

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 3:55:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223444352

Documents (100)

1. EDITORIAL: Butcher of Beirut

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

2. News Summary

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

3. News Summary

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

4. LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

5. Ten Israeli reservists killed SINGLE STRIKE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas



Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

6. 'No one sees policy as credible'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

7. Across the Middle East, Sermons Critical of the U.S.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

8. Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Sep 30, 2006

9. Israeli army raids Lebanon

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

10. Debate on crisis in the Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

11. Britain braced for bird flu

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

12. Boy George faces jail if he won't rake park World at a glance

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

13. SEVEN DAYS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

14. Young defector who fitted mold of martyr - Abraham Rabinovich - Jerusalem

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

15. Syria 's secular regime attempts to ride a religious revival MIDDLE EAST: Bashar al-Assad is making

unfamiliar displays of piety to defuse Islamist discontent with his rule

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

17. <u>Saturday Comment: News Matrix: 18.02.06 - 24.02.06</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

18. News Summary

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

19. International Briefs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

20. Politicians Court a Not-So-Silent Minority: Israeli Arabs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

22. Jobless and lawless: Armed militants in Gaza Intifada is ended, but not the violence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

23. Prime minister's questions

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

24. Havana prays, while Little Havana parties

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

25. NO GENERAL TO BE ACCEPTED AFTER MUSHARRAF'S EXIT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

26. Olaf Wiig in kidnap video

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

27. Stay in Touch

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

28. Israeli Visa Policy Traps Thousands of Palestinians in a Legal Quandary

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

29. Of racism, tyranny, and oppression

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

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

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

31. <u>Focus: Middle East Crisis: THE ROAD TO WAR?: It started with the seizure of one young Israeli soldier by</u>
Palestinian militants. This weekend the Middle East teeters on the brink of a regional war as the world stands

by, apparently helpless to intervene. Jason Burke, Julie Flint in Beirut, Inigo Gilmore in Nahariya, Conal Urquhart in Gaza and Patrick Wintour in St Petersburg report

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

32. Blair admits to cabinet splits over his support for Bush on Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

33. One Last Thing | Democracy, of itself, not solution to all problems

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

34._democracy tide has turned

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

35. EGYPTIAN BLAST 23 killed, Aussies hurt in triple attack Bombing suspects held

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

36. Debate on the crisis in the Middle East



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

37. Keeping Memory Alive ON THE GO

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

38. Bush must abandon failed security policy, presidential hopeful says

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

39. Tale of Two Hostages

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

40. Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

41. All eyes on the Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

42. Israeli onslaught continues

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

43. Hill protesters slam Harper for response to crisis: PM showed 'immaturity' by not denouncing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

44. WHAT A WEEK

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

45. National Briefs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

46. <u>'Islamic fascism' is not a new term</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

47. DIGEST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

48. ISLAMIC CULTURE OF PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE CHANGED: QAZI

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

49. West Bank pull-out off the agenda as Olmert counts cost of failed war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

50._17/04/06

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

51. Should Canada seek talks with Hezbollah?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

52. West Bank pull-out off the agenda as Olmert counts cost of failed war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

53. West Bank pull-out off the agenda as Olmert counts cost of failed war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

54. Canada praised for fighting Taliban: Clinton weighs in on Mideast troubles

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

55. Why won't Israel just exchange prisoners? THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

56. Cruel, corrupt and full of hatred - it's Iran 's mullahs who are to blame

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

57. 17/04/06



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

58. Israel strike kills dozens in Lebanon 20 children among dead Rice cancels Beirut trip

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

59. Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true commitment is to the global market

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

60. We can't bear pictures of the dead. Hezbollah want to see nothing else

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

61. Israeli missiles pound Gaza into new P Dark Age in 'collective punishment'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

62. The price of saving Shalit

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

63. Work is worth the risk of arrest

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

64._17/04/06

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

65. The next threat: extreme dolphins

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

66. Envoys' fury as Straw approves secret talks with Arab terrorists

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

67. RALLIES IN MUSLIM WORLD SLAM POPE'S REMARKS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

68. News Summary

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

69. ISRAELIS HAVE NO MONOPOLY ON PAIN

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

70. Israeli envoy denies force disproportionate

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

71. Middle East crisis: Al-Qaida: Bin Laden's deputy calls for global war on 'crusaders'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

72. Bin Laden deputy urges Muslims everywhere to fight 'crusaders'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

73. Guardian Weekly: Sympathy flees as rockets rain down on Sderot

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

News

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

74. Iragi PM comments on alleged marine massacre

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

75. Iran 'terrorists' can stop mullahs' nukes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

76. WHAT'S AHEAD THIS YEAR: PERISCOPE Cox Newspapers' foreign correspondents and free-lancers tell you what to expect from their part of the world in 2006.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

77. International Briefs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

78. U.S. universities should be more accessible to India students: Bush

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

79. In the World

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

80. 'Our Peace Strategy Has Failed'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

81. Prime minister's press conference

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

82. <u>Comment & Debate: We need to engage with all strands of Muslim opinion: The British government is making a mistake if it believes it can understand a community by talking to just one organisation</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

83. Once Again, Gazans Are Displaced by Israeli Occupiers

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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Sep 30, 2006

84. Deal directly with Latin America, Canada urged

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

85. Muslim who ran cartoons paying the price Efforts at dialogue get overwhelmed

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Sep 30, 2006

86. Palestinians forced to scavenge for food on rubbish dumps

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

87. Experts discuss Middle East in U. Iowa area

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

88. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

89. Palestinians forcedto scavenge for food on rubbish dumps

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

90. OPPOSITION, GOVT JOIN HANDS IN SLAMMING ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST LEBANON

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

91. Islamists assail U.S. and its 'puppets' MIDDLE EAST CRISIS / Blaming U.S. policy for rising radicalism

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

92. Arab regimes fear Islamists' political dividend

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

93. Israel says no to a ceasefire

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

94. On the Hopes for a Mideast Truce

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

95. Sonic boom attacks spread trauma across Gaza TERRIFYING TACTICS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

96. <u>Middle East conflict puts 'Rapture Index' up high: Websites anticipating Second Coming of Christ say events</u> in Israel are proof the Bible's prophecy is being fulfilled

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

97. Navy warships sail to rescue Britons caught in Beirut hell MoD forced to act as 10,000 nationals are trapped

<u>in war zone</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

98. Israel is also part of the violence in the Mideast

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

99. London targeted by Hezbollah bombers Sleeper cells are poised to strike throughout Europe

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2006

100. Blogosphere abuzz with tales of Rapture, end of the world

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006



EDITORIAL: Butcher of Beirut

The Nation (AsiaNet)
January 8, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 380 words

Body

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is reportedly fighting for his life after suffering a massive brain haemorrhage. Even if he survives, his political life, according to close aides, would come to an end; so extensive has been the brain damage. Mr Sharon has fought for the Zionist cause of expansionist Israel ruthlessly all his life, beginning as a full-fledged terrorist, and ending as a supervisor of state terror. He terrorised Palestinians out of their homes and lands, marauding against their properties, forcibly occupying them for Jews in Diaspora to come and settle. This cruel mission he continued even after joining the army, where his actions in the 1956 and 1967 wars showed an almost psychopathic recklessness. But the low point of an already low career came when he was a cabinet minister, in the unprovoked slaughter at Sabra and Shattila in Lebanon in 1982 where over 1000 died, including women and children. Although the Israeli Chief Justice whitewashed him as "indirectly" responsible, the evidence directly points a finger at him. The irony is that today Palestinians, legitimately fighting for their homeland, are being called terrorists by Western leaders and press, while Sharon, who shares with many other Israelis the harrowing deeds of looting, arson and kidnapping is being hailed as a statesman for vacating the Gaza Strip. He is also the instigator of the second Intifadah by his controversial visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

No doubt, as PM he demolished Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip in the teeth of opposition from his Likud stalwarts, but only when he realised that holding on to them was working against Israel's interests. To the world, he tried to project the evacuation as a definite advance in the peace process but lost no time in expanding settlements in the West Bank. With his absence, his newly formed Kadima party's chances in upcoming polls have become doubtful. For one thing, the outcome also depends on how <u>Hamas</u> fares in Palestine's January 25 poll.

Mr Sharon's nature has been best characterised by Uzi Ben Ziman, an Israeli journalist, in his biography as "irascible, vulgar, foul-mouthed, belligerent, haughty, suspicious, disloyal, demanding of total obedience, a poor scholar, outrageously untruthful, violent and vicious."

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The New York Times
February 24, 2006 Friday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 956 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-10

Violence Grows in Iraq After Bombing of Mosque

An outpouring of sectarian fury continued to shake Iraq after the bombing of a major Shiite shrine, leaving at least 138 Iraqis dead and political negotiations over a new government in shambles. A1

A day after the bombing, Iraqis woke to a country as close to open civil war as it has come, expressing shock, assigning blame and setting up makeshift roadblocks in their neighborhoods.

Α1

Roof Collapse Kills 56 in Russia

A roof laden with snow collapsed over a popular vegetable market in an outer district of Moscow, killing at least 56 people, mostly young men from Central Asia and the Caucasus. A3

Old Conflict Reopens in Nigeria

More than 100 people in Nigeria have been killed in the worst violence yet linked to anger over cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, reigniting old ethnic and political tensions between the country's Muslims and Christians. A8

Europe Aid May Bypass Hamas

The European Union is considering making direct payments to the moderate Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, as a way of supporting him while trying to maintain financial pressure on <u>Hamas</u>, the anti-Israeli militant group that swept to power in elections last month. A9

Visa Delays Test U.S. and India

Complaints from three Indian scientists about visa applications for the United States have stirred a diplomatic tempest just days before President Bush is to visit India. A6

U.N. Rights Council Hits Snag

Secretary General Kofi Annan and human rights groups said that a resolution on a new Human Rights Council for the United Nations fell short of their expectations but still provided the best option for replacing the discredited Human Rights Commission. The American ambassador, John R. Bolton, said it should be renegotiated. A4

NATIONAL A12-20

Dubai Company May Delay Move Into U.S. Ports

The Dubai company at the center of a political furor over its plans to take over some operations at six American ports said that it planned to close the deal next week but that it would "not exercise control" over its new operations in the United States while the Bush administration tried to calm opposition in Congress. A1

Twins in the Classroom

Lawmakers in the Illinois House passed a resolution recommending that school districts take parental preference into consideration when deciding whether to separate twins in classrooms. A1

Alabama, the 2nd Peach State

Alabama legislators have some fences to mend with neighboring Georgia after state representatives passed a resolution naming peaches Alabama's official tree fruit. A12

A Big Gift and a Big Tax Break

Boone Pickens, the often controversial Texas oilman turned investor, took advantage of a temporary tax break to make a gift that propelled him into the ranks of the nation's top philanthropists last year. A12

Bush Raises Money for G.O.P.

President Bush plunged into the 2006 midterm elections, headlining back-to-back fund-raising events for Republican candidates in Indiana and Ohio, bringing in at least \$1.6 million, party officials said. A16

Disaster Response Plan

The Bush administration, acknowledging the multitude of Hurricane Katrina failures, advocated giving federal agencies from the Pentagon to the Department of Justice a greater role in the nation's disaster response playbook. A19

Disputes Over Storm Cleanup

Dozens of courthouse disputes and public controversies have erupted recently over the still-gargantuan task of removing tons of debris in Louisiana and Mississippi, almost six months after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit. A1

NEW YORK/REGION B1-7

Anthrax Victim Failed To Declare Skins, U.S. Says

Federal authorities say Vado Diomande, the New York City man who has inhalation anthrax, could have avoided infection had he properly declared the animal skins he was bringing back from Africa with him, and which are believed to have made him sick. B1

In Hot Pursuit of Bicyclists

The New York police have regularly conducted aggressive pursuits of biyclists participating in the monthly Critical Mass group ride, despite guidelines that urge caution when chasing cars. B1

Albany's Plan to Combat Flu

Each county in New York would be charged with formulating its own response plan in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza in the state, according to a formal plan released by the State Health Department. B1

FASHION B8

WEEKEND E1-30; E31-40

ESCAPES F1-11

OBITUARIES A21

SPORTSFRIDAY D1-8

Arakawa Wins Gold; Cohen Falls

Shizuka Arakawa, left, of Japan won her country's first medal at these Olympics, taking the gold in <u>women</u>'s figure skating. The American Sasha Cohen could not manage her demons, fell on her first jump and ended up stunned to take home even a silver medal. A1

BUSINESS DAY C1-14

U.S. and the Port Business

In the outcry over who should run America's port terminals, one trend appears to have been overlooked: companies in the United States began withdrawing from the business decades ago. C1

New Fannie Mae Evidence

An internal investigation has uncovered new evidence that senior executives of Fannie Mae manipulated its accounting in the 1990's to meet earnings projections so that top executives could receive more than \$27 million in bonuses. C1

Wal-Mart's Health Benefits

Wal-Mart Stores, facing a raft of state legislation that would require it to increase spending on employee health insurance, said it planned to ease several longstanding restrictions on who is eligible for the company's benefits. C1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A22-23

Editorials: Reaping what you sow; outrage in Samarra; Francis X. Clines on city life: the great cormorant calls.

Columns: Paul Krugman, Thomas L. Friedman

Crossword E5

Weather A18

TV I	istings	E29
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http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo

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February 11, 2006 Saturday
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Section: Section A; Column 3; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 919 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-7

Ex-C.I.A Officer Says U.S. Ignored Prewar Data

A C.I.A. veteran who oversaw intelligence assessments about the Middle East from 2000 to 2005 accused the Bush administration of ignoring or distorting the prewar evidence on a broad range of issues related to Iraq in an effort to justify the American invasion of 2003. A6

The American general in charge of training the new Iraqi military after Baghdad fell says the Bush administration's strategy to use those forces to replace American troops was hobbled by poor prewar planning.

A6

Iraqi officials certified the results of parliamentary elections, setting Iraq on a timeline for forming a new government, while the kidnappers of an American journalist issued a new deadline for killing her if their demands were not met. A6

France Backs Russia on Hamas

France endorsed Russia's move to hold talks on the Middle East conflict with <u>Hamas</u>, the radical Islamic Palestinian group, saying the discussion could "contribute to advancing our positions." A7

Danish Cartoon Editor on Leave

Flemming Rose, the Danish editor whose decision to publish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad helped provoke weeks of fury in the Muslim world, said he was leaving his newspaper on indefinite vacation. A5

Russian Forces Fight Militants

A clash between armed militants and security officers in southwestern Russia ended after more than 24 hours of sporadic fighting, with 12 militants and at least 6 security officers dead. A5

Ancient Tomb Opened in Egypt

An intact tomb, the first discovered in 84 years at the Valley of the Kings in Egypt, was opened just 16 feet from King Tutankhamen's tomb. A5

NATIONAL A8-12

Former Chief of FEMA Lashes Back at Superiors

Michael D. Brown, the former federal emergency management chief who became a ridiculed symbol of the Bush administration's flawed response to Hurricane Katrina, returned in anger to Capitol Hill and lashed back at his former superiors, saying the administration was too focused on terrorism to respond properly to natural disasters. A1

Telecom Companies Questioned

Though Washington has been caught up in the debate over the National Security Agency's domestic surveillance program, one set of major players has kept silent: telecommunications corporations, who are now being questioned about their possible role in the program. A11

Parade Battle in San Francisco

Every year throngs marvel at the Chinese New Year Parade in San Francisco, the oldest and largest in the country. But this year's parade has been marred by a public battle over the decision to exclude practitioners of Falun Gong, a movement outlawed in China, where the government routinely arrests and detains followers. A8

Attacks on Mexican Border

American officials said Mexican criminal syndicates were stepping up their attacks on American agents patrolling the border as efforts to stem the flow of immigrants and drugs into the United States intensify. A9

Beliefs A12

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Group Blasts Drug Safeguards

The nation's leading dermatology association told an advisory panel that the government-approved system for preventing pregnant <u>women</u> from taking Accutane, the acne drug linked to miscarriages and severe birth defects, is a "disaster." A11

NEW YORK/REGION B1-5

Man Confronts Mother Convicted for Starving Him

Bruce Jackson, 21, who two years ago was found rummaging through a neighbor's trash, for the first time publicly confronted his adoptive mother, as she was about to be sentenced to 7 years in prison for starving him and his three younger brothers. The case drew national attention to the failures of New Jersey's welfare system. A1

Former Governor Released

The former governor of Connecticut, John G. Rowland, was discharged from federal prison, two days before his scheduled release date. He served more than 10 months on a corruption conviction for accepting \$107,000 in gifts and vacations from people doing business with the state. B1

Churches Still in Limbo

Despite months of waiting, the faithful at dozens of Roman Catholic churches and schools across the Archdiocese of New York might have to wait until late spring to find out whether they will be forced to close as part of the largest reorganization in the more than 150-year history of the archdiocese. B1

FASHION B20

SPORTSSATURDAY D1-8

OBITUARIES C14

ARTS B7-19

Makeover for the Met

Peter Gelb, who takes over as the Metropolitan Opera's first new general manager in 16 years, has laid out broad-ranging plans to remake the venerable house. A1

BUSINESS DAY C1-13

A Record Trade Deficit

The United States trade deficit widened to a record \$726 billion in 2005, adding more fuel to the increasingly partisan debate between advocates of further globalization and those who contend that free trade is causing the loss of too many American manufacturing jobs. A1

Improper Trade Verdict

A New York State judge has found that Clark E. McLeod, the former chief executive of McLeod-USA, a once highflying telecommunications company, is liable for improper trading of hot new stock offerings during the technology stock boom. C1

Job Cuts at Volkswagen

Volkswagen, the German auto maker, announced that it planned to eliminate up to 20,000 jobs in the next three years. C1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A14-15

Editorials: Another cave-in on the Patriot Act; Congress's duty on energy; a wink and a nod for lobbying reform; political skeletons, cut and pasted.

Columns: Maureen Dowd, John Tierney.

Bridge B18 Crossword B16 TV Listings B19 Weather A16 http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 5B

Length: 2453 words

Byline: VINCENT J. FARLEY, CATHERINE BOONE SHEALY, JOHN FOSTER, PAUL SIMS, D. DEMETRIUS PRATHER, EUGENE D. RHODES, HOWARD S. BROWN, SHAUL LAVAN, JEROLD S. LOWER, DAVID ROBINSON, CAROLYN GEHL, TONNA HARRIS-BOSSELMANN, JERRY SCHULL, DOROTHY FOSTER, ANN

W. YEARWOOD

Body

President Bush: Responses to Cynthia Tucker's column "United States reaps the grief Bush has sown," @issue, Feb. 26

Boykin's extremism deserves criticism

Cynthia Tucker's column is right on target.

She correctly observes that Gen. William "Jerry" Boykin's well-publicized views on Islam have significantly hurt the United States. Clearly, any foreign leader preparing for a meeting with him knows where he stands.

I think Boykin has gotten easy treatment from the media, considering his speeches regarding the presidential election. One of the major networks ran tapes of him speaking before large audiences in churches in 2002/2003. He said that George Bush was not elected by the American people; "he was appointed by God."

VINCENT J. FARLEY

Farley, of Atlanta, is a retired U.S. State Department senior foreign service officer.

Bush-bashing hits out-of-line mark

The conclusion of Cynthia Tucker's column is: When waging a war on terror, you don't have to make sense. In the United States, it is all President Bush's fault.

There is a war going on that truly does not make sense. It is not our strong war on terror. It is Tucker's "War on Bush" that is ridiculous. When are we going to see some editorials that are not totally slanted and slanderous?

CATHERINE BOONE SHEALY, Atlanta

Lopsided picture of war on terror

Once again, Cynthia Tucker goes off on multiple tangents trying to tie unrelated things together.

Saddam Hussein is a secular nut case, and Osama bin Laden is a religious nut case, but Tucker doesn't want to admit that the only things tying them together are Islam and hatred for civilization. As for her disparaging remarks about Gen. William Boykin, he only stated what most Americans believe.

I don't defend President Bush, and I certainly don't like the ports deal. But don't try to make Saddam less of a monster and don't try to make the average American feel sorry for the Arabs. After all, "peace loving" Muslims started this war.

JOHN FOSTER, Newnan

Blatant slam just weakens credibility

Cynthia Tucker's column takes the biggest piece of cake in the "I hate President Bush" sweepstakes. It was so blatantly anti-Bush that she has finally removed any vestige of credibility with regard to anything related to the president.

She seems to imply that Bush is responsible for other people's xenophobia. She scarcely had time to mention that Bush was on the correct side of the Dubai ports issue. Even Sen. Hillary Clinton's (D-N.Y.) comments are implicitly Bush's fault. Incredible!

PAUL SIMS, Birmingham

Policies leave nation in a bind

I agree completely with Cynthia Tucker's assessment of the repercussions of the Bush administration's continued policies and practices, both foreign and domestic.

Bush and his administration continue to infringe on the most basic rights of every American, while politicizing our national security. To add insult to injury to the American people, they have creatively created a facade complete with anti-Arab sentiments and a senseless war against something intangible called "terrorism," and have used fear to their advantage.

The Rev. D. DEMETRIUS PRATHER, Atlanta

Media remain blinded by hate

In my almost 80 years, I don't believe that I have seen a president so hated by the news media as is George W. Bush.

Who is Cynthia Tucker going to blame for all the ills of this country and the world when Bush's term is over? The sheep don't think the wolves are out there; at least they try to pretend the wolves are not coming. But the wolves will come, and the sheep will try to hide and hope the sheepdogs can save them.

EUGENE D. RHODES, Roswell

'Heart of Gold' fails to wow

I disagree with Bob Townsend's analysis of the movie "Neil Young: Heart of Gold" ("Neil Young can stop searchin'; concert film has heart of gold" Movies & More, Feb. 24).

I have never been to Nashville, and now I never will go there. What I saw at the Tara was an hour and 43 minutes of country-western. I am sort of a country-western fan, but walked out of this one when it became too much to tolerate. Most country-western artists seem to be in need of haircuts. It irks me that this movie received a critic's grade of A-minus.

There were only two of us at the 4:45 p.m. performance --- only one after I walked out, and that was probably one too many.

HOWARD S. BROWN, Atlanta

U.S. can't trust *Hamas* with aid

A recent letter writer forgets that Israel offered the West Bank for peace under the Clinton-brokered accords ("Middle East peace rests in Israel's hands," Feb. 25). Yasser Arafat responded with war. The recent election of <u>Hamas</u> simply confirms Palestinian intentions. <u>Hamas</u> publicly vows to destroy Israel, and even the Jewish people. Furthermore, the new <u>Hamas</u> prime minister refused to accept previous treaties.

Aid to the Palestinian Authority serves little purpose. A Palestinian Authority report conceded this month that \$700 million has been stolen in recent years. The multimillion-dollar houses of numerous Palestinian leaders along the Gaza seashore are testament to that theft. If <u>Hamas</u> follows its mentor Iran, it will become yet another corrupt theocratic regime.

The foreign-funded Palestinian budget mostly pays the salaries of 70,000 militiamen. Many are involved in terror, and some run criminal gangs. Precious little goes to actual services. The United States should rather provide aid to the innocent victims in Darfur than the militants in the West Bank.

SHAUL LAVAN, Atlanta

Bad behavior trumps profanity

As a boy, I heard much profane, filthy language at school and summer camp ("Profanity," Letters, Feb. 26). I went on to two doctoral degrees and to a successful professional career. My ability to express myself well in speech and writing was highly respected. I think my moral and ethical standards have been above serious reproach.

Since moving to the Southeast, I have been alternately amused and disgusted by the emphasis on "proper" language. I find prissy euphemisms annoying when we all know what they mean.

Morality is fairly and honestly dealing with others, not the words used to describe it. No one was ever harmed by taboo words, but many by bad deeds. It is time to attend more to our behavior rather than the niceties of verbal expression.

JEROLD S. LOWER, Atlanta

Stepping on abortion rights

With Samuel Alito and John Roberts on the Supreme Court, the stars are aligned to take away a woman's right to choose to have an abortion even in the case of rape or incest ("Bill targets Roe v. Wade," Page One, Feb. 25).

So this is the philosophy of the anti-abortion movement? Then why don't they lobby just as hard against capital punishment? Where is the legislation for treatment programs for sex and drug offenders in lieu of prison time? Where is the access to contraception without a court order? Why are Lisa Clark and her teenage husband being prosecuted? At least they conceived their baby willingly. Or is this really about controlling <u>women</u> in our fundamentally misogynistic society and less about the sacredness of life?

As a husband, I don't think I'd be willing to watch my wife carry and deliver the child of her rapist. And I believe that I'd kick the teeth out of any government hack who would use the rule of law to force any couple or woman to put up with any such cruel and unusual punishment for being the victim of a violent crime.

DAVID ROBINSON, Norcross

Illegal immigration: Responses to "Senate bill reveals rift on illegals," Page One, Feb. 26

To solve problem, face it head-on

Sen. Chip Roger's (R-Woodstock) illegal immigration bill does not get at the source of the problem: Our craven addiction to foreign labor. As long as consumers demand cheap landscaping, cheap chicken and other fast food, cheap housecleaning and low construction costs, businesses will feed that habit.

The Georgia consumer is the problem, pure and simple. Rogers himself admits that when he needed some work done at home, he wondered about the guys who showed up. But he said they assured him they were legal. I propose we all show the courage Rogers showed and ask the people who are serving you the next time you are eating Mexican food or fried chicken, having the grass cut or getting the house cleaned: Are all you guys legal? Good --- bring it on!

CAROLYN GEHL, Canton

Paper should avoid racial undertones

When did "illegal" become a noun? And why is it used to refer to only a certain group of people who break the law? If I drive too fast, I am committing the illegal act of speeding, but would anyone refer to me as an "illegal"? Worse, if people steal, rape or murder, their acts are certainly illegal, in fact criminal, but they are never addressed as "illegals."

The term illegal, as I see and hear it used currently, has racial undertones. People who overstay their visas or who enter the United States without inspection are breaking the law --- but perhaps seeking work so that you can feed your family isn't the most serious of offenses.

TONNA HARRIS-BOSSELMANN, Tucker

Hiring practice drains economy

It amazes me that some people think they should feel compassion for someone from another nation who has broken, and continues to break, our laws. And they naively believe those people are helping our economy.

If a business can hire an illegal immigrant for rock-bottom wages and pay no worker's compensation, insurance, Social Security or any payroll taxes, why would they hire a legal resident? Legal workers will always cost more to employ. I believe such businesses should be prosecuted. The business that plays by the book cannot compete, and eventually fails, leaving legal workers unemployed. How can this be good for our economy?

Sen. Chip Rogers' bill is a good start.

JERRY SCHULL, Marietta

Many work hard, seek a better life

Senate Bill 529 is inhumane and irrelevant. Denying health and education benefits to undocumented immigrant adults will negatively affect us all.

As an educator, I have helped thousands of immigrants in Georgia learn English and become good citizens over the past 30 years. The vast majority of them have been motivated, hard-working people who came to America seeking a better life. To deprive those who are undocumented of higher education is immoral. To punish those who hire

them is also wrong, and may lead to discrimination against all foreigners. Making local laws is irrelevant because immigration is a national matter. Federal comprehensive immigration reform is urgently needed, not harsh, unforgiving bills such as SB 529.

DOROTHY FOSTER, Sautee

Employers, workers deserve solid policy

Instead of trying to "catch" illegal immigrants or "expose" employers, we need a method to permit them to work. Why not allow the employer to verify that he needs the worker, issue him a permit and declare him legal? This would put the responsibility on the employer to be something of a sponsor, not a lawbreaker, and hopefully would guarantee that the worker and his family would remain employed and seek citizenship.

These families are assets to our communities and provide both economic and social benefits. What do we gain by trying to "catch" them? We simply uproot the families, whose children were born here, making them move again and again to prevent being discovered and deported. We already have forced them to dishonesty in forging papers to drive and work.

When a family has left home in a foreign country to make a new start here with eagerness and skills, it is not necessary to demean them. Surely our elected officials can come up with a more workable policy than punishment for employers and deportation for those whose skills we need.

ANN W. YEARWOOD, Concord

Honor Roosevelt with a state holiday

What a shame our legislators failed to make Jan. 30, the birthday of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, FDR Day in Georgia ("Blocking FDR Day, on moral grounds? @issue, Feb. 26). How can they talk about "mistresses" when it was common knowledge in Warm Springs and among FDR's inner circle that he was a dying man in 1944 and 1945?

How sad that our leaders have forgotten that FDR established the premier center for the treatment of polio here in Georgia, and that the foundation he established was instrumental in finding a cure for polio. Do they not remember that Roosevelt put their fathers to work in the 1930s and sent electricity to rural America --- and don't they remember who led us through World War II?

Can't we honor this world leader, who adopted our state, with FDR Day?

HAL RAPER, Atlanta and Warm Springs

NASCAR: Responses to "NASCAR outraces ASO bid," Arts & Books, Feb. 26

Don't pass up on Symphony Center

I am astonished that the city of Atlanta would consider having the NASCAR hall of fame building erected in lieu of the proposed Atlanta Symphony Center.

Atlanta has been presented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have the architectural statement it needs to be recognized as a metropolis of culture.

The proposed Symphony Center will do for Atlanta what the Sydney Opera House has for Australia. Architect Santiago Calatrava has designed a magnificent structure, and it would be a disaster if ignored.

RICHARD KLIEMT, Roswell

Hall for car racing does not compare

Local officials typically endorse the values of NASCAR fans and consider car racing to be more important than improving the city's culture.

A new concert hall is far more valuable than a building full of trophies, plaques and tributes to race-car drivers. Classical music contributes much more to a people's culture than a sport associated with fast cars, beer and near-crashes.

More shocking is the possibility that architect Santiago Calatrava's beautiful design for a new concert hall may be dumped.

If any expenditure is worth it, that one is. He is the greatest architect to come along in the past 50 years, and Atlanta has grossly undervalued his work before.

It would be a black mark against the city and its officials if we were to once again dump Calatrava's services because a few people are too stupid and shortsighted to realize how valuable he could be to Atlanta.

ALBERT SANCHEZ MORENO, East Point

Redirect funds

If Atlanta doesn't get the NASCAR hall of fame, the city and state governments should redirect all public funding intended for the museum to the Atlanta Symphony Center.

TIM COWLBECK, Atlanta

Holocaust memories

After reading Richard Halicks' article about Joe Maloy, a POW in one of the German prison camps in 1944, I wonder how anyone can ever doubt that there truly was a Holocaust ("Bearing witness," @issue, Feb. 26). I have not personally known anyone who had that horrible experience, but when there are victims still living to tell their story, how can anyone in their right mind doubt that it's true?

I pray, with all my heart, that God has a special place in heaven for our POWs and every Holocaust victim.

MARIE L. PONDER, Madison

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Ten Israeli reservists killed; SINGLE STRIKE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

August 7, 2006 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 6

Length: 388 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Beirut and agencies

Body

FIGHTING and killing continued unabated in the Israel-Lebanon war over the weekend.

At least 10 people were killed when a Hezbollah rocket struck a building in the northern Israeli village of Kfar Giladi yesterday, medics said. The army said all were reserve soldiers. Ambulance workers said another nine people were wounded, four critically.

Among the Lebanese dead were at least five civilians killed in an air strike on a family home near the southern town of Nabatiyeh and six people - the Lebanese authorities say civilians; the Israelis, Hezbollah militants - who died in an inconclusive Israeli commando raid on Tyre.

The bodies of five more Syrian labourers were found in the ruins of a food depot on the Syrian-Lebanese border that was attacked by Israeli bombs on Friday, bringing the death toll from the incident to 28.

The Israelis say they thought the depot was being used to transport weapons.

The Israelis lost at least two more troops in fighting along the border, and three Israeli-Arab <u>women</u> were killed when a Hezbollah rocket hit their village.

The latest violence brings the Lebanese death toll in the 25-day war to at least 575, although the Lebanese Government says that the real toll, including bodies hidden in rubble in inaccessible border areas, could be more than 900.

Most of the dead are civilians hit by Israeli air strikes in the far south and Shiite districts of Beirut.

Hezbollah admits it has lost about 50 of its fighters, though the Israeli Government claims to have killed more than 400, including 50 this weekend. In contrast, 56 of Israel's 89 casualties are combatants, while the remaining 33 are civilians killed by Hezbollah long-range bombardment of northern Israeli towns and cities.

Over the weekend fighter-bombers destroyed parts of the coast road linking Beirut to northern Syria, cutting Lebanon's last main link to the outside world and a vital aid route.

There seemed little prospect of an end to the violence in the near future, with the Israeli Justice Minister, Haim Ramon, saying Israel will continue to "hit Hezbollah" until a new multinational force is deployed in south Lebanon - a

Ten Israeli reservists killed SINGLE STRIKE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

process that could takes weeks if it happens at all. Israeli security forces arrested the Palestinian parliamentary Speaker, Aziz Dweik, a *Hamas* leader, in the West Bank city of Ramallah yesterday.

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



'No one sees policy as credible'

The Independent (London)

August 4, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 366 words

Byline: Mohammad Sarwar Labour MP for Glasgow Central

Body

"While I condemn the hostage taking of Israeli soldiers and rocket attacks on Israel, I believe the response was disproportionate and appalling.

As a Labour MP, I say with sadness and a heavy heart that the Prime Minister's press conference did not inspire me at all. He needs to take a much more even-handed approach.

He refused to endorse Jack Straw's comments that the Israeli response was disproportionate. He refused to condemn Israel, even over the massacre at Qana in which 60 civilians, including 37 children, died.

How can he say this Government's policy is independent when we have provided logistical support in a British airport for the transport of bombs that are being used against innocent men, **women** and children in Lebanon?

Tony Blair talked about wanting to see the spread of democracy in the Middle East and yet at the same time he refuses to talk to <u>Hamas</u>, which was democratically elected, and he stands by while the democratic government of Lebanon is attacked.

He mentioned the creation of a viable Palestinian state and yet he didn't mention the need for the full implementation of UN resolutions 242 and 338, which call on Israel to withdraw its forces to the pre-1967 borders.

He didn't mention the apartheid wall that has caused misery and hardship for many Palestinians. He didn't mention the illegal settlements in the West Bank. There is immense anger among rank-and-file members of the Labour Party and backbench MPs.

He refused again to call for an immediate ceasefire - on both sides. The level of civilian casualties in Lebanon has helped build support for Hizbollah. Yet if George Bush and Mr Blair had called for an immediate ceasefire and Hizbollah had refused to comply, Hizbollah would have faced wide anger, including in the Muslim world.

I was against the Iraq war, I voted against it, but I still believed at the time that at least something good could come out of it and that our Prime Minister would work day and night to bring a peace to the Middle East. This peace now looks distant.

I believe that the Prime Minister's response is not representative of our country's feelings and this is why I have requested, with 15 other Labour MPs, a recalling of Parliament.

Graphic

An Israeli soldier loads shells for a tank at the border REUTERS

Load-Date: August 4, 2006



Across the Middle East, Sermons Critical of the U.S.

The New York Times
July 22, 2006 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8; TURMOIL IN THE MIDEAST: IN THE MOSQUES

Length: 930 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria, July 21

Body

In mosques from Mecca to Marrakesh, sermons at Friday Prayer services underscored both the David-versus-Goliath glamour many Arabs associate with Hezbollah's fight against Israel and their antipathy toward the United States and its allies in the region for doing so little to stop yet another Arab country from collapsing into bloodshed.

"Our brothers are being killed in Lebanon and no one is responding to their cries for help," said Sheik Hazzaa al-Maswari, an Islamist member of Yemen's Parliament, in his Friday sermon at the Mujahid Mosque in Sana, the country's capital.

"Where are the Arab leaders?" he said. "Do they have any skill other than begging for a fake peace outside the White House? We don't want leaders who bow to the White House."

The tone of the sermons suggests that the fighting in Lebanon is further tarnishing the image of the United States in the Arab world as being solely concerned with Israel's welfare and making its allied governments look increasingly like puppets.

"What is creating radicalism in the region is not authoritarian regimes," said Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. "Mainly it is American policy in the region -- survey after survey shows that."

The attacks against Arab leaders from the pulpit were all the more surprising because so many governments have exerted some manner of control over sermons in recent years. Dictating the content of the weekly themes is one means of preventing prayer leaders from launching into the kind of political discussions that could inspire extremists.

Here in Damascus, where the Syrian government has been trying to keep a low profile as the fighting in Lebanon surges, prominent prayer leaders focused on the need to donate generously to help tens of thousands of Lebanese refugees pouring over the border. But they also took other Arab countries to task -- although without mentioning by name such critics of Hezbollah as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan.

"What gives us pain is the Arab position," said Mohamed al-Habash, a cleric who serves in Syria's Parliament, speaking from the pulpit of Al Zahra Mosque. "They are entering a conspiracy against the Arabs, their brothers."

Across the Middle East, Sermons Critical of the U.S.

In an interview, the cleric said the United States was helping religious extremists by encouraging the Israelis to continue their onslaught. By not working harder to stop the deaths of scores of Lebanese <u>women</u> and children, he said, the United States is abetting the recruiting efforts of the likes of Osama bin Laden and the late Abu Musab al-Zargawi.

"The United States is creating more Zarqawis, more bin Ladens in the Mideast every day," Mr. Habash said.

The United States, for its part, blames Syrian support for groups like Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> as being among the root causes of such extremism.

The Saudi government has taken a strong public position against Hezbollah's having brought on the crisis by capturing two Israeli soldiers, last week condemning the organization's "uncalculated adventures." Washington has leaned heavily on that and similar statements in explaining its own position.

Yet the senior Saudi imam delivering the sermon from Islam's holiest mosque in Mecca, broadcast live, presented a rare if discreet criticism of Saudi royal policy.

The Muslim world should be proud of the bravery shown by the Palestinians and the Lebanese confronting Israel, said Sheik Abdul Rahman al-Sudais, who pointedly urged Muslim leaders to return to "sound reason and unify their ranks."

He took an indirect swipe at the United States for claiming to promote human rights while leaving the mounting deaths of civilians all but unmentioned. "Where are those who filled the world with slogans of freedom and democracy?" he asked. "Don't they fear that history will condemn them for their double standards?"

In Egypt, Sheik Khalid Saoudi at the Sayyida Hafsa Mosque in the well-to-do Cairo suburb of Heliopolis, criticized the Saudis and the Arab League for trying to rely on international intervention.

"Every time we rely on the 'big guys,' we get slapped," he told the gathered worshipers, suggesting that Islam was under assault around the world, with conflicts raging in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.

In downtown Cairo, police officers in riot gear prevented several thousand chanting worshipers at sprawling Al Azhar Mosque near the city's main bazaar from taking their protest out into the streets, while thousands marched after sermons in other capitals including Amman, Jordan.

The Iranian government -- whose support of Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> as a means of widening the reach of its Islamic revolution is causing worry in some other Middle Eastern capitals -- also took the opportunity to condemn Arab leaders.

Former president Hashemi Rafsanjani of Iran, speaking at the main Friday Prayer sermon in downtown Tehran, said Arab and Islamic countries "do not even bother to condemn the fact that Muslims are being butchered by nonbelievers."

"This is a historic catastrophe," said Mr. Rafsanjani, who is a Shiite cleric.

He went on to say that all Hezbollah fighters should be considered heroes, according to Reuters. The most radical Shiite cleric in neighboring Iraq, Moktada al-Sadr, also spoke out in support of Hezbollah.

In mosques across the region, virtually every prayer leader used the traditional call-and-response period after the main sermon to ask God to grant a victory to the Muslims. "Amen," responded the congregations in one voice.

Graphic

Photos: In Amman, Jordan, protesters shouted anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans during a rally in solidarity with Lebanon and the Palestinians. (Photo by Ali Jarekji/Reuters)

Outside Al Azhar Mosque in Cairo, a boy waved a Lebanese flag. (Photo by Khaled Desouki/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)

Load-Date: July 22, 2006



Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times
August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 1642 words

Body

Madam, - As in 1996, there is only one word that needs to be said to all those contributors, well meaning and otherwise, who write to defend and excuse Israel's barbaric behaviour in the Middle East. Qana. - Yours, etc,

JIM O'SULLIVAN, Rathedmond, Sligo.

Madam, - After Qana can there be any doubt that the Israeli armed forces are terrorists? - Yours, etc,

Dr COLM STEPHENS, St Patrick's Terrace, Drumcondra, Dublin 3.

Madam, - With the latest massacre perpetrated by the Israelis, surely the time has come for the civilised world to publicly show its disgust at such violations of the most basic principles of international law. We can no longer go on treating the Israeli state as a normal member of the international community. We must now publicly and clearly distance ourselves from such horrific assaults on the most innocent and vulnerable members of the Lebanese population.

The fact that this indefensible attack came just days after the killing of four unarmed members of the UN only underlines the Israeli government's complete indifference to all norms of international conduct and human rights.

I believe the Irish Government should lead the way by calling for the exclusion of Israel from next year's Eurovision Song Contest. This may sound like a trivial action, especially when set against the appalling massacre of children perpetrated by the Israeli state, but such a move would be a very public and high-profile indication that Israel cannot be considered a normal member of the international community while it persists in ignoring that community's most basic precepts. If Israel is not excluded, I believe Ireland should boycott the event.

Israel has placed itself outside the pale of normal civilised conduct. The state of Israel should hang its head in shame, as should any state that defends or excuses it. - Yours, etc,

BRIAN MACGABHANN, Béal an Daingin, Connemara, Co Galway.

Madam, - Alan Shatter (July 29th) makes some telling points about the position of the Irish left on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and by implication on the wider issue of the struggle between the West and growing Islamic fundamentalism. There is confusion, and some plain bad politics, being propagated by some on the Left on these important guestions. As an active member of the Labour Party I hold a different view.

However murky, heartbreaking and confused the war and politics in the Middle East may be, the issue is the right of the state of Israel to exist within the pre-1967 borders. This right is denied to it by both Hizbullah and *Hamas*. The

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

other issue is the growing hold of theocracy, fanaticism and fascism on many Islamic people. The question is where people of the left should stand on these matters.

The struggle going on today between reactionary fundamentalism and the West is a continuation of the conflict which started in Europe over 300 years ago between those who pined for a return to the certainties of pre-Enlightenment politico-religious systems and those who believed, with the likes of Thomas Paine in, the rights of man - liberty, equality and democracy - despite the uncertainty they bring.

There is an unfortunate tendency on the left to identify all who oppose America as objectively progressive. This has often been so, but is not always the case. In the matter of Islamic medievalism and its aggressive political and military manifestations it is certainly not the case. The US has made many mistakes and has needlessly alienated potential allies in this struggle, but it is on the right side this time.

It is the job of all those on the left to be clear where they stand on the basic principles of liberty and equality; to criticise where necessary the American/Israeli actions; to support those elements in the Middle East and elsewhere who oppose the growing fanaticism and fascism in their own societies; and not to confuse anti-Americanism with progressive politics. - Yours, etc,

Cllr JOHN McMANUS, Novara Road, Bray, Co Wicklow.

Madam, - It is ironic that Alan Shatter (July 29th) attacks Michael D Higgins for a "lack of objectivity" in his comments on Israel's military action in Lebanon. Mr Shatter's own contribution owes more to propaganda than to objectivity.

He rightly points out that under international law a state has the right to defend itself and its citizens from attack. By his logic, Lebanon should by now have taken military action against Israel. What exactly has Israel been doing other than attacking the state of Lebanon and its citizens? Israel has not simply sought to overcome the terrorist threat from Hizbullah in a limited military operation. Instead Israeli forces have launched a brutal assault on the civilian population centres of Lebanon.

Israeli politicians claim to have no quarrel with the Lebanese people, yet over 400 Lebanese civilians have died due to Israel's military action. Israel claims to support deployment of the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon, yet Lebanese soldiers perished in an unprovoked Israeli attack on a military base in the first week of the current conflict.

Certainly Lebanon would have the right to defend itself by force and to call in aid from Israel's enemies in Syria and Iran. The world should be thankful that Lebanon's moderate government has called for a ceasefire, instead of exercising the right to defend itself which Mr Shatter has correctly identified.

Mr Shatter also conveniently ignores the unlawful killing of four United Nations observers by Israeli forces at Khiam last Tuesday. This Israeli action showed at best a reckless contempt for human life and at worst a deliberate determination to eliminate UN observers from the scene of the conflict. It is no surprise that apologists for Israeli militarism should wish to gloss over the appalling and possibly deliberate attack on the UN.

Mr Shatter calls upon Michael D Higgins to wake up "to the type of world in which we live" and to the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. Such propaganda seeks to justify Israel's actions at all costs. Israel's supporters would do well to wake up to the reality that terrorism will never be defeated by the slaughter of innocent civilians or UN observers. - Yours, etc,

JOHN WALSH, Dunshaughlin, Co Meath.

Madam, - For the past two weeks your Letters page has been filled with many versions of the history of the conflict in the Middle East, depending on the point being argued. Now all this all pales into insignificance as we learn of the latest war crime committed by the Israelis.

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

The sequence of events was as follows. The Israelis ordered all residents in southern Lebanon to leave. The United Nations requested a three-day ceasefire to allow civilians to leave the area. This was refused by the Israelis and now scores of civilians - old people, **women** and children - have been killed as they slept, by a bomb probably made in the United States.

This pattern of Israeli behaviour had been reported earlier in the conflict. They order people to leave their homes and when they do they are attacked. This is a war crime to add to the many already reported. There is no excuse for this, no justification whatever. What type of nation would allow or even order its armed forces to behave in such a way and how can the Israelis possibly believe that such behaviour is conducive to good relations with their Arab neighbours in years to come? Have they lost all sense of reason and decency?

When are we going to apply the same standards of criticism to Israel as we do to other countries? When are we going to stop feeling residual guilt over the Holocaust? The Israelis and Zionist organisations have used the Holocaust - and I repeat "used" the Holocaust - as a stick with which to beat public opinion and as a cover for the atrocities committed by successive Israeli governments.

It is time to call a spade a spade. If it looks like a war crime, if it smells like a war crime, the chances are it is a war crime. - Yours, etc,

ALAN McPARTLAND, Grange Court, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

Madam, - Few can deny the distress that Lebanese and Palestinian civilians are enduring due to the Israeli offensive against Hizbullah and <u>Hamas</u> but it is disingenuous of commentators to argue that the Israeli response is disproportionate. How should they respond to organisations whose raison d'être is to wipe the Israeli nation from the map?

After Israel withdrew from both Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, both <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah with their incursions have provided casus belli. Israel, as the only true democracy in the Middle East, is entitled to exist peacefully with its neighbours and, difficult as it is to acknowledge for many of us in the West, the endowment of human rights in the region is a two-way process that involves both the recognition of Israel's right to existence and the creation of a Palestinian state.

The real problem lies with Iran and Syria which continued to fund Hizbullah and other other Islamic fundamentalist organisations while Israel was slowly moving towards withdrawing from the West Bank.

There is now no room for moderates in the Middle East and it is unlikely that we will see further acts of withdrawal by Israel, whose very existence has been challenged again. What would you do in Israel's position? - Yours, etc,

CATHAL McCANN, Riverstown, Dundalk.

Madam - Ivana Bacik (July 25th) writes that "the tragic consequences of such a disproportionate reaction to Hizbullah provocation make the inaction of the international community, including our own Government, wholly indefensible".

Arguably it has been the continued inaction over the past six years by the United Nations which, along with many Western governments including our own, turned a blind eye to the arming of the terrorists by Syria and Iran, perhaps for short-term political gain, that has led us to this dreadful conflict. - Yours, etc,

DAVID M ABRAHAMSON, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



Israeli army raids Lebanon

Guardian.com July 17, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 944 words

Highlight: /B Blair leads calls for UN peace force/B More Hizbullah rockets hit Haifa/B 40 British nationals

evacuated

Body

Israeli troops made a brief raid into southern Lebanon overnight to attack Hizbullah bases on the border, the Israeli government revealed today.

News of Israel's ground offensive came as the prime minister, Tony Blair, led calls for an international stabilisation force to be deployed in the area as the only way to stop the violence.

The overnight raid marked the first time Israeli ground troops had been used in six days of conflict with Hizbullah that began after the militant group kidnapped two Israeli troops.

Some analysts believe a major ground invasion of southern Lebanon is being considered by Israel, which wants to remove Hizbullah's capacity to fire missiles over the border. One Israeli newspaper said today that Israel's offensive had so far destroyed a quarter of Hizbullah's fighting capabilities.

An Israeli army spokesman said the troops used overnight were quickly withdrawn. "There was a very small incursion overnight to destroy a few Hizbullah positions immediately on the other side of the fence. That has been done." he said.

The raid came after the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, vowed a "far-reaching" response to a rocket attack yesterday on the northern Israeli city of Haifa that killed eight Israeli railway workers.

There were more Hizbullah rocket attacks on Haifa today, and reports that a building had collapsed. Initial reports said two people were injured and there were fears people could be trapped in the rubble. Hundreds of rockets have hit northern Israel in recent days, reaching as far as 33 miles south of the border.

Israeli jets continued to pound targets in Lebanon today, extending its air raids into the north of the country. At least 23 Lebanese were killed in the latest attacks, reports said.

At least 140 Lebanese civilians have been killed since the violence broke out last week. At least 12 Israeli civilians have died in the rocket attacks, as well as 12 Israeli soldiers and sailors.

Mr Blair called for an international peace keeping force after private talks with the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan.

Israeli army raids Lebanon

Speaking to reporters in St Petersburg, where he is attending the final day of the G8 summit, Mr Blair said: "The only way we are going to have a cessation of violence is if we have an international force deployed into that area."

A small UN contingent has been in the area for many years.

Israel said it was too early to talk about a new deployment of troops under UN or EU auspices. "I don't think we're at that stage yet," said an Israeli government spokeswoman. "We're at the stage where we want to be sure that Hizbullah is not deployed at our northern border."

Lebanese television claimed that an Israeli F-16 was shot down overnight, and showed footage of falling burning debris, but the Israeli military denied it had lost a plane.

Israel's Channel 10 television station reported today that Israel's military was threatening to destroy Lebanon's electricity grid if the rocket attacks did not stop.

About 40 British nationals, mainly <u>women</u>, children and those needing medical care, were evacuated from Beirut early this morning by Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters to be taken to Cyprus.

Two Royal Navy ships are on their way to Lebanon and there are plans for a possible larger evacuation of British nationals. Some 4,000 British families are registered in Lebanon.

In a message to stranded Britons, the Foreign Office said people should "stay put, exercise caution, keep in touch with the embassy and heed local advice" and listen to English language broadcasts.

A cruise ship chartered by France was due to arrive at Beirut's port later today to begin evacuations of French nationals and other European citizens. Russia sent a plane to Jordan this morning to start evacuating its citizens from the region, while the UN was also considering evacuation plans for its staff.

In France, the French president's office said that Dominique de Villepin, the French prime minister, was travelling to Beirut today to meet the Lebanese prime minister, Fuad Saniora, and express the "support and solidarity of the French people in this trial".

Mr Saniora today described Israel's offensive as "terrorism" that would foster extremism in the region.

It is expected that the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, will soon make a visit to the region. In a private conversation about the crisis with Mr Blair at the G8, the US president, George Bush, was overheard saying, "I think Condi is going to go pretty soon".

Yesterday, leaders at the G8 put the onus on Hizbullah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, to end the conflict by freeing the two Israeli troops and stopping the attacks on Israel with rockets.

The Israeli offensive has forced hundreds of thousands of Lebanese to flee, with residents of southern Lebanon going to Beirut or the eastern Bekaa valley, while some of the capital's residents have moved to homes on the hills to the east.

The fighting in Lebanon last week opened a second front for Israel. Israeli jets were also in action in Gaza, where Israel believes one of its soldiers is being held by <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants. Air raids largely destroyed the empty Palestinian foreign ministry and severely damaged about 50 flats nearby.

In the West Bank today, Palestinian militants killed an Israeli soldier and wounded six others when they set off a bomb near troops in Nablus. Meanwhile, police in Jerusalem said they arrested a Palestinian with a large bag containing explosives.

Israel has been attacking Gaza since June 28, three days after <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants tunnelled under the border and attacked an Israeli army post at a Gaza crossing, killing two soldiers and capturing a third.

Israeli army raids Lebanon

Load-Date: July 17, 2006



Debate on crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 1570 words

Body

Madam, - Recent reporting on the escalating and disproportionate attacks by the Israeli armed forces is an indictment of our spineless Government's handwringing reaction.

The Israelis' contention that they are carrying out "pinpoint" attacks on Hizbullah activists is a complete sham. How many more innocent people will have to die before somebody with the power to make a difference decides to take action to stop the slaughter?

The weasel-words of Condoleezza Rice that any ceasefire would be a fraud reflects the unstated satisfaction of the US Government with current Israeli policy. The inaction of our own Government reflects poorly on a nation with a proud humanitarian record. - Yours, etc,

PETER CLIFTON, Peatlands, Midleton, Co Cork.

Madam, - Mary Raftery (Opinion, July 20th) is right. In the face of this palpable wrong - this appalling bombardment of Lebanese civilians by Israeli planes - each of us has a duty to speak out.

I cannot believe how anyone can seek to justify the Israeli attacks. The reports of children dying in the rubble of their homes, of whole families being wiped out as they try to flee the bombing, are utterly horrific. The tragic consequences of such a disproportionate reaction to Hizbullah provocation make the inaction of the international community, including our own government, wholly indefensible. - Yours, etc,

IVANA BACIK, Law School, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

Madam, - All my adult life I have been an ardent supporter of the struggle for freedom of the Palestinian people. I have witnessed with my own eyes the daily suffering they endure under occupation. I fervently support the goal of a secular democratic state in Palestine/Israel where Jew, Muslim and Christian can live together in peace and equality. Yet these strongly held views have never prevented me from stating my unqualified condemnation of the killing of Israeli civilians by the armed wings of *Hamas*, Hizbullah and others.

What I find shocking, therefore, is the total failure of those whose sympathies lie with the state of Israel to condemn, without equivocation, the murder of hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians by Israeli forces in recent days. I can only conclude that they believe that these people are not as deserving of life as Israelis are. There is only one word for an attitude that justifies and lauds the murder of innocent human beings because of their nationality: racism. - Yours, etc,

Dr COLM BREATHNACH, Cedar Brook Walk, Cherry Orchard, Dublin 10.

Debate on crisis in the Middle East

Madam, - Paddy Monaghan, of "Irish Christian friends of Israel" (July 20th), writes "to express support for Israel". Judging by both the tone and content of his letter, he should as a Christian be not so defensive and uncritical of Israel's disproportionate reactions in its ruthless bombardment of the sovereign state of Lebanon, where many Christians have been among the victims.

His partisan support for Israel makes a mockery of the message of justice and peace announced by Jesus, a message which all Christians are obliged to uphold, rather than becoming an uncritical ally of any side in a conflict where the Geneva Conventions are deliberately ignored.

He calls upon the Irish Government to deal with the "root cause of the conflict", which he perceives to lie with Syria and Iran. He fails to understand that the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict goes back to 1948; but without raking up the rights and wrongs of the past, the need now is for Israel to recognise the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to have their home in Israel and for Palestinians to respect the Jewish people's right to co-exist in harmony and justice in the same homeland.

As a Christian I dissociate myself from the extreme position of these so-called Irish Christian Friends of Israel. Muslims, Christians and Jews must learn to co-exist in a world where extremists and fundamentalists of all these major religions of the world have distorted and disfigured their revealed message: that all people are equal in the sight of God, Allah, and Yahweh. - Yours, etc,

BRENDAN BUTLER, The Moorings, Malahide, Co Dublin.

Madam, - There is no justification for Israel's devastating bombardment of Lebanon. As a response to the abduction of two Israeli soldiers it is massively disproportionate and the consequences in terms of the loss of innocent life and the destruction of the infrastructure relied upon by ordinary Lebanese people were entirely predictable.

Israel is also doing exactly what Hizbullah (and its supporters in Iran and elsewhere) wants it to do. It is escalating the conflict with potentially catastrophic consequences for the whole region. In particular, it is likely that the Israeli attack will serve only to destabilise Lebanon and radicalise the large element of its population which up to this point has rejected Hizbullah terrorism.

Supporters of Israeli aggression tell us that the bombing is justified by the firing of rockets into Israel from south Lebanon and the abduction of Israeli soldiers by Hizbullah. While there is no justification for the rocket attacks on Israel, which clearly target civilians, and while the abduction of Israeli soldiers is utterly to be condemned, it must be remembered that the rocket attacks came after the beginning of the Israeli bombardment and that Israel itself abducted two Gaza civilians on June 24th. - Yours, etc,

LENNY ABRAHAMSON, Leinster Road West, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Madam, - Last Friday's letter from Noam Chomsky et al. makes mention of "a doctor and his brother" who were kidnapped by the Israelis, claiming that incident was "scarcely reported anywhere except in the Turkish press". However, after a brief trawl through the Internet I find it mentioned by - among others - the Observer, Haaretz, the Jerusalem Post, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, Agence France Presse, Associated Press, CNN and Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency.

Furthermore, the source for this story seems to an Israeli Defence Forces spokesman. The "doctor and his brother" accordingly become "two <u>Hamas</u> members believed to be planning a large attack against Israel". Additionally, the "doctor" in the story is a 31-year-old medical student lately returned from university in Sudan: I could not ascertain from the story whether he had ever practised medicine anywhere, though the letter seems to imply that the Israelis plucked the scalpel from his hand and dragged him away from sick patients.

Although the missive from planet Chomsky alleges that all this is indicative of "the double standards repeatedly employed by the West", one could just as easily draw the opposite conclusion - namely that we care so little about <u>Hamas</u> attacks on Israel that they fail even to raise an eyebrow in the West, whereas once Israel decides to act, everyone is a critic.

Debate on crisis in the Middle East

What Chomsky seems to be implying is that, put simply, "Israel started it". He cannot say this directly because it is untrue - not to mention childish and irrelevant - so he turns to innuendo and obscure references to the Turkish press, since he knows that his acolytes are too lazy or ignorant to check his footnotes or supply the missing context for themselves. The timeline Chomsky offers also suffers from the flaw that spokespersons for the Popular Resistance Committee boasted after the raid on Israel that they had been planning it for two months.

This letter is just an example of dishonest innuendo wrapped around with a lot of windy rhetoric. We do not need "the world's greatest intellectual" to remind us that war is horrifying: Chomsky's simple demonologies and ludicrous conspiracies are just fantasies that in their own small way are standing in the way of peace. - Yours, etc,

MAURICE FOLEY, Raheny, Dublin 5.

Madam, - I laughed out loud at Tom Carew's attempt (July 19th) to show us by using statistics why it was OK for the Israeli army to kill children. It was a classic. Let's hope we hear from him again. - Yours, etc,

MICHAEL CUDDY, Thor Place, Stoneybatter, Dublin 7.

Madam, - The European Union should send a rapid response group to the Middle East. As Ireland has recently signed up to EU "battlegroups", there is nothing to stop Irish MEPs from initiating such action. Israel has prevented the assets and supports of the European Union - i.e. food and medicines - from reaching hungry, needy and fearful men, <u>women</u>, and children. The battlegroup should be sent to monitor how the assets of the European Union are being treated, and not to engage in military action.

I am sure that the simple arrival of a battlegroup representing 25 nations would send a message to Israel that it cannot bully the European Union as it is bullying the Lebanese and Palestinians. - Yours, etc,

PETER KENNEDY, Sutton Park, Sutton, Dublin 13.

Madam, - Among the numerous bits of military hardware mentioned by observers of the current Israeli attack on Lebanon, two are noticeable by their absence from dispatches. What happened to the (in)famous "smart" missiles of the Gulf wars? And amid the "rain" of Hisbullah missiles falling on northern Israel, where are the Patriot missiles - those paragons of US technology that were to render Israel immune to Arab missile attacks?

The media that so slavishly extolled these technical wonders in recent Middle East conflicts are very quiet. Does their silence indicate a healthier scepticism, or simple embarrassment? - Yours, etc,

PHELIM MURNION, Páirc Thiar, An Spidéal, Gaillimh.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006



Guardian.com February 20, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 2038 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's round-up of the best of the day's papers.

Body

Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's round-up of the best of the day's papers.

Also in today's Wrap: Council tax bills to rise again, Brokeback Mountain dominates Baftas, and Andrew Murray hits tennis heights

BRITAIN BRACES ITSELF FOR BIRD FLU

"We're in a flap," the Sun flaps. "Don't panic," says the Mail, reassuringly. Except what's this underneath the Corporal Jones headline? "Bird flu at our door. Hotlines swamped. But minister says: We're prepared (Now isn't that what they said about foot-and-mouth?)".

Ah, so it was a touch of irony from the Mail. As avian flu advances across Europe towards the UK, with a duck in France confirmed as having had the HN51 strain of the virus, the paper reports that worried people "inundated" a government hotline to report dead birds, and helpfully provides the number of the hotline at the end of its report in case readers have any further sightings of dead ducks.

The paper wants ministers - whom it accuses of "breathtaking complacency and incompetence" - to take a more proactive approach to the spread of bird flu and to order all poultry indoors.

France, the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Greece and Slovenia have already moved flocks inside, but the animal welfare minister, Ben Bradshaw, yesterday said British poultry would only be moved if the disease arrived here. Too late, says the Mail, all the Dad's Army-style pretence of the headline dropped. "This is an emergency - and ministers need to start treating it as such".

The Telegraph also finds Defra's attitude confusing, suggesting that the government department needs to act more quickly, not only to prevent an epidemic but also to emphasise the message that avian flu is not a food-borne virus.

Perhaps, the paper adds helpfully, the government should adopt the slogan "make it chicken tonight". Possibly even a chicken you have slaughtered yourself - it is also exercised by the fact that the outbreak is likely to affect the next shooting season because more than half the pheasants and partridges reared in Britain come from France.

Back to the Sun's flap which, on closer inspection, seems to be based on the fact that, according to its report, "grasping" French farmers have asked for GBP650m in compensation from the EU over their confirmed case of bird flu. The reaction of the "feather-bedded French" is predictable, the red-top scoffs, but then it starts flapping again.

"Before we scoff too much, we had better get ready for our own poultry industry to be heavily damaged by the dreaded flu ... then we won't be feeling so superior as we look across the Channel". No, indeed.

Instead of looking across the Channel, the paper may be better advised to look across the world - to Vietnam. Or so the Independent, which splashes with an unusually positive story headlined: "From the Far East, a lesson in how to beat bird flu", thinks.

According to the paper, Vietnam - the hardest bird flu-hit country with 93 human cases and 42 deaths - has become the first to successfully contain the disease. No new cases of avian flu in humans have been reported there since last November. It has been contained through a combination of vaccination, culling and public communication and, in its leader, the paper says it believes the British government could learn a few lessons about public communication from the Vietnamese.

It says it is inevitable that the virus will reach these shores and is likely to deal our poultry industry a heavy blow. Yet the government has not publicised its timetable for action on British free-range ducks and birds.

"The way to defuse panic would be to help us to adjust to that probability step by step," it says. "And a first step would be to get the birds indoors, however much this upsets the farmers."

- * Tests begin as UK braces for bird flu
- * Telegraph: The danger of Defra
- * Independent: From the Far East, a lesson in how to beat bird flu
- * Independent: Move British poultry inside before the virus arrives

COUNCIL TAX BILLS 'TO RISE 4.3%'

Bird flu aside, it's tax - in one form or another - that's of concern to the broadsheets this morning. The Times and Telegraph both splash on council tax rises and the results of surveys suggesting households will be paying bills above inflation for the tenth year running.

A Times survey says the average bill will rise by 4.3% in April, while the Telegraph - basing its report on a study by the Local Government Association - finds much the same.

Both papers agree the bills will come as a "blow" to people already facing higher energy bills, and older people in particular. And both rail against the tax in their leader columns. The annual rise in the rate is "drearily predictable", sighs the Telegraph (as is the paper's pop at the Guardian in the same column, in which it jabs "an accusing finger at the hundreds of municipal non-jobs advertised in Guardian Society every Wednesday").

But - the Guardian aside - the paper thinks the real cause of the rising rates is an absence of direct accountability and a system that actively penalises thrift. The way to break the cycle, it opines, "is to create a link between taxation, representation and expenditure at a local level". In other words, to replace VAT with a local sales tax.

Meanwhile, the Times thinks there is no "magic formula" to create a level of contentment that the rates, the poll tax and the council tax have failed to achieve. Instead of searching for new ways to fund local government, it says, we should be asking what it is we want local government to do. Until we have consensus on that point, the tax will continue to increase and be "unloved".

The tax is especially likely to be unloved by unsporty Londoners, one assumes, because another report in the paper suggests capital-dwellers face some of the highest rises when they are called upon to pay GBP550m towards the cost of the 2012 Olympics over 10 years, starting this April.

The Guardian is more worried about a draft treaty that could restrict Britain's ability to impose taxes. The paper splashes with a report on the text of the draft "open skies" treaty between the EU and the US, which is designed to liberalise aviation and includes a clause requiring EU states to agree with each other and the US before taking measures to tackle noise or pollution from airlines.

The paper quotes industry sources as saying the clause was included at the insistence of US negotiators - the country vigorously opposes taxes on aviation fuel and emissions trading schemes. The Guardian says the draft treaty will "alarm" environmental activists.

- * Open skies air treaty threat
- * Telegraph: Council tax to rise above inflation for 10th year
- * Times: Council tax rise pushes family bills over GBP2,000
- * Times: Londoners to be hit harder by cost of Olympics

ISRAEL HALTS FUNDING TO PALESTINIANS

The Palestinian Authority, which swore in a new, <u>Hamas</u>-dominated legislature on Saturday, faces an immediate shortfall in its budget following Israel's decision to freeze funds and contacts.

The Israeli cabinet decided to halt the transfer of around \$50m (GBP29m) a month in tax and customs receipts until *Hamas* renounces violence, and has appealed to foreign governments to do the same.

However, the International Herald Tribune says Israel's move puts it at odds in terms of timing with its main ally, the US, as well as the EU, Russia and the UN. The quartet have said funding for the Palestinian Authority will continue until the new government is in place.

The Times, however, believes Israel's move is "temperate". The <u>Hamas</u> leadership is acting on a "curious logic" by which it expects a state it does not recognise to function as its tax collector. It is <u>Hamas</u>'s "addiction to violence" which is causing this impasse, and the paper says this must end if talks are to begin.

- * IHT: Israel freezes funds owed Palestinians
- * Times: Peace on hold

BERLUSCONI ANGER AT JOWELL HUSBAND

"Hideously embarrassing," says David Mills, the husband of the culture secretary, Tessa Jowell, of the alleged hush money scandal in which he and the Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, risk being tried for corruption.

The Guardian reports today that there is now a rift between the two men, with Mr Berlusconi telling a rally in Verona that "someone has taken advantage of my name".

It says Mr Mills's business interests have been a target for the tabloids because his wife's career has taken her to a high-profile cabinet role and that, although there is no suggestion of a conflict of interests, "the drip drip of headlines will not be helpful in her Olympic role".

And so it is that the Mail's take on the tale features a large picture of Ms Jowell - rather than her husband or Mr Berlusconi - and begins "Tessa Jowell is under financial pressure to reveal her financial links with Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi after fresh details emerged of her husband's involvement in a bribery role".

* Berlusconi hits out at Tessa Jowell's husband

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN DONIMNATES BAFTAS

On its masthead today, the Telegraph offers readers the chance to "Win a Bafta lifestyle". So that'll be a raindrenched excursion to Leicester Square followed by a damp squib of an evening then, will it?

"We're heart Broke" wails the Sun after Brokeback Mountain led a Hollywood clean sweep of the awards and British effort The Constant Gardener was "almost completely snubbed". The Telegraph manages to put a brave face on it all. "Of course, the Brits did at least win the awards set aside for the British," it says.

And then there were the frocks. Most of the papers dedicate space to the sartorial efforts of the leading ladies. For the Telegraph's Hilary Alexander, the way in which the stars traversed the length of the soggy red carpet was nothing less than an Olympian effort, worthy of a gold medal.

"As the rain poured down and the wind howled," she purrs, "it required a will of iron, the balancing skills of an Olympic gymnast and, preferably, two burly minders with a brolly apiece, to negotiate the waterlogged red carpet and a 30ft cantilevered ramp of slippery pvc squares that were more like climbing a toboggan run uphill."

In the icy, driving rain of the square, the Guardian's Mark Brown took a more paternalistic approach. "For goodness sake wrap up, you wanted to cry, you'll catch your death," he wrote. "It's not Los Angeles."

- * Bafta night for year of gay shepherds
- * Telegraph: Glamour shines through as leading ladies brave the British weather
- * Sun: Bafta Brits heart Broke

'IMPROBABLE' MURRAY HITS HEIGHTS

"Pulsating and slightly improbable," marvels Mark Hodgkinson in the Telegraph. "He is a freak in British terms," agrees the Times's Neil Harman.

The source of their amazement? A decent British tennis player. Specifically, Andy Murray, the world number 60, who yesterday beat Andy Roddick, the world number three, in the semi-finals of the SAP Open in San Jose.

"British 18-year-olds are not expected to defeat the world number three and say 'it was quite a good effort'", comments Harman. As the clock winds down on the careers of Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, he says, there are a lot of hopes riding on the Scot.

Sports fans are in need of some good news, as it appears the British <u>women</u>'s curling team's hopes of holding onto their gold medal are hanging in the balance after they were hammered 10-5 by Japan. According to the Telegraph, "in football terms it was like Manchester United losing to Macclesfield Town".

- * Telegraph: Weekend of euphoria for Murray
- * Times: 'Murray is giving everyone in tennis cause to take notice'

DI: ANOTHER DAY

In a world of bird flu and British Bafta snubs, it's good to know that the Express is there as an oasis of constancy. For, after a week in which the paper seemed a little peaky and perhaps off its food, tending to rely on the big weather stories for its splashes, it is truly back on form this morning.

Beside a smiling picture of the lady herself, it screeches: "Diana's death: panic as truth is revealed". Phew. There's little to add to the headline except that the truth is not - of course - revealed, and the French are to blame, naturellement.

And this is because, in an unfortunate turn of phrase from a source "close to the investigation", the French are all "running around like headless chickens".

Load-Date: February 20, 2006



Boy George faces jail if he won't rake park; World at a glance

The Evening Standard (London)
June 27, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: LSE; Pg. 8 Length: 373 words

Byline: RACHEL WILLIAMS

Body

BOY GEORGE today criticised his community service punishment of sweeping leaves in a New York park, saying a charity concert would have been more worthwhile.

The former Culture Club frontman, whose real name is George O'Dowd, had wanted to put on a show to raise money for an Aids organisation as part of his sentence for wasting police time. He was charged after falsely reporting a burglary last year.

But a judge at Manhattan Criminal Court ruled earlier this month that he should do the same sort of task as everybody else. And today he warned O'Dowd that if he did not complete his five days' raking duty by the end of August, he would be jailed.

"I'm not going to give you another chance," Judge Anthony Ferrara said.

After the hearing the singer said he was relieved and untroubled by the menial nature of his punishment, but still believed it was not the best choice. "It would have been more useful to make 30 grand with a concert, rather than be prancing around in a park," he said.

"I could have raised some money, could have done something that would have helped." He said of the leaf raking, which he will do at an unspecified park in the city: "I don't care about doing cleaning up.

My mum was a cleaner. I've always been a scrubber."

He vowed to dress up for duty in "something loud" after being told an orange boiler suit wasn't required.

Picture of the day

. BLACK smoke is released from a watch tower on the Great Wall of China to mark International Anti-Drug Day yesterday

Boy George faces jail if he won't rake park World at a glance

Israel threaten 'severe response' over soldier's kidnap

ISRAEL has threatened a punishing offensive in the Gaza Strip over the abduction of an Israeli soldier.

It rejected militant demands for the release of imprisoned Palestinian <u>women</u> and youths in return for information on Corporal Gilad Shalit, kidnapped by gunmen on Sunday.

With tensions rising on the Israel-Gaza border, militants fired rockets into southern Israel late yesterday.

In northern Gaza, Israeli forces massed at the border.

Israeli premier Ehud Olmert warned: "The question of releasing prisoners is not on the agenda of the Israeli government at all.

"The time is approaching for a comprehensive, sharp and severe Israeli operation. We will not become a target of **Hamas**-terrorist blackmail."

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



SEVEN DAYS

Financial Times (London, England)

July 1, 2006 Saturday

London Edition 1

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Section: BACK PAGE - FIRST SECTION; Pg. 18

Length: 1003 words

Byline: By KWAN YUK PAN and EMMELINE RAVILIOUS

Body

BUSINESS

*BP faces US price probe

BP was facing allegations of price manipulation in North America after the US energy regulator slapped the UK-based group with a lawsuit alleging it cornered a significant portion of the US propane market.

*News Corp eyes PCCW assets

News Corporation is in talks with Macquarie Group to join its Dollars 7.3bn (Pounds 3.9bn) bid for PCCW's telecoms and media assets, in a deal that could again put Rupert Murdoch and Richard Li, PCCW chairman, on opposite sides of the negotiating table.

*Arcelor and Mittal agree

Lakshmi Mittal, the Indian steel billionaire, emerged as head of the world's biggest steel company after an audacious five-month takeover struggle.

*Forgeard defiant

Noel Forgeard insisted it was "out of the question" that he would resign as co-chief executive of EADS, amid signs of rising tensions between the aerospace group's French and German shareholders.

*Rosneft warns of 'risk'

Rosneft, the Russian oil group that is planning one of the world's biggest and most controversial initial public offerings, said potential investors faced numerous risks.

*Google to rival Ebay's PayPal

Google will take a major step beyond search, launching an online payment service that will undercut the charges of providers such as Ebay's PayPal.

*EMI snubs Warner counterbid

SEVEN DAYS

EMI, which has been trying to acquire Warner Music for years, rejected an unexpected Pounds 2.5bn counterbid from the US company, setting the stage for a protracted battle between the two groups.

*Siemens in Bayer testing deal

Siemens, the German engineering group, made the biggest acquisition under chief executive Klaus Kleinfeld as it agreed to pay Euros 4.2bn (Pounds 2.9bn) for Bayer's diagnostics business.

*Consortium buys Univision

A consortium of private equity groups agreed to buy Univision Communications, the US Spanish-language broadcasting company, for Dollars 12.3bn (Pounds 6.6bn) in cash.

*Dell in Americas revamp

Dell Computer, the world's largest PC maker, has reorganised its struggling Americas division in a bid to inject fresh momentum into sales and customer service.

*Microsoft to face EU action

The European Union's top antitrust regulator is set to issue a formal ruling that finds Microsoft guilty of breaking EU competitionrules. The ruling is likely to be followed by fines for the US software group of up to Euros 2m (Pounds 1.1m) a day.

*Ghosn warns on Nissan sales

Carlos Ghosn, chief executive of Nissan Motor, warned that sales in Japan were likely to fall short of targets this year, underscoring the carmaker's troubles in its fiercely competitive home market.

*Volatility hits hedge fund gains

The recent market turmoil has wrong-footed a wide swathe of hedge funds, many of which have seen their gains this year wiped out in the past few weeks, according to figures obtained by the Financial Times.

WORLD

*Nabucco gas pipe go-ahead

Plans for a 3,300-km pipeline to transport gas from the Caspian region to Europe secured backing from the European Commission in a move that could bring the Dollars 5.8bn (Pounds 3.1bn) project closer to fruition. The decision comes as the EU is looking to lessen its dependence on Russia for gas.

*Sri Lanka violence flares

A Tamil Tiger suicide attack killed top Sri Lankan military official Major General Parami Kulatunga and three others near the army central command in Colombo. Further violence followed, with five sailors dying in another Tamil Tiger attack.

*Central Bankers under fire

Central bankers came under fire for their failure to tackle inflation, in a report from the Bank of International Settlements, the central bankers' banker. The BIS said that the main risks to the global economy stemmed from globalisation and that inflationary pressures were now becoming more apparent.

*Hurricane warning

Oil and gas companies said the sector was still struggling to repair billions of dollars worth of hurricane damage caused last year to Gulf of Mexico infrastructure. The warning came as this year's season began.

SEVEN DAYS

*G8 sets deadline for Iran

The Group of Eight industrialised nations gave Iran a deadline of next week to give a clear answer to an international offer to resolve tensions over its nuclear programme.

*Italian football clubs on trial

The trial of four leading Italian football clubs - Juventus, AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio - on match-fixing charges was opened and adjourned until next week. Meanwhile Italy was shocked by the apparent attempted suicide of senior Juventus official Gianluca Pessotto.

*Paulson sets out his stall

Hank Paulson defended President George W. Bush's tax cuts at the Senate committee which approved his nomination as US Treasury secretary. Mr Paulson, yet to be confirmed by the full Senate, also said reform was needed in China.

*Turkey acts to stop lira slide

The Turkish central bank again raised rates in a move designed to curb a steep slide in the lira. The bank increased rates by 200 basis points to 22.25 per cent having already raised rates by 400 basis points this month. The lira has been hit hard by the turbulence in the global markets.

*Kidnapping sparks Gaza crisis

Israel launched a series of missile attacks on the Gaza Strip, arrested dozens of <u>Hamas</u> MPs and massed forces at the border after an Israeli soldier was kidnapped by <u>Hamas</u> militants. The group said it would hold the corporal until Palestinian **women** and children were released from Israeli jails.

*Guantanamo blow to Bush

The US Supreme Court ruled that President George W. Bush's administration did not have the authority to try terror suspects by military tribunal. The justices upheld a challenge by Salim Ahmed Hamdan, Osama Bin Laden's exdriver.

*Japan jobless falls

Japan's jobless rate dropped to an eight-year low, while consumer prices continued to rise, fuelling expectations that the Bank of Japan might raise interest rates. The news came just ahead of a decision by the US Federal Reserve to raise rates and amid reports that the eurozone was seeing an upswing in private sector borrowing.

Compiled by Emmeline Ravilious and Pan Yuk

Load-Date: June 30, 2006



Young defector who fitted mold of martyr - Abraham Rabinovich - Jerusalem

The Australian

April 19, 2006 Wednesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 7

Length: 381 words

Body

MATP

BEFORE setting out to blow himself up in Tel Aviv, Sami Salim Hamad stood in front of a video camera with a Koran in his hand and a banner of Islamic Jihad behind him to announce his readiness to become a shahid, or martyr.

His allegiance was new but his readiness to die was not. He had reportedly been a member of <u>Hamas</u> until a few weeks ago but left when that organisation, honouring its commitment to a ceasefire with Israel, refused to dispatch him on a mission.

Hamad has been called a 16-year-old, which would have made him the youngest ever suicide bomber, but his family, poor and from the village of al-Araga near the West Bank city of Jenin, said he was 21.

After completing high school, he began a correspondence course in social work at the al-Quds Open University but stopped, reportedly for economic reasons, and began working in restaurants in the Jenin area. He left home last Tuesday.

In his video testimony, Hamad said he was dedicating his sacrifice to the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons.

He fits the mold of Palestinian suicide bombers by being a young, single, Muslim male. More than 80 per cent of Palestinian suicide bombers are single, most are aged between 18 and 23 and the ranks do not not include Christian Arabs. *Women* suicide bombers remain the exception.

The Israeli occupation and the broad support suicide bombers have enjoyed among the Palestinian population as a way of striking back are primary motivations for those setting out on suicide missions.

In a study of would-be Palestinian suicide bombers, Pakistani journalist Nasra Hassan found that none of those she interviewed conformed to the typical profile of the suicidal personality. "None was uneducated, desperately poor, simple-minded or depressed," she wrote.

An instructor whose task was to prepare suicide bombers told Hassan: "We focus his attention on paradise, on being in the presence of Allah, on meeting the prophet Mohammed, on interceding for his loved ones so that they, too, can be saved from the agonies of hell."

Young defector who fitted mold of martyr - Abraham Rabinovich - Jerusalem

A would-be bomber who changed his mind at the last minute told Hassan of feeling the closeness of paradise as he prepared to self-detonate: "It is very, very near -- right in front of your eyes. It lies beneath the thumb, on the other side of the detonator."

Load-Date: April 18, 2006



Syria's secular regime attempts to ride a religious revival MIDDLE EAST: Bashar al-Assad is making unfamiliar displays of piety to defuse Islamist discontent with his rule

Financial Times (London, England)

May 11, 2006 Thursday

London Edition 1

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Section: COMMENT AND ANALYSIS; Pg. 15

Length: 996 words

Byline: By ROULA KHALAF

Body

"They're like someone who has had a big surgical operation, which might have been fatal, but he didn't die." Yassin Haj Saleh, a Syrian writer and dissident, is describing his country's Ba'athist government. "But now he has to be extremely cautious about his health and he's holding on to life very tightly."

Tellingly, the patient has also turned to religion.

A new Islamic fervour is abroad in Syria as the regime headed for six years by President Bashar al-Assad, and for 30 years by his father, Hafez, before him, abandons what was a fiercely secular identity. Mr Assad prays more visibly and made a special appearance at a commemoration in Damascus last month of the Prophet Mohammed's birthday, an event that had rarely roused much interest in Syria. This year was different. Banners were hung on lamp posts and festivals organised in every town.

That followed a fraught time for the regime, which faces a United Nations investigation into the alleged involvement of top Syrian officials in the killing last year of Rafiq Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister (a charge Damascus denies). Washington, leading efforts to isolate Syria, had been hoping an internal coup would sweep the regime aside.

But in recent months the strains have eased as the US and Europe have turned to more pressing crises - Iran's nuclear dispute and the election of the radical <u>Hamas</u> group in the Palestinian territories. With Iraq sliding into sectarian conflict, Arab states also have softened their attitude towards Damascus, fearing that a collapse of the regime would bring similar chaos.

Still, a progress report on the UN inquiry is due to be delivered to Kofi Annan, secretary-general, next month and an internationally supported tribunal is being set up to try those who will be directly accused of responsibility.

With the prospect of more turbulence ahead, Mr Assad's priority has thus been to consolidate his rule and prevent any domestic challenge from taking advantage of outside pressures. So the government has been using religion to rally people around the flag while at the same time moving more forcefully against dissidents.

Syria 's secular regime attempts to ride a religious revival MIDDLE EAST: Bashar al-Assad is making unfamiliar displays of piety to defuse Islamist discontent w....

"Every time they (the regime) feel squeezed they try to flirt with Islamic symbols," says Mr Haj Saleh. "They attempt to give an Islamic legitimacy to the regime."

The Assad regime sees Islamists as the main threat in a country where the Sunni Muslim majority is ruled by a tiny minority that belongs to the Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shia Islam. The regime went into a frenzy when Abdelhalim Khaddam, former vice-president, defected at the end of last year and in February formed an opposition front with exiled leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, a banned party that Mr Assad's late father brutally crushed in the 1980s.

According to Michel Kilo, an author and opposition figure, security services called in dissidents after the February announcement of the opposition front. "The message was that the front was a red line that could not be approached," says Mr Kilo.

Arrests of political activists intensified. Most were detained only briefly but opposition figures say Ali al-Abdullah, a writer, and his two sons were arrested in March and have not been heard of since.

Meanwhile, in a sign of playing to Islamist sentiment, Mr Assad recently appointed as vice-president Najah al-Attar, the former culture minister: her brother was a Muslim Brotherhood leader in exile. The regime has also allowed demonstrations in defence of the prophet to get out of hand - mobs torched the Norwegian and Danish embassies in Damascus in February during the uproar across the Muslim world over cartoon depictions.

More recently, the government has given a green light to a long-established movement led by a <u>female</u> preacher, Munira al-Qubaisi, to teach religion in mosques. The students of the elderly Ms al-Qubaisi have been organising religious lessons in homes for many years and have been instrumental in spreading religious sentiment among young <u>women</u>.

The religious revival in Syria is visible in the rising number of girls who wear the headscarf and the growing number of men who attend prayers at mosques.

"The government is trying to gain strength from a current that is on the scene and they're saying: 'I'm with you so support me against the outside world,'" says Haitham Maleh, a human rights lawyer.

"They also want to take the card from the hand of the Muslim Brotherhood - what can the Brotherhood say? The regime supports (regional Islamist groups such as) <u>Hamas</u>, Hizbollah, the resistance in Iraq, they build mosques, they had, for the first time ever, big celebrations for the birthday of the prophet," adds Ayman Abdel-Nour, a Ba'athist who has been calling for a modernisation of the party.

Some Ba'athists say the government is deliberately promoting conservative voices to keep people away from the more independent and radical groups, especially the Brotherhood.

One of the most prominent Islamic figures these days is Mohammad al-Habash, a member of parliament and head of the Islamic Studies Centre in Damascus.

A soft-spoken cleric, Mr Habash says that after the 1980s clash with the Brotherhood, there were official attempts to reduce the influence of religion - praying in the army, for example, was banned. More recently, however, "the government realised their attitude towards religion is a mistake. Now we find a relationship between the Islamic current and the government is getting closer day by day."

Some analysts in Damascus warn that playing the religious card could also backfire on the regime, making the ground more fertile for Islamist parties and perhaps for more radical groups than the Brotherhood, which rejects violence.

For now, Syrian intelligence services are watching mosques and scrutinising sermons and everyone is warned against political activity. "You have to be watching all the time and you have to manage the situation at every turn," says Ahmad al-Haj Ali, a former adviser to the information ministry.

Syria 's secular regime attempts to ride a religious revival MIDDLE EAST: Bashar al-Assad is making unfamiliar displays of piety to defuse Islamist discontent w....

Roula Khalaf

Load-Date: May 10, 2006



The New York Times

June 12, 2006 Monday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 1058 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-11

Talks With Russians On Investment Freedom

Russian, American, European and Japanese officials are negotiating over whether Russia should be allowed greater latitude to invest in utilities, pipelines, natural gas facilities and other infrastructure in the United States and Europe. A1

U.S. Rejects Witness Account

The top American commander in Iraq rejected as "baloney" an account by an Iraqi eyewitness who said a dying man resembling Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the terrorist leader, had been beaten by American troops after warplanes demolished Mr. Zarqawi's safe house with two bombs. A10

Iran Refuses Preconditions

Iran has begun a public campaign apparently aimed at nudging the six nations that have offered a package of incentives into negotiations over its nuclear program without first freezing its efforts to make nuclear fuel. Ali Larijani, Iran's chief negotiator, told reporters that Iran would support negotiations but without prior conditions. A11

China Fires Olympics Official

A senior Beijing official responsible for overseeing the huge construction projects planned for the 2008 Olympics was dismissed from his post for corruption, the state news media reported. A11

Shift in Mexico's Election Law

Courts in Mexico recently interpreted electoral law to give the Federal Election Institute, created by congress to eliminate campaign fraud, broad authority to ban any speech that besmirches a candidate's reputation or is false. The agency's rulings in this year's campaign have raised free-speech issues. A3

Hamas to Fight Referendum

The militant faction <u>Hamas</u> announced its intent to block a July 26 referendum called for by Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian leader, after failing to reach an agreement in talks with him. A8

NATIONAL A12-15

Prisoners' Ruse Is a Focus Of Guantanamo Inquiry

Three detainees at the United States military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, tried to conceal themselves in their cells to prevent guards from seeing them commit suicide, a senior military official said. Military officials said one focus of an investigation into the suicides would be the need for procedural changes. A1

Auto Union Expects Hard Times

The president of the United Automobile Workers union, Ron Gettelfinger, left, told his members in a strikingly blunt report that they cannot ride out the automobile industry crisis and should be prepared to make tradition-breaking decisions to help rescue the industry. A1

Elderly **Women** Held in Fraud

Two <u>women</u> in their 70's, posing as aunts, fiancees or cousins, took out numerous life insurance policies on two homeless men, prosecutors say, collecting over \$2.2 million after the men died in hit-and-run traffic cases. The <u>women</u> pleaded not guilty to federal charges of mail fraud and submitting false insurance applications. A12

Questions on Duke Rape Case

The case against the three Duke lacrosse players accused of rape appears to some to be falling apart. Three players have been indicted, but evidence that has surfaced has thrown the accusuer's account into doubt. The prosecutor has refused to speak publicly about the case since the beginning of April. A13

Study of Arab-Americans

In a study financed by the Justice Department, Arab-Americans reported suspicion of government and law enforcement, and concerns about their civil liberties. The study also concluded that local police officers and federal agents were straining under the pressure to fight terrorism and that new federal policies in this effort were poorly defined and inconsistently applied. A15

NEW YORK/REGION B1-6

Black and Hispanic Leaders Meet to Block Candidate

A group of black and Hispanic elected officials from Brooklyn plan to devise strategies to keep a white city councilman from winning the Congressional seat held for the last two decades by Major R. Owens, who is black. B1

Ring Tone Only for Young

High school students in the New York area have begun using a high-pitched cell phone ring tone, inaudible to older people, to surreptitiously communicate in classrooms and places where phone use is prohibited. A1

Mentally III With Diabetes

Roughly one in five mentally ill people develop diabetes, and as more of the mentally ill population die from the disease and related complications than from suicide, mental health professionals have begun to debate the customary limits of psychiatric practice. A1

ARTS E1-10

Tonys Are Awarded

"Jersey Boys," the surprise hit about the Four Seasons as told through their songs, won the big prize -- best musical -- at the Tony Awards, as well as three more, including best actor for John Lloyd Young The show's main competitor, "The Drowsy Chaperone," picked up five awards, including best book, best score and best featured actress. E1

Ensler Organizes Arts Festival

Eve Ensler, the author of the "Vagina Monologues," has organized an arts festival in New York focused on violence against <u>women</u>. The festival, set to begin today, expands the V-Day franchise, the global movement that Ms. Ensler ignited in 1998 with benefit performances of her play. E1

OBITUARIES B7

Flora Gill Jacobs

An internationally recognized authority on dollhouses, she was 87. B7

BUSINESS DAY C1-12

Investors Reducing Risk

As stock markets from India to Brazil to the United States skidded last week, there was little doubt that investors were dumping risk from their portfolios. The question for the coming week is whether investors feel comfortable with the risk they have left. C1

Product Placement in Books

Procter & Gamble has signed an unusual marketing partnership to showcase its Cover Girl makeup products in a novel for young adults. C1

Credit Suisse May Sell Unit

AXA, the French insurance company, is in exclusive talks with Credit Suisse to buy its Winterthur insurance division in a deal worth more than \$8 billion, according to a person with direct knowledge of the transaction. C2

Leaking Exclusive Pictures

The first pictures of Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt were leaked to several gossip blogs before they appeared in People Magazine, which paid millions for the exclusive right to publish them. C1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A16-17

Editorials: The deaths at Gitmo; missing the Medicaid fraud; in foreign territory; hard to say goodbye.

Columns: Bob Herbert, Paul Krugman.

Bridge E8 Crossword E2 Metro Diary B2 TV Listings E9 Weather D10

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Graphic

Photo

Load-Date: June 12, 2006



Saturday Comment: News Matrix: 18.02.06 - 24.02.06

The Guardian - Final Edition February 25, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN SATURDAY COMMENT PAGES; Pg. 26

Length: 381 words

Body

In San Jose, 18-year-old Andy Murray wins his first ATP tournament, and celebrates with a decidedly teenage kiss for his girlfriend

Sporting nothing but socks and boots, Stephen Gough and Melanie Roberts complete their nine-month, 874-mile trek from Land's End to John O'Groats

Days after British cinema is swamped by US movies at the Baftas, the BBC announces it will spend at least £250m on domestic film-making in the next 10 years

Rumours circulate that the fugitive war leader General Ratko Mladic has been captured, as the EU warns Serbia that EU entry negotiations will be halted unless he is delivered

Three French photographers who tailed Princess Diana on the night she died are fined euros 1 each for invasion of privacy by a Paris appeals court

Prince Charles's action against the Mail on Sunday is bedevilled by a damning statement from Mark Bolland and the release of more of the heir to the throne's journals

The proportion of children born outside wedlock in the UK increased almost four-fold between 1980 (12%) and 2004 (42%), reported the Office for National Statistics

The WHO says Vietnam, the country worst affected by bird flu , has found no new cases in humans or birds since last December

The FA announces, to no one's surprise, that the FA Cup final will be played in Cardiff because Wembley might not be ready in time

Mayor of London Ken Livingstone is suspended for four weeks after being found to have brought his office into disrepute for comparing a journalist to a concentration camp guard

David Irving is sentenced to three years in prison by an Austrian court for denying the Holocaust in speeches made in 1989

An armed gang escapes with up to £50m, the largest haul in British criminal history, after a raid on a security depot in Tonbridge, Kent

Saturday Comment: News Matrix: 18.02.06 - 24.02.06

There is an annual 'baby gap' of 90,000 - the difference between the number of children <u>women</u> say they want and the number they have - says an Institute of Public Policy Research study

Bird flu looms on the horizon, with France confirming the dreaded H5N1 has been found in ducks

The Israeli cabinet freezes payments to the Palestinians following the transfer of power to *Hamas*

Iraq teeters on the brink of civil war after the destruction of the golden mosque, one of Shia Islam's holiest sites, sparks widespread violence

Load-Date: February 25, 2006



The New York Times

March 20, 2006 Monday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 985 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-13

Iraq Strategy Defended On War Anniversary

On the third anniversary of a war that they once expected to be over by now, President Bush and senior officials argued that their strategy was working despite escalating violence in Iraq, even as a former Iraqi prime minister once favored by the White House declared a civil war had already started. A1

Iraqi officials announced that they had agreed to form a council to make policy on security and economic issues in the new government, in an attempt to include all the country's major factions in the decision-making process at a time of rising sectarian tensions.

A10

Polio as an Unending Challenge

The drive against polio threatens to become a costly display of all that can conspire against even the most ambitious efforts to eliminate a disease: cultural suspicions, logistical nightmares, competition for resources from many other afflictions, and simple exhaustion. A1

French Unions Set Deadline

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin of France faced an ultimatum from union leaders to withdraw the employment law that set off huge nationwide demonstrations and sporadic violence, or face a general strike. A11

Protests Against Belarus Vote

An expected landslide for President Aleksandr G. Lukashenko drew several thousand Belarussians into the streets, as protesters ignored swirling snow and official threats of arrest to denounce the election as a sham. A11

Hamas Submits Cabinet List

<u>Hamas</u> delivered its proposed cabinet list to the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, and is expected to control the most important government ministries after weeks of negotiations failed to persuade other Palestinian parties to join its government. A8

NATIONAL A14-19

Problems for Black Men More Dire, Studies Warn

The plight of black men in the United States is far more dire than is portrayed by common employment and education statistics, a flurry of new scholarly studies warn. And it has worsened in recent years even as an economic boom and welfare reforms have brought gains to black <u>women</u> and many other groups. A1

Louisiana Aid Reconsidered

The Bush administration originally rejected Louisiana's housing recovery plan. Soon after, Donald E. Powell, President Bush's Gulf Coast rebuilding coordinator, whose own idea of aid had excluded thousands of homeowners, many of them poor, announced that the president would seek \$4.2 billion more for Louisiana to compensate homeowners. A1

Oil Spill Raises New Concerns

An oil spill this month in Alaska, the largest ever on the North Slope, has raised new concerns among state and federal regulators about whether BP, the subsidiary of the oil company that operates the corroded transmission pipeline from which more than 200,000 gallons of crude oil leaked, has been properly maintaining its aging network of wells, pumps and pipelines. A14

Protest Costs City \$2 Million

A clash between the police and antiwar protesters in Oakland, Calif., nearly three years ago will cost the city more than \$2 million, including dozens of payouts to people who were injured when officers fired wooden dowels, bean bags and rubber pellets. A14

Utilities Offer Site for Waste

A group of nuclear utilities planning to build a private nuclear waste dump on an Indian reservation in Utah has offered to sell space there to the federal government. The move could help the government avoid billions of dollars in potential legal damages over its failure to build its own repository. A14

NEW YORK/REGION B1-7

New Building Eats Up Envied Manhattan Views

Writers and editors at Conde Nast magazines and top lawyers at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom are dealing with a reality many Manhattan workers face: coming to terms with the construction of a new building, and the loss of their view. B1

Transit Chief Demands Vote

Roger Toussaint, the president of the transit workers' union, demanded that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority agree to a second vote on the proposed contract that his divided membership previously rejected by only seven votes. B5

Arrests at Antiwar Protests

The police arrested 17 demonstrators in Times Square on charges of disorderly conduct during a small antiwar protest that wound its way through Midtown. B7

SPORTSMONDAY D1-11

Upsets at N.C.A.A. Tourney

When George Mason defeated the defending national champion North Carolina Tar Heels, the upset capped four of the most harried days in the history of the N.C.A.A. men's basketball tournament. Ten teams knocked off competitors seeded at least five spots higher, tying a record set in 1986 and matched in 1990 and 2002. A1

ARTS E1-8

OBITUARIES A20-21

Bill Beutel

The journalist who helped bring about change in the nature of local television news as the dapper and unruffled anchor of "Eyewitness News" at WABC-TV in New York for more than 30 years, he was 75. A21

BUSINESS DAY C1-12

Major Enron Witness

The government will head into the stretch run of its case against two former Enron chief executives. Prosecutors will be looking to end on a flourish with the testimony of Ben F. Glisan Jr., the only former top executive who has already been sentenced in the Enron debacle. C1

Arguments on Patent Case

For the first time in a quarter-century, the Supreme Court will hear a case involving the basic question of what type of discoveries and inventions can be patented. Both sides say the case could have a wide-ranging impact on the development of diagnostics. C1

A Craigslist Challenger

Microsoft has introduced Windows Live Expo, another node in its growing network of Internet services, and a challenger to the heart of Craigslist: free, local classified ads. C4

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A22-23

Editorials: The president and the courts; spreading genocide to Chad; the road to nowhere.

Columns: Bob Herbert and Paul Krugman.

Autos D12

Bridge E6

Crossword E2

Metro Diary B2

TV Listings E8

Weather B8

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: March 20, 2006



International Briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

January 2, 2006 Monday

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Section: National/World; Pg. a7

Length: 420 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: TEHRAN, Iran

Body

Iran's president rips European countries

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's hard-line president who has said the Holocaust was a myth, now has charged that European countries sought to complete the genocide by establishing a Jewish state in the midst of Muslim countries.

"Don't you think that continuation of genocide by expelling Jews from Europe was one of their aims in creating a regime of occupiers of Al-Quds (Jerusalem)?" the official Islamic Republic News agency quoted Ahmadinejad as saying Sunday. "Isn't that an important question?"

Russia halts natural gas sales to Ukraine

MOSCOW - Russia's natural gas monopoly halted sales to Ukraine in a price dispute Sunday and began reducing pressure in transmission lines that also carry substantial supplies to western Europe.

Ukraine's natural gas company Naftogaz acknowledged the reduction by Russia's Gazprom.

Gazprom had given Ukraine a deadline of midnight Saturday to agree to pay quadruple the amount it previously paid for Russian gas, which accounts for about a third of the consumption in the country of 48 million people.

Wildfires break out north of Sydney

SYDNEY, Australia - Walls of flames 100 feet high swept through parched eucalyptus forests Sunday as several fires raged out of control in southeastern Australia, injuring one man and destroying several homes and seven fire vehicles.

Dozens of people fled their homes north of Sydney - some using boats - as hundreds of firefighters battled flames lapping the edges of the city. One ambulance volunteer died of a heart attack Sunday night while helping evacuees in the town of Woy Woy.

Palestinian officers free Italian hostage

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Palestinian security officers stormed a building where an Italian hostage was being held Sunday, freeing the man in a shootout with his kidnappers.

International Briefs

It was a rare show of force in a wave of kidnappings, shootouts and other mayhem in the Gaza Strip that has embarrassed Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, threatening to undermine his Fatah Party in Jan. 25 legislative elections and boost the Islamic militant group *Hamas*.

Tribesmen release 3

SAN'A, Yemen - Tribesmen seized five Italian tourists Sunday, but released three <u>female</u> hostages after a government negotiator convinced the kidnappers that abducting <u>women</u> violated tribal values, Yemeni officials said.

Sheik Darham al-Damaa, secretary-general of a government council in Marib Province, said negotiations were continuing for the release of the two Italian men, according to the Web site of Yemen's ruling party.

Load-Date: January 2, 2006



Politicians Court a Not-So-Silent Minority: Israeli Arabs

The New York Times

March 21, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 934 words

Byline: By DINA KRAFT

Dateline: BAQA AL-GHARBIYEH, Israel

Body

Dr. Ahmed Tibi waved to supporters as his car moved slowly down the main road of this Arab town, past carpet shops, vegetable stands and billboards that call him "a son of the village," unmistakable code for Arabs who are citizens but resist identification with Israel or Zionism.

"Look in the mirror and see whom you're voting for," Dr. Tibi told a gathering of potential voters here, a town bordering the West Bank. His eyes fixed on theirs, he said, "Zionist parties are the problem, not the solution."

As Israel's election approaches on March 28, Arab and mainstream Israeli parties, the ones that Dr. Tibi meant by "Zionist parties," are competing for the votes of an alienated minority: Israeli Arabs.

A recent survey of 500 Arab voters found that only about 16 percent planned to vote for mainstream Israeli parties. In the last election roughly 30 percent of Israeli Arabs voted for these parties.

Almost 20 percent of Israel's 6.8 million citizens are Arabs (a group distinct from the Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip), and a significant voting bloc that has made a difference in past races.

Israeli Arabs speak of frustration with everyone who is trying to represent them. Many criticize both the Arab parties, for focusing more on Palestinian issues than on their own needs, and the mainstream ones, for decades of unfulfilled promises.

The <u>Hamas</u> victory in the Palestinian elections adds another element to the already complex political relationship between Israel's Jews and Arabs. But the Arabs say what would matter to them is if that victory produced further violence between Palestinians and Israelis.

"There is a fear that Israel will impose solutions and not negotiate, as in Gaza, and that will lead to clashes that will have some bearing on Arabs in Israel," said Muhammad Amara, an Israeli Arab who teaches political science at Bar-Ilan University, outside Tel Aviv.

Some Jewish Israelis are worried about a growing Islamist movement that appears emboldened by the <u>Hamas</u> victory. Leaders of the pragmatic Islamist wing in Israel that does participate in politics -- unlike its more militant branch, which refuses to -- stress that they are the face of moderate Islam. "We are against all extremists, whether they are Arab or Jewish," said Sheikh Abas Zakoor, a candidate of the Islamic Movement.

Dr. Tibi, a gynecologist who has been a member of Parliament since 1999, has joined in a coalition with the more pragmatic wing, which currently has two seats.

The heated nationalism practiced by Dr. Tibi and the Arab parties is an effort to tap into the mood of a fed-up minority.

"People live under continued and planned discrimination when it comes to the economy, education and jobs, and we do not see Israeli governments changing the situation," said Ali Haider, co-executive director of the Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality, a group advocating equal status for Arabs and Jews.

Candidates from the mainstream parties are busy courting the Arab vote, too, touting their political muscle and promising to improve towns and villages, and schools and job prospects.

Fighting political discontent with economic solutions is part of Nadia Hilo's strategy to sway Arab voters. An Arab with a high spot on the Labor Party list, she criticizes the Arab parties for claiming to be their people's only legitimate representatives. She says she believes Labor will be part of the governing coalition with the power to force through an agenda focused on narrowing the economic gap between rich and poor.

"This will give a chance to the Arab sector to be more influential and improve their daily lives," she said.

The apathy of a community grown increasingly cynical about the power of government to change its status makes turnout uncertain. This could hurt the Arab parties, which dropped in 2003 to 8 seats, from 10, in the 120-seat Parliament. Only 62 percent of Israeli Arabs voted in 2003, a significant drop from previous years. Pollsters predict a similar figure this year, and expect the parties to win eight seats.

This year, the threshold for a party to win a seat was raised, so some of the smaller parties have banded together in new coalitions.

Mustafa Abu Mokh, 46, a member of Baqa's municipal council, said he doubted he would vote for any party. "What will convince me," he said, "is a party that will answer our day-to-day problems."

Arabs in Israel have higher levels of education, medical care and standards of living than their counterparts elsewhere in the Middle East. But they compare their lives with those of Israeli Jews, who are generally better off.

"Our life in this country is a kind of ambivalence," said Professor Amara. "On the one hand you are a citizen, but what kind of citizen can you be as an Arab citizen in a Jewish state?"

A 32-year-old resident of Baqa who would identify himself only as Hassan said the mainstream parties held no sway with him. His vote will be going to the Arab Balad Party. "We tried Labor; we tried Likud," he said. "They've done nothing."

Azmi Bishara, an Arab member of Parliament who heads Balad, said that compounding the community's sense of isolation was that Jewish Israelis viewed Arabs with suspicion. "The best-case scenario is that they are a demographic burden or tolerated guests, and at worst a fifth column," he said.

Weary of politics and promises, Hanan Ihsaniya, a 23-year-old college student, is among those tuning out the elections all together. "We always vote," she said, "but we don't see results."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: At campaign headquarters for the Arab Movement for Change, Israeli Arab <u>women</u> are asked for their votes. (Photo by Rina Castelnuovo for The New York Times)Map of Israel highlighting Baqa al-Gharbiyeh: A politician in Baqa al-Gharbiyeh is critical of "Zionist parties."

Load-Date: March 21, 2006



The New York Times

January 18, 2006 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 1025 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-8

Hamas Using TV Station To Broaden Strategic Role

The Gaza Strip's newest television station and its popular children's program are part of the strategy of the militant Palestinian group *Hamas* to broaden its role in Palestinian politics and society. A1

Egypt Won't Deport Migrants

Egyptian officials said they would not deport any of 462 Sudanese being held in jails and prison camps since they were detained nearly three weeks ago after a deadly raid on a squatter camp the migrants had set up as a protest. A3

The Bush administration has halted negotiations with Egypt over a free-trade agreement to protest the Egyptian government's harsh imprisonment of a political dissident. A6

Israel's Leader Open to Talks

The acting Israeli prime minister said he would be willing to restart peace talks with the Palestinians if they met the longstanding Israeli demand to break up armed factions. A4

Details on Oil-for-Food Suspect

Details emerged in court about where a South Korean lobbyist who is facing charges in the United Nations' oil-for-food program scandal spent the last year after fleeing when prosecutors let him leave the United States. A5

Iran Offer for Talks Rebuffed

Iran proposed a resumption of nuclear talks with the Europeans, a move that was immediately rejected by Britain as "vacuous." A6

Iraqi Kidnappers Set Demands

A kidnapped American freelance reporter appeared in a silent videotape broadcast by Al Jazeera television, which said her captors had threatened to kill her if the United States does not release all <u>female</u> prisoners in Iraq within 72 hours. A8

Niger Uranium Sale Unlikely

A high-level intelligence assessment by the Bush administration concluded in early 2002 that the sale of uranium from Niger to Iraq was "unlikely" because of a host of obstacles. A8

NATIONAL A10-17

Supreme Court Upholds Assisted Suicide in Oregon

The Supreme Court removed an obstacle to state efforts to authorize physician-assisted suicide, ruling 6 to 3 that John Ashcroft, the former attorney general, acted without legal authority when he threw the federal government's weight against Oregon's Death With Dignity Act. A1

House Begins Lobbying Reform

House Republican leaders laid out a proposal to rewrite House lobbying rules as they moved to contain the political damage from an election-year scandal over undue influence and access afforded to lobbyists. A1

Drug Users Strain Hospitals

A sharp increase in the number of people arriving in emergency rooms with methamphetamine-related problems is straining local hospital budgets and treatment facilities across the country, particularly in the Midwest, according to a two new surveys soon to be released. A10

New Orleans School Overhaul

A mayor's committee set out a plan to decentralize New Orleans' troubled schools. The plan recommends shifting power away from the much-discredited central school administration here, and giving it to individual schools. A12

Hurricane Demolitions Settled

A federal judge approved a settlement in a lawsuit over the first demolitions of homes ruined by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, after city officials agreed to provide advance notice to homeowners. A12

Elderly Inmate Executed

California executed Clarence Ray Allen, a 76-year-old man sentenced to death in 1982 for arranging the murders of three people, amid a gathering debate over capital punishment and a proposed moratorium on executions. A16

Drug Plan's Rolls Growing

The Bush administration said more than 2.6 million people had voluntarily signed up for Medicare's prescription drug benefit in the last 30 days, pushing the total voluntary enrollment to 3.6 million. A17

NEW YORK/REGION B1-7

A Run for the White House, Or Maybe More of a Tiptoe?

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton has been building a political network around the country while running for reelection in New York, consciously steering clear of presidential stomping grounds like New Hampshire or Iowa in a deliberate strategy to avoid suggesting that she has political ambitions beyond the Senate. A1

Pataki Urges Big Tax Cuts

Governor Pataki called for billions of dollars' worth of tax cuts and rebates as the centerpiece of his 12th and final budget, proposing that the state lower income taxes, eliminate New York's tax on inheritances and abolish the so-called marriage penalty. A1

New York's Royal Irish Blood

A new survey suggests that 1 in 50 New Yorkers of European origin carry a distinctive genetic signature, possibly inherited from an Irish high king of the fifth century. B1

Corzine Takes the Helm

Jon S. Corzine was sworn in as New Jersey's 52nd elected governor. B1

Neediest Cases B5

EDUCATION B8

SPORTSWEDNESDAY D1-6

DINING OUT F1-12

ARTS E1-10

OBITUARIES C15

Col. Edward N. Hall

An engineer who as an intelligence officer scrutinized the V-2 rockets of Nazi Germany and later supervised programs leading to the development of the United States' intercontinental ballistic missiles, he was 91. C15

BUSINESS DAY C1-14

S.E.C. and Pay Disclosure

The Securities and Exchange Commission voted unanimously to overhaul the way companies report their pay packages for senior executives, a move that is expected to lead to greater disclosure but not to any significant decline in executive compensation. A1

New Twist in Guidant Battle

Boston Scientific, with financial help from Abbott Laboratories, bid \$27 billion for Guidant, the medical device maker. Within hours, Guidant said it would switch its support from Johnson & Johnson's merger proposal in favor of Boston Scientific's. C1

Intel Misses Earnings Target

Intel said slower sales of desktop computers and weaker prices led it to miss its revenue target for the fourth quarter. C1

Google Acquires dMarc

Google said it would buy dMarc Broadcasting, whose software can allow marketers to send advertisements directly to local radio stations, for up to \$1.24 billion. C1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A18-19

Editorials: Spying on ordinary Americans; DNA's weight as evidence; Governor Pataki's goodbye budget; Dr. King's legacy is being lost.

Columns: Thomas L. Friedman, Maureen Dowd.

Crossword E4 TV Listings E9 Weather D7

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: January 18, 2006



Jobless and lawless: Armed militants in Gaza; Intifada is ended, but not the violence

The International Herald Tribune
January 10, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1000 words

Byline: Craig S. Smith

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Virtually sealed off from the outside world, residents of this strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea liken it to a giant, deteriorating prison, and at its worst it feels like the film "Escape From New York," where inmates ran the show.

The economy beats feebly, filling the streets with armed men and markets and chaotic traffic during the day and emptying them but for scattered police patrols and idle young men at night. The Palestinian Authority, charged with governing the territory together with the West Bank, maintains tenuous control.

"The intifada has ended but the violent energy is still there," said Eyad Sarraj, a psychiatrist and human rights activist living here.

In Gaza City on Saturday night, one man was killed during a gun battle between militants and the police, while elsewhere in town, another armed group threatened to destroy the local offices of Al Arabiya satellite television station, which is based in Dubai. The men were angry at the station for broadcasting a documentary that criticized their use of *female* suicide bombers.

Farther south that same day, gunmen cordoned off a neighborhood in Khan Yunis, Gaza's second-largest city, while members of a well-known drug-smuggling family battled with the Palestinian police. Eleven police officers were reported wounded.

And in Rafah, along the Egyptian border, armed men from the Abu Taha family stopped cars Sunday, checking identification papers in hopes of catching members of the rival Al Masri family, with which they have been carrying on a deadly feud.

While the world is watching Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's fight for life and wondering who will govern Israel in his absence, people in Gaza are far more preoccupied with growing lawlessness and tension between armed factions since Israel's withdrawal.

"One day, these guys woke up and had nothing to fire rockets at, but they had no food in the kitchen, so they turned on the Palestinian Authority," said Khalid Abu Hilal, known as Abu Adham, a spokesman for 10 branches of Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, an armed wing of the Fatah political faction. "We are heading toward civil war."

Jobless and lawless: Armed militants in Gaza Intifada is ended, but not the violence

That possibility has cast a pall over the whole peace process as much as the uncertainty surrounding Israel's post-Sharon policies, because any progress toward peace depends on a strong Palestinian negotiating partner.

But the narrow swath of chewed-up roads, dusty orange groves and crumbling concrete buildings covered with graffiti that make up the Gaza Strip, 44 kilometers, or 28 miles, across and the home to 1.4 million Palestinians, is growing more chaotic by the day.

Part of the problem is Fatah's inability to control the armed men who once did its bidding.

Take Alla al-Hams, a brooding 32-year-old man with a short beard and heavy eyebrows. Like tens of thousands of other men in the Gaza Strip, Hams spent five years fighting Israel, commanding as many as 200 men in carrying out mortar and rocket attacks against Israeli forces and fortified Israeli settlements. He says he lost 20 men, four of them in suicide bomb attacks.

But ever since Israel abandoned the settlements and withdrew its troops in September, Hams and his men have been idle. They have lost the financial support they enjoyed as opponents of the occupation and have grown increasingly frustrated by the lack of any reward for what they regard as years of sacrifice.

"The occupation is over, and we have the right to be compensated for the last five years," he said, surrounded by gunmen in the sitting room of his father-in-law's four-story cinderblock house in Rafah. "The least that we expected after Israel withdrew was a job."

About two-thirds of the territory's young men are unemployed and entertainment is scarce, so politics is about the only game around.

Last week, Hams was seized by masked men while walking alone at night near his home and was taken to the Palestinian Authority's military intelligence office in Gaza City, where he was accused of kidnapping three Britons in December.

Gunmen took the Britons away by car shortly after they entered Gaza from Egypt at the Rafah border crossing.

As with two other kidnappings of foreigners last month, the abductions were apparently meant to pressure the Palestinian Authority into providing work for former opponents of the occupation. All hostages were released in a few days.

But Hams's detention set off a series of confrontations between his men and the Palestinian Authority. His guntoting supporters closed government offices in Rafah and temporarily blocked the crossing into Egypt.

Finally, they bulldozed the concrete border wall, leading to an exchange of gunfire with Egyptian border guards that left two of the guards dead.

The Palestinian Authority released Hams, although many people insist that he was responsible for the kidnappings. He denies it, and he still argues that the Palestinian Authority should give him and his men jobs.

"During the intifada, if a fighter was killed their family was adopted by the factions or the Palestinian Authority would support them, but now, they will die from hunger," he said, cradling his young son between his knees. "You can expect me to do anything to guarantee a good life for my family."

An even more volatile element in the deteriorating security situation is the increasing desperation that Fatah and its followers feel in the face of the political challenge by *Hamas*, the radical Islamic group.

Fatah, the Palestinian government's main faction, is in disarray, consumed with infighting and corruption while *Hamas* appears poised to win a significant slice of political power in parliamentary elections this month.

But few people believe that Fatah will give up government control easily if it loses.

Jobless and lawless: Armed militants in Gaza Intifada is ended, but not the violence

"They are not ready to leave their positions and the advantages they have with the projects they've created," said Hilal, a spokesman for Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades. "That is why Fatah is not interested in holding the elections or why they won't accept the results if they do."

Load-Date: January 24, 2006



Prime minister's questions

Guardian.com

February 1, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 949 words

Highlight: Live: After last night's defeats on the religious hatred bill, today's PMQs should prove lively. Follow it as

it happens.

Body

Where was Tony? Expect to hear that cry, or heckling variants on it, as the prime minister turns up today to take his place for question time (unlike last night, when he failed to vote to overturn a peers defeat on the government's bill - an amendment which was lost by just one vote).

That was only the second parliamentary defeat of Mr Blair's nine-year tenure in Downing Street, but it could prove curtains for his chief whip, Hilary Armstrong. Tory leader David Cameron singled her out at his PMQs debut for childish heckling, and it's unlikely she'll relish showing her face in the chamber today.

Meanwhile, it's still Sir Menzies Campbell's leadership job to lose as he represents the Lib Dems' as stand-in leader. He may be tempted to play to his trump card of Iraq, in the wake of the 100th UK soldier's death yesterday.

Other potential topics could include Iran (again), the education bill (again) and climate change.

Noon

Mr Blair begins with paying tribute to both soldiers killed this week - "we owe them a tremendous debt of graititude".

Labour's Ashok Kumar raises the Equal Opportunities Commission report that <u>women</u> are still being paid less than men. The gender pay gap is down to an all-time low, Mr Blair reminds him, before saying a new report will be out in a few weeks' time.

David Cameron echoes those condolences, before asking where Mr Blair was last night. The PM promises he will "turn up" for the education bill.

The Tory leader sarcastically points out that the Labour chief whip is quieter than usual - adding that it's an "interesting career move" to blame the PM for losing a vote.

Mr Blair reels off a long list of statistics on educational achievements. Mr Cameron points out that every Wednesday the PM defends the education bill, and every weekend he reads reports that the bill is being watered down.

The Speaker reprimands one of the other Labour whips for shouting down Mr Cameron from behind the Speaker's chair.

Prime minister's questions

12.05pm

The Tory leader sits mute while the PM quotes back at him his own support for grammar schoools and selecting by ability - positions he now appears to have abandoned in favour of "selection within schools not between them".

Labour's Kelvin Hopkins appeals to the PM to abandon PFI hospital building projects in light of the profits being "creamed off" by private firms.

The PM points out it is the biggest ever building project in NHS history, and he won't be abandoning it.

Sir Menzies asks simply that any action over Iran has full UN authority. The PM chooses instead to talk about Iraq. So Sir Menzies quotes Jack Straw as saying military action against Iran would be "inconceivable", but is now saying Iran has "one last opportunity" - what does he mean by that, asks the stand-in Lib Dem leader?

They have to come back into compliance with their international obligations and we are pursuing that at the UN, says Mr Blair, but the benches behind him are extremely quiet.

12.10pm

Labour's Sir Stuart Bell asks for a view on <u>Hamas</u>'s victory in the occupied territories. Mr Blair says he respects the result, but says <u>Hamas</u> faces "a very fundamental choice - for democracy and for peace".

Mr Cameron turns to climate change, asking "what happened to joined-up government" in the light of news that several scientific labs looking at the issue are to close, quoting one of his own environment ministers as saying the decision "does not make sense".

The Research Council took the decision to close the labaratories, and there is a debate about that, Mr Blair counters, before saying that a recent survey put the UK fifth in terms of climate change action.

Mr Cameron cheekily asks Mr Blair to go away and think about the issue and "report back to the Commons next week".

The PM again bats the query back to the Research Council.

12.15pm

Tory Nigel Evans complains that the chancellor has "pocketed" 60m from speed camera fines. Mr Blair complains that Mr Evans has voted against road safety investment.

Labour's serial rebel Bob Marshall-Andrews receives a large cheer for simply standing up. Before the war, was the cabinet made aware of the attorney general's original March 8 opinion before going to war? Mr Blair says merely that the attorney general was at the relevant cabinet meeting - before rapidly changing the subject to the Iraqi elections.

Tory David Heathcoat-Amory asks about a directive on the resale of art works, which he claims was 'gold-plated' in the UK. Mr Blair jokes that he should worry more about who Tory MEPs will be sitting with in Brussels in future.

12.20pm

Tory Mark Francois, ahead of the opposition day debate on it this afternoon, complains about the lack of consultation on police force amalgamation.

Labour's Andrew Dismore praises a joint JobCentrePlus and Marks & Spencer initiative in his Hendon constituency, which the PM has visited.

The DUP's Rev Ian Paisley whispers his condolences on the servicemen's deaths, then asks about today's IMC reports on IRA decomissioning - has the PM read them yet, and was the original declaration that the IRA had

Prime minister's questions

disarmed a "misjudgement"? Roars of unionist approval around him, although the Speaker cuts him off from asking a second question.

Graham Allen asks for the teaching of "social behaviour" in primary schools, as well as literacy and numeracy.

SDLP Alasdair McDonnell suggests giving the "wrecking parties" six weeks to resurrect the Stormont assembly.

In passing, Gordon Brown, sat next to the PM, is looking particularly grey-haired today, with large bags under his eyes.

PMQs comes to an end, followed quickly by a "personal statement" from Stephen Byers, apologising for a misleading statement in an earlier apology for a misleading statement to a transport select committee.

Load-Date: February 1, 2006



Havana prays, while Little Havana parties

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 5, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: WEEKEND REVIEW; Pg. C2; 7 Days

Length: 408 words

Byline: Jane Emson, Special to the Sun

Body

Cuba's President Fidel Castro issued what appears to have been a self-fulfilling prophecy shortly before he was whisked to hospital after unexpected bleeding in the nether regions. While Miami's Little Havana went wild with street parties and speculation about the 79-year-old revolutionary's death, citizens in the real Havana kept a low profile, avoided attracting the attention of the police at any cost (as usual), and prayed for his recovery. At his last public appearance July 26, Castro taunted the United States with promises he wouldn't be running the country when he was 100.

Meanwhile, actor and Oscar-winning director Mel Gibson proved that when the police say "you have the right to remain silent," it's a good idea to do so. Nabbed while speeding, allegedly with an open bottle of tequila as a driving companion, Gibson erupted with a verbal volcano of slurs that offended both Jews and <u>women</u>.

Gibson, in his own quirk of dictatorship, reportedly used to demand cast attendance for members of Alcoholics Anonymous at last-minute meetings while in costume and blue-face during the filming of Braveheart. He later apologized publicly (twice) for his verbal insults, but not for apparently endangering lives by driving drunk and speeding.

The names were cuddly, but the massacre was savage. In the hamlet of Wookey Hole, southwest England, a doberman with the plush toy monicker of Barney attacked and disembowelled a stuffed bear named Mabel made by the Stieff company; a toy that was the first love of American rocker Elvis Presley. The owner is said to be distraught. German dog attacks German bear, once owned by an poor American boy and now the prize possession of a wealthy Brit. Can international incidents get any worse?

Well yes, obviously they can. Now marriage and children are joining the weapons of war. While the slaughter continued in the Mideast and Afghanistan, South Korea's military unveiled new policies aimed at making it easier for military couples to have and raise children, in part so they can grow up to be soldiers. The country has the lowest fertility rate among developed countries and the birth rate among military couples is even lower than that in the general population. The army will keep newlyweds together by allowing them to stay in the same posting for five years.

And in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> staged a mass wedding for 200 couples in the Jabaaliya refugee camp, calling it "a celebration from the heart of the siege."

Load-Date: August 5, 2006



NO GENERAL TO BE ACCEPTED AFTER MUSHARRAF'S EXIT

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Length: 449 words

Body

LAHORE: MMA President and Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer Qazi Hussain Ahmad has said that General Pervez Musharraf is ruling the country according to his personal whims and wants to give the entire nation in the servitude of America. Addressing a meeting of <u>Women</u> Wing Jamaat-e-Islami Lahore on Tuesday here at Mansoora, Qazi said 2006 is the year of change therefore people of Pakistan will observe August 14 as Youm-e-Nijat. He said all opposition parties are unanimous that no general will be accepted after the exit of Pervez Musharraf.

Lebanon, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kashmir are in the clutches of colonial powers, he maintained. Washington is equally responsible for the every brutal act committed by Israeli army in Lebanon and Palestine because Zionists are using the US and providing arsenals to eliminate Muslims and innocent citizens. He was of the view that Zionist state cannot defeat *Hamas* and Hizbullah, as the spirit of jihad cannot be crushed with force.

Qazi said people would throng Minar-e-Pakistan on August 14 from every nook and corner of Lahore while similar activities will be witnessed in Peshawar, Karachi and Rawalpindi on August 20, 27 and September 6 respectively. He said people attending these mammoth rallies and public meeting will urge the army to go back to barracks because the country's borders are in danger.

If the corruption and dishonesty is controlled in Pakistan, it will boost the morale of expatriate Pakistanis and move them to invest here. He said only mass drive could ensure free and fair elections in the country. To a question about amendments in Hudood ordinance, Qazi said that present campaign in favour of abolishing the Islamic punishment is foreign funded. He said West is out to crush Islamic movements and Islam.

Qazi grieved Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan; Qazi Hussain Ahmad has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and material during recent rains and flood in certain areas of NWFP including Charsadda. He has sent immediate relief of one million rupees to the affected areas and appealed the masses to donate generously in this hour of need. In a statement on Tuesday Qazi said natural calamities are beyond human control but the damaged caused by the calamities can be mitigated by helping the affected brethren. Seminar on Lebanon Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan will hold a seminar today (Wednesday) on the topic of "Lebanon Now" at 5:30 pm at Mansoora.

JI Ameer Qazi Hussain Ahmad will chair the seminar while Editor-in-Chief The Nation Majid Nizami, President PPP Lahore Aziz-ur-Rehman Chan, Secretary-General JUP Qari Zawwar Bahadur, Director Foreign Affairs Abdul Ghaffar Aziz and others will speak on the occasion.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006



Olaf Wiig in kidnap video

Manawatu Standard (New Zealand)

August 24, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 437 words

Body

TWO Fox journalists -- including New Zealander Olaf Wiig -- who were kidnapped in Gaza City last week said they are in "fairly good health" and appealed for help to secure their release, a videotape released today shows.

A previously unknown militant group, the Holy Jihad Brigades, has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping nine days ago in the Palestinian coastal strip and demanded the United States release "Muslim prisoners" within 72 hours.

The group did not say what would happen if the demand were ignored.

Fox News Channel correspondent Steve Centanni, a 60-year-old American, and Wiig, 36, a former Palmerston North Boys' High School student, were shown sitting on a blanket on a floor. They sat against a black backdrop with no markings. No militants could be seen.

"We're alive and well, in fairly good health," Mr Centanni said, speaking in a clear and calm voice.

"Just want to let you know I'm here and alive and give my love to my family and friends and ask you to do anything you can to try to help us get out of here."

Mr Centanni said they had been treated well.

Mr Wiig added: "I know my family will already be doing this, but if you could apply any political pressure . . . both here in Gaza and the West Bank, that would be much appreciated by both Steve and myself."

The video bore many hallmarks of tapes of captives issued by militants in Iraq, and the rhetoric of the group also mirrored the heavily religious language used by Iraqi insurgents.

Mr Centanni and Mr Wiig were abducted by masked gunmen in Gaza City on August 14 as they were working on a story.

"Release what you have, and we will release what we have," the Holy Jihad Brigades said in a statement.

"It should include everybody without exception. We will give you 72 hours beginning from midday. If you implement our conditions, we will implement our promise, otherwise you will have to wait . . . Here we are giving you another chance, and God knows how many times we have.

"We will exchange the male and <u>female</u> Muslim prisoners in America's prisons with the prisoners we have. The result will be according to the action."

Olaf Wiig in kidnap video

Until today's statement, no one had claimed responsibility for the abduction, which is now the longest-lasting in Gaza for more than a year.

Palestinian leaders -- including Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, of the militant Islamist group <u>Hamas</u> -- have called for the release of the two captives. Palestinian security forces have been scouring Gaza for them.

CAPTION:

Picture: REUTERS THIS video grab from a tape released today shows New Zealander Olaf Wiig, left, and American Steve Centanni appealing for help.

Load-Date: August 24, 2006



Stay in Touch

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

August 18, 2006 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Stay in Touch; Pg. 20

Length: 996 words

Byline: Jacqueline Maley & Alexa Moses

Body

Hollywood is doing its bit for the war effort

NICOLE KIDMAN and 83 of her Hollywood mates have denounced terrorism, 'cos it's, like, really bad?

In a move that has the international Muslim extremist community quaking in its boots, the group of high-profile luvvies has taken out a powerfully worded full-page advertisement in the Los Angeles Times calling for an end to the slaughter of innocents by nasty men belonging to organisations beginning with H. Take that, you terrorist punks!

The signatories include the chairman of News Corporation, Rupert Murdoch, the actors Michael Douglas, Dennis Hopper, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, Danny De Vito, Don Johnson, James Woods, Kelly Preston, Patricia Heaton and William Hurt, and various directors, including Ridley Scott and Michael Mann.

The ad singles out for special mention Hezbollah in Lebanon and *Hamas* in Palestine.

"We the undersigned are pained and devastated by the civilian casualties in Israel and Lebanon caused by terrorist actions initiated by terrorist organisations such as Hezbollah and *Hamas*," it reads.

"If we do not succeed in stopping terrorism around the world, chaos will rule and innocent people will continue to die. We need to support democratic societies and stop terrorism at all costs."

Last we heard, the UN-brokered ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel was still holding, so the ad must have worked. No word yet on any mass al-Qaeda surrenders, but we'll keep you posted.

NOT ON THE ROAD AGAIN!

Guitar fans over the age of 45, start salivating now. Mr "Slow Hand, Fast Car" is coming to Australia for the first time in 17 years, and this time we hope no one will let him behind the wheel of a car.

We are referring, of course, to the guitarist Eric Clapton, of Cream and the Yardbirds fame, who was clocked doing 216 kmh in France in 2004, and lost his right to drive in that country.

The promoter Michael Coppel has announced that Clapton will tour Australia for the first time since 1990 and perform in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. He will play at the Sydney Entertainment Centre on Monday, January 29, and we sincerely hope someone else is driving him to the gig.

Stay in Touch

LOOK AT ME, LOOK AT ME

The Honourable David Ernest Oldfield, soon to be retiring from politics, yesterday sent the following email to every person who works at the NSW Parliament:

"Dear Fellow Parliament House Dwellers, Like me or hate me, at 8.30 on Channel Seven on Thursday night 17 August and for a number of Thursdays following that, you'll be able to enjoy a good laugh at the shenanigans and tribal politics of Celebrity Survivor. For the record, I do not think of myself as a celebrity, though some of my fellow contestants certainly are celebrities, so join us all and watch the pampered struggle as primitives. In short, I believe this show may be seen as Lost meets Survivor meets Gilligan's Island.Best regards, David Oldfield."

We can't be certain, but we suspect that this correspondence may herald the beginning of the end of Western civilisation.

HISTORY WARS

Concerned that postmodernist hippies were poisoning the minds of our children, John Howard kicked off his history seminar yesterday by stumping up a \$100,000 annual prize to be awarded "in recognition of an outstanding publication or body of work that contributes significantly to an understanding of Australian history".

Come question time, and Labor leader and former historian Kim Beazley decided to quiz Howard on his own past.

"I refer the Prime Minister to the history summit being held in Canberra today and the importance of teaching pivotal facts. Given the Prime Minister is so interested in history, when interest rates hit21.39 per cent in 1982, who was treasurer?"

Among those chuckling away at the rare sight of Howard being stumped by a good 'un was the Treasurer, Peter Costello

His giggles soon turned into perplexity when Jackie Kelly leapt to his defence a little later.

The Labor Whip Roger Price was too clever by half by asking Mr Costello to comment on why chicken slaughter statistics had increased under the Howard Government. (Labor has branded Costello chicken man for failing to challenge Howard - geddit?)

Kelly, who last week was branding Costello a North Shore toff, rose and demanded the question be ruled out of order because it was "pure poess".

Normally it is Beazley who sends people scrambling for the dictionary.

However, the Speaker must have understood Kelly, because he accepted her argument and ruled the question out.

Sugar and spice and all things nice ... grrrr!

DESPITE the right-on roots of Sesame Street (the South African version of the show even has an HIV-positive character), most of the Muppets on the strip are blokes. There's Elmo, Cookie Monster, and Ernie and Bert.

But this week a new girl landed on the block. Is she a scientist? A taxidermist? A wannabe film director in the vein of Sofia Coppola? Nope, Abby Cadabby is a fairy with frothy pink pigtails and a pretty turquoise frock, and she's baffling America as to whether she's a mushy marketing opportunity or a third-wave feminist.

As any Muppette knows, getting a gig on Sesame Street is tough, and keeping it is tougher. The <u>females</u> currently struggling to make it on the strip include spunky Zoe and the bilingual Rosita, and they're nowhere in the race against the heavyweights - even the Count is more famous than frumpy Prairie Dawn, who plays Cookie Monster's killjoy sidekick on the Letter of the Day segment. Dig further back in Sesame history and the trend continues with a string of pathetic Muppettes who weren't pretty enough to make the cut, including monster Lulu and bespectacled Elizabeth. Both were homely, and both were ditched by producers after a few seasons.

Stay in Touch

However, Sesame's producers say Abby has caught the fancy of the kiddie focus groups already, meaning a pretty face and a demure nature may be the key to cracking the Sesame glass ceiling.

Stay tuned for the catfight between Abby and a jealous Zoe in the street.

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: Abby Cadabby meets Oscar the Grouch. Photo: New York Times Pop a shirt on, hon ... dancer Katie Ripley blocks traffic pondering her goosebumps, as she stars in a Sydney Dance Company television ad for the ballet Underland. Photo courtesy of the Sydney Dance Company

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



Israeli Visa Policy Traps Thousands of Palestinians in a Legal Quandary

The New York Times
September 18, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

Length: 1069 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank, Sept. 16

Body

Sam Bahour, an American citizen of Palestinian descent, would seem to be the kind of neighbor Israel would welcome.

Mr. Bahour, 41, has a master's degree in business from Tel Aviv University and runs a successful consulting firm. He developed a gleaming \$10 million shopping center in Ramallah, where he has lived for 13 years with his Palestinian wife, Abeer, and their two daughters.

Yet in all that time, Israel has never approved Mr. Bahour's application for a Palestinian identity document, which would allow him to live permanently in the West Bank with his family. He has had to rely instead on repeated renewals of a three-month tourist visa since he moved from Ohio to Ramallah in 1993. And now Israel says he cannot renew it anymore.

"I'm facing a tough choice," Mr. Bahour said. "If I leave, I may not be able to come back here, which is where my life is. If I stay, I will be here illegally."

Mr. Bahour is one of thousands, or perhaps tens of thousands, of people ensnared by an Israeli policy that has effectively frozen immigration to the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since the current Palestinian uprising began in 2000. This spring, after the radical Islamic group <u>Hamas</u> came to power, Israel severed most contacts with the Palestinian Authority and moved to close the last loophole in its immigration policy -- the renewable tourist visa.

Over the past six years, more than 70,000 people, a vast majority of them of Palestinian descent, have applied without success to immigrate to the West Bank or Gaza to join relatives, according to B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights group that tracks the issue. Many who followed Mr. Bahour's route and worked around the ban with tourist visas now have no legal way to remain.

"These people are not really tourists -- they are living and working without legal permits," said Shlomo Dror, the spokesman for the Israeli government agency that handles Palestinian affairs.

"I know these people have a difficult life living this way, and I feel sorry for them," he said. "I think we can solve this when we renew relations with the Palestinian Authority, but right now, we are not talking to them."

Israeli Visa Policy Traps Thousands of Palestinians in a Legal Quandary

Mr. Bahour acknowledges that he has options that others in the same situation may lack. His daughters, ages 12 and 6, are also American citizens, and his wife has a green card that would allow her to live and work in the United States. He and his wife own a second home in Youngstown, Ohio, where Mr. Bahour was born and raised, and his profession as a business consultant is portable.

But the family is committed to building a future here, he said.

"People ask why I don't just leave," Mr. Bahour said. "I tell them it's because I want to make a contribution here."

More common are families in which one spouse has only a Palestinian identity document while the other has a foreign passport, making it difficult or impractical for them to live elsewhere.

Many Palestinians say Israel is pursuing a systematic policy of limiting the population in the Palestinian areas, even if it means separating family members.

"Most every Palestinian knows someone with this kind of problem," said Sarit Michaeli, a spokeswoman for B'Tselem.

In her view, the Israeli policy has several purposes: to apply political pressure on the Palestinians, to create a bargaining chip that could be used in future negotiations and to be a tool in a battle of demographics.

The largest single category of people affected by the Israeli policy is Jordanian <u>women</u> of Palestinian descent who have married Palestinian men and want to move to the West Bank to live with their husbands, Ms. Michaeli said.

Many of those <u>women</u> come to the West Bank on tourist visas and stay on after their visas expire. Complications arise when the <u>women</u> eventually want to travel or visit relatives in Jordan. If they leave the West Bank or Gaza, they face the risk that Israeli authorities will not allow them to return.

Palestinians also say the Israel policy will keep out well-educated, middle-class and politically moderate members of the Palestinian diaspora who could play an important role in developing Palestinian society.

Ali Aggad, a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian origin, has been working in the West Bank since 1999. He is now the general manager at the Unipal General Trading Company, which distributes consumer products for international companies like Procter & Gamble.

For seven years, Israel has routinely granted him a tourist visa that has allowed him to spend weekdays working in the West Bank and weekends in Amman, Jordan, with his wife and two sons. Without warning, Israeli authorities denied him entry to the West Bank twice recently, he said.

Procter & Gamble's office in Tel Aviv is trying to resolve his case with the Israeli authorities, Mr. Aggad said, adding, "All I can do now is wait and hope it works out."

In the past few months, about 50 United States citizens have notified American diplomatic offices that Israel has prevented them from entering the West Bank, said Micaela Schweitzer-Bluhm, a spokeswoman at the United States Consulate in Jerusalem.

"This is an issue we've been monitoring for several months, and it has been raised with the Israeli authorities," she said.

Many people of Palestinian origin sought to return to the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and Gaza after Israel and the Palestinians signed an interim peace agreement in 1993.

Under a 1995 accord, Israel initially agreed to allow 3,000 immigrants to the Palestinian areas each year, as part of a family reunification process, said Mr. Dror, the Israeli official.

Israeli Visa Policy Traps Thousands of Palestinians in a Legal Quandary

Demand proved to be so great, he said, that Israel later increased the number to as many as 20,000 a year. Even so, there was a backlog of some 50,000 applications when Israel froze the process in 2000. Israel resumed allowing immigration last year, but soon froze it again when <u>Hamas</u> won power.

One of the applications stuck in the pile is Mr. Bahour's. He said he applied for permanent residency in 1994 and had not received a reply.

Meanwhile, his current tourist visa expires Oct. 1, and Israeli authorities have written "last permit" in his United States passport.

"I still don't know what I'm going to do," he said. But he will not leave if he can help it. "If I walked away now," he said, "I feel I would be letting my community down."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Sam Bahour at the Ramallah shopping center he built. Israel has effectively frozen certain immigration since the uprising began in 2000. (Photo by Rina Castelnuovo for The New York Times)

Load-Date: September 18, 2006



Of racism, tyranny, and oppression

University Wire
July 27, 2006 Thursday

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Section: COLUMN Length: 1123 words

Byline: By Aly Mohamed, OSU Daily Barometer; SOURCE: Oregon State U.

Dateline: CORVALLIS, Ore.

Body

"Is this the price we pay for aspiring to build our democratic institutions? Can the international community stand by while such callous retribution by the state of Israel is inflicted on us?" -Fuad Saniora, Lebanese Prime Minister.

Mr. Saniora received his answer when the Pentagon announced "rushing" Israel a delivery of precision-guided bombs, while Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ruled out a cease-fire as "false promise." The pro-American government that Israel is smashing was once considered a shining example of President Bush's democracy campaign. Our government has now endorsed unconditional Israeli aggression, leaving them to decide the manner and the number of whomever they wish to butcher. Over the international community and in The Hague's International Court, one hears only faint whispers of the gruesome tyranny - Lebanon should have known not to rely on a community restricted by U.S. backed Israeli interests.

In occupying Lebanon, over 150,000 men, <u>women</u> and children were killed by Israel in 16 years. Six times the dead of Sept. 11 (17,500 civilians) were massacred during the summer of 1982, an invasion which shaped the emergence of <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah - yet politicians act as if resistance movements appeared in a vacuum.

After 'ending' occupation in 2000, Israel continued to violate Lebanese sovereignty by air, sea, and land; kidnapping civilians, and holding thousands without cause behind prison walls. What's more, Israel admittedly refuses to provide mapping to more then 400,000 land mines dispersed throughout Lebanon, which continued the reckless slaughter in their absence.

Since inception, Israel has denied Palestinians the most basic of human rights, driving many of them to the point of violent insanity. Israel then has the audacity to use their violence as a justification for perpetual oppression. Riding the rhetoric of fighting terrorism, Israel continues its history of brutal oppression - bombing airports, roads, fuel tanks, power plants, water supplies, bridges and refuge camps. Apparently, the definition of "terrorism" given in official sources must be qualified only as terrorism against 'us'. Take a moment and ask yourself what your reaction would be to such brutal force.

Although it was Bush who called for Palestinian elections and <u>Hamas</u> participation, he bowed to Israeli demands and imposed suffocating global economic and diplomatic blockades on Palestinians. Imagine American reaction to collective punishment for democratically electing our leaders.

In 1941, Hitler ordered "the harshest measures" against civilian resistance, ordering execution of 50 civilians for every German soldier killed, for "only the (collective) death penalty can be a real means of deterrence."

Of racism, tyranny, and oppression

As Israeli forces subject masses of Palestinians to destitute poverty, curfews, and encirclement by barbed wire fences, they essentially strip them of their civil rights - reducing their lives to a condition of dependence while covering them in a cold blanket of fear and despair. Everyday, Israel turns villages into prisons and homes into cells. These tactics are founded on the portrayal of all Arabs as blood sucking terrorist.

When our government, media, and allies mentioned Iraq's breach of 17 U.N. resolutions and imaginary WMDs as a pretext for war, they conveniently disregarded the 64 U.N. resolutions flouted by Israel and a nuclear arsenal of catastrophic proportions. Whatever atrocities Saddam committed, Israel has either matched or surpassed in what is now the longest occupation in history; though we find no one speaking a word about Israel, we have seen no end to ranting regarding Iraq and Hezbollah.

While Israel is a democracy, it is a racist democracy engineered for the advancement of a single tradition. Israeli historian Benny Morris, the leading authority on Palestinian refugees, noted "without the uprooting of the Palestinians, a Jewish state would not have arisen here" adding that "there are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing." Palestinians are asked to forget their 'right of return' and the oppression of the past while they live through it all the same today.

Is it an ugly trend, or is it that contemporary ethnic cleansing is only to be justified when Muslims are the prime target as in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Israel? Colonial powers and their descendants are unable to rid themselves of racist impulses - be it against Native Americans, African Americans, Native Africans, Japanese, or Aborigines - racist hate must be acted upon, and in its path Arab and Muslim lives are considered worthless; blood cheaper than dirt.

Palestinians are indebted to Jews from all walks of life that document and protest their sufferings. In particular, the growing movement "Yesh Gvul" or "There Is a Limit" - founded by Israeli soldiers refusing to serve in the occupied territories - consequentially incarcerated.

The media has decomposed into a hand of Israeli war propaganda, seeking to present not only moral justification, but depiction of symmetry in mass-murder and military weaponry. No matter their deceit, the death toll has always fallen very disproportionately upon the Palestinians.

What has plunged out is anything akin to a dissenting voice. Media outlets edit everything that would cause the government concern of dishonest brain washing. Every news channel employs generals, CIA agents, and terrorism experts as consultants who speak empty rhetoric, supporting everything Israel. Arguably, the most valuable fact based reading for those seeking concrete understanding of Middle-East policy is the article "Whose War?" published in 2003 by "The American Conservative" (of all magazines).

Israel is far off mark in using murder, expulsion, annexation, and the building of walls to bring it security. We as Americans who have only recently experienced the civil rights movement know in our heart of hearts, never can systematic oppression and confinement of the weak be justified. I have a hard time believing there are no prominent Christian leaders, save Pope Benedict, ready to speak out against this senseless malice.

If America prides itself on liberating others, how are we to turn a blind eye to Arab Muslims and Christians in Lebanon and Palestine? Must we wish for Israel to carry on no matter the cost of innocent civilians, billions in tax dollars needed at home, and wreckage of infant democracies? Are we are interested in increasing global anti-Americanism, as we fool no one while standing staunchly for human rights and unconditionally backing Israel. If we truly claim to value freedom and justice for all, we are obliged to demand Israel cease its brutal and atrocious campaigns.

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Load-Date: July 27, 2006



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

The Guardian - Final Edition
August 11, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES; Pg. 35

Length: 1051 words **Byline:** Paul Moorcraft

Body

Washington has dumped Tony Blair and its disdain of the UN. America is now working with France, the old colonial power, to shape Lebanese events via the international organisation. Friction between Washington and Paris as well as strong objections from the Arab League are delaying a "first-stage" UN resolution on a ceasefire. Immediate Israeli withdrawal is not in the current text.

The Lebanese government has offered 15,000 troops to replace the Israeli Defence Force and to monitor Hizbullah while a robust French-led UN force moves in. The key is to get UN forces in and Israelis out, without letting Hizbullah regroup and rearm. A quick-fix solution could allow a rapid-reaction French component to link up with the existing UN forces, as lead components of a Lebanese military intervention. A UN resolution could save face all round, but it is more likely that the fighting will go on.

The IDF is moving into phase three of its operations: a slower, meat-grinder advance that could, depending on diplomacy, accelerate to a big ground push to the Litani river and probably beyond. Despite memories of the previous quagmire, the IDF may stay until all UN troops are in place. Israelis have little faith in the Lebanese army doing what it has been unable to do since 2000.

So generals in Nato should take note. The conflict in Lebanon is inspiring a potent kind of warfare, which could have a profound impact throughout the Middle East. Previously Israel could capture Beirut in seven days; now it has struggled for four weeks to control small villages right on its own border.

Hizbullah is a novel hybrid, combining the sophistication and weaponry of a formal army blended with the near-invisibility of a hit-and-run insurgency. It has dramatically modernised guerrilla tactics, but it also holds territory and seats in the Lebanese parliament and government. Hizbullah is responsive to the ayatollahs in Iran but - like Sinn Fein/IRA in Ireland - it has an authentic constituency base, one which was partly created by Israel's 1982 invasion.

Western experts are struggling, not least with naming this new phenome non. Some call it network warfare. Traditional armies are large, often cumbersome and organised in a strict disciplined hierarchy; networks such as Hizbullah have numerous widely dispersed fighters who can improvise quickly, not least in their use of hi-tech communications and propaganda. Israeli special forces are surprised to come up against Hizbullah fighters with almost the same quality of equipment - and training - as themselves.

Comment & Debate: Only a negotiated ceasefire can bring a wider settlement: America 's embrace of UN diplomacy over Lebanon is a welcome return to pre-9/11 poli....

Hizbullah has waged a sustained war of attrition against a nation across a state border. To relieve the pressure on <u>Hamas</u> - the fighting continues in Gaza as well - it opened up a second front in the north and maintained a high-tempo war against the regional superpower.

Hizbullah has learned from the Chechens' fight against a much stronger power, Russia. It has challenged state monopolies of force: air and naval power. It withstood the shock-and-awe tactics of bombing from the air by escalating its counterattacks with rockets.

Thinking in the old paradigm, Israel struck at the infrastructure of the Lebanese state with air attacks, only belatedly engaging Hizbullah on the ground. This is a massive own goal, not least because it undermines the Arab world's most moderate (and also weakest) government.

Hizbullah has done a lot better than the conventional forces of all the Arab states that have fought against Israel since 1948. It has won a stunning propaganda victory and shattered Israel's deterrence posture.

Hassan Nasrallah, the Hizbullah leader, has done what Osama bin Laden could never do: he has united Shias and Sunnis throughout the region, especially the young, in the belief that a Muslim renaissance could come via the gun. Just as Iraq demonstrated the limits of US power, the war on Lebanon displayed Israel's weakness. Radical Islam has been the victor in both conflicts.

Israel will now be far more reluctant to fight <u>Hamas</u>, despite the differences in terrain and organisation. Likewise, the Israeli experience must give the US pause before attacking Iranian forces who will fight just as effectively as their students in Hizbullah.

Hizbullah's success will galvanise jihadists from Boston to Bolton to Bombay. The supine political response of the Sunni Arab leaders (who privately loathe Shia success) has played badly in the Arab street. Militant Islam could soon displace the secular despotisms - ironically even the one in Syria that supports Hizbullah.

The Lebanese war is a race against time: will Hizbullah run out of fighting spirit and rockets before the world - and even the US - runs out of patience with Israeli tactics and forces a ceasefire?

So far, no Islamic fanatic has put unconventional warheads on their Iranian missiles. Whether that remains the case may depend on how long the blood-letting goes on. If diplomats conjure up an intervention army far more successful than the existing ill-fated UN force, a regional war that could include Syria may be avoided.

America's embrace of UN diplomacy is a welcome return to pre-paranoia, pre-9/11 politics. The Middle East may now be treated in a more holistic way. If Lebanon works, the French might be persuaded to repeat the miracle by supervising a UN buffer between Israel and Palestine as the old road map to the two-state solution is finally realised.

But if the UN fails, Hizbullah's deadly hybrid could be replicated across Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. Iran acquires nuclear weapons. America withdraws from Iraq as civil war compels a messy partition. Nato forces succumb to domestic pressure and the Taliban retake Kabul. A <u>female</u> Democrat president in Washington reverts to isolation. Such pessimistic probabilities dictate a rapid and orderly western military withdrawal from Arab lands. Whoever rules would sell their oil.

The aspiring French-led diplomacy in Lebanon trumpets the failure of the Anglo-US policy of constructive destabilisation. Only a genuine negotiated ceasefire, allied to a powerful UN intervention force, could - just - lead to a regional settlement.

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Comment & Debate: Only a negotiated ceasefire can bring a wider settlement: America 's embrace of UN diplomacy over Lebanon is a welcome return to pre-9/11 poli....

Load-Date: August 11, 2006



Focus: Middle East Crisis: THE ROAD TO WAR?: It started with the seizure of one young Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants. This weekend the Middle East teeters on the brink of a regional war as the world stands by, apparently helpless to intervene. Jason Burke, Julie Flint in Beirut, Inigo Gilmore in Nahariya, Conal Urquhart in Gaza and Patrick Wintour in St

Petersburg report

The Observer (London)
July 16, 2006

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The Observer

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Byline: Jason Burke, Julie Flint, Inigo Gilmore, Conal Urquhart and Patrick Wintour

Body

Beirut was silent yesterday morning. Smoke still hung in the blue sky like a vague threat, but after a night of violence - physical and verbal - the port city waited. A few shops in the centre warily raised their steel shutters, but the Shia Muslim areas in the south of the city were empty. Occasional cars worked their way around the rubble left by the air strikes of the evening before, some packed with families leaving, others filled with families going to funerals. Then came the blasts in the middle of the day, loud enough to rattle windows across the entire city. Plumes of flame and smoke spouted once more above the tattered buildings. And everyone knew that there would soon be more cars full of refugees, and more cars heading to funerals.

There were many funerals last week, and this weekend there were more. At least 20 Lebanese villagers, including <u>women</u> and children, were killed yesterday in an Israeli air strike on a convoy of vehicles evacuating a village near the southern border. And few expect the funerals to stop soon. Yesterday Israeli and Hizbollah leaders declared 'open war'; bodies of four Israeli sailors were retrieved from a warship struck by a Hizbollah drone; beyond Beirut, bombing continued in the Hizbollah heartland of southern Lebanon and even reached the Syrian border; and dozens of Hizbollah rockets continued to fall randomly on civilian areas in northern Israel, reaching as far south as Tiberias, some 40km inside Israel's borders, causing minor injuries and provoking panic. Further south, though the worst violence of the week had ebbed, the Gaza Strip, from where rockets have been fired into Israeli towns, remained tense, with reports of an Israeli air strike and two dead.

And as the violence continued, so the shock waves around the region and the world grew deeper. The crisis, which has pushed oil prices to a historic high of \$78 per barrel and weakened stock markets around the world, dominated the agenda of the G8 summit of rich nations in St Petersburg, dividing international leaders. In the Middle East itself, Syria and Iran, deeply implicated in the events of the past week, are on high alert. The Egyptians, Jordanians, Turks, Saudis - and, of course, the Iraqis - are all very nervous. America is increasingly involved. Diplomats are

frantically formulating plans to defuse what one described to The Observer as 'a powder keg that could blow out all the lights'. And all this in just five days.

The questions are now manifold and evident; answers less so. How and why did the crisis explode so powerfully and so quickly? What are the regional ramifications? And what happens next?

As ever in the Middle East, the crisis can be traced back to a variety of causes. The timeline can start a few days ago - with a daring cross-border raid by Hizbollah militants on Tuesday that led to the capture of two Israeli soldiers and the deaths of eight more. Or it can start two weeks ago - with the kidnapping of another Israeli soldier by hardline Palestinian militants from the *Hamas* organisation in the Gaza Strip. Or it can start

months, years or decades ago in the myriad interwoven causes that link Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000, the development (with Iranian assistance) of the Hizbollah militia in response to Israel's invasion of Lebanon 18 years earlier, and even the Iranian revolution of 1979, or the Arab-Israeli wars of 1973 and 1967.

For Ehud Olmert, the recently elected Prime Minister of Israel, the crisis started on Wednesday with Hizbollah's cross-border attack. It should have been expected. The militia's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has repeatedly said that it would seek to capture Israeli soldiers on or near the border, and has been trying to do so since moving back into the frontier zone following the Israeli withdrawal six years ago. The army was 'caught with its pants down', said one Israeli commentator last week.

As soon as Olmert - said by associates to be 'incandescent' with rage - heard of the incident, he called an emergency meeting of the inner security cabinet. Around the table with the right-wing Prime Minister, who leads the Kadima party, were his senior ministers and leaders of the other parties, including the profoundly orthodox Shas, who comprise the ruling coalition. The politicians were briefed by the head of the army, Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz, the head of the internal security service, the head of Mossad, and a series of other military advisers.

Halutz's plan mixed various aims. There was little real hope that the pressure on Hizbollah might force the immediate return of the soldiers. But a land, air and sea blockade would prevent Hizbollah receiving supplies and prevent the militia evacuating the hostages to Syria. A tight cordon coupled with air strikes would allow the destruction of Hizbollah's military capacity. In addition, the physical damage wreaked by the bombing would force the government of Lebanon (and the international community) to act against the Islamic militia, hopefully implementing a recent UN Security Council resolution calling for Hizbollah's disarmament and the positioning of Lebanese troops on the southern border. Civilian suffering leading to anger against Hizbollah would, the politicians and military men knew, force the Lebanese, or the international community, or both, to act rapidly. The plan was accepted unanimously. 'If our security and economy is being hit,' said one minister, 'so shall Lebanon's.'

Their responses were, given Israel's history, relatively predictable. The Jewish state's strategic doctrine has always relied, along with massive foreign aid, on a powerful, ruthless and immediate response to any threat. As a final bonus, the Hizbollah attack offered an opportunity to restore the 'deterrence factor' - a key aim of the hawkish chief of staff who has a significant influence on a government that contains fewer former soldiers than almost any other previous Israeli administration. 'There has been a progressive decline in deterrence over the past six years and the defence establishment want to re-establish it,' said Jonathan Spyer, a former adviser on international relations to the Israeli government and a research fellow at the Global Research in International Affairs Centre in Hertzeliya. 'They see it as a very serious big boy's game.'

Crucially, Halutz's plan was not new. Indeed, according to Gerald Steinberg, professor of political studies at Bar Ilan University, it had been sitting 'on the shelf' for some time. 'The scenario that has been followed has been worked on by the military for several years,' Steinberg said. 'Sharon was briefed on it when he was Prime Minister and it is probable that Olmert knew about it.' Yet the more hardline Israelis were not the only ones acting according to a script. Indeed, the script may well have been written elsewhere: in Beirut, Gaza, Damascus and Tehran.

On Thursday morning, the people of the village of al-Dweir, a few miles from the Israel-Lebanon border, gathered at the mosque for a family funeral. Rockets launched by Hizbollah fighters could be heard echoing off the low hills of

the border area. Overhead, Israeli jets and drones circled unheeded by a crowd full of Hizbollah members and supporters. Before long, the yellow and green flag of the Shia group was fluttering.

Dr Yousef Akkash was among the mourners. His brother, killed along with his wife and eight children earlier in the day when Israeli planes obliterated their home, was possibly a member of Hizbollah, but Akkash was not sure. 'I hope he was,' Akkash said. 'If he was engaged in Hizbollah activities, then it was his fate.' But it was a fate that lay in the hands of shadowy men in different countries.

Israeli diplomats last week insisted on an 'axis of evil' linking <u>Hamas</u> in the Gaza Strip, Hizbollah, Damascus and Tehran. 'They are united to destabilise the situation and act against the wills of most people and governments in the region to progress a peace process,' said Barnea Hassid, an Israeli spokesman.

The argument here is simple. The past few months have seen several developments that have displeased those who stand to benefit from continued strife. There has been an improvement in relations between moderate Palestinian leaders and Olmert, who is committed to a disengagement of Israeli forces and settlers from the West Bank and hints that even elements of *Hamas* might be shifting towards a more pragmatic posi tion. In addition, the Syrians, forced to leave Lebanon last year, have become marginalised and Hizbollah has begun to lose credibility. In addition, Tehran is under huge international pressure because of its nuclear programme. Nothing would benefit hardliners in Gaza, Lebanon, Damascus and Tehran more than a nasty and bloody war. 'It is a good thing for Damascus and Tehran,' said Spyer. 'They are largely behind what we are now seeing..'

However, experts point out that there is little history of contact between Hizbollah and the Sunni Muslim <u>Hamas</u>. And though a senior <u>Hamas</u> militant in Damascus is suspected of running the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier in Gaza, that does not mean, says one Western intelligence source, that the Hizbollah strike last week was part of a co-ordinated strategy. And the relationship between Iran and Hizbollah may be more nuanced than often thought. 'The Iranians are in trouble over the nuclear programme, and the Syrians are under pressure, too, and chaos and diversions benefit both,' said Nadim Shehadi, of London's Chatham House think tank. 'But Hizbollah is more linked to Tehran than Damascus.'

An axis may exist, but in a rougher, more informal form than the tight-knit institutional connections seen by the Israelis and their allies. 'If you ignore state borders, you can see a broad anti-American and anti-Israeli front, with Iran leading it. They are playing a clever game. The Iranians are playing chess: their opponents are playing poker.'

One critical question is the degree of support that Hizbollah, which has a well-armed militia and a large social programme, has among Lebanon's poor Shias. The consensus is that the militia had been losing support before the crisis. That may be one reason for Wednesday's attack, even if the reaction of the Israelis was greater than foreseen. 'Hizbollah was being squeezed,' said Steinberg. 'It was "use-it-or-lose-it" time.'

Initially, it looked as if those tactics might have worked. On Wednesday night, as news of the kidnapping broke, teenagers on motorbikes rode up and down Beirut seafront waving the party's yellow flag and honking horns. Even after bombardment chewed up the highway to Damascus and put the airport out of action, celebrants were setting off firecrackers. But as the extent of Israel's onslaught on Lebanon's infrastructure became clear, the atmosphere changed.

'In 1982, I was anti-Israel,' presidential candidate Chibli Mallat told The Observer . 'But this offensive has been provoked by a blatant violation of the demarcation line and the abduction of soldiers. I cannot put the blame on the Israelis. They did not start it.'

Few Lebanese accept Hizbollah's claim that its aim was to barter the release of the handful of Lebanese still held in Israeli jails: they blame Hizbollah for plunging Lebanon back into war. Everywhere there is widespread recognition that, even if the Lebanese government, with its pro-Syrian President and predominantly anti-Syrian administration and parliament, wanted to rein in Hizbollah, it could not. 'The Israelis blame the Lebanese government for not controlling Hizbollah,' said architect Simone Kosremelli. 'Is Italy able to control the Mafia? Could England control the IRA? Israel must know that 50 years of conflict have not brought a solution. There must be another way.'

If there is, it will almost certainly involve the international community. Vladimir Putin, Russia's leader, had hoped to use this weekend's G8 summit to showcase the economic progress in his nation. Officially, education and the fight against HIV head the agenda, but attention has focused on the Middle East - and divisions between the summiteers. The splits echoed those over Iraq three years ago, with France's Jacques Chirac leading condemnation of the Israelis, European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso saying that the use of force by Israel was 'disproportionate', Putin calling for the Israeli response to be more 'balanced' and President Bush avoiding any condemnation of Israel, saying 'the best way to stop the violence is for Hizbollah to lay down its arms and to stop attacking.'

However, with a meeting this weekend of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo disintegrating in mutual recriminations, the EU lacking a clear strategy and the UN lacking credibility, the Americans may hold the real key. 'The Israelis tend to go as far as they can, as quickly as they can, to make their point and strengthen their negotiating position before the international pressure on them gets too much to bear,' said one Western diplomat. 'The US can bring 10 times as much pressure to bear as anyone else.'

Bush has so far largely left discussions with Israeli leaders to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley. Rice, after conversations with UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, has backed the dispatch of a UN team to the region to attempt to negotiate a truce, but few believe it has much chance of immediate success.

A key question is whether Israel will escalate its military response to Hizbollah's continued provocation - yesterday rockets fell deeper and deeper inside Israel. A spokesman refused to rule out a ground offensive, though casualties would be high and the political fall-out of a botched operation potentially devastating. However it may be that a negotiated settlement - exchanging prisoners in Israeli jails as part of a more general agreement that would see the return of the captured Israeli troops and Hizbollah pulling back from the frontier - is possible. Though Israeli demands for the disarmament of Hizbollah may be unrealistic in the short term, they may not be in the long term.

However, it may be that a fuse has been lit. 'The nightmare scenario is war in Gaza, widespread war against the Israelis in Lebanon and between factions, Syria and Iran being dragged into the conflict and a steady escalation from there to who knows where, widespread conflict, oil prices through the ceiling, bombs going off all over the place' said the diplomat. 'You don't usually see the nightmare scenario evolve in the Middle East but, if it does, we are all in deep, deep trouble.'

Perhaps the most hopeful sign is that the vast bulk of the Lebanese and Israeli populations still do not wish harm on one another, though tensions have heightened antagonisms and, in Israel at least, provoked a strong pro-war solidarity.

During a rocket barrage on Friday afternoon, a missile landed in a kibbutz on the edge of the northern Israeli town of Nahariya. As the community had already been almost entirely evacuated, there were no casualties.

Avi Hever, a long-time resident, was one of just four men who chose to stay behind after the first missiles landed last week. 'I was watching TV when I heard the missile go over the house and explode,' he said. 'I went into a safe place between the two walls and the house was shaking all over. Its unpleasant, shocking; it makes you freeze.'

Pointing to empty rooms, he explained that he has sent his wife and two children to his family in Tel Aviv, an exodus mirroring that of Lebanese civilians further north. The Observer asked if he sympathised with those caught up in the same conflict living just a few miles away over the border.

'It's quite hard to feel empathy at the moment, when just 10 minutes ago a rocket hit here and I was in danger. But empathy will come,' he said, glancing across the neat houses, with their groomed front lawns, the Star of David flags flapping defiantly from the rooftops. 'We do want peace and the Lebanese want the same as us. But it's up to them now; they have to choose which way they want to organise their life, with Hizbollah or without it.'

Outside the village of Damour on Lebanon's coast, holes that are dozens of feet wide have shattered a key highway overpass that connects Beirut to the south of the country. It is also the only way out of the war zone for many of south Lebanon's residents, who have been clambering over the piles of rubble and around the craters on their way to Beirut or the northern Bekaa Valley and safety.

'This is a fight between Hizbollah and Israel,' said Umm Mohammed, 36, a Shia woman from outside Tyre. 'Why must they hurt civilians? I have small children.' And she looked nervously to the sky.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006



Blair admits to cabinet splits over his support for Bush on Israel

Belfast Telegraph August 4, 2006 Friday

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Byline: By Colin Brown

Body

Battered by criticism, Tony Blair last night prepared for a holiday, leaving behind a cabinet torn by dissent, a party in turmoil, and a country dismayed by his handling of the Middle East crisis.

The Prime Minister robustly defended his decision to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with President George Bush in refusing to call for a ceasefire while Lebanon burns. His defence came amid claims in the New Statesman that there was a conspiracy between the US, Israel and Britain to launch a war on Lebanon.

Speaking at his monthly press conference, he said that events in Lebanon had to be seen as part of a wider picture and that a stand had to be made against the "arc of extremism" that links Palestine, Syria, Iran and Iraq.

Five years ago, days after the 11 September attacks, Mr Blair told a Labour party conference: "This is a moment to seize. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us re-order this world..."

Since then, Mr Blair has joined Mr Bush in waging a world-wide "war against terror" in Afghanistan, Iraq, and at home in British cities. The two leaders are now accused of standing by as Israel attempts to eliminate Hizbollah in southern Lebanon, at the cost of at least 900 civilian lives.

Yesterday Mr Blair called for an "alliance of moderation to take on those people with such extreme views..." But apparent one-sided support for America and the Israelis has lost allies in the Middle East and support at home.

Resurgent Taliban fighters this week killed three more British soldiers in Helmand province. Suicide bombings kill dozens daily in Iraq, and yesterday it emerged that the respected outgoing British ambassador William Patey, in a leaked memorandum to Mr Blair, had told the Prime Minister that Iraq was facing "a descent into civil war and anarchy". Israel's apparent disregard for the lives of Lebanese civilians, and Mr Blair's refusal to call for a halt to the fighting, has further diminished his standing in the Arab world.

Mr Blair is leaving Britain resigned to the fact that he appears isolated within his cabinet. Yesterday, Mr Blair admitted some cabinet ministers had shown "anxiety" about his refusal to press President Bush to condemn the Israeli bombing. They include Jack Straw, the former foreign secretary - but he denied being at odds with Margaret Beckett, the Foreign Secretary.

He said: "I don't doubt that there are cabinet ministers who have doubts about aspects of the policy. But reports about Margaret [Beckett] and myself, and that my officials have been telling me to do different things, it's not the case."

Blair admits to cabinet splits over his support for Bush on Israel

Ministers are also uneasy that Britain and the US appeared to be allowing the Israelis time to redraw the map of the Middle East by bombing Hizbollah in a proxy war against Iran. Some fear it gives the extremists the opportunity to claim that the West is waging a holy war.

Mr Blair dismissed such fears, saying: "How can there possibly be a religious war when actually what we want is for Jews and Muslims and Christians to live in peace with each other as they do here in our country?

"Our vision of the future is a vision in which diversity of faith and culture and race is a strength not a weakness. The only ones engaged in a war voluntarily are those who committed the atrocities of 7 July, 11 September and 3 November in Madrid."

A UN resolution calling for a ceasefire could be published within the next 24 hours and Mr Blair signalled that Israel might be ready to accept one agreed by the UN security council.

It will be linked to the deployment of a multilateral force, but details over its composition, terms of engagement, and precise role will be the subject of tough negotiations over the weekend. The Prime Minister said the remaining differences to a resolution were "very slight".

Richard Burden, the Labour chairman of the all-party Parliamentary Britain-Palestine group, said: "I think his argument that *Hamas*, al-Qa'ida and Hizbollah can be lumped together is wrong."

Sir Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat leader, accused Mr Blair of a "gross oversimplification", adding: "Mr Blair's determination not to be parted from Mr Bush has deeply damaged Britain's influence."

Mr Blair said that he would continuetalks while on holiday to secure agreement for a UN resolution that could end the bloodshed "within days".

'No one sees policy as credible'

"While I condemn the hostage taking of Israeli soldiers and rocket attacks on Israel, I believe the response was disproportionate and appalling.

As a Labour MP, I say with sadness and a heavy heart that the Prime Minister's press conference did not inspire me at all. He needs to take a much more even-handed approach.

He refused to endorse Jack Straw's comments that the Israeli response was disproportionate. He refused to condemn Israel, even over the massacre at Qana.

How can he say this Government's policy is independent when we have provided logistical support in a British airport for the transport of bombs that are being used against innocent men, **women** and children in Lebanon?

Tony Blair talked about wanting to see the spread of democracy in the Middle East and yet at the same time he refuses to talk to <u>Hamas</u>, which was democratically elected, and he stands by while the democratic government of Lebanon is attacked.

He mentioned the creation of a viable Palestinian state and yet he didn't mention the need for the full implementation of UN resolutions 242 and 338, which call on Israel to withdraw its forces to the pre-1967 borders.

He didn't mention the apartheid wall that has caused misery and hardship for many Palestinians. He didn't mention the illegal settlements in the West Bank. There is immense anger among rank-and-file members of the Labour Party and backbench MPs.

He refused again to call for an immediate ceasefire - on both sides. The level of civilian casualties in Lebanon has helped build support for Hizbollah. Yet if George Bush and Mr Blair had called for an immediate ceasefire and Hizbollah had refused to comply, Hizbollah would have faced wide anger, including in the Muslim world.

Blair admits to cabinet splits over his support for Bush on Israel

I was against the Iraq war, I voted against it, but I still believed at the time that at least something good could come out of it and that our Prime Minister would work day and night to bring a peace to the Middle East. This peace now looks distant.

I believe that the Prime Minister's response is not representative of our country's feelings and this is why I have requested, with 15 other Labour MPs, a recalling of Parliament."

Mohammad Sarwar, Labour MP for Glasgow Central

Load-Date: August 4, 2006



One Last Thing | Democracy, of itself, not solution to all problems

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Body

Of the many deaths already reaped by the Hezbollah-Israeli conflict, perhaps the quietest befell the hopeful policy outlook expressed in President Bush's second inaugural address.

"It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture," the president said. "... And when the soul of a nation finally speaks, the institutions that arise may reflect customs and traditions very different from our own." This multicultural truism is no longer reassuring.

Democracy is a powerful force that often is an engine for liberalism. As Natan Sharansky argues in *The Case for Democracy*, democratic societies are mostly peaceful and, in relation to other systems of government, have a good track record in avoiding wars of belligerence.

But pace Bush and Sharansky, democracy is not a universal solvent. Not all democracies are created equal. The customs and traditions of a society matter as much as its mode of government. It may be true that all people yearn for freedom, but history shows that some people yearn for the freedom to go forth and kill their neighbors.

Until a few weeks ago, Lebanon was regarded as one of the successes of the Bush Doctrine. Even in June 2005, there was trouble on the horizon, when the Lebanese held their free elections: The terrorist group Hezbollah won 14 seats in the 128-member parliament. More worrisome, Hezbollah fared best where turnout was *highest*.

At the time, all that could be hoped was that democracy might reshape Hezbollah. Now it is clear that, having hijacked Lebanon's foreign policy, Hezbollah has reshaped Lebanese democracy.

In an instructive essay in a recent New Republic, Annia Ciezadlo writes, "I live in a mixed Beirut neighborhood, not heavily Shia or even exclusively Muslim." But when Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah spoke on TV announcing a Hezbollah attack on Israeli ships, she heard from all around the neighborhood "a surround-sound rustle of cheers and applause. Outside, caravans of cars rolled through the abandoned streets, and the drivers honked their horns." It will come as little surprise if Hezbollah gains strength in the next election.

One Last Thing | Democracy, of itself, not solution to all problems

Throughout the Middle East, elections have produced gains for Islamists, whose vision of democracy is at least a challenge for and perhaps antithetical to liberalism, tolerance or peace. In the Palestinian territories, the terrorist group <u>Hamas</u> swept to power last January. It, too, shows no signs of having been subdued by the burdens of democratic responsibility. In June 2005, 17 million Iranians cast their ballots for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a man who has declared that "Israel must be wiped off the map."

Some Middle East elections have been less catastrophic, but no more hopeful. In February 2005, Saudi Arabia held mostly symbolic municipal elections. Nonetheless, as the Middle East Forum's Daniel Pipes observed, these "proved a boon for the Islamist candidates." In Egypt, the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood has been gaining support for decades. In Egypt's most recent (and highly imperfect) election, the brotherhood led all opposition groups, winning 88 parliamentary seats - up from 17 seats in 2000. Should Hosni Mubarak lose power, Egypt could become an Islamist state.

Even Turkey and Kuwait, two of the great hopes for Middle Eastern liberalism and toleration, have had problems. Turkish voters elected Tayyip Erdogan's religious AKP Party in 2002, which might be the beginning of a shift away from secular society. And Kuwait's Islamists have been gaining in popularity since the end of the Gulf War. Kuwait's most recent election, on June 29, was the first in which <u>women</u> were allowed to vote; when the ballots were tallied, the Islamist party further increased its base in the National Assembly. As Abdul Razak Shuyji, one of Kuwait's Islamic fundamentalist leaders, boasted to the Washington Post three years ago, "Whenever there is true democracy, the Islamists will prevail."

Even the Iraqi elections, which America gallantly labored to bring about, gave a 41 percent plurality to the Dawa Party and its partner, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Part of their platform is that all laws must flow from Islam. This theocratic precept has proved problematic in the past.

Writing in the National Interest (and in their book *Electing to Fight*), professors Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder note that "unfettered electoral politics often gives rise to nationalism and violence at home and abroad." There is a whole list of democracies that have turned to war: In 1995, Bosnia fought Serbia after nationalist parties won elections. Peru and Ecuador, two other young democracies, went to war in the Amazon.

In other words, democracy isn't bulletproof. Instances of disastrous democracy extend back to ancient times. Athens voted to attack Syracuse in 415 B.C. It was a grinding, terrible defeat that spelled the beginning of the end for Athens in the Peloponnesian War. And, to leap to the 20th century, let's remember that the Germans voted the Nazi Party into power; we all know how that turned out. (I'm drawing no parallel between contemporary political movements and Nazism - simply giving one more instance of free popular elections', meaning democracy, getting the wrong answer.)

Surveying the problems of democracy in the Middle East, Mansfield and Snyder speculate that "although democratization in the Islamic world might contribute to peace in the very long run, Islamic public opinion in the short run is generally hostile to the United States, ambivalent about terrorism and unwilling to renounce the use of force to regain disputed territories... . Per capita incomes, literacy rates and citizen skills in most Muslim Middle Eastern states are below the levels normally needed to sustain democracy."

Certainly, the benefits of democracy should not be minimized. Witness the transformation of Eastern Europe and much of South and Central America. But after <u>Hamas</u> came to power, President Bush quipped that "when you give people the vote, you give people a chance to express themselves at the polls - and if they're unhappy with the status quo, they'll let you know. That's the great thing about democracy, it provides a look into society."

The experience of the last few weeks suggests that the president may be more right than he knows.

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Load-Date: August 6, 2006



democracy tide has turned

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Body

Two years ago, Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen's president, told fellow Arab leaders to reform, or risk being swept away in a global tide of democratization. "Trim your hair now," he warned them, "or someone will shave it for you."

Turning words into deeds, Saleh, who has ruled since 1978, promised to retire at the end of his current term. Last week he changed his mind. Bowing to what he called "the people's pressure," orchestrated in nationwide mass rallies, he declared his candidacy for elections in September that are likely to prolong his tenure until the end of 2013.

Saleh has a better flair for theatrics than most of the region's other rulers-for-life, but their survival instincts are just as keen.

A few years back, and especially in the wake of America's invasion of Iraq, many of them also found it politic to sound responsive to mounting pressure for reform. It was partly internal, inspired by factors such as demography, the fading potency of long-ruling ideologies and the impact of harder-to-control new media such as satellite television.

External forces helped, too, most notably the Bush administration's loud championing, echoed by other Western governments, of political freedom as the ultimate foil for extremism.

Responses across the region varied. The leaders of Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt all went to the bother of getting themselves re-elected in contested votes, and Saudi Arabia ran its first-ever municipal polls.

The legal status of <u>women</u> improved nearly everywhere: Qatar and Kuwait joined most Arab countries by inviting them to vote and run for office. Press freedoms widened notably in some countries, while others, such as Bahrain and Morocco, empowered judicial bodies to look into past human-rights abuses.

With Iraqis and Palestinians voting enthusiastically before the world's cameras, even laggards such as Oman and Syria felt obliged to embrace the rhetoric, if not the practice, of political reform.

But now the tide appears to have turned. Syria's leader, Bashar Assad, no longer bothers with any talk of reform; his police have lately arrested dozens of dissidents.

democracy tide has turned

Since last year's parliamentary and presidential elections, Egypt's government has backtracked, too. Among other measures, it has cancelled some municipal polls, imprisoned the runner-up to President Hosni Mubarak in last year's vote, arrested 600-odd members of the main opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood, sent police goons to beat up peaceful protesters, passed laws enshrining executive authority over the judiciary and banned two Washington-based institutes that promote democracy from working in the country.

The kingdom of Bahrain, once touted as a model reformer, also recently expelled the representative of one of these, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

Police in Jordan, another relatively open country, last month summarily jailed four MPs. They had given condolences to the family of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the slain leader of Al-Qa'ida in Iraq, a provocative but hardly criminal act.

Morocco, also a star reformer, has lately slapped heavy fines on critical journals. Stiffened rules in Algeria, too, are restricting press freedom. Its president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, fired his prime minister in May in what was seen as a move to bolster support for changes to the constitution that would let him run for a third five-year term.

Though polls were held in Saudi Arabia last year to elect town councils, these have yet to meet. Hints by senior princes at further reform have yet to be translated into action.

Kuwait, where an exuberant general election was held last month, seems an exception. Yet the polls were called only after the country's emir, Sheik Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, dissolved his legislature in a fit of pique after it threatened to alter districting rules that have long favoured government-backed candidates.

With its similar tradition of democracy and openness, Lebanon is another apparent exception. Yet while last year's so-called "cedar revolution" shook up politics, and shook off much of neighbouring Syria's influence, it has not reduced the crippling dominance of sectarian and clan leaders.

Several factors explain the waning of reform momentum. One is the high price of oil. Exporters, from Algeria and Libya to the monarchies of the Persian Gulf, find themselves so flush with cash that they can again buy off dissent.

But a bigger factor is the advance of Islamist opposition groups. In the past year, religious parties have crushed secular rivals in Iraq, <u>Hamas</u> has captured the shaky government of Palestine, Islamists have performed strongly in Saudi Arabia's polls, and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood has won an unprecedented fifth of parliament's seats.

More stunning yet, though without any recourse so far to the ballot box, the nascent Islamist movement in Somalia (a non-Arab member of the Arab League) appears close to uniting much of that chaotic country.

The Islamist surge has frightened not only the region's governments, but also foreign promoters of democracy. In particular, the quandary posed by *Hamas* has chilled American enthusiasm for change.

Amr Hamzawy, who assesses Arab political reform at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, describes with dismay how Western officials and academics at a recent conference appeared to "wash their hands of supporting democracy in the Arab world."

During debates in America's Congress over proposals to slash aid to Egypt as a penalty for failing to reform, numerous speakers cited the danger of empowering Islamists and undermining a government which, though distasteful, has served American interests.

Similar signs of a return to realpolitik have been noted with relief by Arab governments. Concerns over Iran's nuclear plans have restrained Western criticism of democracy-shy but pro-Western neighbours like Azerbaijan and the countries of Central Asia.

The United States restored ties with Libya, rewarding its government for scrapping weapons programs while for the most part overlooking its appalling treatment of its own people. Even Syria, forced out of Lebanon and diplomatically isolated, has escaped severe punishment for defying a long list of Western demands.

Graphic

Photo: ZOHRA BENSEMRA, REUTERS; <u>Women</u> wait for their turn to vote at a polling station in Kuwait City in June. The election in Kuwait has bucked the trend in Arab countries, where the zeal for democracy has definitely cooled.

Load-Date: July 8, 2006



EGYPTIAN BLAST 23 killed, Aussies hurt in triple attack; Bombing suspects held

The Advertiser (Australia)
April 26, 2006 Wednesday
Metro Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 39

Length: 434 words

Byline: NICOLETTE BURKE, CANBERRA

Body

EGYPTIAN police arrested 10 people last night over a triple bomb attack in the Sinai beach resort of Dahab that killed at least 23 people and injured more than 80, many of them foreigners.

Twenty Egyptians, a Swiss, a Russian and another unidentified foreigner were killed. Two Australian <u>women</u> were among the seriously injured.

It is the third terror strike on a Sinai resort in less than two years and, once again, it happened as Egyptians were enjoying a national holiday. It also seemed to open a rift between hardline al-Qaida sympathizers and other radical Muslim groups, like *Hamas*, which immediately moved to condemn the bombing.

Security police said they had detained 10 people for questioning - three of whom arrived in Dahab a day before the attack and tried to leave 15 minutes after the explosions.

The police said they did not yet know if the explosions - timed for maximum destruction in a promenade of bars, restaurants and shops - were caused by suicide bombers or bombs on timers.

The injured Australians, a 27-year-old from NSW and a 36-year-old from Melbourne, were on the busy shopping strip when three bombs were detonated almost simultaneously.

They were being evacuated to Cairo for treatment late yesterday. It is understood they suffered serious cuts to the face and body and required surgery.

A third Australian required treatment for severe shock.

Prime Minister John Howard condemned the attacks and said the death toll was sure to rise.

"It is plainly another inexcusable terrorist attack which deserves universal condemnation," he said.

"It's a reminder to all of us, to nations Islamic and non-Islamic, all nations, that terrorism doesn't respect national identity. It doesn't respect religion, it doesn't respect national borders and it plainly doesn't respect human life. And the nature of the challenge remains immense."

EGYPTIAN BLAST 23 killed, Aussies hurt in triple attack Bombing suspects held

The Federal Government has stepped up its travel warnings for people planning to go to Egypt. While the Government was aware of a high risk of a terrorist attack, its previous travel advice failed to mention the Sinai region.

Sydney woman Liz Cush told the ABC she had walked past one of the sites shortly before the blasts.

"I'd walked through there on the way to (the) restaurant probably an hour before it happened," she said.

"I imagine Egyptian people working in that shop were probably killed."

Australian tourist Owen Norris was at a beachfront restaurant just two doors down from where one bomb exploded.

"There was sort of chaos everywhere and there were bodies on the ground and people running off screaming, blood coming out of faces," he said.

Load-Date: April 26, 2006



Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times

August 9, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 1805 words

Body

Madam, - Innocent Lebanese citizens - the old, the poor, men, <u>women</u> and children - continue to be killed in large numbers every day. A million Lebanese civilians have been displaced. Humanitarian laws and the Geneva Conventions are broken with impunity. The aggressive and relentless destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure intensifies by the day.

Israel has also suffered the tragic loss of innocent civilian life, each needless death equally devastating.

What is needed are strong diplomatic efforts, international involvement in the resolution of the conflict, strengthening of the UN peacekeeping forces and a multilateral force in southern Lebanon, political and economic stability for the region and a long-term political settlement. For all, or any, of these to take place, an immediate ceasefire is necessary.

Then, the underlying causes can be dealt with using all the international resources and international involvement that is needed to shift the focus of this conflict from military action and military rhetoric to forging a region where there is political and economic stability and, ultimately, no war. - Yours, etc,

CAROLINE GILL, Brighton Avenue, Foxrock, Dublin 18.

Madam, - Chris Ó Rálaigh (August 7th) writes: "If Israel's aim is to end support for Hizbullah, it would be better off withdrawing from all of Lebanon, all of Palestine and all of Syria."

It is truly hard to imagine how Mr Ó Rálaigh has come to this erroneous conclusion. Has he not seen for himself the devastating consequences of Israel's withdrawal from lands which serve as a buffer against attack from its terrorist neighbours? In 2000 Israel withdrew from Lebanon to internationally recognised borders, relying on United Nations guarantees as embodied in Security Council resolution 1559 which calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. In return it got the terrorist Hizbullah firmly ensconced on its northern border, resulting in the situation today where hundreds of murderous rocket attacks are launched against Israeli civilian targets daily.

A year ago Israel withdrew from Gaza, naively hoping for a peaceful agreement with the Palestinian Authority, only to be confronted with the rise to power of *Hamas*, which also engages in daily rocket attacks against Israeli towns.

Mr Ó Rálaigh goes on to claim that "without this occupation, support for Hizbullah, and indeed <u>Hamas</u>, Islamic Jihad and other groupings would evaporate." In fact, the history of the region proves exactly the opposite: Israeli withdrawal from any territory is interpreted as a sign of weakness and encourages the terrorist groups <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah to make the new borders the front line in their malicious war against the Jewish state. - Yours, etc,

BRIAN SMITH, (TCD alumnus), Montreal, Canada.

Madam, - The creation of a new generation of alienated Lebanese will ensure many more insurgents in the future. Israel will have to accept that only a political and not a military solution can provide a lasting peace.

Israel's current invasion of Lebanon - let's dispense with the weasel word "incursion" - is its third, after the previous episodes of 1978 and 1982 as well as the ruthless bombardments of 1996 (Operation "Grapes of Wrath2). The 1978 invasion came in the middle of US-brokered Middle Eastern peace talks and Unifil was created as a way to get the Israelis off the hook and enable them to withdraw, while providing some kind of security to the local population and extending the authority of the Lebanese state down to the border. Unfortunately, the Israelis chose not to leave, setting up their own enclave, arming and equipping a proxy militia and continuing to terrorise the population for over 20 further years. They also instigated attacks, directly and indirectly, on UN forces, while biased pro-Israeli reports in the US media simultaneously derided Unifil in a carefully calibrated propaganda campaign.

The results of the Israelis' actions was negative in every way. Security for their own country was not attained. Their refusal to withdraw fatally weakened the moderate Shia political party Amal, led by secularist lawyer Nabih Berri (from Tibnin, where Irish troops were located) and effectively led to the creation of Hizbullah, which adopted a much harder line. This may have been aided, but was not inspired by, Syria and Iran. Israel found itself, as an unwelcome force of occupation, fighting an increasingly immoral and unacceptable war until it was eventually forced out in 2000.

Thousands died unnecessarily, the vast majority at Israeli hands. Most were Lebanese civilians.

In all of this, there was one oasis of relative peace. Unifil made its area of South Lebanon relatively safe for its inhabitants. The number of attacks on Israel from inside the Unifil area was insignificant and would have been zero if the Israelis had left sooner. Ireland can be proud of its role during these years. Unifil's critics, whether on the left or the right, often spoke from ignorance or malice.

The UN approach then, whatever its flaws, is very different from what is now being proposed. After nearly a month of aggression visited on the civilian population of Lebanon by Israel, there are nearly a million refugees, more than on any previous occasion, and yet more dead and wounded.

All parts of Lebanon have been hit, every community has suffered and the infrastructure of the country has been set back for decades, after a painful campaign of reconstruction. This is not to excuse the actions of Hizbullah in shelling civilians in Israel, but there is simply no comparison in scale or numbers, nor can there be any excuse for the perpetration of war crimes by a sovereign state recognised in international law. Yet it is now proposed that the UN should call for a cessation of hostilities without calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel's occupying forces, and that a UN force should be deployed to attempt what an unrestrained Israeli military, with all its weaponry, could not achieve: disarming Hizbullah.

While the US and UK have no credibility left to lose among open-minded people of all nations, the UN risks dealing itself a mortal blow at the hands of its own Security Council. Why should oppressed peoples anywhere in the world look for justice and fair treatment to a body which now proposes to reward the oppressor? And why should a country with an honourable record of peacekeeping, such as Ireland, risk the lives of its own soldiers and risk its even-handed reputation for the sake of a deal that can only unravel in the one country in the Middle East which is capable of operating as a successful multi-confessional democracy? Unless firm guarantees of immediate departure are offered by the occupying forces, we should have no part in this.

I lived in Lebanon for a number of years in the 1980s and have returned since that time. - Yours, etc,

PIARAS MAC EINRI, Model Farm Road, Cork.

Madam, - I read with great interest your report on the exchange of views between Michael D Higgins TD and Labour councillors John McManus and Aidan Culhane on the conflict in the Lebanon (The Irish Times, August 5th).

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

As the PRO of the UCD Labour Party, the largest Labour branch in Aidan Culhane's Dublin South constituency, I call on him to support the Labour Party position so ably articulated by Michael D Higgins.

Now is the time for an all-out effort to build an alliance for peace and tackle the causes of the conflict that have had such appalling consequences for the civilian population in Lebanon. Theories about clashes of civilisations are a distraction at best and deserve to be exposed and rejected. - Yours, etc,

PAUL DILLON, Milltown, Dublin 6.

Madam, - The term "war", to describe terror and conflict in the Middle East is in many cases not a neutral description. Both sides employ it, not just as a description, but often as a way to excuse the killing of civilians.

The killing of civilians during war is held to be an "unfortunate side effect" (though much less so by Hizbullah). Still, in a war situation, fighting parties are bound by the "rules of war" (unless you happen to win). Inadequate attempts to avoid targeting non-combatants are often explained along the lines of: "well it's a war; what do you expect?".

Still, in the modern world we have come to expect that military action (justified or not) adheres to standards. The Israeli defence forces argue that they do take all necessary precautions to avoid killing civilians. However, the organisation Human Rights Watch begs to differ. In a recent report it states the following: "Since the start of the conflict, Israeli forces have consistently launched artillery and air attacks with limited or dubious military gain but excessive civilian cost. In dozens of attacks, Israeli forces struck an area with no apparent military target. In some cases, the timing and intensity of the attack, the absence of a military target, as well as return strikes on rescuers, suggest that Israeli forces deliberately targeted civilians."

Doubtless, the IDF would reject these claims. Nonetheless, it is evident that we should not take at face value Israel's claims that it is doing its utmost to avoid civilian death and hardship (least of all when it bombs the exit routes). - Yours, etc,

DAVID O'GORMAN, Delgany, Co Wicklow.

Madam, - In this era, with GPS, laser, high-speed data transmission, unmanned aerial vehicles, and high-resolution aircraft photo-reconnaissance, in addition to radio, communications are better than ever, and the tragic incidents of civilian dead in Lebanon are not due to inaccurate Israeli weapons, carelessness, or malice, but to the genocidal Hizbullah engaging in the war crime of locating its weapons among civilians. It is quite clear in international law that Israel is entitled to attack the rocket-firing areas, even if in civilian locations. Some of your correspondents show no recognition of these considerations.

If the Israelis really wanted to cause civilian deaths, with over 1,000 artillery and 14 fighter squadrons they have the capability to do so on a massive scale comparable to the second World War, where Hamburg saw 45,000 dead in one week from July 22nd, 1943. Israel clearly does not do so.

In addition to this issue of "discriminate" force, the issue of "proportionality" has been mentioned by many people. Even if you use the much higher recent Lebanese government claim of 925 dead in Lebanon, quoted on Sky News (giving no breakdown if the Hizbullah element which must be a significant part of any such total), that still equals one person dead for every 9.3 Israeli air force sorties, one dead for every five targets hit, and one dead for every 14 Hizbullah-held Irano-Syrian rockets.

Is that either "indiscriminate", or "disproportionate"? - Yours, etc,

TOM CAREW, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006



Keeping Memory Alive; ON THE GO

The Forward May 12, 2006

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Section: Fast Forward; Pg. 14

Length: 1113 words

Byline: Masha Leon

Body

'In some paradoxical way, we each have come here to be alone - with our thoughts, with the last distant memory of loved ones long gone," said David Marwell, director of the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, at a Holocaust Remembrance Day event held April 23 at Hunter College. Noting the "responsibility to the past, to remember, mourn and honor those who perished," Marwell touted the museum's "garden of 18 stones - with a tree growing from each one - a tree that represents life and the promise of the future." The event was cosponsored by the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, the American Jewish Congress-Council for World Jewry, the Consulate General of Israel in New York, the New York Board of Rabbis, UJA-Federation of New York and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

"I learned what can happen when Jews have no power," said New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, museum chairman. "Although I was blessed to be born in this great country, the Holocaust has played a significant role in my life. Along with other veterans, [I] helped defeat Hitler and his henchmen. Following the vision of mayor [Ed] Koch, I helped establish the Museum of Jewish Heritage, where memory is preserved and where education is our most important mission." Ambassador John Bolton, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, paid tribute to his Israeli counterpart, Dan Gillerman, and cheered the monumental January 17 U.N. Resolution that instituted worldwide commemoration of the Holocaust. "We cannot depend on occasional movies [to remind us] of the Holocaust," New York State Senator Charles Schumer said. Alluding to Iran and <u>Hamas</u>, he explained: "In every generation, there are those who would try to destroy us." Israel's consul general in New York, Arye Mekel, mused: "You'd have thought the world would have learned a lesson. All they want to do is destroy the Jews and Israel." Citing "the crazy leader of Iran, [as well as] <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah," he said: "This is not an Israeli problem. The world has to stop Iran."

Sam Bloch, president of the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors Association, delivered what he defined as "a symbolic speech" in Yiddish, "the language of [most of the victims] and survivors." Block later told me that when he was asked to speak at the 1995 anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, the then-president of Germany insisted, "You must deliver your speech in Yiddish, because that's what most of the victims spoke." After a rather lengthy narrative of how and where the victims died, he concluded his talk: "Now, flowers and grass cover the shame of the world." Survivor Robert Donat recalled: "It was Passover 1947. We had recently come to America. My mother put a few potato peelings on the Seder plate to remember [concentration camps] Majdanek, Radom, Dachau and Auschwitz. My wife and I have kept up this tradition. Later, my father wrote the story of our family's journey through 'The Kingdom of the Holocaust' [Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963]. He wrote it for my children and their children and for all people, so they would [know] what this generation suffered in civilized Europe." (On the

Keeping Memory Alive ON THE GO

jacket of my copy of Donat's book, Elie Wiesel notes: "I have read hundreds of eye-witness accounts on the holocaust-kingdom...: I know of few other books of this kind that I could recommend without reservation.") As the Temple Emanu-El choir sang, a procession of *female* survivors - Ruth Westheimer among them - and their children and grandchildren mounted the stage to light three sets of six candles, symbolizing the 6 million lives lost. Interweaving pain with anger, the Fifth Avenue Synagogue's cantor, Joseph Malovany, sang a wrenching version of the prayer "El Ma'ale Rachamim" and then led the audience in singing the Partisan hymn "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" (Never say you are on your final road/Our step beats out the message - we are here!")

* * *

Anything negative that I say about ThinkFilm's 2005 movie "When Do We Eat? Sex, Drugs & Matzoh Ball Soup" probably will have little effect on ticket sales. There is an audience of Jews and gentiles who will find hilarious the film's pathologically dysfunctional family's attempt at a Passover Seder. What kind of rite were these people celebrating? Meant to bring together the family, their Seder turns into a battlefield of old hurts, clashes of ego and unsavory revelations. The bizarre gathering includes Ethan (Max Greenfield), who has left his father's business to become a Torah-quoting baal teshuvah and yet still has the hots for his cousin, who seduces him at the Seder. Jack Klugman, of "Odd Couple" fame, is pigeonholed as Artur, the family's grandfather. A Holocaust survivor, his fear of unpacking - a well-founded survivor trauma - should not have been an object of insensitive humor. Born in Santiago, Chile, the film's writer-director-producer's Salvador Litvak, has a name that suggests Litvak provenance. Though Litvaks are noted for their irreverence, by the time the film begins to reverse its vulgar spiral, I, a Warsawborn Litvak, found that the taste of bitter herbs had become irreversible.

* * *

Last week I ran into comedy king Freddy Roman on Madison Avenue. After a hug and a couple of air kisses, I asked him, "Have you seen Jake Ehrenreich in 'A Jew Grows in Brooklyn'?" "Is it good?" he asked. "Would I be going to see it again if it wasn't?" I answered. This time I went with my Bronx-born husband, Joseph, who, during intermission, earned points from former stickball-playing Brooklynites when he told them that he had been a "three-sewer" stickball hitter on Tiffany Street. Ehren-reich's delicious, nostalgic, poignant and, at times, hilarious two-hour-marathon autobiographical retrospective of growing up in Brooklyn is pure joy. The son of Holocaust survivors, Ehrenreich presents an odyssey from Brooklyn to worldwide globetrotting musician, with rest stops in the Catskills as a multitalented tummler-musician. He had the audience roaring. I won't give away the jokes or the stories, but Forward readers will get a kick out of the exposé about Joe and Paul, that haberdashery store whose jingle was a staple on the Forward's WEVD radio hour. If you remember when the beginning of phone numbers had names (like Kingsbridge-8), and you have warm memories of Catskill kochaleins, or classy hotels, you need not be from Brooklyn to relish the show. Just brush up your Simon Sez - you will be tested! After May 28, the show will be moving to Broadway's charming Lambs Theatre, on West 44th Street.

Graphic

IMAGE

IMAGE

Load-Date: June 14, 2006



Bush must abandon failed security policy, presidential hopeful says

University Wire

February 24, 2006 Friday

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Length: 448 words

Byline: By Behnaz Abolmaali, Daily Texan; SOURCE: U. Texas

Dateline: AUSTIN, Texas

Body

The United States must adopt a broader preventative foreign policy to fight terrorism and spread democracy, said 2008 presidential hopeful Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., in a speech on national security at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum Thursday.

"The national security strategy of this administration has been a failure," said Biden, a top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "There is a better way to secure America."

The "axis of evil" countries -- Iran, Iraq and North Korea -- which President Bush identified in his 2002 State of the Union address, now pose an even greater risk to U.S. security, said Biden, who in October of 2002 supported the resolution to invade Iraq.

The Bush administration's hyped-up intelligence on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and short-sighted plans for securing the peace have diverted resources and eroded American trust, Biden said.

Biden stressed the need to build more effective alliances with countries and to work with moderate voices within the Middle East to instill democracy from the inside. He pointed to recent electoral gains by the <u>Hamas</u> party in the Palestinian territories and religious party victories in Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon as proof that elections are a necessary, albeit insufficient, step in advancing democracy.

The senator said he questions the president's judgement regarding the recent domestic spying controversy. Biden added he is supportive of expanding overall military efforts and said the U.S. should take the leadership role in ending genocide in Darfur.

Biden was in Austin, Texas, Thursday to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which was founded as part of the Violence Against <u>Women</u> Act which Biden drafted in 1994, said Anne Wheeler, communications director for the LBJ Library and Museum. Earlier Thursday, he met with a smaller group of students in a lunch at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Lewis Leff, a public affairs graduate student, said the evening's speech was more politicized than the lunch.

"I thought it was effective. He was pushing the message of being more straight-forward and transparent," Leff said.

Biden took a few questions from students after his speech. John Grube, an SEC presidential candidate, asked Biden what the office of the presidency means to him. Biden said the next administration must level with the American people and work to unite a country which is deeply divided.

Bush must abandon failed security policy, presidential hopeful says

"I've seen him on a lot of talk shows and have been impressed with him," said Grube, a government and history senior.

The event was sponsored by the LBJ School of Public Affairs and the LBJ Library and Museum.

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Load-Date: February 24, 2006



Tale of Two Hostages

New York Sun (Archive) January 26, 2006 Thursday

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 1105 words **Byline:** Daniel Johnson

byillie. Daniel Johnson

Body

Here is a tale of two hostages, one British, one German: both attractive, highly educated, high-powered modern European <u>women</u>. Both are Arabic-speaking and Islamophile, both on self-appointed missions to "help" the Palestinians and the Iraqis respectively. Both were initially treated as heroines by the British and German media; both ended by colluding with their kidnappers, and both gave Islamism a propaganda coup.

Kate Burton, the British hostage, had worked in Gaza for the United Nations. A few months ago she attached herself to al Mezan, a Palestinian "human rights" organization that seems to devote most of its energy to denouncing Israel, while doing nothing to counteract the self-inflicted evils of Palestinian society.

Ms. Burton was not a field worker but a fundraiser for al Mezan. Such groups are largely Western-financed and wholly parasitical on Western guilt. That guilt complex in turn is fed by institutions such as London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, or SOAS, where Ms. Burton studied. Despite its high academic reputation in the past - the greatest living Middle Eastern historian, Bernard Lewis, taught there many years ago - SOAS has lately become a source of anti-Americanism, academic boycotts of Israel and support for jihad.

Ms. Burton was kidnapped with her elderly parents in December, while on a tour of Gaza. Western anti-Zionists can now gloat over wrecked former Israeli settlements. But Ms. Burton risked her own and her parents' lives to gratify her schadenfreude: Several visitors have been kidnapped in Gaza in the last year.

The kidnappers held the Burtons for only four days, but in a quiet holiday period the story led the British news agenda. This gave various terrorist groups, including <u>Hamas</u>, an opportunity to pose as moderates by calling for their release. Public figures in Britain appealed on behalf of the Burtons, prayer vigils were held and great emphasis was laid on the fact that Ms. Burton was a committed pro-Palestinian activist.

The shadowy group holding the Burtons, the Brigades of the Mujahidin, demanded that Britain and the European Union put pressure on Israel over various grievances. No ransom seems to have been demanded or paid, but the kidnappers apparently received assurances that a protest would be lodged about the "nogo" zone along the Gaza border. This is designed to protect Israelis against the terrorist incursions, which still continue and are likely to increase, assuming that *Hamas* does well in yesterday's Palestinian election.

No pressure, on the other hand, was exerted by the Europeans on the Palestinian Authority to arrest the culprits. Gaza is a terrorist fieldom in which nobody expects the rule of law to be enforced - least of all since the Israelis washed their hands of the place.

Tale of Two Hostages

Once Ms. Burton was released, she praised her kidnappers for being "kind," adding that they had "a sensitive side." She would return to Gaza as soon as possible. The British Foreign Office has apparently made no objection to Ms. Burton's insouciant attitude, but many people were irritated to find their prayers and good offices exploited by a woman who made common cause with the culprits.

The case of Susanne Osthoff, the German archaeologist who was kidnapped in Iraq last November and held for about three weeks, is even more disturbing. Ms. Osthoff, who had lived in Iraq for many years, appeared in a video while she was in captivity, blindfolded, and flanked by armed terrorists. She claimed that her captors were working for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Ms. Osthoff was presented by the German media as an intrepid guardian of Iraq's archaeological heritage against tomb-raiders; the fact that she was a critic of the United States helped to make her into a cause celebre. A nationwide campaign for her release was launched, with torchlit vigils and appeals from across the entire political spectrum, including Muslim leaders. The former chancellor, Gerhard Schroder, was particularly vociferous.

Faced with this hullabaloo, the new coalition government of Chancellor Angela Merkel panicked. A ransom, believed to be as much as \$5 million, was paid, thereby rewarding blackmail and offering an incentive for future abductions.

But the kidnappers wanted more - and they got it. One of the most notorious terrorists in German custody, Mohammed Ali Hamadi, was given early release from his life sentence and flown immediately to his native Labanon. This broke solemn undertakings given to the United States after Hamadi was convicted of the murder of U.S. Navy diver Robert Dean Stethem in 1985 during the hijacking of a TWA airliner by Hezbollah. This act of appearsement has set a disgraceful precedent and leaves an indelible stain on the reputation of Ms. Merkel and the honor of the German Federal Republic.

While Ms. Osthoff was taking a shower at the German embassy in Baghdad after her release, intelligence officers found that she was secretly carrying "several thousand dollars" concealed in her clothes. The serial numbers on the banknotes matched those on the ransom money. Despite her claims that the money was compensation for cash that the kidnappers had taken from her, the impression remained that the "victim" seemed to have a share of the loot.

Worse was to come. Ms. Osthoff let it be known that she would return to Iraq as soon as possible and failed to thank her benefactors. Then she appeared on al-Jazeera, dressed as a fundamentalist Muslim in a burka, with only her eyes visible, expressing sympathy for her kidnappers' aims. Either Ms. Osthoff had become a fanatic or she had duped everybody. Her credibility has collapsed.

For Ms. Merkel, the Osthoff affair has been a disaster. Germany's first <u>female</u> leader has emerged from the first serious test of her resolve looking not only cowardly but also naive and gullible. When I last saw her in London, before her election, she was at pains to insist that she was not "the German Frau Thatcher."

We can now see just what Ms. Merkel meant by that. Margaret Thatcher always refused to negotiate with terrorists or to give them what she called "the oxygen of publicity." Her decision to storm the Libyan embassy in London in 1984, after gunmen inside shot demonstrators and killed a policewoman, proved that she meant it.

As for the hostages who identify with their kidnappers: This is not only a psychological phenomenon (the "Stockholm syndrome"), but a political one, too. Europe is being held hostage by the Islamists in its midst. If our leaders are not yet ready to stand up to them, the **women** of Europe might as well buy their burkas now.

Load-Date: January 26, 2006



Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons

The Times (London)
January 31, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 29

Length: 1091 words

Byline: Anthony Browne

Body

Denmark faced the full fury of the Muslim world yesterday as a long-simmering row over newspaper cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad finally erupted.

There were street demonstrations and flag-burnings in the Middle East. Libya joined Saudi Arabia in withdrawing its ambassador from Copenhagen. Islamic governments and organisations, including the Muslim Council of Britain, issued denunciations and a boycott of Danish goods took hold across the Muslim world.

The Danish Government warned its citizens about travelling to Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Syria, and withdrew aid workers from the Gaza Strip.

Last night EU foreign ministers issued a statement in support of Denmark, and the European Commission threatened to report any government backing the boycott to the World Trade Organisation.

The fury echoed the outcry that followed the publication in 1988 of the Salman Rushdie novel The Satanic Verses. The trigger for the latest clash of cultures was the publication by the Danish newspaper Jyllends-Posten on September 30 of 12 cartoons of Muhammad. A biographer of the prophet had complained that no one would dare to illustrate his book, and the newspaper challenged cartoonists to draw pictures of the prophet in a self-declared battle for freedom of speech.

One submission showed Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban; in another he tells dead suicide bombers that he has run out of virgins with which to reward them. Any portrayal of Muhammad is blasphemous in Islam, lest it encourages idolatry.

In October ambassadors from ten Muslim countries complained to Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Danish Prime Minister, who refused to interfere with the press's freedom.

But the issue began to boil this month after the cartoons appeared in Magazinet, a Christian newspaper in Norway, and on the website of the Norwegian newspaper Dagbladet.

Imams denounced Denmark from their pulpits, the Arab press inflamed pent-up Muslim anger at the West and last Friday the Saudi Government recalled its ambassador, but still Mr Rasmussen refused to apologise. He condemned attempts to "demonise people because of religious beliefs", but argued: "The Government can in no way influence the media."

By yesterday governments across the Arab world were responding to public outrage.

Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons

Libya closed its embassy in Denmark and the Egyptian parliament demanded that its Government follow suit. The Kuwaiti and Jordanian governments called for explanations from their Danish ambassadors. President Lahoud of Lebanon condemned the cartoons, saying his country "cannot accept any insult to any religion". The Justice Minister of the United Arab Emirates said: "This is cultural terrorism, not freedom of expression." In Gaza, gunmen briefly occupied the EU office in Gaza and warned Danes and Norwegians to stay away. Palestinians in the West Bank burnt Danish flags. The Islamic groups <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood demanded an apology.

Supermarkets in Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen all removed Danish produce from their shelves. Arla Foods, a Danish company with annual sales of about \$430 million in the Middle East, said that the boycott was almost total and suspended production in Saudi Arabia.

The Muslim Council of Britain, whose leaders are to meet the Danish ambassador tomorrow, deplored the newspapers' refusal to apologise for printing "sacrilegious cartoons vilifying the Prophet Muhammad".

Bill Clinton, the former US President, added his voice, telling a conference in Qatar that he feared anti-Semitism would be replaced with anti-Islamic prejudice.

He condemned "these totally outrageous cartoons against Islam".

Per Stig Moeller, Denmark's Foreign Minister, insisted in Brussels last night: "We condemn blasphemy. We want respect for religions. But we cannot intervene. We have sent explanations but, as we have said before, freedom of expression is a matter for the courts, not for the Government."

A spokesman for Peter Mandelson, the EU Trade Commissioner, said that if the Saudi Government had encouraged the boycott of Danish goods, Mr Mandelson would take the matter to the WTO.

Carsten Juste, editor-in-chief of Jyllends-Posten, said that the drawings "were not in violation of Danish law but have offended many Muslims, which we would like to apologise for".

However, a spokesman for the newspaper said: "We do not apologize for printing the cartoons, it was our right to do so. We stand by our decision to print them."

www.timesonline.co.uk

Lastest news www.dagbladet.no/kultur/2006/01/10/454375.html

FROM NEWSPAPER CHALLENGE TO DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT

September 30, 2005 Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten publishes 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad

October 20 Ambassadors of ten Muslim countries complain to Danish Prime Minister.

Jyllands-Posten reports that illustrators have received death threats

November 14 Jamaat-e-Islami, a Pakistan-based group, protests in Islamabad

January 10, 2006 Cartoons reprinted by Magazinet, a Norwegian newspaper

January 26 Saudi Arabia recalls its ambassador and initiates boycott of Danish goods

January 27 Thousands denounce the cartoons during Friday prayers in Iraq

January 28 Danish company Arla places adverts in Middle Eastern newspapers to try to stop boycott of its produce

January 29 Jyllands-Posten prints a statement in Arabic saying the drawings were published in line with freedom of expression and not a campaign against Islam.

Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons

Palestinians burn Danish flags and Libya announces it will close its embassy in Denmark

January 30 EU says it will take World Trade Organisation action if boycott persists. Several Islamic groups, including <u>Hamas</u> and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, call for worldwide boycott of Danish products. Masked gunmen in storm EU office in Gaza

ISLAMIC CONFLICT

- * 1988 Ayatollah Khomeini issues fatwa against Salman Rushdie after publication of The Satanic Verses
- * 2001 The author Khalid Duran faces mass condemnation from Muslims for his book which sought to explain Islam to Jews, culminating in alleged death threats for his apostasy
- * 2002 Fatwa issued against the Nigerian journalist Isioma Daniel after she suggested that Muhammad might approve of the Miss World contest
- * 2004 Extremist kills the Dutch director Theo van Gogh after he made Submission, a ten-minute film about the abuse of Muslim **women** featuring Koranic verses written on **female** bodies
- * 2005 Swedish museum is forced to remove a painting depicting a couple making love while covered in verses from the Koran

Load-Date: January 31, 2006



All eyes on the Middle East

University Wire

January 24, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 Daily Texan via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN Length: 1001 words

Byline: By Daniel P. Rubenstein, Daily Texan; SOURCE: U. Texas

Dateline: AUSTIN, Texas

Body

2005 was a busy year in the Middle East, and 2006 promises to be no different. President Bush outlined U.S. foreign policy objectives for various Middle Eastern states in last year's State of the Union address. This week, let's take a look back at some of Bush's points in his Feb. 2, 2005 speech, propose some suggestions and predict U.S. policy for 2006.

In last year's State of the Union address, Bush raised the bar for Egypt by saying, "[T]he great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East." Egypt answered Bush's expectations with sham elections. Ayman Nour, leader of the liberal opposition, was thrown in jail. If Bush is sincere about promoting democracy in the Arab world, he will highlight Nour's plight at every opportunity.

The U.S.-Egypt relationship will attract public scrutiny in 2006. Egypt is seeking a free-trade agreement with the United States, but will not succeed unless Congress, which gives Egypt \$2 billion a year in aid, believes that Egypt is moving forward on the path of liberalization. Also, President Hosni Mubarak is not getting any younger. He is going to tell Washington that his replacement will either be his son Gamal (affectionately known as Jimmy) or a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Bush needs to convince Mubarak that allowing liberal opposition groups to mobilize without fear is a preferred alternative to corrupt authoritarianism or Muslim theocracy.

Regarding the Palestinian Authority, Bush said last year, "The beginnings of reform and democracy in the Palestinian territories are now showing the power of freedom to break old patterns of violence and failure. ... The goal of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, is within reach."

The Jan. 25 Palestinian parliamentary elections are a laudable step toward a democratic society, but no candidate is running on a platform of peace. One candidate, a leader of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade named Jamal Abu Roub, answers to the nickname "Hitler." Islamic terrorist group *Hamas* is expected to make a strong showing in the elections. Israel's policy is that no terrorist can use an election campaign to receive immunity from attack. Therefore, in 2006, *Hamas* will try to morph into a legitimate political movement - much like the Palestine Liberation Organization did over a decade ago - in order to achieve international and Israeli recognition.

"The government of Saudi Arabia," Bush said in last year's speech, "can demonstrate its leadership in the region by expanding the role of its people in determining their future." Our so-called ally in the war-on-terrorism, Saudi Arabia has not yet taken any steps to expand the role of its people in determining their future. For example, <u>women</u> are

All eyes on the Middle East

still banned from driving. Saudi men who believe in a strict Islamic lifestyle say that allowing a woman to drive means that she will be able to leave home at will, thus providing her with more opportunity to violate Islamic law. Bush must be more specific in his call for Saudi Arabia to respect human rights by encouraging the monarchy to empower its **women**.

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd died in 2005, but now-King Abdullah had been effectively ruling the kingdom since Fahd's stroke in 1995. The Saudi monarchy's future remains unpredictable, but in 2006, expect to see more photo-ops of the royal family at the Bush ranch.

About Iraq, Bush said last February, "We will succeed because the Iraqi people value their own liberty." For all the talk about not being able to impose democracy, voter turnout was high for the Dec. 15 parliamentary election. Now the Iraqi political parties will have to negotiate with each other in order to form a coalition government. The Iraqis will do all of this as they struggle to fight the terrorists among them. In 2006, the U.S. troop level in Iraq will go down, and every politician will take credit for the reduction.

Regarding Syria, Bush said, "Syria still allows its territory, and parts of Lebanon, to be used by terrorists who seek to destroy every chance of peace in the region." Two weeks after Bush's speech, former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Harari was assassinated. The murder was likely orchestrated by the Syrian regime of President Assad. Syria continues to abet the terrorist insurgency in Iraq, and continues to serve as a gateway for Iranian arms for Hizballah in southern Lebanon. Expect Bush to increase pressure on Assad in 2006 because the road to defeating the Iranian regime passes through Damascus.

On Iran, Bush said, "Iran remains the world's primary state sponsor of terror - pursuing nuclear weapons while depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve. ... And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you."

Bush needs to give more help to Iranian dissidents, both moral support and financial aid. Also, if the United States says that it refuses to live with a nuclear Iran, and if Iran is determined to become a nuclear power, somebody is going to blink. Iranian air defenses will be on high alert in 2006. Even without United Nations action, Iran is already becoming isolated - Iran already has begun to remove its foreign currency accounts out of European banks in order to protect its assets from possible sanctions.

President Bush is preparing to deliver his 2006 State of the Union address. Expect to hear the latest edition of the Bush Doctrine, which says that the expansion of freedom in the Middle East will make the region and the rest of the world safer and more prosperous. The U.S. will continue to have a major role to play in the Middle East by leading the democratic revolution on all fronts. The people of the Middle East are no exception to the human desire to live without fear.

Let's hope that Bush continues to move confidently in the direction of his vision, and let's hold him accountable when he wavers from it.

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Load-Date: January 24, 2006



Israeli onslaught continues

The Nation (AsiaNet)
July 9, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 476 words

Body

ISRAEL's murderous incursion into the Gaza Strip, which began nearly two weeks ago to express its outrage at the abduction of its soldier during a Palestinian group's raid into Israel, continues unabated. The Jewish state demands his release as well as an end to rocket fire across the border as a quid pro quo for calling off the operation. Compared to the daily incidents of ruthless killings of Palestinians, men, <u>women</u> and children, large-scale devastation of their property and appropriation of their lands and orchards by the state apparatus of Israel, the loss it sustained in the June 25 raid conducted by a resistance group pales into insignificance.

The present attack was launched despite President Abbas' appeal for restraint since, as he said, the raid "violated the national consensus". The consequences have been disastrous for the people of Gaza. With tanks stalking them at every corner and helicopter gunships pounding their homes and offices, theirs is an extremely miserable and insecure life. The Israelis have abducted their two Ministers and 20 Members of Parliament, threatening Prime Minster Ismail Haniya with murder. Scores, irrespective of age and gender, have been killed.

They stand deprived of the day-to-day essential needs: water, electricity, food and medicines. Hundreds have been stranded since the Israeli forces have blocked points of entry and exit. Commerce has come to a standstill. It is a veritable human tragedy. Instead of stepping in to check the Israeli madness, the apathetic international community has turned a blind eye and let the calamity worsen and perpetuate. The Palestinian people are fighting for a legitimate cause, to drive foreign occupiers out of their homeland.

The distressing circumstances have compelled them to make one concession after the other in the hope of a peaceful existence. Yet Israel has contemptuously dumped agreements it had reached with them, with the guarantor, the US, blatantly siding with their violator. *Hamas*, known for its 'destruction of Israel' mandate, had made a historic shift and struck a deal with Fatah that contained an implicit recognition of Israel, which somehow termed it as a "purely internal matter". As a latest show of arrogance, Tel Aviv has rejected Mr Haniya's offer of ceasefire, squashing the possibility of "return to a situation of calm" and finding a solution through diplomatic means.

The US Ambassador to the UN has fiercely opposed the draft Security Council resolution Qatar has submitted, though it merely demanded Israel to end its aggression and release the Palestinian officials it had taken into custody. The US, under the Bush administration, has thrown all pretence of striving for a fair deal in Palestine out of the window. One really wonders how much longer the Palestinian people have to suffer before the world conscience wakes up.

Load-Date: July 10, 2006



Hill protesters slam Harper for response to crisis: PM showed 'immaturity' by not denouncing

Ottawa Citizen

July 17, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 463 words

Byline: Alexandra Zabjek, The Ottawa Citizen

Dateline: HEZBOLLAH, Israel

Body

HEZBOLLAH, Israel - Deriding Prime Minister Stephen Harper as a carbon copy of U.S. President George W. Bush, angry Lebanese-Canadians and their supporters marched on Parliament Hill yesterday to condemn recent Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Mr. Harper's reaction to the crisis.

About 200 protesters, many carrying Lebanese and Palestinian flags, circled in front of the Peace Tower in the afternoon and demanded an end to the bombings.

The protesters also sharply criticized Mr. Harper, who said Thursday that "Israel has the right to defend itself" after Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers a day earlier. Israel's response to the kidnappings was "reserved," said Mr. Harper on the eve of the G8 summit.

"The Harper response was not at all nuanced," said protester Wassim Garzouzi, 22. "The last government was a bit more diplomatic."

Mr. Garzouzi, whose parents are stuck in Lebanon after going there for holidays, said the Harper government showed "immaturity" when it did not condemn both sides in the crisis as other countries had done.

Mr. Harper joined Mr. Bush last week in placing sole blame for the crisis on Hezbollah, while Russia and France criticized Israel's attacks as being a disproportionate response to the kidnappings.

Yesterday, Mr. Harper joined G8 leaders to produce a strongly worded statement, demanding that Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> free kidnapped Israeli soldiers and calling on Israel to "exercise utmost restraint."

Many protesters noted Mr. Harper's reaction differed from what they might have expected from former prime minister Jean Chretien.

"I think he is trying to improve the image of the country with the United States," said George Shammas, 77, of Ottawa. "Chretien wouldn't say this. I prefer my country to have a more balanced humanitarian attitude."

Protesters said they did not attend yesterday's rally to support Hezbollah, but many appeared at least mildly sympathetic to the group, which is banned as a terrorist organization in Canada.

Hill protesters slam Harper for response to crisis: PM showed 'immaturity' by not denouncing

"What about Gaza and Lebanon and Hezbollah? They don't have the right to defend themselves?" asked Walid Darwish, saying the Hezbollah kidnappings were a response to earlier Israeli incursions into the Gaza strip.

Yesterday's protest ended abruptly when a scheduled speaker was interrupted by a man who took control of the microphone and decried Zionism and the "occupation of Palestine." The <u>female</u> speaker apologized for the man's remarks before ending the rally.

At a rally Montreal, organized by a group called the Montreal Lebanese Committee, some marchers carried signs with photos of Mr. Harper that read, "We were stupid for voting for you."

About a dozen children headed the march for a period, shouting along with their parents, "Israel assassin, Canada complice" (Israel murderer, Canada accomplice).

Graphic

Photo: Jean Levac, The Ottawa Citizen; Demonstrators gathered on Parliament Hill yesterday to demand an end to Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006



WHAT A WEEK

Echo (Australia)

May 25, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 462 words

Body

CLOSE TO HOME

GEELONG swimmers will be doing laps in a 50m pool year-round when the new Waurn Ponds water park opens at the end of 2008.

A NEW report has revealed that one in 50 people in the Barwon region has acquired brain injury and is cared for by family with little or no outside support. The report highlighted that most carers had barely any help from outside services.

THE State Government will push for duplication of the Princes Highway to Colac and has promised extra V/Line services as part of a wide-sweeping 10-year public transport upgrade.

A CORIO man has been jailed for four years after a violent home invasion in which an elderly man was threatened, beaten and robbed of more than \$18,000.

VICTORIA

A MELBOURNE gay community spokesman has hailed new Victoria Police guidelines for policing public space beats where men seek sex with other men. Pride March representative Garrett Teters said a new police policy and beats manual would help ensure people were treated equally.

AUSTRALIA

FIVE-YEAR-OLD Sophie Delezio has given the thumbs up to doctors who say she should be out of hospital and back at school within weeks. Sophie was being pushed in a stroller across a pedestrian crossing on May 5 when she was struck by a car.

JACK the Ripper could well be a Jill. In a bid to crack the identity of one of the greatest murder mysteries of all time, technology developed in Australia has tested 118-year-old DNA the notorious serial killer may have left behind and built a partial *female* profile.

HEALTH Minister Tony Abbott says he has begun formal talks with the pharmaceutical industry over plans to reform the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The Federal Government's aim reportedly is to find \$1 billion in savings from the taxpayer-funded scheme through promotion of generic-brand drugs.

FIRST they lost Private Jake Kovco's body, then the military admitted it had also lost a draft report into his bungled repatriation. Defence force chief Angus Houston was forced into another embarrassing apology after revealing a

WHAT A WEEK

senior officer left a CD containing the report at Melbourne Airport, where it was found and handed to broadcaster Derryn Hinch.

THE WORLD

<u>HAMAS</u> and Fatah paramilitaries have staged mass shows of strength amid warnings the Islamists' decision to deploy its gunmen on the streets of Gaza could trigger a Palestinian civil war.

IN one of the most intensive searches for Jimmy Hoffa in decades, the FBI summoned archeologists and anthropologists and brought in heavy equipment to scour a horse farm for the body of the former labour leader, who vanished in 1975.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

A CHINESE high school student has invented a computer where the operator just moves their eyes to make it work. Zhou Chen, from Nanjing, named his invention the eyeball mouse.

Load-Date: May 25, 2006



National Briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)
January 28, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Woodward Communications, Inc.

Section: National/World; Pg. a6

Length: 505 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: JAKARTA, Indonesia

Body

Major quake hits off Indonesian coast

A magnitude-7.7 undersea earthquake rocked eastern Indonesia early today, the U.S. Geological Survey said. There was no danger of a tsunami, and no injuries were reported.

The earthquake occurred in the Banda Sea about 120 miles south of Ambon city, the USGS said. It occurred at a depth of 212 miles.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said no destructive tsunami threat existed.

Amran, an official at Indonesia's meteorological agency in the capital, Jakarta, said there were no immediate reports of damages or injuries. Like many Indonesians, he goes by only one name.

The Internet news portal Detik.com reported from Ambon that people fled their houses in panic when the earthquake, which lasted about two minutes, struck.

Japanese university to discipline chemist

TOKYO - Japan's most prestigious university will discipline a chemistry professor after finding that 12 of his experiments could not be reproduced, raising questions about their veracity, a university spokesman said Friday.

The finding by an investigative panel at the University of Tokyo comes just weeks after the scientific world was rocked by a South Korean university's declaration that a professor's claims of cloning human stem cells was fraudulent.

The investigation in Japan now raised doubts about genetic research experiments conducted by professor Kazunari Taira, 53.

In papers published in the British journal Nature and elsewhere between 1998 and 2004, Taira said his research team successfully coaxed E. coli bacteria to produce the human enzyme Dicer, the Kyodo news agency reported.

Colombia: Al-Qaida, passport ring linked

National Briefs

BOGOTA, Colombia - Colombia insisted Friday that a false-passport ring it dismantled might have links to al-Qaida and *Hamas*, despite U.S. doubts about the counterfeiters' connection to the terrorist groups.

Colombian officials said Thursday the gang supplied citizens from Pakistan, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and other countries with false passports and Colombian nationality without them ever setting foot in the country.

Acting Attorney General Jorge Armando Otalora said some of the 19 people arrested were wanted for working with al-Qaida and the militant Palestinian group.

Police describe alleged serial killer's motive

MEXICO CITY - A <u>female</u> wrestler suspected of killing at least 10 elderly <u>women</u> in Mexico City said she acted out of anger at being abandoned by her mother and sexually abused by the man who took care of her, police said Friday.

Juana Barraza, 48, was arrested Wednesday while fleeing a house where an 82-year-old woman had been strangled with a stethoscope. Barraza has admitted to four killings, but police said evidence linked her to a total of 10, implicating her as the notorious "Mataviejitas," or "Little Old Lady Killer."

Police had suspected the killer was a man dressed as a woman and spent months detaining, questioning and fingerprinting transvestites. *Female* serial killers are rare in any country, making up only 8 percent of all serial assassins in the United States.

Load-Date: January 28, 2006



'Islamic fascism' is not a new term

Lancaster New Era (Pennsylvania) September 2, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Section: A; Pg. 8 Length: 519 words Byline: Editorials

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

Body

In recent days, President Bush, Sen. Rick Santorum and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld have criticized "Islamic fascists" for waging a war of terrorism on the West.

Some close listeners have directed their criticism not at Islamic fascists but at the administration and its friends who supposedly have minted this "new buzz word for Republicans."

Not only is the phrase new, they say, but it slanders Islam and, in calling radical Muslims "fascists," is historically inaccurate.

These critics are wrong.

"Islamic fascism',' or "Islamofascism," is hardly a new description if radical Muslims. It apparently first appeared in an article in the Sept. 8, 1990, issue of The Independent.

The article's author, Malise Ruthven, wrote: "Authoritarian government, not to say Islamo-fascism, is the rule rather than the exception from Morocco to Pakistan."

The term came into general usage, particularly among conservatives, but also among some Mideast scholars, following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States by al-Qaida operatives.

The columnist Christopher Hitchens condemned "fascism with an Islamic face" three days after the attacks.

Neither have George Bush and Rick Santorum suddenly adopted the terminology this week.

Santorum compared the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to fascism and communism in a speech to Lancaster County ACTION in February 2002.

Bush used the phrase as early as October of last year in a speech before the National Endowment for Democracy.

"Some call this evil Islamic radicalism; others, militant Jihadism; still others, Islamo-fascism," he said. "Whatever it's called, this ideology is very different from the religion of Islam."

That brings us to the supposed slam on Islam that critics say the term suggests.

'Islamic fascism' is not a new term

Bush and other administrative spokesmen have said repeatedly since 9/11 that they have no quarrel with Islam or Muslims in general, only radical Muslims, or Islamic fascists. Nothing they have said or done contradicts that.

Neither is the phrase inaccurate simply because it was first applied to Italian fascism - a political, not religious, movement.

Those who use the term "Islamic fascists" are not referring to one group of religious fanatics, but to several organized bands of Muslim terrorists who, together, present a threat to Western civilization.

Robert S. Wistrich, who discussed "the new Islamic fascism" in The Jerusalem Post on Nov, 16, 2001, describes it this way: a totalitarian mind-set, hatred of the West, fanatical extremism, repression of <u>women</u>, loathing of Jews and dreams taking over the world.

Osama bin Laden is not the only Islamic fascist who has called for Muslims to overrun the West and reclaim the glory Muslim countries have lost.

Islamic fascism also extends to groups of Muslim fundamentalists such as <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah, as well as the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Instead of arguing that the term Islamic fascist is new and wrong, critics of the Bush administration should pay closer attention to what these religious zealots are planning for the rest of us.

By whatever name they are called, Muslim terrorists are bad news for free people.

Load-Date: September 3, 2006



DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)
September 17, 2006 Sunday
FOURTH EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 462 words

Byline: FROM NEWS SERVICES

Body

HAVANA

Sudan's president says no to U.N.

Sudan's president again rejected the deployment of U.N. peacekeeping troops in the war-ravaged Darfur region, in a meeting Saturday with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in Cuba, at the Nonaligned Movement summit meeting.

Annan urged the government of Sudan in an editorial distributed Saturday to accept the U.N. Security Council's decision to replace the African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur with better-equipped U.N. troops.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir rejected his appeal.

TOKYO

Typhoon slams into Japanese island chain

A strong typhoon tore through Japan's southern Okinawa island chain Sunday, unleashing heavy rains and fierce winds that have killed three people, injured scores and triggered landslides.

Typhoon Shanshan had weakened overnight, but it still was lashing the region with maximum sustained winds of 100 mph. It was forecast to continue churning northeast and hit Japan's southwestern island of Kyushu as early as Sunday evening, Japan's Meteorological Agency said.

Heavy rain warnings were issued for much of western Japan, but the storm has so far killed three people before even making landfall.

A father and teenage daughter died Saturday when their car was hit by a flash flood in Kyushu, Kyodo News agency and national broadcaster NHK said. Another man was separately swept away in high waters elsewhere, Kyodo said.

BAIKONUR, KAZAKHSTAN

Russian rocket to take tourist to space station

DIGEST

Engineers mounted a Russian Soyuz rocket on top of its launch pad in the middle of the Kazakh steppe Saturday and began final preparations for blastoff to the international space station in two days.

Joining Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Tyurin and U.S. astronaut Michael Lopez-Alegria on Monday will be the world's first <u>female</u> space tourist, Anousheh Ansari. Ansari is an Iranian-American entrepreneur who is paying an estimated \$20 million to be the fourth amateur astronaut to visit the orbiting station.

BANGKOK, THAILAND

Blasts in south follow peace rally

A series of bomb blasts ripped through three department stores Saturday night in Thailand's restive south, killing four people and wounding dozens, police said.

The attacks in the region's main commercial center of Hat Yai came hours after the military staged a peace rally in the south, the site of a Muslim insurgency.

Authorities blamed separatist insurgents for the attacks.

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK

Abbas to meet with Bush, Palestinian says

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will meet President George W. Bush in New York this week and will probably seek to promote his planned coalition with *Hamas*, a Palestinian official said Saturday.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said the meeting with Bush would take place Wednesday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly.

Notes

World

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - River water gushes over a levee after a typhoon brought heavy rainfall in Karatsu, in southwestern Japan, on Saturday. The storm forced the suspension of dozens of flights and disrupted shipping in the region, according to reports. Kyodo News/The Associated Press

Load-Date: September 17, 2006



ISLAMIC CULTURE OF PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE CHANGED: QAZI

The Frontier Star
September 9, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 500 words

Body

LAHORE, Sept. 9: Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Qazi Hussain Ahmad Saturday accused General Pervez Musharraf of using political turncoats to further his so called enlightened moderation agenda in the country through amendments in the Hudood laws which are based on Quranic revelations.

"The people of Pakistan will not allow the army generals to change Islamic culture of Pakistan as there is no room for legislation on secular basis in a country which came into being in the name of Islam. Constitution of Pakistan provides ample guidance in respect of democracy to federation in line with the Islamic teachings therefore its restoration in the original form can only steer the country out from the prevalent crisis," the JI ameer added.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad expressed these views while addressing central training workshop for the JI <u>women</u> office bearers here at Mansoora. The workshop is organized by <u>Women</u> Wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, which is attended, by large number of JI office bearers from across the country. Addressing participants of the workshop Qazi Hussain Ahmad highlighted role of <u>women</u> in the ongoing drive against the government. He pointed out that <u>women</u> in Palestine and Lebanon have changed the political scene in their respective areas by participating in the political and Jihadi struggle from the platform of <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah.

The JI <u>women</u> wing, he urged, can play important role in making the drive against Musharraf regime by mobilizing the masses. Replying a question about MQM the JI Ameer revealed a dangerous ploy seeking to enable Karachibased parochial group to make inroad in the political arena of Punjab under official patronage. Islamabad, he said, is using an American think tank International Republican Institute to affect its agenda.

A recent public opinion poll conducted by the IRI has shown an upward change in the mass support to MQM. Contrary to factual position, the IRI survey puts MQM public support at 12 per cent, which, Qazi said, is enough to prove the pre-poll ringing plans under official patronage.

He said the MMA will thwart this official plan to make win MQM in the general elections by boycotting the elections being held with Musharraf in the power and tendering resignations from the assemblies if the military dictator tired to re-elect himself as president through them.

Earlier, in his address to training workshop the JI secretary general Syed Munawwar Hassan urged the <u>women</u> leaders not to be pessimistic in the wake of western media trial of the Islamic movements across the globe. To a question, Syed Munawwar Hassan said ironically all the resources and forces of Muslim countries are being used to extend logistic support to enemies of Islam. He said such rulers should be ousted from the corridors of power so that resources of Ummah could be utilized for the betterment of Muslims. The lauded the JI <u>women</u> wing for organizing a national level training moot to polish the organizational skill and moral faculty of its office bearers.

ISLAMIC CULTURE OF PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE CHANGED: QAZI

Load-Date: December 6, 2006



The Independent (London)
August 19, 2006 Saturday
Second Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 27

Length: 464 words

Byline: By Karin Laub in Jerusalem

Body

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On the domestic front, the fighting in Lebanon, along with Israel's ongoing offensive against militants in Gaza, appears to have discredited the idea of unilateralism. Israeli troops left Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005, in both cases without a peace deal.

At the height of the war, Mr Olmert still asserted that the fighting in Lebanon could create momentum for a West Bank pull-out, prompting angry accusations that he was trying to hijack the war for a divisive political agenda. However, in meetings this week, Mr Olmert told cabinet ministers and key legislators that the West Bank plan was being shelved.

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Mr Olmert's troubles could be further compounded by legal entanglements. Haim Ramon, his close ally and the chief ideologue of the West Bank pull-out, said yesterday that he would resign as Justice Minister next week because of a pending indictment on a charge of "indecent assault" of an 18-year-old <u>female</u> soldier at a government office. Mr Ramon's departure would further weaken the Olmert camp in Kadima. The next election is not scheduled until 2010, but, in the past decade, no Israeli government has survived a full four-year term.

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"But he is definitely in trouble," said the analyst Yosef Alpher. "His situation does not look good." ap

Load-Date: August 19, 2006



UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is The NorthEast August 31, 2006 Thursday

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Section: FEATURES; Hearallsides

Length: 1125 words

Dateline: The North East

Body

ID CARDS: UNDER a last-minute shabby compromise agreed between the Government and Tories in the House of Lords, anyone renewing their passport or any other "designated" document will be compulsorily entered onto the National Identity Register.

Individuals will merely be able to opt not to receive a card until January 1, 2010 - but will still have to pay for it.

The problem has always been the database, not the card, and the comprehensive destruction of privacy it will bring.

In Parliament, round one may have gone to the Government by misdirection, but in the country it's a different story.

Millions are already vehemently opposed. What's the Home Office going to do? Round them up and force them to be fingerprinted or iris scanned? The coercion they will have to use will bring home to the public the true nature of the scheme.

The Government may think it has won, but our group NEsaysNO2ID has only just begun to fight. - Robin Ashby, NEsaysNo2ID, Newcastle.

FOLIC ACID

SO what is new about folic acid in pregnancy? Nothing.

Forty years ago, I was in general practice and we routinely gave Pregaday (folic acid plus iron) to <u>women</u> who wished to conceive or who were in the early months of pregnancy. We knew then that it would help in the prevention of nervous system defects in babies. - Dr Ann E Carr, Middleton St George.

SHAME OVER SHOOTINGS

IN the space of a week two coroner's juries in London, investigating separate incidents in the Gaza strip, have found that the Israeli armed forces have murdered two British citizens by deliberately shooting them in the head.

On both occasions, despite the evidence of murder, the Israeli government has refused to co-operate with the coroner.

Imagine if the Palestinian organisation <u>Hamas</u> had targeted an innocent British journalist and an equally innocent aid worker. The Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, would have denounced <u>Hamas</u> and in doing so he would have called for EU and UN sanctions against them.

Yet when Israel murders British citizens, the families of the deceased find that the UK government has been totally uncooperative. One can only assume they don't really care. Just as they don't care when Palestinian boys of nine and ten years old are shot by Israeli snipers, or old people have their houses bulldozed to make way for illegal Jewish settlers.

As far as the UK government is concerned, the state of Israel can kill who it wants to kill. It can ethnically cleanse Palestinian Arabs from their land if it chooses and it can break every international law that it wants to break.

There will be no condemnation, no sanctions, no UN resolutions. One can only judge that the UK government is morally bankrupt. - John Gilmore, Bishop Auckland.

KNIGHTLY GIGGLES

ACCUSE me of sour grapes if you must, but the very mention of knighthoods amuses me, seeing how I find them ridiculous, along with the fancy dress which goes with them.

I remember former Labour Chancellor Denis Healey ridiculing his fancy regalia - "Don't we look silly?" he asked while all dressed up to appear in the House of Lords.

And while titles prevail, so will the Us and Them scenario. Let's get shot of them, in the name of democracy. - Alfred H Lister, Guisborough.

SAD PLACE

RETURNING to England on vacation after many years away I have been struck by the changes, and must admit very few of them are positive

I was so looking forward to coming home, having been born and raised in No Place, near Beamish, in County Durham. I live in Canada now, but have always been, and always will be proud of who I am and where I come from, so imagine the dismay I felt when I set eyes on the village of my childhood.

It was just a small coal mining village, but it was special in my eyes. However, today it looks like something from a Charles Dickens novel - filth and squalor, an all-over look of desolation. I could not get over the crumbling walls and streets, the boarded-up houses. A far cry from what it used to be.

Have the people of this country got no pride any more? Where are the members of the local council, the landlords who own these homes, that they should allow such decay?

I speak highly to Canadians and my family of the country and the county of my birth, but there will be no photographs of No Place going back to show my children or grandchildren.

I am embarrassed at the state of a place I dearly loved. I would have rather come home and found it levelled to the ground. - Margaret Laing (nee Moore), now of Medicine Hat, near Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

ROAD CONGESTION

T KELLY is too late with his call (HAS, Apr 12) for restoration of our pre-Beeching railway network. The endless growth in our population has aggravated the shortage of housing to the point where building land is becoming very scarce (and expensive) and much of the land formerly covered by railways and their buildings has already disappeared under bricks and concrete, especially in urban and suburban areas.

Transport advisors to the Government are keenly aware of how much time is left before traffic increase brings gridlock to our road system, but their remedy is very different.

Transport Minister Alastair Darling is already considering proposals to charge motorists for using the roads, and obviously the level of charge can be adjusted to regulate the traffic density to any desired figure.

One hundred years ago, most Britons were priced off the roads by their inability to find the cost of a motor car. Soon it will be their inability to find the road tolls. Another illustration of how overpopulation of a small island deprives its citizens of their liberties. - Bob Jarratt, Caldwell, Richmond.

MARK THE OCCASION

ST GEORGE'S DAY - April 23 - is nearly upon us, and I would like to encourage my fellow Englishmen and <u>women</u> to go out and celebrate our patron saint's day.

As usual, I will start the day off by singing the national anthem to my children, and then tuck in to a full English breakfast before joining fellow patriots in Darlington town centre to drink some fine English beer.

After visiting various watering holes, I will head off home to enjoy a meal consisting of British beef, potatoes and vegetables, before I raise my small glass of rum to Her Majesty the Queen before retiring to bed.

April 23 is a big day for England, and I urge all English people to celebrate it in style and join me as I say: "God Save the Queen." - Christopher Wardell, Darlington.

POLICE COVER

I HAVE just been on a short visit to Bishop Auckland, and I found one thing very remarkable. During the six days I spent in the town I became very aware that I had seen only two police cars, and not one bobby on the beat. Is this due to the low crime rate of the area, or are all the police working under cover? Intrigued. - R Dixon, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland.

Load-Date: August 31, 2006



Should Canada seek talks with Hezbollah?

The Toronto Star August 27, 2006 Sunday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A16

Length: 498 words

Body

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Should Canada seek talks with Hezbollah?

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

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

Load-Date: August 27, 2006



Belfast Telegraph
August 19, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 484 words

Byline: By Karin Laub in Jerusalem

Body

In the face of plummeting approval ratings in the wake of the war in Lebanon, Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, has been forced to shelve plans to pull out of the West Bank and is struggling to ride out a growing public storm over the government's wartime bungles.

At the start of his term three months ago, Mr Olmert had been confident he could draw Israel's final borders by 2010 by pulling out of much of the West Bank unilaterally. He would turn Israel into a "fun place to live", he promised.

After 34 days of fighting Hizbollah, Mr Olmert, known for his rapid-fire decision-making, is more subdued, turning increasingly to others for advice, members of his inner circle say.

On the domestic front, the fighting in Lebanon, along with Israel's ongoing offensive against militants in Gaza, appears to have discredited the idea of unilateralism. Israeli troops left Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005, in both cases without a peace deal.

At the height of the war, Mr Olmert still asserted that the fighting in Lebanon could create momentum for a West Bank pull-out, prompting angry accusations that he was trying to hijack the war for a divisive political agenda. However, in meetings this week, Mr Olmert told cabinet ministers and key legislators that the West Bank plan was being shelved.

A top Olmert aide, Asaf Shariv, confirmed the policy shift. "Right now, we will deal with other issues," said Mr Shariv. "It's not that it [the pull-out] was cancelled, but it is not on the agenda."

That strips Mr Olmert's coalition of its main reason for being - making another attempt to resolve the Palestinian conflict. Mr Olmert would be hard-pressed to find an alternative to the West Bank plan, since peace talks are expected to remain frozen as long as the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u> is in charge in the West Bank and Gaza.

Bereft of a program, Mr Olmert's government - an uneasy alliance of his centrist Kadima and the centre-left Labour - is increasingly vulnerable to political attack, especially as complaints mount about his handling of the war.

Mr Olmert's troubles could be further compounded by legal entanglements. Haim Ramon, his close ally and the chief ideologue of the West Bank pull-out, said yesterday that he would resign as Justice Minister next week because of a pending indictment on a charge of "indecent assault" of an 18-year-old <u>female</u> soldier at a government office. Mr Ramon's departure would further weaken the Olmert camp in Kadima. The next election is not scheduled until 2010, but, in the past decade, no Israeli government has survived a full four-year term.

Polls suggest that a majority of Israelis are not demanding Mr Olmert's resignation, for now.

"But he is definitely in trouble," said the analyst Yosef Alpher. " His situation does not look good."

* Israeli warplanes flew over Lebanon's Bekaa Valley and the nroth of the country yesterday but did not launch an attack.

Load-Date: August 19, 2006



The Independent (London)
August 19, 2006 Saturday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 27

Length: 468 words

Byline: By Karin Laub in Jerusalem

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charge of "indecent assault" of an 18-year-old *female* soldier. The next election is not scheduled until 2010, but, in the past decade, no Israeli government has survived a full four-year term.

Polls suggest a majority of Israelis are not demanding Mr Olmerfs resignation, for now. "But he is definitely in trouble," said the analyst Yosef Alpher. "His situation does not look good." Israeli warplanes flew over Lebanon's Bekaa Valley and the north of the country yesterday but did not launch an attack. Reuters said jets, helicopters and drones had circled the area, 35 miles east of Beirut, and had come under anti-aircraft fire but were not hit and did not open fire, AP/REUTERS

Load-Date: August 19, 2006



Canada praised for fighting Taliban: Clinton weighs in on Mideast troubles

Ottawa Citizen
July 27, 2006 Thursday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 426 words

Byline: Richard Foot, The Ottawa Citizen

Dateline: HALIFAX

Body

HALIFAX - Canada is "absolutely" right to be fighting in Afghanistan, and the consequence of abandoning the war against the Taliban would turn out to be far more serious than the continued loss of Canadian lives if we stay, says former U.S. president Bill Clinton.

"I think your people have done an astounding job there," he said during a speech last night in downtown Halifax.

Mr. Clinton acknowledged the war in Afghanistan is "becoming less popular" in Canada, partly because of the stream of dead and injured soldiers coming home from Kandahar.

"But you can't go there without casualties," he said.

If Canada and other NATO nations pull their armies out, he said, "the price we'll pay in the long run, including the lives of our military personnel, would be greater. As awful as this is, it's not nearly as awful as things would become if we left."

Mr. Clinton was brought to Halifax by Frank McKenna, the former New Brunswick premier and former Canadian ambassador to Washington.

Following his speech, Mr. Clinton sat in a leather armchair on an expansive stage, answering at length questions put to him by Mr. McKenna.

Asked if Canada should continue its mission in Kandahar, Mr. Clinton said because of the dangerous work of U.S., Canadian and other forces -- including special forces and intelligence agents and "people you don't know" -- al-Qaeda has "nowhere near the operational solidity it did at the time of 9/11.

"Afghanistan is tough," he added. "But it would be a travesty if a genuine Muslim democracy were allowed to collapse and the Taliban were allowed to re-establish its control, particularly over <u>women</u> and girls, and al-Qaeda were allowed to come back in.

"We don't have enough bodies there. There are 40,000 (U.S. and NATO) troops in Afghanistan and about 120,000 in Iraq. That's the fundamental problem there."

Canada praised for fighting Taliban: Clinton weighs in on Mideast troubles

Asked what he makes of Israel's military strikes on Lebanon and Hezbollah, Mr. Clinton reminded the audience that many Arab and Persian Gulf states have not criticized Israeli military action in recent days, because they, too, fear Hezbollah and Shia extremism in the region.

Mr. Clinton echoed calls for a ceasefire, and an international force to be brought into the area. But he made it clear that he believes the fault of the current crisis lies with Hezbollah.

"We've got to get these forces -- Hezbollah and *Hamas* --to decide if they're going to play politics, or play war.

"The Israelis aren't perfect, but they're in a tough neighbourhood," he said. "They gave up the Golan and Gaza, and every time they give, they get bashed."

Graphic

Photo: Christian LaForce, The Halifax Chronicle Herald; Former U.S. president Bill Clinton told an audience in Halifax last night that if coalition troops were to leave Afghanistan before completing their mission 'the price we'll pay in the long run, including the lives of our military personnel, would be greater.'

Load-Date: July 27, 2006



Why won't Israel just exchange prisoners?; THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Independent (London)

July 20, 2006 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 31

Length: 1169 words

Byline: JOHANN HARI

Body

Lenin once said, "There are decades when nothing happens, and weeks when decades happen." As decades pass in the Middle East this week, does anybody still believe this is about saving three Israeli soldiers - a piece of Hollywood schmaltz called "Saving Corporal Shalit" and its two sequels? Are Beirut, Haifa and Gaza City burning for them?

Only a dwindling band of people now believe this, the official pretext for the twin-set of wars Israel is fighting on its northern and southern fronts. If it had been true, there was an obvious solution - swapping prisoners. Israel is currently holding 8,200 Palestinian fighters, as well as at least three Lebanese fighters who were seized in Lebanon itself during the long 18 years when Israel was occupying its entire southern region. Both <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbollah have said the Israeli soldiers will head home as soon as there is a fair swap.

This is such a wacky, left-wing idea that it was pursued by Ariel Sharon just two years ago, when he gave Hizbollah 429 prisoners in exchange for an Israeli businessman and three corpses. The people who scoff at this proposal now are implicitly saying that Sharon was a flower-power hippie - one of the few insults he has never earned in his long life. The opponents of a prisoner-swap also warn gravely that it would fire the starting gun for an open season on Israeli soldiers, with dozens being snatched. But previous prisoner-swaps have not been followed by a spate of kidnappings' indeed, they have led to a period of calm.

So what is the real reason for the bombing of Lebanon? The most obvious is a desire permanently to remove the Hizbollah militia from its place nestling on Israel's borders, where it has amassed 13,000 rockets. This was a grievance just waiting for a casus belli.

But is this aim of disarming Hizbollah reasonable? The Islamic fundamentalist group is indeed revolting. In their early days Hizbollah imposed a savage code of "Islamic behaviour" on the Muslims of South Lebanon, imprisoning <u>women</u> in their homes and murdering gays. Since then, they have endorsed the suicide-murder of Israeli children as they sit in pizzerias, and even in 1994 bombed a synagogue in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 85 civilians totally unconnected to this conflict.

Yet if being ideologically repugnant, snatching fighters and owning rockets were a reason for a war, then Lebanon would have an even greater right to invade Israel. After all, it holds their snatched fighters, owns far more than 13,000 rockets (some nuclear) and has a history of invading their territory and committing mass slaughter on dishonest pretexts. One Israeli general de-manded this week, "Howlongcan we live with a knife to our throats?" But the far bigger knife belongs to Israel. Are they really saying the right to self-defence and a buffer-zone of security belongs to them alone?

Hizbollah is at its core a self-defence organisation, however ugly, and its recent operations have been limited largely to this function. It was formed to expel Israeli troops who mounted an unprovoked invasion of Lebanon in 1982 in order to crush the Palestinian groups operating there. By the time the Israeli forces finally left in 2000, they had killed an estimated 17,000 Lebanese citizens and Palestinian refugees.

Since the end of the occupation, Hizbollah had only fired across the border once, until Israel began its aerial bombardment last week. This was when the Israelis blew up Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of <u>Hamas</u>, outraging the world. (It is also worth remembering that half a million people in Lebanon get their drinking water from tanks provided by Hizbollah. At least 100,000 people depend on the hospitals and health clinics they run.)

There was always a way for Israel to put Hizbollah's rockets beyond use without a single innocent Lebanese child being bombed, and without anyone being deprived of safe drinking water. Hasan Nasrallah, the head of Hizbollah, has been asked repeatedly if he would accept a two-state solution. He always replies that he will never sabotage "an internal Palestinian matter", and that if Israeli and Palestinian leaders negotiate a settlement both sides can accept, Hizbollah's missiles will never be used across the border again. Hizbollah will be reduced to a local Lebanese problem. Revolting though he is, Nasrallah has always kept his word on these matters: he even explained to Sharon back in 2004 that at some point in the future he would kidnap more soldiers in a bid to reclaim the remaining fighters Sharon clung onto.

But a real negotiated two-state solution is precisely what Ehud Olmert does not want. Here we get to the central reason why Olmert has chosen a violent non-solution to Hizbollah over a peaceful authentic solution. Uri Avnery, the veteran Israeli peace campaigner, explains, "[In Israel] we have an ongoing, partly hidden debate about what's really the main thing - achieve peace or create a bigger Israel? The people in power today still believe that a greater Israel is more important. They got away from the idea that all of the country of Palestine should become Israel, but they would still like to annex significant parts of the West Bank. That's their priority. As long as this is apriority... they think peace is a bad thing." Peace would create momentum towards negotiations with the Palestinians' democratically elected leaders - and that cannot be allowed to happen.

The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz has just published a long, authoritative study of Olmert's motives, drawing on sources very close to the Prime Minister. It reveals that "Olmert has another consideration, of which he is not speaking [in public]. He wants to set a precedent for the convergence plan in the West Bank, to show that Israel won't accept terror from beyond the fence after it withdraws."

He knows the deal he plans to impose on the West Bank will be unacceptable to Palestinians. Not just to Islamic Jihad, but the vast majority. He has been proposing to seize strategically valuable chunks of the West Bank by annexing them to Israel since as long ago as 1978, after all. So he is trying pre-emptively to terrify them now so they will not dare fight back.

So here it is, the kernel of emotional truth behind this war. Its clearest expression can be found in the speeches of Ze'ev Jabotin-sky, figurehead for the right-wing of Zionism, the man Olmert was raised to revere. Talking of the Arabs in 1923, Jabotinsky insisted, "A living people makes enormous concessions... only when there is no hope left."

That is the true purpose of the wars in Gaza and Lebanon - to ensure, at last, there is no hope left for the Arabs. But the Palestinians and Lebanese will not slump away. They will become gripped with a nihilistic hate, and long after Ehud Olmert is nothing more than a skeleton and a statue, the hate will still burn. Does he imagine this is good for the children of Israel?

Why won't Israel just exchange prisoners? THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This is such a wacky, left-wing ideal that it was pursued by Ariel Sharon two years ago

j.hari@independent.co.uk

Load-Date: July 20, 2006



Cruel, corrupt and full of hatred - it's Iran's mullahs who are to blame

Daily Mail (London)
July 18, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: ED 1ST; Pg. 12

Length: 1216 words **Byline:** ANN LESLIE

Body

OH GOD. Oh Allah. Oh whoever you may, or may not, worship - how long must this go on? The crisis and bloodshed in the Middle East seems endless, and insoluble.

In decades of covering the region, I have seen 'hopeful' peace plans come and go.

But every time these plans fail - as they always have done - blame is variously attributed to Zionism, Islamo-fascism, the Americans, Jews in general, corrupt Arab dictators and, of course, Britain for having been the imperialist power that divided up the Muslim 'caliphate' after the defeat of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

And did I mention Uncle Tom Cobley?

So often, the blame game in the Middle East seems to be the only game in town.

Now, Bush and Blair are playing it - not only (correctly) accusing Hezbollah, the heavilyarmed and disciplined Islamist paramilitary group in Lebanon, of provoking the latest conflict, but also Iran and Syria, a secular dictatorship run by the Alawites, a small Shia sect.

Syria doesn't mind murdering its own fellow Muslims if it deems them to be threatening the brutal, stupid and corrupt Assad regime.

After all, the father of the present hereditary ruler of allegedly republican Syria cheerfully flattened an entire neighbourhood of the city of Hama which housed Islamic opponents, including their <u>women</u> and children. The Arab world scarcely shrugged.

But, of course, if militant Islamists - who wouldn't be tolerated in Syria - set about killing Israelis, well that's fine by the Syrian regime: Ah, dear Arab brothers, do you want some money, offices, transport facilities, the odd rocket or two?

No problem! We want to get rid of the 'Zionist entity' too! As you know, we (unlike those U.S-toadying Arab regimes such as Jordan and Egypt) don't even recognise the 'Zionist entity' as a legitimate nation.

But it is Iran, a martyrdomobsessed Shia theocracy, run by corrupt and relentlessly cruel mullahs (one of whom, under Sharia law, strangled to death with his own hands a teenage girl for 'immorality') which is largely responsible for what is going on now on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The thousands of rockets which Hezbollah claims to possess come from Iran, via Syria.

The abolition of Israel has been a formal part of Iran's constitution since the 1979 revolution (when the Ayatollah Khomeini, who later condemned Salman Rushdie to death for publishing a novel which he found offensive, despite never having read it).

When I last went to Friday prayers in the Iranian capital Tehran, a sleek, fat, deeply corrupt ayatollah, swathed in a white turban and wielding a Kalashnikov, gave the sermon.

He was the mullah whom the West had fooled itself into thinking was 'pragmatic' and 'moderate'.

And what did he preach? It was the usual bloodthirsty rant: 'Death to Israel!' 'Death to America!' 'Death to Britain!'.

(To the Iranian regime, America is the 'Great Satan'; Britain is the 'Little Satan').

Recently, that same ayatollah declared that Iran didn't have to go to the trouble of 'wiping Israel off the face of the map' (which the loopily fundamentalist Iranian president declares to be his aim).

This 'moderate', 'pragmatic' mullah confidently predicted that the two terrorist groups Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> would - thanks to Allah, the most merciful, most compassionate - do the job instead.

Hezbollah was set up in the Eighties by Iran's Revolutionary Guard in response to the long and bloody occupation of Southern Lebanon by Israel.

Years ago, I was told by a Hezbollah spokesman in Beirut that 'we are here to drive the Israelis out of Lebanon'. But the Israelis left Lebanon six years ago.

So why does Hezbollah remain in place? Because it is dedicated not to freeing Lebanon from foreign forces, but to destroying Israel.

Its manifesto includes the Russian tsarist forgery The Protocols Of Zion, which alleges a plot by Jews to conquer the world, as well as one of the ahadith (the sayings of the Prophet), which declares that Paradise can only be attained if all Jews are destroyed.

It is horrifying now to witness the fact that, between them, the implacable Hezbollah and the implacable Israel are destroying Lebanon piece by piece.

When I first went to Beirut, it was dubbed the 'Paris of the East': sophisticated, cosmopolitan, laid-back, seductive, louche, smelling of coffee, croissants, intrigue, and good red wine - of which the Sunni Muslims as well as the Christians were very fond.

I would stay in the achingly glamorous St George hotel (still in ruins) on the coastal corniche; it used to be full of spies (such as Kim Philby) and 'businessmen', and all-round chancers, wheelerdealing effortlessly in several languages, surrounded by glittering shoals of heavily madeup, bejewelled wives, girlfriends and high-class tarts.

That seductive, open-hearted, open-minded, witty and glamorous Lebanon was gradually beginning to emerge again after 15 years of civil war.

Last year, I went there after the so-called 'Cedar Revolution' which, thanks to massive popular and peaceful demonstrations, drove the hated Syrian occupation forces out of the country.

But then I went to the southern suburbs of Beirut - now being bombed by the Israelis - to interview a member of the Hezbollah 'politburo'.

This was a totally different Beirut; it resembled the poorest neighbourhoods in Tehran. The broken-down streets were full of black-veiled <u>women</u> and Hezbollah flags - pale yellow and green, adorned with a fist bearing a Kalashnikov.

Cruel, corrupt and full of hatred - it's Iran 's mullahs who are to blame

Portraits of the grim, beetlebrowed Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini and the current Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, adorned the lampposts.

And posters saying 'No to 1559' were everywhere. The UN Security Council's Resolution 1559 demanded that foreign forces (i.e. Syria) leave Lebanon and that all militias be disbanded. Syria left, the various militias were disbanded - but not Hezbollah.

The bearded, turbaned Sheikh Abdul Majid Ammar informed me that Hezbollah would never disarm, 'because, otherwise, Lebanon cannot defend itself against Israel'. But Israel is not attacking Lebanon, I pointed out. 'But it might,' he answered levelly.

And now, of course, it has - largely because Hezbollah in Lebanon is a fully-armed statewithina-state, bent on Israel's destruction. The Lebanese Government is too weak to destroy Hezbollah (besides, many of its military men are, like Hezbollah, Shia Muslims and therefore unwilling to fight their 'brothers').

So what can the world do, apart from wring its hands?

It could perhaps assemble an international force (including Arabs) to create a demilitarised zone on the Lebanese/Israeli border. And call for a ceasefire.

And pressure Hezbollah and *Hamas* to relinquish the Israeli soldiers they have kidnapped.

And, of course, pressure the Israelis to hold back and not dismantle hapless Lebanon for its failure to control its statewithin- a- state. Only the Americans - who keep Israel afloat with aid and weapons - can do the latter.

But both Syria and Iran must be willing to use their influence to rein in their terrorist surrogates.

If they don't, I'm afraid that beautiful, seductive Beirut will keep on burning: the smoke from its bombed buildings, the despairing cries of its people, will continue to bring back terrible memories of those long, murderous, civil-war years which, until the past few days, they believed they had finally left behind.

Graphic

LEADER OF A CRUEL REGIME: IRAN'S AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI

Load-Date: July 18, 2006



UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is The NorthEast July 12, 2006 Wednesday

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Dateline: The North East

Body

ID CARDS: UNDER a last-minute shabby compromise agreed between the Government and Tories in the House of Lords, anyone renewing their passport or any other "designated" document will be compulsorily entered onto the National Identity Register.

Individuals will merely be able to opt not to receive a card until January 1, 2010 - but will still have to pay for it.

The problem has always been the database, not the card, and the comprehensive destruction of privacy it will bring.

In Parliament, round one may have gone to the Government by misdirection, but in the country it's a different story.

Millions are already vehemently opposed. What's the Home Office going to do? Round them up and force them to be fingerprinted or iris scanned? The coercion they will have to use will bring home to the public the true nature of the scheme.

The Government may think it has won, but our group NEsaysNO2ID has only just begun to fight. - Robin Ashby, NEsaysNo2ID, Newcastle.

FOLIC ACID

SO what is new about folic acid in pregnancy? Nothing.

Forty years ago, I was in general practice and we routinely gave Pregaday (folic acid plus iron) to <u>women</u> who wished to conceive or who were in the early months of pregnancy. We knew then that it would help in the prevention of nervous system defects in babies. - Dr Ann E Carr, Middleton St George.

SHAME OVER SHOOTINGS

IN the space of a week two coroner's juries in London, investigating separate incidents in the Gaza strip, have found that the Israeli armed forces have murdered two British citizens by deliberately shooting them in the head.

On both occasions, despite the evidence of murder, the Israeli government has refused to co-operate with the coroner.

Imagine if the Palestinian organisation <u>Hamas</u> had targeted an innocent British journalist and an equally innocent aid worker. The Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, would have denounced <u>Hamas</u> and in doing so he would have called for EU and UN sanctions against them.

Yet when Israel murders British citizens, the families of the deceased find that the UK government has been totally uncooperative. One can only assume they don't really care. Just as they don't care when Palestinian boys of nine and ten years old are shot by Israeli snipers, or old people have their houses bulldozed to make way for illegal Jewish settlers.

As far as the UK government is concerned, the state of Israel can kill who it wants to kill. It can ethnically cleanse Palestinian Arabs from their land if it chooses and it can break every international law that it wants to break.

There will be no condemnation, no sanctions, no UN resolutions. One can only judge that the UK government is morally bankrupt. - John Gilmore, Bishop Auckland.

KNIGHTLY GIGGLES

ACCUSE me of sour grapes if you must, but the very mention of knighthoods amuses me, seeing how I find them ridiculous, along with the fancy dress which goes with them.

I remember former Labour Chancellor Denis Healey ridiculing his fancy regalia - "Don't we look silly?" he asked while all dressed up to appear in the House of Lords.

And while titles prevail, so will the Us and Them scenario. Let's get shot of them, in the name of democracy. - Alfred H Lister, Guisborough.

SAD PLACE

RETURNING to England on vacation after many years away I have been struck by the changes, and must admit very few of them are positive

I was so looking forward to coming home, having been born and raised in No Place, near Beamish, in County Durham. I live in Canada now, but have always been, and always will be proud of who I am and where I come from, so imagine the dismay I felt when I set eyes on the village of my childhood.

It was just a small coal mining village, but it was special in my eyes. However, today it looks like something from a Charles Dickens novel - filth and squalor, an all-over look of desolation. I could not get over the crumbling walls and streets, the boarded-up houses. A far cry from what it used to be.

Have the people of this country got no pride any more? Where are the members of the local council, the landlords who own these homes, that they should allow such decay?

I speak highly to Canadians and my family of the country and the county of my birth, but there will be no photographs of No Place going back to show my children or grandchildren.

I am embarrassed at the state of a place I dearly loved. I would have rather come home and found it levelled to the ground. - Margaret Laing (nee Moore), now of Medicine Hat, near Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

ROAD CONGESTION

T KELLY is too late with his call (HAS, Apr 12) for restoration of our pre-Beeching railway network. The endless growth in our population has aggravated the shortage of housing to the point where building land is becoming very scarce (and expensive) and much of the land formerly covered by railways and their buildings has already disappeared under bricks and concrete, especially in urban and suburban areas.

Transport advisors to the Government are keenly aware of how much time is left before traffic increase brings gridlock to our road system, but their remedy is very different.

Transport Minister Alastair Darling is already considering proposals to charge motorists for using the roads, and obviously the level of charge can be adjusted to regulate the traffic density to any desired figure.

One hundred years ago, most Britons were priced off the roads by their inability to find the cost of a motor car. Soon it will be their inability to find the road tolls. Another illustration of how overpopulation of a small island deprives its citizens of their liberties. - Bob Jarratt, Caldwell, Richmond.

MARK THE OCCASION

ST GEORGE'S DAY - April 23 - is nearly upon us, and I would like to encourage my fellow Englishmen and <u>women</u> to go out and celebrate our patron saint's day.

As usual, I will start the day off by singing the national anthem to my children, and then tuck in to a full English breakfast before joining fellow patriots in Darlington town centre to drink some fine English beer.

After visiting various watering holes, I will head off home to enjoy a meal consisting of British beef, potatoes and vegetables, before I raise my small glass of rum to Her Majesty the Queen before retiring to bed.

April 23 is a big day for England, and I urge all English people to celebrate it in style and join me as I say: "God Save the Queen." - Christopher Wardell, Darlington.

POLICE COVER

I HAVE just been on a short visit to Bishop Auckland, and I found one thing very remarkable. During the six days I spent in the town I became very aware that I had seen only two police cars, and not one bobby on the beat. Is this due to the low crime rate of the area, or are all the police working under cover? Intrigued. - R Dixon, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland.

Load-Date: July 12, 2006



Israel strike kills dozens in Lebanon; 20 children among dead; Rice cancels Beirut trip

The International Herald Tribune
July 31, 2006 Monday

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Byline: Steven Erlanger and Hassan Fattah

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Hassan Fattah reported from Beirut and Helene Cooper contributed from Jerusalem.

*

An Israeli air raid on the southern Lebanese town of Qana killed at least 28 civilians, including 20 children, on Sunday, the bloodiest day of this conflict, putting enormous pressure on Israel and the United States to move rapidly toward a cease-fire.

Israel said that the Qana strike had been aimed at Hezbollah fighters firing rockets into Israel from the area, but the result was the collapse of a residential apartment building and the crushing of civilians who were spending the night in the basement, where they believed they were safe.

Accounts of the death toll differed. A New York Times reporter counted 28 bodies at local morgues. Some officials said that at least 57 civilians had been killed, including 37 children.

Whatever the final number, the deaths in Qana set off a chain reaction, with protests in Beirut against the United States, Israel, the United Nations and moderate Arab countries. Hezbollah and the Palestinian group *Hamas* vowed revenge. There were new calls for an immediate end to the fighting and condemnations worldwide of Israel's tactics in this war against the radical Shiite militia group, which set off the hostilities with a raid into Israel across the Lebanese border.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice canceled a planned trip to Beirut and decided to return to Washington on Monday to hammer out a speedy resolution to the conflict that could be brought before the United Nations this week.

"I will continue to work and work and work that is what we can do," said a visibly shaken Rice. "If there is a way humanly to accelerate our efforts, I would do it."

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, expressed sorrow for the Qana attack but told Rice that Israel needed another 10 to 14 days to complete its war aims against Hezbollah, according to a senior Israeli official.

The Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, demanded an immediate cease-fire and made it clear that Rice would not be welcome in Beirut on Sunday.

"There is no place on this sad day for any discussion other than an immediate and unconditional cease-fire, as well as an international investigation into the Israeli massacres in Lebanon now," Siniora said.

For the Lebanese, Qana is synonymous with the killing of civilians. Ten years ago there, in an eerily similar attack, Israel responded to mortar fire by shelling a UN post where refugees were sheltering, killing 100 people and wounding another 100. That attack, on April 18, 1996, shocked the world and helped bring an end to that conflict with Hezbollah after an eight-day diplomatic shuttle by Warren Christopher, the secretary of state at the time.

In a speech to the diplomatic corps, Siniora accused Israel of war crimes and asked, "Why, we wonder, did they choose Qana yet again?" He asked the diplomats to work at the United Nations for a cease-fire, saying: "We cannot be expected to negotiate or discuss anything else while the ruthless, pitiless sword of the Israeli war machine continues to drip with the blood of innocent <u>women</u> and children."

At the United Nations, Secretary General Kofi Annan urged the Security Council, meeting Sunday in emergency session, to condemn the Qana attack and to call for an immediate cease-fire.

"I am deeply dismayed that my earlier calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities were not heeded," he told the council.

Rice said Sunday that she called Siniora to express her condolences and to cancel her planned visit to Beirut. She met with Olmert on Sunday evening.

"We are also pushing for an urgent end" to the fighting, Rice said. "But the views of the parties on how to achieve that are different." She did not call for an immediate cease-fire, arguing that a long-term resolution required a political package deal, which would include a cessation of hostilities.

"We want a cease-fire as soon as possible," she said. "I would have wanted a cease-fire yesterday if possible, but the parties have to agree to a cease-fire and there have to be certain conditions in place."

Rice decided to return to Washington to work on a Security Council resolution that would try to codify a political resolution to the conflict including the insertion of a new international peace-keeping force along the border, the resolution of a disputed border area called Shabaa Farms and the return of captured Israeli soldiers and bring an end to this war in northern Israel and Lebanon, now in its 19th day.

Israeli forces also have been fighting in Gaza since June 28 after another Israeli soldier was captured by <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militants in a raid on June 25.

Olmert said that Israel would investigate what had happened in Qana. But he and the Israeli Army blamed Hezbollah fighters for firing hundreds of rockets from the area, which is a stronghold for the militia group.

In a statement, the Israeli Army said it had warned residents of the region and of Qana "several days in advance" to leave their homes, and said: "The responsibility for any civilian casualties rests with the Hezbollah who have turned the suburbs of Lebanon into a war front by firing missiles from within civilian areas."

The army said that it was investigating Qana, but that it was puzzled that the strike happened between midnight and 1 a.m., and hit next to the building, while the building collapsed around 7 a.m. Brigadier General Amir Eshel said it was at least possible that the explosion was caused by munitions inside the building.

"It is possible that various things were stored inside the house, things that ultimately caused an explosion," Eshel said. "Perhaps things we were unable to blow up in the strike, that could have been left behind. I say this very carefully, but at the current time I haven't got the slightest clue what could explain this time difference."

Israel strike kills dozens in Lebanon 20 children among dead Rice cancels Beirut trip

Olmert told his cabinet on Sunday: "We will not blink in front of Hezbollah and we will not stop the offensive despite the difficult circumstances."

He said that "Israel is in no rush to reach a cease-fire before we get to that point where we could say that we reached the main objectives we had set forth. This includes the ripening of the diplomatic process and preparing the multinational force."

On Sunday, Hezbollah fired more than 156 rockets into northern Israel, the Israeli Army said, the highest total so far in the fighting. Eight people were slightly wounded, including a reporter for the Haaretz newspaper.

So far, nearly 1,900 rockets have fallen in Israel. Nineteen civilians have been killed and more than 400 have been wounded. Thirty-three soldiers have been killed and 88 have been wounded.

Nearly 550 Lebanese have been killed in airstrikes, with as many as 200 more missing, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Nearly 2,000 people have been wounded, the ministry said. In addition, Israel estimated that 300 Hezbollah fighters had been killed in ground fighting with Israeli troops.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true commitment is to the global market

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES; Pg. 27

Length: 1174 words **Byline:** Peter Wilby

Body

So now we know. The purpose of intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan was not regime change, Tony Blair explained in Los Angeles on Monday, but "values change". By bombing and shooting their way into Baghdad and Kabul, he and President Bush wanted to convince the benighted locals of the benefits of democracy, free markets and the rule of law.

They think Israel can achieve the same ends by pulverising Lebanon, and thus dealing a blow to the "arc of extremism", successor to the still undefeated "axis of evil". And the reason extremism appears to be growing is that, in reality, we are winning. Iraqis, Afghans, Palestinians, Lebanese - they're all embracing democracy, and presumably voting for <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah only because of what the Marxists used to call false consciousness. The terrorists - who are all "the same thing" whether they are in Gaza, Baghdad, Kashmir, Indonesia, Africa, Madrid or London - are becoming more and more desperate because "reactionary Islam" now faces "existential battles" for its survival.

Well, it's good to have that straight. Many thought it unkind to compare the Blair-Bush policies in the Middle East to the medieval crusades. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Blair believes he is engaged in a holy war, even though he reckons this is true only of the other side. No wonder, with the stakes so high, he won't listen to Labour members, backbenchers, ministers or foreign-affairs advisers. Or even his own past words. "We could have chosen security as the battleground," he said in Los Angeles. "But we didn't. We chose values." Forget what he said about WMDs; strike it from the record.

Strike also from the record what was once the prime minister's favourite mantra: what matters is what works. Invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon clearly don't have to work in any conventional sense. Everything comes down to ideology after all.

So what is that ideology? What does Blair mean by values? Both in Los Angeles and, the previous day, in San Francisco, addressing the big cheeses from Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Blair tried to give some coherence to his political philosophy, and explicitly linked it to the Middle East. The "isms" that now dominate debate, he argued, are not socialism or capitalism. (Nor, we must assume, communitarianism, one of Blair's forgotten favourites.) They are "protectionism, isolationism, nativism". It is a battle between "open or closed" responses to globalisation, between "modern or traditional attitudes to a changing world".

Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true com....

On one side stand free trade, open markets, investment in education, science and technology; on the other, protectionism, tariffs, tight labour market regulation, resistance to foreign takeovers. No prizes for guessing which side Blair thinks he is on.

The key word here is "modern". It comes up repeatedly when Blair speaks. The "global fight", he said in Los Angeles, is "about modernisation". "Everywhere," he said at his monthly press conference in London yesterday, "we support a process of modernisation." This modernity, in Blair's mind, is associated with the "competitive global market" that he wishes the whole world, including Muslims, to embrace. That is what gives his political thinking, domestically and internationally, a kind of unity.

If he believed wholeheartedly in the rule of law, he would have a greater care for civil liberties and international conventions about when and how to wage war. If he were as committed to democracy as he says he is, he would pay more respect to the British public's views on the Iraq war and on Israel's bombing of Lebanon and to the Palestinian and Lebanese votes for <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah respectively. But Blair's true commitment is to the global market.

As things stand, the global market is run by the rich in the interests of the rich. Two-thirds of global trade is controlled by just 500 firms. The competitive element is competition between nation-states for their favours - in terms of investment, jobs, sponsorship of public projects. This is the modern world that Blair wants Islamic countries to join. When he and Bush talk about an "open" Middle East, they mean open not just to different political views and religions but also to global capital, restlessly searching for new markets and assets.

Even to some moderate Muslims, this is a big step. They live, for the most part, in traditional societies. Yet they are invited to join a global market under which, as Marx and Engels warned, "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned". Some Gulf states contrive to allow Mammon to coexist with God, but Islam as a religious faith has developed no significant equivalent of Calvinism, which interpreted worldly commercial success as a sign of God's grace.

There lies the inadequacy of Blair's approach. As he acknowledges, we have to convince moderate Muslims that our values are preferable to those of reactionary Islam. But it is not, as he seems to think, enough just to find a settlement in Palestine. He also has to convince Muslims that our laws and political systems can better protect what they hold precious than can the fanatics and terrorists. This does not necessarily include sharia law and veiled <u>women</u>, but it does mean preserving a certain social and cultural integrity, and running their own economies as they wish.

What happened in Iraq immediately after the invasion - the wholesale privatisations, the grab for assets by US-based multinationals - justifies their scepticism.

But the modern world doesn't have to be under the thumb of global capital. We can be "open" to a global market but it need not be this one. The rules of global trade can be biased towards the poor, instead of being framed in the interests of the rich. They can encourage tariffs where they protect infant industries in developing countries, instead of allowing them only where they protect western interests. Crucially for Islamic countries, they can allow controls on capital movements, as well as on migration of people. They can nurture stronger trade unions, stricter health-and-safety regulation and improved environmental practices, instead of treating all these as market distortions. They can act against international monopolies and, again crucially for Islamic countries, in favour of local ownership. They can favour investment in public goods over private consumption.

In that kind of global market many poor Muslims might see something for them. In the global market we have now they see benefits only for rich westerners. Blair talks about liberty and tolerance. But the global market is highly illiberal and intolerant. It allows only one form of economic organisation and it is relentlessly hostile towards the traditional, as anyone who surveys British retailing or recalls what happened to mining communities will understand. Muslims might be persuaded of the merits of democracy and legality, but the merits of modernity, as defined by Blair, are a harder call.

Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true com....

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We can't bear pictures of the dead. Hezbollah want to see nothing else

The Times (London)
August 1, 2006, Tuesday

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Byline: David Aaronovitch

Body

AT 6.30am on Sunday, from a two-tree hillock on Hampstead Heath, I stood looking out over London -me, a few feral parakeets and a little black dog. The city was mauve and placid; no sirens, no explosions, no dead children. I had just heard the overnight news from Qana, and I wasn't imagining that I loved my three children any more than the Lebanese man who that night had lost his three.

They'd been given warning to leave their homes, but it seems that the Shalhoubs and the Hashems -the two large families who were wiped out in the bombing just didn't have the money or the ability to make the journey. Even before the events at Qana, David Miliband is said to have asked at a meeting of the Cabinet: "Where will this all end?" On Monday a moderate member of the Lebanese Cabinet told the BBC that the violence was putting Lebanon back years. Ann Clwyd MP -a woman I greatly admire -lent her voice to the call for a quick ceasefire.

How, after all, can this be borne? We should stop it now. There should be no more killing. We should stop it even before Israel has secured its border, even while Hezbollah's military force is still intact. How can you argue with the impulse to save innocent life?

"Asymmetrical warfare" is a term usually employed to describe the deployment of insurgent and terrorist techniques against a massively better-armed adversary. It almost suggests that such an approach is defensible. But there is a second sense in which the phrase might be used. We weedy democrats and life-loving liberals cannot bear what the ideologues of *Hamas* and Hezbollah find all too bearable. We argue about whether we even want to see the pictures of the dead. They seem to want to look at nothing else.

We understand the problem. Israeli violence may damage the democratic and reform movements in Lebanon and Syria. But Hezbollah's violence, apparently, serves only to strengthen the forces of religious ecstasy. To us, hitting a UN force is a humanitarian outrage. To Hezbollah it's a tactic. To Hezbollah every civilian is a warrior.

Take the Israeli killing of four UN soldiers last week, condemned by Kofi Annan as "deliberate". On July 18 one of the doomed officers e-mailed home to say that Israeli ordnance was landing nearby and that, "this has not been deliberate targeting, but has rather been due to tactical necessity". A retired Canadian general interpreted this for Canadian television. "What he was telling us was Hezbollah soldiers were all over his position and the IDF were targeting them. And that's a favourite trick by people who don't have representation in the UN. They use the UN as shields, knowing that they can't be punished for it."

Reporters from Qana said that, the day after the Israeli attack, "there was little evidence of fighters". But the Israelis have released footage claiming to show rockets being fired at Israel from within the village. Other aerial sequences

clearly depict rocket launchers being fired from behind apartment blocks and launcher trucks being driven to hiding places in garages and under houses. It was this kind of action that prompted Jan Egelund, of the UN, to call upon Hezbollah to stop this "cowardly blending...among <u>women</u> and children". He added: "I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more children and **women** dead than armed men."

Today, on the website of Hezbollah's own propaganda agency, al-Manar, you can find the boast that on one day at the end of last week: "Islamic resistance fighters launched barrages of rockets at northern Israeli settlements...According to Israeli media, some 20 settlers were injured in today's attacks." "Settlements" is Hezbollah for towns and villages, and "settlers" is Hezbollah for civilians. So when a 240lb Hezbollah rocket slammed into the Israeli countryside last week, it should have prompted the thought that when the Israelis miss their targets they hit civilians and when Hezbollah misses, they don't.

Getting in among the UN positions and the civilians, firing at "settlers" while seeing the other side condemned for its inhumanity, is part of the new asymmetry.

Unfortunately, Hezbollah is pretty good at hitting the soldiers too. If you recall those TV pictures in the 1980s of chaps in keffiyehs blindly firing off their RPGs and Kalashnikovs round a corner and then running like buggery, that has all gone.

Some clue as to how things have changed was offered on Sunday night's Panorama.

Though it was incidental to its story, what the programme showed is how organisations such as <u>Hamas</u> propagandise the children and adults in their care, exulting martyrdom and teaching them to embrace death. We saw schools that celebrate suicide bombers and school computers full of jihadoporn. Had you been watching the evening drama on al-Manar recently you could have seen a Syrian drama series on the Jewish plot to take over the world. One scene was set in a brothel where a Jewish prostitute thinks she is dying from some disease. "I implore you," she tells the Madam, "send me only Christian clients. I don't want any Jew to be infected by me." It's The Forsyte Saga as scripted by Heinrich Himmler.

If that's the cultural you can imagine the political. But just in case you can't, let me help you. Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah (thinks, how exactly did he become leader of Hezbollah?) is a prolific speaker, but is credited with meaning what he says. Nasrallah believes that the Jews "invented the legend of the Nazi atrocities". That Israel "is a cancerous body in the region" that "must be uprooted". More magnanimously: "Let us spare bloodshed. Let the Yemenite Jews return to Yemen, the Moroccan Jews to Morocco, the Ethiopian Jews to Ethiopia, the European Jews to Europe, and the American Jews to America." Though even that is generous because: "Anyone who reads the Koran...sees what acts of madness and slaughter the Jews carried out throughout history...Anyone who reads these texts cannot think of co-existence with them, of peace with them, or about accepting their presence, not only in Palestine of 1948 but even in a small village in Palestine, because they are a cancer."

This is the chap with the long-range missiles (getting longer range) sitting on Israel's northern border. And while Hezbollah might bring out the Lebanese flags for the press in Beirut, in their southern fastnesses the only banners are theirs.

And what do we say, knowing this? That Bad Blair should lean on Worse Bush who should put the squeeze on Murdering Olmert and it'd all be over. That's the new orthodoxy.

God alone knows, the Israelis have, in their history, committed crimes and terrible errors. Sabra and Chatilla, the refusal to recognise for many years that Palestinians actually existed, the brutalities of the occupation, the settling on the West Bank and in Gaza and so on. The Palestinian organisations have their own track record of deceit and murder. Consequently, each slow step towards a peace has been agonising, and now the new asymmetry makes progress almost impossible. As of today, I have no answer.

Read David Aaronovitch's blog: timesonline.co.uk/davidaaronovitch

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



Israeli missiles pound Gaza into new P Dark Age in 'collective punishment'

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Byline: By Donald Macintyre in southern Gaza

Body

As a textbook example of hi-tech precision bombardment it could hardly be improved. Smoke was still rising yesterday from the scorched wreckage of the six transformers at Gaza's only power station, each destroyed by a single missile fired by an Israeli warplane some 10 hours earlier.

Had they hit the huge cylindrical diesel tank 100 metres away they would have set the whole power station alight. But the strike was clinically effective, cutting all the electricity to 700,000 Gaza consumers, threatening water supplies and depriving its public of light, cooking, broadcast news, and - a crucial issue in scorching summer temperatures - fans.

"I'm so surprised that they did this," said Dr Derar Abu Sisi, the operations manager at the Al Nusirat power station. "We have been right through the worst of the intifada but this didn't happen." It would, Dr Abu Sisi said, take a "minimum of three to six months" to restore supplies at a cost between \$5m (pounds 2.8m) and \$7m. "The Geneva Convention says it is not allowed to attack infrastructure for the civilian people," he added. "You might expect that economic infrastructure could be a target in the last stages of a war. But this is not like that."

The damage to Gaza's power supply was condemned as "unacceptable and barbaric collective punishment of civilians, including <u>women</u>, children and old people" by the office of Mah-moud Abbas, which complained it was intensifying what it says are the difficulties he already faces in try-ingto secure the safe release of Gilad Shalit, the 19-year-old Israeli army corporal ab-ducted by militants - including members of <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing - on Sunday.

The crisis escalated yesterday as <u>Hamas</u> called for the prisoner swap Israel has so far refused to entertain' another faction responsible for Cpl Shalit's abduction, the Popular Resistance Committees, threatened to kill a settler it says it is holding if Israel does not end its military campaign in Gaza, and a third, the Al Aqsa Martyrs, claimed to have seized a 62-year-old man from the central Israeli City ofRishonLezion.

Last night the army prepared to issue leaflets telling Beit Hanoun residents to leave their homes in preparation for a concerted move by armoured troops into north Gaza to attack Qas-sam rocket-launching units. Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, said that the army would not hesitate to carry out "extreme action" in the coming days to bring the abducted soldier back to his family.

The aerial attack on the power station was one of four conducted early yesterday. The other three were on bridges in central Gaza, which the Israel Defence Forces said were intended to hamper attempts by Cpl Shalit's captors to move him from the south to the north. Yesterday, however, a side road alongside the most easterly of these, which fords the currently dried-up river running through the Wadi Gaza on the main north-south Sala-hadin road, was busy with traffic which had turned off to avoid the wrecked bridge to continue its journey unimpeded towards Gaza City from the south.

Another target was an old railway bridge 200 metres to the west, which the army says can be used by vehicles but which carried a now-broken water pipeline to two refugee camps.

Zakri al-Ouh, 62, a construction worker who lives nearby and helped to build the two-lane road bridge under Egyptian supervision in 1965 and 1966, said: "When it rains, maybe in September, then it will be impossible to use the road, but at the moment I can't see how this can help the soldier." He added: "At first I was in favour of handing back the soldier as quickly as possible. We have to consider the power of Israel against our own weakness.

"But now they have done this I think there should be an exchange of prisoners before he is handed back." The southernmost town of Rafah - to which roads were notably less crowded than usual yesterday - still has power because it takes its electricity from Israel. But Rafah, which had most to gain from Israel's withdrawal last August because it had been the most ravaged in all of the occupied territories during four years of the intifada, now fears a return of conflict.

Yesterday morning, with Israeli troops and tanks now occupying the disused airport two kilometres from the town centre, Maher Abu Ermana 21, was doing a brisk trade in sacks of flour, oil sugar and beans provided by aid agencies, sold to him by impoverished refugee recipients trying to make a few extra shekels, and invariably labelled "not for resale". Such is Gaza's dysfunctional economic cycle that Mr Abu Ermana is now selling his wares to customers stocking up in fear of war shortages. Up to two days ago, after Cpl Gilad Shalit was abducted by Palestinian militants, he said: "I was selling two sacks a day. Now I am selling 20 to 40."

"We are all worried," said Zakia Mahmoud, 40, who has 10 children. "I hope it will not return to what it was before. If it does, we will lose half of our sons."

The most audible element of the "message" Israel says it is delivering to Gaza in the hope of securing the safe release of Cpl Shalit - in the event of which it says it will pull back its forces from the Strip - are the sonic booms produced by warplanes deliberately travelling faster than the speed of sound over Gaza.

Yesterday's booms -which produce the shattering sound of a heavy explosion in the immediate vicinity - started at about 5am and were for the first for sev-eral months, after two human rights groups filed a High Court petition saying that they constituted an illegal "collective punishment", particularly traumatising children.

At the time Eyad Sarraj, the director of the Gaza community mental health programme, said they were causing **women** to miscarry and inducing panic, anxiety and low academic performance among children.

But the most powerful impact of Israel's - so far - "specific and limited" military campaign is likely to be the cuts in power. Gaza City's main Shifa hospital said its generator was working 24 hours a day but because of fuel shortages could keep going for only two weeks.

Mark Regev, the Israeli foreign ministry spokesman, insisted the attacks on power stations and bridges was justified by the need to bring out Cpl Shalit alive.

The Israeli human rights agency Btselem warned that the power cuts would jepoardise water supplies and health care. It stressed that Israel had the right to enact "all legal measures" to secure the release of Cpl Shalit but not those which conflict with international humanitarian law prohibitions against "objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population".

'I hope the conflict will not return to what it was. If it does, we will lose half our sons'

LEADING ARTICLE, PAGE28

ADRIAN HAMILTON, PAGE 29

Graphic

An Israeli mobile artillery unit shelling targets in the Gaza Strip yesterday as the conflict continued DAVID FURST/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Load-Date: June 29, 2006



The price of saving Shalit

Canberra Times (Australia)

July 21, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 13 Length: 1143 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

LENIN once said, "There are decades when nothing happens, and weeks when decades happen." As decades pass in the Middle East this week, does anybody still believe this is about saving three Israeli soldiers - a piece of Hollywood schmaltz called "Saving Corporal Shalit" and its two sequels? Are Beirut, Haifa and Gaza City burning for them?

Only a dwindling band of people now believe this, the official pretext for the twin-set of wars Israel is fighting on its northern and southern fronts. If it had been true, there was an obvious solution - swapping prisoners. Israel is currently holding 8200 Palestinian fighters, as well as at least three Lebanese fighters who were seized in Lebanon itself during the long 18 years when Israel was occupying its entire southern region.

Both *Hamas* and Hezbollah have said the Israeli soldiers will head home as soon as there is a fair swap.

This is such a wacky, left-wing idea that it was pursued by Ariel Sharon just two years ago, when he gave Hezbollah 429 prisoners in exchange for an Israeli businessman and three corpses. The people who scoff at this proposal now are implicitly saying that Sharon was a flower-power hippie - one of the few insults he has never earned in his long life.

The opponents of a prisoner-swap also warn gravely that it would fire the starting gun for an open season on Israeli soldiers, dozens facing snatching. But previous prisoner- swaps have not been followed by a spate of kidnappings; indeed, they have led to a period of calm.

So what is the real reason for the bombing of Lebanon? The most obvious is a desire permanently to remove the Hezbollah militia from its place nestling on Israel's borders, where it has amassed 13,000 rockets.

This was a grievance just waiting for a casus belli.

But is this aim of disarming Hezbollah reasonable? The Islamic fundamentalist group is indeed revolting. In their early days Hezbollah imposed a savage code of "Islamic behaviour" on the Muslims of South Lebanon, imprisoning <u>women</u> in their homes and murdering gays. Since then they have endorsed the suicide-murder of Israeli children as they sit in pizzerias, and even in 1994 bombed a synagogue in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 85 civilians totally unconnected to this conflict.

The price of saving Shalit

Yet if being ideologically repugnant, snatching fighters and owning rockets were a reason for a war, then Lebanon would have an even greater right to invade Israel. After all, it holds their snatched fighters, owns far more than 13,000 rockets (some nuclear) and has a history of invading their territory and committing mass slaughter on dishonest pretexts. One Israeli general demanded this week, "How long can we live with a knife to our throats?"

But the far bigger knife belongs to Israel. Are they really saying the right to self-defence and a buffer-zone of security belongs to them alone?

Hezbollah is at its core a self- defence organisation, however ugly, and its recent operations have been limited largely to this function. It was formed to expel Israeli troops who mounted an unprovoked invasion of Lebanon in 1982 in order to crush the Palestinian groups operating there.

By the time the Israeli forces finally left in 2000, they had killed an estimated 17,000 Lebanese citizens and Palestinian refugees.

Since the end of the occupation, Hezbollah had fired across the border only once, until Israel began its aerial bombardment last week. This was when the Israelis blew up Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of <u>Hamas</u>, outraging the world. (It is also worth remembering that half a million people in Lebanon get their drinking water from tanks provided by Hezbollah. At least 100,000 people depend on the hospitals and health clinics they run.)

There was always a way for Israel to put Hezbollah's rockets beyond use without a single innocent Lebanese child being bombed, and without anyone being deprived of safe drinking water. Hasan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah, has been asked repeatedly if he would accept a two-state solution. He always replies that he will never sabotage "an internal Palestinian matter", and that if Israeli and Palestinian leaders negotiate a settlement both sides can accept, Hezbollah's missiles will never be used across the border again. Hezbollah will be reduced to a local Lebanese problem. Revolting though he is, Nasrallah has always kept his word on these matters: he even explained to Sharon back in 2004 that at some point in the future he would kidnap more soldiers in a bid to reclaim the remaining fighters Sharon clung on to.

But a real negotiated two-state solution is precisely what Ehud Olmert does not want. Here we get to the central reason why Olmert has chosen a violent non-solution to Hezbollah over a peaceful authentic solution. Veteran Israeli peace campaigner Uri Avnery explains, "[In Israel] we have an ongoing, partly hidden debate about what's really the main thing - achieve peace or create a bigger Israel. The people in power today still believe that a greater Israel is more important.

They got away from the idea that all of the country of Palestine should become Israel, but they would still like to annex significant parts of the West Bank. That's their priority. As long as this is a priority ... they think peace is a bad thing."

Peace would create momentum towards negotiations with the Palestinians' democratically elected leaders - and that cannot be allowed to happen.

The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz has just published a long, authoritative study of Olmert's motives, drawing on sources very close to the prime minister. It reveals that "Olmert has another consideration, of which he is not speaking [in public]. He wants to set a precedent for the convergence plan in the West Bank, to show that Israel won't accept terror from beyond the fence after it withdraws."

He knows the deal he plans to impose on the West Bank will be unacceptable to Palestinians. Not just to Islamic Jihad, but the vast majority. He has been proposing to seize strategically valuable chunks of the West Bank by annexing them to Israel since as long ago as 1978. So he is trying pre-emptively to terrify them now so they will not dare fight back.

So here it is, the kernel of emotional truth behind this war. Its clearest expression can be found in the speeches of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, figurehead for the right-wing of Zionism, the man Olmert was raised to revere.

The price of saving Shalit

Talking of the Arabs in 1923, Jabotinsky insisted, "A living people make enormous concessions ... only when there is no hope left."

That is the true purpose of the wars in Gaza and Lebanon - to ensure, at last, there is no hope left for the Arabs. But the Palestinians and Lebanese will not slump away.

They will become gripped with a nihilistic hate, and long after Olmert is nothing more than a skeleton and a statue, the hate will still burn.

Johann Hari is a columnist with The Independent.

Load-Date: July 20, 2006



Work is worth the risk of arrest

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

June 16, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: LIFESTYLES; Pg. 37

Length: 391 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BETHLEHEM, West Bank

Body

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP) -- Hana Saleh's commute to work is on a rocky path that would be a picture of serenity -- except for the Israeli border guards lurking among the olive trees.

At least once a week the 19-year-old Palestinian cleaning woman is caught, detained for two hours and sent back home. But as the main breadwinner for a family of 13, she's willing to take the risk for the other four paydays.

With jobs scarce in the Palestinian areas, Saleh and thousands of others have little choice but to sneak into Israel. It's a journey becoming more necessary and more difficult each day, as the Palestinian economy sinks and Israel builds its controversial barrier.

"I was caught yesterday by the border police and detained for two hours. But I had to come back again today," said Saleh. Her pay -- \$33 US a day -- is five times what her brother makes, when he can find a job near Bethlehem, their West Bank hometown eight kilometres from Jerusalem.

Jobs and money in the West Bank are increasingly scarce because of a Western economic boycott and tightened Israeli travel restrictions, both in reaction to the recent election that put the militant group *Hamas* in power.

Meanwhile, Israel is accelerating construction of its barrier -- a complex of fences, walls and barbed wire -- determined to keep out Palestinian militants but also illegal workers. The barrier will eventually encircle Jerusalem. So far only about 30 kilometres of the 88-kilometre ring has been built.

These days, Israel issues only about 11,000 work permits to Palestinians, about 15 per cent of the 80,000 granted before the Palestinian uprising broke out six years ago, said Shlomo Dror, an Israeli military spokesman on Palestinian affairs.

Tens of thousands more enter Israel illegally, mostly from the West Bank, Dror said. Sneaking into Israel from the sealed-off Gaza Strip is much harder.

Israeli border patrols catch about 4,000 undocumented Palestinians every week and the number is growing, said Border Police commander Hasin Fares. Some Palestinians have complained of beating at the hands of the police, even after an Israeli crackdown on such behaviour.

Work is worth the risk of arrest

But the flow doesn't stop, in part because Israeli businesses remain dependent on the cheap labour they get from the Palestinians. "There is demand and there is supply so they are coming to work," Fares said.

Graphic

Photo: Associated Press; Palestinian <u>women</u> climb up rocks on their way from the West Bank town of Bethlehem to work in Jerusalem. With few jobs in the Palestinian areas, tens of thousands of West Bank Palestinians are forced to climb clandestinely around Israel's separation barrier to find work.;

Photo: Associated Press; Palestinian workers who sneaked illegally from the West Bank through the village of Ni'alan to work in Israel prepare coffee at a temporary camp at the edge of the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Sefer.;

Photo: Associated Press; Hana Saleh, 19 covering her face, rides a bus after sneaking into Israel.;

Photo: Associated Press; A Palestinian man crosses into Jerusalem.

Load-Date: June 16, 2006



17/04/06

UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is The NorthEast April 17, 2006 Monday

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Section: FEATURES; Hearallsides

Length: 1125 words

Dateline: The North East

Body

ID CARDS: UNDER a last-minute shabby compromise agreed between the Government and Tories in the House of Lords, anyone renewing their passport or any other "designated" document will be compulsorily entered onto the National Identity Register.

Individuals will merely be able to opt not to receive a card until January 1, 2010 - but will still have to pay for it.

The problem has always been the database, not the card, and the comprehensive destruction of privacy it will bring.

In Parliament, round one may have gone to the Government by misdirection, but in the country it's a different story.

Millions are already vehemently opposed. What's the Home Office going to do? Round them up and force them to be fingerprinted or iris scanned? The coercion they will have to use will bring home to the public the true nature of the scheme.

The Government may think it has won, but our group NEsaysNO2ID has only just begun to fight. - Robin Ashby, NEsaysNo2ID, Newcastle.

FOLIC ACID

SO what is new about folic acid in pregnancy? Nothing.

Forty years ago, I was in general practice and we routinely gave Pregaday (folic acid plus iron) to <u>women</u> who wished to conceive or who were in the early months of pregnancy. We knew then that it would help in the prevention of nervous system defects in babies. - Dr Ann E Carr, Middleton St George.

SHAME OVER SHOOTINGS

IN the space of a week two coroner's juries in London, investigating separate incidents in the Gaza strip, have found that the Israeli armed forces have murdered two British citizens by deliberately shooting them in the head.

On both occasions, despite the evidence of murder, the Israeli government has refused to co-operate with the coroner.

17/04/06

Imagine if the Palestinian organisation <u>Hamas</u> had targeted an innocent British journalist and an equally innocent aid worker. The Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, would have denounced <u>Hamas</u> and in doing so he would have called for EU and UN sanctions against them.

Yet when Israel murders British citizens, the families of the deceased find that the UK government has been totally uncooperative. One can only assume they don't really care. Just as they don't care when Palestinian boys of nine and ten years old are shot by Israeli snipers, or old people have their houses bulldozed to make way for illegal Jewish settlers.

As far as the UK government is concerned, the state of Israel can kill who it wants to kill. It can ethnically cleanse Palestinian Arabs from their land if it chooses and it can break every international law that it wants to break.

There will be no condemnation, no sanctions, no UN resolutions. One can only judge that the UK government is morally bankrupt. - John Gilmore, Bishop Auckland.

KNIGHTLY GIGGLES

ACCUSE me of sour grapes if you must, but the very mention of knighthoods amuses me, seeing how I find them ridiculous, along with the fancy dress which goes with them.

I remember former Labour Chancellor Denis Healey ridiculing his fancy regalia - "Don't we look silly?" he asked while all dressed up to appear in the House of Lords.

And while titles prevail, so will the Us and Them scenario. Let's get shot of them, in the name of democracy. - Alfred H Lister, Guisborough.

SAD PLACE

RETURNING to England on vacation after many years away I have been struck by the changes, and must admit very few of them are positive

I was so looking forward to coming home, having been born and raised in No Place, near Beamish, in County Durham. I live in Canada now, but have always been, and always will be proud of who I am and where I come from, so imagine the dismay I felt when I set eyes on the village of my childhood.

It was just a small coal mining village, but it was special in my eyes. However, today it looks like something from a Charles Dickens novel - filth and squalor, an all-over look of desolation. I could not get over the crumbling walls and streets, the boarded-up houses. A far cry from what it used to be.

Have the people of this country got no pride any more? Where are the members of the local council, the landlords who own these homes, that they should allow such decay?

I speak highly to Canadians and my family of the country and the county of my birth, but there will be no photographs of No Place going back to show my children or grandchildren.

I am embarrassed at the state of a place I dearly loved. I would have rather come home and found it levelled to the ground. - Margaret Laing (nee Moore), now of Medicine Hat, near Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

ROAD CONGESTION

T KELLY is too late with his call (HAS, Apr 12) for restoration of our pre-Beeching railway network. The endless growth in our population has aggravated the shortage of housing to the point where building land is becoming very scarce (and expensive) and much of the land formerly covered by railways and their buildings has already disappeared under bricks and concrete, especially in urban and suburban areas.

Transport advisors to the Government are keenly aware of how much time is left before traffic increase brings gridlock to our road system, but their remedy is very different.

17/04/06

Transport Minister Alastair Darling is already considering proposals to charge motorists for using the roads, and obviously the level of charge can be adjusted to regulate the traffic density to any desired figure.

One hundred years ago, most Britons were priced off the roads by their inability to find the cost of a motor car. Soon it will be their inability to find the road tolls. Another illustration of how overpopulation of a small island deprives its citizens of their liberties. - Bob Jarratt, Caldwell, Richmond.

MARK THE OCCASION

ST GEORGE'S DAY - April 23 - is nearly upon us, and I would like to encourage my fellow Englishmen and <u>women</u> to go out and celebrate our patron saint's day.

As usual, I will start the day off by singing the national anthem to my children, and then tuck in to a full English breakfast before joining fellow patriots in Darlington town centre to drink some fine English beer.

After visiting various watering holes, I will head off home to enjoy a meal consisting of British beef, potatoes and vegetables, before I raise my small glass of rum to Her Majesty the Queen before retiring to bed.

April 23 is a big day for England, and I urge all English people to celebrate it in style and join me as I say: "God Save the Queen." - Christopher Wardell, Darlington.

POLICE COVER

I HAVE just been on a short visit to Bishop Auckland, and I found one thing very remarkable. During the six days I spent in the town I became very aware that I had seen only two police cars, and not one bobby on the beat. Is this due to the low crime rate of the area, or are all the police working under cover? Intrigued. - R Dixon, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland.

Load-Date: April 17, 2006



The next threat: extreme dolphins

The Times (London)
February 4, 2006, Saturday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 25

Length: 451 words **Byline:** Giles Coren

Body

WELL, THEY'RE BURNING flags again after someone thousands of miles away drew a couple of cartoons. They're issuing fatwas and burning effigies and mailing death threats to anyone with an opinion about anything at all. And, what, you thought I was going to make jokes about it? For a few lousy quid? You thought I was going to deliver my own personal thoughts on the matter in a forum that is available over the internet in countries where people sit reading The Times over their morning cornflakes with a rocket launcher lying on the table next to the toast rack? When hell freezes over, my friend.

Hell in the secular, metaphorical sense, of course. No disrespect to anything religious. I do not possess any pictures or sculptures or any other images of Hell, nor do I suggest that anybody ever had the wrong sort of sex there, or ate pork nearby or did anything disrespectful to **women** or...anyway, did you see where they rescued that dolphin?

I'm going to write about the dolphin because I think it is more or less safe to write about dolphins. So far as I know, there are no really extreme dolphins hiding out in the mountains anywhere who might take offence and start threatening to kill me, and also to kill anyone who publishes what I write, or even vaguely knows me. And if there are, then they will have to act fast, because dolphins do not last long in mountains.

Unfortunately, I do not have much to say about dolphins. I have a lot to say about the right of journalists and cartoonists to express themselves however the hell they want, but I am not going to say it, because I do not want to upset the strictly held religious beliefs of anybody who has a gun. So I will write about that bloody dolphin, and we will see what happens when writers are motivated purely by fear -whether the fear of causing offence, or the fear of being blown up on the bus.

My opinion about the rescue of the dolphin is that the vast amount of press coverage it got, hot on the heels, or should I say, hot on the fins, of the story about the Thames whale (see how, when we are afraid of inciting religious hatred, we have to make crap anthropomorphic puns), proves that the celebrity bubble has burst. Oh yes, Celebrity Big Brother was such a low point for humanity, largely because of George Galloway (who was by no means elected in 2005 because he pandered to local religious prejudices), that the media have completely lost interest in people, and are now interested only in fish.

That's my opinion about the dolphin. It's a load of balls, but it ain't going to get the Cross of St George burned on the streets of Gaza. Except by <u>Hamas</u> activists furious because whales and dolphins are not fish at all, but aquatic mammals.

The next threat: extreme dolphins

Load-Date: February 4, 2006



Envoys' fury as Straw approves secret talks with Arab terrorists

Mail on Sunday (London)
January 22, 2006 Sunday

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Section: FB S 04; Pg. 11

Length: 496 words

Byline: JASON LEWIS

Body

JACK STRAW is at the centre of a row with top diplomats after approving secret negotiations with banned terror groups.

The Foreign Secretary has given the go-ahead for 'engagement' with organisations having links to Osama Bin Laden and Middle East terror networks.

He has become convinced that only by talking to those on the fringe of terrorism can Britain be safeguarded. Now his advisers are attempting to forge links with organisations which are outlawed in parts of the Middle East.

But this has angered traditionalists in the Foreign Service who fear the department is being hijacked by officials too eager to ' understand' Muslim fundamentalism.

And The Mail on Sunday has learned that this fear has gone to the top of the diplomatic ladder.

Sir Derek Plumbly, ambassador to Cairo and one of Britain's most senior envoys, has warned the Foreign Office against its attempts to open negotiations with the Egyptian-based Muslim Brotherhood.

In a carefully worded but highly critical letter to senior officials in Whitehall entitled 'Engagement with political Islam', he urged the to reconsider the policy. He told superiors: 'I detect a tendency to be drawn to engagement for its own sake,' adding that by opening talks with the organisation Britain risked upsetting Egypt a key ally in the region and a major trading partner which is trying to combat the rise of fundamentalism.

He said such negotiations with the Muslim Brotherhood would further 'panic the horse'.

The Brotherhood has strong historic links to Al Qaeda and other Middle East terror groups, including <u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad. Bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri were members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

Banned in Egypt and behind the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981, the group has branches in 70 countries and has been accused of giving financial and logistical support to terrorists.

Sir Derek, ex-director of the Foreign Office's Middle East department, was first posted to the region in 1975 and has an Egyptian wife.

But Mr Straw is understood to have been persuaded that Britain should open a dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood by Foreign Office advisers in the 'Engaging with the Islamic World Group'.

Envoys' fury as Straw approves secret talks with Arab terrorists

It includes Islamic issues adviser Mockbul Ali, 25, who has argued in internal Foreign Office memos that the Muslim Brotherhood is a 'reformist' and moderate group.

He is a former political editor of a Union of Muslim Students magazine which had sympathetic features on <u>women</u> suicide bombers.

After the September 11 attacks, he wrote warning against ' terrorism becoming synonymous with "Islamic fundamentalism",' adding: 'It is a paradox of the US system that the non-white world has been terrorised in the name of freedom.' A Foreign Office spokesman said: 'The position with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt is that we have always had contacts with members of the People's Assembly, including members of political parties and independents, and will continue to do so.'

Load-Date: January 23, 2006



RALLIES IN MUSLIM WORLD SLAM POPE'S REMARKS

The Nation (AsiaNet)
September 22, 2006 Friday

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Length: 566 words

Body

ISLAMABAD- MMA staged countrywide protest to condemn the sacrilegious utterances of Pope Benedict against Islam and the Prophet (PBUH) on Friday. Protest rallies were also staged in many parts of the Muslim world against the Pope's remarks. The workers and leaders expressed their extreme resentment over the issue and resolved to join hands to put an end to continuous humiliation of Muslims world over.

Addressing a rally in Abpara MMA leader Hafiz Hussain Ahmad said," Musharraf government is an ally of the anti-Islam lobby. We can never forget the plight of Muslim brethren in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Palestine. And we can never forgive those who have caused the troubles to our brethren."

Another MMA leader Mian Muhammad Aslam also severely criticised the Pope's remarks and said that Islam was spread through the message and not through the sword. He suggested Pope to consult history books for his lack of knowledge might increase the chasm between the people of different faiths. "It is sad to listen to a statesman of a Muslim country saying that with the help of Indians we will fight the Mujahideen who have been fighting for the freedom of their Kashmiri brothers", said Maulana Abdul Malik. "The 22 thousand mujahideen who helped defeat godless communisms are now labelled as terrorists," he added.

All the speakers called the people to come out of their houses to protest against the un-Islamic policies pursued by the Musharraf government, ranging from the important foreign policy issues to the <u>women</u>'s protection bill. Speakers among others include Maulana Sharif Hazarvi, Maulana Zahoor Ahmad Alvi, Dr Muhammad Kamal, Shams-ur-Rehman Swati, Sufyan Abbasi and the Vice President MMA Maulana Abdul Hameed Qasmi.

AFP adds: Around 2,000 green flag-bearing <u>Hamas</u> followers swelled the streets of the West Bank town of Ramallah, haranguing Benedict whom they said "knows nothing about history" after his controversial remarks during a lecture on September 12. The Pope, meanwhile, has invited the ambassadors of Muslim countries to the Vatican for a meeting on Monday as part of a diplomatic offensive to repair rifts caused by his remarks.

In Iraq, an aide to revered Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani called for an apology for the "harmful and objectionable" remarks, calling also in a sermon for a dialogue among religions. "If the Pope was mistaken or his statement was a slip of the tongue, he should apologise," said Ahmed al-Safi. "Apology is a virtue. It is objectionable to keep the situation ambiguous.

Up to 300 demonstrators filed into Tehran's revolution square, burning US, British and Israeli flags that had been bound into a single cloth and chanting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." Influential Qatari sheikh Yousuf al-Qaradawi accused the Pope of saying things "even a secondary school pupil shouldn't say," in a sermon that was partly broadcast by Qatar-based pan-Arab satellite channel Al-Jazira.

RALLIES IN MUSLIM WORLD SLAM POPE'S REMARKS

A gathering of around 300 angry scholars in Kabul called on religious leaders across the country to use Friday prayers to read to their congregations the words the Pope had used that linked Islam with violence. Former Malaysian premier Mahatir Mohammad, meanwhile, urged Muslims to refrain from violent protests similar to those held over the profane cartoons. "You can give your comments but do not be physical about it," Mahatir told reporters.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006



The New York Times

January 31, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1224 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-13

Troops Wounded in Iraq Get New Model of Care

Special rehabilitation centers created to treat the Iraq war's most catastrophically wounded troops are developing a new model of advanced care, a response to the war's distinctive medical conundrum: the military is saving more of the wounded, yet the survivors are more damaged. A1

New Message by Qaeda Deputy

More than a week after the Al Qaeda deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri resurfaced in an audio tape posted on the Internet, Al Jazeera broadcast a video of Mr. Zawahiri berating the United States for a bombing attack on a remote village where he had been suspected of being, and threatening further attacks on the United States. A6

West Continues Palestinian Aid

The United States joined with Europe, Russia and the United Nations to rule out an immediate suspension of aid to the Palestinian Authority following the victory of <u>Hamas</u>, and American officials said international aid could continue until <u>Hamas</u> took office in two or three months. A8

Big Drop in Iraq Force Planned

The chairman of a high-level group planning the transfer of security responsibilities from American to Iraqi troops said that the number of American and other foreign soldiers in Iraq would fall to below 100,000 by year's end and that an overwhelming majority would be out in two years. A12

2nd Video of Seized Reporter

Al Jazeera broadcast a second videotape of a kidnapped American journalist, Jill Carroll, showing her dressed in a white Muslim head scarf and weeping as she spoke to the camera. A12

Iraq Audit Highlights Waste

An examination of thousands of contracts that the United States wrote committing billions of dollars of Iraqi oil money and seized assets has provided the most comprehensive look yet at the confusion, waste and lack of accountability in programs during the American-led occupation. A12

Iraqi Girl Dies of Bird Flu

A 15-year-old Iraqi girl has died of bird flu, Iraqi and international health officials said, indicating the arrival of the disease in another country -- one that, in its current war-torn state, may be ill prepared to control the flu's spread. A13

NATIONAL A14-19

Senate Clears Way for Vote To Confirm Court Nominee

Senators voted 72 to 25 to allow an up-or-down vote on the confirmation of Judge Samuel A. Alito Jr. as the 110th justice of the Supreme Court, ending a last-ditch Democratic effort to block the nominee. A1

Site Selected for Black Museum

After nearly a century of political infighting and delay, the Smithsonian Institution selected a prominent space on the Mall near the Washington Monument as the site of its National Museum of African-American History and Culture, its first dedicated to a comprehensive study of the black American experience. A16

Suit Challenges Kansas Law

A federal trial opened in Wichita over whether a Kansas law prohibiting virtually all sexual activity by people under age 16 means health-care professionals and educators must report such behavior to state authorities. Some say that requirement would stop many teenagers from seeking contraception, counseling, or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. A14

Union to Help Fight Pollution

The effort to reduce smog stemming from seaports, among the biggest polluters in the nation, gained an ally when the union representing thousands of West Coast dockworkers promised to help significantly reduce toxic emissions. A14

G.O.P. Leader Criticizes NASA

The chairman of the House Science Committee sharply criticized NASA after the agency's top climate scientist and several public affairs officers complained of political pressure aimed at preventing public discussions of global warming. A15

National Guard Recruitment Up

National Guard officials said recruiting had grown so much in recent months that they expected to expand the Guard even as the Bush administration proposes to shrink it. A17

Bush to Urge Alternative Fuels

President Bush will renew a call for the development of alternative fuel for automobiles and promote the construction of new nuclear power plants in his State of the Union address, White House officials said. The issues have been part of Mr. Bush's agenda for years, but never a top priority. A19

NEW YORK/REGION B1-6

With Agency in Spotlight, Another Child Dies

A 4-year-old Bronx boy whose family was being investigated by child welfare officials died after suffering a fractured skull and severe lacerations to his liver in the messy, cold, two-bedroom apartment he shared with four siblings and two adults, officials said. A1

A preliminary review released by the city's Administration for Children's Services detailed a series of lapses by the agency's caseworkers that created a chain of missed opportunities to save 7-year-old Nixzmary Brown. B1

Homeless Health Crisis

The first extensive examination of the health of the city's homeless adults has found their health to be far worse than even the doctors who deal with them every day had thought. B1

Shooting Is Called Justified

A preliminary investigation has indicated that a police officer was justified in shooting an off-duty colleague who was pointing a gun at another man in the Bronx, Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said. B1

Neediest Cases B5

SCIENCE TIMES F1-8

Health & Fitness F5

SPORTSTUESDAY D1-6

ARTS E1-10

Making Money Making Movies

Film schools like the University of Southern California's School of Cinema-Television are increasingly focused on the practical side of the movie business, with an emphasis on commercial awareness and skills that will make its graduates employable. E1

OBITUARIES B7-8

Wendy Wasserstein

A playwright who spoke for a generation of smart, driven but sometimes unsatisfied <u>women</u> in a series of popular plays that included the long-running Pulitzer Prize winner "The Heidi Chronicles," she was 55. A1

BUSINESS DAY C1-16

Exxon's Record Profits

Exxon Mobil disclosed that it set an all-time high in profits for any American company, reporting \$36 billion in annual income. But while most companies would be proud of record profits, Exxon did everything it could to play down the news. A1

Nominating a New Fed Chief

The nomination of Ben S. Bernanke to head the Federal Reserve Board is expected to come before the Senate today, but with attention focused on the nomination of Samuel A. Alito Jr. to the Supreme Court, many in Washington have taken little notice. A1

Enron Judge Picks Jury

In a single day, the federal judge presiding over the Enron trial defied skeptics by selecting a 12-person jury to decide whether former Enron executives Kenneth L. Lay and Jeffrey K. Skilling conspired to defraud investors in the biggest business collapse in history. C1

Kraft Announces Revamping

Kraft Foods, the world's second-largest food company, announced a major revamping in which it would eliminate 8,000 jobs, or 8 percent of the work force, and close 20 plants. C1

Wachovia Executive Retires

Wallace D. Malone Jr., who became Wachovia's vice chairman 15 months ago after selling it to SouthTrust bank, will receive a golden parachute worth about \$135 million when he steps down from the company. C1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A20-21

Editorials: Wanted: a wary audience; the way forward for Turkey; Gail Collins on Wendy Wasserstein.

Columns: John Tierney, Nicholas D. Kristof.

Crossword E8 TV Listings E9 Weather D7

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: January 31, 2006



ISRAELIS HAVE NO MONOPOLY ON PAIN

The Mirror
July 28, 2006 Friday
Eire Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6 **Length:** 555 words

Byline: PAT FLANAGAN

Body

ISN'T it just as well Britain was never governed by people like the bunch of war criminals now in charge of Israel?

Otherwise we might still be rebuilding what was left of Dundalk and other Border towns after the IRA kidnap and murder of British Army captain Robert Nairac.

What if the Brits launched air raids on Dublin after the IRA killed police officers in a rocket attack on Newry?

The suggestion is madness. The United Kingdom is a civilised country and anyway, there is no way the rest of the world would have let them get away with it.

But that is exactly what Israel has done.

Three conscripts were kidnapped and they kill hundreds of innocent <u>women</u> and children and plunge the whole Middle East into chaos.

Yet the world stands idly by and watches the carnage.

The Israelis are using the same methods deployed by the Nazis during the Second World War.

If the French Resistance assassinated or kidnapped even a solitary German soldier, entire villages were razed and their populations massacred.

What Israel is doing in the Lebanon and Gaza is just as bad. If they can't get the perpetrators they punish the people.

Israel has shown itself to be a cruel rogue state with no conscience. It is every bit as bad as or even worse than Syria and Iran.

ISRAELIS HAVE NO MONOPOLY ON PAIN

The intentional killing - for that's what it was - of four UN peacekeepers shows the contempt that country has for the international community. Because of the appalling treatment of the Jewish people by western nations over the centuries, there is a marked reluctance to criticise Israeli actions.

Certainly there is no other race on earth that has had six million of their people murdered in less than a decade. The Holocaust is truly a stain on the soul of humanity. But no one has a monopoly on pain and suffering.

They say that people who have evil done to them do evil in return. The sickening sights in southern Lebanon is proof of that.

When the bombs and missiles rain down on the apartment blocks and hospitals in Lebanon, the people there suffer their own little holocausts.

But to the Israeli war machine, the lives of Arabs, be they <u>women</u> or children, or of UN personnel are of little consequence.

They have murdered international observers, journalists, peaceful protesters and targeted Palestinian children.

Their "Berlin Wall" in the West Bank is making life impossible for thousands of families.

They have an illegal nuclear weapons programme and have not the slightest qualm about breaking international law.

Our Government has behaved well so far and Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern has not been slow to condemn Israel's outrageous behaviour.

But Ireland must go further and expel the Israeli ambassador from Ireland. If the Israelis want to behave like barbarians they should not be accorded the trappings of a civilised state.

Killing 400 civilians in an illegal war is nothing short of criminal and the perpetrators should be in the dock at The Hague.

They have descended to the level of terrorists like <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah and, instead of defeating these organisations, have made them stronger.

The irony is that Israel has not the manpower to occupy Lebanon permanently and, when the dust settles, Hizbullah will be back stronger than ever.

All this bunch of child-killers has done is to condemn future generations of Israelis and their neighbours to the horror of perpetual war.

Graphic

HORROR: Aftermath of Israeli attack

Load-Date: July 28, 2006



Israeli envoy denies force disproportionate

Canberra Times (Australia)
July 27, 2006 Thursday
Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 2 Length: 554 words Byline: Paul Maley

Body

Israel's Ambassador to Australia has rejected accusations his country is using disproportionate force in its war against Hezbollah militants.

Meanwhile, his Syrian counterpart has denied Syria has armed the group and refused to condemn its rocket attacks on Israeli civilians.

Speaking just a day after Israeli forces bombed a United Nations observation post, killing four peacekeepers, the Israeli Ambassador Naftali Tamir told The Canberra Times that Israel was the using the "utmost care" in its strikes, which he said were aimed solely at Hezbollah fighters and infrastructure.

"I do not think we are using force excessively," he said. "We are using a very targeted sort of operation. I know the results are sometimes unfortunate, but those who are attacking us are doing it indiscriminately."Mr Tamir said yesterday's bombing of the long established UN observation post in the southern Hezbollah stronghold of Khiam, which UN Secretary General Koffi Annan said appeared deliberate, was an accident that would be investigated.

"To say to us that we are targeting the United Nations would be an absurdity ... the United Nations has never been, and will never be, a target," he said.

Mr Tamir rejected the suggestion that the bombing of the UN post betrayed a carelessness in the way Israel was prosecuting the war.

"I would not go to that extremity.

I would like the investigation to find out whether there was Israeli responsibility," he said.

Responding to media reports that Israel had attacked at least 10 Lebanese ambulances since the conflict began, Mr Tamir denied the vehicles had been fired on intentionally and cautioned against rushing to judgment.

"Accusation in the Middle East is something which is common currency," he said. "Sometimes it's more difficult to substantiate allegations in our part of the world.

There are cases where we were condemned and there was no substance to it."

Israeli envoy denies force disproportionate

Mr Tamir said ambulances "had been targeted in Israel, and targeted intentionally". He said the current violence was the result of Syria and Iran and "Hezbollah and *Hamas* are the puppets".

Mr Tamir said the imagery broadcast by the media had focused inordinately on the situation in Lebanon and more attention should be drawn to the suffering in Israel.

Syrian Ambassador to Australia, Tammam Sulaiman, denied his country was arming Hezbollah and refused to condemn the group for launching rocket attacks on Israeli civilian populations, although he said he regretted civilian deaths.

"We support the resistance," he said. "And this is part of the resistance ... the Lebanese people have the sovereign right to defend their people. The question really should be posed to Israel that Israel is occupying another land and targeting civilians." Mr Sulaiman said Israel was a "terrorist country" and that the kidnapping by Hezbollah of its soldiers was being used as "a pretext". "Israel wants every country, every party, every organisation to succumb to its needs," he said. "Syria and Lebanon were the only two countries that did not make peace with Israel according to the Israeli conditions."

He said Israel and their supporters in the West were guilty of double standards. "If they are honest in condemning terrorism they should condemn the terrorism of Israel, which really targets the children and <u>women</u> and civilian people," he said.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006



Middle East crisis: Al-Qaida: Bin Laden's deputy calls for global war on 'crusaders'

The Guardian - Final Edition
July 28, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 6

Length: 554 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker, Beirut

Body

Al-Qaida's deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, made a dramatic intervention in the Lebanese crisis yesterday with a videotape calling on Muslims everywhere to rise up against Zionists and "crusaders".

"How can we remain silent while watching bombs raining on our people?" he asked. "O Muslims everywhere, I call on you to fight and become martyrs in the war against the Zionists and the crusaders," he said in the eight-minute tape, entitled The Zionist-Crusader War on Lebanon and the Palestinians, parts of which were broadcast by al-Jazeera television yesterday.

Zawahiri also criticised "impotent, treacherous" Arab governments for their feeble response to the Israeli attacks. "My fellow Muslims, it is obvious that Arab and Islamic governments are not only impotent but also complicit . . . and you are alone on the battlefield. Rely on Allah and fight your enemies . . . make yourselves martyrs."

"All the world is a battlefield open in front of us," he added. "The war with Israel does not depend on ceasefires . . . It is a jihad for the sake of Allah and will last until (our) religion prevails . . . from Spain to Iraq." (Spain was under Muslim rule for several centuries, starting in 711 and ending with the fall of Granada in 1492.)

In the recording, Egyptian-born Zawahiri wore a grey robe and white turban in front of a picture of the burning World Trade Centre.

In the background were photos of two other militants identified as Mohamed Atta, ringleader of the September 11 attacks, and Muhammad Atef (also known as Abu Hafs al-Masri), an aide of Osama bin Laden who was killed by a US air strike in Afghanistan in 2001. "There are 10,000 prisoners of war in Israel's jails that nobody bothers about, but when it came to three Israeli soldiers, the whole world was turned upside down," Zawahiri said in the message. Palestinian militants from <u>Hamas</u> are holding one Israeli soldier and the Lebanese Hizbullah is holding two.

"As they fight us everywhere, we will fight them everywhere; everyone who has joined in the crime must pay the price; we can't stand by and monitor these rockets spewing their fire on the people of Lebanon and remain quiet," Zawahiri continued. "The war with Israel is not based on any agreements or any border disputes . . . it is jihad for the sake of Allah, to free all of Palestine from occupation and to rid all the homes of Islam from the crusaders. The whole world is our battlefield."

Zawahiri did not mention Hizbullah - the Lebanese Shia organisation - by name. Al-Qaida's leaders are Sunnis and in a tape last June Zawahiri referred to Iraqi Shia as "infidels".

Middle East crisis: Al-Qaida: Bin Laden's deputy calls for global war on 'crusaders'

But in a message broadcast in 2004, Bin Laden said the September 11 attacks had been inspired by "the oppression and tyranny of the American/Israeli coalition against our people in Palestine and Lebanon" - especially the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

"I couldn't forget those moving scenes, blood and severed limbs, <u>women</u> and children sprawled everywhere. Houses destroyed along with their occupants and high rises demolished over their residents . . ." Bin Laden said in the tape. "As I looked at those demolished towers in Lebanon, it entered my mind that we should punish the oppressor in kind and that we should destroy towers in America in order that they taste some of what we tasted."

guardian.co.uk/alqaida >

Load-Date: July 28, 2006



Bin Laden deputy urges Muslims everywhere to fight 'crusaders'

The Irish Times
July 28, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 10

Length: 551 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker in Beirut

Body

Al-Qaeda's deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, made a dramatic intervention in the Lebanese crisis yesterday with a new videotape calling on Muslims everywhere to rise up against Zionists and "crusaders".

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Bin Laden deputy urges Muslims everywhere to fight 'crusaders'

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Load-Date: July 28, 2006



Guardian Weekly: Sympathy flees as rockets rain down on Sderot

Guardian Weekly June 16, 2006 Friday

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*The*GuardianWeekly

Section: Pg. 1

Length: 516 words

Byline: Chris McGreal, Sderot

Body

Sympathy for Huda Ghalia had largely evaporated from the streets of Sderot on Monday after the Israeli town endured a weekend pounding by scores of Palestinian missiles, and the army attempted to cast doubt on its responsibility for wiping out most of the Palestinian child's family.

Images of the 10-year-old girl wailing after a shell landed on her family's picnic on a Gaza beach last Friday, killing seven people including all Huda's siblings, horrified many Israelis usually indifferent to Palestinian suffering.

The scenes prompted a flicker of questioning over Israel's firing of thousands of shells into Gaza, which has claimed more than 20 civilian lives in recent weeks, in response to a much smaller number of Palestinian rockets. The government immediately called a halt to the artillery barrages. But the mood swiftly hardened in Sderot, a small Israeli town close to the Gaza border, as it was battered by more than 50 "Qassam" rockets last weekend. One rocket severely wounded a 61-year-old man.

Sderot's mayor, Eli Moyal, demanded that the government send the army to reoccupy or destroy the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, the area from which many Palestinian rockets are fired, if Sderot was to survive. "You have to choose," he told officials in the prime minister's office. "If you do not destroy Beit Hanoun, Sderot will become a ghost town. The people of this city cannot sustain any more Qassam attacks."

Scores of protesters are camped outside the Sderot home of Israel's defence minister, Amir Peretz, who was a popular mayor of the town in the 1980s, to demand a harder line. Mr Peretz has so far resisted calls from the military to reinvade Gaza, but pressure is growing.

Among the protesters is a group of hunger strikers led by Yael Tyayri, a 43-year-old teacher with five children. "My seven-year-old son doesn't want to go to the bathroom without me because of the Qassams . . . My 12-year-old son, last year he couldn't eat properly . . . The doctor told me to take him away from Sderot for a bit."

Ms Tyayri doesn't give much thought to why the Qassams are fired. It is enough that more than 3,000 rockets have been launched into Israel over the past five years, killing five people, including three children from Sderot.

Guardian Weekly: Sympathy flees as rockets rain down on Sderot

Israel used to respond with ground assaults but since its withdrawal from Gaza in September it has used artillery barrages. The army has dropped 6,000 shells since the beginning of April, claiming the lives of elderly farmers, children and <u>women</u>.

Those deaths went largely unnoticed in Sderot, as did the destruction of another Gaza family last month when an Israeli airforce missile attack on Islamic Jihad activists also wiped out three generations of one family. Among the survivors was three-year-old Maria Aman, who is paralysed from the neck down.

The army has suggested that the explosion that killed Huda Ghalia's family was caused by a Palestinian rocket or a mine laid by <u>Hamas</u>. Ms Tyayri seized on that. "I don't want to be unpleasant, but did you see any pictures of the family dying? How do we know they are dead? How do we know who killed them?"

Load-Date: June 24, 2006



Iragi PM comments on alleged marine massacre

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

May 31, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 14

Length: 564 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BAGHDAD

Body

BAGHDAD (AP) -- Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki broke his public silence Tuesday on the alleged killing of about 24 civilians by U.S. marines, saying such deaths were never justified, even in the fight against terrorists.

The deaths in Haditha, a volatile town in western Iraq, have barely caused a stir in Iraq and much of the Arab world -- where American troops are reviled as brutal invaders who regularly commit such acts.

Al-Maliki, speaking in a television interview with the British Broadcasting Corp., expressed remorse over the reported killings last November.

"We emphasize that our forces, that multinational forces will respect human rights, the rights of the Iraqi citizen," al-Maliki said. "It is not justifiable that a family is killed because someone is fighting terrorists, we have to be more specific and more careful."

Arab media have largely ignored the allegations of brutal U.S. marine misconduct in Haditha, though a few publications have made highly critical comments and said events in the small Euphrates River town northwest of Baghdad were neither the biggest alleged atrocity by American forces nor would they be the last.

The pan-Arab daily Asharq al-Awsat focused on the role of the Western media in exposing the allegations.

"As soon as I read the news, the immediate question that came to mind was: 'Why wasn't the tape broadcast by an Arab channel or published in an Arab newspaper?" asked Diana Mukkaled in the newspaper's Sunday edition.

Mukkaled referred to a videotape shot by an Iraqi journalism student and later obtained by Time magazine that showed the bodies of **women** and children, some in their night clothes.

Reports of what happened in Haditha did not surface until March when the incident began to be seriously investigated. An Associated Press report in March included accounts from people in the town who said they witnessed killings.

But for now, renewed U.S. interest in the allegations has only drawn a muted response from the media in Iraq. That also appeared to be largely the case elsewhere in the Arab world.

Iraqi PM comments on alleged marine massacre

The state-run media in Syria, whose anti-U.S. regime is thought to be fomenting violence by allowing foreign fighters to use its territory to enter Iraq, carried a report from the Syrian Arab News Agency quoting British newspaper reports on the killings.

The daily Al-Thawra ran the agency's report with the headline: "Marines deliberately killed children in Iraq."

In the Persian Gulf region, whose rulers are longtime Washington allies, the media reported the killings, but without editorial comment.

Dawood al-Shirian, a Saudi commentator and TV talk show host, said other regional issues, like the Fatah-<u>Hamas</u> rivalry in the Palestinian territories, could have overshadowed the Haditha killings.

"But this issue cannot be hidden for long," al-Shirian told the AP. "Sooner or later, it will come to the surface."

Haditha is in Anbar province, a mainly desert region that stretches from just west of Baghdad to the Jordanian and Syrian borders. Its inhabitants are overwhelmingly Sunni Arabs and it has been the most dangerous part of Iraq for U.S. forces since their arrival in 2003.

Anbar's communities maintain strong tribal links and are bitter critics of the post-Saddam Hussein order in Iraq, in which the Sunni Arabs lost dominance to the Shiites and Kurds, who combined make up about 80 percent of Iraq's 27 million people.

Load-Date: May 31, 2006



Iran 'terrorists' can stop mullahs' nukes

The Sun (England)
May 1, 2006 Monday

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Section: OPINION ON MONDAY

Length: 575 words

Byline: Trevor Kavanagh

Body

THE world has three options as it faces the terrifying prospect of a nuclear armed Iran.

It can watch the mullahs build nukes and hold the world to ransom.

It can denounce American aggression - while secretly counting on the world's only superpower to ride to everyone's rescue.

Or it can encourage the Iranian people themselves to topple the fanatics who threaten global Armageddon.

Since no world leader, including President George Bush, wants a US strike, the safest bet is to encourage an already seething domestic resistance.

Yet Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has ruled it out, leaving us with one nightmare vision - a tyrannical regime ready and willing to wage nuclear war.

He rejects the use of American force as "inconceivable." But

in an act of appeasement that has enraged MPs of all parties, he has barred Iran's only real internal resistance, the People's Mujahedin Of Iran (PMOI).

He upholds the distorted

EU view that they are "terrorists" - simply because Tehran says they are.

It was the price the ayatollahs extracted for continuing to talk to Britain, France and Germany - the so-called "E3" - about their nuclear ambitions.

Those talks proved to be a dangerous waste of breath.

The gullible trio squandered three years trying to bring Iran to heel - while its leaders were taking irrevocable steps to becoming a nuclear power.

Tortured

Now, as brave Iranian citizens are tortured and slaughtered for standing up

Iran 'terrorists' can stop mullahs' nukes

to the evil regime, Europe is effectively helping the mullahs destroy them.

By branding the PMOI terrorists, they give police squads authority to round up and murder them.

The vast majority of ordinary Iranians despise the Islamic zealots running Iran.

The population are young, bright and ambitious to join the enlightened, prosperous West. They are appalled by President Mahmoud Ahmad-

inejad's threat to wipe Israel off the map.

And thousands courageously risk their lives to make their protests public.

Yet the West looks on as the regime crushes these "terrorist" acts with unimaginable brutality.

<u>Women</u> and children are hanged. Boys have their eyes gouged out or are flogged to death. Men suffer unspeakable torture before being butchered.

Iran's tentacles spread far beyond its borders.

Their fingerprints are on almost every act of international terrorism.

They effectively rule Syria, sponsor *Hamas* and fuel insurrection in Iraq.

The mullahs are killing our soldiers in Basra. Death squads hunt down the regime's critics abroad. Exiled Hossein Abedini told me last week how he was ambushed by assassins in Istanbul, pumped full of bullets and left for dead in 1990.

Mr Abedini, a member of

the National Council Of Resistance Of Iran which includes the PMOI, suffers to this day from wounds to his lungs,

kidney, liver and spleen.

"I was in a deep coma for 40 days and unconscious for three months," he said.

He bitterly denounced the EU ban on Iranian resistance.

Ironic

"Ahmadinejad's cabinet are the Who's Who of international terrorism," he said.

"It is preposterous and ironic for the EU to put a terrorist tag on the main victims of Iranian terrorism."

A Commons committee backed by an overwhelming majority of MPs and peers want the PMOI ban lifted.

Its chairman, former Labour MP Lord Corbett, dismisses claims that a popular uprising cannot succeed.

"We have seen evidence in Katmandu, in Nepal, Georgia and the Ukraine that when the people make up their minds, nobody can stand in their way.

"We should be supporting them, not banning them."

Load-Date: May 1, 2006



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

January 1, 2006 Sunday

Home Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: @ISSUE; Pg. 6E

Length: 2243 words

Byline: LARRY KAPLOW, MARGARET COKER, MIKE WILLIAMS, SUSAN FERRISS, CRAIG SIMONS, DON

MELVIN, SABRA AYRES, SHELLEY EMLING, RAYMOND THIBODEAUX

Body

IRAQ: Long way from an end

The American force level is now at about 160,000, the highest since the war began in 2003. The prerequisites for U.S. withdrawal are a reduction in violence and the training of Iraqi forces. Violence, mostly roadside bombings and other insurgent attacks, was the worst yet in 2005 and shows little sign of a sustained decline.

In December, U.S. officials said that there were about 111,000 Iraqi police officers and troops of about 195,000 needed. Officials say training is going slowly and troop quality is inconsistent. In mid-December, Iraqi forces acted independently in about 21 percent of the U.S. and Iraqi military operations, according to the State Department.

America could have fewer partners in Iraq in 2006. Some countries in the U.S.-led coalition, including Bulgaria and Poland, are scheduled to reduce troops or remove them entirely. Compared with 2005's schedule of three national elections, the next year is largely unscripted but more crucial.

A new parliament will take office for a four-year term (following December's elections). But forming a coalition government could take months as rival Sunni and Shiite Muslims, ethnic Kurds and others jostle for control. If they founder and delay, expect violence to fill the vacuum.

The new constitution comes up for another review and could face revision, bringing more discord over basic issues such as federalism and the role of religion in government.

The trial of Saddam Hussein will probably continue well into 2006 and could end in an execution --- certain to raise political tension as it stirs strong feelings among his loyalists and those who hate him.

Iraq enters 2006 still dilapidated, battered and dysfunctional. Though thousands of projects, from medical clinics to road resurfacings to school renovations, have been completed, reconstruction has been slow and spotty. Insurgents repeatedly attack oil lines, electrical towers and the reconstruction workers themselves.

But the biggest problem could be a lack of money. U.S. officials have warned of a coming "Reconstruction Gap." Nearly all the \$30 billion the United States has so far set aside for the task has been spent or committed, and there is not enough money to do many planned projects, such as water treatment and electricity plants.

--- Larry Kaplow in Baghdad

MIDDLE EAST: Elections could alter status quo

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his ruling Fatah party will face strong opposition in parliamentary elections on Jan. 25 from *Hamas*, the Islamic militant organization popular because of its long record of social work.

Fatah, the organization formed by the late Yasser Arafat that controls West Bank and Gaza Strip affairs, is decried as corrupt and ineffectual. Fed-up Palestinians are expected to give *Hamas* at least 20 percent of the vote.

The Israeli election March 28 will be heavily influenced by the Palestinian results. A strong <u>Hamas</u> showing could boost the already popular alliance between the country's oldest leaders, Ariel Sharon and Shimon Peres. The two hope to draw Israelis away from past ideologies of socialism and religious Zionism to the mantra of security above all

A revamped Labor Party, whose new leader, Amir Peretz, is winning popular support by focusing on the country's growing poverty, challenges them.

A breakthrough in the peace process is unlikely. Labor's Peretz says that if he wins he would quickly negotiate a full peace with the Palestinians, but he's trailing in polls. Sharon would forgo talks and continue building the West Bank barrier that cuts Palestinians off from Jerusalem and gives Israel access to prime agricultural land there. This move might bring quiet to Israel, but it also will fuel frustration on the other side.

--- Margaret Coker in Jerusalem

LATIN AMERICA: U.S. learns friends are hard to find

The theme in Latin America will be anti-American sentiment, with the fiery leftist president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, leading the chorus. Following in the footsteps of his mentor, Fidel Castro, Chavez has made the Bush administration his whipping boy, blasting the United States for the Iraq invasion, its push for a hemisphere free-trade deal and what he calls "imperialism."

The message has found resonance in a region where U.S.-backed economic reforms have failed to raise the living standards of the poor masses.

Somehow the region must find a way to bring more opportunity to the poor. Without that, look for popular discontent to grow and for leftist candidates to win increasing success. Mexicans kept crossing the borders in large numbers to find work in the United States, and the trend will continue. The Cubans keep coming, too, with the number of people willing to risk their lives in the choppy waters of the Florida Straits rising in 2005.

Mexico --- President Vicente Fox has been a strong U.S. ally and free-trade advocate in the region, but he cannot run for another term. That's why the July 2 elections may be a bellwether of the region's sentiment. Current polls show leftist candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador doing well, and a win by a leftist in Mexico would be sure to shake up Washington.

Brazil --- The region's biggest economy and most populous country, Brazil holds presidential elections in October. It isn't known yet whether President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will stand for re-election. Lula, a leftist, has upset some

of his supporters by following a cautious economic policy aimed at keeping peace with the World Bank and Wall Street.

Venezuela --- Chavez is expected to win easily when he stands for re-election in December. The socialist will continue to be a thorn in the side of Bush while maintaining his popularity fueled by his nation's oil reserves.

Cuba --- Despite the never-ending rumors of his impending demise, Fidel Castro continues to stalk the world stage. He'll turn 80 this year and the aging communist war horse shows no signs of compromising his Marxist principles or taking early retirement.

Haiti --- Don't expect presidential elections scheduled for early 2006 to provide any magic solution to the troubled island's sad state. Former President Jean Bertrand Aristide, now in exile in South Africa, still exerts huge influence among the Haitian poor, and his followers could turn the elections into a violent mess if provoked. The 8,000-strong force of United Nations peacekeepers will probably remain in Haiti for the foreseeable future.

--- Mike Williams In Miami and Susan Ferriss in Mexico City

ASIA: Economy faces threats in China

Chinese politics today are almost as hard to fathom as they were in imperial times, when the emperor remained hidden from view in the Forbidden City. But with Hu Jintao firmly established as both the nation's president and military chairman, major personnel or policy shifts are unlikely in 2006.

Beijing's most serious political headache may come from Hong Kong, where tens of thousands of citizens marched in December to call for greater democracy.

China's blistering growth will slow slightly in 2006. While GDP growth was above 9 percent in 2005, Morgan Stanley chief Asia-Pacific economist Andy Xie said 8 percent growth is more likely this year, largely due to manufacturing overcapacity.

Foreign investment growth is likely to slow as companies seek cheap labor costs in other Asian countries. The two significant threats to the economy are a possible bird flu pandemic or a collapse of China's overheated property market, either of which could cause a recession with global repercussions.

Beijing has vowed to improve China's environmental woes after a string of high-profile disasters. But environmental problems are likely to get worse in 2006 as millions of people migrate to cities and factories step up production. A recent Chinese government report said at least half of the water in more than 50 Chinese cities is not fit for human consumption, and hundreds of urban areas suffer from hazardous air pollution.

--- Craig Simons in Beijing

GREAT BRITAIN: Transfer of power won't bring change

Britain's Tony Blair, glib and sunny, has seen off four Conservative leaders since he became prime minister in 1997. But he has promised not to run again and will soon hand power to Chancellor Gordon Brown.

Blair lost his first vote ever in the House of Commons in 2005 and could be out this year. Brown is an intellectual politician but also a brooding and secretive one. Many Labor Party members hope he will lead them back to the left. In this they are likely to be disappointed; Brown was Blair's partner in wrestling Labor to the center.

In the wings is David Cameron, the latest Conservative leader and a Tory version of Blair --- a young, charismatic politician who will pull his party to the center.

--- Don Melvin in London

GERMANY: Coalition may slow reforms

The country's first <u>female</u> chancellor, Angela Merkel, faces a rough road ahead. Her campaign promised to shape up the country's economy, Europe's largest, by passing tough reforms. But without enough votes to win outright, Merkel was forced into a grand coalition with her opponents. Getting the coalition to go along with her market and labor reform packages may prove harder than winning the race itself. Germany's economy is stagnant, and unemployment is about 11 percent.

Germany's relations with the United States should also develop differently now that former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who was never shy about his opposition to the U.S.-led war in Iraq, has left the political scene. Germans remain staunchly opposed to the war. But Merkel has said she intends to mend fences with the White House.

--- Sabra Ayres

FRANCE: Aftershocks of riots still haven't subsided

France remains rattled from three weeks of unrest that swept the suburbs of Paris and other cities beginning in late October. In a rampage of riots and vandalism, thousands of youths were arrested, mostly from struggling ethnic minorities. The violence exposed a country that has yet to deal with the realities of segregation and joblessness facing its growing immigrant communities, especially those of North and West African origin.

In 2006, the government will continue to encourage more diversity at businesses and even on television while continuing to reject quotas. Also next year, the country can expect to see two of its best-known politicians --- Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy --- step up their jockeying for power. Both have an eye on the May 2007 presidential elections, which will choose a successor to Jacques Chirac.

France's vaunted cultural standing was also rattled in '05. London beat Paris in the competition to host the 2012 Olympic Games and, even worse, a survey of 500 food experts conducted by Restaurant magazine last summer placed only one French restaurant in the world's top 10; Britain had four.

--- Shelley Emling in Paris

RUSSIA: Putin unlikely to loosen grip

President Vladimir Putin faces growing Western criticism for his increasing political power and his control of Russia's media.

But with the latest polls showing the ex-KGB officer with 73 percent approval ratings, few at home are expecting him to change his authoritarian ways. The key political developments in 2006 will take place behind the Kremlin walls, with maneuvering to find a successor for Putin when his second term expires in 2008.

It will be difficult to beat whomever Putin handpicks. Russia's economy is dripping with petro-dollars, thanks to high oil prices, and the money is slowing trickling down, meaning most Russians live better now than they did five years ago. Government involvement in Russia's most important economic sectors leaves some investors wary, and this could be a problem when it comes to drawing in much-needed foreign direct investment.

--- Sabra Ayres in Moscow

AFRICA: Nations' new leaders bring back iron fist

Africa's new generation of enlightened leaders, including Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi, Rwanda's Paul Kagame and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni --- all rebels turned statesmen --- appear to be slipping back into familiar patterns of African rule: solidifying their power by jailing political rivals, violently dispersing opposition rallies and cracking down on journalists. All of this while professing democracy to baffled Western donors who once esteemed them as models of Africa's new leadership.

The eastern region of Africa is on the verge of crisis: deadly post-election riots in Ethiopia and the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar, violent protests in the run-up to Kenya's constitutional referendum, and massive street protests in Uganda after Museveni's government jailed the country's main opposition leader in the run-up to the 2006 elections.

One of the bright spots on the continent is Liberia, which elected Africa's first woman president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Her victory promises to embolden more African **women** to go into politics, a realm long dominated by men.

In southern Africa, black Africans are growing impatient with the slow pace of land redistribution. In Namibia and South Africa, the white minority still benefits from the vestiges of apartheid --- they own the vast majority of farmable land while many black Africans remain landless.

The continent's biggest problem, though, remains the AIDS epidemic. The United Nations estimates that 26 million adults in sub-Saharan Africa between 15 and 49 are HIV-positive, and treatment programs are sporadic in some countries, nonexistent in others.

--- Raymond Thibodeaux in Addis Ababa

Graphic

Photo: VINCENT YU / Associated PressDemonstrators march on a Hong Kong street in December to seek political reforms that would allow voters in the Chinese territory to pick the city's leaders.

Photo: SCHALK van ZUYDAM / APLiberia elected Africa's first woman president, Ellen-Johnson Sirleaf, whose victory should encourage more African *women* to go into politics. Other nations chose rulers who are former rebels.

Photo: Parliamentary elections Jan. 25 will provide a challenge for Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah party. A strong <u>Hamas</u> showing would threaten Abbas' vision of seeking peace with Israel and establishing a Palestinian state.

Photo: MOHAMMED BALLAS / Associated PressPalestinian members of the Fatah party show their identification cards at the entrance to a voting center in the West Bank town of Jenin during the November primary. Younger party activists made good last week on their threat to split with Fatah.

Photo: FERNANDO LLANO / Associated PressWorkers who support Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez look at a poster with the image of President Bush during a march in Caracas in May. Chavez has blasted the United States for the Iraq invasion, its free-trade initiatives and what he calls "imperialism."

Photo: Hugo Chavez, president of Venezuela and vocal Bush critic, is expected to win re-election.

Photo: MICHAEL SPINGLER / Associated PressFirefighters in Gentilly, south of Paris, extinguish a burning car during riots by youths, mostly from strugging ethnic minorities.

Photo: ITAR-TASSRussian President Vladimir Putin is expected to sign a bill, passed last week, that gives the state greater control over the funding and activities of nongovernmental groups.

Photo: House of Commons TVBritish Prime Minister Tony Blair (left), who has held the job since 1997, will soon hand power to Chancellor Gordon Brown. Brown helped Blair bring the Labor Party to the center.

Photo: HADI MIZBAN / Associated PressIraqi police secure the site as a truck burns following an explosion in western Baghdad in September. Violence, mostly roadside bombings and other insurgent attacks, was the worst yet in 2005 and shows little sign of a sustained decline.

Photo: JAN BAUER / Associated PressAngela Merkel, who replaced Gerhard Schroeder as Germany's chancellor, intends to mend fences with the White House.

Photo: Sabra Ayres

Photo: Raymond Thibodeaux

Photo: Craig Simons

Photo: Margaret Coker

Photo: Larry Kaplow

Photo: Don Melvin

Photo: Shelley Emling

Photo: Mike Williams

Photo: Susan Ferriss

Load-Date: January 1, 2006



International Briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA) February 6, 2006 Monday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a8

Length: 560 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Team studies fault line in Pakistan quake

TOKYO - In the massive earthquake that hit northern Pakistan in October, a fault shifted over a 65-kilometer section, and the ground was pushed up to a height of 5.5 meters in places, according to a Japanese and Pakistani joint research team.

The team's study has fully revealed the movements of faults during the earthquake for the first time.

The National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, Kyoto University, Hiroshima Institute of Technology and the Geological Survey of Pakistan conducted the joint research in January.

Iraq steps up security for Shiite ceremony

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Iraq will deploy thousands of police to prevent Sunni militants from bombing a major Shiite ceremony next week, while the bullet-riddled bodies of two Shiites were found Sunday in the latest round of killings between rival Sunni and Shiite groups.

The U.S. military, meanwhile, announced the release of about 50 Iraqi detainees, but no <u>women</u> were among them. The freeing of <u>women</u> is a demand by kidnappers of American journalist Jill Carroll, who was abducted Jan. 7 in Baghdad.

Sectarian anxieties are running high in Iraq amid a spate of killings and kidnappings.

Three gunmen shot dead two policemen in the northern city of Kirkuk, and a roadside bomb killed two civilians near Baghdad, police said.

Iraqi forces are stepping up security ahead of the most important date in the Shiite calendar - the feast of Ashoura - to prevent a repeat of suicide bombings by Sunni extremists that killed at least 230 people during the ceremonies in the past two years.

Israel threatens to halt payments to Palestinians

International Briefs

JERUSALEM - Israel agreed to make a crucial payment of \$54 million in tax and customs revenues to the Palestinians, but officials said future transfers will be halted once <u>Hamas</u> militants form the next Palestinian government.

The decision was made after a flare-up of violence. Israeli forces pounded the northern Gaza Strip with missiles and artillery fire, killing three Palestinian militants. Hours later, a Palestinian assailant killed one woman and wounded four other people in what police called a politically motivated stabbing in central Israel.

Israel collects millions of dollars in taxes and customs duties for the Palestinians, transferring the funds to the Palestinian Authority each month.

Families of ferry passengers lash out

SAFAGA, Egypt - Family members of passengers on a ferry that sank in the Red Sea protested on Sunday as they waited in vain for news of their loved ones, accusing Egypt's government of mishandling the rescue after the ship went down with more than 1,400 on board.

Egyptian officials said the captain was missing, and some survivors alleged he had jumped into one of the first lifeboats out rather than stay with the crippled ferry. A lawmaker said ships operated by the same company had been involved in past tragedies, including one that sank last year.

Police raise the number of those rescued to 401 - up from 376 reported Saturday.

Outside the Red Sea port in Safaga, where survivors were being taken, about 100 family members shouted at police and criticized Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for not providing more information. On Saturday, at similar demonstrations in the port 280 miles southeast of Cairo, family members threw stones at police.

Load-Date: February 7, 2006



U.S. universities should be more accessible to India students: Bush

Hindustan Times

March 3, 2006 Friday 1:26 PM EST

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Length: 531 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: Hyderabad

Body

Hyderabad, March 3 -- US President George W Bush said here today that American universities and colleges should be more accessible to Indian students.

He was addressing students of the Indian School of Business after visiting farmers and weavers at Acharya N G Ranga Agriculture University (ANGRAU) here today.

Ruling out protectionist measures to address domestic concerns on outsourcing, Bush said he favoured easy access for Indian students to American universities and schools.

"I have taken a position, the US will reject protectionism. We won't fear competition. We welcome competition," he said interacting with young entrepreneurs at the Indian School of Business, which has collaboration with Wharton School and Kellog School of Management.

Acknowledging that globalisation had a negative impact in terms of employment guarantee and protection, he said: "Losing a job is painful. But the fundamental question is how does the government react." He said one way was to resort to protectionist laws and the other was to educate people so that they found jobs in the 21st century.

"Let us make sure that pro-growth economic policies are in place -- it means low taxes, less regulations, fewer lawsuits and wise energy policies," Bush said.

Earlier, Bush, clad in blue shirt and black trousers, walked around the compound and tried his hand at weaving looms put on display at the ANGRAU situated on the outskirts of the city.

Accompanied by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Rajashekara Reddy, President Bush spoke to <u>women</u> of self-help groups, posed for pictures, signed autographs and took straw hats as mementos. He also spent time with farmers, and weavers. He even tried his hand at the threaded weaving looms put on display.

Folk dancers tapped their feet to drumbeats as Bush walked past in a leisurely pace, waving to the artistes and planting kisses on the faces of children around.

Bush, also saw a seven-year-old buffalo, Murra, brought in from Haryana at ANGRAU.

ANGRAU is involved in US-India knowledge initiative on agriculture. The business school is affiliated with the Wharton and Kellogg School of Management.

U.S. universities should be more accessible to India students: Bush

Bush also formally announced the setting up of a US Consulate in Hyderabad.

To protest the President's visit Communists and Muslim groups burnt effigies of President Bush.

Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen said the shutdown in the Old City of Hyderabad was a message that the President was not welcome.

The Majlis also urged Muslims to offer financial help to *Hamas* in Palestine to help fight Israel.

His arrival to Hyderabad was a low-key, but a tightly guarded affair. Sharpshooters were on guard all around the Andhra capital as US secret service agents fanned across the city to ensure a safe tour the US President.

Two aircraft resembling his Air Force One flew into Hyderabad one after the other as part of US presidential security.

Bush and his wife Laura stepped down from their Boeing 747-200B that landed at the Hyderabad airport shortly before 10 a.m. He was received by Governor of Andhra Pradesh Rameshwar Thakur and the Chief Minister Rajashekhara Reddy.

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Load-Date: March 4, 2006



In the World

The Philadelphia Inquirer

March 5, 2006 Sunday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A14

Length: 543 words

Body

Seven killed in Afghan fighting

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - A roadside bomb exploded yesterday as a vehicle carrying Afghan intelligence agents drove by in a southern province, killing four agents.

Separate fighting in southern Kandahar province, a former Taliban stronghold, killed a member of the U.S.-led coalition and two insurgents, the American military said in a statement.

The French Defense Ministry said a special forces officer was killed. France has had 200 special forces officers in southeast Afghanistan since 2003, the ministry said. About 25 countries have forces in the coalition.- **AP**

U.N. agency facing shortages in Kenya

EL WAK, Kenya - The U.N. food agency will soon run out of food needed to feed 3.5 million Kenyans facing prolonged drought because it has received a fraction of the required funding, officials said yesterday.

The World Food Program has enough cereal to last until April but will run out of other staples by month's end, program spokesman Peter Smerdon said.

The program needs \$225 million to buy more than 33,000 tons of food each month until February 2007 but has received only \$28 million, he said. "If we don't get any more food aid it will be a catastrophe," Smerdon said.- AP

Al-Qaeda leader decries cartoons

CAIRO, Egypt - Al-Qaeda's No. 2 leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, criticized the West for its insult to Islam's prophet, complaining in a video broadcast today on Al-Jazeera that the Prophet Mohammed and Jesus "are not sacred anymore."

Referring to the cartoons of the Muhammad that have been printed in a number of European newspapers, al-Zawahiri said: "They did it on purpose and they continue to do it without apologizing, even though no one dares to harm Jews or to challenge Jewish claims about the Holocaust nor even to insult homosexuals."

In the World

In the video broadcast on the satellite network, al-Zawahri also offered his support to <u>Hamas</u>, the militant Islamic group that is forming a new Palestinian government after sweeping legislative elections.- **AP**

Elsewhere:

The suspected leader of a gang accused of torturing to death a young Jewish man near Paris was extradited from Ivory Coast to France yesterday. Youssef Fofana, 22, is a suspect in the torture death of Ilan Halimi, 23, who was abducted Jan. 21 and found Feb. 13.

Algeria freed a first group of Islamic militants yesterday after deciding to pardon or reduce sentences for more than 2,000 people detained during an insurgency in the 1990s. The exact numbers of prisoners freed was unclear, as was the nature of their crimes. About 20 prisoners could be seen leaving two prisons outside Algiers.

A Mexico City judge has ordered a woman suspected in the deaths of several elderly <u>women</u> to stand trial on six counts of homicide. Prosecutors said they had evidence implicating Juana Barraza, 48, as the notorious "Mataviejitas," or "Little Old Lady Killer." They said she confessed to four killings, and her fingerprints matched those in a total of 10 cases.

Two Sri Lankan menwho snatched a gold chain from a woman struggling in the waves of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami will be tried for murder, Sri Lanka's solicitor general said yesterday. After yanking her necklace, the two let Dineti Deshika fall back into the torrent. Her body was found after the waters receded.

Load-Date: March 5, 2006



'Our Peace Strategy Has Failed'

New York Sun (Archive) January 26, 2006 Thursday

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 525 words

Byline: Shoshana Bryen

Body

After hundreds of thousands of deaths, the displacement of about 3 million people, and the destruction of the tribal way of life of the people of Darfur; after the establishment and deployment of an African Union "peacekeeping" force of 7,000 men supported by American logistics and \$170 million; after President Bush called the human catastrophe "genocide" and demanded U.N. action, Jan Pronk, U.N. special envoy to Sudan, has said, "Looking back at three years of killings and (ethnic) cleansing in Darfur, we must admit that our peace strategy so far has failed. All we did was pick up the pieces and muddle through, doing too little, too late."

Mr. Pronk, it appears, has been educated by, or perhaps haunted by the multitude of men, <u>women</u>, and children murdered outright or starved into submission by the Darfur rebels with the active support of the Sudanese government under the protection of the threat of a Chinese veto of Security Council action. (China has a large stake in the oil riches of southern Sudan, and thus supports the government in Khartoum regardless of the depredations it heaps upon its citizens.) According to media reports, Mr. Pronk "appealed to [the U.N. Security Council] to undertake a transition from the African Union mission to a UN force of ... peacekeepers with the authority to use violence to prevent attacks against civilians and disarm militias." (My emphasis)

Aside from the syntactical oddity, Mr. Pronk is on to something.

A "war strategy" - the authority to use violence - might, in fact, be more effective and humane than a "peace strategy." The militias are waging war against the people of Darfur and warriors - people authorized to use violence - are needed to protect the people and kill, yes, kill, the perpetrators. There is no reason to believe anything less will stop the Janjaweed ravaging of an already ravaged people.

One of the most bizarre notions born of the late 20th century is that people who kill, loot, maim, rape, pillage, and blow up buses are driven by circumstance to their evil deeds and can be convinced by diplomacy to stop. There is an implicit assumption that killers have an agenda amenable to compromise or purchase. It further assumes that at least some of the killers' claims have merit that diplomats - and victims - should consider. It is on a par with the notion that sharing power with terrorists will "moderate" them, making them aware of potholes, civil rights, and the requirements for peaceable relations among nations.

But it is often the case that one party's agenda is the death of its enemy and the acquisition of its physical and intellectual space and/or property. Janjaweed, <u>Hamas</u>, Hezbollah, and Al Qaeda give no evidence of interest in the achievement of some of their goals or satisfaction of some of their claims. The benefits of a Western-style "win-win" situation eludes them.

'Our Peace Strategy Has Failed'

To the extent that Mr. Pronk is successful in convincing the United Nations that killing the killers is the fastest route to peace, the people of Darfur may yet have hope.

Ms. Bryen is director of special projects at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Load-Date: January 26, 2006



Prime minister's press conference

Guardian.com April 24, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1848 words

Highlight: Tony Blair faces questions from Westminster journalists at his monthly press conference from midday.

Follow it live with Oliver King

Body

With the Daily Mail running that hoary old cliche of a headline - "Crisis? What NHS crisis?" - prompted by Patricia Hewitt's "best year ever" comment yesterday, expect job losses and trust deficits in the NHS to figure prominently. Does Tony Blair still have confidence in his health secretary? He will undoubtedly says yes, as he's as determined as she is that journalists put the recent bad headlines in some perspective, arguing that the current painful reforms are justfiable because they will ensure proper financial control in the future.

After Mr Blair's comment about how "out of touch" his critics on civil liberties are, expect more from the PM on this subject, too. Labour believes it is responding to the public mood and dismisses as exaggerated distortions claims that it is undermining British democracy. Given that we are in the middle of a local election campaign, Mr Blair will try and paint his political opponents as soft on law and order for opposing Asbos, 90-day detention and ID cards among other things.

Questions too on "cash-for-honours". Has Mr Blair been preparing to talk to Scotland Yard? At PMQs last week he repeated a favourite phrase of Downing Streets when faced with awkward questions, saying that he wasn't going "to give a running commentary" on the affair. That won't stop journalists trying, though.

Midday

Still waiting for Tony Blair but we can see a flatscreen TV. Are we in for one of those powerpoint demonstrations loved by Downing Street and loathed by journalists who are keen to get their questions in?

Mr Blair joins us and opens by reminding journalists about the progress made on waiting lists, cardiac care and cancer care. All improved, he says. No winter flu crisis, either. He tells us that he is going to be "very open" about the challenges the NHS is facing but reminds his audience of Labour's record of achievement.

12.05pm

Next year will be "very challenging for the reasons we know," he says. Talks about creating a "different type" of health service centered around patient choice. Points to the screen to figures backing up his case. I'm not minimising the difficulties, Mr Blair repeats, but "for the sake of balance ... let's get the figures right" about jobs, he tells the nursing unions.

12.10pm

Mr Blair points to screen and says there are double the amount of heart operations and patients helped with the use of statin drugs. On cancer, he says there are more consultants and the speed with which patients are seen has been improved (though there is a lot further to go, he admits). Outcomes have improved, too, as the number of cancer deaths are down.

Our NHS has been changed for the better, he sums up. The PM asks for, one, a sense of balance - yes, there are problems but there have been lasting improvements - and, two, reforms do mean difficulties but the reforms will make the extra money work better for the patient. The challenges faced over the next year will be overcome by the NHS, he claims.

12.15pm

Nick Robinson of the BBC asks him why he didn't use the phrase "best year ever" to describe the NHS, and whether he would care to repeat it. The facts speak for themselves, says the PM, although he doesn't repeat the comment. He says he'll meet the targets set by central government. The PM asks anyone to show where Labour has done badly by nurses, given the increases in numbers and pay.

Adam Bolton of Sky News raises the question of increased pay in the NHS and the government's underestimatation of the figures. Mr Blair pauses and say hes doesn't accept the resources on pay are not justified ... the overall pay bill as a proportion of NHS expenditure is down, not up, since 97, says the PM. He also wants to lay to rest the idea that GPs are on 250,000pa - he doesn't believe any doctor is being paid that much.

Practice-based commissioning in the NHS gives the GPs the incentive to do more in a primary care setting and not to refer to hospitals, he says. GPs doing a lot more that used to be done in hospitals and hospitals doing a lot more "day surgery", Mr Blair says.

12.20pm

... the PM asks for sense of balance for a third time.

Tom Bradby of ITV asks if patients have "never had it so good". Mr Blair avoids using that particularly loaded phrase but his answers implies that he believes that to true.

Andy Bell from Channel 5 asks if job losses mean the NHS reforms are working. Mr Blair disagrees but says there was no proper financial control in the NHS. It's only progress if the patient gets a better deal, Mr Blair says. There are many different methods of paying for healthcare but the principles around the world seem to be the same.

12.25pm

Newsnight asks Mr Blair if - as a focus group organised by the programme suggested - he is the problem and that people don't believe in him. Instead of doing focus groups, you could help me with this debate, says Mr Blair.

The Sun's political editor George Pascoe-Watson asks if Patricia Hewitt is the right person to carry through the reforms as health secretary. "Of course," Mr Blair says. He claims that waiting lists dramatically fell the month that patient choice was introduced.

George Jones from The Daily Telegraph brings up lenders to the Labour party and whether the party can repay the money. He says he has nothing more to add to what John Prescott said yesterday ... he frowns and then - surprise, surprise - says he is not going to give a "running commentary" on the affair.

12.30pm

Channel 4's Jon Snow asks about health, too. Mr Blair repeats his earlier comments.

Prime minister's press conference

Asked why some good health trusts have to bail out the overspenders, the PM says that's the way the system has always worked but overspending trusts will only be bailed out if the have a "recovery programme in place".

Bloomburg asks about the reform of the House of Lords and whether he believes in a democratic upper chamber. He says he hasn't made up his mind.

Oona Blackman of the Mirror returns to NHS closures. Mr Blair repeats that some reports are exaggerated and that it's always possible to find bad news stories, even in his constituency, but that healthcare is different.

GMTV asks about Dave the Chameleon advert and whether it has backfired. It's just a bit of fun, says the PM, and he's sure Mr Cameron will be able to handle it. At some point the Tory leader will have to make some decisions, he says.

12.35pm

Gary Gibbon of Channel 4 news says it sounds like you're more open-minded than before. "I'm marginally more open-minded," says the PM ... "I'm a very open minded bloke". But he then advises the hacks not to read too much into what he's saying ...

Catherine McCloud from the Glasgow Herald asks about the "unpaid" minister for <u>women</u>. Mr Blair hints he might well pay Meg Munn - he says "it has to be resolved". On the wider point about equality of pay, Mr Blair says there is a need to talk to employers about closing the gap, suggesting the very predictions about how long it will take are "too pessimistic".

RTE ask about the return of the Northern Ireland assembly and the Queens's visit to Ireland. Relations between the two countries have been transformed, Mr Blair says.

12.40pm

Ben Brogan from the Daily Mail asks when the NHS reforms will stop and if Mr Blair will stick around to see them finished. The PM responds, "I was waiting for that sting in the tail". The big problem we faced, says Mr Blair, was rationing by waiting list - with people waiting sometimes years for elective surgery. If people now have a door-to-door average wait of seven or eight weeks and a maximum of18 weeks, that is effectively the end of that problem and would be a major transformation.

There will always be problems with the health service, he admits. What we are trying to do is get to the stage where GPs and hospitals have incentives to improve their own services. Take MRI scanners, he says, which are not used at weekends or evenings. As the government builds in incentives, this will change, he says.

12.45pm

The BBC asks about how and why donations to the Labour party were turned into loans and whether the PM has taken legal advice. Mr Blair repeats his line about not offering a "running commentary" - he won't say anything because it would be "a complete distraction" but indicates that there will be a time and place when journalists can question him. Mr Blair says that it's right that sponsors of city academies are nominated for honours.

Andrew Grice of the Independent asks if his administration is "one of the most authoritarian in history" - a charge levelled by Liberty. Mr Blair disagrees, reminding him that Labour introducted the Human Rights Act. But the civil liberty of a pensioner living in fear also "counts" he says. People are fed up with menaces on the street and drug dealers. We will legislate again if the police need more powers, he promises.

The Scotsman asks if he is not uncomfortable with the idea that people who endorse a policy of his are rewarded by honours. Mr Blair says it is not about endorsing his policies, but about benefiting society.

12.50pm

Prime minister's press conference

Asked by Tyne Tees if there are any similarities between Alan Shearer's early retirement and another north-east icon who may have to consider giving up. Mr Blair responds by saying "my knees are fine", which raises a laugh.

A Middle Eastern journalist asks about Britain's contribution to the Palestinian issue and the "Abdullah" plan - a reference to King Abdullah's proposals. Mr Blair says it's a priority for him to make progress because without progress we'll have a running sore which causes great mistrust in the world. Everyone must accept the principles though which peace will come - ie a two-state solution with security for Israel guaranteed.

"I support entirely the mandate of *Hamas*," the PM says, but they must change their attitude to Israel.

12.55pm

Patrick Wintour of the Guardian asks what responsibility central government has in the NHS crisis and what his latest estimates are for the overall defecit figure and whether he is planning to fine overspending trusts.

Mr Blair denies the last question but says "of course we take responsibility". He doesn't know what the current prognosis is on the deficit but he says it's not "sensible" to give an estimate. He hints that the 800m figure might prove to be an exaggeration.

Jerry Lewis of Israel radio asks Mr Blair to clarify the government's attitude to <u>Hamas</u>, as well as Osama Bin Laden's latest audio tape, and the threat of the BNP.

1pm

Mr Blair says the BNP and racism offer nothing but misery. About <u>Hamas</u>, he says the government's position remains as he set it out earlier. Osama Bin Laden's tape reveals the extremism of their politics of hatred.

A Sky reporter returns to the question about the NHS and the difference between peoples' perceptions and the service they receive. Mr Blair repeats his call for balance in the reporting of the NHS story.

On Iran, Mr Blair says it's not the same situation as with Iraq, but adds that the west shouldn't be sending signals of weakness at the current time.

Mr Blair wraps things up with the comment that "all good things must come to an end" before grinning and leaving the room.

Load-Date: April 24, 2006



Comment & Debate: We need to engage with all strands of Muslim opinion: The British government is making a mistake if it believes it can understand a community by talking to just one organisation

The Guardian - Final Edition
July 12, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES; Pg. 31

Length: 1246 words

Byline: Jonathan Freedland

Body

Alexandra Palace is not a mosque, but last week it looked like one. Set designers had gone to work, painting domes and minarets, so that the interior of the building where British television began looked more like north Damascus than north London, more Mecca than Muswell Hill. The change was for Islam Expo, a four-day festival of debate, music and culture that brought in tens of thousands of people, instantly becoming the biggest event of its kind in the history of Britain's Muslim community.

I was at a panel on the origins of terrorism: "religious or political?" The star turn was Palestinian-born Dr Azzam Tamimi of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB). Asked whether <u>Hamas</u> should recognise Israel and renounce violence, he launched into a full-throttle rhetorical assault, insisting: "It is the same as asking rape victims to recognise that their rape was legitimate . . . We will never do that, never!"

While the audience were loudly applauding and cheering, I was struck by two related thoughts, both of which have become especially pressing in the globalised world of the 21st century - in which it is now common, rather than unusual, for people to live far away from the lands with which they strongly identify.

For this is the age of the diaspora. There are Indians in America, Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, and everybody in London. Many of these communities stay passionately connected to the politics of the old country. But their view of that politics is different from those who are living it, day to day. Thus is born the phenomenon of the irresponsible diaspora.

I saw it up close in the US, when I met Irish-Americans whose nostalgic brand of Irish nationalism made them much more stubbornly hardline than the leadership of Sinn Fein, those who lived the reality of contemporary life on the Falls Road. As one senior republican put it to me, these third-generation Americans in Boston and New York were "more Catholic than the Pope".

The phrase doesn't fit Dr Tamimi, but the sentiment does. For most Palestinians on the ground had to give up the luxury of such dogmatism long ago. Even <u>Hamas</u>, which stands alongside the MAB in the worldwide fraternity of the Muslim Brotherhood, is quite clearly on its way to reaching an acceptance of Israel's existence within the 1967 borders. It has taken tentative steps in that direction already, most recently in its backing for the so-called "prisoners' document" that implies acceptance of Israel. For the sake of trying to end the distress they live with every day in Gaza and the West Bank, they can no longer afford the ideological purity of Dr Tamimi's "never".

Comment & Debate: We need to engage with all strands of Muslim opinion: The British government is making a mistake if it believes it can understand a community

Intriguingly, tension on the other side of this conflict, between Israel and the Jewish diaspora, often runs the other way. True, in the Oslo period of the 1990s the minority Zionist Organisation of America stood to the right of Yitzhak Rabin, insisting it understood Israel's security needs better than Israel itself. But a more frequent clash is of the kind seen last week, when 300 British Jews took a full-page ad in the Times to call on Israel to halt its "collective punishment" of the people of Gaza. I share the signatories' horror at the bombing of a Palestinian power station and cutting-off of fuel supplies: such actions are morally indefensible. And I reject the complaints of those Israelis who denounce their diaspora critics, saying that only those who live with the Israeli reality have any right to comment. That said, I do wonder why these concerned Jews did not place an ad in an Israeli newspaper. If their motive was moving Israeli policy, that would surely have been the right place. Instead, they have allowed their opponents to say their prime interest was advertising their own dovishness to their fellow Britons.

Still, the move has served as a timely reminder that no diaspora community, no ethnic minority, is a monolith: they are as varied as the societies with which they identify. Timely, because right now the government faces serious criticism of its view of the British Muslim community - or communities - specifically in the way they are represented.

On Friday Channel 4 will air a documentary by Martin Bright of the New Statesman in which he argues that ministers have in effect anointed as the official representatives of British Islam those who represent some of its most radical shades of opinion. Central is the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), an umbrella body but one that is, Bright argues, sympathetic to a robust form of Islamism. Others recall the MCB's former head, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, who at the height of the Salman Rushdie affair wondered if "death is too good for him".

Bright traces the origin of this approach to the Foreign Office, which has long believed in engagement with political Islam, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Using a stream of leaked documents, Bright shows how civil servants have argued for the same policy of engagement to apply domestically. The result has been the admission to Britain of one of the Brotherhood's spiritual leaders, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi - who blesses suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, denounces homosexuality, and defends the physical disciplining of <u>women</u> by their husbands - on the grounds that he is in tune with "mainstream" British Muslim opinion (a move rather at odds with Tony Blair's stated belief that the Brotherhood is partly responsible for the global spread of the ideology that underpins Islamist terrorism). A succession of other, less strident Muslim leaders testify that they have been shut out of government dialogue - and denied financial help - in favour of the privileged MCB.

The key question is where, in fact, the British Muslim mainstream lies. Bright says the majority are from the more non-political Sufi tradition; others insist that young British Muslims see the MCB as, if anything, too mild and insufficiently hardline. Which is it?

Polling offers a mixed picture. Last month the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that British Muslims had far more negative views of westerners than Muslim communities elsewhere in Europe. A significant majority viewed western populations as selfish, arrogant, greedy and immoral - attitudes more prevalent in Muslim societies in the Middle East and Asia than among other European Muslims. Another poll last week further found that 13% of British Muslims believe the 7/7 bombers should be regarded as "martyrs".

Of course, the flipside of that finding is that a majority of British Muslims believe no such thing. Indeed the poll found most saying the government has failed to combat extremism - a greater proportion with that view than among the British population as a whole.

There is, then, evidence available to both sides of this argument: those who say British Muslims are radical and therefore have to be met where they are - not where others would like them to be - and those who say that this community is essentially moderate, but is regularly stirred up by hardliners who enjoy the misguided support of the government.

My own view is that the government is making a mistake if it hands the franchise of dialogue over to a single organisation or strand of opinion. It may be more convenient, but it is mistaken. For diasporas and religious communities are diverse organisms, with complex, contradictory views. They can be irresponsible and irritating, but they are never monolithic. The annoying reality is, you have to speak to all of them.

Comment & Debate: We need to engage with all strands of Muslim opinion: The British government is making a mistake if it believes it can understand a community

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Once Again, Gazans Are Displaced by Israeli Occupiers

The New York Times

July 12, 2006 Wednesday

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Length: 1207 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: SHUKA, Gaza Strip, July 11

Body

Khairi Edbary and his family of eight normally share a tiny concrete house with his brother and his family of eight, with a raw dividing wall of concrete blocks providing a touch of privacy.

These days, however, the house is almost empty. The Edbarys live on the eastern edge of the broken runway of what was once the Gaza airport, which has now been taken over by Israeli troops.

Like many of the people here, mostly poor farmers, the Edbarys have heeded the Israeli call to evacuate their homes to escape the fighting and are sleeping in United Nations schools in nearby Rafah.

Mr. Edbary, 36, displayed a large brass shell from an Israeli heavy machine gun that had fallen from an attack helicopter onto his roof. "At night," he said, "the noise is frightening, and the firing shakes the ground. They shoot at anything moving at night."

He had returned to his house on Tuesday to prepare some food for his family and retrieve documents for a sick daughter, before making his way back about three miles to the Rafah Elementary Boys School, run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which helps Palestinian refugees and their families.

In the last week, the agency has opened two schools in Rafah to house the displaced people of Shuka and southern Gaza. There are about 1,000 people in 136 families at the two schools, sleeping on thin mattresses in empty classrooms, said Jamal Hamad, an agency spokesman, "but the numbers are increasing every day."

Initially, people like Fayez Sawarka, 40, stayed at home. But the Israeli incursion into the airport and its neighborhood, with tanks and armored bulldozers and artillery, destroyed some of the narrow roads and made it difficult if not impossible for farmers to get to their fields or to bring in food.

The shelling and the noise were followed by Israeli calls on loudspeakers for residents to leave their homes for their own safety.

"We just took our identity cards and the clothes we were wearing," Mr. Sawarka said, adding that he, his wife and their 10 children lived for a week in the open outside Rafah. Locals fed them, and the United Nations agency finally brought them a tent, then began to open the schools.

Once Again, Gazans Are Displaced by Israeli Occupiers

"We left all the crops in the ground," he said, watermelon, garlic, cucumbers and tomatoes. "I know nothing about my house."

The agency provides food, water and shelter, plus some social workers. But no one knows how long this will last.

For John Ging, the director of operations for the agency in Gaza, the Israeli incursion, to try to force the release of a captured soldier, is the latest strain on a population already suffering from a broad economic boycott of the *Hamas*-led Palestinian Authority, which has been unable to pay salaries for five months.

"There is now a humanitarian crisis here," Mr. Ging said. "For many Palestinians now, it's a struggle to survive, for the basics of life."

Before the Israeli incursion, the agency and other aid institutions were struggling to help people cope with the lack of jobs and salaries.

Now, he said, with the destruction of Gaza's only power plant, the bombing of some key bridges, the damage to water pipes and the sleep deprivation caused by sonic booms, "there is collective suffering here that doesn't distinguish" between civilian and fighter.

"We are all collectively living with the consequences of that Israeli military action," he said. "It affects everyone."

Mr. Ging said that Israeli citizens under Palestinian rocket fire were also living in fear, and that that was equally unacceptable. "All lives are equal," he said.

Still, his job is Gaza, and with the closure of the Karni border crossing because of security alerts, "we'll run out of broad beans and whole milk in another day."

The agency now distributes food packages to 725,000 of Gaza's 1.4 million people, an increase of 100,000 in the last month, he said. There are 235 shipping containers of food in Israel, he said, at the Ashdod port, waiting to be brought through the Karni crossing.

According to the World Food Program, "the last two weeks have had a significant impact on food security," with shortages of milk and sugar, and only a week's supply of flour remaining, said a spokeswoman, Kirstie Campbell. Food companies and bakeries are struggling with the power cuts, she said, and fishermen are not allowed out beyond the harbor, though on Monday Israel allowed the program to bring in some canned meat and flour through the Erez crossing, normally used only for people.

"The issue is capacity," she said. The one truck through Erez took an hour and contained 25 metric tons of food, she said. But 1,000 metric tons of flour is waiting in Ashdod, though that represents only a third of the agency's monthly needs for its 160,000 recipients.

Israel has said that it is trying to minimize harm to civilians as it tries to force the release of the soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, and stop rocket fire into Israeli towns. More than 50 Palestinians have died since the Israeli incursion began nearly two weeks ago; most of the dead have been militants.

Israel has also said it has allowed in needed gasoline and diesel fuel, medicine and foodstuffs, and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert noted Monday that Israel was still supplying Gaza with water and electricity because "we don't want to punish the civilian population."

Still, after the damage to the power plant, most Gazans get only six hours of electricity a day, at unpredictable times, so refrigeration of food becomes a problem. So does water supply, because many Gazans use electric pumps to get their water, and there are similar problems with sewage treatment.

On Saturday, the head of Israel's Gaza liaison administration, Col. Nir Press, told The Jerusalem Post that "the situation in Gaza is not even close to developing into a humanitarian crisis," saying such charges made by the Palestinians were aimed at deceiving the international community.

Once Again, Gazans Are Displaced by Israeli Occupiers

Mr. Ging, the United Nations representative, said in response: "There's growing resentment expressed to me about the debate whether it's a humanitarian crisis or not. It is a humanitarian crisis."

The Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya, emerged on Tuesday from a long period of silence to hold a cabinet meeting. He told reporters that living conditions in the Gaza Strip "are becoming critical because of a lack of food, fuel and medicine."

Mr. Haniya thanked the European Union for sending fuel for Gaza hospitals via a new mechanism set up to meet the basic needs of Palestinians without going through the <u>Hamas</u>-led government. Around 78,000 gallons of fuel was delivered Tuesday to power generators at public hospitals, the first of what are meant to be monthly deliveries.

In Shuka, Mr. Edbary said he supported the raid into Israel that captured the soldier, and thought Israel should be willing to negotiate some form of prisoner exchange.

"At least Israel should release the women and children prisoners of ours that they have," he said. "It's shameful."

Does he think his government bears some responsibility for the troubles he now has? Mr. Edbary's eyes wandered. "I don't care about politics," he said. "I care about our dignity."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: The United Nations has opened two schools near Rafah, in southern Gaza, to house Palestinian refugees shunted aside in the Israeli incursions.

Khairi Edbary, 36, and his wife moving their family of eight on Tuesday from their home in Shuka, Gaza, to a center set up in a local school. (Photographs by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)

Load-Date: July 12, 2006



Deal directly with Latin America, Canada urged

Ottawa Citizen

April 26, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: CITY; Pg. C6; Diplomatica

Length: 909 words

Byline: Jennifer Campbell, Citizen Special

Body

Canada should start dealing with Latin America and the Caribbean directly. It doesn't always have to do so in concert with its large southerly neighbour. This prescription came from Jorge Quiroga, the youthful former president of Bolivia, clearly someone who has some experience dealing with both Canada and the U.S.

Mr. Quiroga was a guest speaker at a day-long symposium held Friday at Foreign Affairs. The event, presented by the Canadian Institute for International Affairs and FOCAL (The Canadian Foundation for the Americas), was titled "Where Can Canada Really Make a Difference?" It set out to look at "neglect and opportunity" in Latin America and the Caribbean, 16 years after Canada signed up with the Organization of American States.

Mr. Quiroga was vice-president of Bolivia when he stepped in as president from 2001 to 2002 when President Hugo Banzer stepped down because he was battling cancer. Mr. Quiroga ran for the presidency in the December 2005 election but lost to Evo Morales.

"There's something to be gained through direct communication between Canada and Latin America," Mr. Quiroga said, using communication problems in his own family as an example of how messages can get mixed when communication involves too many parties, whether parents and children, or governments.

In his suggestions on what Canada can do, Mr. Quiroga suggested it can show Latin America how to structure a multicultural society. He also said Latin America's countries need institution-building and poverty-reduction.

In his comments, Peter Hakim, president of Interamerican Dialogue, a Washington-based think tank that looks at western hemisphere relations, talked about how impressed he was to have been asked by Canadians how they should be running their foreign policy, something he said would never happen in the U.S.

"I may get to like it," Mr. Hakim said with a laugh.

Mr. Hakim admitted that the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean are doing far better than they were a decade ago, but said they should be doing even better. When you take into account other economic indicators such as savings rates, tax and export policies, education and infrastructure, he said, "you get nervous about how long the buoyancy is likely to continue."

Deal directly with Latin America, Canada urged

Addressing the topic of their particular session, which was to look at the surge of "populist" governments and included a French-language address from Venezuelan Ambassador Jesus Perez, Mr. Hakim said he doesn't see an ideological shift "of great importance" in Latin America.

"What we're seeing is bad governments being thrown out of office -- governments that don't perform," he said. "And if the left governments don't perform, they'll get turfed out too."

Palestinian Pleading

A prominent Palestinian spokesperson was in Canada this week, trying to re-establish aid ties with her country after the Canadian government cut them off. Hanan Ashrawi, an elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council for the Jerusalem District and a strong advocate for government accountability, was invited to speak Saturday in Montreal by the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations and the Canadian Arab Federation.

She came to Ottawa this week to meet with Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay, Liberal Party foreign affairs critic Stephane Dion, NDP leader Jack Layton and Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe.

Yesterday, before heading home, she was meeting with some 30 parliamentarians -- MPs and Senators.

She was in Canada to explain that there are ways the government can get aid to the Palestinian people without the risk of it getting into the hands of the <u>Hamas</u> government, explained Amin Abou-Hassira, head of the general delegation for Palestine in Canada. Canada cut off aid shortly after <u>Hamas</u> was elected because the party didn't promise non-violence in its platform.

"There are ways for CIDA to supervise the aid," Mr. Abou-Hassira said, adding that the situation is complicated but the bottom line is that the living conditions of the average Palestinian are not good and Canada is in a position to help.

Foreign Food Flair

Where else can you sample culinary delicacies from 18 Asia-Pacific countries, and then take home all the recipes? The Asia Pacific Food Fair is back and takes place May 10 from noon till 2:30 p.m. at the Chinese Embassy.

The event happens every two years and involves the embassies and high commissions of Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. It is put on by the Asia Pacific Group, through the Heads of Mission Spouses Association. In addition to food and drink from 18 countries, participants will be treated to a table of handicrafts for sale. The group also publishes cookbooks of the recipes that will be sold at the event.

This year, the food-fair proceeds will go to Harmony House, an Ottawa shelter that helps <u>women</u> and their children make the transition from abusive environments. Meanwhile, Laureen Harper will be the guest of honour. She will speak, and officially open the fair.

Committee member Khorshied Samad, who is married to Afghan Ambassador Omar Samad, also promised door prizes and a raffle for at least one exotic holiday.

For information and tickets (\$30), e-mail juyenakhan @yahoo.com or call Renalta at (613) 236-0138.

Jennifer Campbell is a freelance writer and editor in Ottawa.

Reach her at Diplomatica@sympatico.ca.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen; International Day: A handful of ambassadors and high commissioners took part in Ashbury College's International Day Thursday. Activities included an international food fair at lunch time. From left, student Laura Pavezka, 16, Headmaster Tam Matthews, Ana Isabel Messina, wife of the ambassador from the Dominican Republic, Musaed Al Haroon, ambassador of Kuwait, and students Katherine Agapitoy, 17, and Angela Bouzanis, 16.;

Colour Photo: Bruno Schlumberger, The Ottawa Citizen; Asia-Pacific Food Fair: Members of the Asia-Pacific group within the Heads of Mission Spouses' Association are preparing for its bi-annual Asia-Pacific Food Fair, which takes place May 10 at the Chinese Embassy. Juyena Khan, wife of Bangladesh High Commissioner Rafiq Khan, held a planning meeting Monday. From left, Ghazala Malik (Pakistan), Cherry Ignatius (Malaysia), Ms. Khan and Khorshied Samad (Afghanistan).;

Colour Photo: Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen; Day of Remembrance: Australian High Commissioner Bill Fisher and New Zealand High Commissioner Graham Kelly held a commemorative service yesterday at the Canadian War Museum to mark ANZAC Day, the two countries' national day of remembrance. Mr. Fisher, left and Mr. Kelly.;

Colour Photo: Focus on <u>Women</u>'s Health: Mesaid Al-Kulaib, third secretary of the Embassy of Kuwait, hosted a lunch in support of the Shirley E. Greenberg <u>Women</u>'s Health Centre yesterday. From left: Linda Schumacher, executive director, <u>Women</u>'s Health Centre Advisory Board, Karen Fung Kee Fung of the health centre, and Mr. Al-Kulaib.;

Colour Photo: Ryan Jackson, The Ottawa Citizen; Art Exhibit: The Foreign Service Community Association hosted an art exhibit yesterday in the Skelton Lobby of the Lester B. Pearson building, 125 Sussex Dr. The exhibit continues until Friday.;

Colour Photo: Ryan Jackson, The Ottawa Citizen; Cultural Evening: The Polish Embassy hosted a cultural evening for the Carleton University Library Circle of Friends last night. Rafal Domisiewicz of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland chats with Vivian Cummins, co-ordinator of research and training at Carleton University.;

Colour Photo: Ryan Jackson, The Ottawa Citizen; Gallipolli Recalled: The Turkish Embassy, Australian High Commission, New Zealand High Commission and the Canadian War Museum presented the Canadian premiere of Gallipoli, a First World War docudrama, Monday at the War Museum. From left: Australian High Commissioner William Fisher, New Zealand High Commissioner Graham Kelly and Turkish Ambassador Aydemir Erman.;

Colour Photo: Aaron Lynett, The Ottawa Citizen; The Art of Ukrainian Easter Eggs: Inna Prystaiko, wife of Vadym Prystaiko, charge d'affaires of the Embassy of Ukraine, hosted the third annual pysanka (Ukrainian Easter egg) workshop Thursday at the embassy, with Chrystia Chudczak providing the instruction. Chrystia Chudczak demonstrates her technique.;

Colour Photo: Aaron Lynett, The Ottawa Citizen; The Art of Ukrainian Easter Eggs: Inna Prystaiko, wife of Vadym Prystaiko, charge d'affaires of the Embassy of Ukraine, hosted the third annual pysanka (Ukrainian Easter egg) workshop Thursday at the embassy, with Chrystia Chudczak providing the instruction. Ms. Prystaiko, left, shows Yulia Rozhkova how to use the 'kistka,' used to write on eggs.

Load-Date: April 26, 2006



Muslim who ran cartoons paying the price; Efforts at dialogue get overwhelmed

The International Herald Tribune February 23, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1344 words

Byline: Michael Slackman and Hassan M. Fattah

Dateline: AMMAN

Body

Michael Slackman reported from Amman and Hassan M. Fattah from Sana, Yemen. Mona el-Naggar contributed reporting from Cairo.

*

In a direct challenge to the international uproar over cartoons lampooning the Prophet Muhammad, the Jordanian journalist Jihad Momani wrote: "What brings more prejudice against Islam: these caricatures, or pictures of a hostage-taker slashing the throat of his victim in front of the cameras or a suicide bomber who blows himself up during a wedding ceremony?"

An editor in Yemen, Muhammad al-Assadi, wrote an editorial condemning the cartoons but also lamenting the way many Muslims reacted. "Muslims had an opportunity to educate the world about the merits of the Prophet Muhammad and the peacefulness of the religion he had come with," Assadi wrote. "Muslims know how to lose, better than how to use, opportunities."

To illustrate their points, both editors published selections of the drawings and for that they were arrested and threatened with long prison terms.

Momani and Assadi are among 11 journalists in five countries facing prosecution for their decision to publish some of the cartoons. Their cases illustrate another side of this conflict, the intra-Muslim side, in what has typically been defined as a struggle between Islam and the West.

The flare-up over the cartoons, which were first published in a Danish newspaper, has magnified a fault line running through the Middle East, between those who want to engage their communities in a direct, introspective dialogue and those who focus on outside enemies.

But it has also underscored a political struggle involving emerging Islamic political movements, like <u>Hamas</u> in the Palestinian territories and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and Arab governments unsure of how to contain them.

"This has become a game between two sides: the extremists and the government," said Tawakkul Karman, head of <u>Women</u> Journalists Without Constraints, a journalists' rights group in Sana, Yemen. "They've made it so that if you stand up in this tidal wave, you have to face 1.5 billion Muslims."

Muslim who ran cartoons paying the price Efforts at dialogue get overwhelmed

The heated emotions, the violence surrounding protests and the arrests of the journalists have sent a chill through people, mostly writers, who want to express ideas contrary to the prevailing sentiment.

It has threatened those who contend that Islamic groups have manipulated the public to show their strength and that governments have used the cartoons to establish their own religious credentials.

"I keep hearing, 'Why are liberals silent?" said Said al-Ashmawy, an Egyptian judge and author of many books on political Islam. "How can we write? Who is going to protect me? Who is going to publish for me in the first place?

"With the Islamization of the society, the list of taboos has been increasing daily. 'You should not write about religion. You should not write politics or **women**.' Then what is left?"

While the cartoons have indeed infuriated Muslims, the regional dynamics underneath the conflict have been evolving over a period of decades, during which leaders have tried to stall the rise of Islamic political appeal by trying to establish themselves as guardians of the faith.

In the end, political analysts around the region say that governments have resorted to the very practices that have helped the rise of Islamic political forces in the first place. They have placated the more extreme religious voices while arresting and silencing more moderate voices, like those of Momani and Assadi.

Jihad Khazen, a prominent Arab columnist for the pan-Arab newspaper Al Hayat, said: "The Islamists wanted to prove their strength. The government replied in kind, saying that we are all Muslims and we care about our religion, and I think the truth was trampled on in the process."

In Jordan, King Abdullah II, who has been trying to control the most extreme religious forces in the region, came out with such a powerful condemnation of Shihan, the paper Momani edited, that even his allies were taken aback.

The newspaper printed three of the cartoons without obscuring them, including one of the prophet in a turban shaped as a bomb with a burning fuse.

Many of the king's supporters said he felt the need to respond as firmly as he did partly because of the rise of *Hamas*, which won parliamentary elections for the Palestinian Authority, and also to strip the Islamists in Jordan of an issue to rally around.

"What Shihan did was a corruption on earth which cannot be accepted or excused under any circumstances," the Royal Court said in a statement reported by Petra, Jordan's official news agency.

But now there seems to be a growing concern and in some circles a degree of regret for unleashing a wave of anger that has claimed lives.

In Jordan, authorities moved quickly to release the journalists from detention.

In Libya, where spontaneous protests are unheard of, allowing demonstrations against the cartoons seemed a safe bet for the authorities until the protesters began criticizing the government.

A group of some of the world's most renowned Islamic religious leaders and scholars recently issued a declaration that, though sharply critical of the drawings, sought to rein in the violence and cautioned Muslims against becoming international pariahs. In so doing, they have begun to echo the sentiments of the journalists facing criminal charges.

"We appeal to all Muslims to exercise self-restraint in accordance with the teachings of Islam," the statement said. It added that "violent reactions" can lead "to our isolation from the global dialogue."

To many journalists, proof that Momani and Assadi face charges because of the region's broader political dynamics, and not because of the offensive nature of the cartoons, can be found in Egypt.

Muslim who ran cartoons paying the price Efforts at dialogue get overwhelmed

After all, Ahmed Abdel Maksoud and Youssra Zahran are free. The two are journalists with the Egyptian weekly newspaper Al Fajr, one of the first Arab newspapers to publish the cartoons. The two wrote a story about the caricatures and reprinted them in October, several months before the conflict erupted, to condemn the drawings.

"The feelings of the Muslims are being exploited for some purpose," said Adel Hammoude, editor in chief of Al Fajr. "Religion is the easiest thing to use in provoking the people. Egyptians will never go out on the street in protest about what happened in the case of the sinking ferry or against corruption or this or that."

That thinking is widespread in Yemen, where three journalists languished in a squalid basement cell, escorted to court by police officers carrying machine guns. It is echoed in Jordan as well, where two journalists await trial.

Momani was to appear in court on Wednesday, while two of the Yemeni journalists were released Tuesday pending their trial. The third was to begin his trial on Wednesday.

Government officials in both countries say the journalists were arrested for having printed blasphemous cartoons. In Jordan, a spokesman said the king felt especially obligated, because his family is a direct descendant of the prophet.

But in Yemen, with presidential elections scheduled for September, many see a more political motive.

"They've now found a good reason to put us here: They say the public demanded it," said Assadi in an interview in his jail cell.

Assadi, who once worked as a part-time correspondent for The New York Times, is the editor of The Yemen Observer, an English-language paper owned by an adviser to Yemen's president. Assadi has been sharing a prison cell with Abdulkarim Sabra, the managing editor of the weekly Al Hurriya, and Yehiya al-Abed, a reporter for that paper.

The three men stand accused of insulting their faith by publishing the images, a crime approaching heresy. In each case the intention was to condemn the drawings, and The Observer put a black X across the picture to obscure the image.

"When I saw all the demonstrations, I thought that Muslims should be able to see what the fuss was all about," said Sabra, during an interview in jail. "I condemned them; I said these drawings don't represent our prophet, burn them."

Load-Date: February 26, 2006



Palestinians forced to scavenge for food on rubbish dumps

The Independent (London)
September 9, 2006 Saturday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 34

Length: 580 words

Byline: By Patrick Cockburn in Jerusalem

Body

The Israeli military and economic siege of Gaza has led to a collapse in Palestinian living conditions and many people only survive by looking for scraps of food in rubbish dumps, say international aid agencies.

"The pressure and tactics have not resulted in a desire for compromise," Karen Abuzayd, the head of the UN Relief and Works Agency is said to have warned. "But rather they have created mass despair, anger and a sense of hopelessness and abandonment."

Israel closed the entry and exit points into the Gaza Strip, home to 1.5 million Palestinians, on 25 June and has conducted frequent raids and bombings that have killed 262 people and wounded 1,200. The crisis in Gaza has been largely ignored by the rest of the world, which has been absorbed by the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon.

"<u>Women</u> in Gaza tell me they are eating only one meal a day, bread with tomatoes or cheap vegetables," said Kirstie Campbell of the UN's World Food Programme, which is feeding 235,000 people. She added that in June, since when the crisis has worsened, some 70 per cent of people in Gaza could not meet their family's food needs. "People are raiding garbage dumps," she said.

Not only do Palestinians in Gaza get little to eat but what food they have is eaten cold because of the lack of electricity and money to pay for fuel. The Gaza power plant was destroyed by an Israeli air strike in June. In one month alone 4 per cent of Gaza's agricultural land was destroyed by Israeli bulldozers.

The total closure imposed by Israel, supplemented by deadly raids, has led to the collapse of the Gazan economy. The 35,000 fishermen cannot fish because Israeli gunboats will fire on them if they go more than a few hundred yards from the shore. At the same time the international boycott of the <u>Hamas</u> government means that there is no foreign aid to pay Palestinian government employees. The government used to have a monthly budget of \$180-200m, half of which went to pay 165,000 public sector workers. But it now has only \$25m a month.

Palestinians forced to scavenge for food on rubbish dumps

Aid agencies are frustrated by their inability to persuade the world that the humanitarian crisis is far worse in Gaza than it is in Lebanon. The WFP says: "In contrast to Lebanon, where humanitarian food aid needs have been essentially met, the growing number of poor in Gaza are living on the bare minimum."

It is possible for foreign journalists to visit Gaza but it is a laborious process passing through the main Israeli checkpoint at Erez and then walking down a long concrete tunnel. The kidnapping of two Fox television employees by criminals - though they were later released - has also dissuaded several TV companies from covering the crisis. The total closure imposed by Israel dates from the seizure of Cpl Gilad Shalit by Palestinian militants on 25 June. Between then and the end of August, Israeli security forces killed 226 Palestinians, 54 of them minors, in the Gaza Strip, according to the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem. Of these it says that 114 were taking no part in any hostilities.

The quickest way to alleviate the crisis would be for Israel to allow the Rafah crossing into Egypt to reopen, according to the mayor of Gaza City. But any restoration of the economy would require the reopening of the other crossing points at Erez and Kami.

Israel lifted its sea blockade of Lebanon yesterday after an interim maritime task force led by an Italian admiral deployed off the Lebanese coast, the commander of UN peacekeepers said.

Graphic

Unemployed Palestinians, some holding empty bowls and bread, protest outside the Palestinian parliament building in Gaza City over the lack of food and jobs MOHAMMED ABED/AFP/GETTY

Load-Date: September 9, 2006



Experts discuss Middle East in U. Iowa area

University Wire

September 12, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 The Daily Iowan via U-Wire

Length: 619 words

Byline: By Matt Nelson, The Daily Iowan; SOURCE: U. Iowa

Dateline: IOWA CITY, Iowa

Body

The camera captures a woman with long, dark hair. She holds a yellow folder, has large sunglasses and faded jeans. Behind her are young <u>women</u>, some wearing traditional head scarves, and young men. Cypress and palm trees stand over them. A magazine focused on explaining the changing face of modern Arab media shows her at Amman University. She could be any young woman in any American city. But she's from Jordan, more than 8,000 miles away.

The distance between Middle Eastern and American cultures may seem vast, yet two speakers made it their goal to shorten the gap in Iowa City, Iowa on Sept. 11.

Marwan Kraidy, an assistant professor at the American University in Washington, D.C., and Steve Clemons, director of the American Strategy Program at the New American Foundation, spoke at the lowa City Public Library. The Stanley Foundation -- an Iowa-based, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focused on discussions of peace and security issues -- in conjunction with the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council, brought the lecturers to town.

Kraidy spoke first, discussing Arab satellite TV, the primary way most Arab-speaking people get their news and, more importantly, their entertainment.

"More people watch entertainment than news," he said. "Reality TV has the most popular shows on Arab television." He described the most popular program "Star Academy" as a sort of "American Idol" with singing competitions. The Arab version is complicated -- contestants live together in a house with 60 cameras, broadcasting live, 24 hours a day.

And because Arab reality shows often involve a lot of singing, broadcast companies use clips as additional, cheap programming, with each music video voted upon by viewers.

Kraidy demonstrated the effect of Arab pop culture and its influence on politics in the form of a picture, taken after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Lebanese youths held a sign that read "call 1559," a reference to the United Nations resolution calling for Syria to withdraw from Lebanon, filtered through an Arab pop culture expression: the text-message vote. In the political arena, Clemons spoke about discussions with U.S. foreign-policy officials and the direction he sees American diplomacy moving.

"The primacy of the U.S. in [the Middle East] region is fragile," he said. "The mystique of American power has been shattered by Iraq."

Experts discuss Middle East in U. Iowa area

Clemons, speaking to the mostly middle-aged audience, expressed frustration at the day-to-day approach the Bush administration was taking with handling Middle East crises.

"I'm worried about discontinuity -- what we did yesterday is not very useful for what we have to handle tomorrow," he said. He went on to describe his view of the Iran situation and how American policymakers need to embrace the former president of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, instead of vilifying him, as Clemons saw the U.S. media do.

Clemons' solution to Middle East turmoil emphasized what he called the "George Soros" approach -- stabilizing countries through cash assistance in an effort to pave the way for the eventual Americanization to follow, as the U.S. businessman Soros did in Eastern Europe. He also said the United States deals too broadly with Middle East problems.

"We're talking about nuances of culture," he said. "What's going on with <u>Hamas</u>, and Palestine, and Hezbollah, and Lebanon, and Iraq, and Iran, the so-called global war on terror lumps all of these together."

Yet he remains optimistic about the possibilities for change and democracy in the Middle East.

"As people get engaged and vote, in the long run, it will have stabilizing results," he said. "Because at the end of the day, people want a better life for themselves."

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Load-Date: September 12, 2006



Letters

Christian Science Monitor August 4, 2006, Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 616 words

Body

What it would take for peace between Israelis and Palestinians

Regarding your July 14 editorial, "The way in - and out - of Israel's wars": Unhappily, there is no substitute for war as long as Israel's neighbors insist that it has no right to exist and threaten genocide if it should prevail.

And on those rare occasions when Palestinians do come to a bargaining table, their insistence on a right of return for the Palestinian people is something no sane Israeli politician would agree to. Some form of reparations might well work, though, provided Palestinian politicians could be counted on to shut down groups that attack their Israeli neighbors.

Your comments suggest that if the Israelis, Palestinians, and Lebanese show disgust with those who bring war into their lives, the bloodshed might stop. I wish that were likely, but people who cheer the misfortunes of others are not likely partners for peace.

Herb Yood

Orleans, Mass.

Your July 14 editorial on the Middle East totally absolves the chief culprit - Israel. <u>Hamas</u> had kept a unilateral cease-fire for 17 months, both before and after its democratic victory this January, but Israel continued to use violence in the West Bank and Gaza and to seize more land and water in the West Bank, all in violation of international law.

Israel's destruction of Gaza's infrastructure has brought severe shortages of fuel, water, food, and medicines and is threatening the health and lives of over 1 million civilians. Hospital patients are especially endangered. Amnesty International calls this collective punishment "war crimes." Israel's excuse: one captured soldier. Israel holds 10,000 Palestinians, many tortured, many <u>women</u> and minors, many without charges. Would this justify comparable collective punishment of 1 million Israelis?

As long as the US gives Israel a blank check, Israel will seek to militarily impose its conditions on the Arabs and act with impunity. The result will be more bloodshed.

Edmund R. Hanauer

Framington, Mass.

Taiwan merely wants self-preservation

Letters

I would like to address some of the issues brought up by the July 31 article, "Next troublesome missile test: Taiwan?", concerning Taiwan's defense policy. The article is correct that Taiwan has always pursued a defensive strategy toward the very real threat of China. Included in this strategy are continued efforts to reach out and improve relations and decrease tensions with China. However, Taiwan has the right and the duty to protect its 23 million citizens from the direct threat represented by Beijing's 800 missiles aimed at Taiwan.

It is interesting that while China is a key member in the six-nation talks trying to defuse the North Korean missile crisis, Beijing continues its missile buildup on the Taiwan Strait. This missile buildup is a similar risk to peace and stability in the region and should be included in the six-nation talks as a way to decrease the overall tensions in East Asia. Taiwan is an active partner in maintaining peace and stability in the region, but it cannot overlook its own security.

Alice Wang

Director, Information Division

Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston

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Load-Date: August 3, 2006



Palestinians forcedto scavenge for food on rubbish dumps

The Independent (London)
September 9, 2006 Saturday
Fourth Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 36

Length: 581 words

Byline: Patrick Cockburn in Jerusalem

Body

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"The pressure and tactics have not resulted in a desire for compromise," Karen Abuzayd, the head of the UN Relief and Works Agency is said to have warned. "But rather they have created mass despair, anger and a sense of hopelessness and abandonment." Israel closed the entry and exit points into the Gaza Strip, home to 1.5 million Palestinians, on 25 June and has conducted frequent raids and bombings that have killed 262 people and wounded 1,200. The crisis in Gaza has been largely ignored by the rest of the world, which has been absorbed by the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon.

"<u>Women</u> in Gaza tell me they are eating only one meal a day, bread with tomatoes or cheap vegetables," said Kirstie Campbell of the UN's World Food Programme, which is feeding 235,000 people. She added that in June, since when the crisis has worsened, some 70 per cent of people in Gaza could not meet their fam-ily's food needs. "People are raiding garbage dumps," she said.

Not only do Palestinians in Gaza get little to eat but what food they have is eaten cold because of the lack of electricity and money to pay for fuel. The Gaza power plant was destroyed by an Israeli air strike in June. In one month alone 4 per cent of Gaza's agricultural land was destroyed by Israeli bulldozers.

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Palestinians forcedto scavenge for food on rubbish dumps

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Load-Date: September 27, 2006



OPPOSITION, GOVT JOIN HANDS IN SLAMMING ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST LEBANON

The Frontier Star August 4, 2006 Friday

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Length: 646 words

Body

ISLAMABAD: Opposition and treasury benches in national assembly have joined hands

in slamming Israeli aggression against Lebanon, expressing solidarity with the people of Lebanon besides pledging support to Hezbollah. The ARD legislators announced to set up fund for the people of Lebanon and donate one-month pay to the fund.

Opening debate on situation in Lebanon MMA president Qazi Hussain Ahmad regretted that the whole world was playing the role of glum spectator over Lebanon crisis. Tyrannical forces are backing Israel. Muslim rulers have grown weak. Hezbollah is fighting with Israeli troops with full might. Pakistan army should enjoy popular support if it wants to stay stronger; he said adding army should play its constitutional role. On the other hand, chief of army staff is imposing decisions in the capacity of president. This way the army will remain weak.

He went on to say Hassan Nasrullah has become hero and leader of Muslim Ummah. He is rightfully representing sentiments of Muslims. On the other hand, India is threatening Pakistan with hot pursuit and we are showing nervousness. Our leaders and generals are fearful of war. OIC is keeping mum in the prevailing situation. We will have to evolve planning to face this situation. We will have to forge unity in our ranks other wise no one would be able to escape advancement of Jewish force, Qazi warned.

He held that the international court of justice should be moved against Israeli barbaric aggression in Qana. Opposition member Shah Mehmood Qureshi said there is awful difference in the thinking of Muslim rulers and masses on Lebanon issue. Legislators of PPP and ARD are setting up relief fund for people of Lebanon and their parliamentarians will donate one-month pay.

Parliamentary secretary for defence Major (Retired) Tanveer Hussain Syed said President Musharraf had strengthened defence of the country otherwise our situation would have not been different from Lebanon. We should not forget Kashmir besides Lebanon and we should come to their aid as well. Opposition legislator Pervez Malik said the role being played by OIC in the prevailing crisis is regrettable.

OPPOSITION, GOVT JOIN HANDS IN SLAMMING ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST LEBANON

MMA legislator Hafiz Hussain Ahmad alleged US is backing Israel. People of Lebanon and Palestine are with <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah who have defeated US and Israel. The situation will improve if OIC is expelled from ICU. MP Bhindara said he condemns Hezbollah for raising state within state. I slam Israel too. Government of Lebanon should fight war if it has to be fought. The completely Muslim world will support it. However, no one will back Hezbollah.

Opposition legislator Naheed Khan said UN Security Council and European countries are keeping mum over Israeli aggression. State Minister Malik Ameen Aslam said atrocities being perpetrated in Lebanon is slap on the face of whole humanity. Maulana Merajuddin from FATA said what Israel has done is not a new thing.

Opposition legislator Fauzia Wahab said Israeli aggression is being termed as third world war UK and US are involved in it. Minister of state for foreign affairs Khusro Bakhtiar concluding the debate said the house has represented the sentiments of the whole world. Pakistan will be ahead of all in dispatching peacekeeping forces in Lebanon.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006



<u>Islamists assail U.S. and its 'puppets'; MIDDLE EAST CRISIS / Blaming U.S.</u> policy for rising radicalism

The International Herald Tribune
July 22, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 630 words

Byline: Neil MacFarquhar

Dateline: DAMASCUS

Body

The main weekly prayer sermons in mosques from Mecca to Marrakesh, Morocco, on Friday underscored the sharp contrast between the swelling David-versus-Goliath glamour Arabs associate with Hezbollah's fight and the utter antipathy toward the United States and its regional allies for doing so little to stop yet another Arab country from collapsing into bloodshed.

"Our brothers are being killed in Lebanon and no one is responding to their cries for help," said Sheik Hazza'a al-Maswari, an Islamist member of Parliament, in his Friday sermon at the Mujahid mosque in Sanaa, the Yemeni capital. "Where are the Arab leaders? Do they have any skill other than begging for a fake peace outside the White House? We don't want leaders who bow to the White House."

The tone of the sermons underscored how the lack of a cease-fire in Lebanon is both further tarnishing the image of the United States in the Arab world as being solely concerned with Israel's welfare and making its allied regimes look increasingly like puppets.

"What is creating radicalism in the region is not authoritarian regimes, mainly it is American policy in the region survey after survey shows that," said Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, whose polls have charted the steady decline of America's image among Arabs.

The pervasive attacks against Arab leaders from the pulpit were all the more surprising because so many regimes have exerted some manner of central government control over sermons in recent years. Dictating the content of the weekly themes is one means of preventing prayer leaders from launching into the kind of political discussions that inspire extremists.

In Damascus, for example, where the government has been trying to keep a low profile as the fighting surges, leading prayer leaders focused on the need to donate generously to help Lebanese refugees pouring over the border. But they also slipped in criticism of neighbors, although critics of Hezbollah, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, were not mentioned by name.

"What gives us pain is the Arab position," said Muhammed al-Habash, a cleric who serves in Syria's Parliament, speaking at Al Zahra Mosque. "They are entering a conspiracy against the Arabs, their brothers."

Islamists assail U.S. and its 'puppets' MIDDLE EAST CRISIS / Blaming U.S. policy for rising radicalism

In an interview, the cleric said that by encouraging the Israelis to continue their onslaught, the United States was only helping religious extremists. By not working harder to stop the deaths of scores of Lebanese <u>women</u> and children, the United States "is creating more Zarqawis, more bin Ladens in the Mideast every day," Habash said.

The United States blames Syrian support for groups like Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> as being a cause of extremism.

The Saudi government also took a particularly strong public position against Hezbollah provoking the crisis by capturing two Israeli soldiers, issuing a statement last week condemning the organization's "uncalculated adventures." Washington has leaned heavily on this in explaining its own position.

Yet the senior Saudi imam delivering the sermon from Islam's holiest mosque, in Mecca, broadcast live, presented a rare if discreet criticism of royal policy.

The entire Muslim nation should be proud of the bravery shown by both the Palestinians and the Lebanese confronting Israel, said Sheik Abdul Rahman al-Sudais, while pointedly addressing Muslim leaders directly, urging them to return to "sound reason and unify their ranks."

He also took an indirect swipe at the United States for pretending to push human rights while leaving the mounting deaths of civilians all but unmentioned.

"Where are those who filled the world with slogans of freedom and democracy?" he said. "They don't fear that history will condemn them for their policy of double standards?"

Load-Date: July 28, 2006



Arab regimes fear Islamists' political dividend

Financial Times (London, England)

July 21, 2006 Friday

London Edition 1

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Section: MIDDLE EAST AND THE AMERICAS; Pg. 7

Length: 618 words

Byline: By WILLIAM WALLIS

Dateline: CAIRO

Body

For Islamist groups beyond the immediate reach of Israeli firepower, the explosion of conflict in Lebanon may prove double-edged.

As the only organised opposition to entrenched autocracies, articulating the outrage that many Arabs feel, Islamists from Morocco to Saudi Arabia look set to gain from a fresh groundswell of public support. But the immediate response of conservative, US-allied Arab regimes may be to close down those remaining channels through which they have made political gains.

Burnt by the electoral successes of some of its and Israel's most virulent opponents, Washington is less enthusiastic about democratising the region and is unlikely to make a fuss.

As in the past, when Palestinian civilians have fallen victim to the Israeli army, so the bombardment of Lebanon and Gaza has exposed the limited capacity of Arab governments to come to the rescue.

Moreover, events in Lebanon have served as a reminder of how quickly Washington can drop an Arab ally - in this case the Siniora-led government in Beirut - when Israel's "right to self-defence" is at play.

Jordan and Egypt, the only Arab states formally at peace with Israel, have both issued measured criticism of Israel's devastation of Lebanon, but it was only yesterday that two Arab governments delivered stronger condemnations. Iraqi prime minister Nuri al-Maliki described the Israeli offensive as "operations of mass destruction" while the Saudi defence minister, Prince Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz, said: "We cannot tolerate that Israel plays with the lives of citizens, civilians, women, old people and children."

What has been new is that along with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt also blamed Hizbollah, and indirectly its Syrian and Iranian backers, for stirring a tiger with destabilising consequences for all.

Among much of the Arab population, however, the abduction of Israeli soldiers first by Sunni Palestinian militants and then by the Lebanese Shia guerrillas, Hizbollah, was seen as heroic - legitimate means to leverage the release of Palestinian and other Arab prisoners in Israeli jails.

Islamist groups have been quick to exploit the resulting discomfort of Sunni Arab governments, which has been heightened by their fears of rising Iranian influence in the region.

Arab regimes fear Islamists' political dividend

"Hizbollah has become a role model which attracts people because it contrasts so much with the paralysis of Arab regimes who supposedly have the power yet play only a dwindling and embarrassing role," said Mohamed Habib, deputy leader of Egypt's banned Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest and largest Sunni Islamist movement.

Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's president, has defended his role in attempting to defuse the crisis: initially trying to secure the release of Palestinian prisoners in return for the first soldier captured, Corporal Gilad Shalit, and also claiming that he had persuaded the Israelis to hold off a broader land attack on Lebanon.

But by Saturday, when Arab foreign ministers appealed for help from the United Nations, it was clear that no western-allied Arab leader had much leverage, the agenda having shifted to more radical groups and states - notably Syria and Iran. "It is the first time in the Arab Israeli conflict to see two fronts opened up by two Islamist movements. This partly explains the reaction coming from the Arab regimes," said Dia Rashwan, expert at the Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic studies. "It is risky for them too."

Predictably, Israeli officials argue that the raids on Israel are evidence that a policy of accommodation with political Islam, which has seen <u>Hamas</u> win control of the Palestinian government and Hizbollah secure the largest opposition block in Lebanon's parliament, does not lead to moderation.

Load-Date: July 20, 2006



Israel says no to a ceasefire

Belfast News Letter (Northern Ireland)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

Ulster Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 14

Length: 558 words

Body

TONY Blair was pressing on "hell for leather' yesterday with attempts to secure a United Nations resolution for a ceasefire in the Middle East, his spokesman said.

The prime minister, on a visit to the US, had already spoken by telephone to the prime ministers of Israel and the Lebanon in a bid to help find an acceptable way forward.

As events in the Middle East lent "even greater urgency' to the efforts, Mr Blair was also speaking to his counterparts in Turkey, Italy and Germany.

And the UK was involved in negotiations with the French and Americans at the UN in New York to draw up a resolution "as soon as possible' that could have an immediate impact on the ground.

"We are pushing with the same urgency " in fact I would say a greater urgency " for a resolution after the events of the last few days, as we were last week,' the spokesman told reporters.

"We believe a resolution can help bring this conflict to an end and I think the sooner we have it the better. That's why we are still going hell for leather for a resolution.

"We are working flat out in London, in the UN and from here to try to reach the situation as quickly as possible where there is agreement on a text in New York.

"We hope that will then have an immediate effect on the ground.'

His words came as Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert said there would be no let-up in the offensive in the immediate future as airstrikes continued.

A 48-hour halt to hostilities " aimed at allowing civilians to leave and aid to get in " did not hold after Hezbollah continued to fire rockets at Israeli targets.

It was called under US pressure following outrage over the strike on Sunday morning that levelled a house in Qana, killing at least 56 people "mostly **women** and children "taking refuge there.

Asked if the prime minister was disappointed the halt had not been observed, the spokesman said: "There has been, as I understand it, action on both sides. The important point is that we negotiate to bring the action on all sides to a close.

Israel says no to a ceasefire

"That's where our focus is."

Mr Blair's efforts have not included discussions with Syria, he conceded, despite the nation's links with Hezbollah, because of its limited influence.

"You have to concentrate your efforts on where you actually think you can influence things and that's what the prime minister is doing.'

Meanwhile, the defence minister, Amir Peretz, has said Israel plans to "expand and strengthen' its attack on Hezbollah.

Liberal Democrat defence spokesman Michael Moore said that was a "major setback' for diplomatic efforts.

And he called on Mr Blair and US president George Bush to put pressure on Israel to call an immediate ceasefire.

"There was a small glimmer of hope for diplomatic progress over the last 24 hours but this is a major setback,' Mr Moore said. The UK and US must put pressure on the Israeli government to agree to an immediate ceasefire and reverse their defence minister's position.

"Other countries in the Middle East also have a vital role in persuading Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> to lay down their arms and release the Israeli soldiers.'

The prime minister's spokesman said "exhortation' would not resolve the situation " only agreement on both sides of the way forward.

"There are two sovereign governments here. This will not proceed unless those two sovereign governments are in broad agreement with where we're going.'

Load-Date: August 1, 2006



On the Hopes for a Mideast Truce

The New York Times
July 28, 2006 Friday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 4; Editorial Desk; Pg. 28

Length: 586 words

Body

To the Editor:

Re "Cease-Fire Talks Stall as Fighting Rages on 2 Fronts" (front page, July 27):

Against the wishes of the rest of the world, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice insists that there is no point to calls for a cease-fire unless the conditions are right to make it a lasting one.

So what if a cease-fire lasts only a day before fighting erupts again? Don't those lives saved in one day mean anything? Would a temporary cease-fire create more lost lives in the future?

Enough with the cold calculus of realpolitik; stop the loss of human lives now.

Kate Somers

Princeton, N.J., July 27, 2006

To the Editor:

Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of Lebanon asks rhetorically, "Is the value of human life less in Lebanon than that of citizens elsewhere?" (front page, July 27).

This is a question he should ask of Iran and Syria, as well as of Hezbollah.

It is Iran, Syria and Hezbollah that deliberately emplace missiles next to <u>women</u> and children, in residential neighborhoods. These terrorists, not Israel, spend innocent human life as if it were inflated currency of little worth.

Dennis Flynn

Byfield, Mass., July 27, 2006

To the Editor:

The systematic dehumanization of the Arab people is evident when Israel targets Lebanon for collective punishment.

On the Hopes for a Mideast Truce

The Hezbollah terrorists have adopted the same logic of holding the Israeli people responsible for the actions of their government.

When Prime Minister Fouad Siniora asks, "Is the value of human life less in Lebanon than that of citizens elsewhere?," the answer, devoid of diplomatic parlance, is yes, if you agree with the Israeli attacks.

Jahan Habib

Boston, July 27, 2006

To the Editor:

Why is there no outrage against Hezbollah or *Hamas*, only criticism of Israel? Israel never sought these conflicts.

It appears that terrorist organizations have special dispensation to bring death and destruction to any country without condemnation from the international community. The question is why.

What sad times for the world and humanity.

Linda Vaughn

Daytona Beach, Fla., July 27, 2006

To the Editor:

Nicholas D. Kristof ("In Lebanon, Echoes of Iraq," column, July 25) uses the example of Israel's restrained conduct toward Hezbollah from 2000 until two weeks ago to prove the wisdom of restraint.

But Israel's restraint during this time allowed Hezbollah to arm itself to the teeth right along the Israel-Lebanon border, waiting for the appropriate excuse to rain down rockets on Israel's towns and cities.

Since Israel didn't seem to care, the international community didn't put much effort into enforcing United Nations Resolution 1559 (which calls for the disarming of Hezbollah).

Now that Israel has put its foot down by responding strongly, the international community has followed, and there is a consensus that Hezbollah must be disarmed.

This would not have been possible if Israel had responded to this attack as it had to others.

Ben Bokser

Jerusalem, July 25, 2006

To the Editor:

Nicholas D. Kristof mentioned that Israel was not rewarded for its withdrawal from Gaza and Lebanon.

The reports from Gaza after the withdrawal leave little room for the idea of a reward.

The Israeli forces withdrew from Gaza and tightly shut the air, sea and land access to the strip. Goods perished at the "crossing points," and the movement of humans occurred at a snail's pace, when and if it occurred at all.

These restrictions resulted in a suffocating atmosphere, a de facto siege. What is there to reward?

Hana El Sahly

Houston, July 25, 2006

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: July 28, 2006



Sonic boom attacks spread trauma across Gaza; TERRIFYING TACTICS

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

July 6, 2006 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 17

Length: 531 words **Byline:** Ed O'Loughlin

Body

DOCTORS in Gaza say a combination of Israeli bombardment, sonic boom attacks and economic warfare is leading to a serious deterioration in public health, with children and pregnant **women** most vulnerable.

At Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, obstetricians say there has been a rise in miscarriages, premature births and stillbirths since the capture of Corporal Gilad Shalit by Palestinian militants on June 25 led to an escalation in conflict.

They believe the main cause is Israel's reintroduction of sonic boom attacks in recent days in a campaign to terrify Gaza's 1.4 million people and prevent them from sleeping.

At various hours of the day and night the Israeli Air Force has sent its supersonic aircraft over Gaza to break the sound barrier. The sound is akin to that of a large bomb, and it can produce panic attacks, shock and nosebleeds.

"The sonic booms, combined with all the other stress, have a bad effect on the health of pregnant <u>women</u>," said Dr Adnan Radi, a senior obstetrician.

"The explosions can lead to premature contraction of the uterus and premature delivery of the baby. Whenever there is this booming, the next day we see a rise in the number of premature deliveries and miscarriages."

At Shifa doctors say the number of <u>women</u> miscarrying or beginning premature labour has risen from two to four a day to as many as 10. In the past 10 days there have been three stillbirths, compared with one every six months, the doctors said.

Israel began to use sonic booms against the people of Gaza last year, and security officials sought to portray the booms as a "non-lethal" and humane weapon designed to persuade the civilians of Gaza to force militants to stop firing missiles at neighbouring Israel and, more recently, to free Corporal Shalit.

There was outrage last November when the air force inadvertently set off sonic booms over Israel itself, leading to widespread civilian panic.

One Gaza resident, Areesh Bahja, said the booms were distressing for her three children. "They are very tired and very upset and they get sick and vomit very easily," she said. "They have lost a lot of their appetite. When they are watching TV ... and there is a sonic boom they jump up like they are on springs and they grab hold of me."

Sonic boom attacks spread trauma across Gaza TERRIFYING TACTICS

Her five-year-old daughter, Layan, said: "When the sound isn't big, I'm not afraid. But when it's a big one, it scares me and gives me a pain in my head."

As she spoke, an Israeli 155-millimetre shell dropped a kilometre or so away, close enough to make the walls of the house ring.

"That's the sound of a shell," Layan said disdainfully. "I'm not scared of that."

Humanitarian aid has been reduced and hospital staff wages unpaid because of the West's decision to join Israel in boycotting the <u>Hamas</u> government in the Palestinian Authority. Last week Israeli aircraft knocked out Gaza's only power plant, disrupting supplies to most of the Strip.

"We've had to halt all elective and non-emergency surgery," said the hospital's director of public relations, Dr Jumaa al-Sagga.

"There is also a noticeable increase in gastroenteritis-type symptoms because of poor food and because the power cuts mean that people can't refrigerate their food properly anymore."

Graphic

TWO PHOTOS: Subdued ... Palestinians sit in the gas-lit living room of a house in the town of Rafah. Israel reintroduced sonic boom attacks to terrify Gaza's 1.4 million people. Photo: AP/Emilio Morenatti A Palestinian leaves his house after a missile strike. Photo: AP

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



<u>Middle East conflict puts 'Rapture Index' up high: Websites anticipating</u> <u>Second Coming of Christ say events in Israel are proof the Bible's prophecy</u> <u>is being fulfilled</u>

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

July 19, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 548 words

Byline: Charles Enman, CanWest News Service

Dateline: OTTAWA

Body

OTTAWA -- Rapture watchers, those who believe in a moment when Jesus Christ will take true Christians into heaven prior to his Second Coming, see great portent in what is now happening in the Middle East.

The website rapture ready.com says it is time to "fasten your seatbelt." Its Rapture Index is now at 157 -- and those seatbelts needed fastening when the 145 threshold was passed.

The index has been higher. Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, the index hit 182.

Raptureready.com looks at plagues, volcanoes, crime rates, and even globalism as precursors of the end times. It does not claim infallibility, but it does call the Rapture Index "a Dow Jones Industrial Average of end time activity." The higher the index, "the faster we're moving towards the occurrence of pre-tribulation rapture."

For some observers, the current hostilities between Israel, <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah are eerily reminiscent of images from the 14th chapter of the Book of Zechariah. One blogger, who calls himself Dr. Dominguez, M.D., points out on his blog biblia.com that the chapter "is about the horrible struggle between Israel, particularly Jerusalem, and the surrounding countries with the Second Coming of Christ."

The second verse of the chapter says nations will fight against Jerusalem: "The city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the *women* raped. Half of the city will go into exile."

But the Lord will come and save Jerusalem: "Never again will it be destroyed," the 11th verse says. "Jerusalem will be secure."

The nations that fought Jerusalem will suffer terrible punishment: "Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths," the 12th verse predicts.

Dominguez cites Hezbollah's declaration of war on Israel, the rumours of Iranian involvement, the attack on an Israeli warship and the pounding Israeli counter-attack as apparent signs that the prophecy of Zechariah may be in the process of being realized.

Middle East conflict puts 'Rapture Index' up high: Websites anticipating Second Coming of Christ say events in Israel are proof the Bible's prophecy is being fu....

Gerald Flurry, editor of thetrumpet.com, an online publication of the Philadelphia Church of God, also says the world is stumbling unwittingly toward the fulfilment of the prophecies of Zechariah. He points out that the United Nations, many individual nations and even many Israeli Jews are saying Israel must give up East Jerusalem if it is to live peacefully with its Palestinian neighbours. This means, he writes, that "the prophecy in Zechariah is now in the early stages of being fulfilled, even though the world doesn't know it!"

Even American politicians are touching on the matter. Paul Schmelzer, editor of eyeteeth.blogspot.com, points out that Newt Gingrich, former Republican speaker of the House of Representatives, believes the Third World War is now in process.

"We're in a war!" Gingrich told a Fox News interviewer. Moreover, "it's clearly worldwide."

The former speaker referred not only to violence in the Middle East, but also to the recent train bombings in Mumbai, India, ongoing problems in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even to recent arrests of 17 alleged terrorists in Toronto.

"You have Canadians plotting to blow up the Canadian Parliament and behead the prime minister," he said.

A measured response is not appropriate, Gingrich said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Ariel Schait, Associated Press; An Israeli soldier runs to reload a heavy artillery piece. Rapture watchers are being told to fasten your seatbelt for the return of Christ.

Load-Date: July 19, 2006



Navy warships sail to rescue Britons caught in Beirut hell; MoD forced to act as 10,000 nationals are trapped in war zone

Mail on Sunday (London)

July 16, 2006 Sunday

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Section: 3RD 04; Pg. 9

Length: 581 words

Byline: MARTIN SMITH

Body

TWO British warships were preparing to steam to Lebanon last night to help evacuate British citizens trapped in the conflict zone.

The flagship aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious and the assault ship HMS Bulwark were deployed after criticism from Britons in Beirut, the Lebanese capital, that the Government was not doing enough to help.

Other countries have already mobilised their armed forces and around 10,000 Britons are trapped.

However, the 22,000-ton Illustrious was docked in Gibraltar last night, two days away, while Bulwark an 18,400-ton amphibious craft is on duties off Barcelona.

A military source said the Ministry of Defence could order eight helicopters Sea Kings and EH101s on board Illustrious to fly ahead of the carrier, refuel at Aviano in Italy and in Cyprus before starting an evacuation in Lebanon.

They could airlift small numbers to Cyprus. Bulwark is equipped with Merlin helicopters and is closer to the troublespot.

But before the flights begin, the SAS and SBS are likely to be sent ahead to secure the ground in order to guarantee the safety of British citizens.

One British woman yesterday described how she was hiding in terror in her Beirut home from the constant air strikes and that she felt 'completely abandoned' by the British Government.

Clair Vainola, 31, from Newcastle, working as a drug counsellor in the city since last November, said: 'There are planes overhead and I can hear bombs falling. It's terrifying.

'I rang the embassy and they told me the conflict was not serious and they would not be evacuating any British citizens.

How many more have to die before the Government classifies this as serious?'

Marnie Cashmore, 39, from Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire, said her partner William Rushton, 43, arrived in Beirut on business last Tuesday just before the air strikes began.

Navy warships sail to rescue Britons caught in Beirut hell MoD forced to act as 10,000 nationals are trapped in war zone

She said last night: 'Bill has been virtually trapped in his hotel. He went to the embassy on Friday afternoon for help and no one answered the door.

'He said it was just like a case of "would the last person to leave turn off the lights". He is now driving to Syria.'

It was a different story for American, Italian and French citizens as their governments swiftly arranged for evacuation by warships and aircraft.

Israel launched its offensive after Hezbollah guerrillas crossed the border last Wednesday and captured two Israeli soldiers. Israel has bombarded Lebanon's airport and main roads and destroyed Hezbollah's headquarters in south Beirut. The Israeli military has conceded that it has hit more than 150 targets.

Yesterday an Israeli missile targeted a van near the southern Lebanese port of Tyre, killing 20 passengers including **women** and children and wounding six, police said. The van was carrying families fleeing Marwaheen.

Israeli aircraft also bombed a Hezbollah office in southern Beirut and attacked roads, bridges and petrol stations in north, east and south Lebanon, killing at least 12 and wounding 32, security sources said.

A senior Israeli intelligence official claimed Iranian troops helped Hezbollah fire a missile that damaged an Israeli warship off the Lebanese coast killing two and leaving two missing on Friday. Israeli officials also said a Hezbollah missile sank a merchant ship with 12 sailors on board.

Last night Israeli rescue services said Hezbollah had fired a second barrage of rockets at the city of Tiberias. Israeli warplanes then destroyed the Beirut office of senior <u>Hamas</u> official Mohammed Nazzal. He was not hurt in the attack.

Graphic

DEVASTATION: RESCUERS REMOVE BODIES AFTER AN ISRAELI MISSILE HIT THE LEBANESE PORT OF TYRE. RIGHT: CLAIR VAINOLA

Load-Date: July 17, 2006



Israel is also part of the violence in the Mideast

University Wire
July 17, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 Daily Evergreen via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN Length: 586 words

Byline: By Amelia Veneziano, Daily Evergreen; SOURCE: Washington State U.

Dateline: PULLMAN, Wash.

Body

Headlines reading "Mideast in crisis!" are nothing unusual.

Also regular is President George W. Bush making pandering and forgiving statements to Israel, emphasizing their rights, rather than their responsibilities, to the Middle East.

But the last seven days strayed from the time-tested path of Israeli victimization. Israel has launched a series of very aggressive attacks on their neighbor to the north, Lebanon, and on Hezbollah, an Islamic terrorist group who resides in the nation.

Israel responded to Hezbollah's kidnapping of two soldiers not with diplomacy, but with bombs. Across the planet, leaders and politicians are condemning Israel's aggression in the attacks on a nation that has been fairly westernized and liberated, unlike some of their Islamic neighbors.

The United States is on fairly good terms with Lebanon and many students come from across the world to study there.

Many Lebanese students come here as well, as one did during my senior year in high school. Her name is Fallouk and immediately after hearing of the bombings, I e-mailed her to make sure she was OK. So far, so good, she responded. As a Lebanese teenage girl, Fallouk has higher expectations of herself than many American high school students, and is very unlike the mistaken conceptions of Muslim <u>women</u>. She has career goals and would never dream of submitting to the burka.

Her family is not part of a terrorist group. Muslim, yes, but contrary to popular Western myth, not all Muslims are evil.

North of the current hot spot, Bush and other leaders from the free world are deep in discussion of powerful issues at the G-8 summit in Saint Petersburg, Russia, The New York Times reported. While surrounded by all this diplomacy in action, Bush can't help but be himself, clearly favoring Israel.

His most explicit and damning statement yet was reported at Yahoo! News: "Our message to Israel is, look, defend yourself, but as you do so, be mindful of the consequences. And so we've urged restraint."

Israel is also part of the violence in the Mideast

The article continues: "The United States refused to endorse calls for a cease-fire, saying that must be accompanied by constraints on Hezbollah, *Hamas*, Syria and Iran."

What about Israel? Will no one ever say, wait, Israel, too, is part of the violence? Many claim Israel is merely defending itself from the blood thirst of their neighboring nations.

Bush has certainly accepted this as truth. Bush's presidency has been the most pro-Israeli presidency in history. According to the Media Monitors Network, "In terms of letting Israelis commit atrocities and engage in acts of self-destruction with impunity, he's right. No other president has allowed Israel to terrorize the entire region"

Israel is in no way an innocent victim in the Middle East. Israel has launched its share of missiles and has more than a few drops of blood on her hands.

We have stood behind Israel and supplied them with weapons, when the rest of the world has asked Israel to step down. The rest of the world has avoided involvement. The U.S., especially in the last six years, has justified and validated Israel's claims on the region and supported their attempts at wars and walls. We have aligned with Israel, for better or for worse. Now, we can just hold on.

Today, Fallouk and her countrymen bunker down in various towns across Lebanon, fearing for their lives and homes, trying to survive the night.

All the while, Bush does nothing and Israel continues to bomb a nation for the acts of one renegade terrorist group.

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Load-Date: July 17, 2006



London targeted by Hezbollah bombers; Sleeper cells are poised to strike throughout Europe

Sunday Express
July 30, 2006 Sunday
U.K. 1st Edition

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Section: NEWS; 4 Length: 590 words

Byline: EXCLUSIVE By Julia Hartley-Brewer POLITICAL EDITOR

Body

HEZBOLLAH "sleeper" cells across Western Europe have been ordered to prepare to carry out terror attacks on London and other cities in protest at the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon.

The militant Lebanese group is reported to have cells in more than 20 countries around the w orld - and all are poised to launch deadly bombing attacks on innocent civilians.

Imad Mugniyeh, Lebanese commander of Hezbollah's overseas operations, is understood to be behind the plan and is co-ordinating its execution. He headed the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list until the 9/11 attacks saw Osama Bin Laden become America's public enemy number one.

According to German intelligence sources, the attacks will be launched if Israel continues its military offensive against Lebanon.

A similar alarm has been raised by Israel's Shin Bet security service and Israeli embassies and institutions have been placed on high alert.

It is believed that Hezbollah, which also has sleeper cells in Latin America and southeast A sia, has already been involved in several spectacular attacks on western targets.

Mugniyeh, who is known as "the Lebanese Bin Laden", lives in Iran and has evaded capture for more than 20 years, despite the US placing a GBP 3million bounty on his head.

Western intelligence reports claim he has connections in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the US and is said to have met Bin Laden.

He is thought to be almost impossible to trace after having plastic surgery to disguise his face and change his fingerprints.

The young Mugniyeh first attracted the attention of western intelligence services over his involvement in the kidnapping and torture of William Buckley, the CIA station chief in Beirut, in 1984. Mugniyeh, in his mid-forties, has also been linked to the bombing of the American embassy and marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, as well as the 1985 hijacking of a TWA jet and murder of one of its passengers.

London targeted by Hezbollah bombers Sleeper cells are poised to strike throughout Europe

He is wanted in Argentina for his role in recruiting the bombers of the Israeli embassy and Jewish centre in Buenos Aires in 1992.

Mugniyeh left Lebanon and fled to Iran in 1994 with his wife and son after a failed assassination attempt. He is believed to have played an active role in fomenting trouble in Iraq.

Former CIA agent Robert Baer has described Mugniyeh as "the master terrorist", saying: "He is the most dangerous terrorist we have ever faced. Mugniyeh is probably the most intelligent, most capable operative we have ever run across, including the KGB or anybody else."

Mugniyeh is known to have close links with the Iranian leadership, reportedly attending a "terror summit" in Syria this year alongside Iran's hardline fundamentalist President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In Damascus, the pair met the leaders of Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and *Hamas*.

US officials and Israeli intelligence sources believe Mugniyeh has now taken charge of plotting Iran's retaliation against western targets should President Bush order a strike on Iranian nuclear sites. Last night Nadim Shehadi, a Middle East expert at Chatham House, the foreign policy think tank in London, warned that the current crisis could also make a fresh Al Qaeda attack on Western Europe more likely.

He said: "There is a strong rivalry between Hezbollah and Al Qaeda. The real risk is how this will affect Al Qaeda. They have been attacking Hezbollah, accusing them of being infidels and Hezbollah have hit back saying Al Qaeda kill **women** and children.

"Now Al Qaeda are being upstaged and they need to show their might - to prove their credentials with another major attack."

Graphic

NO LET-UP: Israeli armour continues to pound targets in southern Lebanon yesterday as there was a glimmer of hope for a ceasefire

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



Blogosphere abuzz with tales of Rapture, end of the world

Ottawa Citizen

July 19, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 606 words

Byline: Charles Enman, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Have you heard of the Rapture? That's the moment when Jesus Christ will take true Christians into heaven prior to his Second Coming. Many of those who believe in the Rapture see great portent in what is now happening in the Middle East.

On the Internet, raptureready.com says it is time to "fasten your seatbelt." Its Rapture Index is now at 157 -- and those seatbelts needed fastening when the 145 threshold was passed.

The index has been higher. Just after the terror attacks on the United States in September 2001, the index hit 182.

Raptureready.com does not claim infallibility, but it does call the Rapture Index "a Dow Jones Industrial Average of end time activity." The higher the index, "the faster we're moving towards the occurrence of pre-tribulation rapture."

Raptureready.com looks at plagues, volcanoes, crime rates, and even globalism as precursors of the end times.

For some observers in the blogo-sphere, the current hostilities between Israel, <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbolloh are eerily reminiscent of images from the 14th chapter of the Book of Zechariah.

One, who calls himself "Dr. Dominguez, M.D.," and whose blog is at biblia.com, points out that the chapter "is about the horrible struggle between Israel, particularly Jerusalem, and the surrounding countries with the Second Coming of Christ."

The second verse says nations will fight against Jerusalem. "The city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the <u>women</u> raped. Half of the city will go into exile." But the Lord will come and save Jerusalem. "Never again will it be destroyed," the 11th verse says. "Jerusalem will be secure."

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Dr. Dominguez cites Hezbollah's declaration of war on Israel, the rumours of Iranian involvement, the attack on an Israeli warship, and the pounding Israeli counterattack as apparent signs that the prophecy of Zechariah may be in the process of being realized.

Gerald Flurry, editor of Thetrumpet.com, an online publication of the Philadelphia Church of God, seems to believe the world is stumbling unwittingly toward the fulfilment of the prophecies of Zechariah. He points out that the United

Blogosphere abuzz with tales of Rapture, end of the world

Nations, many individual nations, and even many Israeli Jews are saying that Israel must give up East Jerusalem if Israel is to live peacefully with its Palestinian neighbours. This means, he writes, that "the prophecy in Zechariah is now in the early stages of being fulfilled, even though the world doesn't know it!"

Even U.S. politicians seem to be getting apocalyptic. Paul Schmelzer, editor of eyeteeth.blogspot.com, points out that Newt Gingrich, former Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, believes World War III is now in process. "We're in a war!" Mr. Gingrich told a Fox News interviewer. Moreover, "it's clearly worldwide."

He referred not only to violence in the Middle East, but to the recent train bombings in Mumbai, ongoing problems in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even to the recent arrests of 17 alleged terrorists in Toronto. "You have Canadians plotting to blow up the Canadian Parliament and behead the prime minister," he said.

A measured response is not appropriate, Mr. Gingrich said. Referring to the rain of missiles upon Israeli territory, he said, "if the president of the United States had 50 missiles hit south Florida (from Cuba) today, he would do something decisive. He would not show restraint."

Prophecies aside, in this heavy moment, maybe seatbelts would help.

Load-Date: July 19, 2006