdad as the prime minister went to the northern city of Mosul to encourage Iraqi soldiers fighting in a new offensive to rid that area of Sunni Islamic extremists. Page A10

LEBANON RETRACTS POLITICAL MOVES

Lebanon's governing faction rescinded two political decisions, moving closer to ending a weeklong political crisis with Hezbollah that prompted the worst bloodshed the country has seen since its 15-year civil war. The decisions to challenge Hezbollah's private phone network and the job of the chief of airport security, a Hezbollah ally, were retracted after meetings between Lebanese leaders and an Arab diplomatic delegation led by the foreign minister of Qatar. Page A6

Stories and Secrets in Myanmar A14

France Convicts 7 of Terrorism A13

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NATIONAL

SCHWARZENEGGER HAS PLAN

To Close State Budget Gap

To close California's huge budget gap, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has a plan: persuade a Wall Street investment firm to lend the state \$15 billion against future proceeds from the state's rather unsuccessful lottery program with the lending firm taking large risks, for a low-yield return. And if that fails, the state's sales tax will go up a penny over the next few years. The lottery idea reflects the severity of California's budget gap. PAGE A23

LET THEM EAT LIVER

Foie gras, run out of Chicago with great fanfare two years ago, is being allowed back. The city's aldermen voted, 37 to 6, to repeal their ban on sales of the controversial delicacy, the fattened livers of duck and goose. Since 2006, when this became the first major city in the United States to enact such a ban, it had been mocked by critics, including Mayor Richard M. Daley. PAGE A19

WEST VIRGINIANS VOTE OUT JUDGE

The chief justice of West Virginia's Supreme Court, Elliott E. Maynard, lost his re-election bid after being dogged by a conflict-of-interest scandal stemming from photographs showing him dining with the chief executive of a coal company that had cases pending before the court. He had been the clear favorite in the race but after the photographs surfaced finished third in a field of four candidates. PAGE A25

REPORT CITES NURSING NEGLIGENCE

Nursing home inspectors routinely overlook or minimize problems that pose a serious threat to patients, Congressional investigators say in a new report. In the report, the investigators, from the Government Accountability Office, say they have found widespread "understatement of deficiencies," including malnutrition, bedsores, overuse of prescription medications and abuse of nursing home residents. PAGE A21

BURNING OUT BUT NOT FADING AWAY

Radio telescopes on Earth and NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory have taken pictures of stellar debris believed to be the youngest supernova remnant known in the Milky Way. The observations show that it is still expanding outward at a pace of perhaps 30 million miles per hour, or about 5 percent of the speed of light. "It's doing things we have never seen before," said one physics professor. PAGE A23

BUSINESS

CONSUMER PRICES RISE,

But Inflation Fears Ease

Consumer prices edged up slightly in April, but far more slowly than many economists had anticipated, the government reported, lending credence to the view that a slowing economy is applying the brakes to inflation. The data offered a measure of vindication to the Federal Reserve, which has been lowering interest rates in a bid to spur the economy even as some economists have argued that a surge of cheap credit will exacerbate rising prices. PAGE C4

FREDDIE MAC POSTS LOSSES

Freddie Mac disclosed losses that were smaller than expected only because of accounting tactics that minimized the effects of bad loans. Yet investors cheered the results anyway, and pushed the company's shares up by over 9 percent. Like its rival Fannie Mae, whose share price rose after the company reported enormous losses, Freddie

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Mac's performance reiterated that investors believe Freddie and Fannie are too important for either to fail. PAGE C3

EYE CARE BLOSSOMS IN COUNTY

That Orange County, Calif., has become a center of small companies developing devices for eye care is no coincidence. Some of the companies were nurtured by a six-year-old private organization of more than two dozen top executives of corporations in the county. The organization, called the Orange County Technology Network, or Octane, has so far created 27 companies, most in electronics and software technology and in biomedical devices, especially eye care devices. PAGE C8

WATCHING THE WIDGETS GO BY

The name -- Chumby -- seems deliberately calculated to make this \$180 appliance sound endearing. What's it for? Well, it sits on your desk, bedside table or kitchen counter, connected to a power outlet and to your wireless home network. Every 30 seconds or so, its screen changes to reveal another widget (small, simple, single-purpose on-screen programs, like local weather, stock statistics, sports scores and news headlines). Because Chumby widgets are relatively easy for programmers to create, they're proliferating like rabbits. PAGE C1

Ad for Stent May Deceive Public C3

I.R.S. Steps Up Offshore Regulation C4

British Bank Says Inflation to Rise C4 SPORTS

A BUDDING AMERICAN STAR

In Wheelchair Racing

Josh George, 24, has established himself as one of the fastest wheelchair racers alive, having held two sprinting world records and also won several major marathons. He will head to the Paralympic Games in Beijing after the Olympics with a chance to win medals and grab the attention of the American public, which barely knows his sport exists. "You tell them, 'I'm a wheelchair racer,' and they'll say, 'Good for you!' like, 'Good for you, you're getting out of the house and doing something,'" he said. PAGE C13

WHAT TO MAKE OF HENIN'S LEAVING?

Life happens. Sooner or later, that crackling backhand winner is not as thrilling, measured against the exhilaration of impending adulthood. "It is my life as a woman that starts now," Justine Henin said Wednesday upon stepping down from her perch atop women's tennis at 25, and worn out. Harvey Araton asks: Could it be that the burden of being 5 foot 5 3/4, 125 pounds, in the era of what Mary Carillo calls "big babe tennis" was finally too much? PAGE C13

New York Report

TWO INTERNATIONAL ARMS DEALERS,

Accused of Sins Both Old and New

Not many investigations are as intricate as the Drug Enforcement Administration's three-year pursuit of Tareq Mousa al-Ghazi and Monzer al-Kassar, two shadowy international arms dealers who are being prosecuted in federal court in Manhattan. The story begins in southern Lebanon and ends with a sting operation in which the D.E.A. claims to have caught the men trying to ship arms from Romania to Suriname for members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. PAGE A29

ON RITES AND RIGHTS

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There was once a tiny religious minority so persecuted it was forced to build its own educational and political infrastructure to survive in the city of New York. The subculture ultimately seized power from the entrenched majority and changed what it meant to be a New Yorker. Yet a museum has never devoted a major exhibition to the history of this group. That is, until Friday, when "Catholics in New York, 1808 to 1946" opens at the Museum of the City of New York. Page A28

OBITUARIES

HARVEY L. SCHEIN, 80

Among the first Americans to reach the upper echelons of a major Japanese company, he led the Sony Corporation of America in the 1970s and doubled its size in spite of championing the failed Betamax video recording system and clashing with Sony's top Japanese executives. PAGE C12

LARRY LEVINE, 80

A house engineer at Gold Star Recording Studios in Hollywood, he helped create Phil Spector's groundbreaking "wall of sound" technique on hit records by the Crystals, the Ronettes and the Righteous Brothers. Along with Mr. Spector, Mr. Levine refined the wall of sound technique through a process of trial and error. Mr. Levine's calm, accommodating nature proved to be a perfect match for his volatile partner. PAGE C12

ARTS

FIRST GAY KISS IN DAYTIME SOAPS

Turns a World Around

Soap operas, which have been shedding their audiences for years now, have over the past 7 1/2 months seen a decline in viewers between the ages of 18 and 34. All the soaps but one, that is: the historically stodgy CBS drama "As the World Turns." Since its introduction of a gay-themed story line, the show has gained viewers, specifically younger viewers, some of whom turned to the show after following the romance of college-age characters Luke and Noah, whose initial kiss was the first gay kiss in daytime soaps. PAGE B1

BRITISH ACTOR SEDUCES AMERICA

When Ben Daniels arrived on Broadway this spring for his role as the ostentatiously rakish Valmont in the Roundabout Theater Company's revival of "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," he was a largely unknown but deeply attractive British import. But his seduction of New York critics has been as swift as one of Valmont's conquests. Sitting in a backstage lounge before showtime on a recent afternoon, he was alternately dead serious in discussing his craft and almost giggly over his good fortune. PAGE B1

HOME

HOMEOWNERS FROM HELL:

Tales of Contractor Rage and Woe

Much has been written about contractors from hell. (There is a Web site of that very name filled with horror stories and legal resources.) Comparatively little attention is paid to the unreasonable, irrational and selfish demands of some homeowners. One contractor suffered such feelings of rage, frustration and pain from what he calls a client from the dark side that he sought therapy. PAGE D1

SETTING THEIR OWN BOUNDARIES

Ten years ago, Michael Roach and Christie McNally, Buddhist teachers with a growing following in the United States and abroad, took vows to be celibate and never to separate, giving themselves a range of about 15 feet. Their practice, which even they admit is radical by the standards of the religious community whose ideas they aim

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to further, has sent shock waves through the Tibetan Buddhist community as far as the Dalai Lama himself. PAGE D1

THURSDAY STYLES

CAN NINTENDO'S WII FIT

Revolutionize Exercise?

Nintendo's latest brainchild, Wii Fit, could send ripples through the home-fitness market. It is not meant to replace a gym, but in a world of \$3,000 elliptical machines and \$150-an-hour personal trainers, it has at least a chance of becoming a global, affordable, mass-market interactive home-fitness system. One writer, two fitness professionals, an avid exerciser and one work-at-home parent try it out. PAGE E1

OF TURF WARS AND BOARDSHORTS

With annual sales of roughly \$2 million, the privately held Da Hui surf clothing line is a flyspeck compared to behemoths like Billabong or Quiksilver. But the appeal of the label, now sold at surf shops in 19 states and 12 countries, is that its black boardshorts and no-frills logos bypass the sport's floral sartorial cliches and summon up a hard-core, roots surfer image of riders like those Da Hui underwrites. PAGE E1

DIVERSITY SCARCE IN TECHNICAL FIELDS

Back in the bad old days, the workplace was a battleground, where sexist jokes and assumptions were the norm. Women were shut off from promotion by an old boys' network that favored its own. All that has changed in the last three decades, except where it has not. In the worlds of science, engineering and technology, it seems, the past is still very much present. PAGE E2

EDITORIAL

NO REBATES FOR YOU

Immigrant restrictionism is stiffing hundreds of thousands of American citizens and legal residents out of their tax-rebate checks. That isn't the only toxic byproduct. PAGE A30

LEBANON AT THE EDGE

President Bush claimed credit for Lebanon's Cedar Revolution. Now that Lebanon is again in deep trouble, he has no real plan to help. PAGE A30

CULLING FRIENDLIER SKIES

Far too many innocent travelers find their names on the government's mammoth terrorist watch list. Instead of fixing the list, the Bush administration is urging the passengers and airlines to fix the problem. PAGE A30

OP-ED

NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF

As the author sneaks through Tibetan areas in China, eluding local troops in a curtained car, it becomes clear that the recent anti-Chinese protests spread across a larger area in traditional Tibet than is sometimes realized. Far beyond Lhasa, this was, in effect, a popular uprising against Chinese rule throughout Tibetan areas, and the region is still seething. PAGE A31

GAIL COLLINS

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Hillary Clinton loves impossible obstacles. Ever since the North Carolina primary, the Democratic establishment has been sending out word that Clinton has a perfect right to run through the rest of the election schedule as long as she doesn't say anything mean about the Chosen One. But is it hopeless? Not entirely. PAGE A31

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News Summary

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Body

INTERNATIONAL

TALIBAN POSE NEW THREAT

Near Southern Afghan City

Hundreds of Taliban fighters have swarmed into a strategically important district just outside Kandahar, the biggest city in southern Afghanistan, apparently in a push for control just days after 400 Taliban members escaped in a spectacular breakout from the Kandahar prison, officials said. It was unclear whether any of the fighters were among the prison escapees. Afghan military reinforcements arrived in Kandahar and have deployed in Kandahar Province, said a NATO spokesman. PAGE A6

PROGRESS SEEN IN ISRAEL'S TALKS

Israel appeared to be making diplomatic progress on three fronts: a possible prisoner exchange with Hezbollah; a second round of indirect talks with Syrian representatives in Turkey; and a possible truce with Hamas in Gaza. Some Israelis, meanwhile, have suggested that the current flurry of diplomatic activity is intended to distract attention from the political and legal troubles of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who the police say is suspected of receiving illicit funds. PAGE A11

LAWYERS' ROLE IN INTERROGATIONS

Senior Pentagon lawyers played a more active role than previously known in developing the aggressive interrogation techniques approved for use in 2002 at the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, according to officials familiar with a Senate investigation. Documents show that the lawyers gathered information about techniques used to train American pilots to withstand captivity. PAGE A8

ROLE FOR CAMBODIA VICTIMS IN TRIAL

An office worker and a security guard are two of hundreds of Cambodians who have applied to the court to be recognized officially as victims of the Khmer Rouge and to bring parallel civil cases against them. In a controversial experiment by the unusual hybrid tribunal administered jointly by the United Nations and the Cambodian government, the victims will have a chance to seek mostly symbolic reparations: a monument, perhaps, or a museum or trauma center. PAGE A6

News Summary

RICE'S SURPRISE VISIT TO LEBANON

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made a surprise visit to Lebanon, the first by a senior American official since an agreement last month that handed decisive new powers to Hezbollah. Ms. Rice met with government leaders from both the government majority and the Hezbollah-led opposition, signaling her support for a compromise that appears to have stabilized the country even as it delivered another setback to American allies in the region. PAGE A11

Imprisoned Woman Found in Italy A7

Arrest of Militia Leader in Brazil A11

Fast Food Charity in India A9

NATIONAL

A QUIET SENATOR

Moves to the Fore

Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island is an introverted former Army Ranger who has quietly become one of the Democratic Party's leading voices on military affairs and an expert on housing policy. Now Mr. Reed, best known for his repeated efforts last year to set a deadline for the withdrawal of American military forces from Iraq, is being chattered about as a potential running mate for Senator Barack Obama, the presumptive Democratic nominee. PAGE A13

GAY COUPLES MARRY IN CALIFORNIA

At 5:01 p.m., same-sex couples across California began the state's court-approved experiment with same-sex marriage, and many more are expected in the coming weeks. All 58 counties will begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on Tuesday. But some places in the state have called off all weddings performed by county clerks. PAGE A15

A NEW LIST OF PLANETS

The Geneva Observatory just unveiled a list of 45 new planets, some of them slightly bigger than Earth and others twice as massive as Neptune. The planets orbit Sun-like stars in our galaxy, and orbit their stars in 50 days or less, which is a closer orbit than Mercury and puts them within frying distance of any living creatures. PAGE A24

CRITICISM FOR PROSTITUTION MAVEN

A Web Site called TheEroticReview.com has quietly come to dominate the country's prostitution scene, helping it migrate from the street corner to the Internet. The site's founder, David Elms, is in jail awaiting trial in a case unrelated to the site, and many in the industry are not at all upset. Some of Mr. Elms's critics have said that he abused his influence over the industry, while others say he would demand sex or money to promote certain women or agencies. PAGE A12

STILL ON THE FLOODPLAIN

In 1993, the tiny town of Chelsea, Iowa (population 297) was inundated when floodwaters ravaged communities across the Midwest. The City Council voted to move much of the town, with help from federal aid -- but only few homeowners took the buyouts. As Chelsea sits under six feet of water once again, the town's residents are second-guessing everything but also staunchly defending its right to exist exactly where it wants to. PAGE A12

COURT TO HEAR MUSLIMS' CHALLENGE

News Summary

The Supreme Court agreed to hear a case which would determine whether government officials can be sued for damages by the Muslim men who were rounded up in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The case is an appeal by the Bush administration on behalf of then-attorney general John D. Ashcroft, and Robert S. Mueller III, the director of F.B.I. PAGE A16

BUSINESS

DESPITE IRISH VOTE,

The Euro Remains Strong

When France and the Netherlands rejected a proposed European Constitution three years ago, it rattled the euro and left many questioning whether the currency could survive without a more unified Europe. But in the first day of trading since Ireland voted down a plan to further integrate into the European Union, the euro actually rose against the dollar. That has helped foster the belief that the European monetary union can prosper even without an accompanying political union. PAGE C1

HONDA DEBUTS CLEAN-BURNING CAR

The first FCX Clarity -- the world's first hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicle intended for mass production -- rolled off the assembly line at Honda, the company that makes it. The company is only planning a small initial run of the clean-burning vehicles, but said it planned more when hydrogen filling stations become more common. "Basically, we can mass-produce these now," a company executive said. "We are waiting for the infrastructure to catch up." PAGE C1

FINALLY, IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Mechanical engineers have long toiled in the shadows of Silicon Valley, but no longer. The demand for skilled workers in data centers has helped their salaries climb more than 20 percent in the past two years -- bumping them into the six-figure range, and there is more demand than people to fill it. "We're building the railroads of the future, and we can't keep up," an executive at a company that owns data center sites said. PAGE C1

F.C.C. CHIEF SUPPORTS MERGER

Kevin J. Martin, the head of the Federal Communications Commission, said he would circulate a plan this week to approve the merger between Sirius Satellite Radio and XM Satellite Radio, the nation's two satellite radio companies. Mr. Martin said the deal met the requirement of being "in the public interest," but the deal needs the backing of at least two other commissioners for approval. PAGE C6

'SOUL TRAIN' KEEPS PLUGGING ALONG

"Soul Train," the 1970s television staple famous for Afros, tight bellbottoms and the inspired moves of the dancers in the "Soul Train" line, was never actually canceled, and continues to live on in reruns. Now a production company, MadVision Entertainment, has purchased the show from its creator (and longtime host) Don Cornelius, and says it has big plans for the music program and its archives. They also might update the show for modern viewers. PAGE C3

Anheuser-Busch Sizes up a Suitor C1

McClatchy Announces Layoffs C10

NEW YORK REPORT

RESIDENTS IMAGINE LIFE

Without Community Centers

News Summary

The community center at Parkside Houses, a public housing complex in the Bronx, could be one of the casualties in the New York Public Housing Authority's decision to shutter hundreds of its community centers and programs due to a budget crunch. And though many of the tenants and their supporters sympathize with the agency's budget woes, they wonder if it has done all it could to tighten its finances before cutting popular and important programs. PAGE B1

SCIENCE TIMES

A REVOLUTION IN RICE

That Could Help Feed the Hungry

Norman T. Uphoff, a professor of government and international agriculture at Cornell, has started a revolution in the way rice is cultivated. His counterintuitive approach focuses not on the amount of rice plants, but the quality of the individual plants. He says the less-is-more ethic could help solve the global food crisis. PAGE F1

THE ARIA OF ALGORINO

It's a bizarre sort of convergence: Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," which was a book and then an award-winning documentary, is now set to become an opera. (No, really.) La Scalain Milan, has commissioned the Italian composer Giorgio Battistelli to write it. John Tierney, for his part, has tried to imagine what an exchange between Mr. Gore and Mr. Battistelli over suggestions to the script might sound like. PAGE F1

A CLINGY MENACE MOVES WEST

The quagga mussel is a tiny bivalve about the size of a fingernail with a penchant for clinging to hard surfaces. It also has a formidable sex drive, which means that once it is introduced into an ecosystem, it can wreak a lot of environmental and economic havoc (the mussels have already carpeted much of the Great Lakes). The mussel is making its way west and has been found in the Colorado River, which augurs serious trouble for hydroelectric and water supply plants along the river. "It's going to be devastating," an ecologist said. PAGE F3

THE ASTRONAUT'S NEW CLOTHES

NASA said the extravehicular activity suit -- rocket scientist-speak for spacesuit -- will get a major overhaul. Astronauts who have spacewalked have said they have spent a lot of energy "fighting the suit," and so the new suits will be lighter than the 350-pound behemoths they currently wear and will be designed both for weightless conditions in space and walking on the moon. PAGE F4

ARTS

THE FRENCH CONSIDER

The Audacity of Hope

Rising young black authors, poets and rappers in France say a new black consciousness is emerging there, lately hastened by, of all things, the presumptive Democratic nominee for president of the United States. An article in Le Monde a few days ago described how Barack Obama is "stirring up high hopes" in the country. "Obama tells us everything is possible," says Youssoupha, a rapper in France, pictured above. PAGE E1

BETWEEN THE WALLS

Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier's new book, "America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11," uses the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989, and the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, as bookends for a period during which, they argue, "the ideas and dynamics that characterize the current era took shape." And while the subject matter has been addressed by many scholars of foreign policy, Michiko Kakutani writes, the authors have written a highly informed book that lucidly maps the forces reshaping the post-cold-war world. PAGE E1

News Summary

Alastair Macaulay: Sampler of Ballet Across America E5

SPORTS

THE LAKERS SURVIVE.

Now Comes the Hard Part.

The Los Angeles Lakers staved off elimination by defeating the Boston Celtics in Game 5 of the N.B.A. Finals, but now they have to do what no team has ever done: come back from a 3-1 series deficit to win a title. The quick turnaround before Game 6 -- only one off-day to adjust to make a 3,000-mile trip and a three-hour time difference -- is likely to make that challenge even harder. PAGE D2

A BREAKTHROUGH, FINALLY

Charlie Zink has staked his baseball career on his ability to throw a knuckleball, a rare and maddening skill. He'd gotten so good that he became arrogant, and developed a casual work ethic that eventually led to tendonitis in his right shoulder -- effectively costing him the next two seasons. Now the 28-year-old pitcher with the unorthodox grip is poised to make his major league debut with the Boston Red Sox. PAGE D4

OBITUARIES

WALTER NETSCH, 88

An architect who sculptured sleek, functional structures and placed them in windswept ridges, he designed the ethereal chapel at the United States Air Force Academy, which in 2004 was designated a National Historic Landmark. PAGE B7

EDITORIAL

THE GENOCIDE CONTINUES

Despite the dispatch of United Nations peacekeepers to Darfur and the issuing of international arrest warrants for leaders of the genocide, the killing goes on. And it will continue until the Security Council shows the will to stop it. PAGE A20

BETTER SYSTEM FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has set a welcome national example by opening a juvenile court that cuts down on unnecessary detentions and improves the treatment of children who end up in police custody. PAGE A20

R.I.P. TO THE S.U.V.

It's hard to convince most Americans that there is a silver lining to \$4-a-gallon gasoline. But General Motors provided a nugget of good news when it announced that it would shutter much of its production of pickups and sport utility vehicles. It's hardly the solution to global warming, but it's a start. PAGE A20

OP-ED

DAVID BROOKS

In a period that has brought us instant messaging, wireless distractions and attention deficit disorder, Tiger Woods has become the exemplar of mental discipline. PAGE A21

BOB HERBERT

Two young men embody the true meaning of friendship at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. PAGE A21

News Summary

LEADER OF THE PACK

How can Barack Obama win over those elusive blue-collar voters in November? He can ditch the Nicorette and start smoking again. An op-ed by Tony Horwitz. PAGE A21

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The Sergei connection

The Jerusalem Post

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Body

Poor Tzipi Livni - the burden of ministerial office can weigh heavy. It involves obligations that produce not a little unease. For instance, among the last follies ascribed to Ariel Sharon, just before his catastrophic stroke, was a promise to Vladimir Putin to hand over the Russian Compound's famed Sergei Building (the sumptuous "Sergei Imperial Guest House"). It's smack-dab in the very heart of Jerusalem - in the western part thereof, the one that lies within the Green Line, the one that ostensibly Israel may be allowed to keep after it relinquishes all it liberated in its 1967 war of self-defense (including Judaism's Holiest of Holies).

Claims for a pound of the Jewish national flesh, it so appears, are being made not only by Arabs. We owe slices of our capital to all sorts of latecomers, conquerors, glory- seekers, clout-hunters and would-be meddlers in our volatile region.

With friends like Putin, let's not forget, we need no enemies. He actively helps Iran gain the nuclear capability with which to obliterate the Jewish state. Putin supplies Syria with missiles with which to decimate Israel's population centers and down its fighter jets. Via Damascus, Putin succors Hizbullah and Russian-made rocketry fired from Gaza's Hamastan explodes in Ashkelon. Putin deserves none of the consideration that might perhaps be extraordinarily extended a bosom buddy (though genuine allies wouldn't pursue archaic pretexts for a foothold in another nation's capital and the cradle of its heritage).

Moreover, Putin doesn't politely request a special cordial gesture. A Russian Foreign Ministry-sponsored Web site names the issue of "Russian property in Jerusalem" as one of the most outstanding bilateral problems between the countries, listing it under the heading of "Getting What Is One's Own" with the further elucidation that "Russia has a number of complaints against Israel." It goes on to assert that there's no contesting "the legitimacy of Russia's claim to the St. Sergius Metochion and the building of the Russian church mission as well as various other facilities in Jerusalem."

THOUGH NO written documentation exists anywhere of Sharon's alleged pledge to Putin, its intrinsic logic and consistency are undeniable. An administration prepared to divest Israel of some parts of Jerusalem won't shrink from surrendering other parts too - even bits of its central downtown, in which nobody would presumably portray our tenure as controversial or precarious.

Given such an ultra-appeasing mindset, it might well be that Sharon was loath to disappoint Putin and so is Foreign Minister Livni. But had they and their Kadima cohorts fully focused on the ramifications? The ultimate eviction from the Sergei premises of Israel's Agriculture Ministry and environmental organizations is the least troublesome

The Sergei connection

consequence (the blow to national sovereignty notwithstanding). In Kremlin hands, these holdings would de facto become extraterritorial. What if terrorists were to flee and find refuge therein? Would IDF troops break into Putin's toehold in the Holy Land?

The precedent, additionally, might stimulate other appetites. The Greek Orthodox Church owns the land on which the Knesset and the prime minister's residence stand. If a ministry can be evicted, why not the Jewish parliament and the head of government?

Livni might not relish the complications, but noblesse oblige. If Arik obsequiously promised, she is honor bound to fawningly fulfill Putin's wishes. All foreigners, it seems, have more cogent claims to Jerusalem than do Jews. As Sharon and sidekicks - with Livni prominently among them - demonstrated during disengagement, Jews are portable and disposable.

And how did Russia's unchallengeable claims arise? The Russian Compound was chartered by the Russian Orthodox Church from the Ottomans in 1858. It was earmarked for the welfare of pilgrims. The Sergei Complex, occupying nine compound acres, was constructed decades afterward by Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich (son of Tsar Alexander II, brother of infamous Tsar Alexander III and uncle to last Tsar Nicholas II) to accommodate visiting aristocrats. Among his other distinctions, Sergei was president of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society." Turkish law categorized his property as strictly private and emphatically not a Russian state holding.

Post-revolution, "White" and "Red" Russian churches vied for compound ownership. The Mandatory Brits commandeered the lot. Israel purchased most of the compound from the USSR in 1964, but, being cash-strapped then, paid the \$3.5 million in... oranges. The Sergei Building, church and courtyard weren't included in the deal and until the Six Day War served as the local KGB spy nook.

Putin reportedly won't countenance sale of the property due to a deep-seated sentimental connection to Sergei and his legacy. Too bad Livni doesn't exude similar emotional attachment to Sergei's victims.

SHE, OF all homegrown dabblers in statecraft, should know that the grand duke was an avid practitioner of the recurrent Romanov theme: "Beat the Jews and save Russia." His anti-Semitism was unrivalled even by the rabid anti-Semitism of his royal kinfolk. In 1891 - mere months after Sergei's building went up in Jerusalem - his brother appointed him governor-general of Moscow. Sergei's immediate move was to uproot the city's 30,000 Jews. Moscow was to be "cleansed" in three orderly phases - the poorest and least-veteran Jewish inhabitants ousted first and the richest and longest-residing Jews removed last.

The banishment edict was published on the first day of Passover. The next night police swooped down on Jewish homes, roused entire frightened families and drove thousands of scantily clad men, women and children to the lockup where they were crammed into filthy cells. Others hid out in dark alleyways and cemeteries, only to be eventually rounded up and roughed up. All, shorn of their possessions, were later driven out of town like vermin. Many were tortured. The infirm died in transit. Some were dragged in wooden manacles, like outlaws, to do long stretches of hard labor in distant prisons.

Over months and several expulsion installments, Moscow was rendered virtually judenrein. While Sergei rejoiced, deported Jews were reduced to utter destitution. In Sergei's Russia, however, they were the lucky ones. Elsewhere, Sergei's clan unleashed gruesome pogroms - painstakingly premeditated as diversionary tactics to quell internal unrest - in which Jews suffered all manner of barbaric butchery, eclipsed only by the horrors of the Holocaust.

This is the Sergei whose individual real estate holding Putin elevates to a sacred national heirloom for all Russians. But if Putin speaks in terms of national birthright, why not also Livni? Why not demand at least a modicum of quid pro quo - a central sliver of Russia's capital for a central sliver of Israel's capital?

Why not demand that - in return for one ruthless Russian despot's property, for which Putin yearns nostalgically - he pay with what Sergei stole from the Jews he robbed and exiled? Moscow's Zaryadye historical district, adjacent to Red Square, was the hub of Muscovite Jewry (particularly the sizable Glebov Yard, site of the then-Jewish ghetto). Why not award that area to Israel in return for Sergei's courtyard?

The Sergei connection

Putin may balk and assert that Israel isn't heir to the Jews Sergei dispossessed, in which case Livni could note that neither is Putin's Russia heir to Sergei.

That's how a proud foreign minister of the Jewish state and a prime-ministerial aspirant should have reacted. But although Livni may not lack ambition, she is woefully deficient in Jewish pride.

Graphic

2 photos: The Sergei building in Jerusalem. Why not demand at least a modicum of quid pro quo? Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski/Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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***There is a harsh crackdown on 'bad hijab' (improper dressing) this year;
IRAN: Dress Code Row - Another Ahmadinejad Failure***

IPS (Latin America)

April 30, 2007 Monday

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Length: 1262 words

Byline: Kimia Sanati

Body

"The government has tried to keep away from being directly associated with the crackdown and a spokesman even denied any role by the government. But the interior minister commands the police force and has himself strongly supported the plan so there is no way the crackdown could have taken place without the government sanction," an observer in Tehran told IPS, asking not to be named.

"Hardliners have for years been demanding that the system suppress younger people showing scorn for the Islamic system by the way they dress. In spite of his campaign promises, Ahmadinejad has had to give implicit support for the crackdown -- even at the price of estranging the electorate as pressure from the hard line camp mounts," he added.

"As usual he (Ahmadinejad) is playing a make believe game, levelling accusations at 'enemies' who encourage young people to neglect the Islamic dress code so that when the Islamic state cracks down on them, they are disillusioned and become unhappy with the system. It's as if the younger generation is manipulated by the enemies all the time to tarnish the image of the Islamic regime and that's the only reason for what they call 'bad hijab'," the observer said.

Mainly implemented in the capital, the annual crackdown had evolved into an affair that coincides with the onset of summer when the searing heat prompts **women** to be less respectful of the country's strict dress code. This year though, it is being enforced more vigorously than usual with hardliners' cries to correct "social mores" getting shriller.

Ansar-e **Hizbullah**, a hard line pressure group, known for taking public morality issues into its own hands, called the public to a protest march to support the initiative taken by the law enforcement forces after Friday prayers before the police crackdown began last week.

The hard line group had criticised the authorities' failure to put an end to what it called immorality in the society, particularly during the reformist presidency of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) when pressure on the public relaxed, but did not cease altogether.

The law enforcement forces' recent crackdown was cheered on by hard line newspapers like 'Keyhan' and 'Jomhuri Eslami'. It was also extensively advertised in advance by the state-run media with several top brass officials of the law enforcement forces appearing on the state television and discussing various aspects of the issue, warning the public to abide by the laws or face the consequences.

There is a harsh crackdown on 'bad hijab' (improper dressing) this year IRAN : Dress Code Row - Another Ahmadinejad Failure

Everybody knows what improper dressing is and how one should appear in the public, Brig. Gen. Ahmad Rouzbehani, director general of the law enforcement centre for combating social corruption, told the Iranian News Agency. Anybody who is improperly dressed must therefore expect to face up legal encounter by the police, he added.

As could be expected, reformists, and in some cases even certain conservatives and hardliners like the country's Chief of Judiciary Ayatollah Shahroudi, are now criticising the crackdown itself, its intensity or methods used by the police.

Combating improper dressing is cultural work. Arresting people's children...is in no way acceptable. I can never defend an Iranian youth getting involved with the legal system for something like improper dressing, Abed Fattahi, a reformist member of the Iranian Parliament told Iranian Labour News Agency.

"Battling poverty, drug addiction and unemployment are more urgent issues than tackling improper dressing. Much more important problems in foreign and domestic policy now have to be addressed by the government," Fattahi was quoted as saying.

Ahmadinejad was elected to power two years ago on a pledge to expose and punish the corrupt, send the clergy back to the mosques and put food on the tables millions of poor families by redirecting Iran's enormous oil wealth. He also promised to create new jobs for at least 10 million Iranians, aged between 16 and 60.

Far from fulfilling those promises, the Ahmadinejad's administration has built up a confrontation with the West over its nuclear programme leading to tightening international sanctions. Domestically it has launched drives against all types of dissent even arresting hundreds of teachers for demanding promised pay and benefits.

On the streets of Tehran police stop women and order them to cover their hair with their shawls or scarves completely or remove their make-up. Tight-fitting dresses, Bermuda pants and sandals that reveal feet and lower legs could result in a visit to the police station though bail can be had on signing a pledge to wear clothes that conform to Islamic laws.

Men are also stopped occasionally for what the police call 'improper appearance' or even playing loud music in their cars which the police call nuisance to public. Improper appearance for men can be anything from the way they wear their hair and beards to low cut jeans or T-shirts with images or words considered improper.

I was stopped on the street by two police officers. They told me my long hair was inappropriate for a man and un-Islamic. They shoved me into a police van and took me to the police department in charge of dealing with bad dress code and moral corruption. I was released after hours of waiting, only after I signed a pledge to cut my hair and never wear it long, a 24-year-old man told IPS. The place was full of girls and women and some young men. Charges ranged from wearing tight dresses and skimpy shawls or, in the case of men, to long hair and beards modelled after western pop stars."

'Improperly dressed' women in cars are not spared. The police have orders to stop cars, even on the highways, and detain the improperly dressed driver or passengers, Mehdi Ahmadi, a high ranking police official was quoted by Iranian Labour New Agency as saying. The crackdown also targets shops selling improper clothing and 65 shops were closed down by the police on the first two days of the crackdown, he said.

Thousands of women and men have been issued warnings on the streets of Tehran and a number of cars in which passengers were improperly dressed or were playing loud music were away hauled to police stations.

This year's crackdown is unique in another respect. Anybody taken to the police station for 'improper dressing' will be photographed for record, Col. Mohammad Hosseini of the law enforcement forces told ILNA.

Following new restrictions imposed on university students in Shiraz University, including a ban on shorts and sleeveless shirts in university dormitories, students staged a sit-in on the campus last Monday and demanded the resignation of the university chancellor.

There is a harsh crackdown on 'bad hijab' (improper dressing) this year IRAN : Dress Code Row - Another Ahmadinejad Failure

More than 2,000 student protestors of Shiraz University, both male and female, released a list of their demands last week that included, among other things, abandoning of all imposed restrictions on girls and boys ;particularly the irrelevant sensitivity to women's dress and respect for students private sphere', ILNA reported.

The Islamic Republic's situation is somewhat unique. The regime has to fight on two fronts, internal and external. While it is engaged in a war of attrition with big world powers over its foreign policy outlook, posing itself as United States' arch foe, particularly with its nuclear ambitions, Ayatollah Khamenei's theocracy has no choice but contain, even if it calls for use of force, any move towards western-style liberties; a political analyst in Tehran told IPS, on condition of anonymity. © 2007 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: April 30, 2007

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Letters

The Jerusalem Post

April 7, 2008 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1195 words

Byline: Miki Goldwasser, David Katcoff, Toby Willig, Abe Krieger, David Goldstein, Paul David Swinford, Jacques Tolub, Hetty Mahler

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

A call to leaders

of the free world

Sir, - I would like to express my deep gratitude to the leaders of the free world for their sensitive consideration of the issue of our kidnapped sons. My son, Udi, and Eldad Regev were abducted to Lebanon on July 12, 2006. We have not heard from them since; neither has the Red Cross.

I would like to point out that what has happened to us - a brutal kidnapping followed by a refusal to provide any sign of life - is no longer a matter concerning Israel alone. It concerns European countries too, and, indeed, all people of good will.

Radical Islam, with its draconian laws stemming mainly from the Shi'ite interpretation of the Koran, is taking root in Europe at an alarming pace. Anyone familiar with Islamic history knows that this Islam not only rejects Israel and the Jews but also all "infidels" - citizens of the free world.

If European countries contributed their utmost to saving our beloved sons, that in itself would be a victory over the medieval, ominous forces threatening the free world.

When the leaders of that free world call upon Hizbullah to provide us with a sign of life from our sons and demand speedy negotiations aimed at releasing them, it will signal the heinous organization that in the face of the unacceptable violence it has inflicted upon us, the free world is resolutely holding to its values.

There are ways to act; for the sake of future generations, we must act. I call upon the free world to help us free our sons; its leaders have the power to do so ("To save lives, negotiate with the devil," Gershon Baskin, February 26).

MIKI GOLDWASSER

Nahariya

Valuable movie

Letters

Sir, - Manfred Gerstenfeld was far too heavy-handed in criticizing Fitna and its producer, Geert Wilders ("Not the bash it could have been," April 2). Wilders has made an accurate documentary of enormous benefit to Israel.

Gerstenfeld may be technically correct in claiming that the violent passages in the Koran do not necessarily lead to violent acts, but the increasing numbers of people who see the origin of Muslim violence in the Koran base their conclusions on firm doctrinal footing.

Making this sort of connection allows people to start understanding Israel's predicament with Islam as having a basis in Islamic doctrine at least as much as in objective reality. Denying that connection opens the door to explaining Islamic rage at Israel as being caused by Israeli misdeeds. Affirming it shows Israel as the victim of religious bigotry.

No system of ideas should be exempt from critical examination, however politically incorrect.

DAVID KATCOFF

Jericho, Vermont

Build it & they'll come...

Sir, - The drop in aliya could be countered by expanding the role of Nefesh B'Nefesh and making sure it has the cooperation of every government agency and ministry. Its success is unparalleled in the history of Israel. Its professionalism and lack of political spin makes it the foremost vehicle for aliya ("MKs to begin pushing for more Western aliya," March 12).

Israel is blessed with scientific, mathematical and environmental projects that can touch the hearts and minds of young people. Special efforts should be made to recruit them worldwide to work specifically on such dreams which can become reality.

Our goal should be to make every Jew in the world believe he has a place in Israel. That can happen, and if we build an infrastructure that makes sense, young Jews will come.

TOBY WILLIG

Jerusalem

...no, we won't

Sir, - Michael Freund ponders what Israel can do to induce more Jews to make aliya ("How to reverse the decline in aliya," April 2).

I come from a modern Orthodox community whose members should be prime candidates for aliya, but hardly anyone is going. We don't like the way the "settlers" are treated; we see ourselves as settlers. We don't see Israel really defending itself. We see Ehud Olmert giving away Jerusalem and the West Bank. We see an unbelievable amount of corruption. Israel no longer seems a place for practicing Jews to live.

Finally, we see you as losers. No one likes a loser.

ABE KRIEGER

Highland Park, New Jersey

Men of worth

Sir, - Shmuley Boteach's designation of Eliot Spitzer as "self-loathing" (March 17) just won't wash. To start with, his use of "self-loathing" is not too clear. Narcissistic means "self-loving," so self-loathing must be the opposite of

Letters

narcissistic, right? But treating oneself to a \$5,000-an-hour hooker sounds very narcissistic. Maybe by "self-loathing" Boteach just means "feeling inadequate."

Anyway, let's accept that modern culture has "raised a generation of men to believe that they are anonymous unless they accumulate money or fame." So why did Spitzer, who has plenty of money and fame, need to seek a sense of personal worth in the arms of a prostitute?

According to Boteach's logic, there should be a direct, not inverse, relationship between worldly success and faithfulness in marriage. Rich and powerful men should make the best husbands. But the Spitzers and the Clintons just don't fit the analysis.

Conventional wisdom would suggest the opposite, namely, that very rich and powerful men develop an inflated sense of personal worth and therefore feel they are entitled to certain pleasures commensurate with their achievements. Don't most women know that if you marry a rich and powerful man, the chances of his remaining faithful are quite small?

DAVID GOLDSTEIN

Jerusalem

Converting Jews

Sir, - A personal comment on Shmuley Boteach's "Would Jesus want to convert the Jews?" (April 1):

I've been a Southern Baptist Christian for 55 years and I've never met a person who tried to convert a Jew to Christianity. I've never heard the subject talked about in Church, only read about it in the newspaper.

As a Christian, it is my belief that I should tell anyone who will listen about my beliefs because I believe it is the only way to be accepted by God; but there is nothing in my belief that tells me I should force anything on someone else.

From time to time a sect will show up at our home and my wife tells them to take a hike, but I like to sit and talk with them about their theology. I've never seen anyone get violent while defending their religious beliefs.

Perhaps Rabbi Boteach's concern is exaggerated?

PAUL DAVID SWINFORD

Geneseo, Illinois

Sir, - It is an error to persuade a Jew to become a Christian, or vice versa - a violation of conscience. Welcome, yes, to those who come, but only spontaneously.

Each religion is, theoretically, loving, generous and fraternal. But what is done in the name of religion is often dreadful.

The decline of the Jewish people, chiefly in the Diaspora, will not be stemmed by conversions to Judaism but by a struggle against assimilation, and by having larger families.

JACQUES TOLUB

Ra'anana

Too much of a good sing

Sir, - When Israel Radio started its Voice of Music broadcasts about 20 years ago, lovers of classical music were very happy. But, lately, the person responsible for the programming has been putting on too much vocal music for my taste. So the first thing I do is put my crystal glasses away in a cupboard until the danger to them has passed.

Letters

Those sopranos could be useful in keeping night-shift workers awake.

HETTY MAHLER, Haifa

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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A day at Shefayim - ESRA celebrates 30 years

The Jerusalem Post

November 14, 2008 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 1187 words

Byline: David E. Kaplan

Highlight: Despite the feeling by some of being left out of the Israeli narrative, Anglos gather in the rain to celebrate the country and volunteering in its service

Body

The final days prior to the ESRA 30th anniversary had a D-Day countdown panic about them. There was justifiable concern about the weather. The forecasts were for heavy rain and wind. "Would the people come?" plagued the minds of event organizer Jane Krivine and her team of 100 volunteers. They needn't have worried!

While it did rain hard, the English-speaking community braved the "miserable weather," and ESRA Chairwoman Debbie Lieberman typified her organization's philosophy of responding to a negative with a positive when she animatedly bellowed at the closing ceremony at Kibbutz Shefayim: "Israel should be indebted to ESRA - we brought the much-needed rain."

For over 30 years, ESRA has brought much else. The event was not only a celebration of a journey of communal service but an opportunity to showcase to the Israeli public "who we are and what we do," Lieberman told Metro. Apart from the general press, the event was covered on Israel TV news. Former Australian and Spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert Mark Regev told a packed auditorium, "I am proud of my Anglo-Saxon roots. You can travel the length and breadth of Israel and you will see a ward in a hospital, a department at a university or an ambulance or fire station with the plaque recognizing a contribution from some faraway philanthropic Anglo Saxon from LA, London or Sydney."

What has been neglected, stressed Regev, has been the absence of the narrative "of you - 'the Anglos' - who came on aliya and settled this land, fought in its wars and contributed to its economy, its sciences, its academia and its politics."

ESRA's 30-year anniversary was in many respects a response to Regev's observation.

The day was educative and informative. Visiting the writers' corner, one could meet among the many English-speaking authors Rebecca Yeheskel, who had written a book about her childhood in India. Born in Poona, and educated in an English school, she immigrated to Israel in 1970 with her husband, a pilot in the Indian Air Force. Gathering an audience, she related the origin of the Jewish community in India, much of it covered in her book. She related how her "Jewish forefathers arrived before the destruction of the Second Temple, shipwrecked off the coast near where Bombay is today. There were seven men and seven women who survived and as time passed, they forgot their Hebrew, but certain traditions were retained."

A day at Shefayim - ESRA celebrates 30 years

People were enjoying no less the lecture in the adjacent hall by former South African Leah Zinder, IBA News diplomatic correspondent. Like many Israelis, English speakers are generally news junkies. But unlike native-born Israelis, Anglos tend to be obsessed with how Israel is so negatively portrayed in the world media. Not surprisingly, Zinder's and Regev's lectures attracted the largest audiences of the event. Zinder spoke of the "new television," and what she refers to as "the tyranny of the visual image." The line between news and entertainment "has been completely blurred," she said. News has evolved out of a milieu of moviemaking, she said, citing the Second Lebanon War as a particularly low point in TV news coverage.

"Reports were part fabricated - pictures and TV footage doctored or manufactured. Remember the pictures of buildings alleged to have just been bombed and later discovered to have been hit weeks before or the wailing Lebanese woman, standing despairingly before her destroyed home, on three separate occasions in three different towns?" Zinder asked. What the TV audiences watch the world over "is what Hizbullah or Hamas want them to see. Who guides them in these areas? Who translates from the Arabic into English? This is controlled news and the foreign media plays along with it," the reporter asserted.

Regev, on the other hand, has no problem with the rough coverage Israel receives in the world media, saying "the job of the media is to be critical." He refutes the popular local belief of "an international media conspiracy" against Israel. "While I am not na-ve [enough] to believe there is no bias or anti-Semitism in the media," he said, he generally sees the foreign media not as hostile but "aggressive" - "because that's what they're paid to be. We wouldn't want it otherwise. Who would want to read sycophantic Pravda-type papers? Not any of you! We are all from Anglo-Saxon societies nurtured on press freedom. My job is to defend Israel's actions and policies, and if I have any criticism of the foreign media it's that they're not equally aggressive when covering our adversaries," Regev declared.

There was good reason why former American Ahron Klieman, Emeritus Professor of Diplomacy at Tel Aviv University, also attracted a large audience - his subject: "The US Elections and Israel." Who would not be curious how each of the presidential candidates would impact the Middle East, particularly on the Iran question?

"We cannot bomb Iran," Klieman explained. "Since our attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1982, the Iranians have taken precautions, widely dispersing their facilities underground. So all we may achieve is to stall the program. Worse, we would likely cause a disruption in the free flow of oil through the Persian Gulf." Not exactly a result that would improve Israel's shaky popularity in Europe and elsewhere. Irrespective of who would win the White House, "Neither a joint or solo military operation is likely," says Klieman, "The momentum now is to pursue a diplomatic path."

Aside from politics, ESRA's reunion boasted subjects of interest for everyone - religion, literature, medicine, photojournalism and history. The morning began with British photographer, curator and co-author Ruth Cormon joining famed Israel Prize recipient David Rubinger for "Israel Through My Lens" - a presentation of slides and readings from Rubinger's book, which has topped Israel's bestseller list for months. His photographs, covering 60 years, are a pictorial documentary of Israel's turbulent history. One impressive photo shows a line of IDF soldiers, a typical image of the Israeli army of the 1950s, young, brash and "undisciplined." In the photographer's own words: "There isn't one soldier in this line who is standing in the same position as another. Everything uniform about an army is missing. That was typical of the period. No saluting. No Prussian drill. But it wasn't a bad army, by any means."

The depiction of fortitude and grit that began the day at Shefayim also concluded the long day as it passed into night. Nineteen volunteers were presented with certificates of recognition for years of dedicated community service.

ESRA Life President Merle Guttman, who gave the keynote address, reflected back over 30 years to the meeting in Herzliya when the idea of establishing an organization to assist English-speaking immigrants in their integration was first conceived. Since its inception, ESRA has raised over NIS 50 million to support some 160 community projects throughout Israel.

It rained hard that day at Shefayim. But it didn't dampen the spirits of an English-speaking army of volunteers determined to continue making their mark on Israeli society.

Graphic

4 photos: THE OR MOVEMENT table promoting the Negev to English speakers. FOUNDER AND Life President of ESRA, Merle Guttman with fellow ESRA members. ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN from one of ESRA's projects, who performed on stage. A TABLE of English writers in Israel, Rebecca Yeheskel.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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IDF likely to expand Gaza op before cease-fire is imposed. Army impatient for government to decide on next move. Commander of Izzadin Kassam's rocket division killed in strike. Gilad to Cairo tomorrow to seal Egyptian commitment to stop smuggling

The Jerusalem Post

January 11, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1119 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ, AP contributed to this report

Highlight: Lead Story

Body

The IDF will likely expand its operations in the Gaza Strip in the coming days in an effort to press Egypt to declare its readiness to stop the weapons smuggling from the Sinai Peninsula into Gaza, defense officials said Saturday.

The IDF is currently operating in the northern Gaza Strip but on Saturday, the air force dropped leaflets throughout Gaza warning residents of an impending expansion of the operation.

One possibility is that the IDF will move deeper into Gaza City. Another possibility is that the IDF will push into southern Gaza.

"The IDF will escalate the operation in the Gaza Strip," the leaflets read in Arabic. "The IDF is not working against the people of Gaza but against Hamas and the terrorists only. Stay safe by following our orders."

The leaflets urged Gazans not to help Hamas, and to stay away from its members.

As Operation Cast Lead entered its third week, senior military sources expressed concern that if the political echelon did not immediately decide on its future direction, IDF soldiers would become static targets and lose the initiative to Hamas.

"The troops cannot just stand and wait," one officer explained. "They always need to be on the move."

On Monday, head of the Defense Ministry's Diplomatic- Security Bureau, Amos Gilad, is scheduled to travel to Cairo for talks with the Egyptians about the weapons smuggling, which Israel insists must be stopped before it ends the Gaza offensive.

"The Egyptians understand that they need to deal with the smuggling," a senior official said. "While in public they deny that the weapons come into Gaza through the tunnels, in private they recognize that this is the truth."

On Saturday, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit to advance the issue. Steinmeier is to come to Tel Aviv on Sunday and meet with Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

IDF likely to expand Gaza op before cease-fire is imposed. Army impatient for government to decide on next move. Commander of Izzadin Kassam's rocket division k....

Officials said that Steinmeier would likely arrive with positive impressions from his talks in Cairo, where he received the impression that the Egyptians were willing to begin confronting the tunnel industry in Rafah.

The officials said that Egypt was not likely to agree to the deployment of a multinational or American force along its border with Gaza or even sign a memorandum of understanding with Israel regarding the tunnels.

"Both of these initiatives would be interpreted as signs of weakness by people who oppose the regime of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt," another defense official said.

What was likely to happen, the officials said, was that the Egyptians would receive technical support from foreign countries in detecting the tunnels. The US has already sent combat engineers to advise the Egyptians and the Germans have offered them equipment as well.

On Saturday, the air force bombed a rocket squad and killed Amir Mansi, a senior member of Hamas's military wing, Izzadin Kassam, and commander of its rocket division in Gaza City.

Mansi was behind dozens of rocket attacks against Israel in recent weeks, a senior IDF officer said. Mansi had close ties to Hizbullah, and was known to receive information from the group on a regular basis, including learning how to fire rockets, the officer added.

Mansi was killed while attempting to fire mortars at troops in Jebel Rice, in the northern Gaza Strip. Two other Hamas gunmen were also hit.

The IDF officer said the fact that Mansi was personally involved in attacking Israeli troops showed that Izzadin Kassam was in "serious distress," as senior Hamas operatives would not ordinarily venture onto the battlefield.

Entire Hamas companies had been wiped out, and some Hamas fighters had gone AWOL or fled the fighting, the officer said.

"We know of complete battalions that have just been erased," the top officer said. "They are afraid to come out and fight. That's why Mansi went out to fire rockets on his own."

The officer also said that Hamas had replicated the "nature reserves" - including tunnel systems and rocket launchers - that the IDF found in southern Lebanon in 2006, this time within built-up areas in Gaza City.

The group had built the tunnels so that if the IDF penetrated further into the city, it would encounter hand-to-hand resistance.

According to the officer, at least 300 Hamas gunmen had been killed since the ground forces stage of Operation Cast Lead began eight days ago. The IDF estimate, he said, was backed up by intelligence.

On Saturday, the Palestinian death toll since Operation Cast Lead began on December 27 passed 800.

Ten IDF soldiers have been killed since the operation began, nine in Gaza fighting and one in a Hamas mortar strike on the IDF base at Nahal Oz. Three Israeli civilians have been killed.

Twenty-three rockets were fired at the South on Saturday. Two that fell in Ashkelon left one person moderately wounded, three people lightly hurt, and caused extensive damage to homes.

Some 20 soldiers were lightly wounded in fighting over the weekend.

More than 15 terrorists were killed overnight Friday, the IDF said. Aircraft attacked more than 40 targets, including 10 rocket-launching sites, weapons-storage facilities, smuggling tunnels, an anti-aircraft missile launcher and gunmen.

IDF likely to expand Gaza op before cease-fire is imposed. Army impatient for government to decide on next move. Commander of Izzadin Kassam's rocket division k....

The dropping of the leaflets appeared to be partly a psychological tactic. Defense officials are prepared for a third stage of the offensive, in which soldiers would push much further into Gaza, but are waiting for approval from the government.

The officials said the army had also planned a fourth stage that called for a full reoccupation of Gaza and toppling Hamas.

On Saturday night, IDF infantry, tanks, artillery, engineers and intelligence branch personnel were engaging Hamas gunmen. Snipers fired at soldiers from the Paratroopers Brigade. The troops fired back and reported a hit.

Mortar shells were fired at soldiers. Troops returned mortar fire.

Between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, the IDF ceased fire to allow the transfer of humanitarian aid into Gaza. This "humanitarian corridor" has been observed daily since Wednesday.

In the day's bloodiest reported incident, an Israeli tank shell killed nine people in a garden outside a home in the northern Gaza town of Jabalya, said Adham el-Hakim, administrator of Kamal Adwan hospital.

The IDF disputed the account, saying it did not carry out attacks in that area on Saturday.

Israel has come under international criticism for the rising number of civilian casualties. Palestinian paramedics said the nine people killed in the garden were from the same clan and included two children and two women.

"Residents brought them to the hospital in a civilian car. They put them all in the trunk because their bodies were mangled," Hakim said.

Separately, a woman was killed by tank fire in the nearby town of Beit Lahiya.

Graphic

2 photos: SOLDIERS MAKE preparations at a staging area just outside Gaza yesterday. IDF operations create smoke in Gaza City. (Credit: Dan Balilty/AP; AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Diaspora gets a different taste at Israel's 60th

The Jerusalem Post
April 28, 2008 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 1163 words

Byline: RACHELLE KLIGER, The Media Line News Agency, Special to The Jerusalem Post

Body

While nearly \$25 million is being poured into the lavish celebrations in Israel marking 60 years of Israel's independence, the country's representative offices around the world are finding other creative ways to mark the momentous event.

Embassies in the United States and other Western countries have ample budgets to mark the celebrations and enjoy abundant support from local Jewish communities, which are organizing festivities of their own complementing the embassies' events.

But other embassies have to be more cautious about open celebrations.

In countries where the views of the locals about Israel range from indifference to outright hostility, Israeli officials are toning down the festivities, in accord with local sensibilities.

"We have a problem in doing a big production like they do in the US. or in Europe," says Shani Cooper, spokeswoman for the Israeli embassy in Cairo. "We have to stay limited within our boundaries, and to be honest, we don't want to do something huge because it will touch a sore spot."

The embassy is holding a reception for diplomatic staff and government officials, which some 400 guests are expected to attend. The backdrop of the reception will feature slides with Israeli landscapes, an Israeli singer will perform and, while Israeli wines will be served, non- alcoholic beverages will be provided for the observant Muslim guests.

"In an Arab country, with the current situation of the peace process and the media hostility in Egypt, it wouldn't be right to do something ostentatious," Cooper says.

Cooper is stationed in one of the toughest Israeli missions and faces many challenges as spokeswoman. Israel and Egypt signed a peace accord in 1979 and have full diplomatic relations. However, the views of Israel in the streets of Cairo, as reflected in the Egyptian media, remain very negative. The relationship is often described as a cold peace.

The Israeli embassy in Amman is also opting for a respectable, albeit low-key, event.

The two countries signed a peace deal in 1994.

Diaspora gets a different taste at Israel 's 60th

"We have certain security limitations, so we're restricted in terms of the venue," says Itai Bar-Dov, spokesman for the embassy.

For security reasons the event will not be held in the open or at a hotel but at the embassy itself, which will provide an all-Israeli produce spread, including Israeli-made cheeses, to be dispatched to the neighboring country ahead of the event.

The embassies, as well as the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, declined to comment on security measures throughout the festivities. However, all admitted that tight security was not just on account of the independence celebrations; security was tightened around Israeli interests around the world after the assassination of Hizbullah arch-terrorist Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus on February 12. Arab capitals believe the Mossad was involved in the assassination.

"We're not specifically changing anything for the celebrations," Bar-Dov says. "The security here is tight enough."

Security concerns for Israeli officials overseas are not unfounded.

Three months ago the Israeli embassy in Mauritania was the target of a shootout in which three people were wounded. The terror attack is believed to have been an al-Qaida operation.

Israel's embassy in Mauritania is hardly an obvious terror target. In fact, many Israelis do not even know this country exists, let alone that it is the only member of the Arab League that has held full diplomatic relations with Israel continuously for nine years.

Boaz Bismut, ambassador to Mauritania, sounds unperturbed about the security threat, although he is not indifferent to it.

Elsewhere, in Western countries, the festivities will be more open.

The Israeli embassy in London is holding a reception for up to 1,000 guests. In addition, the local Jewish community is organizing several Israel solidarity events that are sparking counter-demonstrations from pro-Palestinian organizations.

Jenny Najar, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, said a rally on May 10, two days after the official events in Israel, would counter what she called Israeli propaganda about the 60th anniversary.

"It's also to commemorate the Palestinian nakba, the events of 1948 and to point to the right narrative of what happened," Najar says.

Other British organizations participating in the rally say the suffering of Palestinians is "no reason for celebrations."

The Israeli embassy in London is not treating these demonstrations lightly, but officials there feel these pro-Palestinian organizations are not as influential as they make themselves out to be, and there are no plans to actively offset the rallies.

"Our campaign is 365 days a year," says Lior Ben-Dor, spokesman of the embassy in London. "The calendar is full of events that our ill-wishers use as excuses to harm us, whether it's the assassination date of Fathi Shikaki, Nakba Day, or the day Israel was founded. We are on alert all year round, including Independence Day."

Celebrations in some US cities are extending beyond the boundaries of the Jewish population.

In Houston, home to more than 45,000 Jews, the Jewish community recently held a parade in honor of Israel's 60th Independence Day celebrations, attended by more than 2,000 people.

Police cordoned off streets for participants, Jews and Christians alike, who marched nearly a mile with Israeli flags.

Diaspora gets a different taste at Israel 's 60th

"There were no opposing demonstrations, even though we did prepare for that," says Asher Yarden, consul general in Houston.

"The 60th celebrations are an expression of solidarity with Israel, and here at the consulate we strive to garner support among the American public for Israel and bring about political support," Yarden says.

Other global events in which Israel's 60th birthday is being marked include international book fairs in France, Italy, Belarus and Poland. The Paris literary event hosted a high-level delegation of guests from Israel, including President Shimon Peres and 40 leading Israeli writers. The event was boycotted by many Muslim countries, which were angered by the decision to make Israel the guest of honor.

Bismut and his counterparts in Egypt and Jordan could only dream of having Israel being granted tributes like that in their host countries.

Nevertheless, Bismut points out a plus side of representing Israel in a country such as Mauritania, where a dollar stretches a lot farther than it does in Western embassies.

Part of the budget allocated for the festivities is being invested in an impoverished suburb of the capital called Toujounine. The money is being spent on developing women's cooperative ventures such as textile-dyeing and sewing workshops, providing them with a vocation and expanding their working opportunities.

Bismut believes this is a groundbreaking initiative that could help improve Israel's image, especially since the governor of this area is an Islamist, who opposes relations with Israel.

"The hundreds of people who will benefit from this will remember it as a present from Israel," he says.

Graphic

Photo: FOLK DANCERS mark the year's first grain harvest in the fields of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet. Israeli dance, music, and food will be featured in celebrations of Israel's 60th at the nation's embassies and consulates abroad. (Credit: Itzik Shafran)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Letters

The Jerusalem Post

December 17, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1131 words

Byline: Rabbi Jacob Chinitz, James A. Marples, Howard R. Silverman, Menachem G. Jerenberg, Jessica Fischer, David Lee, Israel Zvi, P. Berman, M. Veeder

Highlight: Reader's Letters

Body

Male domination...

Sir, - Your editorial on Orthodox Jewish women making their mark in halachic studies and rabbinical courts was very much in place ("Sensitivity and Halacha," December 16). However, I do not believe that the blame for male domination in the field of Jewish marriage and divorce jurisprudence can all be laid on the male rabbis.

Unfortunately, it has to be recognized by the Orthodox, and all of us interested in the relevance of Halacha to Jewish reality, that the Torah text itself prescribes this male domination when it states: "Ki yikah ish isha" ("when a man takes a woman").

It is the man who marries and divorces, and until we tackle this issue head-on, using the principle of yesh koah beyad hachamim - the rabbis have the power - to amend Torah law to give women equal status in marriage and divorce, the underlying problems will remain no matter how much learning and actual court participation is achieved by Orthodox female scholars.

RABBI JACOB CHINITZ

Jerusalem

...no 'equal rights'

in spirituality

Sir, - This editorial made an inappropriate comparison: that we trust our lives to female doctors, implying we should trust female Torah scholars in matters of Divine consequence.

I feel that tradition is an important component in Judaic and Christian theological frameworks. We believe that God created the first man, Adam. It is certain that Adam did not seek theological counsel of a woman. I hold to the belief that Jewish rabbis and Catholic priests should be male, and adherence to that qualification helps me relate to God's plan for my life and the life of others.

Spirituality isn't subject to "equal rights laws." The sexes weren't made to be equal in all matters. Tradition, like faith itself, must be based on feelings from within and not dictated by gender quotas or biases.

Letters

JAMES A. MARPLES

Longview, Texas

Why discriminate?

Sir, - The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations deplores the detention of Jamie and Stacy Cowen upon their arrival in Israel ("Messianic Jews detained at Ben-Gurion Airport," December 15). As president of the UMJC, Cowen spearheaded humanitarian aid to Israel and participated in social causes for the betterment of the Jewish people.

The UMJC continues to support these efforts and does not engage in any activity that is outside the bounds of Israeli law. In 2003, and most recently in the summer of 2008, the UMJC convened its annual conference in Israel, which The Jerusalem Post reported.

We call upon the government of Israel to uphold the freedom of religion of all.

HOWARD R. SILVERMAN

UMJC

Columbus, Ohio

Extremely odd

Sir, - If I didn't know better, I would accuse Jeff Barak of nepotism ("Look past the technology," December 16). How else can one explain his attaching the epithet "extreme right-wing" to the Likud's list, while terming Ehud Barak's Labor "center-left"? May I remind him that the confirmedly extreme left-wing Meretz Party is being spoken of as a possible voting alternative to Labor, since it is nearly indistinguishable in its policies!

Also, where exactly does he get off calling the defectors who formed Kadima "the sensible part of Likud"? Could it be that he is the last Israeli to realize that the Gaza disengagement was a complete and utter disaster - just as the Likud's "extreme right-wing" members warned?

MENACHEM G. JERENBERG

Ramat Beit Shemesh

Get savvy...

Sir, - How naive your Monday letter writers seem! ("Oh, Bibi!" December 15.) They have forgotten how manipulative Ariel Sharon was and Ehud Olmert is, and how much irrevocable damage their non-policies have done to the State of Israel - shown once again by this week's prisoner release to the Palestinian Authority.

Binyamin Netanyahu, on the other hand, is the consummate politician, attracting those people to the Likud whom he sees as strengthening the party and making it more centrist.

While Moshe Feiglin has been pushed too far down the Likud list, he can up and join Avigdor Lieberman if he wants to be in the Knesset, or in a coalition. There's still room.

JESSICA FISCHER

Michmoret

...about whom

we're confronting

Letters

Sir, - Re your photo of released Palestinian prisoners celebrating upon their arrival in Ramallah (December 16): I served in the war against Nazi Germany. We saw Germany as our enemy, just as the Israelis see Hamas and Hizbullah. We had a leader who swore Germany's destruction, not one who constantly announced his desire to surrender our land to the enemy, including half of our capital city.

Prisoners of war lived harshly behind barbed wire. They were not patted on the head and sent back to the Wehrmacht. We blockaded Germany to the maximum possible, and we bombed it mercilessly.

We did not send in lorries loaded with fuel, food and money; neither did we sit down and chat with the Germans until they were thoroughly beaten and prepared to make peace.

We did not allow our pro-Nazis to hire boats and go visiting their Nazi friends, laden with gifts. We did not act like softies or pushovers.

Israel, you are at war. You need someone like Bibi Netanyahu to lead you to victory. When the war has been won, you can pick any peacenik you like. But certainly not yet.

DAVID LEE

London

Dream on

Sir, - "The Palestinians will demand democracy, civil rights, the right to vote... the right to change the character of the bi-national state" ("The emerging bi-national reality," December 16.)

Really? The Palestinians have never made these demands before. Their demands are, in fact, contrary to the peaceful coexistence of two peoples: no Jews in the West Bank or Gaza, full control over the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem, and a four-million-strong immigration to pre-1967 Israel of the descendants of Arabs who lived in Israel prior to the War of Independence.

Gershon Baskin's wish list is his own, and his only.

ISRAEL ZVI

Efrat

Civilized is the way

Sir, - In "Another look at the Hebron Peace House" (December 16) my impression is that Sunny Sassoon has confused two different issues.

No one is trying to evacuate Jews from Hebron. What you have here is an argument about who is the rightful owner of a piece of property.

The decision to evacuate the house before a final decision was made by the court appears to have been a political move, and of course the leadership of the Right fell into a trap because they used emotion rather than straight thinking in addressing the problem.

In the final analysis, the court will determine who truly owns the property, and its decision will stand.

Both sides in Hebron acted in a shameful manner. I am personally committed to Jews remaining in Hebron, but individual disputes must be settled in a civilized manner in a court of law.

P. BERMAN

Shoham

Letters

Seems so

Sir, - So, Bernard "madoff" with the money... ("Jewish charities face devastating losses from Madoff scam," December 16).

M. VEEDER

Netanya

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Guardian Weekly: Books: A deadly embrace: Fawaz A Gerges reads three books that consider how past US policy haunts Iraq's present: The Strategy and Ideology Of Martyrdom by Mohammed M Hafez US Institute of Peace 285pp \$17.50 A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja by Joost R Hiltermann Cambridge University 314pp \$29 Merchant of Death: Money, Guns, Planes, and the Man Who Makes War Possible by Douglas Farah and Stephen Braun Wiley 308pp \$25.95

Guardian Weekly

November 16, 2007 Friday

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*The***GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 36

Length: 1166 words

Byline: Washington Post

Body

The new Iraq has set a world record in suicide bombings. Since the American-led invasion in 2003, Iraq has suffered nearly 1,000 suicide attacks, more than double the number carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka, *Hizbullah* in Lebanon and Hamas in Israel, combined. Most targeted Iraqi security forces and Shia civilians.

One of the saddest questions is whether it is partly "blowback" - intelligence jargon for what goes around, comes around. The fact that the US once backed Osama bin Laden and other jihadis against the Soviets in Afghanistan is well known. But three new books suggest that there are other kinds of blowback in the war on terror.

Far from "draining the swamp" of terrorism, as US architects of the war had hoped, the new Iraq imports suicide terrorists and exports bombing techniques. In *Suicide Bombers in Iraq*, Mohammed Hafez seeks to understand what drives men and, in rare cases, *women*, to sacrifice themselves. He believes they are mainly non-Iraqis, although he warns that it is impossible to reach firm conclusions about where they come from, what motivates them and how recruiters have mobilised so many in a short time. "It is not clear who is carrying out most of the suicide attacks in Iraq," he admits.

Analysts worldwide have been unable to arrive at a useful socioeconomic or psychological profile of suicide bombers in Iraq. Some are from poor families in developing countries such as Egypt, Syria, Algeria, Morocco and Pakistan, while others come from affluent homes in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, England and Italy. They are educated and uneducated. The bulk seem to be in their teens and 20s, but more than a few are in their 30s to 50s. And while some have had previous links to violent activism, for others the suicide attack is their first (and last) offence. The only consensus among analysts, Hafez says, is that suicide bombers are not simply crazy or born violent.

Guardian Weekly: Books: A deadly embrace: Fawaz A Gerges reads three books that consider how past US policy haunts Iraq 's present: The Strategy and Ideology Of....

Al-Qaida in Iraq and its ideological allies face growing indignation from fellow Sunnis fed up with the toll on Muslim civilians. But greater challenges are faced in Iraq than suicide terrorism, insidious as it is. Hafez estimates that suicide bombers and other internationalist, ideological jihadis represent just 5% of Iraqi insurgents. The overwhelming majority of fighters are Iraqi nationalists who eschew suicide bombing and deploy Islam as the vocabulary of resistance; their goal is to shift the balance of power in favour of Sunnis and to force US troops to leave.

Joost R Hiltermann, a former Human Rights Watch investigator who is now with the International Crisis Group, traces America's predicament in Iraq to its collusion with Saddam Hussein during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s and its silence over his repeated use of chemical weapons.

Hiltermann's *A Poisonous Affair* is a chilling account of the gassing of Halabja, a village in Iraq's Kurdish region, in March 1988 and the subsequent counterinsurgency campaign known as Anfal ("The Spoils"), in which about 80,000 Kurdish civilians were driven from their homes by poison gas, hauled to transit centres, sorted by age and sex and taken to execution sites in Iraq's western desert. In the early 1990s, Hiltermann and his colleagues at Human Rights Watch pieced together the Anfal story from captured Iraqi documents, declassified US reports and testimonies of survivors. Hard as it tried, the NGO could not mobilise the international community to bring a charge of genocide against the Iraqi regime at the international court of justice.

A Poisonous Affair explains that, having recovered territories lost to Iraq in the early 1980s, Ayatollah Khomeini, then Iran's supreme leader, went on the offensive against Saddam. He sent vast numbers of barely trained young infantrymen against Iraqi lines, and the Iraqi leadership saw poison gas - first mustard gas and later more potent, insecticide-related formulas - as the most efficient way to stop them.

According to a CIA analysis cited by Hiltermann, Iraq employed chemical weapons "on a scale not seen since the first world war" and became the first nation to use nerve agents in battle. Still, the US sided with Saddam. Although officially neutral, Washington began sharing intelligence data on Iran's battle plans and provided Baghdad with economic aid. Arms poured into Iraq from the West as well as from the Soviet Union. And the Reagan administration opposed a UN investigation of Iran's allegations that Iraq had used chemical weapons.

Hiltermann explores America's multiple motives. US officials were still angered by the Iranians' seizure of the US embassy in Tehran and determined to prevent Khomeini from exporting his Islamic revolution. But then, as now, there were other factors: The Reagan administration hoped to co-opt Iraq, through "constructive engagement", into backing Arab-Israeli peacemaking and ending its assistance to radical groups, particularly Palestinians. Oil supplies and business opportunities for US companies also loomed large, Hiltermann notes.

Thus, in Hiltermann's account, the die was cast for Iraq's expanded use of chemical weapons. The main chemical offensive came in the spring of 1988 - first on a Kurdish rebel headquarters in the Jafati valley, then at Halabja, then on the first day of every stage of the six-month Anfal campaign. The Reagan administration laboured to get Saddam off the hook. *A Poisonous Affair* shows that US policymakers knew Iraq had gassed Halabja but instructed American diplomats to cast partial blame on Iran. By Hiltermann's persuasive account, the US sacrificed universal norms at the altar of cold war calculations and short-term gain, a choice that set the stage for America's current deadly embrace with Iraq as well as Iran's quest to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Blowback also looms large in *Merchant of Death*, a riveting investigation of the world's most notorious weapons dealer, Viktor Bout, whose post-cold war arms network has stoked violence worldwide. Although US intelligence officers have tried for years to shut down Bout's operation, Douglas Farah and Stephen Braun reveal that the US paid firms linked to him as much as \$60m to ferry weapons to the US military and contractors in Iraq in 2003 and 2004.

Senior US policymakers may have known Bout was among the war profiteers. But even after newspaper reports about his activities in Iraq, mid-level US officials in Baghdad allowed his suspected airplanes to continue to land at US air bases and even to fill up on military fuel for free, rationalising the decision on the need to get supplies

Guardian Weekly: Books: A deadly embrace: Fawaz A Gerges reads three books that consider how past US policy haunts Iraq 's present: The Strategy and Ideology Of....

quickly. "We have an old saying in the marine corps," one officer says in the book. "If you want it bad, you get it bad."

Farah, a former Washington Post reporter, and Braun, a Los Angeles Times correspondent, call the episode "a textbook case of shoddy postwar planning and bureaucratic blindness". But after reading Suicide Bombers in Iraq and A Poisonous Affair , it's hard not to see it as more than that.

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The great Winograd expectation

The Jerusalem Post

January 25, 2008 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 1100 words

Byline: AMOTZ ASA-EL

Highlight: Middle Israel

Body

There is a sense of expectation in the air. Half-a- year on, and having forgotten nothing and learned nothing, thousands of those who have emerged from the war of summer '06 humiliated, disillusioned, bereaved, displaced, dispossessed, maimed and otherwise victimized are once again placing their hopes on five senior citizens to bang the gong that will pierce our leaders' eardrums and reinvent our own situation: swiftly, miraculously, in one fell swoop, as if with the wave of Harry Potter's wand.

And how good it feels to expect.

Like a groom under the canopy about to unveil his bride, like a mother in the waning moments of an overdue pregnancy, or a newly licensed driver about to receive his father's car keys, so the gullible in our midst now await next week's belated Winograd Committee report to finally make their day.

"Ah, this will have to be it," they tell themselves moments before being confounded by the prime minister's latest brandishing of a hitherto unknown resurrection stone. Now he will finally be made to pay for his arrogance, conceit, haste, frivolity and refusal to assume responsibility, says the Middle Israeli while watching yet another dispiriting newscast bending his flat screen.

For what have we asked? Has anyone, God forbid, demanded he be hanged, mutilated or beheaded, or has any of us just compared him with Saddam Hussein, Benito Mussolini or King Charles? All we said is that his botched war - like Begin's, Golda's and Barak's - should make the leader go. In a way, he should be flattered for being lumped with them.

"Now," say Winograd's gullible spectators, "now he will finally be shown the door."

Well, they then concede, "maybe not expressly, that is - maybe also not with a stroke of his pen. Maybe also not with his lips. And maybe also not with a wink of his eye, or with a nod of his head, or with the pointing of his finger. And, let's face it - maybe also not at all. Most probably, actually."

Maybe, that is, those five sorcerers' stone will just transmit something like: "What went wrong in summer '06 we already said in spring '07, but now it's winter '08 and today we want to put things in proportion, we want to remind everyone that Tel Aviv is still there, that Haifa's war bruises have been efficiently whitewashed, that in the Negev the sun still shines in the morning and the winds still blow in the evening, and that in Jerusalem you can still pray to any God at any time of the day."

The great Winograd expectation

Should that kind of bottom-line emerge come Wednesday, when Eliahu Winograd faces the cameras, how should those who now so innocently expect cataclysm, cope with the hangover, with the realization that just when they expected them, neither the messiah nor his donkey ever showed up?

Very simple: Reverse their expectations.

ALL WE need to do is understand already now that the real Harry Potter in our midst is not Winograd, but Olmert. This way we win twice: First, our expectations will be satisfied, and second, instead of being depressed we'll be entertained. For even Olmert's many detractors cannot take away from him the one title all agree he earned honestly: Political Magician No. 1.

Olmert first impressed the reviewers when he managed what no one else ever did - that is, to start one political term barely entering parliament, and then end that same term as prime minister. If that's not magic, what is? That particular magic is even more remarkable considering that prior to that election, as mayor of Jerusalem, he managed to shrink his own faction, Likud, until it altogether vanished, and to abandon the mayoralty itself to ultra-Orthodoxy, and still proceed from there to the nation's helm! Doesn't this honorably compete with Harry Potter's conversations with snakes?

Or take Olmert's setback the day Ariel Sharon appointed both his sworn enemies foreign minister and treasurer. Muggles would have lost face and faded into oblivion. But our hero is a wizard, and while it may be an exercise in futility to ask "how," the incontrovertible fact is that at the end of the day his enemies ended up on bottom and he on top.

That is also how the morning after the war, when all squibs and Mudbloods measured what they believed were his shrinking armies, Olmert cast his aphrodisiac spell on the burly, bearded man beyond the pale with the misleadingly **female** nickname Yvette, bringing him so deep into his bosom that there was no separating the two for 14 months during which Olmert's grip on power was as solid as Putin's on Siberia. Once again the wiz had done his number, emerging from nowhere with a wedge he drove through his detractors so well that many wondered: "Imagine if he had split **Hizbullah** that way!"

Then there was that nuisance, the foreign minister so many mistook for a wizard. But Olmert, like all real wizards, figured that when left alone on stage, all would see what he knew all along - that she didn't have the magic. And wasn't he right. Or those clowns from Labor, whom Olmert has long ago got hooked in his cabinet, where will they go? He's placed outside their doors a photo of the wolf they all dread most - Bibi, that Lord Voldemort who makes things move without touching them.

SEEN THIS WAY, Olmert now has us bracing for the mother of all his magics. Judging by the promos he has so far released, this one should be even more startling than everything we have already seen.

First there were the simple buyouts of potential deserters. A ministry-without-portfolio to Ruhama Avraham, a deputy ministry to Ghaleb Majadle, a Knesset committee's chair to David Tal and more responsibilities for Minister Ya'acov Edri. Squibs can cringe, but for the wizard, such spoils constitute the war's damage control.

An even better foretaste of what awaits us after Wednesday was offered with the spell cast on Shas, where Olmert arrived riding a broom and carrying the one present that more than any other could mesmerize that lot.

"You shouldn't have," said a starry-eyed Eli Yishai as he carefully unwrapped the silvery box out of which emerged the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Olmert looked at his prey and knew it had been trapped - indefinitely.

"Ha," he said to himself as he straightened his sorting hat and vanished in the clouds, "now I know what handing Taiwan to China would feel like."

Then again, all that was before Lieberman's wedge evaporated and the wizards of Winograd descended upon Olmert. Now, you say, even Olmert's many shackled, hooked, trapped and purchased allies can't possibly save him, right? Wrong, unless of course you're still in the business of denying Olmert's wizardry - and expecting your own salvation.

Graphic

Photo: Harry Potter. Unexpected competition in the Holy Land.

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One-sided reality of combat in Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The Irish Times

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Opinion; Pg. 12

Length: 1281 words

Body

Despite reports of intense combat, Hamas weapons pose little threat to Israeli forces, writes **Ed O'Loughlin**

YOU COULD be forgiven for thinking that there was a major ground battle going on in the Gaza Strip right now.

"Fierce fighting" vies for headline space with "intense combat", while Israeli troops and Palestinian fighters swap "heavy exchanges of fire" in "house-to-house clashes". But experience of Israel's many previous raids into Gaza in recent years - the Israeli government is blocking independent foreign journalists from witnessing this one - suggests a more one-sided reality.

Unlike the *Hizbullah* men who fought the Israeli army to a standstill in Lebanon two years ago, Hamas's gunmen have no modern anti-tank missiles. Their mainly home-made rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) are useless against the heavy armour of the Israeli defence force's tanks and armoured personnel carriers. The Palestinians have no artillery or precision heavy weapons, and no air defences to counter Israel's US-supplied fighter bombers and attack helicopters, or the armed robot aircraft which circle constantly overhead. Their automatic rifles would be lethal against unprotected soldiers encountered at short range, but the tactics which Israel has perfected for the Gaza Strip ensure that its soldiers are seldom exposed to effective enemy fire.

In fact, only about a dozen troops have died while participating in numerous deep raids inside Gaza since the IDF's last major loss in May 2004. Then, 11 troops were killed in two separate incidents involving poorly armoured vehicles since withdrawn from service.

Of the five Israeli soldiers killed so far in the current massive invasion, one was reportedly hit by mortar fire. Three others were killed and 20 wounded when one of their own tanks blasted the Palestinian house in which they were hiding. The fifth was also killed by so-called friendly fire, ie accidental fire from his own side.

The Palestinian death toll from such incursions has been vastly higher: Operation Rainbow, May 2004, killed at least 53 Palestinian militants and civilians; Operation Days of Penitence, October 2004, killed between 104 and 133; Operation Summer Rains, June 2006, 400 plus; Operation Autumn Clouds, November 2006, at least 70; last year an unnamed raid on Jabaliya killed over 100. All these raids and numerous smaller ones were duly reported in the foreign media, condemned as disproportionate by much of the international community and then quietly forgotten. The present Operation Cast Lead (some 630 Palestinians killed, as of last evening, and rapidly rising), is well on course to dwarf them all combined - as evidenced by yesterday's single incident toll of 42 civilians, killed when an Israeli artillery shell landed near a UN-run school.

In a typical Israeli invasion, small teams of undercover soldiers use the cover of darkness to seize control of civilian homes selected for their fields of fire, taking the residents hostage and building snipers nests to cover the tanks that

One-sided reality of combat in Israeli- Palestinian conflict

rapidly join them. In ensuing operations, the tanks and snipers sit back and take a heavy toll of the young Palestinian gunmen who invariably rush to the scene - one of the most under-reported aspects of the Israeli-Palestine conflict is the ineptitude of the martyrdom-loving Palestinians when it comes to basic guerrilla tactics.

While their comrades keep the neighbourhood pinned down, infantrymen typically use civilian hostages as human shields - this is known in the IDF as the "neighbour procedure" - as they go door to door rounding up the menfolk, most of whom are then marched off to Israel to be interrogated and, if suspected of militant links, convicted and jailed. (Torture of suspected terrorists is tolerated by the legal authorities and courts in Israel, and torturers are allowed to defend themselves by asserting that the torture was "necessary".)

Although greater in extent and in its massive death toll, the present Israeli ground invasion of Gaza seems to have followed the same broad pattern so far, penetrating only the fringes of teeming Gaza City. And just like its smaller predecessors, Operation Cast Lead's massive Palestinian death toll has proved immensely popular with an Israeli press and public demanding further retaliation for missile fire from Gaza which has killed 20 people in eight years (in the same period Israel has already killed more than 3,500 Gazans, at least 1,500 of them civilians, according to Israeli rights group B'Tselem). On Monday Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported that public support for defence minister and former prime minister Ehud Barak was "rising with each missile that pounds Gaza". Barak and his coalition partner/rival, foreign minister Tzipi Livni, both have hopes of winning the premiership in elections on February 10th.

Unfortunately for the besieged, blockaded, bomb-shocked people of Gaza, February is still a long way off. Meanwhile, Operation Cast Lead shows signs of escalating into something even worse.

Most Israeli government spokesmen and women have so far denied that the aim of the current operation is to eliminate Hamas militarily in the Gaza Strip. But the underlying logic of Israel's internal political and military intrigues, and of both sides' stated aims, suggests otherwise. Hamas says it will not renew its previous six-month ceasefire with Israel, which unravelled last month following mutual violations, unless the Jewish state agrees to end its crippling three-year-old economic blockade of the Strip's desperate population - a demand echoed by human rights groups and local UN agencies.

But Israel says this would legitimise the rule of an Islamic fundamentalist movement which refuses to renounce terrorism and violent resistance, and which itself does not recognise Israel's legitimacy.

Instead, Israeli leaders said this week that they intend to pound Gaza until Hamas is forced to accept an imposed and unconditional ceasefire, with no requirement on Israel to end the blockade and no international mechanism to ensure that all sides, including Israel, behave in future.

Also on Israel's wish list is the return to Gaza of its compliant Palestinian client, Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement, which remains nominally in charge of the West Bank, where Jewish settlement activity continues unabated, despite having lost Palestine-wide elections in 2006. It was routed from Gaza following its failed US- and Israeli-backed putsch against the elected Hamas government last year.

In company with Egypt, the EU and perhaps the US and allied Arab states, Fatah will then mop up whatever is left of Hamas and police Gaza's borders and crossings to prevent further smuggling of weapons.

But the chances of Hamas agreeing to what amounts to an unconditional surrender are nil. Instead, its militants have stepped up their own rocket fire into Israel, using new long-range rockets to strike for the first time the major cities of Ashdod and Beersheba. Three Israeli civilians have been killed so far.

The European Union has so far quietly joined with Israel and the US in the diplomatic and economic siege of Gaza. But there is no way it, or anyone else, will take on the job of policing Gaza on Israel's behalf, a task the mighty Israel defence force failed to carry out. Any Israeli attempt to subdue its entire area, whether by slow starvation, gradual bombardment or rapid ground assault, would cause civilian deaths on a scale never before seen in the lopsided Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

One-sided reality of combat in Israeli- Palestinian conflict

The world may not yet be cynical enough to keep looking the other way.

Ed O'Loughlin reported on Gaza for more than five years as Middle East correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*

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Letters

The Jerusalem Post
January 7, 2008 Monday

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Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Super-heroes

Sir, - The overall impression I got from reading Herb Keinon's and David Horovitz's interview with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was of a man who views himself as a sort of super-hero in his own comic book, illustrated by pictures of the friends to which he kept pointing and alluding to during the interview: "Impressive-Man" Putin, "Very Impressive-Man Mubarak," "Exceptional-Man" King Abdullah II, Reformed-Terrorist-Man Abbas, and "Giant Friend-of- Ours" Bush.

Olmert related his adventures with these other super- heroes as if they were enough to pass off as leadership ("Every solution will be painful," January 4).

JONATHAN FELDSTEIN

Efrat

Sir, - Our prime minister seems unaware of what Palestinian children are taught, what Palestinian imams teach in mosques, and what Mahmoud Abbas's speeches to the Palestinians in Arabic actually say. I believe most Israelis would agree that the pains Olmert seems willing to help inflict on us will simply lead to more and worse pain.

DAVID LLOYD KLEPPER

Jerusalem

Sir, - Among the most striking aspects of the interview were Olmert's completely inappropriate, and wrong, "admissions" that Israel has violated its commitments and, perhaps more tellingly, his claim that Israelis have to understand that Israel's closest allies, including the US, envision an Israel with 1967 borders.

Olmert could not be more wrong when it comes to public opinion and political analysis in the US. No responsible member of Congress sees an Israel with 1967 borders, and in visit after visit to Capitol Hill we hear the same refrain, that Olmert has either misread the political will here or deliberately undercut it for his own agenda - as they complained Ehud Barak did in earlier years.

DAVID SCHOEN

Letters

Atlanta

Sir, - A deep-seated need for friends "out there" instead of securing safety here has guided Ehud Olmert for years. What about the age-old question: What have they done for us lately? Where were our friends as Hizbullah armed itself to the teeth following the UN truce which forbade that; and as Hamas has followed suit via the Philadelphi corridor, which we gave up in return for our friends' promises? Where have our friends been as our Negev is bombarded daily for years?

And where will our friends be when, within the '67 borders, we are bombarded daily from the West Bank? Answer: Where they have always been - at home, saying good things about us.

AVIGDOR BONCHEK

Jerusalem

Democracy ain't all

Sir, - In "The asymmetry confronting Bush" (January 4) David Horovitz noted the "urgency of the democratic dangers" as evoked by Prime Minister Olmert. He concurred that such concern is appropriate, as sooner or later "a compromise will have to be made between the river and the sea over either territory, democratic rights, or the Jewishness of Israel," and that the vast majority of Israelis are "not prepared to compromise on a Jewish state and a democratic one."

However, as recent reality has shown, if Israel were to withdraw from the West Bank without an appropriate security apparatus - as may happen in the foreseeable future and as occurred in Gaza - then I think a majority of Israelis, their homes threatened on a daily basis by a barrage of Kassams, Grads or Katushyas, would (unfortunately) prefer to rule another people - yes, undemocratically.

JAY ZUCKERMAN

Oranit

Good plan!

Sir, - Seth Clyman's solution to end the Kassam rocket attacks in Sderot was right on! I would only add the suggestion that Mahmoud Abbas be invited to set up his tent next to Bush ("My plan to stop the Kassams now," Letters, January 6).

FRED CROWN-TAMIR

Mevaseret Zion

Vilna'i on Barghouti

Sir, - Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilna'i's remarks about releasing Marwan Barghouti were ill-advised, to say the least ("Vilna'i backs Barghouti release as part of Schalit prisoner swap," January 6). When will our leadership understand that Hamas, and Fatah, care nothing for the Palestinian prisoners, who are considered only a tool to impress the gullible Europeans and others, and for use as a bargaining chip.

To underline this I suggest we choose up to 50 Palestinian prisoners who would be exchanged for Gilad Schalit. Every day they should be placed on a bus ready to go, and returned to captivity every evening that agreement is not reached, with articles and photos sent to every available international news agency.

The opinion and support of the international community are crucial to the Palestinians, and publicity showing how little the Arabs actually care for their brethren might ring a bell with that community and have some positive results here in Israel.

Letters

I. LEWIS

Netanya

Lantos & Wallenberg

Sir, - It is symbolic that Rep. Tom Lantos (D- Burlingame) announced his illness and his stepping-down in the same month that we commemorate the day Raoul Wallenberg - the man who saved Lantos and his wife more than 60 years ago - was taken by the Soviets, never to be seen again ("Lantos to quit US Congress," January 3).

Lantos never forgot the man who saved his life. When elected to Congress in 1981, he was the driving force behind president Reagan awarding Wallenberg honorary US citizenship. Lantos was also the first to sign our "100,000 Names for 100,000 Lives" campaign to disclose the fate of Wallenberg. We know he will continue his work to preserve the memory and uncover Wallenberg's fate.

DANIEL RAINER

Int'l Raoul Wallenberg

Foundation

Jerusalem

Why new moms

get depressed

Sir, - Re "Post-natal depression hits 1 in 10" (January 6): A woman is often expected to experience the discomforts of pregnancy in silence since "pregnancy is not a disease," undergo natural childbirth since "women have been doing it since the beginning of time," breastfeed successfully since "any woman can do it if she really wants to" and return to her pre-pregnancy weight by her first postpartum checkup or else she's "let herself go." On top of it all, she is expected to forget what she went through giving birth, because "it's all worth it."

Personally, I have been subjected to a midwife who told me to "stop being a baby"; a gynecologist who castigated me for not losing my "baby fat" by my six-week checkup, and numerous Tipat Halav nurses who harshly criticized me for everything from not breastfeeding to not hanging a toy on the carriage.

Pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period are physically and emotionally challenging; however, women are expected to remain silent regarding their experiences, while taking the abuse of others. Is it any wonder that 10% suffer from depression?

VICTORIA FEINERMAN

Petah Tikva

35, and counting

Sir, - Mazal tov to Yaakov Kirschen for his first 35 years of Dry Bones (January 6). I once wrote him a criticism of an inadvertent mistake he used to make frequently, and he's never done it again. Keep up the good work!

M.M. VAN ZUIDEN

Jerusalem

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Letters

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