

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 3:54:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223444305

Documents (100)

1. Fatah invokes memory of Arafat as campaign closes

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

2. Israel set for military raid over kidnapped soldier

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. Women bit players in Palestinian poll Activists divided on female role

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. Nation & world

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. Palestine plus free-elections equals more terrorism

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. Militants dig in for Israeli invasion

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

7. We must talk to gunmen, says father of Israeli soldier

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. In New Problem for Palestinians, Banks Reject Transfers

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

9. Israeli soldier's captors deliver dawn ultimatum

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. We won't negotiate, Israel says: Rejects ultimatum: After deadline passes, militants vow to release no

information on captive
Client/Matter: -NoneSearch 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. Israel might free prisoners - minister

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

12. Israel set for military raid over kidnapped soldier

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. Editorial: Voters can elect who they wish

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. ISRAEL STEPS UP GAZA RAIDS IN BID TO FREE SOLDIER

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. Fears tactics may turn young to al-Qaeda

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

16. THIS IS THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

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._INTERNATIONAL NEWS: Israelis demand release of kidnapped soldier

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. Fatah invokes memory of Arafat as campaign closes

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. Israel floats prisoner swap

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. Militants give Israel 24 hours to release prisoners

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

21. Israel rejects militants' ultimatum: Deadline, threat to kill hostage soldier slammed as 'extortion'

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. Israel 'has annexed Jordan Valley and shut out Palestinians'

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

23. Under the gun in Gaza

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

24. Tories cut Palestinian aid

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

25. Israel opens new front in Gaza ground assault: Government also hints prisoner swap to be 'reciprocated'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

26. Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians

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. Kidnapped journalist says time is short

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

28. Israel 'has annexed Jordan Valley and shut out Palestinians'

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. What if a rocket hit a Kiwi school?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

30. Kidnap group deadline

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

31. Islamic Jihad leader defends suicide killings

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

32. Supply shortages spark health crisis in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

33. Israel storms into Gaza in bid to free kidnap soldier

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

34. U.S. Says It Also Finds Cartoons of Muhammad Offensive

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. Israeli offensive threatens to escalate into major fighting

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

36. Images that will terrorise Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

37. Israeli air strike kills nine Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

38. Israel 's president is subject of sexual harassment case

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. U.N. worker urges support for Palestine

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

40. Israelis pull out of Gaza - but they'll be back

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. Israelis hit offices of Palestinian top official Prime minister unhurt as bid to freesoldier is stepped up

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

42. 2 missiles target Haniyeh's office Witnesses say attack caused fire at building used by the Palestinian prime minister

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

43. <u>Star of Palestinian 'young guard' woos the voters Sharmila Devi goes on the campaign trail in Khan Younis</u> with Mohamed Dahlan, Fatah's popular reforming candidate

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

44. LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

45. Tanks mass to free kidnap soldier

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

46. Matt McCarten: Sickening silence by the West on Gaza tragedy makes us all complicit

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

47. Threats to Jews

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

48. Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

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

49. Israelis threaten a broader action Incursion into Gaza seeks soldier

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

50. The real reason why Israel is using such violence against the Palestinians in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

51. DIGEST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

52. Tanks roll into Gaza as Israel strikes back over soldier's kidnap

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

53. Palestinian PM accuses Israel of plan to topple gov't

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

54. CUPE boycott of Israel won't help cause of peace

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

55. Middle East: 18 die in worst fighting since withdrawal last year

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

56. Talking to the enemy is distasteful but necessary

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

57. Missile strike targets Palestinian PM's office

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

58. Gaza's health system is hit hard by cuts in aid

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

59. Israel threatens to invade Gaza: There will be no bargaining, vows prime minister

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. Shock and awe in Gaza

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. Israel threatens Gaza invasion if kidnapped soldier is not freed

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. Funds Cut, Gaza Faces a Plague of Health Woes

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. Israel ignores ceasefire offer

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. Iran likely to top agenda as Olmert meets Bush in US

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 problem with democracy Rogues' Gallery: Optimism

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. In Short

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. The week: A detour on the road map, and echoes of the cold 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

68. Palestinian anarchy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

69. LETTERS

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

70. Lebanon shares the guilt: Lebanese officials were complicit in Hezbollah's act of war

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

71. One for 1,000?

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

72. Hopes for Gaza peace hang on Egyptian plan

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

73. Words to Live By

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

74. Israel says pull-back to border is not an end to Gaza offensive

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

75. Tense Gaza braces for revenge onslaught

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

76. Israeli prime minister rejects any talks over captured soldier Olmert instead vows to conduct 'broad and ongoing' military action in Gaza.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

77. A Day of Funerals Across the Northern Gaza Strip

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

78. Gaza fighting pauses for funerals But sporadic clashes kill 5 Palestinians

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

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Sep 30, 2006

79. Gaza on brink over hostage soldier

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. International inertia on Gaza is a disgrace

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

81. Militants holding Israeli soldier demand release of prisoners

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

82. Nation & world

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

83. Israeli hostage: Bargaining chip?

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

84. Israel lets food and fuel into Gaza But Olmert vows to get captive back

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

85. Israeli warns of military action if soldier harmed

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

86. Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

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

87. InShort

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. In Gaza, a grim struggle against poverty Chaos and conflict destroy economy

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

89. Cut off, Gaza sinks into despair Months of sanctions cripple the economy

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

90. Israelis given 6am deadline to meet demands for release of captured soldier: Palestinian groups warn 'case will be closed': Olmert says he will not give in to extortion

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. TENSION Militants demand start of prisoner release Ultimatum for Israel

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

92. It's the occupation, stupid. But which one?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

93. Deadly double standards sow terror

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

94. Abduction that led to chaos

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

95. Israeli army enters Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

96. Israeli army enters Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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97. World Ticker

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

98. Israeli troops enter Gaza In a bid to protect soldier, strikes knock out power and two bridges.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Sep 30, 2006

99. QUOTES

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006

100. Canada right to suspend aid

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2006



Fatah invokes memory of Arafat as campaign closes

The Independent (London)
January 24, 2006 Tuesday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 21

Length: 752 words

Byline: By Donald Macintyre in Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip

Body

Fatah leaders invoked the memory of Yasser Arafat, apologised for "mistakes", and reminded voters that the mainstream Palestinian movement had resisted Israel long before <u>Hamas</u>, in a frenetic last day of election campaigning yesterday.

Fatah went all out to maximise its vote in tomorrow's parliamentary elections, even as it began to come to terms with the prospect that *Hamas* might win.

Mohammed Dahlan, the most prominent Fatah leader in Gaza, appealed for support outside the late president's house before travelling to his home base of Khan Yunis to speak to a chaotic but enthusiastic rally of several thousand supporters.

He told Fatah activists at the old presidential residence in Gaza City that they would be sending a "loving letter" to Mr Arafat and committing themselves to his life goal of "establishing an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital, and a right and just solution for (Palestinian) refugees."

A leading Fatah candidate, Sami Masherawi, told the rally: "Fatah apologises for the mistakes of the past. We will not allow a few corrupt figures to damage the Fatah reputation." Another Fatah activist, Fouad Madi, declared: "It was we who carried the olive branch and the gun. We used force and stones first. We wrote our struggle in blood and for 50 years we led the struggle."

In a message designed to defend Fatah against <u>Hamas</u>'s persistent claims to have "driven" Israel out of Gaza, a huge painted banner depicted an armed and masked Fatah militant in combat and proclaimed: "In Gaza we're victorious and to the West Bank and Jerusalem we are going."

But despite the high-flown rhetoric of the campaign for the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, it was clear in Mr Dahlan's home town that more mundane - and largely internal - issues were preoccupying most voters.

While Fatah supporters thronged to the rally amid sporadic shooting into the air, a group of <u>women</u> at the poverty-stricken Khan Yunis refugee camp explained why they were likely to vote for <u>Hamas</u>.

Fatah invokes memory of Arafat as campaign closes

Samaher Sidha, sitting outside the bullet-riddled home of a neighbour on what had been the front line between the camp and the Jewish settlement of Neve Dekalim until the Israeli withdrawal in August, pointed to the rubble of a house that was demolished by Israel.

Mrs Sidha, a 23-year-old mother-of-four, said Mr Dahlan had visited and "promised he would deal with all this. But we heard this before in the last elections. There were lots of promises but nothing was implemented." Acknowledging that this was an area where <u>Hamas</u> supplied food and financial help to poor families, including her own, Mrs Sidha said of the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority: "In 10 years they haven't done anything. We want to change them, we have to try something new." Citing "corruption and security chaos" as key issues, she said: "Why did the authority increase the wages of their employees? That was a bribe. We elected Fatah and [Mr] Dahlan but they haven't done anything about unemployment or started construction work."

There were similar worries even among enthusiastic supporters of Mr Dahlan. Samira Tawfiq, 27, a Palestinian Authority employee, said she would vote for Fatah and hoped Mr Dahlan would be the Palestinian president "in the future". She added that the lack of internal security - with armed feuding between Palestinians - and unemployment were the key issues. "We used to see blood when the occupation was here but we are still seeing it. What we need is a strong leader. Fatah needs to change. It's not only me, people love Fatah but they want to see it change. But they are not extremists' they will negotiate with Israel."

With the latest survey by the respected Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki showing Fatah at 47 per cent and <u>Hamas</u> at 42, the popular Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti appeared, in an interview from jail on Sunday, to hold out the possibility of power-sharing with <u>Hamas</u>. Mr Dahlan, who unlike Mr Barghouti is standing as a district candidate and cannot be certain of a parliamentary seat until the election is over, did not go so far yesterday but said he was happy that <u>Hamas</u> was at last participating in a national election.

Convulsed by the election yesterday, Khan Yunis was a riot of competing banner-waving processions, including a parade by the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine led by young men folk dancing.

The ultra-militant Islamic Jihad, which is responsible for the last six suicide bombings in Israel, urged Palestinians not to vote.

Graphic

Palestinian supporters take part in a *Hamas* rally in the West Bank AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Load-Date: January 24, 2006

End of Document



Israel set for military raid over kidnapped soldier

The Independent (London)
June 27, 2006 Tuesday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 21

Length: 696 words

Byline: By Donald Macintyre in Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip

Body

Israel began assembling troops, tanks and armoured vehicles on the Gaza border yesterday amidfrantic diplomatic and political efforts to secure the safe release of the 19-year-old corporal seized by Palestinian militants.

The heavy build-up came as the three groups claiming responsibility for Sunday's raid on an Israeli army post demanded the release from Israeli gaols of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and prisoners under 18 in return for the release of the soldier captured in the attack.

Appearing to rule out a prisoner exchange deal with <u>Hamas</u>, the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, declared: "This is not a matter of negotiations, this is not a matter of bargaining."

The contingency plans for what Mr Olmert defined as a "broad and ongoing military operation" inside Gaza - the first since Israel withdrew settlers from the strip in August - appeared to be on hold at least as long as there was a chance of diplomats and Palestinian officials persuading the captors to hand over Corporal Gilad Shalit unharmed.

Israel has launched a diplomatic initiative to persuade the international community that the crisis, and the issue of Cpl Shalit's release, was a "make-or-break" test of the credibility of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, and his eligibility as a negotiating "partner" for Israel.

Despite public exhortations by the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian government on the militants to ensure Cpl Shalit was unharmed, and efforts by Mr Abbas to secure his release, Mr Olmert said: "It should be clear that we see the Palestinian Authority on all its levels, from the chairman on downward, as the responsible element for this operation and all that happens from it."

While insisting that Israel wanted to see diplomatic efforts - involving senior Egyptian and Jordanian officials among others - to secure Cpl Shalit's release take their course, Israel's ambassador to the UN, Dan Gillerman, warned: "Time is limited," and added: "For months the international community had been telling Israel that if it bolstered Mr Abbas's authority he would then prevail over <u>Hamas</u>. He has to prove he is the man in charge ... He has talked the talk. Now he has to walk the walk," said Mr Gillerman. He said if Mr Abbas succeeded it could help Israel to develop Mr Olmert's planned meeting with him into negotiations, but "if he fails to deliver then we do not have a partner".

Israel set for military raid over kidnapped soldier

Walid Awad, aspokesman for Mr Abbas's office, said the President was doing everything to secure Cpl Shalit's release but warned that there was heavy pressure from families of 10,000 prisoners held in Israel to free some of them in return. He urged Israel not to resort to an armed incursion into Gaza and "to allow space and time for discussions to proceed. If Israel wants to get the soldier out alive then force should not be a choice for anybody."

Mr Awad claimed Mr Haniyeh, the <u>Hamas</u> Palestinian Prime Minister, had been as "surprised as the President" at the soldier's seizure in an operation sanctioned "from outside" and that there were splits between the faction inside Gaza and the Damascus-based political leadership under Khaled Mashaal.

The demand for prisoner releases issued late yesterday afternoon by the three militant groups, <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing, and two offshoots of the Palestinian Resistance Committees, the Salahadin brigades and the Islam Army, was the first public acknowledgement by the militants they were holding the corporal.

A <u>Hamas</u>'s part in the operation was ordered by the military and political leadership outside the cabinet - including Mr Mashaal. But he added that <u>Hamas</u> had had "no choice" after Israeli attacks that killed civilians and that "a price" should be paid for Cpl Shalit's release.

At the mourning tent for one of the Palestinian gunmen killed in the operation, Mohammed Asmi Farwana, 22, the dead man's brother, Abu al-Majd, 29, said he had known nothing of his brother's involvement. He said: "It was a good operation. We want the soldier to go back to his family but in return for something. We want to see the prisoners released."

Abbas has to prove he is in charge, but 'if he fails... then we do not have a partner'

Load-Date: June 27, 2006

End of Document



Women bit players in Palestinian poll; Activists divided on female role

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 24, 2006 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 11

Length: 761 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Hebron

Body

SEE your local candidate's face only when elections come around? This cannot be said of Fathiya Qawasmi of Hebron, who is standing in this week's Palestinian parliamentary poll.

At a time when more and more Muslim <u>women</u> in Palestine are adopting the hijab or headscarf, the 42-year-old school principal goes further, campaigning in a full cloth mask, or niqab. Only her eyes stare out from the posters; most voters will never see her face.

"I have no problem with the hijab but I like trying to be more pure by following the model of the <u>women</u> of the Prophet, peace be upon his name," she told reporters, with a senior male party colleague as interpreter.

Ms Qawasmi is one of 13 <u>women</u> whose pictures appear on the 59-strong list of national candidates submitted by the Islamic militant movement <u>Hamas</u>, which is contesting tomorrow's elections for the first time. Two other <u>women</u> also appear only as masked shapes; the other 10 are all modestly veiled.

The widow of Abdullah al-Qawasmi, a *Hamas* leader shot dead by Israeli undercover forces in 2003, she is ranked at number 36, meaning it will take a *Hamas* landslide for her to win a place in parliament.

But with <u>Hamas</u> now riding high in the polls, perhaps equalling or even surpassing the ruling Fatah party, the next Palestinian legislative assembly is certain to include several <u>female</u> Islamicist politicians.

This prospect is highlighting divisions between Islamic <u>female</u> activists, who want to use power to preserve what they see as woman's traditional role in the home, and secular <u>female</u> candidates who fear that <u>Hamas</u> gains will destroy hopes for greater equality.

"I feel that after this the struggle for <u>women</u> to get rights would go back to 40 years ago, because we feel they will damage our achievements with <u>women</u> in policy-making partnerships and gender issues," said Jihad Abu Znaid, 38, a Fatah candidate who is active in <u>women</u>'s issues.

She said some of the <u>Hamas women</u> were merely "token <u>females</u>" with no real policies or drive of their own, included only to help bring out the <u>female</u> vote.

But while it is very different from the Western ideal of equality, the movement's supporters claim that - unlike the shambolic Fatah-run Palestinian Authority - <u>Hamas</u> shows an active practical interest in helping <u>women</u> through its private education, health, welfare and training programs.

Ms Qawasmi says that if she were elected, her priorities would be the wellbeing of <u>women</u>, children and the family, including more financial support for the families of security prisoners in Israeli jails, and work on local issues such as better funding for Hebron's pediatric and gynaecology services.

But many secular Palestinians ask how <u>Hamas</u> can help <u>women</u> on practical issues if it takes such a conservative Islamic view of their wider role.

Stark as the issue of Palestinian <u>women</u>'s rights might seem to outsiders, it remains a lesser political priority for a society dominated by the desire to end Israeli settlement expansion and military occupation and to win basic rights and independence.

Significantly, none of the main factions contesting this election makes any mention in its platform of so-called "honour killings", in which male relatives murder young **women** suspected of transgressing strict codes forbidding even the suggestion of sexual independence.

Nor are there likely to be many **women** in the next parliament.

The only real <u>female</u> star of Palestinian politics, the 2003 Sydney Peace Prize winner, Hanan Ashrawi, is seeking re-election as number two on the national list of Third Way, a moderate, secularist faction headed by the respected former finance minister Salam Fayyad. Polls suggest her party may get the 2 per cent of the national list vote it needs to meet the minimum threshold to take seats in parliament.

For the rest, the parties have agreed to a rough quota of 20 per cent <u>female</u> candidates on their national lists, from which half the parliament's 132 eats will be filled by proportional representation.

But the other half of the seats will be filled by voters in local constituencies, where the chances of victory will depend on personal popularity and power bases as much as party allegiance. In these highly charged local battles, no gender quotas apply: out of 414 listed candidates only 15 are <u>women</u>.

According to Jihad Abu Znaid, many Fatah men talk about equal rights for <u>women</u> while at the same time viewing any gain for <u>females</u> as a loss for men.

"Fatah men, they like to give us our rights but if we touch their rights, wow!" she said. "They are still very traditional in their mentality."

Graphic

PHOTO: <u>Female</u> rights a side issue ... <u>women</u> pray before a <u>Hamas</u> campaign rally in Nablus on Sunday. Photo: AP/Emilio Morenatti

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



Nation & world

Charleston Daily Mail (West Virginia) September 22, 2006, Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. P3A

Length: 549 words

Body

Hungarian prime minister denies he lied to voters

BUDAPEST, Hungary - With protesters massed outside the gates of the stately Hungarian parliament for a fourth straight day, Prime Minister Ferencz Gyurcsany sat in his wood-paneled office inside and tried to explain why he had admitted on tape that his party had done a "boneheaded" job of running the country and that he had lied to voters to win re-election.

Looking weary and with his legs crossed, Gyurcsany said he was merely exaggerating for dramatic effect when he told a private meeting of party loyalists in May that "we lied in the morning, the night and the evening" to the public.

"It's important to emphasize that I did not lie," he said in an interview.

Christians executed

for attacks on Muslims

PALU, Indonesia - Christian mobs torched cars, looted Muslim-owned shops and burned a prison, freeing hundreds of inmates, in violence touched off by today's executions of three Roman Catholics convicted of instigating attacks on Muslims.

On the island of Flores, the executed men's birthplace, machete-wielding mobs ran through the streets today, sending **women** and children running in panic, police and witnesses said.

Fabianus Tibo, 60, Marinus Riwu, 48, and Dominggus da Silva, 42, were found guilty of leading a Christian militia that launched a series of attacks on Muslims in May 2000 that left at least 70 people dead.

Recognition of Israel

an obstacle for coalition

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - The Palestinians' ruling <u>Hamas</u> group will not enter into a coalition government if recognizing Israel is a condition, a top <u>Hamas</u> political adviser said today, raising new doubts about President Mahmoud Abbas' ability to bring a more moderate government to power.

At the United Nations on Thursday, Abbas indicated that the planned national unity government between <u>Hamas</u> and his Fatah Party would recognize the Jewish state.

Nation & world

But the <u>Hamas</u> political adviser, Ahmed Yousef said today that "there won't be a national unity government if **Hamas** is asked to recognize Israel." Instead, he reiterated **Hamas**' offer of a long-term truce.

College cancels plans for Iranian leader's speech

UNITED NATIONS - Columbia University scrapped plans for a speech by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, citing security and logistical problems.

Thursday's cancellation came after a Jewish activist group expressed outrage that the hard-line leader had been invited to speak.

Ahmadinejad, who was in New York for the annual U.N. General Assembly, drew widespread condemnation last year for calling the Holocaust a "myth" and saying Israel should be wiped off the map.

Bush to meet with leaders

of Pakistan, Afghanistan

WASHINGTON - President Bush is trying to settle troubles that have bubbled up between two U.S. allies in the war on terrorism who accuse each other of failing to crack down on extremists.

Bush was to meet today with Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf. He's following up that meeting with talks on Tuesday with Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Then, they'll have a three-way sit down on Wednesday.

COMPILED FROM WIRE REPORTS

Bush is working to find a way to defuse the dispute between Pakistan, which is helping the United States track Osama bin Laden and restrain bin Laden's al-Qaida organization, and the struggling democratic government in Afghanistan.

Load-Date: September 22, 2006

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Palestine plus free-elections equals more terrorism

University Wire

February 1, 2006 Wednesday

Copyright 2006 Rocky Mountain Collegian via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN Length: 573 words

Byline: By Ryan Chapman, Rocky Mountain Collegian; SOURCE: Colorado State U.

Dateline: FORT COLLINS, Colo.

Body

In 1993, the Palestinian group Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (*Hamas* for short) denounced the Oslo accords, the closest thing to a peace treaty ever established between Israel and the Palestinians.

In 1994, *Hamas* brought the use of suicide bombings against innocent Israeli civilians to a whole new level.

Now, in what appears to be a tragic turn of events for anyone with a vested interest in peace in the region, the terrorist organization *Hamas* has taken control of the Palestinian government. Last week, the group won 42.9 percent of the vote giving them majority control of parliament with 74 of the 132 seats, thus unseating the Fatah, who under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, held control of the government for decades.

This all occurred after <u>Hamas</u> ran for election on the platform of continued "resistance" against Israel. A co-founder of the group, Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, was even quoted in the Wikipedia online encyclopedia as saying that the goal of the group was to "remove Israel from the map."

Last semester I criticized Israel's decision to return the territory of the Gaza Strip to Palestine because it would only encourage the terrorists who were using violence against <u>women</u> and children to achieve their objectives. Now it appears I wasn't just blowing smoke, as the succession of the Gaza Strip has not only encouraged <u>Hamas</u> but has convinced many Palestinian civilians of the group's ability to get things accomplished.

Leaders in Europe, as well as the United States, reacted with shock last week at the obvious increase in <u>Hamas'</u> popularity and their overwhelming victory in a democratic election. Which begs the obvious question: could no one see this coming? Did no one think that giving terrorists what they want would encourage and embolden them? What was considered by some to be a gesture of goodwill and an investment in peace by the Israelis has set off a chain of events that could ignite centuries of warfare. It has also, in the same blow, destroyed the legitimacy of anyone who claims that Palestinians are a peaceful people.

With the full knowledge that <u>Hamas</u> has no plans to either discontinue violence or recognize a Jewish state; the majority of Palestinians voted to be governed by murderers.

Many believe that with the governments of two countries in the region; Iran and now Palestine, both bent on the destruction of Israel, increased violence and even war are not too far in the future. Dan Junge, a senior history major here at CSU, conceded that he "would not be surprised at all if Israel began to take things into their own hands" in the face of this growing aggression by their neighbors.

Palestine plus free-elections equals more terrorism

With the backing of the United States and with the support of most of Western Europe (if that could even be considered an advantage) this standoff seems to be fairly one-sided.

At this point, we can only hope that the continued pressure by the global community and the string of strongly worded letters from the United Nations (their most significant contribution to any conflict in years) will be enough to prevent Palestine from getting a lot of people killed.

In last Friday's Denver Post, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was quoted as saying "You cannot have one foot in politics and another in terror." It is too bad that most of the Middle East doesn't agree.

Ryan Chapman is a senior marketing major. His column runs every Wednesday in the Collegian.

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Load-Date: February 3, 2006

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Militants dig in for Israeli invasion

The Australian (Australia)

June 30, 2006 Friday

All-round Metro Edition

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Section: WORLD PHOTO TABLE; Pg. 10

Length: 989 words

Byline: Martin Chulov, Middle East correspondent in Gaza

Body

MATP

WAR loomed in the Holy Land last night after militants killed two kidnapped Jewish settlers, while up to 80 <u>Hamas</u> officials -- including eight cabinet ministers -- were arrested in Israeli raids that have decapitated the Palestinian Government.

Palestinian Deputy Prime Minister Nasser Shaer was among those detained. Together, he and the other ministers seized represent one-third of the Palestinian cabinet. Twenty-four MPs were also arrested.

In a series of dramatic escalations five days after an Israeli soldier was captured, militants have dug into positions in northern Gaza ahead of a likely new invasion, and remaining *Hamas* leaders have gone into hiding.

The body of settler 62-year-old Noach Moskowitz was found next to a cemetery last night, hours after the remains of 18-year-old Eliyahu Asheri were retrieved from a shallow grave close to the West Bank capital of Ramallah.

For a second night, Israeli jet fighters set off repeated sonic booms above Gaza while artillery and navy ships pounded abandoned farmland in the north. Israeli tank columns and troops were on the move in the south of the isolated strip as negotiations to free captured Corporal Gilad Shalit failed to make progress.

<u>Hamas</u> declared the Israeli moves an "act of war against the Palestinian people" as well as "a grave precedent (and) an international crime", and warned of dire consequences for the dormant peace process.

"This goes against all human moral and democratic values," spokesman Mushir al-Masri said. "The international community must have its say."

Raids across the key West Bank cities of Ramallah, Jenin, Qalqilya and Nablus, as well as the Israeli capital Jerusalem, netted the *Hamas* officials.

Most were seized after Israeli forces surrounded the Legislative Council building in Ramallah where they were meeting.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said the arrests had been ordered because of alleged links to terror plots. "Their complicity in the events of recent days and in the soldier's kidnapping, as well as their request for a prisoner

Militants dig in for Israeli invasion

exchange, proves that the <u>Hamas</u>'s main concern is not the lives of the Palestinian people, but rather the implementation of a terrorist policy against Israel."

None of the Gaza-based Government has yet been targeted, but Israeli ministers have warned that Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and exiled Damascus-based <u>Hamas</u> politburo chief Khalid Meshaal are in their sights.

Four Israeli fighter jets caused sonic booms above Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's summer palace late on Wednesday after Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had demanded Damascus hand over Mr Meshaal, *Hamas*'s highest-ranked figure, who has allegedly stalled attempts to free Corporal Shalit in a bid to use him as a bargaining chip. Air force strikes on electricity transformers on Tuesday night cut power to more than 70per cent of the Gaza Strip and the damage is expected to take up to six months to repair.

The attack on the power plant and repeated sonic booms prompted Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to claim Israel was engaged in "collective punishment" against all Gaza residents. Israel has prevented Mr Abbas from leaving Gaza while the crisis continues.

Before yesterday's arrests, he was intensively involved with Mr Haniyeh in attempts to free Corporal Shalit, who Palestinian officials last night said remained alive and in good health.

The second Israeli kidnapped on Sunday, Eliyahu Asheri, was believed to have been killed shortly after he was seized by West Bank members of the Popular Resistance Committees. The 18-year-old son of a dual Israeli-Australian citizen, formerly from Adelaide, had been shot once at close range. Mr Asheri's father left Adelaide 20 years ago after converting to Judaism.

The White House last night backed the Israeli moves, insisting that Israel had a right to defend itself. The US and the bulk of the international community have labelled <u>Hamas</u> a terrorist government and have refused to deal with it until it recognises Israel.

Mr Olmert insisted Israel did not want to re-occupy Gaza and had invaded the strip 10 months after its forces withdrew, primarily to rescue Corporal Shalit. However, he said the military also had a secondary objective of stopping rocket fire.

Opinion -- Page 16

Editorial -- Page 17

MOUNTING TENSION

The Middle East is on the brink of war as Israel demands the return of a kidnapped soldier

SUNDAY

* Palestinian militants kidnap Israeli soldier Corporal Gilad Shalit during an attack on the Gaza border town of Kerem Shalom

MONDAY

- * Kidnappers demand the release of nearly 500 <u>women</u> and children held in Israeli jails in exchange for information on the abducted soldier; Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejects any deal
- * Jewish settler Eliyahu Asheri kidnapped

WEDNESDAY

* Israelis expand a military offensive in an effort to rescue the soldier

Militants dig in for Israeli invasion

- * About 750,000 people 65% of the Gaza population go without electricity and running water after an air strike on the territory's only power station
- * In southern Gaza, where the soldier is believed to be held, armed forces move into a disused airport near Rafah and set up an observation post as scores of Palestinians flee
- * Troops and tanks are poised for a thrust into the northern part of the territory, from where militants are firing crude rockets into Israel
- * Israeli warplanes fly low over Gaza as masked militants carrying assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers fan out on streets, preparing mines and taking up positions behind sand embankments in expectation of an Israeli assault
- * In a signal to Syria, home to the exiled leadership of <u>Hamas</u>, Israeli fighter jets fly low over the residence of President Bashar al-Assad near the Mediterranean port of Latakia

THURSDAY

- * Israeli forces arrest *Hamas* government officials in the West Bank
- * Thousands of Israeli troops mass near the southern Gaza town of Rafah
- * Militants announce they have killed Asheri, the settler kidnapped on Monday

Load-Date: June 30, 2006

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We must talk to gunmen, says father of Israeli soldier

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

July 8, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 16

Length: 532 words

Byline: Patrick Bishop in Jerusalem

Body

THE father of the young soldier held captive by Palestinian gunmen increased the pressure on Israel's government yesterday by urging them to negotiate his son's release.

"In the end it will be necessary to pay a price for Gilad's freedom," said Noam Shalit, whose 19-year-old son was seized from Israeli territory two weeks ago. "I don't understand why the government is delaying negotiations on this price."

Avi Dichter, the public security minister, hinted that prisoners might be released as "a goodwill gesture" if Cpl Shalit were freed.

"The release of the soldier is a must," Mr Dichter said in a speech to business leaders. If the Palestinians halted attacks, "Israel will need to, after some time, release prisoners as a reciprocal gesture. Israel knows how to do this. Israel has done this more than once in the past".

Tomorrow the cabinet will discuss the direction of the campaign, but the prime minister, Ehud Olmert, has so far been adamant that there will be no deals.

<u>Hamas</u>, the ruling Islamist group in the Palestinian territories, said that Cpl Shalit was being well treated and that only negotiations would secure his release.

"His treatment is being done well and in a humanitarian way in accordance with the orders of our religion," the group said.

Reports claimed that his abductors were willing to scale down their ransom demands. Palestinian and diplomatic sources said they were now prepared to free the soldier and halt rocket attacks in return for an Israeli withdrawal and the release of about 100 Palestinian **women** and 30 men who have been in jail for more than 20 years.

The corporal's capture by groups linked to <u>Hamas</u> prompted a retaliatory incursion by Israeli forces, the first since they withdrew from Gaza last year. Yesterday at least seven more Palestinians died, adding to the 22 who were killed on Thursday. Gaza buried its dead to the sound of gunfire, as Israel continued its operation, designed to take ground used by militants to fire rockets into Israel and as a punitive expedition to deter further attacks. Many of the casualties were militiamen, but civilians also suffered, including young boys who were hit as they watched the battles that erupted after Israeli armour pushed into the northern Gaza Strip. At some funerals gunmen fired in the air and chanted bellicose slogans. But the day proved to be relatively quiet as the militants licked their wounds.

We must talk to gunmen, says father of Israeli soldier

Public opinion in Israel is strongly in favour of destroying the <u>Hamas</u>-led government by killing its leaders. A poll showed that 82 per cent of people backed an assassination campaign.

<u>Hamas</u> ministers admit that they have no control over the actions of their militia and other armed groups and are powerless to fulfil the Israeli demands. The gunmen are more inclined to listen to Khaled Meshal, the <u>Hamas</u> leader living in exile in Damascus. He is said to be behind the abduction and is seen as central to any deal that is negotiated.

Ismail Haniya, the *Hamas* prime minister, could appeal only for international intervention, denouncing the offensive as "a crime against humanity".

The call was echoed by Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, who wields even less influence.

Load-Date: July 8, 2006

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In New Problem for Palestinians, Banks Reject Transfers

The New York Times
May 4, 2006 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1199 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank, May 3

Body

As the <u>Hamas</u>-led government struggles to raise cash after the suspension of Western aid to the Palestinian Authority, it faces a new and unexpected obstacle: banks here are refusing to accept its money transfers from abroad.

The United States Treasury last month barred almost all financial dealings with the Palestinian Authority in response to *Hamas*'s rise to power, under a federal law that makes it a crime to provide funds to terrorist groups.

That has rattled local banks, which are tied to the American banking system. The banks abruptly stopped handling even basic wire transfers needed for the authority to receive money donated by foreign countries.

In recent weeks Arab countries, coordinated by the Arab League in Cairo, have raised more than \$70 million. But so far, Palestinian officials say, no bank has been willing to move the money to the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, wary of legal entanglements with the United States.

Ismail Haniya, the Palestinian prime minister and a leader of <u>Hamas</u>, said Wednesday that the government could begin paying overdue salaries, which are now two months late, if the money reached the Palestinian Authority's bank accounts.

"The problem is not with raising money," Mr. Haniya said at a news conference in Gaza City. "The problem is how to transfer this money to the Palestinians."

Mr. Haniya accused the United States of putting pressure on the banks "so that the money we have collected does not reach citizens or civil servants." <u>Hamas</u> says it will not bow to political pressure from Israel or the West. But without money from abroad, it is not clear how the Palestinian Authority can function.

The European Union joined the United States in suspending all financial assistance for the authority after <u>Hamas</u> took office in late March as a result of its decisive victory in Palestinian legislative elections. Israel has also frozen the roughly \$50 million it collects in tax and customs revenues each month on behalf of the Palestinians.

Now, with the United States Treasury's action, even Arab and Muslim countries that want to assist the authority have not been able to deliver their aid.

In New Problem for Palestinians, Banks Reject Transfers

American diplomats say the United States is not directly putting pressure on the banks. But the Treasury has publicized the government's position that <u>Hamas</u> is a terrorist organization and that financial transactions with the Palestinian Authority are barred. There are a few exceptions to the ban, including dealings with the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, who opposes violence against Israel and supports peace talks.

"Generally speaking, if an organization or individual is facilitating direct fund-raising for <u>Hamas</u>, they open themselves up to action by the United States," said Molly Millerwise, a spokeswoman for the Treasury in Washington.

On Tuesday, Stuart Levey, the under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the Treasury, was in Israel to meet with senior Israeli officials on how to prevent money from reaching designated terrorist groups, the United States Embassy said.

The Palestinian Authority needs at least \$150 million a month just to pay salaries and run essential institutions like schools, hospitals and the police force. On its own the authority raises barely \$30 million a month, and it is falling deeper into debt each day.

Since coming to power, the <u>Hamas</u>-dominated government has missed two paydays for the authority's 165,000 employees. Palestinian nurses and teachers, civil servants and security force officers like Muhammad Burbar, 23, are caught in the middle.

Mr. Burbar has not received his monthly \$333 paycheck since February. He is out of cash, and his wife needs medical treatment. On Tuesday the couple sold a tiny gold bracelet and a pendant they bought for their daughter when she was born last year.

They received \$28 from a gold shop in Ramallah.

"We didn't have any other choice," Mr. Burbar said. "I have no idea when I will get paid again, and I'm not optimistic. This could go on for another six months."

The shop owner, Khader al-Asbah, said 99 percent of his customers in the last two months sold family jewelry, traditionally held as a form of savings by Palestinian families.

Economists and aid groups say the Palestinian economy, ailing since the start of an uprising against Israel in 2000, risks a major contraction if government workers go unpaid for months.

The United States government lacks legal jurisdiction over financial transactions abroad if no American citizens or institutions are involved. But many Middle Eastern banks have branches in the United States or have business relationships with American banks to handle international transactions.

Banks here fear they could jeopardize their ties to the United States or put themselves at legal risk if they handle money for the Palestinian Authority, regardless of its origin, said George Abed, governor of the Palestinian Monetary Authority, which effectively serves as the Palestinian central bank.

The Arab Bank, based in Jordan, has held the main account for the Palestinian Authority in recent years. Officials there and at other banks have refused to discuss the issue of transactions for the authority.

But Mr. Abed acknowledged that the Palestinian government and the banks were in an extremely awkward position. "Banks, being careful as they usually are, have been telling the Palestinian Authority that they can't complete these transactions," Mr. Abed said Tuesday in an interview in Ramallah.

The Arab Bank, which has branches in the United States, has been subject to American legal action, including a lawsuit filed in Federal District Court in Brooklyn by about 50 American survivors or relatives of people killed in suicide bombings or other attacks by *Hamas*.

In New Problem for Palestinians, Banks Reject Transfers

"No bank wants to risk being cut off from international transactions," Mr. Abed said. "This is oxygen for banks. If you are a bank, and you shut yourself out of the United States and Europe, what are you going to do -- conduct all your transactions in rupees?"

Though the banks are wary, *Hamas* says it will not give in.

One option is to have the Arab League send the donated money directly into the personal bank accounts of Palestinian Authority employees, bypassing the authority. But that may be highly impractical, because money would have to be wired into 165,000 separate bank accounts.

"It is being studied, but it does not sound very feasible," Hesham Youssef, a senior Arab League official, said in a phone interview from Cairo.

The United States, the European Union and Israel have demanded that <u>Hamas</u> do three things before they will consider dealing with the group: recognize Israel, disavow violence and accept existing Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

<u>Hamas</u> has refused, instead appealing to Arab and Muslim countries to replace the lost financing.

Arab League countries recently renewed a pledge made years ago to provide the Palestinian Authority with \$55 million a month, but it has regularly fallen short. Even if the league finds a way to get the money to the Palestinian Authority, it is barely one-third of what the authority needs to pay its monthly bills.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Two Palestinian <u>women</u> in Gaza City waited their turn Monday to receive United Nations food aid. (Photo by Khalil Hamra/Associated Press)

Load-Date: May 4, 2006



Israeli soldier's captors deliver dawn ultimatum

Guardian.com July 3, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 649 words

Highlight: Three militias holding an Israeli soldier today issued a dawn deadline for the Jewish state to start

releasing Palestinian prisoners.

Body

Three militias holding an Israeli soldier today issued a dawn deadline for the Jewish state to start releasing Palestinian prisoners.

In a statement faxed to news agencies, the Palestinian militants warned the Israeli government it would "bear all the consequences" unless the jail releases began by 6am tomorrow."We give the Zionist enemy until 6.00 tomorrow morning, Tuesday, July 4," the fax read. "If the enemy does not respond to our humanitarian demands mentioned in previous leaflets on the conditions for dealing with the issue of the missing solder ... we will consider the current file of the soldier to be closed ... and then the enemy must bear all the consequences of the future results."

Corporal Gilad Shalit, 19, was captured on June 25 in a cross-border raid by militants linked to the Palestinians' ruling *Hamas* party, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam.

In their first statement, the captors demanded the release of about 500 **women** and children held in Israeli jails. They later raised their demands to include an additional 1,000 prisoners.

Israel has said publicly it would not negotiate Cpl Shalit's release but, privately, political and defence leaders have not ruled out releasing prisoners who were not involved in actual attacks on Israel.

Yesterday, Israel threatened to target the <u>Hamas</u> political leadership in the Gaza Strip with detention or worse as diplomatic efforts to negotiate the release of Cpl Shalit stalled. An Israeli air strike destroyed the office of the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, in the early hours, without causing injury.

Israel said the strike was intended to send a message to the <u>Hamas</u> political leadership that it was responsible for the fate of the teenage soldier.

At a cabinet meeting several hours later, the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said he would do whatever was necessary to secure the soldier's release. "I have instructed the security establishment and the [military] to increase the strength of their actions in order to pursue these terrorists, those who dispatch them, their ideologues and those who sponsor them. Nobody will be exempt," he said.

Mr Olmert said Israeli attacks on Gaza would end immediately after the soldier was freed.

Israeli soldier's captors deliver dawn ultimatum

Intensive efforts to mediate his release, involving Egypt and other regional players, have failed.

The head of Israel's Shin Bet security service, Yuval Diskin, told the cabinet that the crisis may take a long time to resolve. "We have to take a deep breath ... there is no magic solution," he said.

The defence minister, Amir Peretz, warned that, if the crisis continued, Israel would go after "higher-calibre targets", said by his aides to refer to senior <u>Hamas</u> officials in the occupied territories and in exile. Last week Israel detained eight <u>Hamas</u> cabinet ministers in the Palestinian government, who live in the West Bank, and 20 of the group's MPs.

<u>Hamas</u>'s military wing raised the stakes yesterday by threatening to destroy civilian infrastructure inside Israel if the Israeli military kept up its attacks on non-military targets in the Gaza Strip. Last week the Israeli air force bombed the territory's only power plant and bridges. <u>Hamas</u> said it would hit "similar targets" in Israel.

The Israeli prime minister said his country should not be blamed for the suffering of ordinary Palestinians in the Gaza Strip caused by attacks on infrastructure that have cut power supplies. He said the fault lay with the "bloodthirsty gang of terrorists" holding Cpl Shalit.

Since the solder was seized there has been no sign that he is alive or any concrete evidence of his condition, although Israeli officials have said they believe Cpl Shalit to be alive.

Israel opened the main cargo crossing into Gaza for about four hours yesterday to permit the delivery of some foodstuffs, medicines and fuel at the request of the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice.

Load-Date: July 3, 2006



We won't negotiate, Israel says: Rejects ultimatum: After deadline passes, militants vow to release no information on captive

The Gazette (Montreal)
July 4, 2006 Tuesday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 772 words

Byline: IAN FISHER, New York Times; Newsday and AP contributed to this report

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert rejected an ultimatum yesterday set by Palestinian militants who suggested they would kill a captured Israeli soldier unless Israel began to release 1,500 Palestinian prisoners.

After the deadline passed early today, militants holding the soldier said they would give no more information about him because Israel ignored their demands.

Abu Muthana, spokesperson for the shadowy Army of Islam, would not say whether the soldier is dead or alive. "We will not give any information that will give the occupation good news or reassurance," he said.

The Army of Islam was unheard of before Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, was captured on June 25. Two other groups - the *Hamas* military wing and the Popular Resistance Committees - have taken responsibility for the abduction.

"We will not conduct any negotiations on a prisoner release," Olmert said in a statement yesterday.

"The government of Israel will not yield to the extortion of the Palestinian Authority and the <u>Hamas</u> government, which are led by murderous terrorist organizations," Olmert said.

The Palestinian statement, issued by the three militant groups who said they took part in the soldier's capture gave Israel until this morning local time - 11 last night - to begin releasing prisoners.

As Israeli forces moved into northern Gaza and with indirect negotiations apparently at a standstill, the week-old crisis threatened to spill over Israel's border into Syria.

Israeli tanks began moving in greater numbers into the Beit Hanoun neighbourhood of northern Gaza today, appearing to broaden smaller-scale military operations. Witnesses said an air strike killed at least one person and wounded several others. Israeli aircraft also bombed an empty building at the Islamic University in downtown Gaza.

After the Palestinian ultimatum was issued, the Israeli defence minister, Amir Peretz, said he would hold to account Syria's president, Bashar Assad, who has allowed <u>Hamas</u>'s political leader, Khaled Meshaal, to live in Syria and is believed to have significant influence over him.

We won't negotiate, Israel says: Rejects ultimatum: After deadline passes, militants vow to release no information on captive

"<u>Hamas</u>'s terrorist headquarters operates in Syria and is headed by Khaled Meshaal," Peretz told leaders of the Labour Party, which he heads. "I suggest that Bashar al-Assad, who is trying to conduct himself blindly, open his eyes, because he bears the responsibility."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak flew to Saudi Arabia yesterday in a bid to enlist King Abdullah in his efforts to solve the crisis.

In Damascus yesterday, the Syrian foreign minister, Walid Muallem, said that although Syria had influence with *Hamas*, it did not have any hand in the capture of the soldier, and would be unable to demand his release.

Instead, Muallem said, the only solution would be an end to the Israeli military operation, followed by negotiations between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>. He said Israel would have to be willing to offer a fair deal, like releasing prisoners who are **women** or under 18.

Meshaal, whom Israel blamed for planning the capture of the soldier, has lived and worked in Damascus for years. And while Muallem said Meshaal did not have any role in the military attack - a fact disputed by at least one Palestinian faction leader in Damascus - he said Syria would never force him to leave.

Meshaal is taking unprecedented security precautions, according to a Palestinian official in Damascus. Meshaal, who survived an Israeli assassination attempt in 1997, already had strict security and rarely appeared in public.

Other top <u>Hamas</u> leaders who operate out of Syria are living on the run. They change safe houses almost every night, have cancelled all travel outside Syria and stopped using cellphones.

Their ultimatum had said that if Israel did not begin releasing prisoners, Israel would "bear full responsibility for the future consequences."

"If they don't fulfill our demands, we will close the kidnapped soldier's file," a spokesperson for the Popular Resistance Committees said.

Since his capture, Israeli forces have imposed a slow squeeze on Gaza to try to secure the soldier's release, crossing over the borders in the north and the south, firing about 1,500 artillery rounds from land and sea, and carrying out nightly air raids. They also put pressure on civilians in Gaza, knocking out its only power plant and sharply limiting what goods can pass into Gaza. Exports have been halted entirely.

If the soldier is killed, that campaign is likely to intensify quickly and violently. One Israeli cabinet member was quoted as saying: "Our operations will be far, far worse."

In his statement, Olmert said he held the Palestinian Authority fully responsible for the soldier's safety.

Graphic

Photo: KEVIN FRAYER, AP; A Palestinian militant from <u>Hamas</u> makes his way to a position in Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

Load-Date: July 5, 2006



Israel might free prisoners - minister

The Irish Times

July 8, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 458 words

Byline: Peter Hirschberg in Jerusalem

Body

Middle East: An Israeli minister suggested for the first time yesterday that Israel might release Palestinian prisoners, if an Israeli soldier being held by militants in the Gaza Strip was released and rocket fire into Israel ceased.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants holding the abducted soldier also scaled back the number of prisoners they were demanding in exchange for the 19-year-old corporal, raising speculation of a deal.

In northern Gaza, meanwhile, Israeli forces yesterday killed at least seven Palestinians, most of them militants, as troops, backed by aircraft and tanks, continued to fight armed masked men, mainly in the town of Beit Lahiye.

At least 23 Palestinians, most of them militants, were killed on Thursday in fierce battles with Israeli forces, which moved into northern Gaza for the first time since withdrawing from the coastal strip 10 months ago.

Despite the military operation, militants fired 15 rockets into Israel yesterday, lightly injuring three people.

Army chief Lieut Gen Dan Halutz said close to 40 Palestinians had been killed since Israel launched an operation last week aimed at winning the release of Cpl Gilad Shalit. One Israeli soldier has been killed in the fighting.

From the outset, the Israeli government has refused to negotiate with Cpl Shalit's captors, who demanded the release of over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. But public security minister Avi Dichter was quoted telling a conference yesterday that, if the soldier was released, and rocket and other attacks ceased, Israel "knows how to carry out a release of prisoners as a goodwill gesture. We did it in the past . . . "

The public security minister was not suggesting a simultaneous release of both the soldier and prisoners, but rather that the soldier would be freed, the rocket fire would cease, and then Israel would free prisoners. The deal suggested by Mr Dichter is very similar to an Egyptian proposal rejected earlier this week by <u>Hamas</u>. A <u>Hamas</u> deputy said the Palestinian people "have no faith in goodwill gestures".

But having initially demanded the release of some 1,500 prisoners, <u>Hamas</u> officials appeared to be scaling back their demands, saying they would release the soldier and stop rocket attacks in exchange for the release of all Palestinian <u>female</u> prisoners (there are just over 100) and some 30 long-serving prisoners, who have been in Israeli jails for more than 20 years.

There has been no sign of life from Cpl Shalit since he was abducted on June 25th, but <u>Hamas</u> militants holding him released a statement yesterday saying he was receiving "humane" treatment in accordance with the precepts of Islam.

Israel might free prisoners - minister

In a statement from the EU, the Finnish presidency said: "The EU condemns the loss of lives caused by disproportionate use of force."

Load-Date: July 8, 2006



Israel set for military raid over kidnapped soldier

Belfast Telegraph

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

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Length: 1078 words

Byline: By Donald Mcintyre

Body

Israel began assembling troops, tanks and armoured vehicles on the Gaza border yesterday amid frantic diplomatic and political efforts to secure the safe release of the 19-year-old corporal seized by Palestinian militants.

The heavy build-up came as the three groups claiming responsibility for Sunday s raid on an Israeli army post demanded the release from Israeli jails of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and prisoners under 18 in return for information on the soldier captured in the attack.

Appearing to rule out a prisoner exchange deal with <u>Hamas</u>, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, declared: This is not a matter of negotiations, this is not a matter of bargaining. The contingency plans for what Mr Olmert defined as a broad and ongoing military operation inside Gaza the first since Israel withdrew settlers from the strip in August appeared to be on hold at least as long as there was a chance of diplomats and Palestinian officials persuading the captors to hand over Corporal Gilad Shalit unharmed.

Israel has launched a diplomatic initiative to persuade the international community that the crisis, and the issue of Cpl Shalit's release, was a make-orbreak test of the credibility of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, and his eligibility as a negotiating partner for Israel.

Despite public exhortations by the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian government on the militants to ensure Cpl Shalit was unharmed, and efforts by Mr Abbas to secure his release, Mr Olmert said: It should be clear that we see the Palestinian Authority on all its levels, from the chairman on downward, as the responsible element for this operation and all that happens from it. While insisting that Israel wanted to see diplomatic efforts involving senior Egyptian and Jordanian officials among others to secure Cpl Shalit's release take their course, Israel's ambassador to the UN, Dan Gillerman, warned: Time is limited, and added: For months the international community had been telling Israel that if it bolstered Mr Abbas's authority he would then prevail over <u>Hamas</u>. He has to prove he is the man in charge. He has talked the talk. Now he has to walk the walk. Mr Gillerman said if Mr Abbas succeeded it could help Israel to develop Mr Olmert's planned meeting with him into negotiations, but if he fails to deliver then we do not have a partner.

WalidAwad,aspokesman for Mr Abbas s office, said the President was doing everything to secure Cpl Shalit s release but warned that there was heavy pressure from families of 10,000 prisoners held in Israel to free some of them in return. He urged Israel not to resort to an armed incursion into Gaza and to allow space and time for discussions to proceed. If Israel wants to get the soldier out alive then force should not be a choice for anybody.

Mr Awad claimed that Ismail Haniyeh, the <u>Hamas</u> Palestinian Prime Minister, had been as surprised as the President at the soldier's seizure in an operation sanctioned from outside, and that there were splits between the faction in Gaza and the Damascus-based political leadership under Khaled Mashaal.

Israel set for military raid over kidnapped soldier

The demand for prisoner releases issued yesterday by the three militant groups <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing and two offshoots of the Palestinian Resistance Committees, the Salahadin brigades and the Islam Army was their first public acknowledgement they were holding the corporal.

A <u>Hamas</u> member of the Palestinian parliament said <u>Hamas</u> s part in the operation was ordered by the military and political leadership outside the cabinet including Mr Mashaal. But he added that <u>Hamas</u> had had no choice after Israeli attacks that killed civilians and that a price should be paid for Cpl Shalit s release.

At the mourning tent for one of the Palestinian gunmen killed in the operation, Mohammed Asmi Farwana, 22, the dead man s brother, Abu al-Majd, 29, said he had known nothing of his brother sinvolvement. Hesaid: It was a good operation. We want the soldier to go back to his family but in return for something. We want to see the prisoners released. Try to survive... we love you

Gilad Shalit, the quiet young man who has dual French-Israeli citizenship, excelled in physics at school and chose to do his military service in a combat unit. Noam Shalit, his French-born father, yesterday issued a call on Army Radio to his kidnappers, asking that they remember that he s a human being. He added: We want to hear a sign of life. We believe that those who are holding him also have families and children, and that they know what we are feeling. Addressing his son directly in the same broadcast, he added: Try to survive the difficult moments. We love you, and are waiting for you to come back home.

Prospects for negotiationBy Jerome Taylor

Israel has a history of negotiating prisoner exchanges with its enemies, who have often used hostage-taking as a political tool. In 1985 it agreed to the release of more than 1,150 Palestinian prisoners in return for three soldiers taken captive in Lebanon.

A similar deal was reached with the militant group Hizbollah in early 2004. Years of negotiations brokered by the Germans led to an agreement to release more than 400 militants in exchange for the Israeli businessman Tannenbaum Elhanan, who had been captured four years earlier. The remains of three Israeli soldiers were also returned. Despite a suicide bomber killing 10 Israelis on the day of the prisoners release, the exchange went ahead without a hitch.

Hizbollah arranged for the soldiers remains to be flown to Germany for identification, while Israel sent busloads of freed Palestinian prisoners to Lebanon. Two high-profile guerrilla leaders were among those released, as well as a German national, Stephen Smyrek, who had been caught working for Hizbollah in 1997.

<u>Hamas</u> has also benefited from prisoner exchanges in the past. In 1997, Israel was forced to release the group s spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, after two Mossad agents were caught by Jordan on a botched mission to assassinate Khaled Mashaal, himself a *Hamas* leader.

King Hussein of Jordan demanded heavy concessions from Israel as the assassination attempt directly contravened an earlier peace agreement signed by the two countries. The then Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was severely embarrassed by Sheikh Yassin's release as the spiritual leader soon began speaking out again in favour of suicide bombings. An Israeli helicopter gunship assassinated him in 2004.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



Editorial: Voters can elect who they wish

The New Zealand Herald January 25, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 567 words

Body

The United States can be forgiven to a certain extent for believing the world is America writ large. They see foreigners drinking their cola, munching their hamburgers, enjoying their movies and music. Little wonder that they suppose free elections anywhere will produce the government Americans would choose.

But in the Middle East that is plainly not so. Iran has fairly freely elected an Islamist government. Iraqis long ago rejected the Westernised leaders the Bush Administration had in mind for them, and the democracy the United States is expending so much money and effort to establish there could well produce a religious regime. Now, on the eve of elections in Palestine, Washington is disconcerted to find the party of the Islamic militant organisation, *Hamas*, might win more votes than any other.

<u>Hamas</u> has been polling almost as well as the secular Palestinian nationalist organisation, Fatah, and the US is reported to have spent almost \$3 million to try to influence the result. At least that is what the New York Times says it has been told by unnamed officials. Officially the US Government says it is "working with the Palestinian Authority to enhance democratic institutions and support democratic actors, not just Fatah".

That phrase, "not just Fatah", could be fatal to the prospects of the organisation founded by the late Yasser Arafat. The US seems blissfully unaware that any declaration of support is a kiss of death. Here, the anti-nuclear dispute has become a popular test of national sovereignty largely because the US does not like it. If that attitude can prevail in a Western democracy, how much more potent must it be in the Middle East?

But if Fatah loses the election that starts tonight its fate cannot be blamed entirely on the Judas kiss from the US. In its administration of the Palestinian territory, Fatah's own corruption and internal discords are more than enough to have turned voters against it. On the positive side, *Hamas* has much going for it. The organisation, which makes the world's news mostly for the terrorism it has sponsored, is as well known to Palestinians for providing welfare and other services that they have not received from the government of their territory.

<u>Hamas</u>, which has boycotted previous elections, looks certain to feature in the disposition of power from the parliamentary elections tonight. It will not be easy for the US or Israel to accept a Palestinian government that includes an organisation opposed to Israel's existence. But <u>Hamas</u> has down-played that in the election campaign and it need not be fatal to a relationship with Israel or the US. However much the US might regard <u>Hamas</u> as a terrorist organisation, and thereby "undemocratic", it has participated in this election. Religious parties are popular in Muslim societies and the West needs to recognise that.

Accepting elected Islamic governments does not mean respecting their treatment of <u>women</u> and religious dissidents, or any aspects of their law that are an affront to human rights and civil liberties. But if this is the way Muslim majorities prefer to order their societies, so be it. Islamist parties prosper mainly on external opposition,

Editorial: Voters can elect who they wish

much as the anti-nuclear cause has done here. Without Western antagonism they would stand to lose much of their appeal. Democracy never guarantees a desired result. Accepting the result is perversely the best way to change it.

Load-Date: January 24, 2006



The New York Times
July 3, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 6; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1472 words

Byline: By IAN FISHER and STEVEN ERLANGER; Ian Fisher reported from Gaza for this article, and Steven

Erlanger from Jerusalem.

Dateline: GAZA, Monday, July 3

Body

Israeli aircraft intensified their attacks on Palestinian targets in Gaza early on Monday, hitting the downtown offices of the Fatah political party here and sites in the northern part of the territory, a day after Israel's prime minister ordered his military to do whatever was necessary to pressure militants to free an Israeli soldier captured a week ago.

Just after daybreak, Israeli tanks and troops began to move into northern Gaza from massed positions on the border.

An Israeli Army official said the operation was not large, calling it "a pin-point operation, to reveal explosives and tunnels" prepared by Palestinians. "There's no massive entrance of forces right now," he said.

About 25 tanks entered Gaza to protect the troops, most of them from engineering brigades, the official said. Still, such an operation would be a logical preparation for a larger entry of forces later.

The strikes appeared to be a direct response to the instructions of the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, who told subordinates at a cabinet meeting on Sunday that he intended to make the lives of Gazans ever more miserable until the captured soldier, 19-year-old Cpl. Gilad Shalit, was released. But Israel also yielded somewhat to outside pressure by allowing a limited supply of fuel and food into Gaza.

Mr. Olmert, whose air force has already bombed Gaza's bridges, crippled its only power plant, shelled the Palestinian prime minister's office here and subjected all 1.4 million Gaza residents to night after night of sleep-depriving sonic booms, said he had ordered the military and government "to do everything in order to bring Gilad back home."

There were no immediate reports of casualties in the Israeli attacks early on Monday, but Israeli soldiers killed three Palestinian gunmen near the airport on Sunday night, raising the total Palestinian death toll in the latest crisis to five.

At the same time, senior Israeli military officials counseled the Israelis to have patience and suggested that the operation to pressure the <u>Hamas</u>-led government to release the soldier could take some time.

On Saturday, the Israeli defense minister, Amir Peretz, approved a limited opening of two border crossings for the next four days to allow in basic supplies of food, fuel and medical supplies. By early Sunday evening, 50 trucks of wheat, corn, meat, cooking oil and other basics had passed through the Karni crossing, according to Capt. Jacob Dallal, an Israeli military spokesman. About 265,000 gallons of diesel fuel, 21,000 gallons of gasoline and 200,000 tons of natural gas were shipped through the fuel terminal at Nahal Oz, he said.

A week after Palestinian militants attacked an Israeli military post, capturing Corporal Shalit and killing two other soldiers, both sides appeared to be groping for a solution to the crisis, each caught by potentially competing aims.

Israel has repeatedly signaled that it does not want to harm civilians or reoccupy Gaza, which it vacated last year, but it is struggling to find increasingly punitive ways to prevent any future kidnappings of soldiers, while trying to weaken <u>Hamas</u>, which Israel considers a terrorist organization. At the same time, leaders of the Fatah faction have appeared stymied by the refusal by <u>Hamas</u> and allied groups to release the corporal, as <u>Hamas</u> leaders have sought not to appear to be capitulating to Israeli pressure.

Meanwhile, aid groups have warned of a looming humanitarian crisis in Gaza, completely sealed off for a week. The United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, added his voice to the concern on Sunday, telling reporters at an African Union summit meeting in Gambia that Israel's actions appeared counterproductive. "I remain very concerned about the need to preserve Palestinian institutions and infrastructure," he was quoted as saying by Agence France-Presse. "They will be the basis for an eventual two-state solution and that's in the interest of both Israel and the Palestinians."

With Israel's limited reopening of two Gaza crossings, fuel began arriving by late morning at gas stations, many of them dry for days, but the relief did not necessarily ease anxiety here. With short tempers bursting into shouting matches, drivers waited for two hours at one station in Gaza City, which had received about 500 gallons of diesel --less than one-tenth the capacity of a fuel tanker. "Their aim is just to cause panic," said Sabem Bhar, an employee at the station. "They can't cut it off completely. But they want to pressure us, to play with our nerves."

Early on Wednesday, the Israeli military began its military operations to free Corporal Shalit, striking the power station, bridges, training camps for militants and suspected bomb-making factories.

Israeli artillery fire -- suspended on June 9 after seven members of a Palestinian family were killed on a beach in Gaza -- resumed in force, with hundreds of rounds fired every day from the land and sea. The Israeli military said it had fired 1,500 shells since the operation began and carried out more than 40 airstrikes.

But for all the pyrotechnics, the operation has been relatively restrained. Part of that restraint seems to reflect worry for Corporal Shalit's life. And part is over pressure from outside, including from the United States, not to endanger civilians' lives.

The shells have been aimed at open areas, many of them places in the north of Gaza where militants had been firing homemade Qassam rockets at civilians in Israel.

But the Israel military has been steadily increasing the pressure, on both the militant groups and Palestinians generally, in the hope that their discomfort forces the prisoner's release.

In addition to the cuts in power -- which has also limited water and air-conditioning on sweltering days -- Israeli jets have scorched over the skies at night setting off sonic booms that jolt people out of bed. Overnight on Sunday, Israeli aircraft hit the empty office of the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya, who is also a top member of *Hamas*, which led the attack through a secret tunnel into Israel that ended with the capture of Corporal Shalit.

The message, underscored regularly by Israeli officials, is that Israel would not hesitate to assassinate top <u>Hamas</u> leaders, and that they hold the <u>Hamas</u> government responsible for the actions of <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing.

Mr. Haniya visited his office after the strike. "This is the policy of the jungle and arrogance," Reuters quoted him as saying. "Nothing will affect our spirit and nothing will affect our steadfastness."

Despite the small number of casualties, Israel has been coming under strong criticism for its attacks on the infrastructure in Gaza, especially for the bombing of the power plant, which is partly owned by an American company.

The plant -- still smoking four days after all six of its transformers were hit -- was visited Sunday both by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, and the United Nations special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Alvaro de Soto.

Two days ago, Israeli warplanes also bombed the entrances to all four access roads to the plant, which is insured by the United States Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or OPIC.

Meantime on Sunday, hopes for any negotiated end to the standoff looked increasingly bleak.

Egypt has taken the lead in trying to find some compromise, but according to news media reports, it has been frustrated by apparent divisions inside <u>Hamas</u>, split into parts in Gaza and inSyria, where its political leader, Khaled Meshal, lives. <u>Hamas</u> has demanded the release of all <u>women</u> and people under 18 years old in Israeli jails in exchange for Corporal Shalit, who Palestinian officials say is alive and in good health.

"Efforts are continuing without results," Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a top aide to Mr. Abbas, who has also been working on a deal, told reporters. "We are close to a dead end."

On Saturday, Mr. Abbas told The Associated Press, "The Egyptian efforts have encountered difficulties because there is no partner in <u>Hamas</u> capable of making decisions."

"The <u>Hamas</u> leadership abroad says that the decision is in the hands of the military wing in Gaza," he added, "while the military wing says that the decision must be made by the leadership abroad."

It is uncertain what kind of deal might be acceptable to Israel. Mr. Olmert has ruled out any prisoner exchange with <u>Hamas</u>, and did so again in the cabinet meeting on Sunday. "Surrendering today means inviting more extortion," he said.

It is possible, however, that in a wider summit meeting later with Mr. Abbas, Mr. Olmert might be willing to release Palestinian prisoners, as former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon did in his summit meeting with Mr. Abbas in Egypt in February 2005.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: Ehud Olmert

A firefighter at the scene of an Israeli attack early today in Gaza City. Israel also carried out airstrikes in the northern part of Gaza. (Photo by Petros Karadjias/Associated Press)(pg. A1)

Israeli troops and armor massed on Gaza's northern border this morning. (Photo by Rina Castelnuovo for The New York Times)(pg. A9)

Load-Date: July 3, 2006



Fears tactics may turn young to al-Qaeda

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

July 8, 2006 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 13

Length: 1092 words **Byline:** Ed O'Loughlin

Body

The Palestinians are impervious to Israeli military logic, writes Ed O'Loughlin in Gaza.

PROFESSIONAL soldiers are usually keen to warn their civilian bosses about what they call "mission creep", the error of sending in troops to do undefined jobs, with ill-defined goals and no established exit strategies.

By any conventional military standards, Israel's reinvasion of parts of the Gaza Strip this week had "mission creep" written all over it, even before the first tank rolled up to the edge of Beit Lahia and began firing its guns.

According to the Israeli defence establishment, the primary purpose of Operation Summer Rains is to secure the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit, captured by Palestinian militants on June 25.

However, so far as anyone - including Israeli intelligence - knows, the 19-year-old tank gunner is being held in the south of the strip, far from the present bloody incursion.

The killing of as many as 40 Palestinians since Corporal Shalit's capture, reportedly including six civilians, is unlikely to increase his captors' wish to free him alive and with nothing in return, as Israel demands.

The second rationale for the attack is to prevent Palestinian militants from firing homemade rockets at towns in Israel, as some groups have continued to do ever since Israel withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza in September. Yet a previous Israeli invasion of the northern rocket-launching zone in 2004 killed more than 120 Palestinians but failed to prevent the rocket fire.

Far from being deterred by Israel's new invasion, the armed wing of the Palestinian ruling party, <u>Hamas</u>, reacted by firing a new long-range twin-engined rocket, which it had been hinting it was holding in reserve during a 15-month self-imposed ceasefire.

The Israeli Defence Force's muddled new mission has already claimed the life of one soldier, Staff Sergeant Yehuda Bassel, 21, who might have been killed by his own side.

Nonetheless, Israel's leaders, civilian and military, are unlikely to be deterred in the short term.

"I don't know if we will succeed to free Gilad [Shalit] or if we will stop the rocket fire," admitted Tzachi Hanegbi, a senior MP for the ruling Kadima party. "The policies are aimed at making clear that Israel's patience has been tested, that it has a right to self-defence and that the price it has paid is intolerable."

Fears tactics may turn young to al-Qaeda

In other words, the Israeli Government is using its massive military superiority to send the Palestinians a message. But what if the Palestinians fail to take the point?

"Israel has backed itself into a corner," Ismail al-Ashqar, a <u>Hamas</u> MP, confidently announced, even as Israeli shells pounded near his office in the northern Gaza town of Jabalya.

"The civilian Prime Minister, [Ehud] Olmert, and the civilian Defence Minister, Amir Peretz, want to prove that they are as strong as all the others who came before them - military men like [Ariel] Sharon or [Yitzhak] Rabin - and that they are better leaders," Mr Ashqar said.

"We know we are about to lose militarily but in the future we will win. All these Israeli attacks and killings and so on are good for us. They make us strong and they unite us with the Arab world and the Muslim world."

The present Israeli operation again demonstrates that while lightly armed Palestinian militants are far from invulnerable to tanks, helicopters and artillery, they are impervious to military logic.

As before, the young men lurking in the alleyways of north Gaza, infused with dreams of martyrdom and fingering their rifles and light anti-tank weapons, are convinced they can exact a high toll on the invading Israelis, despite experience suggesting otherwise.

The older men, on the other hand, are more susceptible to worldly pressures - the killing of <u>women</u> and children, homes and schools destroyed, the threat of personal assassination - the kind of measures which Italy and Switzerland condemned this week as the disproportionate use of force against a civilian population, contrary to the Geneva Conventions.

Here again there is a practical problem with Israel's tactics: they take the older, wiser and more worldly men, the ones who might actually be listening to Israel's message, out of the game. The arrests last week of most of <u>Hamas</u>'s political leadership in the West Bank has been widely interpreted by the Israeli media and security experts as a move to oust the democratically elected Palestinian ruling party.

"Security sources" say that plans for winding up <u>Hamas</u> as a political party were in place before Corporal Shalit's capture, an operation which, it is generally agreed, seems to have caused the <u>Hamas</u> Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, surprise and dismay.

News of the abduction came just as <u>Hamas</u> and the former ruling party, Fatah, were finalising a deal, based on the so-called "prisoners' document" drawn up by senior Palestinian prisoners, whereby <u>Hamas</u> would for the first time recognise Israel and the need for a peaceful negotiated solution to the conflict with Israel.

Now, instead of leading his people towards compromise and perhaps even peace, Mr Haniyeh is a bystander as the situation slides ever deeper into bloodshed.

Even in Israel, widespread public satisfaction at the move against a hated enemy is being tempered, in some quarters, by caution. "The problem is that today it is already not clear that acting against the political and military echelons of <u>Hamas</u> will pull our chestnuts out of the fire," Professor Shaul Mishal, a <u>Hamas</u> expert at Tel Aviv University, wrote in Yedioth Ahronoth this week.

"On the contrary, it could clear the way for a young and determined brand of terrorists ... for whom the arms and the struggle are the point of their existence, for whom Palestine is only a way station in a long journey of global jihad modelled after al-Qaeda ... therefore, I do not see a clear connection between the wholesale arrests of the political leadership to bringing the soldier back home."

Mkhaimar Abusada, a political scientist at Gaza University, recalls how the Israeli Government refused to talk to the former Fatah leader, Yasser Arafat, because it accused him of being behind all Palestinian terrorism. It still declines to hold talks with Mr Arafat's moderate and pragmatic successor, the Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, on the grounds that he is too weak to bother with.

Fears tactics may turn young to al-Qaeda

"Now they say they don't want to negotiate with <u>Hamas</u>," Professor Abusada said, " but ... if Israel misses this opportunity - and time is running out - I really don't think Israel will find anyone else to talk with in the future."

Graphic

PHOTO: Grief ... relatives of a Palestinian man killed in an Israeli attack attend his funeral in Gaza City. As many as 40 Palestinians have been killed since an Israeli soldier was captured on June 25. Photo: AFP/Mahmud Hams

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



THIS IS THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

The Mirror
July 3, 2006 Monday
3 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 317 words

Byline: BY JON CLEMENTS

Body

ISRAEL was yesterday accused of following the law of the jungle after blowing up the Palestinian Prime Minister's HQ.

Ismail Haniyeh, who leads the <u>Hamas</u> government, said: "This is the policy of the jungle and arrogance - nothing will affect our spirit and nothing will affect steadfastness."

And *Hamas* warned it would attack civilian targets in Israel, including schools, unless it stopped military action.

A spokesman said: "If it continues with these attacks we will strike similar targets in the Zionist Occupation which we have not targeted until now." A helicopter fired a missile at Mr Haniyeh's offices in Gaza in a bid to get Palestinian militants to free kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit. The building was empty and no one was hurt.

An office used by <u>Hamas</u> was hit in a second attack, killing a militant, and a school was blasted but there was no casualties.

Tanks and troops occupied Gaza for the first time since August after Corporal Shalit, 19, was abducted a week ago. Israel has refused to negotiate.

<u>Hamas</u> had asked for all Palestinian <u>women</u> and children in Israeli jails to be freed. It later changed its demands to the release of 1,000 prisoners. Israel has sealed Gaza's borders and destroyed its only power plant, roads, bridges and suspected arms factories.

The army opened one crossing yesterday for food and medical supplies amid warnings of a humanitarian disaster.

But Israeli PM Ehud Olmert told his cabinet: "Nobody has died of a lack of electricity.

THIS IS THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

"They tell us that people in Gaza are not comfortable, but nobody has died of an electrical blackout, but from Qassams [rockets] they have. We won't create a humanitarian crisis."

There are fears Mr Haniyeh could be assassinated. Mr Olmert warned: "I have ordered the military to use their power to pursue these terrorists and those who dispatch them, provide their ideology and sponsor them. No one will be exempt."

j.clements@mirror.co.uk

Graphic

ANGER: Haniyeh yesterday

Load-Date: July 3, 2006



INTERNATIONAL NEWS: Israelis demand release of kidnapped soldier

Daily Post (North Wales)
June 27, 2006, Tuesday
Mersey Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 20

Length: 463 words

Byline: LIAM CHRISTOPHER Daily Post Correspondent

Body

ISRAEL Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he has ordered the army to prepare a "broad" military operation against militants in the Gaza Strip following the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier.

"It should be clear there will be no immunity to those who are holding him," Olmert said in a speech at a business conference in Jerusalem.

Olmert also said he holds the entire Palestinian leadership for the safety of the soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit. Shalit was seized in a cross-border raid early Sunday. Two Israeli soldiers were also killed in the attack.

The militants tunnelled into Gaza and attacked the Israeli army post at the Kerem Shalom crossing from behind, surprising the soldiers.

It was the first such ground assault since Israel pulled out of Gaza last summer and the first soldier abducted by Palestinians in 12 years.

Three of the Palestinian attackers were killed in the battle with Israeli forces at the crossing where the borders of Israel, Egypt and Gaza converge.

Later, a statement from Palestinian groups purporting to hold the soldier demanded the release of <u>women</u> and children under 18 held in Israeli prisons.

The demand, if authentic, was the first by his captors.

Israel, which sent some troops into Gaza after the assault, blamed the Hamasled government and warned that militants and their leaders will be killed if the abducted soldier is harmed.

Called into an emergency session last night, the Security Cabinet authorised Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to order military moves against Palestinian militants in Gaza.

But first there would be diplomatic efforts to win the return of the soldier, according to a government statement.

<u>Hamas</u> played a leading role in the long-planned attack, and the operation cast a shadow over talks between <u>Hamas</u> and moderate Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party over a joint programme that includes the recognition of Israel as a nation.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS: Israelis demand release of kidnapped soldier

After the attack, Israel closed the vital border crossings, the only way people and goods can enter or exit the territory. Previous closings have lead to widespread hardship in the area.

Speaking in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Deputy Prime Minister Nasser Shaer of <u>Hamas</u> called for the soldier's release.

"We care about the life of the soldier and call upon the kidnappers to guarantee his life and to release him," he said.

<u>Hamas</u> TV ran a statement by Abu Musanna, a spokesman for Islamic Army rejecting the appeals. He said the group's demands in exchange for the soldier would be "a prize for our people".

<u>Hamas</u>, which recently resumed its open involvement in rocket fire on Israel, confirmed its participation in the attack. The small Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) and a previously unknown group, the Islamic Army, said they also took part.

We care about the life of the soldier

Graphic

An Israeli tank manoeuvres at a gathering point near Kibbutz Mefalsim, southern Israel

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



Fatah invokes memory of Arafat as campaign closes

Belfast Telegraph January 24, 2006

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Length: 768 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip

Body

Fatah leaders invoked the memory of Yasser Arafat, apologised for "mistakes", and reminded voters that the mainstream Palestinian movement had resisted Israel long before <u>Hamas</u>, in a frenetic last day of election campaigning yesterday.

Fatah went all out to maximise its vote in tomorrow's parliamentary elections, even as it began to come to terms with the prospect that *Hamas* was on the point of ending its virtual monopoly within the Palestinian political institutions.

Mohammed Dahlan, the most prominent Fatah leader in Gaza, appealed for support outside the late president's house before travelling to his home base of Khan Yunis to speakto a chaotic but enthusiastic rally of several thousand supporters.

He told Fatah activists at the old presidential residence in Gaza City that they would be sending a "loving letter" to Mr Arafat and committing themselves to his life goal of "establishing an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital, and a right and just solution for (Palestinian) refugees."

A leading Fatah candidate, Sami Masherawi, told the rally: "Fatah apologises for the mistakes of the past. We will not allow a few corrupt figures to damage the Fatah reputation." Another Fatah activist, Fouad Madi, declared: "It was we who carried the olive branch and the gun. We

used force and stones first. We wrote our struggle in blood and for 50 years we led the struggle."

In a message designed to defend Fatah against <u>Hamas</u>'s persistent claims to have "driven" Israel out of Gaza, a huge painted banner depicted an armed and masked Fatah militant in combat and proclaimed: "In Gaza we're victorious and to the West Bank and Jerusalem we are going."

But despite the high-flown rhetoric of the campaign for the Palestinian

Legislative Council elections, it was clear in Mr Dahlan's home town that more mundane - and largely internal - issues were preoccupying most voters.

While Fatah supporters thronged to the rally amid sporadic shooting into the air, a group of <u>women</u> at the poverty-stricken Khan Yunis refugee camp explained why they were likely to vote for <u>Hamas</u>.

Samaher Sidha, sitting outside the bullet-riddled home of a neighbour on what had been the front line between the camp and the Jewish settlement of Neve Dekalim until the Israeli withdrawal in August, pointed to the rubble of a house that was demolished by Israel.

Mrs Sidha, a 23-year-old mother-of-four, said Mr Dahlan had visited and "
promised he would deal with all this. But we heard this before in the last
elections. There were lots of promises but nothing was implemented."
Acknowledging that this was an area where *Hamas* supplied food and financial
help to poor families, including her own, Mrs Sidha said of the
Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority: "In 10 years they haven't done
anything. We want to change them, we have to try something new." Citing
"corruption and security chaos" as key issues, she said: "Why
did the authority increase the wages of their employees? That was a bribe.
We elected Fatah and [Mr] Dahlan but they haven't done anything about
unemployment or started construction work."

There were similar worries even among enthusiastic supporters of Mr Dahlan.

Samira Tawfiq, 27, a Palestinian Authority employee, said she would vote for

Fatah and hoped Mr Dahlan would be the Palestinian president "in the

Page 3 of 3

Fatah invokes memory of Arafat as campaign closes

future". She added that the lack of internal security - with armed

feuding between Palestinians - and unemployment were the key issues. "

We used to see blood when the occupation was here but we are still seeing

it. What we need is a strong leader. Fatah needs to change. It's not only

me, people love Fatah but they want to see it change. But they are not

extremists; they will negotiate with Israel."

With the latest survey by the respected Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki

showing Fatah at 47 per cent and *Hamas* at 42, the popular Fatah leader

Marwan Barghouti appeared, in an interview from jail on Sunday, to hold out

the possibility of power-sharing with *Hamas*. Mr Dahlan, who unlike Mr

Barghouti is standing as a district candidate and cannot be certain of a

parliamentary seat until the election is over, did not go so far yesterday

but said he was happy that *Hamas* was at last participating in a national

election.

Convulsed by the election yesterday, Khan Yunis was a riot of competing

banner-waving processions, including a parade by the radical Popular Front

for the Liberation of Palestine led by young men folk dancing.

The ultra-militant Islamic Jihad, which is responsible for the last six

suicide bombings in Israel, urged Palestinians not to vote.

Load-Date: January 24, 2006



Israel floats prisoner swap

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

July 8, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. C14

Length: 625 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) -- Israeli forces opened a new eastern front in a three-day-old ground assault in Gaza early today, exchanging fire with militants and closing in on a dense residential area, witnesses said.

The forces, including some 15 tanks, entered Gaza near the Karni commercial crossing, moving along the border area just 500 metres from the Shajaiyeh neighborhood.

Meanwhile, Israel sent conflicting signals Friday on whether it is prepared to swap Palestinian prisoners for a 19-year-old Israeli soldier whose capture by Palestinian militants has touched off a harsh Israeli military campaign.

Israeli troops killed 32 Palestinians in two days of air strikes and artillery barrages, Palestinian officials said. The campaign is aimed at stopping rocket attacks on Israel and pressuring the ruling <u>Hamas</u> movement to release the kidnapped soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

Israel's public security minister, Avi Dichter, suggested Friday that Israel is ready to cut a deal that would fall short of a direct prisoner swap,

Dichter said Israel could free some Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture, provided Shalit is released and <u>Hamas</u> stops rocket attacks on Israel. If there is calm, "Israel will need to, after some time, release prisoners as a reciprocal gesture," Dichter said. "Israel knows how to do this. Israel has done this more than once in the past."

He was referring to previous prisoner swaps, usually in deals that free far more Palestinians than Israelis. Privately, Israeli officials have said they did not rule out talks in Shalit's case, either.

Moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said he has won Israeli assurances it would reciprocate for Shalit's release by freeing some prisoners, as well as *Hamas* politicians it has rounded up in recent days.

Officials close to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert later said Dichter's statement did not reflect the views of the government, and that Israel insists on the soldier's unconditional release. However, the government did not issue a formal statement distancing itself from the minister.

Israel does not want to be seen as cutting a deal with <u>Hamas</u> militants, but also does not seem to have a way to free the soldier by force.

Israel floats prisoner swap

<u>Hamas</u> said Friday that Shalit, seized June 25, is alive and being treated well. It also urged Israel to negotiate. The Islamic militant group initially demanded the release of hundreds of prisoners, but then scaled back its demands, seeking freedom for some 150 <u>female</u> inmates and several dozen men serving long sentences.

The internal Israeli debate came as ground troops backed by tanks pursued militants in the streets of crowded Gaza towns, and aircraft struck northern Gaza.

Shalit is believed to be held in southern Gaza, and days after he was seized, Israel launched its biggest military campaign in the coastal strip since ending its 38-year occupation there nine months ago.

The incursion began in southern Gaza, then expanded Thursday to the north as troops seized control of a ribbon of land. On Friday, Israeli aircraft struck Palestinian gunmen in northern Gaza.

Palestinian health officials said a total of 32 Palestinians were killed over two days, including 24 on Thursday, in the bloodiest day of clashes since the renewed fighting began last week. An 11-year-old boy shot in the chest during fighting on Wednesday died of his wounds late Friday, Palestinian hospital officials said.

Despite the Israeli offensive, Palestinian rocket fire from Gaza continued Friday, with militants launching a dozen projectiles toward Israel.

Egyptian mediators have proposed a two-stage deal in which <u>Hamas</u> would free Shalit and halt rocket attacks. In exchange, Israel would halt its offensive and promise to free some Palestinian prisoners in the future.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Getty Images; An Israeli soldier looks through a gun sight during a military operation Friday in the northern Gaza Strip

Load-Date: July 8, 2006



Militants give Israel 24 hours to release prisoners

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

July 4, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 23

Length: 738 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) -- Militants gave Israel 24 hours starting Monday to begin releasing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, implying they would kill an abducted Israeli soldier if their demands were not met.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejected any negotiations with the militants, and the army pressed ahead with its Gaza offensive. Privately, though, some Israeli officials said the government had not ruled out any options to win Cpl. Gilad Shalit's freedom.

Early Tuesday, Palestinian residents said several Israeli tanks and a bulldozer entered the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun. The military said they were still outside. Israel has been building up troops across from northern Gaza, preparing for an invasion.

Tanks and troops have been entering and exiting in small numbers through the day. The military said it was carrying out "limited" operations to uncover explosives and tunnels.

Israel has pounded Gaza with air strikes and artillery shells for nearly a week in an unsuccessful effort to force the militants to release Shalit. Israel sent a small force of tanks into northern Gaza on Monday, raising fears it was gearing up for a large invasion.

A <u>Hamas</u> militant was killed and four wounded in an Israeli air strike in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza just after midnight, Palestinians said. Israel said its air force targeted Palestinians planting a bomb near soldiers' positions.

Early Tuesday, Israeli forces surrounded a building in the West Bank city of Ramallah. The military said militants who abducted and killed an 18-year-old Israeli settler last week were holed up inside, and the goal was to arrest them.

After Shalit was seized in a June 25 raid on an army post, his captors demanded Israel free all imprisoned Palestinian <u>women</u> and minors in exchange for information about him. They later increased their demand to include the release of a further 1,000 prisoners.

Early Monday, <u>Hamas'</u> military wing -- one of the three groups holding him -- issued a statement giving Israel until 6 a.m. today (11 p.m. EDT Monday) to "start" freeing the prisoners.

Militants give Israel 24 hours to release prisoners

If Israel doesn't comply, "we will consider the soldier's case to be closed," the statement said, "and then the enemy must bear all the consequences of the future results."

Abu Obeida, spokesman for the <u>Hamas</u> military wing, later told The Associated Press that Israel must at least begin freeing the **women** and minors.

"Israel must understand that the resistance factions are serious in this matter. They will close this case if (Israel) doesn't deal with the demands," he said, adding that the militants would not compromise.

Abu Obeida refused to specify what the militants would do if the ultimatum was ignored. Killing Shalit, however, would remove their only leverage against Israel and likely would invite far harsher reprisals against Gaza.

"If God forbid, they should hurt the soldier, our operations will be far, far worse," Israeli Justice Minister Haim Ramon told Channel 2 television.

Olmert said the government would not cave in to extortion.

"There will be no negotiations to release prisoners," his office said in a statement, adding that he holds the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Authority responsible for Shalit's safety.

Many Palestinians say they do not want Shalit to be harmed. But the demand to free some of the 9,000 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel is very popular here, and it would be difficult for the militants to release Shalit without at least a token prisoner release.

"I think they should release the <u>women</u> and children and (the militants should) release the soldier. But without anything in return, they'll kill him," said Saked Abu Kosh, 30, a pharmacist in the southern town of Rafah.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was in Saudi Arabia on Monday to co-ordinate with the Saudis on efforts to reach a deal over Shalit. Mubarak already has tried to enlist Syria's help.

Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz warned Damascus that he held it responsible for Shalit's fate because the Syrian government harboured <u>Hamas</u>' leaders.

Dahlan spoke as the Palestinian parliament held its first session since Israel arrested dozens of top <u>Hamas</u> officials in the West Bank, including eight cabinet ministers and 26 legislators, late last week.

"By arresting those legislators and ministers, Israel is trying to hijack the Palestinian political regime, but our people will protect our political regime," parliament speaker Abdel Aziz Duaik said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Associated Press; Israeli army elite troops storm <u>Hamas</u> offices during an overnight operation on Sunday in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Load-Date: July 5, 2006



<u>Israel rejects militants' ultimatum: Deadline, threat to kill hostage soldier</u> slammed as 'extortion'

Ottawa Citizen
July 4, 2006 Tuesday
EARLY Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 621 words

Byline: Dion Nissenbaum, McClatchy Newspapers

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Palestinian militants holding a 19-year-old Israeli soldier hostage ratcheted up the pressure yesterday by issuing a veiled threat to kill him unless Israel releases hundreds of prisoners by dawn today.

In a statement immediately rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as extortion, the three groups holding Cpl. Gilad Shalit said they would "consider the current case closed" if Israel didn't begin releasing more than 1,000 prisoners by 6 a.m. local time -- or 11 o'clock last night -- "and then the enemy shall have to bear all future consequences."

Within hours, Mr. Olmert issued a terse statement warning leaders of the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Authority that Israel would hold them responsible if the Israeli soldier was killed.

"Israel will not give into the extortion by the Palestinian Authority and the <u>Hamas</u> government, which are led by a murderous terrorist organization," the statement read. "We will not conduct any negotiations on the release of prisoners."

The demand came as diplomatic efforts to secure Cpl. Shalit's release appeared deadlocked, Israeli tanks began rolling into northern Gaza for small-scale operations and the soldier's father urged Israel's military chief of staff to get his son back alive.

"Everything is at a standstill and we are going around in a circle, unfortunately," said Qais Abu Leila, a Palestinian lawmaker who has been working to resolve the crisis.

Pressure has slowly been building since June 25, when Palestinian militants, including <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, attacked an Israeli military outpost along the Gaza Strip border, killing two soldiers and capturing Cpl. Shalit.

Within days, Israel sent tanks back into the Gaza Strip for the first time since last September, when it officially ended its 38-year military occupation of the area. Israeli troops took over the defunct Gaza Strip airport as a base of operations, but stopped short of a full-scale invasion.

Israel rejects militants' ultimatum: Deadline, threat to kill hostage soldier slammed as 'extortion'

Over the past week, Israeli jets have crippled the region's only power plant, destroyed key bridges, buzzed the summer palace of Syrian President Bashar Assad, bombed militant training camps and fired missiles into the empty office of Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh. Israeli soldiers in the West Bank arrested eight members of the <u>Hamas</u> Cabinet and nearly two dozen Palestinian lawmakers.

Early yesterday, Israeli tanks moved into northern Gaza, where they began looking for tunnels in what could be a precursor to a larger military operation in the area.

The militants holding Cpl. Shalit originally demanded that Israel release about 100 <u>women</u> prisoners and 300 other Palestinians under the age of 18 who are behind bars. After Israel began its military campaign, the militants upped their demand and called on Israel to release 1,000 prisoners.

Israeli leaders have consistently said they won't negotiate for Cpl. Shalit's release because it would only encourage militants to try and abduct more Israelis.

After a week of fruitless attempts to resolve the crisis, there were indications yesterday that the standoff could stretch on for weeks.

Israeli newspapers reported the military has drawn up a prolonged campaign that calls for gradually turning up the pressure on the Gaza Strip by arresting more <u>Hamas</u> leaders, taking over areas in the northern Gaza Strip used by militants to fire rudimentary rockets into southern Israel, and potentially killing <u>Hamas</u> leaders in both Gaza and Syria.

Soon after the militants made their demands, Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Dan Halutz met with Cpl. Shalit's family in northern Israel. The soldier's father urged the military to do all it could to ensure that his son comes home safely, according to the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper's website.

Graphic

Photo: Jim Hollander, The Associated Press; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel will not negotiate with Palestinian militants over the release of Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

Load-Date: July 4, 2006



Israel 'has annexed Jordan Valley and shut out Palestinians'

The Independent (London)
February 14, 2006 Tuesday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 20

Length: 618 words

Byline: By Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

Israel has in effect "annexed" the Jordan Valley, or eastern strip of the West Bank, by severely restricting the movements of Palestinians inside it, it was claimed yesterday.

The accusation was made by B'tselem, a leading Israeli human rights organisation, following investigations by B'tselem and the newspaper Ha'aretz which showed that some 200,000 Palestinian West Bank residents are systematically prevented from entering the Jordan Valley area, including farmers seeking to cultivate their own land and seasonal farm workers who used to work there regularly.

The Jordan Valley is politically highly sensitive because by remaining under Israeli control it would further substantially restrict the scale of any Palestinian state. Ehud Olmert, the acting Prime Minister, while being careful not to be specific about the fate of Israeli settlements in the area when he foreshadowed further West Bank withdrawals last week, has made it clear that Israel would maintain control of the border with Jordan.

B'tselem said the general prohibition on the entry of any Palestinians into the Jordan Valley apart from those officially registered as living there "severely violates the human rights of the Palestinian population" by severing what amounts to a third of the West Bank area from the rest.

Although the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have progressively prevented Palestinians travelling on Route 90, the main road running along the valley, and set up seven checkpoints restricting easterly movement of Palestinians, B'Tselem said much heavier restrictions on movement through the checkpoints were introduced after March 2005, when Jericho was handed over to Palestinian control.

The IDF said the measures had been taken to protect settlers in the Jordan Valley area from "at least a handful" of terrorist attacks along Route 90 over the past six years.

Although the settlements in the Jordan Valley were created, like others, since the Six-Day War in 1967, the IDF pointed out that under the Oslo accords the area was classified as "Area C" under which it continued to be controlled by Israel. A statement said some workers with the right permits and "humanitarian" cases were allowed to travel into the area. Such workers are believed to number only in the hundreds.

Israel 'has annexed Jordan Valley and shut out Palestinians'

But B'Tselem said that beside excluding many Palestinians bordering the area from their source of livelihood, the measures meant that residents of Palestinian villages north of Jericho were not able to host relatives or friends who lived outside the valley or in the city itself. **Women** who married residents of the valley but had not changed their ID or addresses were frightened to leave the area in case they were refused permission to return.

A 25-year-old Palestinian woman, Nafia Abu Musaed, died in hospital yesterday after being shot in the chest by Israeli troops near the Gaza border fence. IDF sources said that the soldiers involved had identified "movement of suspicious figures" 50 metres from the fence when the shots were fired. Palestinians sources said the woman was several hundred metres from the barrier.

In the West Bank, Mushir al Masri, aprominent <u>Hamas</u> member of the new Palestinian Legislative Council said the new prime minister after the <u>Hamas</u> election victory would be a member of the group.

This appeared to rule out the possibility of an independent or public figure only loosely connected with *Hamas*.

There has been speculation that this could be Ishmael Haniya, numberr one on the <u>Hamas</u> candidates' list in the elections and regarded as one of the more pragmatic <u>Hamas</u> leaders. But Mr al Masri refused to confirm that and other <u>Hamas</u> sources said a final decision had yet to be taken on who it would be.

COMMENT, PAGE 27

Graphic

Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the right-wing Likud Party, at a Jordan Valley Jewish settlement EPA

Load-Date: February 14, 2006



Under the gun in Gaza

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

February 4, 2006 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 30

Length: 1534 words **Byline:** Ed O'Loughlin

Body

While Israel and its allies are determined to hold a hard line against the new <u>Hamas</u> Government, blockaded Palestinians see nothing but hypocrisy, writes Ed O'Loughlin.

ON JANUARY 15, on the basis of claimed intelligence about terrorist tunnel digging, the Israeli Government shut down Karni - the sole agreed crossing point for goods entering and leaving the Gaza Strip. Since then, 1.3 million Palestinians in the 365-square-kilometre fenced-in ghetto have been deprived of dairy products, fresh fruit and building materials.

The UN says medical and humanitarian supplies are running low.

Worse, the closure is costing impoverished Gaza half a million US dollars every day, as vital food and flower exports rot at the border. With Gaza's domestic market already swamped with unexportable produce, more than 150 tonnes had been dumped by last Saturday.

Much of this produce comes from a single company, the Palestinian Economic Development Corporation, set up to take over greenhouses which the World Bank bought only months ago from departing Jewish settlers.

"We have to pay our labourers and our suppliers and the whole project is threatened if we can't do that," said the corporation's Ayed Abu Ramadan. "More than 4000 job opportunities are at risk."

Another Palestinian sob story. But this one wasn't meant to end like this.

It was less than three months ago, on November 15, that the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, pulled a famous all-nighter in Jerusalem to extract from Israel a promise that it would allow Gaza's trade to flow freely through Karni. Under strong US pressure, Israel also promised to implement a long-stalled commitment to allow ordinary Palestinians "safe passage" between the isolated territories of the West Bank and Gaza, travelling in heavily guarded non-stop convoys.

At stake, as Australian-born peace envoy James Wolfensohn outlined at the time, were global hopes that Israel's withdrawal from Gaza last September would spark off a new round of peace-making. That in turn depended on improving the often desperate living conditions of Palestinians, who would otherwise have nothing to lose from continuing violence.

Under the gun in Gaza

The deal has not been honoured. Before last month's shutdown the number of truckloads of goods Israel allowed to pass through Karni peaked at 80 a day - far short of the agreed 150 minimum.

Israel also reneged on the "safe passage" agreement, claiming that it was worried about security at Gaza's Rafah border crossing, handed over to Egypt and Palestinian control under the November 15 deal. European police monitors at the crossing told the Herald this week that they were unaware of the serious violations of the Rafah deal now alleged by Israel.

The Palestinians accuse Israel of waging economic and social warfare against their people and institutions, of still relentlessly playing the Middle East's old zero-sum game. But after years of Palestinian terrorism Israel is not easily contradicted when it uses security as a reason for backing out of deals.

This week, for instance, the Israeli Government announced it would withhold \$US55 million (\$72.7 million) in January customs revenue which it owes the Palestinian Authority under its Oslo obligations. The decision, which follows the dramatic victory of the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u> in last week's elections, is officially based on security grounds. "If we pay over this money there is no guarantee that it won't come back to haunt us in the form of suicide bombings," said a foreign ministry spokesman.

Israeli ministers and officials, led by the acting Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, made it clear Israel will never deal with a <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Authority unless it renounces violence, recognises the right of Israel to exist and honours all previous agreements with Israel made by the discredited Fatah party.

It would be difficult to argue with such a statement of principle in the face of unrepentant terrorism, and nobody did so when the so-called quartet of would-be Middle East peacemakers - the US, EU, UN and Russia - met in London this week.

Palestinians have a very different view of things. Why, they ask, is <u>Hamas</u> being told it must agree up front to honour Fatah's agreements - the failed 1993 Oslo Accords, the abject 2003 "road map for peace" - when Israel has been able to ignore many of its own obligations, notably on the freezing of its ever-growing settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the easing of its onerous military restrictions on everyday Palestinian life and - only this week - the payment of money which it owes the Palestinian Authority under formal Oslo commitments?

Why should <u>Hamas</u> formally recognise the legitimacy of a Jewish state in Israel when successive Israeli governments have taken practical steps to block the creation of a genuine Palestinian state "until the Palestinians turn into Finns", as a senior government adviser famously admitted?

And why, they ask, is the world calling on <u>Hamas</u> to renounce violence when it has been on a ceasefire for a year now?

Israeli intelligence blames <u>Hamas</u> for the death of only one of the 35 Israelis killed since all the main parties to the conflict, including Israel and <u>Hamas</u>, agreed to a de facto truce on February 7 last year (most of the rest were killed by Islamic Jihad).

Since then, despite the agreement, Israeli forces have killed more than 190 Palestinians, including several members of *Hamas*, and arrested thousands more. In the past week they shot dead two children.

It was the internationally presentable Olmert, who said in 2003 of Oslo signatory and elected Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat, then imprisoned in his Ramallah office, "Expulsion is certainly one of the options; killing is also one of the options."

Why, ask Palestinians, does nobody in the West ever ask Israel to renounce the use of violence in pursuit of its political goals?

"If I was to advise <u>Hamas</u> I would not advise them to repeat the mistakes of Fatah," says Ziad Abu Amr, a secular independent lawmaker who is tipped by some as a future foreign minister.

Under the gun in Gaza

"They made their concessions and Israel could still carry on expanding its settlements, denying national rights, blocking people's movements, building walls and stalling on negotiations. The Palestinians recognised Israel, renounced struggle, recognised Israel's right to exist, and what did they get in return? Recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation? Big deal."

Since last week's Palestinian elections Israel's leading media commentators have been falling over themselves to denounce the Palestinians for electing a party that rejects the Oslo accords and the two-state solution.

They forget that Israelis did the same thing themselves in 1996, only months after the murder of the Nobel peace laureate Yitzhak Rabin, when arch hawk and Oslo rejectionist Benjamin Netanyahu displaced peacenik Shimon Peres in a free and fair election.

In recent days <u>Hamas</u>'s violent, mystical and anti-Semitic founding charter has been widely cited in Israel as proof that it will never be prepared to moderate or negotiate, whatever its leaders may now be saying.

Yet Ariel Sharon - Israel's longtime uber-hawk (in these parts one quickly runs out of hawk-like superlatives) - originally became prime minister on the back of a long history of alleged war crimes. His Likud party's platform "flatly rejected" Oslo's two-state solution and any halt to continuing Jewish settlement of land seized from Palestinians.

His cabinets have contained ministers who called openly for the expulsion of Arabs from the Biblical land of Israel and who publicly referred to them as "lice" and "cancer".

Yet last year, before a stroke felled him, Sharon stunned the world by recognising the need for a Palestinian state - of a sort, at least - and evacuating 8000 Jewish settlers from Gaza and an isolated part of the West Bank.

Israelis are right to point to the murderous record of <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing which, between September 2000 and February last year, dispatched more than 50 suicide bombers and killed almost 300 Israelis.

But they might also ask themselves how their own troops, police and religious fundamentalists came to kill more than 3780 Palestinians in five years, many of them unarmed or non-combatants, 689 of them minors, 188 of them women. And they might ask themselves how, if they were Palestinians, they might feel about that.

The souq (market) in Hebron is a depressing place right now, but when this war is over people will still live there. The sooner talk of high principle is abandoned, and haggling begins, the sooner peace, of some sort, will come.

Writing this week in the Israeli mass daily Yedioth Ahronoth, the commentator Ofer Shelah concludes: "We will talk with <u>Hamas</u> or with the officials subject to it - or else there will be a disaster in the territories, under our responsibility. And we will talk to the Palestinians if we want to and they want to -no matter what name they go by. The Israeli public, which understands this despite the smokescreen of cliches that the politicians hurl at it, has already announced in the polls that for its part, Israel can talk to <u>Hamas</u>. After the usual delay, the politicians will also follow suit."

Graphic

PHOTO: Seeing red ... Palestinian farmers, in a protest against the crossing closure, destroy tomatoes grown in a former Israeli settlement. Photo: Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/Reuters

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



Tories cut Palestinian aid

The Toronto Star

March 30, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A01

Length: 1023 words

Byline: Mitch Potter, Graham Fraser With files from Sean Gordon

Dateline: OTTAWA

Body

A senior minister in the new <u>Hamas</u> government last night accused Canada of "double standards" for deciding to freeze funding for the Palestinian Authority.

Khaled Abu Arafa, who learned of Ottawa's decision just hours after he was sworn in as Palestinian Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, told the Toronto Star he was "dismayed by a ruling that doesn't give us a chance."

Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay announced yesterday Canada has cut off contact and funding to the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Palestinian Authority but will be maintaining its aid to Palestinians through non-governmental organizations and international agencies.

This means a suspension of \$7.3 million in Canadian funding, almost one-third of the \$25 million a year that Canada spends in aid in the West Bank and Gaza. Canada became the first nation aside from Israel to cut off financial assistance to the authority since *Hamas* won the legislative elections in January.

MacKay announced that because the <u>Hamas</u>-led government has not renounced violence, recognized Israel or accepted the "road map" for peace, Canada is responding by cutting aid.

"As a result, Canada will have no contact with the members of the <u>Hamas</u> cabinet and is suspending assistance to the Palestinian Authority," he said in a statement.

International Co-operation Minister Josee Verner said Canada makes an important distinction between aid to the Palestinian Authority and aid to Palestinians.

"Working with our partners and through the United Nations, its agencies and other organizations, Canada will continue to support and respond to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people," Verner said. "Canada will also continue to work with the voices of moderation within Palestinian society."

Abu Arafa, who was elected as an independent candidate and is one of several non-<u>Hamas</u> ministers in the government launched yesterday, said he hoped Canada will retreat from its decision.

"Nobody can say this is just a <u>Hamas</u> government. It is a government of the Palestinian people and everyone was elected in a fair and decent way. The Canadian government was part of this process. The Canadian government approved this process. I really don't understand the double standard."

Tories cut Palestinian aid

Abu Arafa said the new Palestinian cabinet has received assurances of additional support from Arab governments in the region in the event that the international community follows through on threats to "collectively punish" Palestinians for electing candidates of the Islamic militant group.

The following projects are being suspended:

\$6.3 million for a housing rehabilitation and policy development project that was being done by Canada Mortgage and Housing with the Palestinian Authority's public works and housing ministry and finance ministry;

\$400,000 for the refurbishment and management of the Ramallah Municipal Industrial Park that was being done by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the city of Ramallah;

\$600,000 being spent by Justice Canada to support an annual justice dialogue between justice ministers from the Palestinian Authority, Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

In addition, officials in the Canadian International Development Agency said yesterday that several other projects that delivered support to the Palestinian Authority have come to an end and not been renewed, and seven projects are being restructured so as not to provide assistance to the Palestinian Authority or its officials or engage with officials.

At the same time, funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees will continue, as will work in the areas of child protection, counselling for children, vocational training, support for <u>women</u>'s rights, youth activities, municipal management, job creation and entrepreneurship.

But this attempt to establish a distinction between the <u>Hamas</u> government - elected in democratic elections - and the Palestinian people was criticized yesterday.

"It tells the Palestinians that we only pay lip service to democracy," McGill political scientist Rex Brynen told the Star. "We won't talk to Palestinian officials, although we will speak to North Korea, Belarus or Zimbabwe, all much worse regimes in terms of human rights. It will be seen as a one-sided, hypocritical response to the outcome of the Palestinian election."

Brynen said that if the international community joins Canada in cutting off support for the Palestinian Authority, it will mean that public sector workers will not be paid - affecting 1 million people, and that 1.5 million schoolchildren will not be taught.

Janice Stein, director of the Munk Centre for International Studies, told the Star that there is one major problem with cutting off funding to the Palestinian Authority.

"There are 60,000 security force personnel on the payroll of the Palestinian Authority, and there is no other way to pay their salaries," she said. "It's not in anyone's interest to have 60,000 unemployed armed young men. That's a huge problem."

But B'nai Brith Canada issued a statement yesterday applauding the government for its decision.

"Canada has stood true to its principles by refusing to do business with a terrorist entity whose avowed aim continues to be the destruction of the Jewish state," said B'nai Brith executive vice-president Frank Dimant.

Israeli officials welcomed the Canadian boycott.

"This isn't just Canada. This is the United States, this is Europe, this is much of the international community," said Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev.

Early in the month, MacKay was criticized when he indicated that "some Canadian aid will continue" to the Palestinian Territories. He later clarified that the government was reviewing its aid programs with the Palestinian

Tories cut Palestinian aid

Authority in light of *Hamas*' refusal to make a commitment to the principle of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of the "road map" peace plan.

"It's been the consistent position of the Conservative party and to date that has not happened, and as a result there will be no direct or indirect funding to the Palestinian Authority," MacKay said yesterday.

The Bloc Quebecois and New Democrats criticized yesterday's decision.

Load-Date: March 30, 2006



Israel opens new front in Gaza ground assault: Government also hints prisoner swap to be 'reciprocated'

Ottawa Citizen

July 8, 2006 Saturday

EARLY Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 489 words

Byline: Sarah El Deeb, The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israeli forces opened a new eastern front in a three-day-old ground assault in Gaza early today, exchanging fire with militants and closing in on a dense residential area, witnesses said.

The forces, including about 15 tanks, entered Gaza near the Karni commercial crossing, moving along the border area just 500 metres from the Shajaiyeh neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, Israel sent conflicting signals yesterday on whether it is prepared to swap Palestinian prisoners for a 19-year-old Israeli soldier whose capture by Palestinian militants has touched off a harsh Israeli military campaign.

Israeli troops have killed 32 Palestinians in two days of air strikes and artillery barrages, Palestinian officials said. The campaign is aimed at stopping rocket attacks on Israel and pressuring the ruling <u>Hamas</u> movement to release the kidnapped soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

Israel's public security minister, Avi Dichter, yesterday suggested that Israel is ready to cut a deal that would fall short of a direct prisoner swap.

Mr. Dichter said Israel could free some Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture after Cpl. Shalit is released and *Hamas* stops rocket attacks on Israel.

If there is calm, "Israel will need to, after some time, release prisoners as a reciprocal gesture," Mr. Dichter said. "Israel knows how to do this. Israel has done this more than once in the past."

He was referring to previous prisoner swaps -- usually in deals that freed far more Palestinians than Israelis. Privately, Israeli officials have said they did not rule out talks in Cpl. Shalit's case, either.

Moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said he has won Israeli assurances that it would reciprocate for Cpl. Shalit's release by freeing some prisoners, as well as *Hamas* politicians it has rounded up in recent days.

Officials close to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert later said Mr. Dichter's statement did not reflect the views of the government and that Israel insists on the soldier's unconditional release. However, the government did not issue a formal statement distancing itself from the minister.

Israel opens new front in Gaza ground assault: Government also hints prisoner swap to be 'reciprocated'

Israel does not want to be seen as cutting a deal with <u>Hamas</u> militants, but also does not seem to have a way to free the soldier by force.

<u>Hamas</u> yesterday said that Cpl. Shalit, seized June 25, is alive and being treated well. It also urged Israel to negotiate. The Islamic militant group initially demanded the release of hundreds of prisoners, but then scaled back its demands, seeking freedom for about 150 <u>female</u> inmates and several dozen men serving long sentences.

The internal Israeli debate came as ground troops backed by tanks pursued militants in the streets of crowded Gaza towns, and aircraft struck northern Gaza.

Cpl. Shalit is believed to be held in southern Gaza, and days after he was seized, Israel launched its biggest military campaign in the coastal strip since ending its 38-year occupation there nine months ago.

Load-Date: July 8, 2006



Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians

The New York Times
July 4, 2006 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1354 words

Byline: By IAN FISHER; Michael Slackman contributed reporting from Damascus for this article.

Dateline: GAZA, Tuesday, July 4

Body

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, rejected an ultimatum on Monday that had been set by Palestinian militants, who suggested they would kill a captured Israeli soldier unless Israel began to release 1,500 Palestinian prisoners.

"The government of Israel will not yield to the extortion of the Palestinian Authority and the <u>Hamas</u> government, which are led by murderous terrorist organizations," Mr. Olmert said in a statement. "We will not conduct any negotiations on a prisoner release."

The Palestinian statement, issued by the three militant groups holding the soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, gave Israel until Tuesday morning local time -- 11 p.m. Eastern time on Monday -- to begin releasing prisoners.

As the deadline expired, calls to the military wing of <u>Hamas</u> and the Popular Resistance Committees, the two main groups holding the corporal, were not answered. A spokesman for the Islamic Army, the least important of the group and previously unknown, told Reuters: "Discussion is closed." The spokesman, Abu al-Muthana, said: "Whether he will be killed or not killed, we will not disclose any information about the fate of the soldier."

He said he expected a joint statement later on Tuesday, but his comments hinted that the fate of the corporal will simply remain unclear, the way some previous Israeli abductees were treated by Hezbollah.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israeli tanks began moving in greater numbers into the Beit Hanoun neighborhood of northern Gaza, appearing to broaden smaller-scale military operations on Monday. Witnesses said an airstrike killed at least one person and wounded several others. Israeli aircraft also bombed an empty building at the Islamic University in Gaza.

In Ramallah, in the West Bank, Israeli forces entered a police station, seizing three Palestinians suspected of involvement in killing a Jewish settler last week, the Israeli Army said, Reuters reported.

As Israeli forces moved into northern Gaza and with indirect negotiations apparently at a standstill, the week-old crisis threatened to spill over Israel's border into Syria.

In Damascus, Syria said it had had nothing to do with the soldier's capture and could play no role in obtaining his freedom.

Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians

After the ultimatum was issued, the Israeli defense minister, Amir Peretz, said he would hold to account Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, who has allowed <u>Hamas's</u>'s political leader, Khaled Meshal, to live in Syria and is believed to have significant influence over him.

"The <u>Hamas</u>'s terror headquarters operates in Syria and is headed by Khaled Meshal," Mr. Peretz told leaders of the Labor Party, which he heads. "I suggest that Bashar al-Assad, who is trying to conduct himself blindly, open his eyes, because he bears the responsibility."

He added: "We will know how to strike those who are involved."

Last week, Israeli warplanes buzzed Mr. Assad's summer home in Latakia, and they have struck in the past at what the Israelis said were terrorist targets in Syria.

In Damascus on Monday, the foreign minister, Walid Muallem, said that while Syria had influence with <u>Hamas</u>, it did not have any hand in the capture of the Israeli, and would be unable to demand his release. Instead, Mr. Muallem said, the only solution would be an end to the Israeli military operation, followed by talks between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>. He said Israel would have to be willing to offer a fair deal, like releasing prisoners who are <u>women</u> or under 18.

"Now, for a solution, the aggression has to stop in order to allow room for diplomacy," Mr. Muallem said in an interview. "To solve the issue, it is not correct that the key is in Damascus. The key is in Gaza."

Mr. Meshal, whom Israel blamed for planning the capture of the soldier, has lived and worked in Damascus for years. And while Mr. Muallem said Mr. Meshal did not have any role in the military attack -- a fact disputed by at least one Palestinian faction leader in Damascus -- he said Syria would never force him to leave.

The ultimatum by the Palestinians said that if Israel did not begin releasing prisoners, Israel would "bear full responsibility for the future consequences."

"If they don't fulfill our demands, we will close the kidnapped soldier's file," a spokesman for one of the groups, the Popular Resistance Committees, told reporters in Gaza.

Asked if that meant the soldier would be killed, the spokesman said: "We will close the file. We have no comment beyond that."

Three militant groups have said they took part in the soldier's capture on June 25: the Popular Resistance Committees; the military wing of <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist group that leads the Palestinian government; and an apparently new group, the Islamic Army.

Since the soldier's capture, Israeli forces have imposed a slow squeeze on Gaza to try to secure the soldier's release, crossing the borders in the north and the south, firing some 1,500 artillery rounds from land and sea, and carrying out nightly air raids. If the soldier is killed, that campaign is likely to intensify quickly and violently. One Israeli cabinet member was quoted as saying, "Our operations will be far, far worse." In his statement, Mr. Olmert said he held the Palestinian Authority fully responsible for the soldier's safety.

The Israelis have previously suggested that the lives of <u>Hamas</u> leaders, who took over the government after winning elections in January, are at risk.

On Sunday, Israel underscored that possibility by bombing the offices of the <u>Hamas</u> prime minister, Ismail Haniya, which were empty at the time. Israeli officials said the raid was intended to warn <u>Hamas</u> that it risked losing power in Gaza, not to speak of the lives of its officials, unless it worked to free the corporal.

One major question -- the subject of much speculation in the Israeli news media -- remains whether Israel would accept any compromise despite Mr. Olmert's strong stand. The Army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, after visiting Corporal Shalit's family in northern Israel on Monday, said such a decision would be up to the political leadership, in conjunction with the military.

Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians

Nearly every night since entering Gaza on Wednesday, Israeli forces have tried to raise the stakes. On Monday morning, Israeli aircraft bombed an office of Fatah, the party that <u>Hamas</u> pushed from power, then troops moved in small numbers across the border in the north.

An Israeli military spokeswoman characterized it as a small, "very specific operation" aimed at searching for "tunnels and explosives" used by militants in attacks on Israel. For months, militants have been firing homemade Qassam rockets from northern Gaza into Israel.

Beit Hanoun has been hard hit by the artillery barrages, and residents said a small number of Israeli soldiers crossed the border about 6 a.m.

Omar al-Masri, 23, said he was returning from his job as a security guard when he spoke with family members who said Israeli soldiers had taken over four Palestinian houses and herded about 40 people -- including his wife and two children -- into a room in one of them.

"They told me, 'Don't come home, it's dangerous for you,' " Mr. Masri said.

He said family members told him there were about 80 Israeli soldiers in all, some in uniform and others disguised as Palestinian militants. He said they came on foot, leaving their vehicles several hundred yards away. Reporters were able to walk near one of the houses that neighbors said had been taken over by Israeli soldiers. There was no sign of them, nor anyone else. The area was completely deserted.

The Israeli military spokeswoman, who spoke as is the practice on the condition of anonymity, said Israeli forces were believed to have killed two militants in northern Gaza on Monday.

She said that in one case, two gunmen approached Israeli soldiers there, who opened fire, possibly killing one of the gunmen. In a second incident, Israeli aircraft hit what she said was a group carrying an antitank missile near the fence that separates Israel from Gaza. She said the military believed that one of the men had been killed.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Protesters marched Sunday in a Palestinian neighborhood in Damascus, Syria, in opposition of recent Israeli attacks aimed at militants in Gaza. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)

Load-Date: July 4, 2006



Kidnapped journalist says time is short

The Guardian - Final Edition
February 10, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 24

Length: 343 words

Body

Jill Carroll, the US journalist kidnapped in Iraq a month ago, said in a video broadcast last night that time was running out for the authorities to meet her captors' demands. In black-and-white footage that she said was shot last Thursday, Carroll was pictured wearing an Islamic veil and reading a short message in a calm voice.

"I am fine. Please just do whatever they want, give them whatever they want as quickly as possible," she said in the images broadcast on a private Kuwaiti television channel. "There is a very short time. Please do it fast. That's all." The video was delivered to the channel along with a letter written by Carroll, the contents of which have not been divulged.

Carroll, a freelancer working for the US daily Christian Science Monitor was abducted by a little-known group who are demanding the release of all Iraqi <u>women</u> prisoners held in US and Iraqi jails.

In a separate development, an Egyptian diplomat was kidnapped yesterday in Gaza City after armed men shot out the tyres of his car as he drove to work at the Egyptian mission. It is the first time in more than a dozen kidnappings that a diplomat has been targeted in Gaza and coincides with the visit of the leadership of *Hamas* to Cairo.

Hussam al-Mawsili was driven away by his captors in the city and police checkpoints throughout the Gaza Strip failed to locate him. The kidnappers were believed to be members of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, part of the Fatah movement of the Palestinian Authority's president, Mahmoud Abbas. The group made no comment yesterday about the kidnapping.

Egypt has played a mediating role between the Palestinians and Israel and the US. In the past year it has been training Palestinian security forces.

<u>Hamas</u> won the Palestinian elections three weeks ago and is now preparing to establish a government. Mushir al Masri, a <u>Hamas</u> member of the Palestinian legislative council, criticised the kidnapping. "This is an attempt to damage our relations with Egypt, embarrass <u>Hamas</u> and poison the atmosphere here as we try to create a government."/WC 350

Load-Date: February 10, 2006



Israel 'has annexed Jordan Valley and shut out Palestinians'

Belfast Telegraph February 14, 2006

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Length: 617 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

Israel has in effect "annexed" the Jordan Valley, or eastern strip of the West Bank, by severely restricting the movements of Palestinians inside it, it was claimed yesterday.

The accusation was made by B'tselem, a leading Israeli human rights organisation, following investigations by B'tselem and the newspaper Ha'aretz which showed that some 200,000 Palestinian West Bank residents are systematically prevented from entering the Jordan Valley area, including farmers seeking to cultivate their own land and seasonal farm workers who used to work there regularly.

The Jordan Valley is politically highly sensitive because by remaining under Israeli control it would further substantially restrict the scale of any Palestinian state. Ehud Olmert, the acting Prime Minister, while being careful not to be specific about the fate of Israeli settlements in the area when he foreshadowed further West Bank withdrawals last week, has made it clear that Israel would maintain control of the border with Jordan.

B'tselem said the general prohibition on the entry of any Palestinians into the Jordan Valley apart from those officially registered as living there "severely violates the human rights of the Palestinian population" by severing what amounts to a third of the West Bank area from the rest.

Although the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have progressively prevented Palestinians travelling on Route 90, the main road running along the valley, and set up seven checkpoints restricting easterly movement of Palestinians, B'Tselem said much heavier restrictions on movement through the checkpoints were introduced after March 2005, when Jericho was handed over to Palestinian control.

The IDF said the measures had been taken to protect settlers in the Jordan Valley area from "at least a handful" of terrorist attacks along Route 90 over the past six years.

Although the settlements in the Jordan Valley were created, like others, since the Six-Day War in 1967, the IDF pointed out that under the Oslo accords the area was classified as "Area C" under which it continued to be controlled by Israel. A statement said some workers with the right permits and "humanitarian" cases were allowed to travel into the area. Such workers are believed to number only in the hundreds.

But B'Tselem said that beside excluding many Palestinians bordering the area from their source of livelihood, the measures meant that residents of Palestinian villages north of Jericho were not able to host relatives or friends who lived outside the valley or in the city itself. **Women** who married residents of the valley but had not changed their ID or addresses were frightened to leave the area in case they were refused permission to return.

Israel 'has annexed Jordan Valley and shut out Palestinians'

A 25-year-old Palestinian woman, Nafia Abu Musaed, died in hospital yesterday after being shot in the chest by Israeli troops near the Gaza border fence. IDF sources said that the soldiers involved had identified "movement of suspicious figures" 50 metres from the fence when the shots were fired. Palestinians sources said the woman was several hundred metres from the barrier.

In the West Bank, Mushir al Masri, a prominent <u>Hamas</u> member of the new Palestinian Legislative Council said the new prime minister after the <u>Hamas</u> election victory would be a member of the group.

This appeared to rule out the possibility of an independent or public figure only loosely connected with *Hamas*.

There has been speculation that this could be Ishmael Haniya, numberr one on the <u>Hamas</u> candidates' list in the elections and regarded as one of the more pragmatic <u>Hamas</u> leaders. But Mr al Masri refused to confirm that and other <u>Hamas</u> sources said a final decision had yet to be taken on who it would be.

Load-Date: February 14, 2006



What if a rocket hit a Kiwi school?

The Dominion Post (Wellington, New Zealand)

June 2, 2006 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; GENERAL; Pg. 5

Length: 1132 words **Byline:** VENTER Nick

Body

The Israeli Foreign Affairs director-general, on a visit to Wellington this week, talks to Nick Venter about *Hamas*, Gaza and Iran.

RON PROSOR, the director-general of the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry, is a man on a mission and he's not going to be diverted by pesky questions about the Israeli intelligence agents caught trying to fraudulently obtain New Zealand passports two years ago.

"I come from a country that if you have to look back all the time you will never look forward," Mr Prosor says during a flying visit to Wellington this week.

But what about the people of New Zealand, he is asked.

The Israeli Government has apologised to its New Zealand counterpart for the actions of two of its "citizens", but surely it owes an apology to New Zealand travellers whose safety was compromised, for a time at least, by the subsequent revelation that Israeli agents had previously succeeded in obtaining New Zealand passports.

"You can try me on another angle again," Mr Prosor, a 48-year-old career diplomat, replies patiently, "(but) we are looking at how to move things forward."

Moving things forward, in Mr Prosor's view, is switching attention from the actions of Israel to the actions of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the new <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Government. Mr Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map" and <u>Hamas</u>'s charter commits it to Israel's eventual destruction.

Flanked by aides, and with security guards hovering in the background, Mr Prosor leans across the table in a featureless office borrowed from a local businessman for the interview.

Iran's nuclear programme, what he calls its "nuclear weapons programme", marks a critical moment in Middle East history, he says. It is a threat to Israel and the international community.

"When Ahmadinejad talks about the destruction of the state of Israel and denies the Holocaust, I don't define him as either a lunatic or crazy, I take him at his word.

What if a rocket hit a Kiwi school?

"When <u>Hamas</u> leaders talk about the destruction of the state of Israel and the annihilation of the Jewish people, this is the time for the international community not to keep silent.

"It is time to stand up and be counted because only a determined, united and motivated international community can stop Iran's nuclear threat."

It is for that reason that Israel has responded as it has to *Hamas*'s victory in the Palestinian elections held in January, he says.

The Israeli Government has withheld taxes collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority and blocked exports from the Gaza Strip.

Together with the freezing of about \$1.6 billion of aid from the United States and the European Union, the measures have financially crippled the Palestinian Authority. Its 150,000 workers, who support an average of seven or eight people each with their wages, have not been paid for three months.

"<u>Hamas</u>, a terrorist organisation, is basically running the show and any allocation of resources that goes directly to a <u>Hamas</u>-led ministry, let it be education or health or security will be used by <u>Hamas</u> to do more terrorist activities," says Mr Prosor.

"We are all trying to find the right mechanism that, on the one hand, will not give money to terrorists, but on the other will not hurt the Palestinian people."

Unfortunately, the evidence suggests Israel is failing in at least one of its objectives.

Aid agencies report that almost 80 per cent of the people in Gaza are living on less than \$3.30 a day and that 10 per cent of children under five are suffering chronic malnutrition.

The United Nations, through which New Zealand is still directing aid to Palestinians, is appealing for emergency funds to prevent the collapse of health and education services and to provide food and medicine for the Palestinian people.

Mr Prosor avoids criticising New Zealand for that.

He says it is not the Israeli intention to hurt the Palestinian people, "but it is important for *Hamas* to be denied funds that would then allow it to fund suicide bombings and strategic terror and to buy weapons on a large scale".

"Israel is a democracy under fire. We are trying to find the right calibration between defending our citizens on a daily basis against phenomena that the Western democracies have not encountered yet, like strategic terror and suicide bombings.

"We don't have all the right answers, but we feel sometimes as if we are writing the new code book of the international community in countering these phenomena. And sometimes we feel that like-minded countries that should be walking hand in hand with us are more interested in criticising than in really finding constructive solutions."

But why should New Zealanders distinguish between Israeli children blown up by <u>Hamas</u> suicide bombers and Palestinian children killed by indiscriminate Israeli shellfire, he is asked.

In World War II, you had armies operating against armies, he replies. That is not the situation Israel finds itself in.

Last year, Israel closed its settlements in the Gaza Strip and handed it over to the Palestinians.

"Palestinians don't see Israelis even with binoculars. The Palestinians are now able to take the future into their own hands and turn Gaza into the new Singapore."

But, isn't their ability to do so hindered by the Israeli blockade on exports from Gaza?

What if a rocket hit a Kiwi school?

Mr Prosor holds up his hand. He will come to that in a moment.

"But what do we see?" he continues. "We don't see the Palestinians assuming responsibility, but we see Katyusha rockets falling on a daily basis in Netiv Haasara, Sederot and Ashkelon.

"What do you do?

"What would you do if someone sends Katyusha rockets to a school in Wellington from densely populated areas?

"We are doing everything that we can.

"Even if we know that someone is a terrorist driving in a car, if <u>women</u> and children are in the vicinity, we don't usually give a green light to those operations, but we need to be able to defend ourselves within our small borders.

"Israel is a small country. We are a small people like New zealand, but we have a big heart."

Mr Prosor is pleased with the sentiment. That, he says, is a good note on which to end the interview.

And with that he is whisked off for a meeting with Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters.

Mr Prosor has left himself no time to explain how the Palestinians can turn the Gaza Strip into the new Singapore while Israeli soldiers are blocking the export of fruit and vegetables grown in the glasshouses inherited from Israeli settlers and while 75,000 textile workers are out of work because their garments cannot be shipped out of Gaza.

CAPTION:

Moving right along: Career diplomat Ron Prosor says we should all move on from the case of the Israeli intelligence agents who were caught fraudulently trying to obtain New Zealand passports. Israel has.

Picture: ANDREW GORRIE

Load-Date: June 2, 2006



Kidnap group deadline

EVENING CHRONICLE (Newcastle, UK)

July 3, 2006 Monday

Edition 1

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 241 words

Byline: By The Evening Chronicle

Body

The three Palestinian terror groups that captured an Israeli soldier have given Israel until 6am tomorrow to start releasing Palestinian prisoners or "pay the full future consequences".

The statement faxed to news agencies did not expressly say what those consequences would be.

It declared: "We give the Zionist enemy until 6am tomorrow. If the enemy does not respond to our humanitarian demands mentioned in previous leaflets on the conditions for dealing with the issue of the missing soldier...we will consider the current file of the solider to be closed. ... and then the enemy must bear all the consequences of the future results."

Cpl Gilad Shalit, 19, was captured on June 25 in a cross-border raid by militants linked to the Palestinians' ruling *Hamas* party, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam.

The group initially demanded the release of about 500 **women** and child prisoners, then raised its demands to include an additional 1,000 prisoners.

Israel has publicly said it would not negotiate Shalit's release, but privately, political and defence leaders have not ruled out releasing prisoners who were not involved in actual attacks on Israel.

Last week, Israel launched a campaign in the Gaza Strip to pressure militants to free the soldier. It holds the <u>Hamas</u> government responsible for Shalit's capture on Israeli territory. Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh's <u>Hamas</u>-led government said it had no contact with the kidnappers.

Load-Date: July 3, 2006



Islamic Jihad leader defends suicide killings

The Irish Times

April 17, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 512 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Tehran

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Ramadan Abdallah Shalah, secretary general of Islamic Jihad, led the extremist group's delegation to the conference for the support of the Palestinian people here at the weekend.

<u>Hamas</u>, the ruling Palestinian Islamist party, has observed a unilateral truce with Israel for more than a year, but Shalah's group never ceased suicide bombings. "We call them martyrdom operations," he corrects me at the onset of our interview.

Shalah, who lives in Damascus, estimates about 100 Islamic Jihad members have killed themselves attacking Israelis since September 2000. Though Shalah says the group has also carried out "hundreds of military operations", it is the suicide bombings that shock public opinion in the West.

How can he possibly justify such atrocities? "We don't justify it as a strategy," Shalah explains in English. (He holds a doctorate in economics from Durham University.) "We do it as a reaction to the crimes, atrocities and massacres committed by Israeli troops and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Why is killing Palestinians permissible? Why is invading our villages with tanks justified and legal, while the ultimate sacrifice is not?

He continues: "When people realise the miserable life they're leading is the most the Israelis will ever offer, they hope for a better life in the hereafter. It's about dignity; would you want to live as a slave in conditions that even animals in the West would not accept? Or would you prefer a better future with God? It's a kind of salvation for the individual, and a hope of liberation for an oppressed people." But, I insist, how can Islamic Jihad justify the killing of innocent Israeli <u>women</u> and children? Shalah mentions an interview the Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, gave on April 11th, in which she said that Palestinians who attack Israeli soldiers are not "terrorists", while those who attack civilians are.

"Initially we did not target civilians," Shalah says. "We adopted this policy as a reaction to the killing of our civilians. Our people feel that Israelis must suffer as we suffer. It's not fair for them to live in peace in Tel Aviv, without knowing what Israeli soldiers do to us, while we're suffering in Khan Younis, Rafah and Nablus."

Islamic Jihad considered a truce proposed by the Egyptian government in March 2005, on condition the Israelis reciprocate. "But Israel did not stop assassinations, the demolition of houses and the confiscation of land for even one hour," Shalah says, adding that "*Hamas* intended to participate in the election, so it was to their benefit to maintain stability". He fears Palestinians are headed for a conflict between *Hamas* and Fatah.

Islamic Jihad leader defends suicide killings

"Abu Mazen [Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas] is trying to mobilise Arab countries to support him in a siege on <u>Hamas</u>, so Fatah can come back to power. We believe the Palestinian community should face the challenge of the Israeli occupation, not enter into internal strife, because the Israelis are offering the Palestinians nothing. We are trying to maintain a balance between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>."

Load-Date: April 17, 2006



Supply shortages spark health crisis in Gaza

The International Herald Tribune
May 9, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 1194 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Hanin al-Hilo was screaming at the nurses at the main Gaza hospital, Al Shifa: "If I called and said I was the son of Mr. Somebody, some big shot, I'd have a place!"

But with a third of the hospital's dialysis machines awaiting repair and spare parts, Hilo a policeman and his father, sitting weakly in a wheelchair, had to wait in the corridor. Even those using the machines are not being given the normal dose of hormones and minerals, a nurse explained, because the hospital has run out. "Soon they're going to need blood transfusions instead," she said.

With a sudden shortage of everything from disposable needles and adhesive tape to vital drugs, the once impressive public health system in Gaza is running down fast under the dual pressure of aid cutoffs and the closing of the Karni crossing point with Israel.

Already, Shifa's general director, Dr. Ibrahim al-Habbash, said the hospital could no longer provide chemotherapy for many forms of cancer, had only a few days' supply of important surgical drugs like atropine, adrenaline, heparin and lidocain, and had used up its strategic three-month cache of supplies normally kept for a health crisis.

In addition, armed men have been forcing their way into the hospital demanding preferential treatment for relatives, clan members or friends, and for authorization to travel outside Gaza for medical treatment.

"We've suffered in the past, of course, but in the last month, the problems have really increased," Habbash said. "There are shortages of medications and disposables in all departments, we're trying to limit the operating list and people are suffering, even dying because of these shortages."

Habbash, when asked, hands over his list of urgent needs that he has passed on to the financially troubled Palestinian Ministry of Health. It includes numerous drugs and antibiotics, as well as plaster of Paris, syringes, disposable bedsheets and intravenous solutions, surgical gloves, suture sets and blood-testing needles.

Hilo's anger, he admitted later, was increased by the frustration of a second month without salary, a situation suffered by every employee of the Palestinian Authority the largest employer in Gaza including all of the 1,400 hospital staff members, and many of the families of the patients.

His anger is a sign of the mounting frustration over the gaps in health care here, which are a result of a double crisis: the budget deficit of the authority which has worsened significantly since Israel stopped transferring tax

collections and after the United States and the European Union cut off aid after the <u>Hamas</u> government took over and the inability to get goods into Gaza through the main crossing point at Karni, which the Israelis keep closing whenever there is a security alert.

Since Jan. 1, Karni has been open half of the time and an average of only 23 truckloads a day have left Gaza in that period, compared with a target of 150 a day, according to James Wolfensohn, a former envoy to the region for the international community. Produce has rotted and crucial imports have been held up. Supply shortages are less severe on the West Bank, where cargo crossings are less of an issue.

The authority is in part responsible for these problems, for failing to stop attempted attacks on Karni, though Israel has been criticized by Wolfensohn and the European Union, and more quietly by Washington, for keeping the crossing closed.

Even before the <u>Hamas</u> victory, the authority was running \$75 million a month in debt because it raised salaries last summer and hired thousands of young armed men, causing the World Bank to cut off budget support. After the <u>Hamas</u> victory, Israel stopped handing over tax payments, and after <u>Hamas</u> took office, Washington and the Europeans suspended aid because **Hamas** refuses to recognize Israel and to forswear violence.

The United States and the EU say humanitarian aid will get through but Washington does not consider government salaries to be humanitarian aid. There has been discussion of a new structure to funnel aid to health and education departments or individual Palestinians that would somehow bypass the <u>Hamas</u> government even to pay salaries directly to individuals judged not to be connected to <u>Hamas</u> but nothing has been decided.

The results are severe in Gaza.

A recent internal report by the World Health Organization, provided to The New York Times, portrayed a crisis that was bound to worsen as the economic siege of the *Hamas*-run authority continues.

The report predicts a "rapid decline of the public health system towards a possible collapse" and "no access or limited access to preventive programs" like immunization for a large part of the population, especially the poor.

Although about 70 percent of the 1.4 million people in Gaza are refugees or their descendants, who get primary care from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, the organization runs only clinics, not hospitals.

According to another report by Physicians for Human Rights/Israel, the authority provides 64.5 percent of general health needs, 77 percent of emergency hospital treatment and 76 percent of the needs of <u>women</u> and midwives. It also pays for the treatment in Israel and abroad of many difficult cases like pediatric oncology and pediatric heart operations, as well as various cancer and orthopedic treatments.

"Lack of funding for this system will lead to the deaths of thousands of people in the short term and extensive morbidity in the long term," the report says. The group like the EU urges Israel to pay the Palestinians the \$50 million or so a month it collects in tax receipts for the authority and to ease "the policy of closure and curfew" that is undermining the Palestinian ability to deliver services to people.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, said there had been no special restrictions on transferring medical supplies since *Hamas* took over.

"Israel wants to do all it can to avoid suffering among Palestinians," he said. "But we have legitimate security concerns with an administration run by *Hamas*, which espouses terrorism against Israel."

The relief and works agency is the second-largest employer in Gaza, and while it is paying salaries, "we cannot substitute for or replace the Palestinian Authority," said its Gaza director, John Ging.

Supply shortages spark health crisis in Gaza

The agency is already paying \$78,000 a month for rent on shipping containers stuck at Karni, he said, because the export block on Gaza means that once the limited cargo allowed into Gaza is unloaded, the empty containers may not return to Israeli territory. "We'd rather use the money for food," Ging said.

In the dialysis ward of Shifa Hospital, sat Ahmed Shabat, 51, well-dressed in fraying clothes. He must come every other day. "This is my work," he says, then shows the swollen veins on his arms caused by a lack of mineral supplements normally provided.

"What is the relationship between humanitarian and political aims here?" he asked. "The United States is the mother of democracy. What is political about salaries to teachers and nurses? Please, please don't mix humanitarian help with politics. Please separate the two."

Load-Date: May 11, 2006



Israel storms into Gaza in bid to free kidnap soldier

The Evening Standard (London)
June 28, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: A MERGE; Pg. 4

Length: 517 words

Byline: JASON BEATTIE

Body

ISRAELI tanks and troops today stormed into southern Gaza in a massive display of strength designed to force the release of a kidnapped soldier.

As armoured vehicles rolled into the Gaza Strip, Israeli aircraft destroyed bridges and a power plant, cutting electricity throughout most of the territory.

Corporal Gilhad Shalit, 19, was seized by militants on Sunday.

"We have no desire to remain in the Gaza Strip. We want to bring our boy home, that's all," said Israeli government minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer.

The operation was ordered by Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert despite pleas from United States secretary of state Condoleezza Rice to "give diplomacy a chance".

Israeli helicopters and planes struck three bridges near the southern town of Rafah, in what the army said was an attempt to stop *Hamas* militants moving-Cpl Shalit from the area. At least nine missiles were fired at Gaza's only power station, cutting electricity to much of the Gaza Strip, said Palestinian security officials. The station's three functioning turbines and a petrol reservoir were engulfed in flames that firefighters were unable to control.

The invasion force, led by bulldozers to clear booby-traps, set up camp near the disused international airport just inside the Gaza area. The Israelis described it as a "limited" swoop aimed at "terrorist infrastructure".

But there was an implicit threat that the operation would be stepped up if the soldier was not released.

In a worrying sign that the conflict could escalate, a *Hamas* leader called on supporters to confront the Israelis.

"Fight your enemies, who come to their deaths. Grab your rifles and resist," Nizar Rayan said in a radio message.

Israel storms into Gaza in bid to free kidnap soldier

Palestinian gunmen were reported to have set up barricades, blocked roads and planted improvised bombs. A faction called the Popular Resistance Committees threatened to kill an 18-year-old settler abducted in the West Bank in response to Israel's incursion.

Despite international pressure, <u>Hamas</u> - the governing party in Palestine - is refusing to release Cpl Shalit unless Israel frees Palestinian <u>women</u> and children held in its jail. Mr Olmert has refused to consider such an exchange. "The question of freeing (Palestinian) prisoners is in no way on the Israeli government agenda.

There will be no negotiations, no bargaining, no agreements," Mr Olmert said before ordering the invasion.

He said Israel would not allow itself to become a victim of "Hamas-terrorist blackmail".

The hostage crisis is the most serious threat to stability in the Middle East since Israel pulled out thousands of troops and settlers from Gaza last year after holding it since the 1967 war.

It is the biggest test yet for Mr Olmert.

He was elected in March on a platform of carrying out a similar withdrawal from parts of the occupied West Bank, another territory Palestinians want as part of an independent state.

With tension growing, <u>Hamas</u> reached a political deal yesterday with the more moderate Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. But Israel dismissed the accord as "doublespeak" aimed at lifting a US-led aid embargo on the Palestinian Authority.

Graphic

FORCE: ISRAELI SOLDIERS SING AND DANCE AS THEY PREPARE TO ENTER THE GAZA STRIP AT THE RAFAH CROSSING DISPLAY OF FORCE: ISRAELI TANKS CROSS THE BORDER INTO GAZA TODAY

Load-Date: June 28, 2006



U.S. Says It Also Finds Cartoons of Muhammad Offensive

The New York Times
February 4, 2006 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1211 words

Byline: By JOEL BRINKLEY and IAN FISHER; Joel Brinkley reported from Washington for this article, and Ian

Fisher from Gaza. Julie Bosman contributed reporting from New York.

Dateline: WASHINGTON, Feb. 3

Body

The Muslim world erupted in anger on Friday over caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad published in Europe while the Bush administration offered the protesters support, saying of the cartoons, "We find them offensive, and we certainly understand why Muslims would find these images offensive."

Streets in the Palestinian regions and in Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Indonesia and Malaysia were filled with demonstrators calling for boycotts of European goods and burning the flag of Denmark, where the cartoons first appeared.

While a huge rally in the Gaza Strip was peaceful -- and many leaders warned against violence -- some of the oratory was not.

"We will not accept less than severing the heads of those responsible," one preacher at Al Omari mosque in Gaza told worshipers during Friday Prayer, according to Reuters. Other demonstrators called for amputating the hands of the cartoonists who drew the pictures.

Many Muslims consider it blasphemy to print any image of Muhammad, the founder of Islam, let alone a cartoon that ridicules him.

The set of a dozen cartoons has outraged Muslims as being provocative and anti-Muslim, while many Europeans have defended their publication under the right to free speech.

One cartoon depicts Muhammad with a turban in the shape of a bomb. Another shows him at the gates of heaven, arms raised, saying to men who seem to be suicide bombers, "Stop, stop, we have run out of virgins." A third has devil's horns emerging from his turban. A fourth shows two **women** who are entirely veiled, with only their eyes showing, and the prophet standing between them with a strip of black cloth covering his eyes, preventing him from seeing.

Since being published in Denmark in September, they have been reprinted in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Hungary, as well as in Jordan. They are also on the Internet. Editors at the papers in France and Jordan were fired.

The United States has been trying to improve its image in the Arab world, badly damaged by the Iraq war and American support for Israel.

The State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack, reading the government's statement on the controversy, said, "Anti-Muslim images are as unacceptable as anti-Semitic images," which are routinely published in the Arab press, "as anti-Christian images, or any other religious belief."

Still, the United States defended the right of the Danish and French newspapers to publish the cartoons. "We vigorously defend the right of individuals to express points of view," Mr. McCormack added.

At the United Nations, Secretary General Kofi Annan also criticized the publication of the cartoons, but urged Muslims to forgive the offense and "move on."

"I am distressed and concerned by this whole affair," he said. "I share the distress of the Muslim friends, who feel that the cartoon offends their religion. I also respect the right of freedom of speech. But of course freedom of speech is never absolute. It entails responsibility and judgment."

For the Bush administration, talking about the uproar represented a delicate balancing act. A central tenet of the administration's foreign policy is the promotion of democracy and human rights, including free speech, in countries where they are lacking. But a core mission of its public diplomacy is to emphasize respect for Islam in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Major American newspapers, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times and The Chicago Tribune, did not publish the caricatures. Representatives said the story could be told effectively without publishing images that many would find offensive.

"Readers were well served by a short story without publishing the cartoon," said Robert Christie, a spokesman for Dow Jones & Company, which owns The Wall Street Journal. "We didn't want to publish anything that can be perceived as inflammatory to our readers' culture when it didn't add anything to the story."

In a midafternoon meeting on Friday, editors at The Chicago Tribune discussed the issue but decided against publishing the cartoons. "We can communicate to our readers what this is about without running it," said James O'Shea, the paper's managing editor.

Most television news executives made similar decisions. On Friday CNN ran a disguised version of a cartoon, and on an NBC News program on Thursday, the camera shot depicted only a fragment of the full cartoon. CBS banned the broadcast of the cartoons across the network, said Kelli Edwards, a spokeswoman for CBS News.

Only ABC showed a cartoon in its entirety, lingering over the image for several seconds during Thursday's evening news broadcast and on "Nightline." "We felt you couldn't really explain to the audience what the controversy was without showing what the controversy was," said Jeffrey Schneider, a spokesman.

In France, where rioting broke out last year among its sizable Muslim population, President Jacques Chirac released a statement on Friday defending free speech but also appealing "to all to show the greatest spirit of responsibility, of respect and of good measure to avoid anything that could hurt other people's beliefs."

In Gaza, a pamphlet released by gunmen at the European Union office threatened harm to "churches."

<u>Hamas</u> leaders, showing how their role has changed since their election success last week, quickly and publicly reacted to calm fears of Gaza's small Christian population, only 3,000 people. On Thursday a top <u>Hamas</u> leader, Mahmoud Zahar, visited the only Catholic church in Gaza to condemn any threats against Christians.

"He said he is protecting us not because he is <u>Hamas</u>," said the Rev. Manuel Musallam of the Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, who said he has long and friendly relations with <u>Hamas</u>. "But he is protecting Christians and our institutions as the state of Palestine and as a government."

Palestinian Talks on Government

By The New York Times

GAZA, Feb. 3 -- Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president and a top leader of the defeated Fatah, arrived in Gaza on Friday night to begin initial talks with *Hamas* about forming a new government.

<u>Hamas</u> also seemed to be making possible moves toward Israel: In an article published Friday in a Palestinian newspaper, Khaled Mashal, the top <u>Hamas</u> political leader, who lives in Syria, said that while <u>Hamas</u> would never recognize Israel's right to exist, it was prepared to discuss a long-term truce.

"If you are willing to accept the principle of a long-term truce, then we will be ready to negotiate with you over the conditions of such a truce," he wrote.

Previous <u>Hamas</u> statements about a truce included, among other demands, the requirement that Israel pull back to its 1967 borders.

In a moment of particular tension on all sides since <u>Hamas</u>'s election, at least two homemade rockets were fired Friday from northern Gaza into an Israeli kibbutz, seriously injuring a 7-month-old baby, the Israeli military reported.

Three others were injured lightly when one rocket hit a house on the outskirts of Kibbutz Karmia, about five miles north of Gaza. The army reported that it fired artillery back into Gaza. Islamic Jihad later claimed responsibility for the attack.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Iraqis in Falluja, 30 miles west of Baghdad, chanted anti-Danish slogans yesterday in a demonstration to protest publication of cartoons that mocked the Prophet Muhammad and portrayed him as a terrorist. (Photo by Muhanned Faizal/Reuters)

Load-Date: February 4, 2006



Israeli offensive threatens to escalate into major fighting

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

July 1, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 541 words

Byline: Ravi Nessman, Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said Friday that Israel's offensive is aimed at toppling the <u>Hamas</u>-led government but maintained he is working with mediators to resolve the crisis over a captive Israeli soldier.

Israel kept up the pressure in Gaza, destroying the interior minister's office and targeting a car carrying gunmen in an air strike. Israel also said it attacked a terrorist cell, killing a local Islamic Jihad leader -- the first reported death in the offensive.

With the crisis threatening to boil over into major fighting, the UN Security Council scheduled an emergency debate Friday. The Palestinians sought a resolution condemning Israel's actions and demanding a halt to all military operations.

Early Saturday, the Palestinians holding the soldier issued a new set of demands, calling on Israel to halt its offensive in Gaza and ordering the release of 1,000 prisoners.

The demands were laid out in a joint statement by the governing <u>Hamas</u> party and two smaller groups with close ties to <u>Hamas</u> -- the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam. The three groups have claimed responsibility for Sunday's capture of Cpl. Gilad Shalit in a cross-border raid.

Earlier this week, the same groups called for the release of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and minors held by Israel in exchange for information about Shalit. Saturday's statement, like the earlier one, did not promise to release Shalit or give any information about his condition.

Israeli defence officials said they believe he suffered slight wounds but is still alive. Israel has ruled out a prisoner swap.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh urged his people to remain steadfast. Though he did not directly address Israel's demand that they hand over the abducted soldier, he implied the government would not trade him for eight Palestinian cabinet ministers detained by Israel on Thursday.

He also accused Israel of using the soldier's capture as a pretext for launching a major offensive with the aim of bringing down his government.

"This total war is proof of a premeditated plan," he said.

Haniyeh spoke in a sermon at a Gaza mosque Friday, the Muslim day of worship, as <u>Hamas</u> gunmen stood guard outside. It was his first public appearance since Shalit, 19, was captured Sunday in a raid on an army post in Israel that sparked the crisis and sent <u>Hamas</u>'s top leaders into hiding.

Israel sent troops into southern Gaza on Wednesday -- the first major raid into the territory since Israeli soldiers pulled out last year after a 38-year occupation -- and began a wave of air strikes across the coastal strip.

The United Nations said a strike that destroyed Gaza's only power plant had pushed the territory to the edge of a humanitarian crisis and the International Committee of the Red Cross said it was working to get the military blockade of Gaza lifted for aid shipments.

With troops massed on the border, Israeli officials on Thursday postponed a planned invasion of northern Gaza as international mediators sought a way out of the standoff.

Haniyeh said Friday he was in contact with Arab, Muslim and European leaders to try to resolve the crisis, "but this Israeli military escalation complicates matters and makes it more difficult."

Graphic

Photo: Petros Karadjias, Associated Press; A boy holds a Palestinian flag during a demonstration in southern Gaza Friday. Israeli planes have struck 30 targets in Gaza since an Israeli soldier was kidnapped Sunday.

Load-Date: July 1, 2006



Images that will terrorise Israel

The Times (London)

March 30, 2006, Thursday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 21

Length: 897 words **Byline:** James Rubin

Body

Withdrawing settlers isn't enough. There must be an aid operation to help Palestinians

This week's election in Israel was unusual. It's rare for politics in that country to be based on policy rather than personality. But when voters went to the polls on Tuesday, their choice was between continuing the painful occupation of territories in the West Bank or a future separation from the Palestinians.

With his victory, the Kadima leader Ehud Olmert will now put together a coalition committed to withdrawing unilaterally from substantial areas of the West Bank.

This policy will have a profound effect on the region and the world -and could bring Israelis a new sense of psychological and physical security. *Hamas*, now running the Palestinian Authority, seems unlikely to launch an intifada of suicide bombers while Israel is deploying troops to remove Jewish settlers.

That's the good news. But there are dangers lurking. For there is a key difference between Mr Olmert's plan to remove settlements on the West Bank and the withdrawal ordered by Ariel Sharon, his predecessor, from Gaza last summer. Gaza was relatively clean and quick. The West Bank could be far more complicated.

Last time round, the Israeli Prime Minister was dealing with a Fatah-led Palestinian Authority. Mr Sharon made sure that Fatah was kept informed of the details of his plans, though both sides knew it was not in their interest to broadcast the fact. It wasn't really a negotiation, but at least the Palestinians knew what was going to happen on the ground and when. As a result, Israeli troops were able to remove Jewish settlers without the added threat of Palestinian attack.

The Israelis will not offer the same access and information to <u>Hamas</u>, an organisation that has sent numerous suicide bombers to kill innocent Israeli men, <u>women</u> and children and that still refuses to recognise Israel's right even to exist. This time there could be chaos. So lines of communications will need to be kept open. Quietly, a broker -perhaps the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, or an international figure -will need to be found to pass messages between the two sides.

The second problem is that the next phases of withdrawal will undoubtedly involve a huge security operation and sealed borders, and this could mean further hardships for the Palestinians. Today there are already shortages of food and medicine in the occupied territories; with stepped-up security we may witness a genuine humanitarian crisis.

Images that will terrorise Israel

This could involve a tragic human cost -and there will be a political price as well. The Israelis already face a huge battle for public opinion. If television pictures of desperate, starving children are beamed around the world, as they were during the years of sanctions against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the international condemnation of Israel will be swift and severe, even though the Jewish settlements are being removed.

Inasmuch as the world is already hugely sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinian people as a result of occupation, Mr Olmert would be well advised to help to organise a large-scale relief operation. If he will not deal directly with <u>Hamas</u>, and surely he will not, the international community needs to help him to construct an arm's-length programme to provide food, medicine and shelter for the Palestinians.

It may fall to non-governmental organisations or the United Nations to put in place a support network that saves lives -and Israel's reputation.

Israel will want guarantees that international aid does not visibly strengthen <u>Hamas</u> or free resources for its militias. A mechanism will be needed to ensure that <u>Hamas</u> is not able to smuggle in guns and bombs under the guise of aid. At a minimum, aid should be provided in the form of goods and services rather than as money directly to the Palestinian Authority. Cash has a nasty habit of ending up in the hands of the wrong people. The details will be crucial.

Meanwhile, expectations need to be lowered: there will be no handshakes on the White House lawn, talks at Camp David or shuttle diplomacy. The peace process, for so long the subject of so much attention, is gone. The best we can hope for is that negotiations will be replaced not by unilateralism but by a form of parallelism. For while the Israelis are choosing to pull up stakes and establish new borders, <u>Hamas</u> may forsake terrorism for a while so that it can focus on improving the lives of ordinary Palestinians and show that it can run a functioning government with a minimum of corruption. It may put forward a reasonable face of moderation to the world, a face of restraint, at least temporarily.

But even when <u>Hamas</u> sounds reasonable and says that it can accept an Israel within its pre-1967 borders, it does not speak of achieving last- ing peace with its enemy but of a "truce". This is not the "war is over" language of President Sadat of Egypt in 1979 or of King Hussein of Jordan in 1994.

And that's the real dilemma. For so long as <u>Hamas</u> continues to use these deceptive formulations, the Palestinians are not going to achieve their goal of a viable state of their own. That is why the international community should not waste its energies on seeking a permanent peace. Instead it should work to promote parallel restraint.

James P. Rubin, former Assistant Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration, now anchors World News Tonight on Sky News

Load-Date: March 30, 2006



Israeli air strike kills nine Palestinians

Guardian.com June 13, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 670 words

Highlight: Nine Palestinians were killed in an Israeli air strike on the Gaza Strip today.

Body

Nine Palestinians were killed in an Israeli air strike on the Gaza Strip today.

The attack - which came less than a week after the killing of a family on a Gaza beach prompted <u>Hamas</u> to end its 16-month ceasefire - killed seven civilians and two Islamic Jihad militants.

The Israeli army said two missiles had targeted a car carrying militants planning to launch rocket attacks on Israel.

Palestinian witnesses said the first missile missed the vehicle. The second arrived two minutes later, after a crowd had started to gather at the scene.

Witnesses said a father and son were killed, and three medical officials on their way to help following the first missile strike also died.

Angry crowds at the scene of bombing burned tyres, and scores of people surrounded the mangled yellow van hit by a missile.

Ambulances ferried the dead and wounded towards the Shifa Hospital, where officials said 32 more people had been injured, three of them seriously. <u>Women</u> at the morgue chanted "Death to Israel! Death to the occupation!" as bodies were brought in.

Outside the morgue, an Islamic Jihad militant fired his rifle in a show of anger, and other gunmen vowed revenge.

"What happened today is a brutal massacre committed against innocent civilians and fighters from our group," Kader Abib, an Islamic Jihad leader in Gaza, said.

"The Zionist enemy insists on shedding Palestinian blood, and we insist on going ahead with our jihad and resistance. God willing, the resistance groups ... will have a harsh response. All options are open for us."

The incident occurred amidst further deterioration in what had been a long-term period of relative calm between Israel and Palestinian militant groups.

The Palestinian territories are split by an increasing rivalry between <u>Hamas</u> - which controls the majority of seats in the parliament - and the more moderate Fatah faction led by the president, Mahmoud Abbas.

Israeli air strike kills nine Palestinians

Fatah gunmen attacked *Hamas* buildings and offices in the West Bank yesterday and overnight.

The attacks came in retaliation for <u>Hamas</u> attempts to assert control in the Gaza Strip using a newly-established 3,000-strong "security force" of militants.

Israel said the Islamic Jihad militants killed in today's strike were Hamoud Wadiya, the organisation's leading rocket launcher, and Shawki Sayklia.

They had allegedly been planning to fire Russian-made Katyusha rockets, which have a longer range than most militant rockets.

Shortly after the attack, the Israeli defence minister, Amir Peretz, said his government would no longer show restraint towards Palestinian militant groups.

There has been a deliberate lull in Israeli attacks on Gaza since Friday's beach bombing, with army officials saying they were giving the Palestinian Authority a chance to crack down on militant groups launching rocket attacks on Israel.

"We will act with all our might and use all our means against any group that acts against us," Mr Peretz said. "We showed the necessary restraint in light ... of the international uproar that resulted, but it's over."

Sporadic exchanges of fire across the Gaza border have continued since Israel withdrew from the Gaza strip last September.

Islamic Jihad militants have shelled Israeli towns close to the strip with rocket launchers, and Israeli forces have retaliated with air strikes and artillery fire.

Since giving up its ceasefire following the Gaza beach attack, *Hamas* has also begun firing rockets at Israeli towns.

Eight members of a Palestinian family who had been picnicking on the beach were killed, sparking a wave of international outrage.

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, expressed regret over the killing, but a question mark remains over the cause.

Initial speculation pointed towards an Israeli artillery shell that had gone off target, but an Israeli army inquiry is expected to report later today that the deaths were caused by a <u>Hamas</u> mine planted on the beach to impede Israeli military vehicles.

However, several Israeli shells exploded within 250 metres of the beach, with one still unaccounted for.

Load-Date: June 13, 2006



Israel's president is subject of sexual harassment case

The International Herald Tribune
August 23, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 593 words **Byline:** Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The Israeli police confiscated a computer and documents at the official residence of President Moshe Katsav and plan to question him as part of an investigation into sexual harassment allegations, the police said Tuesday.

Katsav's position is largely ceremonial and any legal proceedings against him would not directly threaten the government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

The case comes at a time, however, when several senior government figures have been involved in legal or political controversies.

In addition, many Israelis have been sharply critical of the country's political and military leadership over the handling the recent fighting in Lebanon.

The case involving Katsav surfaced almost two months ago when a woman who previously worked for him told an Israeli newspaper that he had sexually harassed her. Later, a second woman made similar allegations. Neither woman has been identified.

Katsav wrote to the attorney general, saying one of the <u>women</u> had demanded money from him before she went public with her accusation.

The attorney general, Menachem Mazuz, ordered an investigation last month, but the case was overshadowed by the recent fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

The police said that they entered the president's official residence on Monday night, taking the computer and documents.

The authorities are searching for communication between Katsav and his accusers, according to Israel Radio.

Katsav has denied any wrongdoing, and his office said Tuesday that the president was fully cooperating with the investigation. No charges have been filed, but if they are, it would almost certainly force Katsav from office.

Justice Minister Haim Ramon resigned Sunday after he was charged with forcibly kissing a <u>female</u> soldier last month.

Israel 's president is subject of sexual harassment case

In other matters that have attracted attention, the state comptroller has been investigating the sale by Olmert of his Jerusalem home two years ago, and the purchase of a new one nearby. Critics contend he received an above-market price for his old home, and paid a below-market rate for his new one.

Also, the army's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, has faced criticism after a newspaper revealed that he spoke to his bank and sold mutual fund shares several hours after Hezbollah staged its cross-border raid on July 12, precipitating the fighting.

Katsav was selected as president in 2000, after his predecessor, Ezer Weizman, resigned during a corruption scandal. Weizman quit after it was revealed that during the 1980s, when he was a member of Parliament and a government minister, he received hundreds of thousands of dollars from a French businessman with interests in Israel.

In the West Bank, an Israeli military court charged the speaker of the Palestinian Parliament, Aziz Dweik, a *Hamas* member, with belonging to an illegal organization, The Associated Press reported.

Israel considers <u>Hamas</u> a terrorist organization and membership in the group is banned under Israeli law. After Palestinian militants, including <u>Hamas</u>, seized an Israeli soldier on June 25, Israel began arresting Palestinian legislators and cabinet members belonging to <u>Hamas</u>.

Dweik, who was arrested Aug. 6, is the most senior figure charged so far.

In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military shot and killed three militants from the Islamic Jihad faction when they approached the Gaza Strip's perimeter fence, according to the Israeli military and Palestinian security officials.

Also, the military surrounded a house east of Gaza City and arrested five wanted militants, including two members of *Hamas*, the military added.

Load-Date: August 27, 2006



U.N. worker urges support for Palestine

University Wire February 6, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 The Stanford Daily via U-Wire

Length: 829 words

Byline: By Ben Eppler, The Stanford Daily; SOURCE: Stanford

Dateline: STANFORD, Calif.

Body

Azza Karam of the United Nations Development Program passionately argued for American and European cooperation with the newly elected <u>Hamas</u> government and discussed the gender egalitarianism of the Islamist movement in her speech at Stanford University last Friday. "We don't have the luxury of turning our back on the Palestinian elections," she said.

The talk, sponsored by the Coalition for Justice in the Middle East (CJME) and co-sponsored by the Roosevelt Institute's Center for International Security and the Muslim Students Awareness Network, characterized political Islam as distinct from Islam as a culture, a religion and a fundamentalist movement. Coinciding with last week's electoral victory of <u>Hamas</u>, Karam's discussion "could not be more timely," said to Nizar Melki, vice president of CJME.

In most Arab countries, Karam said, "The halo around Islamism is amazing." As the "untried political alternative," political Islamist parties enjoy tremendous popular support not just in Palestine but around the Arab world. Islamist parties would win elections held in Egypt and Jordan today.

Pointing to corruption in Fatah, Palestine's more secular former ruling party, and the autocratic manner in which Egyptian President Hosny Mubarak oppresses opposition, she argued, "Secular politicians have to take responsibility for their failure to reach the hearts and minds of the people in the way that political Islam has been able to."

The election represents "a new form of political engagement and development" for the Islamist movement, according to Karam. "If the Palestinians get their rights and the Israelis get their peace, who can complain?" she asked. Even if <u>Hamas</u> is not successful in negotiating a satisfactory settlement, as seems likely, the radical Islamic group will still have to "be politicians." The newly-elected government will need to address appalling conditions in Palestinian refugee camps, organize social services and come to the table with Israel, she added.

"They cannot fight as they have been doing," Karam said.

At a time when Western countries threaten to withhold support from the Palestinian government if *Hamas* does not renounce its more radical stances, Karam called such a policy negligent.

"How dare we turn our back on that?" she asked, referring to the United States' declared support for democracy around the world.

U.N. worker urges support for Palestine

Karam also offered practical reasons for the United States and European Union's continued engagement with *Hamas*. If the Western world withdraws its backing from a government, she warned, "we create martyrs."

Karam also noted distinctions within the Islamist sphere. Like any movement, Islamism consists of moderates, radicals and those in between. "The main difference between radical Islamists and moderates is their position vis a vis the use of violence."

The militant, terrorist-sponsoring arm of <u>Hamas</u> belongs at the radical end of the spectrum, she said, expressing her hope that the group will continue the moderate shift initiated by its decision to participate in the political process.

Although Karam's 50-person audience had questions pertaining to specific points of her argument, many listeners found it compelling.

"Of course, the biggest danger is always 'one man, one vote, once," said aerospace engineering and international relations graduate student Ben Goldsmith. "But if we can sidestep that, I think there's an opportunity for real change."

One of Karam's more controversial points was her contention that -- with the election of <u>Hamas</u> and other Islamist parties -- "<u>women</u> will become very critical interlocutors." She argued that since the beginning, <u>women</u> have played key roles in Islamist movements, doing everything from "sitting on central committees to smuggling weapons beneath their [coverings]."

Audience members expressed skepticism on this point, alluding to the Iranian revolution and arguing that, although **women** played key roles in that upheaval, they were later betrayed and oppressed by the Islamist government. Karam responded by noting that until the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad last June, Iran had a **female** vice president. She blamed gender inequality on conservative interpretations of the Quran. Enlightened interpretations of the Muslim holy book embrace gender equality, she said.

Karam also argued that Western media stereotypes the role of Muslim <u>women</u> in the Middle East, explaining that <u>women</u> play a greater political role than is widely believed.

"It's just much easier to believe that if a woman is wearing a bikini she is liberated and if she is wearing a veil she is oppressed," she noted.

CJME representatives said they were pleased with the dialogue.

"We felt that Dr. Karam's talk achieved the important goal of CJME, which is to promote campus awareness of topics pertaining to the Middle East and U.S. foreign policy towards the region," Olivia Sohns, co-president of the coalition, wrote in an email to The Daily.

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Load-Date: February 6, 2006



Israelis pull out of Gaza - but they'll be back

Birmingham Post
July 29, 2006, Saturday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 399 words

Byline: James Tapsfield, Joe Churcher and Jon Smith

Body

Israelis tanks and troops pulled back to the Israel-Gaza border yesterday after a particularly deadly incursion that killed 30 Palestinians over three days, but the army said the withdrawal was temporary and did not mean its monthlong offensive was over.

The latest Gaza fighting came as the world's attention stayed fixed on fighting further north, where Israel is waging war with Lebanon-based Hezbollah guerrillas.

An end to the violence in Gaza did not appear to be in sight, moreover, with Palestinian officials saying that negotiations for the release of prisoners had stalled.

Palestinian officials said they had not received a response from Israel to their softened conditions for the release of 19-year-old Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was captured by <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants in a cross-border raid on June 25.

<u>Hamas</u> has called for Israel's guarantees that it would free <u>women</u>, children and long-serving Palestinian prisoners if Shalit is released.

Dr Salah Bardawil, a senior <u>Hamas</u> official, said Israel's refusal to guarantee that it would release any Palestinian prisoners if Shalit were freed created the stalemate.

Bardawil also denied reports that <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah were co-operating in negotiations for the release of prisoners.

He noted, however, that he would support such an effort "if it is in the interests of both Lebanese and Palestinians".

Israel's incursion into Gaza began after militants killed two soldiers and captured Shalit, who remains in an unknown location in the custody of the Palestinian militant groups.

According to an Associated Press count, Israeli troops have killed 159 Palestinians since they started attacking the Gaza Strip to try to recover Shalit and stop Palestinian militants from firing rockets into Israel.

Most of those killed were militants, but also included a considerable number of civilians.

Israelis pull out of Gaza - but they'll be back

The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility yesterday for a rocket attack on the southern Israeli town of Zikim that injured two children who were hit by shrapnel.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, in Algeria, said the situation in the Palestinian areas and Lebanon was only likely to get worse after world leaders failed to agree on an immediate ceasefire at a summit in Rome on Wednesday.

"The situation will worsen and the consequences will be very heavy, not only for the region but probably for the entire world," he said.

Load-Date: July 29, 2006



<u>Israelis hit offices of Palestinian top official; Prime minister unhurt as bid to</u> freesoldier is stepped up

The International Herald Tribune
July 3, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 994 words

Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: GAZA

Body

An Israeli aircraft fired missiles early Sunday into the empty offices here of the Palestinian prime minister, the highest profile target yet in Israel's escalating campaign to force the Palestinians to release an Israeli soldier.

The airstrike, around 2 a.m., set ablaze the offices of the prime minister, Ismail Haniya, but no casualties were reported and he was not in the office at the time, Palestinian security officials said.

Haniya inspected the damage about an hour later. "It's an attack against a Palestinian symbol," he said. "We ask the international community and the Arab League to take its responsibilities toward our people and intervene to bring an end to this aggression."

In a second Israeli airstrike, a member of <u>Hamas</u> was killed when an aircraft fired at a building used by a <u>Hamas</u> security force, Palestinian security officials said.

In the past week, Israel has been steadily ratcheting up its response to the capture of the soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was seized by Palestinian militants, including members of <u>Hamas</u>, which controls the Palestinian government.

Israeli troops have been in southern Gaza for several days, positioned for a large-scale invasion. They have not yet been sent into the heavily populated parts of Gaza.

Israel has carried out frequent air raids against Palestinian government offices, including bombing the empty Interior Ministry building on Friday morning.

Roads, bridges and the region's electrical power station have been attacked, and power has been cut or greatly reduced to most of the territory. The power shortages have required the use of generators, which in turn has led to a shortage of fuel.

In attacking the prime minister's office, Israel signaled that it was prepared to take action against the most senior figures in *Hamas*.

On Thursday, Israeli troops in the West Bank arrested 8 <u>Hamas</u> members who serve in the Palestinian cabinet and more than 20 <u>Hamas</u> legislators.

Israelis hit offices of Palestinian top official Prime minister unhurt as bid to freesoldier is stepped up

Israel has pressured Palestinian leaders with similar tactics in the past. It bombed the empty Gaza headquarters of Yasser Arafat when he was the Palestinian leader and kept him confined to his West Bank compound for three years until he died in November 2004.

On Saturday, meanwhile, a Palestinian official offered the most specific information yet on the condition of Shalit, saying that he suffered three wounds when he was seized on June 25, but that he had been treated by a Palestinian doctor and was in stable condition.

The official, Ziad Abu Ein, the deputy minister for prisoners, spoke at a news conference in Ramallah in the West Bank.

"He has three wounds, I guess shrapnel wounds," Abu Ein said of Shalit, whose capture by Palestinian militants spawned the current crisis. "He is fine now."

Abu Ein said his information came from people involved in negotiations on the possible release of the soldier.

Releasing Shalit was the key to ending the crisis in Gaza, President George W. Bush said Saturday in a telephone call with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, according to the spokesman for the National Security Council, Frederick Jones, Reuters reported.

On Saturday, Palestinian militants holding the soldier demanded the release of 1,000 prisoners of various nationalities, and Israel rejected the demand. Some <u>Hamas</u> leaders said last week that they wanted the release of the hundreds of Palestinian <u>women</u> and youths held by Israel in exchange for Shalit.

In the past, Israel has traded large numbers of prisoners to win the release of captured Israelis, but the government said Saturday that it would not negotiate with the Palestinians.

"Our serviceman must be released immediately and unconditionally," said Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry. "We won't settle for anything less."

Israel holds thousands of Palestinians in its jails. Many are on trial or have been convicted of involvement in violence, although some are being held without charge.

The Palestinian demand was made in a statement issued by the three groups that claimed responsibility for capturing the soldier, including the armed wing of *Hamas*.

The statement asserted that Israel's "political leadership is still under the influence of their military and security commanders, who know nothing but the language of invasion, destruction and killing."

Abu Ein did not say when Shalit was treated or where he was being held. Israeli television, citing Israeli officials, reported Friday that Shalit had been wounded in the abdomen and an arm and was believed to be in or near the town of Rafah, on the Gaza Strip's southern border with Egypt.

Shalit was captured by Palestinian gunmen who tunneled into Israel, attacked a military post, killing two other soldiers, then slipped back into Gaza.

Egypt has been in contact with the Palestinians in an attempt to resolve the crisis.

Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, was optimistic. "Things have not reached an impasse, and efforts continue to find a solution that is acceptable to all parties," he told reporters in Gaza.

In southern Gaza, a new contingent of Israeli tanks and other armored vehicles entered the territory east of the town of Khan Yunis on Saturday and came under fire from Palestinians, according to the Israeli military and Palestinian witnesses.

Israelis hit offices of Palestinian top official Prime minister unhurt as bid to freesoldier is stepped up

Military officials said the Israeli forces were conducting a "specific operation" and were not expected to remain in the area for long. Reuters reported that the forces were searching for mines and other explosives, according to a military source.

For the past several days, the Israelis have had a much larger force positioned at an airport that has not been used for years and is near Rafah. There has been sporadic shooting, but no major clashes.

The Israelis also have a large armored force just outside the northeastern border of Gaza and have carried out frequent airstrikes and heavy shelling in northern Gaza. The Palestinians have been firing rockets into southern Israel.

Load-Date: July 5, 2006



2 missiles target Haniyeh's office; Witnesses say attack caused fire at building used by the Palestinian prime minister

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

July 2, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a9

Length: 393 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Israeli aircraft attacked the office of Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, of <u>Hamas</u>, in Gaza City early today, witnesses said, setting the building on fire.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. The Israeli army had no comment.

Witnesses said two missiles hit the south side of the building at about 1:45 a.m. local time, setting it ablaze. Because of the late hour, the building was empty, they said.

On Thursday, Israeli planes attacked the Interior Ministry, part of Israel's campaign to force release of a soldier abducted by Palestinian militants last Sunday.

The soldier is in stable condition from his wounds, a Palestinian official said Saturday, while President Mahmoud Abbas warned the coming hours were "critical, sensitive and serious" for calming the crisis.

There had been no sign of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, since he was abducted a week ago during a militant raid on an Israeli army post just outside the Gaza Strip that killed two soldiers and two of the attackers.

Ziad Abu Aen, a Palestinian deputy minister and <u>Hamas</u> official, said "mediators" told him Shalit had received medical treatment for wounds he suffered in the raid and was in stable condition.

"He has three wounds," Abu Aen said in the West Bank city of Ramallah. "I guess shrapnel wounds."

The <u>Hamas</u>-affiliated militants holding Shalit initially said they would trade information about him for all Palestinian <u>women</u> and underage prisoners in Israeli jails. The militants raised their demands Saturday, calling for an end to the Israeli offensive and the release of 1,000 other prisoners in Israel, including non-Palestinian Muslims and Arabs.

The new demand appeared aimed at rallying support in the Arab world.

Israel has ruled out any compromise, saying it would only encourage more abductions.

Israel has also blamed Syria for the kidnapping, noting it gives haven to *Hamas*' top leaders.

2 missiles target Haniyeh's office Witnesses say attack caused fire at building used by the Palestinian prime minister

Defense Minister Amir Peretz met with senior Israeli security officials Saturday night and then called Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to urge the Bush administration to step up pressure on Syria to work for Shalit's release, Israeli officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to make a formal statement.

Egypt and other foreign mediators have been working to try to resolve the crisis, but Abbas said those efforts had yet to bear fruit.

Load-Date: July 2, 2006



Star of Palestinian 'young guard' woos the voters Sharmila Devi goes on the campaign trail in Khan Younis with Mohamed Dahlan, Fatah's popular reforming candidate

Financial Times (London, England)

January 14, 2006 Saturday

London Edition 1

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 618 words

Byline: By SHARMILA DEVI

Body

Mohamed Dahlan, the 44-year-old Gaza strongman who is standing in this month's Palestinian legislative elections, always looks cool under pressure. But he has taken up smoking again after hitting the campaign trail hard.

With barely two weeks to go, he has embarked on a punishing meet-and-greet schedule in his native district of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, where many of the 90,000 eligible voters are impoverished descendents of refugees resulting from Israel's creation in 1948.

Although his personal standing gives him a 15 per cent lead over local candidates of the militant Islamic group <u>Hamas</u>, Mr Dahlan is leaving nothing to chance and is busy courting the 20 or so clan chiefs who command the loyalties - and votes - of hundreds of family members.

Mr Dahlan is one of the leaders of the young reformers in the once all-powerful Fatah movement that opinion polls show is barely ahead of <u>Hamas</u> overall in the run-up to the January 25 election for 132 seats on the Palestinian Legislative Council. Fatah is suffering from widespread disillusionment with its leader Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority president.

On the surface, little seems to connect the Gaza masses with the suave and charismatic former security chief, of whom President George W. Bush once said: "I like that young man."

But as his convoy pushed through Khan Younis's narrow streets this week, hundreds of supporters turned out to cheer him on as <u>women</u> and children threw sweets from balconies, like a scene from a Palestinian wedding. The jeeps passed a small rally of <u>Hamas</u> supporters wearing Islamic green baseball caps. One of them snarled: "We're gonna teach you a lesson."

Mr Dahlan repeatedly refers to other Fatah candidates but it is clear the crowds regard him as the star.

At the end of an exhausting day campaigning this week, Mr Dahlan acknowledged to the FT that Fatah was lagging <u>Hamas</u> in terms of organisation and strategy. "In Khan Younis, I've tried to serve as a model for others in Fatah and I'm trying to convince the leadership that we are stronger than <u>Hamas</u>."

Star of Palestinian 'young guard' woos the voters Sharmila Devi goes on the campaign trail in Khan Younis with Mohamed Dahlan, Fatah's popular reforming candida....

Mr Dahlan was one of the "young guard" who broke away last month to register a separate Fatah list headed by Marwan Barghouthi, a West Bank leader who is serving five life sentences in an Israeli jail. Aides say the move was tactical, to force Mr Abbas to take notice of the demands of a younger generation instead of the "old guard" leaders. Mr Abbas and his contemporaries spent much of their lives in exile, returning to the occupied territories with the late Yassir Arafat after the interim self-rule Oslo accords of the mid-1990s.

The tactic worked and Fatah now has a united list, although many of Mr Dahlan's younger supporters wish the split had been permanent.

Many Palestinians in Gaza say they would like Mr Dahlan to use the same forcefulness, others say brutality, that he used to suppress *Hamas* in the late 1990s to deal with a recent wave of lawlessnessfollowing Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.

After recent talks with armed factions, such as Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Mr Dahlan says he is confident the elections and their aftermath will proceed smoothly.

He was in charge of negotiations with Israel on post-Gaza withdrawal issues, such as border crossings and opening links with the West Bank. But he was forced to take time off late last year after a flare-up of back problems he says date back to torture sustained in an Israeli prison during the 1980s.

Many Palestinians like the fact Mr Dahlan is considered acceptable as a negotiator by Israel and US, a virtue that has proved a handicap to other leaders. He will not state his long-term ambitions, but many expect to watch his rise to the presidency before too long.

Load-Date: January 13, 2006



THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN January 28, 2006 Saturday All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 16

Length: 2184 words

Body

MATP

Hamas vote proves democracy has undesired results

MOST TALKED ABOUT

PALESTINIAN POLL

I AM amused by the reaction to the results of the fairly run democratic elections in Palestine ("<u>Hamas</u> win threat to peace", 27/1). I gather the result is not to the US's liking. Time to relive Iran 1953 when the US overthrew the democratically elected Mossadegh government and put the Shah in power as a compliant dictator. This led directly to the ayatollahs and the creation of a fundamental Islamic state that is the enemy of the US Government. To the Palestinians' credit, they did not succumb to all the interference and pressure put on this election by the US and Israel and voted freely, as is their right. If the US chooses to interfere with the results then they will probably create another fundamentalist Islamic state that is the sworn enemy of the US, just as Iraq will become. Sometimes democracy produces unpleasant results.

Glenn Lee

Maylands, WA

WHILE Israeli acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declares he will continue Ariel Sharon's policy of further withdrawals and endeavours for disengaging from the Palestinians -- and the majority of Israelis rejecting right-wing Benjamin Netanyahu -- the Palestinian majority have backed extremist radical militant group <u>Hamas</u> to lead them. No doubt we will eventually see, with huge fanfare, <u>Hamas</u> leadership officially stating they will accept the existence of the Israeli state and give up armed attacks on Israeli civilians while other militant groups such as Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah continue their attacks. <u>Hamas</u> leadership will publicly condemn these acts of terrorism and there will be a good cop/bad cop policy, with the international community urging Israel to continue making further concessions. Israel should make it clear to any future Palestinian government that it will only continue negotiating peace with a zero tolerance policy on terrorism.

Michael Burd

Toorak, Vic

WITH the election of <u>Hamas</u>, the Palestinian Authority has evolved from Fatah's terrorist-harbouring policies to become a fully-fledged terrorist state. This is less of a change than people pretend. The real difference between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> is that <u>Hamas</u> is more honest, both in its financial dealings and about its goal of destroying the non-Arab state next door.

Judith Rona

Bondi, NSW

DO the Palestinians really expect productive negotiations with Israel by electing <u>Hamas</u> to power? <u>Hamas</u> has sworn to the destruction of Israel. It is part of the ongoing Palestinian refusal to accept reality: their refusal to accept the UN decision of 1948 to create Israel and after 1967 with their election of Yasser Arafat. Now they give power to a terrorist group detested in the Western world while expecting the same nations to keep providing them with the aid needed for reconstruction after the barren Arafat years. The Palestinians have proved to be their own worst enemies.

Norman Rich

Newport, NSW

WITH regard to <u>Hamas</u>, I completely agree with Prime Minister John Howard's statement that we don't support a people who indulge in suicide bombing. We support airplanes flying at great height dropping massive tonnage of bombs.

Ian Pollock

Maleny, Qld

IT was very amusing to read your headline ("Powerful <u>Hamas</u> vote stuns Israelis", 27/1). I have recently returned from Israel and the opinion of the average Israeli, whether it be taxi drivers, shopkeepers or lawyers, was that <u>Hamas</u> would win the election. It was the opinion of various military personnel that <u>Hamas</u> would win. The only point of disagreement being by how much. It would appear that, as usual, politicians are out of touch with reality therefore it was really only the politicians who were surprised.

Sheron Segman

Caulfield, Vic

THE Prime Minister's call for a democratically elected body, <u>Hamas</u>, to renounce violence, seems rather hypocritical. I know he was just parroting the US stance, but someone should have ensured he "had received advice" as to who was involved in using unprovoked violence against Iraq.

A. O'Connell

Allambie, NSW

WHAT is a president left to do when he gives democracy to the Palestinians and they get it wrong? Call them terrorists, get some slam dunk evidence and invade?

Jack Bedson

Armidale, NSW

NOW that they've been elected, will <u>Hamas</u> pursue a non-violent resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute? Let's examine what their charter says. "There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors." Israel had a fringe minority party called Kach that espoused a violent stance towards the Palestinians. It was outlawed in 1994. The

Palestinians prefer to vote in their violent ideologues. Perhaps we shouldn't be talking about extremists on both sides. Palestinian militancy occupies centre stage.

Mark Lewkovitz

Bondi Beach, NSW

PM's speech proves history still has its lessons

DURING the past 30 years, the teaching of history in Australia has been transformed from rote-learning text book information -- which students were expected to recall in examinations -- to an emphasis on inquiry-based learning. An increasing emphasis on the teaching of Australian and Asian history has accompanied this shift in pedagogy. This has provided a corrective sense of balance, to use the Prime Minister's term, to the dominant narrative empire histories that most Australians used to learn. Sadly, these advances have been misrepresented in John Howard's speech as succumbing to a postmodern culture of relativism where any objective record or achievement is questioned or repudiated. Doesn't the Prime Minister understand that some of the great advances in the history of humankind have been made because people have questioned and challenged accepted practices? Within the Enlightenment traditions that the PM valorises, everyday taken-for-granted practices were based on assumptions that some human beings could be owned by others, and that women were inferior to men. These continued until challenged by abolitionists who fought against the practice of slavery and suffragettes who struggled for women to own property and vote. Howard needs to sit in a history classroom. There he would observe young Australians not only engaged in rigorous intellectual work but also learning more about the processes of causation, continuity and change that have shaped their nation and world. He would see students posing questions, weighing up evidence, making decisions and debating points of view. Then he might realise why the skills of historical inquiry are such valuable life skills. If he spent time in the classroom, Howard might also note the levels of empathy and understanding students develop for people in other places and times and their genuine joy of learning about the past. In so many classrooms history teaching and learning are alive and well. The Prime Ministers comments fly in the face of this laudable reality.

Deborah Henderson

School of Cultural and Language Studies

Kelvin Grove Campus, QUT

THE renewed discourse on the merits of postmodernist school curriculum is welcome. As a recent senior school graduate, I praise the Prime Minister's criticism of this "fragmented stew of themes and issues". English and history students are, on the surface, encouraged to deconstruct all issues in order to gain an objective understanding of the text. We are told to challenge every viewpoint and ignore the dominant messages forced upon us by popular literature and culture. Students have become victims of ideologically driven education departments. Those who defend this system of teaching proclaim that students are learning to challenge accepted versions of the truth. But in the classroom the reality is that the independent ideas of students are encouraged only when they conform to the intrinsically biased views exposed by the postmodern humanities curriculum.

Brock William

Wongawallan, Qld

IT appears that our Prime Minister has taken offence to how history is taught in schools, referring to it as a fragmented stew, hijacked by a postmodernist culture of questioning and repudiation. That history has suffered as a discipline within Australian schools, goes without saying. However, I must have missed something. I was under the impression that one of the primary aims of studying history was to learn how to question the past in order to understand the present. That the agents of history, including the historians, have seen the world through glasses of various shades and tints. At what stage did history become a cabbage patch that sprouts a single, self-evident narrative every year to be served on the plate, whole and organic?

Travis Gottschutzke

Hyde Park, SA

Promiscuity fears misguided

IT is disappointing to read that the development of a world-first vaccine to prevent human papilloma virus has raised the furphy of teenage sexual promiscuity ("Vaccine sparks promiscuity fears", 27/1). This achievement will save the lives of many <u>women</u> worldwide and our pride in the development of the vaccine by professor Ian Frazer should not be compromised by hypothetical and unfounded comments by people like Senator Barnaby Joyce. Research has shown that many teenagers are sexually active and there has been an increase in the rates of sexually transmitted infections among this population. Delivery of this vaccine must occur before sexual activity begins and therefore at a relatively young age. We have just completed the first study to examine attitudes to the vaccine among a representative sample of more than 1000 <u>women</u>. There was a strong relationship between approval of vaccination in general and vaccination against HPV. In other words, <u>women</u> recognised that this vaccine was about disease prevention rather than sex. A majority (79 per cent) were in favour of vaccinating their children against cervical cancer. Senator Joyce may be interested to know that 91 per cent of these <u>women</u> disagreed with the statement that vaccinating young people against HPV would encourage them to become sexually active. It would be shameful if ideologically driven arguments about young people's sexuality got in the way of the community's adoption of lifesaving prevention measures. As always, discussions about sex generate considerable heat. Regarding the sexual health of our young people, we need to rely on evidence not rhetoric.

Professor Suzanne Garland

Royal Children's Hospital

Professor Marian Pitts

La Trobe University

Professor Doreen Rosenthal

University of Melbourne

SENATOR Joyce's suggestion that any vaccine for HPV would be an invitation to teenage promiscuity is absurd. HPV is only one of a number of sexually transmitted infections that can result from unsafe sexual activity. Concerns over premature sexual activity should be met with open and active parental education of their children about sexual health and responsibility. Quite simply, the "social implications" of this vaccine would be a reduction in the number of <u>women</u> affected by cervical cancer.

Mathew Kunkel

Dutton Park, Qld

Muzak to our ears

NORMAN Lebrecht is clearly playing classical shock jock in his glib summing up of Mozart's "mediocre" life. I wonder if anyone will remember Lebrecht 25 years after his death, let alone 250.

Nick Scott

Woodend, Vic

FIRST BYTE

I'M concerned. If Australian soccer now demands to be called football, will this eventually lead to soccer players having the exclusive right to be called footballers.

J. Brown

Mountain View, California

DOES John Byrne (Letters, 27/1) realise that, thanks to the IR reforms, next year he may get his wish and may have to go to work.

John Auger

Freshwater, Qld

IF I burnt an Australian flag tea towel, am I making a political statement or am I just trying to get out of the washing up?

John Paul Janke

Curtin, WA

I WONDER if Tom Holden (First byte, 27/1) has considered the possibility that had the ABC not reported the Aboriginal cleansing ceremony in Sydney's Hyde Park on Australia Day, no other media broadcast organisation would have?

Garry Wong

Wanniassa, ACT

DID Lloyd Swanton (Letters, 27/1) count the state of Hawaii? It has no difficulty sporting the British flag within its own.

Barry Wells

Clifton Beach, Qld

THE current politicians in the National Party appear to be suffering from a crisis of uncertainty. They're not quite sure whether they are pro-Liberal or pro-Australian.

Randolph Magri-Overend

Point Clare, NSW

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Load-Date: January 31, 2006



Tanks mass to free kidnap soldier

The Times (London)
June 27, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 31

Length: 880 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell and Ian MacKinnon

Body

Israel has warned Palestinian leaders of massive retribution unless the young corporal snatched by militants in a tunnel raid is returned, report Stephen Farrell and Ian MacKinnon

A large-scale military clash loomed in Gaza last night as Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, rejected demands to negotiate for the release of a captive soldier and his army prepared an operation to free the man.

Gaza militants who seized Corporal Gilad Shalit after a raid on Sunday had demanded the release of Palestinian **women** and children from Israeli jails in return for information about his whereabouts.

Mr Olmert quickly responded: "The question of freeing prisoners is in no way on the Israeli government agenda. There will be no negotiations, no bargaining, no agreements."

He was speaking as Israel massed tanks on the border and said that the country was prepared to assassinate senior Palestinians, including the leaders of <u>Hamas</u>, the ruling party. An incursion to free the soldier would be by far the largest move into Gaza since the Israeli withdrawal a year ago.

The military wing of <u>Hamas</u> was one of three armed groups that claimed responsibility for the pre-dawn raid on Sunday, in which the 19-year-old dual French-Israeli citizen was captured. The raid was carried out by armed men who tunnelled from Rafah to Kerem Shalom, a military base just across the border. Two Israeli soldiers were killed as well as two militants.

Mr Olmert put the army on alert for a "comprehensive and protracted operation" unless the 19-year-old corporal was freed unconditionally.

Mr Olmert's Government urged Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, to secure the soldier's freedom, holding him and the rest of the Palestinian Authority accountable.

"I gave the orders to our military commanders to prepare the army for a broad and ongoing military operation to strike the terrorist leaders and all those involved," Mr Olmert said. "Let it be clear: we will reach everyone, no matter where they are, and they know it. There will be immunity for no one."

Egyptian and Jordanian diplomats also working to bring about the release of Corporal Shalit, and Dan Gillerman, the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, demanded that President Abbas exercise all the pressure at his disposal.

Tanks mass to free kidnap soldier

"We expect Mahmoud Abbas to exert his authority," Mr Gillerman told The Times. "He has the means and military capability to ensure the soldier's safe return. Leaders in the region and the world realise this is a watershed. It's the last chance for President Abbas to show he's in charge."

The demand for release of prisoners was made in a statement signed by <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing, the Saladin Brigade and the Army of Islam. The last two groups are offshoots of the Popular Resistance Committees, which has links to *Hamas*.

In Gaza, however, there was widespread support for the Kerem Shalom raid, even as the sealed-off coastal strip prepared for an Israeli attack.

The <u>Hamas</u>-led Government claims that it knew nothing of the Kerem Shalom raid in advance, saying that it was carried out by its military wing.

Challenged on whether that meant that it tacitly backed the raid or had lost control of its fighters, Ghazi Hamad, the government spokesman, said that it was hard to restrain angry people in an abnormal situation. "Gaza is surrounded by Israeli troops. Daily in Gaza there are massacres and murders and assassinations, so it is not easy to tell people you have to be be patient and polite. You expect a kind of reaction sometimes," he told The Times. He also complained of international double standards: ignoring thousands of Palestinian prisoner in Israeli jails but protesting at the capture of one Israeli.

In Rafah, where the tunnel was burrowed from border greenhouses, families sent away their children and prepared for evacuation before the arrival of Israeli tanks, which have already destroyed the offending structures. But as they watched tanks, bulldozers and mechanical diggers rumbling just a mile away, Palestinians viewed the raid on Sunday as retaliation for recent Israeli helicopter raids that have killed 14 Palestinian civilians during rocket strikes aimed at militants in crowded areas.

Ahmed Attiyah, whose house is overlooked by an Israeli watchtower in Kerem Shalom, said that Gaza was so ground down by Israeli air attacks and border closures that it had nothing to lose by hitting back. "We were under Israeli threat any time, from their rockets and from their shelling," he said. "We had no safety, so why not retaliate?"

In a nearby hospital Baha Mehedin said that Palestinians wanted peace but were not prepared to sell their rights. "*Hamas* did something against soldiers, not citizens and not civilians, so I think everyone supports this," the 56-year-old English teacher said.

Across the border the Israeli Government was under intense domestic pressure to hit <u>Hamas</u>. Mr Olmert has been criticised for failing to curb Palestinian rocket attacks into Israel, which have intensified in recent weeks.

Israel sought to curb them with artillery fire into the launching areas but halted the barrage after eight Palestinians were killed during a beach picnic although the Israel Defence Forces insist that their shells were not responsible.

timesonline.co.uk/mideast Analysis by Stephen Farrell

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



Matt McCarten: Sickening silence by the West on Gaza tragedy makes us all complicit

The New Zealand Herald
July 9, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 909 words

Body

Doesn't the deafening silence by the West, including New Zealand, over the unfolding tragedy in the Gaza Strip seem so breathtakingly hypocritical? Most of us support Israel's right to exist and rightly hope that the young Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, kidnapped last week, is released unharmed. But surely Israel cannot expect us to believe for a minute that their military response has anything to do with releasing the young soldier, but everything to do with taking out the elected *Hamas* Government.

How else do you explain the missile attack on the office of Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh last Monday? After obliterating the prime minister's office, the Israeli military issued a statement claiming that bombing his office was intended to "secure the safe return" of their kidnapped soldier. Oh, please!

The mainstream media don't serve us well when they promote only the Western view. Shalit's kidnapping happened during a raid on an Israeli military base at a key border crossing between Israel and Gaza. Shalit's base was where regular Israeli artillery shelling of Gaza was organised. Isn't it amazing that we hear about the infrequent symbolic and largely harmless mortar attacks but not about Israel's more regular lethal artillery attacks? Israel would have us believe that <u>Hamas</u> carried out the kidnapping. But responsibility is actually claimed by the Popular Resistance Committees, apparently in response to Israel's assassination a month ago of their founder. Their head was also the director-general of the interior ministry of the Palestinian Authority. The PRC are demanding the release of hundreds of Palestinian children and <u>women</u> from Israeli jails whom they claim are imprisoned on concocted charges based on false confessions extracted by torture.

"Is it not astonishing," said a leading Middle East commentator, "that the entire world knows the name and face of the Israeli soldier, while the hundreds of Palestinian children held in Israel's dungeons, not to mention 10,000 adult prisoners, thousands held without charge and trial, abducted from their homes in the middle of the night by Israeli occupation forces, remain nameless and faceless before a silent world?"

You can see his point. Of course, the Israeli Government claims it won't be "held to ransom by terrorists" and launched its "Summer Rain" campaign to release the hapless hostage. The apparent rescue operation involves massive attack helicopters and fighter jets against the civilians of Gaza Strip. Three bridges linking up the 1.3 million people who live in Gaza have so far been destroyed on the pretext of preventing the kidnappers from moving their hostage. But in a particularly vindictive action, Israeli jets also bombed Gaza's only power plant, leaving half the people without water and two-thirds without electricity. The message to the Palestinian people was that they are to be punished collectively. Presumably, the strategy is to turn the population against *Hamas*. But according to Time magazine, it seems to be having the opposite effect.

Matt McCarten: Sickening silence by the West on Gaza tragedy makes us all complicit

The Israeli military forces have also "arrested" a third of the Palestinian Cabinet, including the finance minister and the parliamentary speaker. This week, an Israeli Government spokesperson said it had drawn up an assassination list of government leaders, including the Prime Minister, if Shalit is not released. Can you imagine anything more outrageous than one state threatening to assassinate the elected leaders of another state?

The silence of the "international community" is sickening. Whenever armed resistance by Palestinians occurs, Western leaders line up to condemn terrorism. Yet when violence is carried out by Israeli military forces, these events are considered "unfortunate incidents". That was the description given to the Israeli shelling of a family picnicking on a Gaza beach last month. Some Western reports even bought the absurd spin that the family's murder was possibly the result of a mine planted by *Hamas*.

A White House spokesperson stated: "While Washington urges Israel to ensure innocent civilians are not harmed, the hostage-taking and the attacks by <u>Hamas</u> last weekend have precipitated the current events in Gaza. Israel has the right to defend itself and the lives of its citizens."

According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, in just three weeks leading up to Shalit's kidnapping, 27 Palestinians were killed by the army and 59 were wounded, including 30 children; 300 Palestinians were also arrested and imprisoned.

But this isn't all. The deliberate and calculated destruction of Palestinian property, the economic strangulation of the Occupied Territories, the ongoing construction of Israel's apartheid wall and the psychological terror inflicted by military raids and checkpoints are all done to cower Palestinians into submissive silence.

The New York Times recently reported the analysis of Ali Jarbawi, a professor at the Palestinian Birzeit University, of the real reasons for the current Israeli operation: "The kidnapped soldier matters but was also a pretext for the Israelis, who also have a score to settle with <u>Hamas</u>. Israel wants a compliant Palestinian Authority." This latest Israeli assault is part of a deliberate strategy to destroy the ability of the elected <u>Hamas</u> Government to resist settling the "Palestine-Israel conflict" (as the dispossession of Palestinians is banally labelled) on Israel's terms.

Our silence makes us complicit.

Load-Date: July 8, 2006



Threats to Jews

Western Mail
July 29, 2006, Saturday
First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 21

Length: 250 words

Body

SIR - What a topsy turvey world some people live in! Israel has not pledged to annihilate any of her neighbours but both <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah, proxies of Iran and Syria, have pledged to wipe out every Jew from the world, not just Israel.

And there are those in Wales who are happy for that to happen!

Would Ms White like the UN force to be composed of Iranians, Libyans, Saudis and the rest of the absolute monarchs and dictators that form the majority in any UN vote. They have never voted against Palestinian suicide bombers or against China for Tiananmen Square!

Yes Lebanon and the UN are culpable. There were UN observers, did they tell Mr Annan about the weekly plane loads of weaponry from Iran via Syria into Lebanese- controlled airports? The thousands of dollars the <u>Hamas</u> personnel are spending on weapons and not on helping their people in Gaza is also unreported

Why don't Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> come out and fight like a proper army instead of hiding behind <u>women</u> and children? This condemned even by the UN.

I know many Israeli soldiers and their parents; some I taught in Cardiff High School. None wants to be fighting a war, but the chilling fact is their neighbours don't want Israel to have 1% of the land in the Middle East and live in peace.

Israel occupies none of Lebanon and none of Gaza which has open borders with Egypt to receive all the aid it could from the oil-rich Arab countries.

Please fellow Welsh people don't be a party to finish what Hitler began.

JEAN A EVANS

Llanedeyrn, Cardiff

Load-Date: July 31, 2006



Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

The Australian (Australia)
July 13, 2006 Thursday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 719 words

Byline: Martin Chulov Middle East correspondent

Body

MATP

IRANIAN-backed Hezbollah militants yesterday kidnapped two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid that threatens to drag Lebanon and Syria into outright conflict with Israel.

The Israeli Defence Force last night confirmed two soldiers had been seized by Hezbollah guerillas during a rocket barrage and immediately launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon to find them. At least three Israeli soldiers are believed to have been killed in the strike.

The attack takes to three the number of Israeli soldiers being held hostage and is set to spark the most significant flashpoint in the western Middle East in more than a decade. Less than an hour after the operation, Israeli warplanes attacked three bridges in southern Lebanon to prevent the guerillas from taking their captives further north.

Hezbollah positions destroyed by artillery three months ago were also under heavy attack. Reinforcements were being called to the northern border ahead of a mooted full-scale invasion into parts of Lebanon from which the Israeli military withdrew in 2000.

Israel was preparing for an all-out assault against Hezbollah's supporters, which could include targets in Syria and Beirut that provide the Shia-backed militants with weapons and money. Israel has previously said Hezbollah's main benefactor, Iran, is not out of reach of its warplanes.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned: "There are elements from the north and from the south who threaten our stability and threaten to test our determination.

"They will fail and will pay a heavy price for their deeds."

Six Israeli soldiers were injured in the Hezbollah assault, five civilians were moderately wounded and a tank destroyed by a landmine. The operation was seen as a diversion from the two-week siege of Gaza designed primarily to find a third Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was seized from a tank by <u>Hamas</u>-aligned militants late last month.

Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

It came hours after the Palestinian militant most wanted by Israel for more than a decade apparently escaped a fourth attempt to kill him after surviving a strike by an F-16 jet on a building in central Gaza.

The 227kg bomb dropped at daybreak on Wednesday Israeli time killed six people and wounded 36 others, including civilians. But Mohammed Deif, the head of <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, is believed to have fled the building.

Israel claims its chief quarry was wounded in the strike, which military officials said targeted a key *Hamas* hideout. However, a spokesman for *Hamas*'s military wing last night strongly denied the claim.

After the border fight, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said: "For the second time in two weeks, we have been attacked in an unprovoked manner by jihadist groups. This underscores their true agenda. We withdrew to UN-sanctioned borders in accordance with international agreements and we continue to be attacked.

"This is proof that what we are seeing here is a continued push by global jihadi groups bent on Israel's destruction."

Within hours of seizing the captives, Hezbollah released a statement saying it was prepared to trade their freedom for the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails.

"In the frame of our will to free Islamic resistance prisoners and detainees, we kidnapped two Israeli soldiers on the northern border of Palestine," the statement said. "The two soldiers have been taken to a safe place."

<u>Hamas</u> officials have tried for the past two weeks to trade Corporal Shalit for <u>female</u> and juvenile prisoners jailed in Israel, but their attempts have been met with staunch refusals by the Israeli cabinet. Israel has repeatedly accused Syria of backing the Damascus-based head of <u>Hamas</u>'s politburo, Khaled Meshaal, who it accuses of being behind the Shalit kidnapping. For two years, it has also blamed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for sponsoring Hezbollah. Lebanon and Syria remain sworn enemies of the Jewish state. The al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigades last night released a statement praising the Hezbollah operation.

"This heroic action returned the smiles to our faces and joy to the hearts of the Palestinian nation, especially those being massacred by Israel in Gaza," said a spokesman.

"We are proud of our Lebanese brothers and thank them for the joy they have given us."

Load-Date: July 12, 2006



<u>Israelis threaten a broader action; Incursion into Gaza seeks soldier -</u> Correction Appended

The International Herald Tribune June 29, 2006 Thursday

Correction Appended

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1187 words

Byline: Ian Fisher and Steven Erlanger

Dateline: RAFAH, Gaza

Body

Israel on Wednesday stepped up its confrontation with the Palestinians over the capture of an Israeli soldier and threatened an even broader response including a strike at Syria if he was not freed.

Israel fired artillery shells into areas in northern Gaza where Palestinians often fire Qassam rockets into Israel, preparing for a possible incursion.

The military also flew four warplanes over the house of President Bashar Assad of Syria, a blunt message, the Israelis said, that he should help in freeing the soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit.

As Israeli tanks hunkered down inside southern Gaza at the airport here and fighter planes knocked out half of Gaza's electricity, there were no signs that the confrontation would ease. Rather, the crisis seemed to be tipping toward wider violence.

The Israeli defense minister, Amir Peretz, on Wednesday approved an extension of the Israeli push into northern Gaza, in particular toward the towns of Sderot and Ashkelon. At about 9 p.m., after reportedly dropping leaflets urging citizens of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya to leave their homes, Israeli artillery batteries began to fire, with rounds hitting areas darkened by power cuts every 45 seconds or so.

Palestinian leaders continued to insist on an exchange of the soldier for the release of <u>women</u> and minors from Israeli prisons a condition that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert vowed would not be considered.

The choice, Israeli officials said, was the soldier's unconditional release or an escalation that could widen the conflict regionally. Haim Ramon, Israel's justice minister, raised the possibility of a strike in Syria to kill Khaled Meshal, an exiled political leader of *Hamas*.

Referring to Shalit, 19, who was captured near Gaza on Sunday by <u>Hamas</u> fighters, Olmert said: "We won't hesitate to carry out extreme action to bring Gilad back to his family. All the military activity that started overnight will continue in the coming days.

"We do not intend to re-occupy Gaza," he said in a speech in Jerusalem. "We have one objective, and that is to bring Gilad home."

In what the Israelis said was a message to Assad, four Israeli warplanes flew over his residence in Latakia, in northwest Syria, where he was believed to be staying, Israeli officials said.

Assad is the host in Syria of Meshal, the <u>Hamas</u> leader whom Israel and Fatah have blamed for ordering the raid into Israel, in which two Israeli soldiers were killed and four were wounded, including Shalit.

Syria said its air defenses fired on the Israeli planes, "which dispersed and left the region," according to the Syrian news agency SANA.

Syria called the flyover "an unjustified and rejected provocation."

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, condemned Israel's attacks on infrastructure in Gaza, which completely disabled its only power plant and knocked down three bridges on the north-to-south roads. In a statement, Abbas said he considered "the aggression that targeted the civilian infrastructures as collective punishment and crimes against humanity."

In Gaza, meanwhile, the Popular Resistance Committees, a group with ties to <u>Hamas</u>, displayed the identity card of an 18-year-old Israeli settler, Eliahu Asheri, whom it claimed to have kidnapped in the West Bank. Militants said they would kill him if Israel did not halt its operations in Gaza. Israeli media also carried unconfirmed reports that a 60-year-old Israeli missing for two days had been abducted.

But for all the saber-rattling on both sides masked Palestinian militants continued to threaten Israeli troops here there was comparatively little bloodshed on Wednesday.

Two Palestinians, aged 2 and 17, were reportedly killed Wednesday while playing with an unexploded Israeli shell in the southern town of Khan Yunis. But there were no reported casualties in Israeli airstrikes, also carried out at a *Hamas* training camp here and in areas in the north used by militants to shoot rockets into Israel.

Unlike other Israeli incursions in Gaza, there have been no reported skirmishes between the military and Palestinian militants, though the Israelis stayed largely out of reach, dug in at the airport.

The airport, Israeli military officials said, will act as a staging ground for an operation that will progressively escalate until Gilad, said to be wounded but alive after the attack, was freed.

Beyond the specific issue of Gilad, the standoff also underscored far broader, and typically complicated, political goals on both sides.

For Israelis, the operation is also aimed at deterring <u>Hamas</u>, which now leads the Palestinian government, from carrying out similar attacks in the future and to end rocket attacks from Gaza. Israeli newspapers carried articles speaking of the attacks on the infrastructure as a way to extract a concrete longer-term cost for the actions of Palestinians' leaders.

For many Palestinians in Gaza, the refusal to back down seemed a collective effort to highlight their own sense of grievance.

The economy has broken down under an embargo of Western aid since <u>Hamas</u> took power in January. The Palestinians remain under siege, they say, despite the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza last year, with their borders often closed and encircled by Israeli warplanes and ships.

There remains widespread approval for the capture of Gilad and <u>Hamas</u>'s demand for an exchange, given that there are nearly 9,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, among them 95 <u>women</u> and 313 men under the age of 18.

Israelis threaten a broader action Incursion into Gaza seeks soldier

"There is support for this because I am not safe when I walk on the street," said Mustafa Raghib, director of Gaza's largest flour mill.

He was forced to shut it down for several hours after the electricity was cut. "I don't live a good life. I am not safe in my country. Give me a good life and I will not support actions like this."

Israeli leaders said Wednesday that they had ordered the military forward after seeing little progress on diplomatic efforts including by Egypt and France to free Gilad, who also holds French citizenship.

Amid sonic booms that shattered windows, Israeli planes hit the three bridges and Apache helicopters targeted all six of the transformers at the power plant an attack Israeli officials said was necessary to make any transfer of Gilad more difficult.

"Nobody understands the logic," Rafik Maliha, the plant's manager, said as firefighters worked to keep down smoke that still rose hours after the attacks. "They want to keep people in the dark so kidnappers don't move? What's the relationship?"

He added: "If there is no electricity, there is no water. It is more than collective punishment."

Both Palestinian and Israeli officials said the plant, built by Norway and run by oil subsidized by the European Union, provided 42 percent of the power to Gaza's 1.3 million residents, and now Gaza is completely dependent on Israel for its power.

Maliha said it would take as long as a year to replace the transformers, at a cost of more than \$1 million each

On Tuesday, Palestinian negotiators from Fatah, <u>Hamas</u> and other factions rushed to finish a draft of a unified political program, based on a document compiled in May by Palestinian prisoners.

Correction

An article June 29 on the deaths of two Palestinians in an explosion in the southern Gaza town of Khan Yunis misstated the cause. Palestinians initially blamed an Israeli shell for the blast, but Palestinian security officials and Palestinian journalists later said that the blast appeared to be a Palestinian explosive that went off unintentionally.

Correction-Date: July 12, 2006

Load-Date: July 12, 2006



The real reason why Israel is using such violence against the Palestinians in Gaza

The Independent (London)

July 10, 2006 Monday

First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 27

Length: 1174 words **Byline:** JOHANN HARI

Body

If you have never been there, it's hard to give a sense of the cramped claustrophobia of Gaza It is a tiny patch of land squeezed between the sea and the local superpower, where 1.4 million people live locked in fear and never leave. I couldn't find anybody my age who had ever been beyond Gaza in the rotting refugee camps and concrete slabs of poverty that fill the Strip.

They were stuck in their little sand-and-concrete hole, smaller than the Isle of Wight, dreaming angry dreams of Jerusalem' the rest of the world seems to them unimaginably far away. Their world begins and ends with the beaches to one side - now unusable because of Israeli attacks - and the tanks to the other.

Over the past three weeks, as so often before, the entire population of Gaza has been subject to collective punishment. The civilian population is woken in the night by "sonic booms", sudden deafening noise-explosions caused by Israeli planes that everyone assumes, for a terrible moment, are bombs being dropped on them. The civilian population is being starved. Although 14 per cent of their children were already suffering from levels of malnutrition that match sub-Saharan Africa, food supplies into Gaza are being restricted. Dov Weisglass, an adviser to the Israeli Prime Minister, refers to this with a chuckle as "putting the Palestinians on a diet". And the civilian population is being bombed. In the week we were grieving for the slaughtered of 7/7, the same number of Palestinians have been blown up, many of them <u>women</u> and children in their own homes.

The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz gave a small snapshot of what this looks like for Gazans. Last Thursday morning, Illan as-Siam was sitting at home with his wife and three children when an Israeli tank smashed into their garden. Armed soldiers got out and, aiming guns at the children, they announced they were turning the house into a temporary military base. They were forbidden from even going to the lavatory. When they cracked and let the crying 11-year-old go, he was accompanied at gunpoint.

What are they being punished for, these 1.4 million people? What has happened that makes Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, say: "I want no one to sleep at night in Gaza. I want them to know what it feels like"? The

The real reason why Israel is using such violence against the Palestinians in Gaza

vast majority, of course, have done nothing. More than half the population of Gaza are children. Among the adults, 67 per cent want a two-state solution with Israel and an end to attacks on Israeli civilians.

But "they" - everyone, innocent or guilty - are being ostensibly punished for three reasons. The first is that an Israeli soldier has been kidnapped. He is the only Israeli being detained by the Palestinians. By contrast, the Israelis are currently holding 8,200 Palestinian fighters, 800 of them Guantanamo-style, without charge and indefinitely. Some of these people were involved in attacks upon the Israeli civilian population and deserve to be severely punished - but the vast majority were simply resisting violent occupying troops within Gaza and the West Bank.

The second public reason is that, against the will of the majority, a tiny number of Palestinians are firing Qassam rockets at Israel from the West Bank. Thirteen Israeli civilians have ever died in this way - in contrast to the 238 Palestinians killed from the air since the Israeli "disengagement" from Gaza. If the Israelis are entitled to bomb in response, what are the Palestinians entitled to do? The current firing of rockets only began after Israeli forces broke their promise to provide Gazans with a safe passage to the West Bank, declared economic war on their elected leadership, and struck at the Islamic University in Gaza.

The final public reason is that the Palestinians chose - in free, open elections - to elect <u>Hamas</u>. I dislike <u>Hamas</u> intensely. It is an organisation that loathes <u>women</u>'s rights, believes in the execution of homosexuals, and defends the deliberate targeting of Jewish children. But the Palestinian people did not give them a mandate on that basis. They gave <u>Hamas</u> a mandate to eradicate the fetid corruption of Fatah, and they made it clear that they expect **Hamas** to pursue any real path to peace that came along.

That's why last month, when the Fatah President, Mahmoud Abbas, threatened to use his remaining powers to hold a referendum on accepting Israel's existence over the heads of <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist organisation quickly backed down. They made clear signals that they would accept peace with Israel after all.

But here we come to the real reason for the assault the world - including, very publicly, Kofi Annan - is watching in disbelief. Most people would expect any Israeli government to celebrate the news that even the radical wing of the Palestinians were poised to accept Israel's existence. But once *Hamas* makes this commitment, there is no longer any excuse to refuse serious peace negotiations - and that was never part of the Sharon-Kadimaplan, inherited and followed to the letter by Olmert.

We need to look at the origins of the Kadima approach to understand what is happening in Gaza. Ariel Sharon did not have a Damascene conversion to the cause of Palestinian self-determination in his seventies, after a lifetime of trying to crush it. He simply realised that unless the borders of Israel were quickly redrawn, the higher Arab birthrate was going to soon produce an Arab majority living between the River and the Sea under Israeli rule. This would leave Israel with a choice: either become an apartheid state and lose even American support, or be voted out of existence.

Sharon chose to steer away from this by redrawing the country's boundaries unilaterally to ensure a Jewish majority, on his own terms and in his own way.

This would allow him to seize the choicest morsels of the West Bank - including the major settlements and the all-important water supplies - and leave the Palestinians with barren scraps like Gaza.

The only thing that could obstruct this plan is the arrival of a Palestinian "partner for peace", somebody the world could demand that Israel negotiate with. Inevitably, any negotiations would require Olmert to give up some of the areas he is currently planning to seize. Sharon had already snubbed Abbas when he offered just this back in 2002, concocting an excuse about him not disarming the militias quickly enough. (If Abbas had done what Sharon demanded, he would be dead now.) Over the past three weeks, confronted with the possibility that even *Hamas* would negotiate, Olmert has continued Sharon's strategy. He has tried to choke off any possible partner by invading Gaza and attempting to stoke yet further Palestinian radicalisation.

The real reason why Israel is using such violence against the Palestinians in Gaza

The last three weeks have not been primarily about an Israeli soldier, a slew of rockets, or <u>Hamas</u>. They are about the determination of the Israeli government to unilaterally seize chunks of the West Bank, and to refuse to negotiate, any time, any place, anywhere.

The last three weeks have not been primarily about an Israeli soldier, a slew of rockets or *Hamas*

j.hari@independent.co.uk

Load-Date: July 10, 2006



DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 12, 2006 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 274 words

Byline: FROM NEWS SERVICES

Body

GAZA STRIP

Haniyeh: Most in Cabinet won't be legislators

Incoming Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said Saturday that a majority of the ministers in the Cabinet he was putting together would come from outside the newly elected Palestinian legislature.

Haniyeh, a leader of the <u>Hamas</u> group, has been negotiating with different Palestinian factions to form a coalition government by the end of the month after the Islamic militant group's overwhelming victory in parliamentary elections Jan. 25.

<u>Hamas</u> spokesman Salah Bardawil said the group told Palestinian parties they must decide by Monday whether to join a <u>Hamas</u>-led government.

AMMAN, JORDAN

2 men are executed in killing of American

Two men convicted of killing a U.S. aid official were hanged before dawn Saturday in Jordan's first execution of al-Qaida-linked militants.

The men, Salem bin Suweid of Libya and Yasser Freihat of Jordan, were executed for the 2002 killing of Laurence Foley, 60, an administrator with the U.S. Agency for International Development who was gunned down near his home in Amman.

The murder plot was blamed on al-Qaida in Iraq chief Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Bin Suweid was charged with shooting Foley, and Freihat was found guilty of driving the getaway car.

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

Villagers dispute army statement about attack

Pakistani soldiers backed by helicopter gunships attacked a suspected militant hideout in Pakistan's volatile tribal region near the Afghan border and killed about 30 fighters, an army spokesman said Saturday.

DIGEST

But residents and hard-line clerics disputed the military's claim, saying most of the dead were villagers, including <u>women</u> and children.

Load-Date: March 12, 2006



Tanks roll into Gaza as Israel strikes back over soldier's kidnap

Daily Mail (London)

June 28, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: ED 3RD; Pg. 2

Length: 594 words

Byline: MATTHEW KALMAN

Body

ISRAELI tanks and troops swept into the Gaza Strip early today as the Jewish state launched a major offensive to free a captured soldier.

The incursion began shortly after Israeli warplanes launched devastating raids on bridges and a power station in the Palestinian-controlled territory.

It was the biggest offensive against the area for years and came as Israel dismissed a peace move by the new *Hamas*-led government.

Israeli forces had been massing on the border of the Gaza since Sunday when a 19-yearold Israeli corporal was seized by Palestinian militants.

They moved in early today after mediators said hope was running out of recovering the soldier. The incursion came shortly after Palestinian security forces deployed near the border town of Rafah, site of Gaza's only airport, were ordered out by the Israeli military.

The Israeli army confirmed its forces had crossed the border, the first major ground offensive in Gaza since Israel withdrew last year after 38 years of occupation.

Israeli aircraft attacked two bridges in the central Gaza Strip shortly before midnight.

Planes also cut power to much of Gaza City with its strike on the power station.

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert hinted that unless the kidnapped soldier, Gilad Shalit, was returned safely, Israel would begin targeting senior *Hamas* leaders.

He threatened to cut off water and gas supplies to the Gaza Strip until the soldier was released.

'This government will not compromise with terrorists, nor conduct any negotiations with them,' said Mr Olmert.

'Time is fast running out,' Israeli defence minister Amir Peretz had said as tanks and troops massed on the border.

The hostage crisis has brought relations between Israel and the Palestinians to their lowest point since Israel quit the territory last year.

Tanks roll into Gaza as Israel strikes back over soldier's kidnap

It is a major test for Mr Olmert, elected in March on a platform of carrying out a similar withdrawal from parts of the occupied West Bank.

With tension growing last night, <u>Hamas</u> reached a political deal with the more moderate president Mahmoud Abbas, but rejected any suggestion the plan meant the group blamed for scores of suicide bombings against Israel now recognised the Jewish state and had dropped its vow to destroy it.

Israel dismissed the manifesto as 'doublespeak' aimed at lifting a U.S.led aid embargo on the Palestinian Authority. Earlier, as tanks and troops massed outside Gaza, Palestinian gunmen fanned out behind barricades and in foxholes. Tank fire into southern Gaza lightly wounded one gunman.

Hoping to head off a major flare-up in more than five years of Israeli-Palestinian fighting, Egypt has been trying to broker Corporal Shalit's release. So has France, as the teenage conscript has French and well as Israeli citizenship.

But mediators were close to calling it quits. 'It will be a few hours yet until we know it is hopeless,' one mediator said last night hours before Israel's forces swung into action.

There has been little word on Corporal Shalit's fate.

<u>Hamas</u>'s armed wing offered to release details if Israel frees Palestinian minors and <u>women</u> held in its prisons, but such a swap was ruled out by Mr Olmert.

Israeli media said there was concern Corporal Shalit may have been spirited out of Gaza by his captors.

Militant groups said Sunday's raid was in response to the killing of 14 Palestinian civilians in Israeli air strikes in Gaza against militants behind cross-border rocket attacks.

Hamas's armed wing this month called off a truce it had largely followed since the start of 2005.

The group carried out nearly 60 suicide bombings against Israelis.

Graphic

ISRAELI TANKS HAVE BEEN MASSING AT THE BORDER SINCE SUNDAY

Load-Date: June 28, 2006



Palestinian PM accuses Israel of plan to topple gov't

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

July 1, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. C11

Length: 628 words

Byline: Associated Press; Canadian Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP-CP) -- Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said Friday that Israel's offensive is aimed at toppling the <u>Hamas</u>-led government but maintained he is working with mediators to resolve the crisis over a captive Israeli soldier.

Israel kept up the pressure in Gaza, destroying the interior minister's offi ce and targeting a car carrying militants in an air strike. Israel also said it attacked a militant cell, killing a local Islamic Jihad leader -- the fi rst reported death in the offensive.

With the crisis threatening to boil over into major fi ghting, the UN Security Council scheduled an emergency debate Friday. The Palestinians sought a resolution condemning Israel's actions and demanding a halt to all military operations.

Early today, the militants holding the soldier issued a new set of demands, calling on Israel to halt its offensive in Gaza and ordering the release of 1,000 prisoners.

The demands were laid out in a joint statement by the militant wing of the governing <u>Hamas</u> party and two smaller militant groups with close ties to <u>Hamas</u> -- the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam. The three groups have claimed responsibility for Sunday's capture of Cpl. Gilad Shalit in a cross-border raid.

Earlier this week, the same groups called for the release of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and minors held by Israel in exchange for information about Shalit.

Today's statement, like the earlier one, did not promise to release Shalit or give any information about his condition.

Israeli defence offi cials said they believe he suffered slight wounds but is still alive. Israel has ruled out a prisoner swap.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh urged his people to remain steadfast. Though he did not directly address Israel's demand that militants hand over the abducted soldier, he implied the government would not trade him for eight Palestinian cabinet ministers detained by Israel on Thursday.

Palestinian PM accuses Israel of plan to topple gov't

He also accused Israel of using the soldier's capture as a pretext for launching a major offensive with the aim of bringing down his government.

"This total war is proof of a premeditated plan," he said.

Haniyeh spoke in a sermon at a Gaza mosque Friday, the Muslim day of worship, as <u>Hamas</u> gunmen stood guard outside. It was his fi rst public appearance since Shalit, 19, was captured Sunday in a militant raid on an army post in Israel that sparked the crisis and sent <u>Hamas</u>'s top leaders into hiding.

Israel sent troops into southern Gaza on Wednesday -- the first major raid into the territory since Israeli soldiers pulled out last year after a 38-year occupation -- and began a wave of air strikes across the coastal strip.

The United Nations said a strike that destroyed Gaza's only power plant had pushed the territory to the edge of a humanitarian crisis and the International Committee of the Red Cross said it was working to get the military blockade of Gaza lifted for aid shipments.

With troops massed on the border, Israeli offi cials on Thursday postponed a planned invasion of northern Gaza as international mediators sought a way out of the standoff.

Haniyeh said Friday he was in contact with Arab, Muslim and European leaders to try to resolve the crisis, "but this Israeli military escalation complicates matters and makes it more difficult." The Canadian government expressed concern about the escalating violence.

Foreign Minister Peter MacKay called on all sides "to act with restraint and take all measures possible to protect innocent civilian lives and reduce tensions." "We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit," MacKay said in a statement released Friday.

"The Palestinian Authority must assume its share of responsibility for securing his safe return," he said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Associated Press; Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh

Load-Date: July 1, 2006



CUPE boycott of Israel won't help cause of peace

The Toronto Star

June 5, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A15

Length: 755 words

Body

I was disappointed by CUPE Ontario's recent decision to call for a boycott of Israel.

I start from a long history of support for a Palestinian state, with borders established through negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, with support and assistance from the United Nations. I remain fully supportive of that approach.

I have continually condemned violence on both sides, and called for concessions by Israel including withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza. I knew this could only be accomplished if the Palestinians recognized the right of Israel to exist and ultimately denounced violence as a solution.

I strongly believe Israelis have the right to be secure from suicide bombers, missile attacks and snipers.

I argued that Israel had to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland, with borders to be negotiated between the Palestinians and Israel and had to accept the role of the UN in helping bring this about.

Over the many difficult years that this conflict has been continuing, some significant progress has been made - including Israel recognizing the right of the Palestinians to their own state.

Of course, it is never easy to create a new state, especially in a context of continuing violence, poverty and factionalism.

Nevertheless, supporters of a two-state solution to the conflict must recognize the genuine progress that has been made - even, surprisingly, under the leadership of the old warhorse, Ariel Sharon. Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip and proposed relocating more than 80,000 settlers from the West Bank, sparking a huge controversy within Israel.

These were concrete efforts to help find a negotiated settlement with the PLO. Yet they are now all thrown into jeopardy by the extremism of *Hamas*.

Unfortunately, the situation has gone from bad to worse in the Middle East with the election of the terrorist organization *Hamas*.

The <u>Hamas</u> election was a major setback to efforts by the PLO and Israel to find a negotiated solution. How can Israel negotiate with <u>Hamas</u>, whose official policy is the annihilation of the Israeli people?

Moreover, <u>Hamas</u> has publicly supported suicide bombers and other acts of terrorism, with the goal of killing and maiming as many innocent Israeli <u>women</u>, children and men as possible.

CUPE boycott of Israel won't help cause of peace

All this coincides with the rise to power of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who publicly calls for the annihilation of Israel while he continues to develop the capability to build nuclear weapons.

One does not have to support the militarist rhetoric of U.S. President George Bush to recognize that Ahmadinejad's positions are a recipe for catastrophe, and he must be quickly opposed by the international community.

The Canadian labour movement and the left could play an important role in supporting a peaceful resolution to the Middle East conflict. To do this, however, we must get past simple rhetoric - like the claim that Israel is equivalent to the former South African apartheid regime.

As one of the many in the Canadian labour movement who for many years supported the struggle against apartheid, I am disappointed by this unfair depiction.

A more constructive approach for the labour movement would be to support the continuing peace efforts of PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas. We must all condemn <u>Hamas</u> for its support for terrorism and its refusal to recognize the right of Israelis to exist within secure borders, free of the threat of terrorism.

Finally, if a boycott is warranted, why not direct it at the extremist government in Iran for its continuing push to develop nuclear weapons and its official policy to annihilate the Israelis?

Indeed, workers are regularly jailed for any effort to form unions in Iran. If progressives remain silent about what is happening in Iran, we will cede all leadership on the issue to Bush and his allies, who have their own ignoble motives for an escalating conflict with Iran.

Good people on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide have been trying for years to find ways to expand communication, exchange, and trust between them.

Brave leaders, like Abbas and Sharon, have taken enormous risks to bring their respective constituencies toward a peaceful and mutual resolution of the conflict. Recent events in the region, however, give rise to fear and despair.

The labour movement and the left should try to counteract that despair with calls for genuine dialogue and exchange, not by finger-pointing and boycotts.

Buzz Hargrove is president of the Canadian Auto Workers union, Canada's largest private sector union.

Graphic

ILLUSTRATION BY DEAN ROHRER

Load-Date: June 5, 2006



Middle East: 18 die in worst fighting since withdrawal last year

The Guardian - Final Edition
July 7, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 16

Length: 591 words

Byline: Conal Urquhart, Beit Lahiya

Body

At least 17 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed yesterday in the most serious violence since Israel withdrew its forces from the Gaza Strip last year.

The Israeli army said its incursion into Gaza was designed to prevent rocket fire at Israel and put pressure on the captors of Corporal Gilad Shalit.

A spokeswoman for the army said that it killed 10 militants in five separate attacks. The number of civilian deaths was not immediately clear. In the early hours of this morning Israeli forces took over settlements they evacuated 10 months ago in northern Gaza and pushed to the outskirts of Beit Lahiya.

There has been little progress in international negotiations on the release of Corporal Shalit, 19, who was abducted by Palestinian militiamen on June 25, but Israel increased its offensive after three Qassam home-made rockets hit central Ashkelon, an area previously out of range. The army said eight more Qassam rockets were fired yesterday.

At least two of the Palestinians were killed after firing a rocket towards Israel but the rest of the casualties occurred in northern Gaza. Supported by navy gunboats and helicopter gunships, Israeli tanks and bulldozers were destroying orchards and crops when Palestinian gunmen began to attack them.

About 100 metres from Israeli positions two ambulances waited for the all clear to pick up casualties. Mohammad Farajalah, 24, an ambulanceman, said they were aware of four casualties nearby but they were waiting for the Red Cross to negotiate a safe passage. "We were called out to a casualty and we found ourselves in front of a tank," he said. "There was shooting all around us and we had to wait there two hours until they allowed us to go. While we were there I saw a bulldozer tearing down trees, protected by three tanks."

As the ambulancemen waited, three <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, followed by three from Fatah, moved along the road. One <u>Hamas</u> man carried an anti-tank weapon in a holdall while others placed bombs at the roadside and rolled out command wires.

The first victim of the fighting was a farmer, Mohammad Atari, 25. Abdul Hadi Atari, 36, said tanks and bulldozers were moving around their home when gunfire cut through the walls and hit his nephew in the back. The ambulances came two hours later. By the time they reached the hospital he was dead.

Timeline

Middle East: 18 die in worst fighting since withdrawal last year

June 25 Eight <u>Hamas</u> militants seize Corporal Gilad Shalit during raid into Israel from Gaza, the first since Israeli pullout last year

June 28 Israel shells bridges and power plant, and amasses troops and tanks at Gaza's northern border and at Rafah refugee camp in south

June 29 Israeli troops detain one third of Palestinian cabinet and nearly two dozen *Hamas* lawmakers

June 30 Israeli missile destroys offices of interior minister in Gaza city.

July 1 Factions who captured Cpl Shalit demand release of <u>women</u> and children and further 1,000 prisoners. Israel rejects demands

July 2 Israel threatens to target <u>Hamas</u> political leadership in Gaza. Air strike destroys office of Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh. Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, says he will do whatever necessary to secure Cpl Shalit's release

July 3 Captors give Israel less than 24 hours to meet demands. Israel refuses. Israeli ground forces move into north Gaza. Aircraft bomb Gaza targets. Three Palestinians shot dead.

July 4 Deadline set by militants expires. Militants pull out of negotiations with Egyptian mediators

July 6 Israeli forces and Palestinian gunmen fight fiercest battle since abduction, with reports of at least 17 Palestinian deaths

Load-Date: July 7, 2006



Talking to the enemy is distasteful but necessary

Canberra Times (Australia)
January 31, 2006 Tuesday
Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 11 Length: 833 words Byline: Robert Fisk

Body

OH NO, not more democracy again!

Didn't we award this to those Algerians in 1990? And didn't they reward us with that nice gift of an Islamist government - and then they so benevolently cancelled the second round of elections? Thank goodness for that!

True, the Afghans elected a round of representatives, albeit that they included some warlords and murderers.

But then the Iraqis last year elected the Dawa party to power in Baghdad, which was responsible - let us not speak this in Washington - for most of the kidnappings of Westerners in Beirut in the 1980s, the car bombing of the (late) Emir and the US and French embassies in Kuwait.

And now, horror of horrors, the Palestinians have elected the wrong party to power. They were supposed to have given their support to the friendly, pro-Western, corrupt, absolutely pro-American Fatah, which had promised to "control" them, rather than to <u>Hamas</u>, which said they would represent them. And, bingo, they have chosen the wrong party again.

Result: 76 out of 132 seats. That just about does it. God damn that democracy. What are we to do with people who don't vote the way they should?

Way back in the 1930s, the British would lock up the Egyptians who turned against the government of King Farouk. Thus they began to set the structure of anti-democratic governance that was to follow. The French imprisoned the Lebanese government which demanded the same. Then the French left Lebanon.

But we have always expected the Arab governments to do what they were told.

So today, we are expecting the Syrians to behave, the Iranians to kowtow to our nuclear desires (though they have done nothing illegal), and the North Koreans to surrender their weapons (though they actually do have them, and therefore cannot be attacked).

Now let the burdens of power lie heavy on the shoulders of the party.

Now let the responsibilities of people lie upon them. The British would never talk to the IRA, or to Eoka, or to the Mao Mao. But in due course, Gerry Adams, Archbishop Makarios and Jomo Kenyatta came to take tea with the Queen. The Americans would never speak to their enemies in North Vietnam. But they did.

In Paris.

No, al-Qaida will not do that. But the Iraqi leaders of the insurgency in Mesopotamia will.

They talked to the British in 1920, and they will talk to the Americans in 2006.

Back in 1983, *Hamas* talked to the Israelis.

They spoke directly to them about the spread of mosques and religious teaching. The Israeli army boasted about this on the front page of the Jerusalem Post. At that time, it looked like the PLO was not going to abide by the Oslo resolutions.

There seemed nothing wrong, therefore, with continuing talks with <u>Hamas</u>. So how come talks with <u>Hamas</u> now seem so impossible?

Not long after the <u>Hamas</u> leadership had been hurled into southern Lebanon, a leading member of its organisation heard me say that I was en route to Israel.

"You'd better call Shimon Peres," he told me. "Here's his home number." The phone number was correct. Here was proof that members of the hierarchy of the most extremist movements among the Palestinians were talking to senior Israeli politicians.

The Israelis know well the *Hamas* leadership.

And the *Hamas* leadership know well the Israelis. There is no point in journalists like us suggesting otherwise.

Our enemies invariably turn out to be our greatest friends, and our friends turn out, sadly, to be our enemies.

A terrible equation - except that we must understand our fathers' history. My father, who was a soldier in World War I, bequeathed to me a map in which the British and French ruled the Middle East. The Americans have tried, vainly, to rule that map since World War I.

They have all failed.

And it remains our curse to rule it since.

How terrible it is to speak with those who have killed our sons. How unspeakable it is to converse with those who have our brothers' blood on their hands. No doubt, that is how Americans who believed in independence felt about the Englishmen who fired upon them.

It will be for the Iraqis to deal with al-Qaida.

This is their burden.

Not ours. Yet throughout history, we have ended up talking to our enemies.

The British talked to the representatives of the Emperor of Japan. In the end, they had to accept the surrender of the German Reich from the successor to Adolf Hitler. And today, the British trade happily with the Japanese, the Germans and the Italians. The Middle East was never a successor to Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy, despite the rubbish talked by Messrs Bush and Blair. How long will it be before we can throw away the burden of this most titanic of wars and see our future, not as our past, but as a reality? Surely, in an age when our governments no longer contain men or <u>women</u> who have experienced war, we must now lead a people with the understanding of what war means. Not Hollywood. Not documentary films. Democracy means real freedom, not just for the people we choose to have voted into power. And that is the problem in the Middle East. - The Independent

Load-Date: January 30, 2006



Missile strike targets Palestinian PM's office

The Toronto Star July 2, 2006 Sunday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 940 words

Byline: RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

Israeli aircraft fired missiles at the Palestinian prime minister's office early today, just hours after a Palestinian official said the soldier whose abduction sent Israeli troops into the Gaza Strip is alive and in stable condition.

Witnesses said two missiles hit the Gaza City office of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> early today, leaving one bystander slightly injured and setting the empty building on fire.

The Israeli army confirmed it attacked Haniyeh's office.

The Israeli strike almost certainly was not intended to kill Haniyeh, but appeared instead to be an explicit warning over the continued captivity of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, the 19-year-old soldier abducted by Palestinian militants last Sunday.

Inspecting his burning office, Haniyeh called the Israeli attack senseless.

"They have targeted a symbol for the Palestinian people," he said.

The strike, at about 1: 45 a.m., came shortly after moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned yesterday that the coming hours would be "critical, sensitive and serious" for trying to calm the crisis.

Israeli aircraft also hit a school in Gaza City early today, setting a building on fire, witnesses and rescue workers said. No one was hurt.

Other targets were *Hamas* facilities in northern Gaza.

Palestinian security officials said two militants were wounded in the attack, one of whom later died, hospital officials said.

He was the second militant killed in the five-day Israeli operation to force the release of Shalit.

There had been no sign of Shalit since he was abducted during a militant raid on an Israeli army post just outside the Gaza Strip that killed two soldiers and two of the attackers.

Missile strike targets Palestinian PM's office

Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants exchanged fire for several hours yesterday afternoon when Israeli tanks and bulldozers crossed into Gaza and began razing farmland east of Khan Younis. No serious injuries were reported on either side.

The fighting took place north of the position Israeli troops occupied when they entered Gaza on Wednesday.

The army said it was carrying out a limited operation in the Khan Younis area and the soldiers were expected to leave soon.

The <u>Hamas</u>-affiliated militants holding Shalit initially said they would trade information about him for all Palestinian **women** and underage prisoners in Israeli jails.

The militants raised their demands yesterday, calling for an end to the Israeli offensive and the release of 1,000 other prisoners in Israel, including non-Palestinian Muslims and Arabs.

Israel has ruled out any compromise, saying it would only encourage more abductions.

Israel has also blamed Syria for the kidnapping, noting it gives haven to *Hamas*' top leaders.

Defence Minister Amir Peretz met with senior Israeli security officials last night and then called U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to urge the Bush administration to step up pressure on Syria to work for Shalit's release, Israeli officials said.

Egypt and other foreign mediators have been working to try to resolve the crisis, but Abbas said those efforts had yet to bear fruit mainly because it was unclear who in <u>Hamas</u> - the militants or the group's leadership abroad - was authorized to make decisions about Shalit.

"The next hours are critical, sensitive and serious. And though the efforts are still ongoing, we have not reached an acceptable solution until now," Abbas' office said in a statement yesterday.

He sounded more optimistic at a news conference last night.

"Regarding the soldier, we will surely reach an agreement. It is not a dead end. People want an acceptable solution," said Abbas, who is from the moderate Fatah Party.

<u>Hamas</u>, which controls the Palestinian cabinet after winning legislative elections in January, insisted Shalit should not be freed without a prisoner swap.

Israel "should understand that it is not easy for the Palestinian people to say, 'Okay, we can release him' ... without a price," said Ghazi Hamad, a spokesman for the *Hamas*-led cabinet.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country that has close ties with Israel, called U.S. President George W. Bush yesterday and talked for 30 minutes about the crisis.

"The president said that the initial goal should be freeing the Israeli soldier - that is the key to ending the crisis," said Frederick Jones, spokesman for the National Security Council at the White House.

Meanwhile, the fuel supply in Gaza dwindled after Israel cut off the flow through a pipeline.

Gas stations across the territory ran dry, and human rights groups worried that if fuel shipments were not restored in the coming days, Gaza could face a humanitarian crisis as generators used to pump water and power hospitals stopped working.

Authorities have been relying on generators since an Israeli airstrike Tuesday destroyed Gaza's only power plant, knocking out 43 per cent of the territory's electricity supply, the United Nations said.

The remaining electricity comes from Israel.

Missile strike targets Palestinian PM's office

The Israeli military said authorities had increased the supply of electricity to Gaza to make up for the power shortage and would work to allow food and fuel supplies to enter the territory in the coming days.

In addition to the fighting near Khan Younis, Israel kept up the military pressure, with aircraft and gunboats pounding open ground in Gaza that the army said militants were using to launch homemade rockets into Israel.

Although troops remained massed on the border, Israel on Thursday postponed a planned invasion of northern Gaza as international mediators sought a way out of the crisis.

With no apparent progress on the diplomatic front, it was unclear how much longer they would hold off.

Graphic

DAVID FURST AFP Getty images An Israeli military dog is prepared for manhunt duties at a staging area for tanks and armoured personnel carriers near the Israeli community of Mefalsim, near the Gaza Strip border.

Load-Date: July 2, 2006



Gaza's health system is hit hard by cuts in aid

The International Herald Tribune
May 8, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 1154 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Hanin al-Hilo was screaming at the nurses at the main Gaza hospital, Al Shifa: "If I called and said I was the son of Mr. Somebody, some big shot, I'd have a place!"

But with a third of the hospital's dialysis machines awaiting repair and spare parts, Hilo, a policeman, and his father, sitting weakly in a wheelchair, had to wait in the corridor. Even those using the machines are not being given the normal dose of hormones and minerals, explained a nurse, because the hospital has run out. "Soon they're going to need blood transfusions instead," she said.

With a sudden shortage of everything from disposable needles and adhesive tape to vital drugs, Gaza's onceimpressive public health system is running down fast under the dual pressure of aid cutoffs and the closing of the Karni crossing point with Israel.

Already, says Al Shifa's general director, Ibrahim el-Habbash, the hospital can no longer provide chemotherapy for many forms of cancer, has only a few days' supply of key surgical drugs like atropine, adrenaline, heparin and lidocaine, and has used up its strategic three-month cache normally kept for a health crisis.

In addition, armed men have been forcing their way into the hospital demanding preferential treatment for relatives, clan members or friends, and authorization to travel outside Gaza for medical treatment.

"We've suffered in the past, of course, but in the last month the problems have really increased," Habbash said. "There are shortages of medications and disposables in all departments, we're trying to limit the operating list and people are suffering, even dying, because of these shortages."

Habbash, when asked, hands over his list of urgent needs that he has passed on to the financially strapped Ministry of Health. It includes numerous drugs and antibiotics, as well as plaster of Paris, syringes, disposable bedsheets, intravenous solutions, surgical gloves, suture sets and blood-testing needles.

Hilo's anger, he admitted later, was exacerbated by the frustration of a second month without salary, a situation suffered by every employee of the Palestinian Authority Gaza's largest employer including all the 1,400 members of the hospital staff and many of the families of the patients.

But his anger is also a sign of the mounting frustration over the gaps in health care here, which is due to a double crisis: the budget deficit in the Palestinian Authority which has worsened significantly since Israel stopped

transferring taxes and the United States and the European Union cut off aid after the <u>Hamas</u> government took over and the inability to get goods into Gaza through the main crossing point at Karni, which the Israelis keep closing whenever there is a security alert.

Since Jan. 1, Karni has been shut half of the time, said James Wolfensohn, the former envoy of the international community, and only an average of 23 truckloads a day have left Gaza in that period, compared with a target of 150 a day. Produce has rotted, but key imports have also been held up.

The Palestinian Authority is in part the author of these problems. It has failed to stop attempted attacks on Karni, even though Israel has been criticized by Wolfensohn and the European Union, and more quietly by Washington, for keeping the crossing closed.

Even before the <u>Hamas</u> victory, the authority was running a monthly debt of \$75 million because it raised salaries last summer and hired thousands of young armed men, which led the World Bank to cut off budget support.

After the <u>Hamas</u> victory, Israel stopped handing over tax payments, and after <u>Hamas</u> took office Washington and the Europeans suspended aid because **Hamas** refuses to recognize Israel and forswear violence.

Both Washington and the European Union say that humanitarian aid will be allowed, but Washington does not consider government salaries to be humanitarian aid. There has been discussion of a new structure to funnel aid to health and education departments or individual Palestinians that would somehow bypass the <u>Hamas</u> government even to pay salaries directly to individuals judged not to be connected to <u>Hamas</u> but nothing has been decided. The results are severe in Gaza.

A recent internal report by the World Health Organization, provided to The Times, portrays a crisis that is bound to worsen as the economic siege of the <u>Hamas</u>-run Palestinian Authority continues. The report forecasts a "rapid decline of the public health system toward a possible collapse" and "no access or limited access to preventive programs" like immunization for a large part of the population, especially the poor.

Although about 70 percent of Gaza's 1.4 million people are refugees or their descendants, who get primary care from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, or UNRWA, the organization only runs clinics, not hospitals.

A report by Physicians for Human Rights-Israel said the Palestinian Authority provides 64.5 percent of general health needs, 77 percent of emergency hospital treatment and 76 percent of the needs of <u>women</u> and midwives. It also pays for the treatment in Israel and abroad of many children who need cancer treatment or heart operations, as well as of adults needing various cancer and orthopedic treatments.

"Lack of funding for this system will lead to the deaths of thousands of people in the short term and extensive morbidity in the long term," the report says. The group, like the European Union, urges Israel to pay to the Palestinians the \$50 million or so a month it collects in tax receipts for the authority and to ease "the policy of closure and curfew" that is undermining the Palestinians' ability to deliver services to ordinary people.

Even a major hospital in East Jerusalem, Augusta Victoria, run by the Lutheran World Federation with help from UNRWA is running out of money and losing staff members. The church in the United States and Canada recently gave the hospital \$225,000 in emergency aid.

UNRWA is the second-largest employer in Gaza, and while it is paying salaries, "we cannot substitute for or replace the Palestinian Authority," said its Gaza director, John Ging. "We already expect accumulating strains on our current services." UNRWA is paying \$78,000 a month in surcharges just because it cannot send empty truck containers out through Karni, he said. "We'd rather use the money for food."

In the dialysis ward of Al Shifa Hospital, Ahmed Shabat, 51, sits well-dressed in fraying clothes. He must come every other day. "This is my work," he says, then shows the swollen veins on his arms caused by a lack of the mineral supplements normally provided.

Gaza's health system is hit hard by cuts in aid

"What is the relationship between humanitarian and political aims here?" he asked. "The United States is the mother of democracy. What is political about salaries to teachers and nurses? Please," he said, "please don't mix humanitarian help with politics. Please separate the two."

Load-Date: May 8, 2006



Israel threatens to invade Gaza: There will be no bargaining, vows prime minister

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A27

Length: 279 words

Byline: Ron Bousso, Agence France-Presse

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- Israeli troops massed on the Gaza border yesterday, igniting fears of a sharp escalation in the Middle East conflict.

The order, from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, came after the kidnapping on Sunday of a 20-year-old Israeli corporal in a dawn raid on an army post on the Gaza Strip border. Two other Israeli servicemen and two Palestinian fighters were killed.

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas ordered his security services to launch a manhunt for the conscript to avert a possible Israeli assault.

Three Palestinian groups, including the armed wing of <u>Hamas</u>, have called for the release of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and children from Israeli jails in exchange for information on the soldier, a demand Olmert promptly rejected.

"The question of freeing prisoners is in no way on the government agenda," Olmert said.

"There will be no negotiations, no bargaining, no agreements," he said.

The premier also vowed that a "large-scale military operation is approaching."

"We have no intention of being blackmailed by *Hamas*."

Sunday's attack, which saw gunmen tunnel their way under the border, was the deadliest militant assault in the area since last year when Israel left Gaza, which has since become plagued by lawlessness and political feuding.

A high-ranking security official also threatened that Israel would work to topple the <u>Hamas</u>-led government unless the soldier is freed.

A representative of the Popular Resistance Committees, which admitted carrying out the attack with the previously unheard-of Army of Islam, said in a telephone call to AFP that it was holding the soldier, identified as Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

Israel threatens to invade Gaza: There will be no bargaining, vows prime minister

"He is alive and in good health," the representative said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; Tanks and armoured personnel carriers line up near Kibbutz Mefalsim in southern Israel yesterday, in response to the abduction of an Israeli soldier and the deaths of two others.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



Shock and awe in Gaza

The Nation (AsiaNet)
June 29, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 472 words

Body

ISRAELI troops riding tanks, armoured cars and bulldozers rolled into Gaza destroying three bridges and a power plant. The excuse for the attack was the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by a militant group who demanded the release of about 500 Palestinian <u>women</u> and children languishing in Israeli jails in exchange with him. While the kidnapping was the act of a few individuals, the entire population in Gaza has been subjected to collective punishment, which is highly condemnable.

The bombing of Gaza's power plant has left the population without water and its hospitals with no electricity to conduct operations. This is likely to create a humanitarian crisis. As if this was not enough, Israeli administration has picked up eight members of the *Hamas*-led Palestinian cabinet including Deputy Prime Minister Nasser Shaer and Labour Minister Mohammad Barghouti as well as 20 members of the parliament. As a threatening gesture on Wednesday, Israeli warplanes flew over the seaside residence of Syrian President Bashar al-Asad while the Israeli Public Security Minister threatened to kill *Hamas* chief Khalid Meshaal, presently living in Syria.

Any such action is liable to draw in Hezbollah from neighbouring Lebanon thus widening the sphere of the conflict. The destruction of property and kidnapping and killing of non-combatants by individual militants or groups are widely castigated as acts of terrorism. When Israel resorts to practices like this, it also has to be condemned as a terrorist state. Washington is therefore liable to be criticised for maintaining double standards when it maintains, as it has done in this particular case, that Israel has a right to defend itself.

Aren't the suicide bombers defending their own people who have been dispossessed by Israel, denied basic rights and subjected to the worst kind of state oppression? Are those whose houses are demolished and orchards destroyed to accommodate the Jewish settlers not justified to retaliate? The power-sharing agreement between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> had been brokered after the hard-line <u>Hamas</u> agreed to give important concessions that were interpreted by some as a tacit recognition of Israel. Hopes were being expressed that this would encourage Israel to give concessions in return, thus providing a boost to the peace process in the Middle East.

The Israeli attack on Gaza has however compromised the position of Prime Minister Ibrahim Hanniyah and strengthened the groups who stand for the destruction of the state of Israel. Unless Washington urgently reins in Tel Aviv, the shock and awe methods it employs are bound to give birth to a strong backlash all over the Arab and Muslim world. This would put the peace process on hold, and weaken the moderate forces. At this point, it seems that Israel has been able to stall the peace process once again.

Load-Date: June 30, 2006



Israel threatens Gaza invasion if kidnapped soldier is not freed

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 14

Length: 299 words

Byline: Tim Butcher in Khan Younis

Body

ISRAEL massed troops and tanks on the border of Gaza yesterday, threatening to invade if a kidnapped soldier was not released.

The Israelis also refused kidnappers' demands to free Palestinian prisoners in return for Cpl Gilad Shalit.

Secret talks with Egyptian intelligence officers mediating between the two sides failed to end the stand-off.

As tension mounted, the three Palestinian groups believed to be behind the kidnapping issued a joint statement referring to the 20-year-old hostage. Without admitting Cpl Shalit was in their custody, they said Israel would get no information until all Palestinian <u>female</u> prisoners and those under 18 were released from jail.

Ehud Olmert, the prime minister of Israel, said there would be "no negotiations, no bargaining, no agreements".

He warned the kidnappers and the political leaders who ordered the operation: "Let it be clear. We will reach everyone, no matter where they are and they know it. There will not be immunity for anyone."

The Israeli army positioned dozens of tanks, troop carriers and other armoured vehicles on the desert border with Gaza in anticipation of a large-scale incursion. A war cabinet will meet today to decide whether to order a punitive strike.

Egyptian intelligence, which maintains strong links inside Gaza, faces a difficult task in trying to secure Cpl Shalit's return because of the involvement of three groups in the attack, in which two soldiers were also killed. They are the armed wing of <u>Hamas</u>, the Izzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, and the Salahadeen Brigade and the Islamic Army, both units from the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC).

<u>Hamas</u>, which was elected to power in January, and the PRC publicly denied any involvement but Egypt was working on the assumption that <u>Hamas</u> military commanders were deeply involved.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



Funds Cut, Gaza Faces a Plague of Health Woes

The New York Times
May 8, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1448 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: GAZA, May 4

Body

Hanin al-Hilo was screaming at the nurses at the main Gaza hospital, Al Shifa: "If I called and said I was the son of Mr. Somebody, some big shot, I'd have a place!"

But with a third of the hospital's dialysis machines awaiting repair and spare parts, Mr. Hilo, a policeman, and his father, sitting weakly in a wheelchair, had to wait in the corridor. Even those using the machines are not being given the normal dose of hormones and minerals, a nurse explained, because the hospital has run out. "Soon they're going to need blood transfusions instead," she said.

With a sudden shortage of everything from disposable needles and adhesive tape to vital drugs, Gaza's once impressive public health system is running down fast under the dual pressure of aid cutoffs and the closing of the Karni crossing point with Israel.

Already, says Al Shifa's general director, Dr. Ibrahim al-Habbash, the hospital can no longer provide chemotherapy for many forms of cancer, has only a few days' supply of important surgical drugs like atropine, adrenaline, heparin and lidocaine, and has used up its strategic three-month cache normally kept for a health crisis.

In addition, armed men have been forcing their way into the hospital demanding preferential treatment for relatives, clan members or friends, and authorization to travel outside Gaza for medical treatment.

"We've suffered in the past, of course, but in the last month, the problems have really increased," Dr. Habbash said. "There are shortages of medications and disposables in all departments, we're trying to limit the operating list and people are suffering, even dying, because of these shortages."

Dr. Habbash hands over his list of urgent needs that he has passed on to the financially troubled Palestinian Ministry of Health. It includes numerous drugs and antibiotics, as well as plaster of Paris, syringes, disposable bed sheets and intravenous solutions, surgical gloves, suture sets and blood-testing needles.

Mr. Hilo's anger, he admitted later, was increased by the frustration of a second month without salary, a situation suffered by every employee of the Palestinian Authority -- Gaza's largest employer -- including the hospital's 1,400 staff members, and many of the families of the patients.

Funds Cut, Gaza Faces a Plague of Health Woes

But his anger is a sign of the mounting frustration over the gaps in health care here, which are a result of a double crisis: the budget deficit in the Palestinian Authority -- which has worsened significantly since Israel stopped transferring tax collections, and the United States and the European Union cut off aid after the <u>Hamas</u> government took over -- and the inability to get goods into Gaza through the main crossing point at Karni, which the Israelis keep closing whenever there is a security alert.

Since Jan. 1, Karni has been shut half of the time, according to James D. Wolfensohn, the former envoy of the international community, and an average of only 23 truckloads a day have left Gaza in that period, compared with a target of 150 a day. Produce has rotted, but crucial imports have also been held up. Though the lack of funds is a significant problem for the Palestinian health care system, supply shortages are less severe on the West Bank, where cargo crossings are less of an issue.

The Palestinian Authority is in part the author of these problems, for failing to stop attempted attacks on Karni, though Israel has been criticized by Mr. Wolfensohn and the European Union, and more quietly by the United States, for keeping the crossing closed.

Even before the <u>Hamas</u> victory, the authority was running a debt of \$75 million a month because it raised salaries last summer and hired thousands of young armed men, causing the World Bank to cut off budget support. After the <u>Hamas</u> victory, Israel stopped handing over tax payments, and after <u>Hamas</u> took office, Washington and the Europeans suspended aid because <u>Hamas</u> refuses to recognize Israel and forswear violence.

Both the United States and the European Union say humanitarian aid will get through -- but Washington does not consider government salaries to be humanitarian aid. There has been discussion of a new structure to funnel aid to health and education departments or individual Palestinians that would somehow bypass the <u>Hamas</u> government, but nothing has been decided.

The results are severe in Gaza.

A recent internal report by the World Health Organization, provided to The New York Times, portrays a crisis that is bound to worsen as the economic siege of the *Hamas*-run Palestinian Authority continues. The report forecasts a "rapid decline of the public health system towards a possible collapse" and "no access or limited access to preventive programs" like immunization for a large part of the population.

Although some 70 percent of Gaza's 1.4 million people are refugees or their descendants, who get primary care from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, the organization runs only clinics, not hospitals.

According to another report, by Physicians for Human Rights/Israel, the Palestinian Authority provides 64.5 percent of general health needs, 77 percent of emergency hospital treatment and 76 percent of the needs of **women** and midwives. It also pays for the treatment in Israel and abroad of many difficult cases like those in pediatric oncology and pediatric heart operations, as well as various cancer and orthopedic treatments.

"Lack of funding for this system will lead to the deaths of thousands of people in the short term and extensive morbidity in the long term," the report says. The group, like the European Union, urges Israel to pay the Palestinians the \$50 million or so a month it collects in tax receipts for the authority and to ease "the policy of closure and curfew" that is undermining the Palestinian ability to deliver services to people.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for Israel's Foreign Ministry, said there had been no special restrictions on transferring medical supplies since <u>Hamas</u> took over. "Israel wants to do all it can to avoid suffering among Palestinians," he said. "But we have legitimate security concerns with an administration run by <u>Hamas</u>, which espouses terrorism against Israel."

The relief and works agency is the second largest employer in Gaza, and although it is paying salaries, "We cannot substitute for or replace the Palestinian Authority," said its Gaza director, John Ging. "We already expect

Funds Cut, Gaza Faces a Plague of Health Woes

accumulating strains on our current services," as refugees who work for the authority and have no salary turn to the agency.

"We're concerned about more instability, more insecurity, more poverty and more dependency" on the agency, he said. The agency, he added, was trying "to meet basic human needs at a subsistence level, but we can't provide the health, education and security services of the P.A."

The agency is already paying \$78,000 a month for rent on shipping containers stuck at Karni, because the export blockage in Gaza means that once the limited cargo allowed into Gaza is unloaded, the empty containers may not return to Israeli territory, he said. "We'd rather use the money for food."

In the dialysis ward of Shifa Hospital, Ahmed Shabat, 51, sits in fraying clothes. He must come every other day. "This is my work," he says, then shows the swollen veins on his arms caused by a lack of mineral supplements normally provided. "What is the relationship between humanitarian and political aims here?" he asked. "The United States is the mother of democracy. What is political about salaries to teachers and nurses? Please," he said, "please don't mix humanitarian help with politics. Please separate the two."

Ismail Siam is watching over his sister, Asma al-Saidi, 53, who has metastatic breast cancer. She had radiation therapy, but a Tel Aviv hospital returned her to Gaza before chemotherapy because the <u>Hamas</u>-run government could not pay for it. Al Shifa does not have the required drugs, and so provides only analgesics to ease her pain.

Mr. Siam, who works for the authority, alternates days here with his brother. Both live in Khan Yunis, farther south in the strip, and they are borrowing the \$10 a day needed to travel here and back. Because the hospital lacks disposables, they also spend \$100 every four days, he said, on laxatives, urine bags, catheters, anticonvulsives, feeding tubes and adhesive tape for their sister.

"I borrow from friends and have no more credit at the grocery store," Mr. Siam said. "Unfortunately, the whole world has chosen to punish us for our vote for <u>Hamas</u>. And I also blame everyone who calls himself a Muslim and who does not help us."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: At Al Shifa, Gaza's main hospital, a medical storage room is nearly empty. The hospital is short of everything from disposable needles to adhesive tape, and it can no longer provide chemotherapy for many forms of cancer. Latifa Nimir Tanna, 53, left, is a patient at the hospital, which has only a few days' supply of important surgical drugs and has used up its strategic three-month cache of such drugs normally kept for a health crisis. (Photographs by George Azar for The New York Times)(pg. A12)

Hanin al-Hilo and his father, who awaited dialysis at a Gaza hospital. (Photo by George Azar for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Load-Date: May 8, 2006



Israel ignores ceasefire offer

The Irish Times

July 26, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 10

Length: 311 words

Byline: Michael Jansen

Body

Israel failed to respond yesterday to a <u>Hamas</u> proposal to halt violence in Gaza. The Palestinian agriculture minister Ibrahim Naja said on Monday that armed factions were ready to stop their rocket fire if Israel ceased its attacks on resistance groups.

<u>Hamas</u> would also agree to a mutual truce and release an Israeli soldier captured by Palestinian fighters on June 25th.

His statement signalled <u>Hamas</u>'s acceptance of an Egyptian proposal which contains Egyptian guarantees for the future release by Israel of ailing, <u>female</u> and minor Palestinian prisoners.

"This initiative was presented in an attempt to alleviate Palestinian suffering," Mr Naja said, "but now it depends on Israel, which has shown no indication of its willingness for a ceasefire."

Gaza area director for the UN Relief and Works Agency John Ging said the people of Beit Hannoun and Beit Lahiya, the focus of an Israeli offensive last week, were "very angry over the continuous shelling of residential areas". A number of families from exposed neighbourhoods had moved to Jabaliya camp on the edge of Gaza city, he added.

"Everybody living in Gaza has to survive without electricity for most of the time. We get between four and six hours a day on rotation basis, but the weak infrastructure cannot cope with scheduling distribution to hospitals, clinics and vital services and synchronising the provision of electricity to the supply of water, so that neighbourhoods receive both at the same time."

Two homes in Rafah and one in Khan Younis were demolished by Israeli air strikes after residents were warned to evacuate. Seven civilians were wounded.

Israel telephones families whose homes are to be targeted and warns them to leave ahead of strikes.

Half a dozen houses have been hit, either because they belong to activists or fighters, or because Israel claims weapons are being stored on the premises.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006



Iran likely to top agenda as Olmert meets Bush in US

Financial Times (London, England)

May 22, 2006 Monday

London Edition 1

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Section: MIDDLE EAST; Pg. 6

Length: 460 words

Byline: By GUY DINMORE and HARVEY MORRIS

Dateline: JERUSALEM and WASHINGTON

Body

Ehud Olmert left yesterday for his first visit to Washington as Israeli prime minister, a rite of passage expected to underscore the close ties between the two allies without providing any substantial breakthrough in the Middle East deadlock.

Officials on both sides described the trip as an opportunity for Mr Olmert and President George W. Bush to get to know each other - they met only once before in 1998 - rather than the occasion for any new \tilde{A} , \hat{A} -initiative.

Mr Olmert took office after campaigning during general elections in March on a platform of further Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank as part of a plan to fix Israel's final borders, with or without the agreement of the Palestinians, by 2010.

The strategy was based on negotiating with Washington rather than with the Palestinians. Israel said it hadno partner for talks on the Palestinian side, particularly after the emergence of a *Hamas*-led government.

The Bush administration, however, is under pressure from its European allies and others not to accede to further unilateral moves by the Israelis, whose withdrawal from the Gaza Strip last year failed to provide promised impetus towards peace.

The Olmert government yesterday pre-empted anticipated US pressure to hold talks with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority's Fatah president, by confirming it would prepare for such a meeting sometime after Mr Olmert's return. After talks with Mr Abbas at the World Economic Forum in Egypt, Tzipi Livni, the Israeli foreign minister, said she saw no reason he should not meet Mr Olmert.

Israeli officials said that Mr Olmert would set out the general framework of his so-called "convergence" plan at a meeting with Mr Bush tomorrow.

The Israeli prime minister has said he intends to evacuate settlements east of the West Bank separation barrier and expand large settlement blocs that Israel would retain. With the US administration focused on developments in the Gulf, thechallenge posed by Iran's nuclear plans was nevertheless expected to top the agenda.

Iran likely to top agenda as Olmert meets Bush in US

The two leaders were also expected to discuss a deteriorating situation in Gaza, where tension was rising between <u>Hamas</u> and Mr Abbas's Fatah movement after the deployment last week of a new <u>Hamas</u> militia and an apparent assassination attempt against a Fatah intelligence chief.

The Israeli cabinet yesterday moved to counter accusations that it was contributing to a humanitarian crisis in Gaza by boycotting the <u>Hamas</u> government. It approved the release of Shk50m (Pounds 6m) in frozen Palestinian Authority funds to buy medical supplies for Gaza hospitals.

The Israeli military, meanwhile, said it was investigating the reported deaths of two <u>women</u> and a child in an Israeli air strike on Gaza in which an Islamic Jihad leader was assassinated.

Load-Date: May 21, 2006



The problem with democracy; Rogues' Gallery: Optimism

The Independent (London)
January 28, 2006 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 37

Length: 845 words

Byline: ROBERT FISK

Body

Oh no, not more democracy again! Didn't we award this to those Algerians in 1990? And didn't they reward us with that nice gift of an Islamist government - and then they so benevolently cancelled the second round of elections? Thank goodness for that!

True, the Afghans elected a round of representatives, albeit that they included some warlords and murderers. But then the Iraqis last year elected the Dawa party to power in Baghdad, which was responsible - let us not speak this in Washington - for most of the kidnappings of Westerners in Beirut in the 1980s, the car bombing of the (late) Emir and the US and French embassies in Kuwait.

And now, horror of horrors, the Palestinians have elected the wrong party to power. They were supposed to have given their support to the friendly, pro-Western, corrupt, absolutely pro-American Fatah, which had promised to "control" them, rather than to <u>Hamas</u>, which said they would represent them. And, bingo, they have chosen the wrong party again.

Result: 76 out of 132 seats. That just about does it. God damn that democracy. What are we to do with people who don't vote the way they should?

Way back in the 1930s, the British would lock up the Egyptians who turned against the government of King Farouk. Thus they began to set the structure of anti-democratic governance that was to follow. The French imprisoned the Lebanese government which demanded the same. Then the French left Lebanon. But we have always expected the Arab governments to do what they were told.

So today, we are expecting the Syrians to behave, the Iranians to kowtow to our nuclear desires (though they have done nothing illegal), and the North Koreans to surrender their weapons (though they actually do have them, and therefore cannot be attacked).

Now let the burdens of power lie heavy on the shoulders of the party. Now let the responsibilities of people lie upon them. We British would never talk to the IRA, or to Eoka, or to the Mao Mao. But in due course, Gerry Adams,

The problem with democracy Rogues' Gallery: Optimism

Archbishop Makarios and Jomo Kenyatta came to take tea with the Queen. The Americans would never speak to their enemies in North Vietnam. But they did. In Paris.

No, al-Qa'ida will not do that. But the Iraqi leaders of the insurgency in Mesopotamia will. They talked to the British in 1920, and they will talk to the Americans in 2006.

Back in 1983, <u>Hamas</u> talked to the Israelis. They spoke directly to them about the spread of mosques and religious teaching. The Israeli army boasted about this on the front page of the Jerusalem Post. At that time, it looked like the PLO was not going to abide by the Oslo resolutions. There seemed nothing wrong, therefore, with continuing talks with <u>Hamas</u>. So how come talks with <u>Hamas</u> now seem so impossible?

Not long after the <u>Hamas</u> leadership had been hurled into southern Lebanon, a leading member of its organisation heard me say that I was en route to Israel.

"You'd better call Shimon Peres," he told me. "Here's his home number."

The phone number was correct. Here was proof that members of the hierarchy of the most extremist movements among the Palestinians were talking to senior Israeli politicians.

The Israelis know well the <u>Hamas</u> leadership. And the <u>Hamas</u> leadership know well the Israelis. There is no point in journalists like us suggesting otherwise. Our enemies invariably turn out to be our greatest friends, and our friends turn out, sadly, to be our enemies.

A terrible equation - except that we must understand our fathers' history. My father, who was a soldier in the First World War, bequeathed to me a map in which the British and French ruled the Middle East. The Americans have tried, vainly, to rule that map since the Second World War. They have all failed. And it remains our curse to rule it since.

How terrible it is to speak with those who have killed our sons. How unspeakable it is to converse with those who have our brothers' blood on their hands. No doubt that is how Americans who believed in independence felt about the Englishmen who fired upon them.

It will be for the Iraqis to deal with al-Qa'ida. This is their burden. Not ours. Yet throughout history, we have ended up talking to our enemies. We talked to the representatives of the Emperor of Japan. In the end, we had to accept the surrender of the German Reich from the successor to Adolf Hitler. And today, we trade happily with the Japanese, the Germans and the Italians.

The Middle East was never a successor to Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy, despite the rub-bish talked by Messrs Bush and Blair. How long will it be before we can throw away the burden of this most titanic of wars and see our future, not as our past, but as a reality?

Surely, in an age when our governments no longer contain men or <u>women</u> who have experienced war, we must now lead a people with the understanding of what war means. Not Hollywood. Not documentary films. Democracy means real freedom, not just for the people we choose to have voted into power.

And that is the problem in the Middle East.

And now, horror of horrors, the Palestinians have elected the wrong party to power

Load-Date: January 28, 2006



In Short

The Irish Times

March 29, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 11

Length: 321 words

Body

A round-up of today's other stories in brief.

Berlusconi's 'boil babies' remark decried

ROME - Italy's centre-left opposition yesterday accused prime minister Silvio Berlusconi of damaging Italy's international image after China denounced his assertion that Chinese communists used to boil babies.

"Do you realise what image is being given of our country if the prime minister says these things?" opposition leader Romano Prodi asked supporters at a rally ahead of an April general election that opinion polls say he is likely to win.

Mr Berlusconi, who is often accused of being obsessed with the "communist threat" in Italy, said at the weekend that the Chinese under Mao Zedong boiled babies. - (Reuters)

Havel's Belarus protest disrupted

PRAGUE - Former Czech president Vaclav Havel was refused entry to the Belarus embassy in Prague yesterday as he attempted to hand over a letter protesting against the recent presidential election.

The letter, which Havel was forced to put in the embassy's letterbox, also demanded that Belarus president Alexander Lukashenko, whose Soviet-style policies have brought condemnation in the West, step down. - (Reuters)

300,000 children in danger, says UN

DAKAR - Hunger will kill more than 300,000 children in west Africa this year if donor nations fail to stump up enough money to provide food aid, the UN said yesterday. The world body said it needed \$92 million to help feed over five million people - many of them <u>women</u> and children - at risk of malnutrition in four countries bordering the Sahara desert: Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Mauritania. - (Reuters)

Hamas wins vote of confidence

GAZA - <u>Hamas</u> won a Palestinian parliamentary vote of confidence in its cabinet yesterday, the final formality before the Islamic militant group takes office. The vote was 71 legislators in favour, to 36 against. The result was expected to favour <u>Hamas</u> since the group has a majority in parliament. - (Reuters)

Load-Date: March 29, 2006



The week: A detour on the road map, and echoes of the cold war

The Guardian - Final Edition January 28, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 20

Length: 318 words

Body

The Middle East road map took a detour into uncharted territory with the surprise victory of <u>Hamas</u> in the Palestinian elections. With Israeli politics already in a state of uncertainty, its "partners for peace" went from the much-despised Fatah movement to the much-feared Islamist group, responsible for the deaths of more than 400 Israelis in about 60 suicide bombings and countless attacks on the army and settlers.

That *Hamas* managed to win 76 seats in the 132-seat parliament shocked the world and probably even the voters.

The US, Europe and other key players greeted the election result with caution, demanding that <u>Hamas</u> give up its violent past, but some commentators predicted that hardline governments on both sides of the divide may be the only way to reach some kind of agreement. Others saw nothing but disaster.

An old-fashioned spy row, with Russia accusing staff from the British embassy of placing hi-tech equipment in a fake rock, dominated headlines earlier in the week. But unlike the cold war version, there were no high-volume recriminations and no mutual expulsions of diplomats.

A league table of how countries are tackling environmental problems was published at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, putting the UK in a respectable fifth place, the US in 28th, with developing countries, mostly in Africa, bringing up the rear.

The Kenya corruption scandal rumbled on, with the World Bank deciding to go ahead with a \$28m (£15m) loan despite the accusations against the vice-president and cabinet ministers. In the US, a Pentagon-commissioned report said the US military was being stretched to breaking point by commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Germany discovered that nearly a third of its <u>women</u> were childless, the highest proportion in the world, and the family minister, who has seven children, urged her fellow citizens to do their bit to halt the sliding birthrate.

Load-Date: January 28, 2006



Palestinian anarchy

The Toronto Star

March 16, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A24

Length: 318 words

Body

Do Palestinians want to make themselves pariahs? Their Jan. 25 election of a <u>Hamas</u> government devoted to Israel's destruction shocked even long-time friends.

Now Palestinian mobs have vented their rage at Israel by seizing foreigners, including a Canadian, shooting up American and European Union missions, and forcing diplomats and aid workers to flee for their lives. This is madness.

Israel's raid Tuesday on a West Bank prison triggered this fury. Troops seized Ahmed Saadat and other militants whom Israelis deem responsible for the 2001 murder of cabinet minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal recently vowed to free Saadat, just before Israel's March 28 election.

All of which has precisely nothing to do with foreign aid workers.

Yet Canadian aid worker Adam Budzanowski was one of 10 people abducted as anarchy swept the West Bank and Gaza. So were two French journalists and a South Korean newsman. A Swiss worker for the Red Cross. Two French **women** doctors. An American teacher. And two Australians seized at a school.

Happily, all were freed unharmed. Even so, targeting them was folly.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other Western leaders are looking for ways to funnel \$1 billion in aid to the Palestinians, through the United Nations, Red Cross, churches and other agencies.

The idea is to bypass <u>Hamas</u> unless it shuns violence, recognizes Israel and abides by peace agreements. If all aid is cut off, people will starve and desperation will breed violence.

But how can aid be delivered if donors are treated like targets?

The Red Cross was forced this week to withdraw staff. The U.N. shut operations and the European Union pulled out monitors. In such chaos, who would there be to deliver aid?

There will be many more Palestinian-Israeli flare-ups before peace ever comes to the region. During those moments of crisis, Palestinians must learn to distinguish their friends from their foes.

Load-Date: March 16, 2006



LETTERS

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 30, 2006 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 8

Length: 808 words

Body

Hamas may surprise all the doomsayers

Maybe, just maybe, <u>Hamas</u> will disarm to negotiate in the quest for peace in the Middle East. After all, many terrorist organisations, including the Mau Mau in Kenya and the Jewish underground groups Irgun and the Stern Gang (Palestine, before the formation of Israel), committed atrocities to gain an independent nation.

Joe Payne Coogee

Many people believe that it was Israel that created the conditions for getting *Hamas* elected to power.

What is omitted is that since 1964, Fatah, the leading Palestinian political body, had never made an honest attempt to reel in terrorists or use its influence to stop their attacks for good. The PLO conducted terrorist attacks against Israel, even while their land was being "occupied" by the Jordanians before 1967.

Even during the "peace process" of the 1990s, when Fatah had the authority to make a stand and eliminate extremist groups, it made no real attempt to do so, since Yasser Arafat always kept terrorism at bay as an option.

Hence, it is the inadequacy and incompetency of Fatah and Palestinian Arabs to reject <u>Hamas</u> that has led it to being voted to power. Surely the Jews can't be blamed for everything.

Philip Ioannou Paddington

What a dilemma for the self-righteous. <u>Hamas</u> wins hands down in what would appear to be have been a fair election but surprise, surprise, the defenders of democracy - Israel, the US, et al - now say they will cut off all aid to the newly elected Palestinian authority unless it immediately comes to heel.

A case of the wrong side winning, it seems.

Eddie Raggett Mosman

Happy to deal with Saddam Hussein, why not *Hamas* ... If the price is right, of course.

Jon McEwan Kurrajong

Questionable hierarchy

LETTERS

Mitchell Beston (Letters, January 28-29) wants Aborigines to give thanks every Australia Day that because those who invaded their country were British, they can enjoy second-class status instead of something possibly worse.

He offers no explanation why any race should have to accept anything less than first class.

Lloyd Swanton Vaucluse

Mitchell Beston has a point. Aborigines should be pleased that their land was stolen by the British and not by Spaniards or Portuguese. By the same token, Africans enslaved by Americans never knew their luck. The Afghans bombed by Americans should have been pleased that the Russians had gone.

And, of course, I am so thankful that my rights are being taken away by that nice Mr Howard, and not by someone nasty like Adolf Hitler. Always look on the bright side of life.

David Catchpoole Bangalow

History there to see

Your leader writer ("John Howard on history", January 27) may not have been old enough, or not interested in ABC television, but I find the comment that "film and television has had so little to tell us about our past" rather strange.

From 1980 to 1990 I wrote a number of mini-series for the ABC including The Timeless Land, 1915, Captain James Cook, and The Alien Years (which dealt with Federation and anti-German hysteria during the 1914 war). My grandchildren tell me that most of these were shown in their school history lessons.

Peter Yeldham Yarramalong Valley

Those who don't learn from history are condemned to repeat it. I know, I repeated history three times at school.

Tug Dumbly Chippendale

Immeasurable gain

The reason the State Government won't take the bull by the horns and make train travel free (Letters, January 28-29) is because our leaders are misguided, believing public transport losses should be minimised to keep budgets from blowing out.

Unfortunately this blinkered view of profit/loss, where you measure revenue only by ticket sales and costs by wages and infrastructure, is simplistic in the extreme.

Gains made outside the square (reduced congestion and pollution, for example) are almost impossible to measure. Nevertheless, they are real.

The electorate would save more if public transport were free than it would cost the Government. It's all in the accounting.

Ian Linton Collaroy Plateau

Players pushed too far

Justine Henin-Hardenne's withdrawl from the <u>women</u>'s tennis final highlights an all too common problem in sports today. Players are continuing to play despite injuries, which sees players like Henin- Hardenne taking medication for a shoulder injury. This appears to have made her ill.

Lleyton Hewitt was also seen having his ankle heavily strapped - and was no doubt taking painkillers - then continued to play. Many leading sportspeople do the same.

LETTERS

As a sportsman who has suffered injuries and withdrawn to let them heal, I can only assume that the big money involved and pressure from coaches and other support staff is the reason for this behaviour, which will surely affect their health in later life.

Jim Eeles Newtown

I haven't seen so many people retire hurt from a sporting event since the Poms were facing Lillee and Thomsonin 1974.

Peter Lloyd Asquith

Graphic

PHOTO: Photo: James Alcock

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



<u>Lebanon shares the guilt: Lebanese officials were complicit in Hezbollah's</u> act of war

The Gazette (Montreal)
July 25, 2006 Tuesday
Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A19

Length: 959 words

Byline: BERYL P. WAJSMAN, Freelance

Body

Jack Todd's Saturday column on fighting terrorism with "state terrorism" presents an erroneous view of the origins of the current Middle East conflict and a misunderstanding of state responsibilities and appropriate response in the existing international legal order.

When he asks whether it matters who started the conflict he exhibits a dangerous naivete. Responsibility matters. And it matters precisely because terrorists and terror-states must know that their actions cannot be carried out without consequences.

This conflict did not start with the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah. It started when Israel unilaterally pulled out of Gaza and was subsequently assaulted by 1,000 Qassam rocket attacks carried out by <u>Hamas</u>. Todd states someone has to have the courage to stop conflict. Well, Israel tried. It did not retaliate for a single attack. It took the body blows.

But then <u>Hamas</u> was elected the government of the Palestinian Authority. That was the beginning of the road we are on today. Within an hour after the attack on Kerem Shalom on the Israeli side of the Gaza border, which resulted in the deaths of two Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of another, <u>Hamas</u> gleefully accepted responsibility for planning and execution. <u>Hamas</u>, as the ruling entity of a political jurisdiction, had committed an act of war against another political jurisdiction.

Hezbollah's attack near Kiryat Shemona in the north of Israel, which resulted in eight dead Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of two others, was also no mere act of a terrorist group, for Hezbollah is much more than that. Hezbollah, as a political party, is part of the Lebanese government holding two cabinet posts. That government has for two years refused to comply with UN Resolution 1559 and disarm Hezbollah's military wing.

Lebanese President Emile Lahoud and Prime Minister Fouad Siniora have gone beyond that. Siniora told Italy's respected Corriere della Sera that he does not want Hezbollah disarmed. Lahoud flatly declared that the Lebanese army, which Lebanon has consistently refused to dispatch to Hezbollah territory, will fight with Hezbollah against Israel. Lebanon has declared, in fact and in law, that the Hezbollah military is a division of the Lebanese army. In so doing, the Lebanese government has hoisted itself on its own petard.

Lebanon shares the guilt: Lebanese officials were complicit in Hezbollah's act of war

International law recognizes that any country attacked by a terrorist group may prosecute military reprisals against the host country of such a group as if, in international legal authority Robert Tucker's words, "That country itself participated in those attacks." This is known as the doctrine of "self-help."

But in the case of Lebanon we need not even resort to these noble standards of international law. The government of Lebanon has made it clear that Hezbollah is an integral part of the Lebanese authority and of its army. Therefore, Hezbollah's actions were ipso facto done in the name of the Lebanese state and were, therefore, acts of war committed by Lebanon. Israel is permitted full retaliatory response to defend itself and its people.

Furthermore, Todd's implication that Israel is targeting Lebanese civilians and not taking even minimum precautions to protect them borders on the worst kind of bias. Israel has showered Beirut with millions of leaflets hours before any raids. Israel did the same in south Lebanon asking people to move back 30 kilometres. It even invited television crews to film preparations on the northern border, something that NBC military analyst and U.S. Medal of Honour winner Colonel Jack Jacobs called wonderfully humanitarian but militarily "stupid" because it put Israel's soldiers at risk by exposing their positions to Hezbollah.

No civilians have ever been targeted. Israel's bombing of Hezbollah positions in south Lebanon and in Beirut has been as surgical as possible. Contrary to many of the pictures we see on television, even the bombing in south Beirut has been limited to an area approximately 20 blocks long by 10 blocks wide.

Anyone seeing the tape will view a Beirut quite intact except for the area where the Hezbollah cowards position their guns and headquarters under the human shield of civilians. Why doesn't Todd question Hezbollah's strategy of hiding behind <u>women</u> and children not only in south Beirut, but in the villages of south Lebanon?

And curiously, he fails to mention that Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> have openly stated all Israeli civilians are fodder for their homicide bombers. Yes, it is sad that hundreds of Lebanese have been killed. But is it any less sad that Israelis have had to suffer over 9,000 terror attacks and thousands dead in the past six years? Or is Israeli blood cheaper than Lebanese blood?

Contrary to Todd's argument, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not following the United States. He is leading Canada. He was the first Western leader to demand <u>Hamas</u> renounce violence upon its election, the first to cut off non-humanitarian aid to <u>Hamas</u>, and the first to demand the arrest of Saeed Mortazavi, the Iranian prosecutor who beat Montreal photojournalist Zara Khazemi over the head with his shoe during torture sessions that led to her death, when Iran sent him as its observer to the UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva.

And when Harper declared in Kandahar that Canadians "don't cut and run" he restored Canadian pride and purpose and put the world on notice we were back on course as a nation that would be engaged in mankind's transcendent struggles for redemptive change. No longer were we to be just salon liberals cowering in smug self-satisfaction that masked nothing less than our own self-doubt driven by a jealousy of others' self-belief.

Beryl P. Wajsman is the president of the Institute for Public Affairs of Montreal.

Graphic

Photo: HUSSEIN MALL, AP; Lebanese citizens check their houses in a destroyed street in the southern suburbs of Beirut, where most of Hezbollah's forces in the Lebanese capital are based.

Load-Date: July 25, 2006



One for 1,000?

University Wire
July 6, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 Indiana Daily Student via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN Length: 546 words

Byline: By David A. Nosko, Indiana Daily Student; SOURCE: Indiana U.

Dateline: BLOOMINGTON, Ind.

Body

Just when peace in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine seemed far-fetched and out of sight ... now life in the Gaza Strip has become an international humanitarian crisis. Bravo!

The <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinians are continuing international war crimes, while the Israelis are continuing their decadeslong genocide of the Palestinian people. According to the international watch-dog organization Human Rights Watch, the Palestinians have resorted to using human beings as "bargaining chips," while Israel has continued acts of military intimidation and aggression -- all in violation of established international law.

This newest human rights mess was sparked June 9, when eight Palestinian civilians were killed by an explosion while picnicking on the beach. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert called the event an "accident," a claim that never resonated with either the Palestinians or most international human rights organizations.

Fast forward to June 22, and all seemed for the better -- Olmert, for a change, apologized to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for the recent deaths of at least another 13 Palestinian civilians, caused when the Israeli army conducted military strikes against suspected <u>Hamas</u> terrorists. Meanwhile, Palestinian militants have conducted regular rocket attacks on Israeli civilian populations since Israel's 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. This indiscriminate targeting has murdered only a few Israeli civilians, but a few is still too many.

Nevertheless, despite the reality that more than 1.4 million Palestinians live in a Gaza Strip that occupies a space about twice the size of Washington, D.C., Olmert was quoted by the Associated Press June 23 as having said: "Israel will continue to carry out targeted attacks against terrorists and those who try to harm Israeli citizens."

Ring around the civilian rosy we go, with a pocket full of death and destruction.

Ashes, ashes, humanity falls down.

Fast forward to June 25, and all hell broke loose. Palestinian militants attacked an Israeli military post, killing two soldiers and kidnapping a third: 19-year-old Cpl. Gilad Shalit. Since that time, Israel has embarked on a campaign of mass destruction that has included sending thousands of soldiers and military equipment into the Gaza Strip, and using aircraft to create "sonic booms" to intimidate the Palestinian people.

As if Israeli, American and European isolation of their democratic Palestinian neighbors was not human rights violation enough, Israel destroyed the Gaza Strip's only power plant -- necessary for running water, lights, sanitation

One for 1,000?

and medical services. <u>Hamas'</u> radical wing has called for an exchange of Cpl. Shalit for 1,000 imprisoned Palestinian <u>women</u> and children held in Israeli jails. Israel rightly refuses, because terrorism has no place in the democratic process, not that they should hold Palestinian civilians hostage.

Human Rights Watch has reminded Israel that it is responsible for the basic welfare of the Palestinian people because they still occupy Palestine, and they have reminded <u>Hamas</u> that taking prisoners -- not to mention executing them -- is a war crime.

Might both Olmert and Abbas ever realize that their terrorist acts only breed increased terrorism?

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Load-Date: July 6, 2006



Hopes for Gaza peace hang on Egyptian plan

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

July 3, 2006 Monday

First Edition

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

Length: 609 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Jerusalem

Body

HOPES for averting a bloodbath in Gaza are now pinned on reports of an Egyptian proposal that Palestinian militants should release the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in return for assurances that Israel will release some Palestinian prisoners in the future.

The Egyptian proposal is an attempt to square Israel's refusal to negotiate for Corporal Shalit's release with the reluctance of Palestinian militants to free him with nothing in return.

The militants holding Corporal Shalit have called for the release of 400 *female* and minor Palestinian prisoners and, more recently, for the freeing of 1000 prisoners from Israeli jails.

Israel has refused to negotiate for an end to what it regards as a terrorist kidnapping, and last week its troops arrested most of the Palestinian ministers and MPs from the ruling <u>Hamas</u> party who are based in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Israel is threatening to try them for membership of a terrorist organisation but hints that they might be released if Corporal Shalit were to be freed alive.

The prospects for a peaceful resolution appeared to hang in the balance yesterday, with conflicting reports from the offices of the Palestinian President, the Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas, and the Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh.

Militants from the armed wing of Mr Haniyeh's <u>Hamas</u> movement led the dawn raid on the Gaza border eight days ago that captured Corporal Shalit and killed two of his comrades as they manned a tank guarding Gaza's border.

Mr Abbas's office briefed reporters that Mr Haniyeh had no authority over the militants holding Corporal Shalit, who include both <u>Hamas</u> members and followers of the smaller Popular Resistance Committee and the new Islamic Army.

However, a spokesman for Mr Haniyeh said that it is hoped that Egypt or Turkey could act as a guarantor for Corporal Shalit's release, on the understanding that Israel would free some of more than 8000 Palestinian prisoners at a future date. Israel has yet to comment on the proposal, but the Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, has repeatedly ruled out negotiation with the Palestinians. Instead, the Israeli army is poised to stage comprehensive raids into northern and southern Gaza, operations that are officially being described as efforts to rescue Corporal Shalit from his unknown hiding place.

Hopes for Gaza peace hang on Egyptian plan

Although Israel denies that it carries out reprisals against civilians, Mr Olmert and his defence chiefs say that Israeli military operations will "pressure" the Palestinians into pushing for Corporal Shalit's release.

Last week Israeli aircraft dropped flyers warning the people of north Gaza of an impending invasion, while Israeli "security sources" used off-the-record briefings in the Israeli media to warn of the suffering that would be inflicted in Gaza should Corporal Shalit not be released.

Israeli artillery and air strikes continued to pound Gaza over the weekend, while fighter bombers repeatedly broke the sound barrier over built-up areas, producing terrifying explosions and preventing the people from sleeping.

Mr Haniyeh's office was largely destroyed by a helicopter attack early yesterday, and at least one <u>Hamas</u> militant was killed in another attack in northern Gaza.

It has emerged, meanwhile, that the United States is to pay \$US48 million (\$65 million) in insurance compensation to a Palestinian power station in Gaza that was badly damaged by an Israeli air strike last week.

Gaza's only power plant was built with US funding and insured by an American state body.

The destruction of its transformers has cut off power to much of the Gaza Strip, threatening supplies of drinking water, which is pumped from underground wells.

Editorial - Page 10

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: Show of support ... <u>Hamas</u> sympathisers rally in Jebaliya refugee camp in Gaza on Friday; the Palestinian Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, above right. Photos: AP/Kevin Frayer; AP A Palestinian militant speaks to journalists in the Gaza Strip on Saturday. Photo: AP

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



Words to Live By

Ottawa Citizen

January 28, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 300 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Some of the main points from the 36 articles of the *Hamas* charter dated Aug. 18, 1988:

On *Hamas*:

- The group "owes its loyalty to Allah, derives from Islam its way of life and strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine."
- "Its ultimate goal is Islam, the Prophet its model, the Koran its Constitution."

The Destruction of Israel:

- "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it."
- "There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours."

Dangers posed by Zionism:

- "After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile (in Egypt) to the Euphrates (in Iraq). When they have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion and so on."

Zionism's operations:

- "(Zionism) does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil and contemptible ways to achieve its end. It relies greatly in its infiltration and espionage operations on the secret organizations it gave rise to, such as the Freemasons, The Rotary and Lions clubs, and other sabotage groups. ... They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character and annihilating Islam. It is behind the drug trade and alcoholism in all its kinds so as to facilitate its control and expansion."

On **women**:

- "Muslim <u>women</u> have a no lesser role than that of men in the war of liberation; they manufacture men and play a great role in guiding and educating the new generation."

Words to Live By

- "We must pay attention to the schools and curricula upon which Muslim girls are educated, so as to make them righteous mothers, who are conscious of their duties in the war of liberation."

Graphic

Photo: The Associated Press; Khaled Mashaal, recognized as the leader of *Hamas*, is based in Damascus, Syria.

Load-Date: January 28, 2006



Israel says pull-back to border is not an end to Gaza offensive

The Irish Times

July 29, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 10

Length: 520 words

Body

Israelis tanks and troops pulled back to the Israel-Gaza border yesterday after a particularly deadly incursion that killed 30 Palestinians over three days, but the army said the withdrawal was temporary and did not mean its monthlong offensive was over.

The latest Gaza fighting came as the world's attention stayed fixed on fighting further north, where Israel is waging war with Lebanon-based Hizbullah guerrillas.

An end to the violence in Gaza did not appear to be in sight, moreover, with Palestinian officials saying yesterday that negotiations for the release of prisoners had stalled.

Palestinian officials said they had not received a response from Israel to their softened conditions for the release of Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit (19), who was captured by <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants in a cross-border raid on June 25th. <u>Hamas</u> has called for Israel's guarantees that it would free <u>women</u>, children and long-serving Palestinian prisoners if Cpl Shalit is released.

Dr Salah Bardawil, a senior <u>Hamas</u> official, said Israel's refusal to guarantee that it would release any Palestinian prisoners if Cpl Shalit were freed created the stalemate. Dr Bardawil also denied reports that <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah were co-operating in negotiations for the release of prisoners.

He noted, however, that he would support such an effort "if it is in the interests of both Lebanese and Palestinians".

Israel's incursion into Gaza began after militants killed two soldiers and captured Cpl Shalit, who remains in the custody of the Palestinian militant groups.

An Associated Press count says Israeli troops have killed 159 Palestinians since they started attacking the Gaza Strip to try to recover Cpl Shalit and stop Palestinian militants from firing rockets into Israel. Most of those killed were militants, but included were a considerable number of civilians.

The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for a rocket attack yesterday on the southern Israeli town of Zikim that injured two children who were hit by shrapnel.

In Algeria, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas said the situation in the Palestinian areas and Lebanon was only likely to get worse after world leaders failed in Rome on Wednesday to agree on an immediate ceasefire.

"The situation will worsen and the consequences will be very heavy, not only for the region but probably for the entire world," he told Algeria's official news agency.

Israel says pull-back to border is not an end to Gaza offensive

Israeli aircraft yesterday hit a metal workshop in the city of Khan Younis that the military said was a weapons storehouse. The strike wounded nine people, including two children, hospital officials said, while hospital officials said a 40-year-old Palestinian man whose house was targeted by Israeli forces had died of his wounds.

Palestinians could be seen streaming out of their houses early in the day to clean up after Israel's latest incursion.

In the temporary absence of Israeli troops, residents inspected their battered houses and vehicles, while rescue workers searched for bodies underneath rubble and militants picked up mines and explosives they had planted to try and blow up Israeli tanks. - (AP)

Load-Date: July 29, 2006



Tense Gaza braces for revenge onslaught

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

June 28, 2006 Wednesday

First Edition

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

Length: 502 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Rafah, Gaza Strip

Body

WITH Israel refusing to negotiate the release of a soldier captured by Palestinian militants, the people of the Gaza Strip are bracing themselves for massive military reprisals.

Samira Hussein, a 40-year-old mother of five, watched as Israeli tanks and jeeps manoeuvred on the border two kilometres away, near the spot where militants captured a member of a tank crew and killed two others on Sunday. "It's a very bad situation here," she said.

"Most people here left their houses yesterday when they heard there was an invasion coming, but I refuse to go. What comes to us comes from God."

Many Gazans, already worn down by months of Israeli and Western economic blockades, were yesterday trying to stock up on essentials in anticipation of an Israeli onslaught.

On Monday, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, ruled out any negotiations with the three militant groups holding 19-year-old Corporal Gilad Shalit.

The groups are led by the military wing of the Palestinian ruling party, <u>Hamas</u>. Arab diplomats have told the Israeli Government the soldier is alive and in reasonable health, although he was wounded in the raid.

A statement, released in the names of <u>Hamas</u>'s Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, the Popular Resistance Committee and the hitherto unknown Islamic Army, demanded the release of the 100 <u>women</u> and 300 Palestinians under the age of 18 held in Israeli jails in return for further information about the soldier.

The US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, called on Israel to give diplomacy a chance to resolve the crisis. France, of which Corporal Shalit is also a citizen, has sent diplomats to seek his release. The militants' demand is thought to be only an opening gambit leading to a demand for the release of more than 8000 Palestinian security prisoners held by Israel.

But Israeli officials say that unless the soldier is released immediately and unconditionally, Israel will take a number of measures, likely to include an escalation in bombardments and assassinations, ground invasions and the possible cutting off of water and electricity to Gaza's 1.3 million people. Officials have also threatened to kill Palestinian leaders, including the Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, of *Hamas*. "The question of releasing prisoners is

Tense Gaza braces for revenge onslaught

not on the agenda of the Israeli Government at all," said Mr Olmert. "The time is approaching for a comprehensive, sharp and severe Israeli operation."

Some in Gaza appeared pleased about Sunday's attack. Samira Hussein said:

"When I see Israel attacking all over Gaza in the last few weeks, the girl who was running on the beach crying for her father who was killed in front of her, dead children everywhere, I think there should be some retaliation so the Israelis can count their dead and injured too."

A senior member of <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing in the southern town of Khan Yunis said reaction was hypocritical. "We have 10,000 prisoners in Israeli jails and not one country ... will intervene for them, but now the whole world is shouting at us because of one prisoner."

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



<u>Israeli prime minister rejects any talks over captured soldier Olmert instead</u> vows to conduct 'broad and ongoing' military action in Gaza.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

FIRST EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 474 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

With troops poised to invade Gaza, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Monday ruled out bargaining with the captors of an Israeli soldier and promised a "broad and ongoing" military offensive.

But large-scale army action appeared unlikely. Officials said they were pursuing a diplomatic solution and conceded that a broad attack would threaten the life of the 19-year-old hostage captured Sunday.

After more than 24 hours of silence, the militants claiming to hold Cpl. Gilad Shalit issued their first demands Monday. The groups, linked to the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian government, said Israel should release all imprisoned Palestinian <u>women</u> and children under 18 in return for information about Shalit.

Olmert rejected the demand. Addressing Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, he charged that the Palestinian attack on an army post at a Gaza crossing and the abduction of the soldier were part of a "murderous, hateful, fanatical Islamic extremist desire to destroy the state of Israel."

"This is not a matter of negotiations, this is not a matter of bargaining," he declared. "Release of prisoners is absolutely not on the agenda of the Israeli government."

Shalit was seized at a military post near the Gaza border by militants who infiltrated Israel through a tunnel. The attack was the first successful infiltration by militants since Israel withdrew from Gaza in September and immediately threatened to plunge the region into a major flare-up of violence.

Speaking earlier to a tourism conference in Jerusalem, Olmert said he held the entire Palestinian leadership responsible for Shalit's safety and warned that his patience was wearing thin.

"I gave the orders to our military commanders to prepare the army for a broad and ongoing military operation to strike the terrorist leaders and all those involved," he said. "There will be immunity for no one."

Military officials said elite brigades and armored forces, backed by tanks, were sent to the frontier, where thousands of soldiers already are deployed.

Page 2 of 2

Israeli prime minister rejects any talks over captured soldier Olmert instead vows to conduct 'broad and ongoing' military action in Gaza.

With Israeli intelligence showing that Shalit was not seriously wounded, defense officials said there were no immediate plans for a massive ground incursion.

However, the officials said a limited operation could begin in the coming days. Such operations could include a rescue attempt or a limited mission meant to pressure <u>Hamas</u> to free the soldier. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the news media.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate who has repeatedly clashed with <u>Hamas</u>, was working with Egyptian mediators and Arab and Western leaders to locate the soldier.

<u>Hamas</u> government spokesman Ghazi Hamad said he had information Shalit was alive and urged the captors to keep him safe.

"I think we are interested in avoiding any confrontation or bloodshed," he told The Associated Press.

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Israeli soldiers near Kibbutz Mefalsim on the Israeli border with the Gaza Strip are on alert Monday waiting for possible orders to invade. AFP / Getty Images PHOTO - Cpl. Gilad Shalit, captured by Palestinian militants, is reported not to be seriously injured.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



A Day of Funerals Across the Northern Gaza Strip

The New York Times
July 8, 2006 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 1161 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip, July 7

Body

It was a day of funerals across northern Gaza on Friday, with relatives and militants mourning those killed in Thursday's fierce fighting with Israeli troops, even as another five Palestinians were killed in more sporadic clashes.

Israeli troops mostly held their ground, securing positions in northern Gaza taken on Thursday. Palestinian militants, mostly armed with Kalashnikov rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, patrolled street corners or laid explosive charges.

In Israel, Avi Dichter, a government minister in charge of internal security, seemed to offer a way out of the current violent impasse.

He said the government did not rule out the possibility of releasing prisoners as a gesture in return for the release of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier captured on June 25, and the re-establishment of a credible cease-fire, according to Israel radio.

"At the end of the day the release of the soldier, Gilad Shalit, will be a must," Mr. Dichter said at a news conference in Tel Aviv. "If Israel will be obliged to in the framework of this agreement, within the calm that will be imposed on the ground by the Palestinian Authority, to release Palestinian prisoners as a gesture to this calm, Israel knows how to do that. In fact, Israel has done it before in the past."

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has consistently ruled out a prisoner trade for Corporal Shalit, and Israel is eager to deter future kidnappings by showing that it will not bargain with the militants.

In the Atatrah neighborhood of Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza on Friday morning, an electric transformer and a house with its windows blown in were still smoking from an airstrike early in the morning that killed two militants.

A little later, Israeli troops raided the area and arrested two sons from the Attar family. In a nearby building, an Israeli sniper could be seen peering through a hole made in an exterior wall. Overhead was the steady buzzing of an Israeli drone, equipped with missiles.

Close by, a heavy machine gun chuttered, followed by the lighter, coughing sounds of a Kalashnikov. A neighbor, taking cover behind a wall of the house, said Ibrahim al-Attar, an elderly man in a white robe, had often driven

A Day of Funerals Across the Northern Gaza Strip

militants away from the area, telling them not to shoot Qassam rockets from here. "Now I don't know," the neighbor said.

Another Palestinian died near here from tank fire, and another from a bullet wound. In the West Bank, a Palestinian militant was shot dead in clashes with Israeli forces in Nablus. On Thursday two Palestinians, both 16, died from Israeli fire during a contested arrest raid in Jenin.

The death toll is difficult to pin down, with news agencies' tallies differing. Dr. Jumaa al-Saqqa, a surgeon and spokesman for Al Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, said 26 Palestinians died in Gaza on Thursday and more than 80 were wounded. Two of the dead were children, Dr. Saqqa said. He estimated that 20 percent of the wounded were young men under the age of 17.

One Israeli soldier, Sgt. Yehuda Basel, 21, died Thursday from a head wound and was buried Friday. Israeli Army officials said Friday that they were investigating whether he had been killed by Israeli fire rather than a Palestinian sniper.

The Shifa hospital, which is running on a generator 18 hours a day, now has a three-week supply of emergency room and surgical drugs, Dr. Saqqa said. But he added: "Depending what happens, of course. It could be used up in a week."

In Jabaliya refugee camp, near Beit Lahiya, mourners gathered for the funeral of Shadi al-Sakani, 24, a swimming coach and member of the military wing of <u>Hamas</u> since the age of 18. He died in Atatrah on Thursday from the impact of an Israeli missile fired from a helicopter.

"He said, 'I'm leaving to fight, and I may not come back,' " said his uncle, Zaki al-Sakani, 55, speaking at a makeshift condolence tent near the mosque.

Shadi al-Sakani was married to Widad, who is pregnant with their third child. Mara, 3, is their daughter; Abdul Rahman, 2, their son. His older brother also fought for *Hamas*, but was wounded in the head a few years ago.

Zaki al-Sakani, the uncle, said he was old enough to remember all of the wars with Israel from the Suez campaign of 1956 on. He said he had rejoiced when Israel withdrew its settlers and troops from Gaza a year ago. "We thought they'd left, but now we believe they never left," he said. "Now I feel the death machine is back, and many people are dying in this effort at resistance."

There is a sudden, pressured unity of Palestinian factions, whose militants have been fighting one another for months in Gaza since <u>Hamas</u> took over the Palestinian Authority after winning at the polls. Even the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, and prime minister, Ismail Haniya of <u>Hamas</u>, have been thrown together in their inability to resolve the case of Corporal Shalit, which seems to be in the hands of <u>Hamas</u> leaders in exile. But few here expect this unity to last much beyond this current crisis.

In a statement, Mr. Abbas said the Israeli incursion had unleashed "new crimes against humanity." Mr. Abbas, who has vainly urged militants to stop firing rockets at Israel or committing suicide bombings there, asked the international community and the United Nations Security Council to put pressure on Israel to end "this destructive policy immediately."

In a news conference on Friday night in Gaza, Mr. Abbas accused Israel "not only of trying to collapse the <u>Hamas</u> government but bring down the Palestinian Authority wholesale" by destroying schools, a power plant, bridges, roads and government buildings.

But at the same time, Mr. Abbas said he still hoped that Egyptian-led negotiations would lead to a package deal involving the release of Corporal Shalit and an Israeli withdrawal and release of some Palestinian prisoners, including <u>women</u>, youngsters and the sick. He called the Palestinians "prisoners of war" and said that "they are human beings with families, just like the Israeli prisoner is a human being."

A Day of Funerals Across the Northern Gaza Strip

Mr. Abbas also termed "invalid" an order by the Palestinian interior minister, Said Sayyam of <u>Hamas</u>, calling on all Palestinian security forces to fight the Israelis in Gaza.

Israel has taken over a wedge of northern Gaza to try to prevent the launching of Qassam missiles into its cities, and it has set up positions in southern Gaza to try to press for Corporal Shalit's release or rescue.

In a statement issued Friday, <u>Hamas</u> said that the corporal was being "well treated in a humane manner" but that the Israeli military operation "is complicating" any solution to the crisis.

Despite the Gaza operation, 14 Qassams were launched on Friday and 13 fell in Israeli territory, the Israeli Army said. Three landed in the center of Sderot, including one in a schoolyard; three people were lightly wounded from shrapnel when a Qassam landed on a factory. Other Qassams landed in open ground.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Relatives of Sgt. Yehuda Basel, 21, mourned yesterday at his funeral in an Israeli military cemetery. He was shot during fighting in northern Gaza. (Photo by Rina Castelnuovo for The New York Times)

Load-Date: July 8, 2006



Gaza fighting pauses for funerals; But sporadic clashes kill 5 Palestinians

The International Herald Tribune
July 8, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 1217 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip

Body

It was a day of funerals across northern Gaza on Friday, with relatives and militants mourning those killed in the fierce fighting Thursday with Israeli troops, even as at least another five Palestinians were killed in sporadic clashes.

But Israeli troops mostly held their ground Friday, securing positions in northern Gaza taken Thursday as Palestinian militants, usually armed with Kalashnikovs and rocket-propelled grenades, patrolled street corners or laid more explosive charges.

In the Atatrah neighborhood of Beit Lahiya early Friday, an electric transformer and a house with its windows blown in were still smoking from an aerial strike that morning that killed two militants.

A little later, Israeli troops raided the area and arrested two sons from the Attar family. In a nearby building, an Israeli sniper could be seen peering through a hole made in an exterior wall. Overhead was the steady buzzing of an Israeli drone, equipped with missiles, which the Palestinians here call the zananah, a made-up word for the "Z" sound of the drone.

Ibrahim al-Attar, an elderly man in a white robe, described how he took the <u>women</u> and children of the house to a downstairs room without windows. "I was afraid what would happen later," he said, pointing out the shrapnel marks in the wall. Close by, a heavy machine gun sputtered, followed by the lighter, coughing sounds of a Kalashnikov. A neighbor, taking cover behind a wall of the house, said that Attar often drove militants away from the area, telling them not to shoot Qassam rockets from here. "Now, I don't know," the neighbor said.

Another Palestinian died near here from tank fire, and another from a bullet wound. In the occupied West Bank, in Nablus, a Palestinian militant was shot and killed in clashes with Israeli forces in Nablus. On Thursday, two Palestinians, both 16, died from Israeli fire during a contested arrest raid in Jenin.

Another two Palestinians were reported by news agencies also to have been killed Friday.

The death toll is difficult to pin down, with wire service tallies differing. Dr. Jumaa Saqqa, a surgeon and spokesman for Al Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, said that 26 Palestinians died in Gaza on Thursday and more than 80 had been wounded. Two of the dead were children, Saqqa said. He estimated that 20 percent of the wounded were young men under the age of 17.

Gaza fighting pauses for funerals But sporadic clashes kill 5 Palestinians

One Israeli soldier, Sergeant Yehuda Basel, 21, died Thursday from a head wound and was also buried on Friday. Israeli Army officials said Friday that they were investigating whether he was killed by friendly fire, not by a Palestinian sniper.

The Shifa hospital, which is running on a generator 18 hours a day, now has a three-week supply of emergency-room and surgical drugs, Saqqa said, but then added: "Depending what happens, of course. It could be used up in a week." The medical services have asked for blood donations.

In the Jabaliya refugee camp, near Beit Lahiya, mourners gathered for the funeral of Shadi al-Sakani, 24, a swimming coach and member of the military wing of <u>Hamas</u> since the age of 18. He died in Atatrah on Thursday from the impact of an Israeli missile fired from a helicopter.

"He said, 'I'm leaving to fight, and I may not come back," said his uncle, Zaki al-Sakani, 55, speaking at a makeshift condolence tent near the mosque. "It's true, I remember him saying that. No one even tried to stop him when they decide to fight, they don't listen."

Shadi al-Sakani was married to Widad, who is pregnant with their third child. Mara, 3, is their daughter; Abdul Rahman, 2, their son. His older brother also fought for *Hamas*, but was wounded in the head a few years ago.

Zaki al-Sakani, the uncle, said he was old enough to remember every war with Israel, beginning with the Suez campaign. He said he rejoiced when Israel withdrew its settlers and troops from Gaza a year ago.

"We thought they'd left, but now we believe they never left," he said. "Now I feel the death machine is back, and many people are dying in this effort at resistance."

There is a sudden, pressured unity of Palestinian factions, whose militants have been fighting each other for months in Gaza since *Hamas* took over the Palestinian Authority.

Even the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, and the <u>Hamas</u> prime minister, Ismail Haniya, have been thrown together in their inability to resolve the case of a captured Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, which seems to be in the hands of <u>Hamas</u> leaders in exile. But few here expect this unity to last much beyond this crisis.

In a statement, Abbas said that the Israeli incursion had unleashed "new crimes against humanity." Abbas, who has vainly urged militants to stop firing rockets at Israel or committing suicide bombings there, asked the international community and UN Security Council to pressure Israel into ending "this destructive policy immediately."

At a press conference Friday night in Gaza, Abbas accused Israel "not only of trying to collapse the <u>Hamas</u> government, but bring down the Palestinian Authority wholesale" by destroying schools, a power plant, bridges, roads and government buildings.

At the same time, however, Abbas said he still hoped that Egyptian-led negotations would lead to a package deal that involved Shalit's release and an Israeli withdrawal, and release of some Palestinian prisoners, including <u>women</u>, youngsters and the sick. He called the Palestinians "prisoners of war" and said that "they are human beings with families, just like the Israeli prisoner is a human being."

Abbas also termed "invalid" an order by Said Sayyam, the interior minister for <u>Hamas</u>, that called on all Palestinian security forces to fight the Israelis in Gaza.

In Israel, Avi Dichter, a government minister in charge of internal security and former head of Shin Bet, said that Israel had not ruled out the possibility of releasing prisoners as a gesture in return for the release of Shalit and the re-establishment of a credible cease-fire, according to Israel radio.

"At the end of the day the release of the soldier, Gilad Shalit, will be a must," he said in Tel Aviv. "If Israel will be obliged to in the framework of this agreement, within the calm that will be imposed on the ground by the Palestinian Authority, to release Palestinian prisoners as a gesture to this calm, Israel knows how to do that. In fact, Israel has done it before in the past."

Gaza fighting pauses for funerals But sporadic clashes kill 5 Palestinians

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has ruled out a prisoner trade and Israel is eager to try to deter future kidnappings by showing that it will not bargain for the corporal with his captors.

Israel has taken over a wedge of northern Gaza to try to prevent the launching of Qassam missiles into its cities, and has set up positions in southern Gaza to try to press for the release or rescue of Shalit, taken by Palestinian militants on June 25.

In a statement Friday, <u>Hamas</u> said that Shalit was being "well-treated in a humane manner" but that the Israeli military operation was "complicating" any solution to the crisis."

Despite the Gaza operation, 14 Qassams were launched Friday and 13 fell in Israeli territory, the Israeli Army said. Three landed in Sederot, including one in a schoolyard; three people were lightly wounded from shrapnel when a Qassam landed on a factory. Other Qassams landed on open ground.

Load-Date: July 24, 2006



Gaza on brink over hostage soldier

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

July 4, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 12

Length: 482 words

Byline: Patrick Bishop in Beit Hanoun and Harry de Quetteville in Gaza City

Body

HOPES for a peaceful resolution of the crisis caused by the seizure of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants were fading last night as a deadline set by his captors approached with no sign of compromise.

The three groups holding Cpl Gilad Shalit, 19, said Israel would suffer unnamed "consequences" if a substantial release of Palestinian prisoners had not begun by 4am British time today.

But the office of Israeli premier Ehud Olmert stated that he would "not give in to extortion" or negotiate with "murderous terrorist organisations". It said it held the <u>Hamas</u>-led government responsible for Cpl Shalit's fate.

Cpl Shalit's father, Noam, said it was "delusional" of Israel to act tough now that his son was being held. "Israel should have done that before the attack [which led to his son's capture], when there was intelligence information on tunnels being dug in the region," he said.

The stage is now set for a full-scale military incursion into the Gaza Strip with the strong risk of loss of life including that of the captured Israeli. Yesterday the 30,000 inhabitants of the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun braced themselves for an attack from the north where Israeli tanks have been massed close to the border for several days. Another force has edged into Gaza from the south.

Last night, a missile reportedly killed one <u>Hamas</u> militant and injured two more in Gaza. The Israelis said they were laying explosives close to their forces. In Gaza City, another missile hit the Islamic University, a <u>Hamas</u> stronghold.

In Ramallah, armoured vehicles and bulldozers surrounded a police station. It was claimed that militants who killed an Israeli civilian last week were inside.

Mr Olmert said he had issued orders to the army to "make sure that no one sleeps at night in Gaza". The groups holding Cpl Shalit left no doubt that if Israel failed to meet their deadline, the consequences could be grim for their captive.

They said Israel had not "learned lessons" from previous crises, issuing a chilling statement. "If the enemy does not respond to our ... conditions for dealing with the case of the missing soldier, we will consider the soldier's case to be closed," it read.

Some 9,000 Palestinians are in Israeli jails. The Qassam brigades, the Popular Resistance Committees and the little-known Islamic Army, who claim responsibility for the operation, demanded the release of all <u>women</u> and children and 1,000 men.

Gaza on brink over hostage soldier

In the week since Cpl Shalit's capture, however, Mr Olmert's government has expanded the goals of its military action in Gaza.

Once simply about a rescue, they now include stopping rockets fired at Israel from the north of the territory, and destabilising the *Hamas* government.

But as the clock ticked down on the militant deadline last night, senior Israeli ministers promised that action to achieve Israel's broader aims in Gaza would be "far worse" if Cpl Shalit is harmed.

Load-Date: July 4, 2006



International inertia on Gaza is a disgrace

Australian Financial Review
July 13, 2006 Thursday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Leaders; Pg. 62

Length: 349 words

Body

Humanitarian requirements now demand that the world stop turning its face away from the appalling events in the Gaza Strip, home to 1.4 million Palestinians. The issue is not who is wrong or who is right in the war between Israel and Palestinian militants over the hostage-taking of an Israeli soldier - Israel has every right to use force to secure his release - but whether the force being employed is proportionate. The killing of <u>women</u> and children, accidental or not, in pursuit of Corporal Gilad Shalit's freedom is not proportionate. The depth and breadth of Israel's attacks on Gaza represents an overreaction. These attacks are putting in jeopardy the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians who have no relationship with militant groups.

The conflict is in danger of cartwheeling out of control, with even greater loss of innocent life. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for restraint, but his pleas have gone unheeded. This reveals an unpleasant truth and it is this: the UN Security Council is proving incapable of exercising moral leadership at a moment when it is demanded by deteriorating humanitarian circumstances. Gaza residents, 80 per cent of whom live beneath the poverty line, are hardly in a position to withstand a long siege. The international community, including principally the United States, must make a more determined effort to stop a downward spiral.

The Palestinian <u>Hamas</u> leadership bears significant responsibility for the mayhem. It might seek to pretend that militant groups are beyond its control, but this is hardly credible. It has done much too little to find a way out of the impasse following the capture of Corporal Shalit. The fact is that members of <u>Hamas</u>'s armed wing were involved. Then there is the broader issue of Middle East peace. <u>Hamas</u> must come to terms with realities, recognise Israel's right to exist behind secure pre-1967 war boundaries and agree to negotiate in good faith. The alternative is a lopsided war in which many more <u>women</u> and children will die. International inertia in this case is a disgrace.

Load-Date: April 5, 2012



Militants holding Israeli soldier demand release of prisoners

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

July 1, 2006 Saturday

THIRD EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A29

Length: 311 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

Militants holding an Israeli soldier today demanded the release of 1,000 prisoners and a halt to Israel's Gaza offensive, complicating efforts to resolve a crisis before it boils over into major fighting.

The latest demand was made after Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said that Israel's military action was aimed at toppling the *Hamas*-led government but maintained he is working with mediators toward a resolution.

Meanwhile, Israel kept up the pressure Friday in Gaza, destroying the interior minister's office and targeting a car carrying militants in an airstrike. Israel also said it attacked a militant cell, killing a local Islamic Jihad leader -- the first reported death in the offensive.

The U.N. Security Council began an emergency debate Friday. The Palestinians sought for a resolution condemning Israel's actions and demanding a halt to all military operations.

Early today, the militants holding the soldier issued a new set of demands, calling on Israel to halt its offensive and ordering the release of 1,000 prisoners.

The demands were laid out in a joint statement by the militant wing of the ruling <u>Hamas</u> party, and two smaller militant groups with close ties to <u>Hamas</u> -- the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam. The three groups have claimed responsibility for Sunday's abduction of Cpl. Gilad Shalit in a cross-border raid.

Earlier this week, the same groups called for the release of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and minors held by Israel in exchange for information about Shalit. Today's statement, like the earlier one, did not promise to release the soldier or give any information about his condition.

Israeli defense officials believe he suffered slight wounds but is still alive. Israel has ruled out a prisoner swap.

Israel sent troops into southern Gaza on Wednesday and began a wave of airstrikes across the coastal strip.

Notes

World

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Palestinian supporters of Islamic Jihad chant slogans as they burn a likeness of an Israeli flag Friday in Gaza City, Gaza, during a protest against Israeli army operations. The Associated Press

Load-Date: July 1, 2006



Nation & world

Charleston Daily Mail (West Virginia) September 12, 2006, Tuesday

Copyright 2006 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P3A

Length: 564 words

Body

Armed militants attack

U.S. Embassy in Syria

DAMASCUS, Syria - Islamic militants attempted to storm the U.S. Embassy in a brazen attack today using automatic rifles, hand grenades and at least one van rigged with explosives, the government said. Syrian security forces killed three of the attackers.

The assailants apparently did not breach the high walls surrounding the white embassy compound in a diplomatic neighborhood of Damascus. But a Chinese diplomat was slightly injured by a stray bullet during the attack, China's government news agency said.

A witness said one Syrian guard outside the embassy also was killed, but the government did not immediately confirm that. At the embassy in Damascus, as at most American embassies worldwide, a local guard force patrols outside the compound's walls while U.S. Marine guards are mostly responsible for guarding classified documents and fighting off attackers inside the compound.

Witnesses also said the gunmen tried to throw hand grenades into the embassy compound, shouting "Allah Akbar!" or "God is great!"

Israeli court orders

release of *Hamas* leaders

OFER MILITARY BASE, West Bank - An Israeli military court ordered the release today of 18 <u>Hamas</u> lawmakers, including three Cabinet ministers, but the men remained behind bars for at least two more days pending an appeal by prosecutors.

The Israeli army had arrested more than two dozen <u>Hamas</u> lawmakers since June after militants in Gaza linked to the group attacked a military post, capturing an Israeli soldier. The military court said the lawmakers should be freed on bail while their trials continue.

Prosecutors appealed the ruling. The court is scheduled to issue a final ruling on Thursday.

Palestinian leaders have said the detentions were illegal and demanded the freedom of the *Hamas* politicians.

Astronaut is seventh U.S.

Nation & world

woman to walk in space

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. - When astronaut Heidemarie Stefanyshyn-Piper poked her head out of an airlock today to begin installing a new addition to the international space station, she joined an elite club of <u>women</u> who have gone on spacewalks.

Only six other <u>women</u> have participated in 159 U.S. spacewalks, and only a single woman has gone on any of the 118 Russian spacewalks. A major reason for the lack of <u>female</u> spacewalkers is the spacesuit, which isn't designed for small sizes, said Piper, who is 5 feet 10 inches tall.

"I fit in the suit better," Piper said before the mission. "If you fit in a suit, then the easier it is to work."

Piper, a spacewalking novice, was joined outside the space station by spacewalking veteran Joe Tanner on the first of three highly choreographed spacewalks during the 11-day mission to attach a 171/2-ton addition to the space station.

Name of Japan's new

prince means 'virtuous'

TOKYO - The first male heir to the Chrysanthemum Throne in four decades was named Hisahito - meaning "virtuous, calm and everlasting," - today, the Imperial Household Agency announced.

The 6-day-old infant, who is third in line to be emperor, was given his name in an ancient imperial ceremony at the Tokyo hospital where his mother, Princess Kiko, is recovering.

The name Hisahito, formed with the Chinese characters for "virtuous, calm and everlasting," was chosen with the wish that the new prince has a long, prosperous life, an even temper and peace of mind, palace spokeswoman Yuka Shiina said.

COMPILED FROM WIRE REPORTS

Load-Date: September 13, 2006



Israeli hostage: Bargaining chip?

The Philadelphia Inquirer
June 26, 2006 Monday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A01

Length: 1121 words

Byline: Michael Matza, Inquirer Staff Writer

Body

Yesterday's cross-border attack, in which two Israeli soldiers were killed, four were wounded and one was kidnapped certainly caught the troops unaware, but it was hardly a tactical surprise.

Capturing an Israeli soldier, although it rarely happens, has long been the ultimate goal of extremist Palestinian groups, and Israeli soldiers are drilled to prepare for the possibility.

"They would rather capture you than kill you... hoping to trade you for Palestinian prisoners..... We were expecting this," said Marius Dreyer, 20, a South African-born Israeli soldier who was on home leave visiting his parents at this 20-family kibbutz near the Gaza Strip when he heard shooting and explosions coming from the 75-foot-high Israeli military watchtower just a few hundred yards behind his house.

Although Dreyer usually locks his army-issued M-16 rifle in a gun safe at the house, yesterday - in the wake of the attack - the weapon lay at his feet as he sat under an awning in a plastic garden chair.

Following a tense search of the kibbutz for possible Palestinian infiltrators after the attack, most residents remained indoors.

While Israel's political-security cabinet immediately approved plans for a military response, the leaders reportedly decided to hold off launching a counterstrike, at least for now, in order to work through diplomatic channels to try to free the kidnapped soldier, 19-year-old Gilad Shalit.

In 1994, when Cpl. Nachshon Waxman, a 19-year-old Israeli-American, was kidnapped while hitchhiking in Israel by <u>Hamas</u> militants, Israeli forces tracked him to a house in the West Bank and stormed it instead of negotiating. Waxman and two of his captors were killed in the battle.

The logic behind kidnapping a soldier is to use him, dead or alive, as a bargaining chip. Israel has been known to release hundreds of Arab prisoners held in its jails in exchange for the return of even one soldier's remains.

Israeli hostage: Bargaining chip?

While opting to move cautiously to free Shalit, Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz left little doubt about how quickly the situation could devolve if he were tortured or killed. "Anyone who causes the soldier to be harmed should know that the soldier's blood is on his head" and that Israel will "exact a painful price," Peretz told reporters in Tel Aviv.

Army spokesmen said the raid, which began about 5:30 a.m., was a joint operation of about eight <u>Hamas</u> and Popular Resistance Committees commandos. A subsequent claim of responsibility issued by the PRC included the name of a previously unknown group, the Army of Islam.

The attackers apparently infiltrated Israel through an 800-yard-long, 25-foot-deep tunnel that the army said originated in the Gaza town of Rafah and passed beneath the security fence between Israel and the strip.

The Web site of the Israeli daily Haaretz reported that Israel's domestic security service, Shin Bet, recently warned the defense establishment that militants intended to use a tunnel to abduct soldiers on Israel-Gaza border.

The army's initial investigation indicated that the attackers split into three cells, with one group lobbing bombs and grenades at a parked armored personnel carrier. The second group attacked a nearby tank, where they killed two crewmen and captured Shalit. The third group opened fire on the watchtower and a field building with automatic weapons.

The raiders were believed to be backed by mortar rounds and antitank missiles fired from deeper inside the skilletflat strip. Although four attackers were killed, the others escaped. After the attack, they apparently blew a hole in the border fence and withdrew with their hostage.

Israeli troops backed by two tanks briefly entered the Gaza Strip in pursuit and to search for the tunnel.

Despite reports that Shalit had been badly wounded, an army spokesman said he did not have to be carried. Israeli Channel 10 reported that his bloody footprints were found leading into Gaza.

"This operation is a natural response to the Israeli crimes of killing <u>women</u> and children, and the assassination of two [militant] leaders," *Hamas* spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said.

Despite the claim of responsibility, a ranking official in the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Authority government called for the soldier's immediate release.

Speaking in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Deputy Prime Minister Nasser Shaer said, "We care about the life of the soldier, and we call upon the kidnappers to guarantee his life and to release him."

The apparent lack of coordination between <u>Hamas'</u> political and armed wings pointed to a deepening split within the movement and an ongoing power struggle between its external leader, Khaled Meshal, who lives in exile in Damascus, Syria, and internal leaders living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including Shaer and Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh.

Haniyeh has been negotiating with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to try to achieve consensus on a national-unity document that would harmonize the political programs of *Hamas* and Abbas' Fatah faction.

The two sides are reportedly close to announcing an agreement in which the Fatah-dominated Palestine Liberation Organization would be reaffirmed as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people for the purposes of external negotiations, principally with Israel. That is why, some analysts say, Meshal, who rejects the PLO, may have orchestrated yesterday's raid in order to knock the agreement off track.

Walid Awad, a spokesman for Abbas, said the Palestinian president "warned *Hamas*, and is holding the movement fully responsible for whatever happens in and to Gaza in consequence to the operation."

The attackers, in their statement claiming responsibility, said the raid was a reaction to Israel's killing of Popular Resistance Committees leader Jamal Abu Samhadana and recent air strikes against militant leaders in which Palestinian bystanders have also been maimed and killed.

Israeli hostage: Bargaining chip?

But Israeli opponents of last summer's withdrawal of Jewish settlers - and the soldiers who guarded them in the Gaza Strip - said Palestinian fighters were working full time to destroy Israel, with or without provocations.

At a news conference, Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the opposition Likud Party, dismissed a reporter's suggestion that the recent campaign of Israeli air strikes into Gaza, designed to counter Palestinian rocket fire into Israel, may actually have been a contributing factor in motivating the attack and kidnapping.

Israel's "government and the prime minister are demonstrating hesitancy and paralysis, and the other side recognizes this. That's what happened today. They recognize it, and they continue, and they escalate," Netanyahu said.

Contact reporter Michael Matza at 215-854-2405 or foreign@phillynews.com.

Load-Date: June 26, 2006



Israel lets food and fuel into Gaza; But Olmert vows to get captive back

The International Herald Tribune
July 3, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 1099 words

Byline: Ian Fisher and Steven Erlanger

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israel opened the border to Gaza on Sunday to a limited supply of fuel and food, while Prime Minister Ehud Olmert repeated that his military would turn to ever-stronger actions to gain the release of a 19-year-old Israeli soldier captured last week.

At a cabinet meeting Sunday, Olmert said he had instructed the government and military "to do everything in order to bring Gilad back home," referring to the captured solider, Corporal Gilad Shalit.

"And when I say everything, I mean everything," the prime minister said, according to the official transcript of the meeting.

At the same time, senior Israeli military officials counseled patience and suggested that the Israeli operation to pressure the *Hamas* government to release the soldier could take some time.

[In more violence on Sunday, Israeli soldiers shot and killed three gunmen who approached the forces stationed in southern Gaza, Palestinian medics and the Israeli Army said, according to The Associated Press. The army said the men were armed with guns and explosive belts. At least five militants have now been killed in the operation.]

A week after Palestinian militants attacked an Israeli military post, capturing Shalit and killing two other soldiers, Israel bowed to outside pressure by easing its slow squeeze in Gaza, insisting that its intention was not to harm ordinary civilians.

Humanitarian groups have warned of a looming crisis in Gaza, completely sealed off for a week and running out of fuel. An Israeli strike on Wednesday knocked out Gaza's only power plant, halving the flow of electricity to the strip's 1.4 million residents.

On Saturday, the Israeli defense minister, Amir Peretz, approved a limited opening of two border crossings for the next four days to allow in basic supplies of food, fuel and medical supplies.

By early Sunday evening, 50 trucks of wheat, corn, meat, cooking oil and other basics had passed through the Karni crossing, according to Captain Jacob Dallal, an Israeli military spokesman. One million liters, or 264,000 gallons, of diesel, 80,000 liters of gasoline and 200,000 tons of natural gas were shipped through the fuel terminal at Nahal Oz, he said.

Israel lets food and fuel into Gaza But Olmert vows to get captive back

Fuel began arriving by late morning at gas stations, many of them dry for days. Drivers waited for two hours Gaza City station that had received 2,000 liters of diesel Sunday less than one-tenth the capacity of a fuel tanker.

"Their aim is just to cause panic," said Sabem Bhar, an employee at the station, which had run out of fuel five days earlier. "They can't cut it off completely. But they want to pressure us, to play with our nerves."

Early Wednesday, the Israeli military began its military operations to free Shalit, striking the power station, bridges, training camps for militants and suspected bomb-making factories.

Israeli artillery suspended on June 9 after seven members of a Palestinian family were killed on a beach in Gaza resumed in force, with hundreds of rounds fired every day from the land and sea. The Israeli military said it has fired 1,500 shells since the operation began and carried out more than 40 airstrikes.

But for all the pyrotechnics, the operation has been relatively restrained, amid suggestions from Israeli military leaders that the crisis may drag out for some time. Part of that restraint seems out of worry for Shalit's life. Part also is over pressure from outside, including from the United States, not to endanger the lives of civilians.

The shells have been targeted into open areas, many of them places in the north of Gaza where militants had been firing off homemade Qassam rockets at civilians in Israel. Militants here shot off six rockets on Friday and Saturday. Three hit Israel, the military said.

But Israel has been steadily increasing the pressure, on both the militant groups and Palestinians generally, in the hope that their discomfort forces the prisoner's release.

"I take personal responsibility for what is happening in Gaza," Olmert said at the cabinet meeting Sunday, according to an unnamed official quoted by The Associated Press. "I want no one to sleep at night in Gaza. I want them to know what it feels like."

In addition to the cuts in power which has also limited water and air-conditioning on sweltering days Israeli jets have raced over the skies at night, setting off sonic booms that jolt people out of bed.

Overnight Sunday, Israeli aircraft hit the empty offices of the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya, who is also a top member of <u>Hamas</u>, the militant group that controls the government here and that led the attack in which Shalit was kidnapped.

The message underscored regularly by Israeli officials is that Israel would not hesitate to assassinate top *Hamas* leaders and that it holds the *Hamas* government responsible for the actions of *Hamas*'s military wing.

Haniya visited his office after the strike and told Reuters: "This is the policy of the jungle and arrogance. Nothing will affect our spirit and nothing will affect our steadfastness."

Despite the small number of casualties, Israel has been coming under strong criticism for its attacks on the attacks on the infrastructure in Gaza, especially for the bombing of the power plant, which is partly owned by an American company.

The plant still smoking four days after all six of its transformers were hit was visited Sunday by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, and the UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Alvaro de Soto.

Two days ago, Israeli war planes also bombed the access roads to the plant.

While calling for the immediate release of Shalit, de Soto said the United Nations found it "difficult to understand that the power plant was struck."

He said that such attacks on the infrastructure weakened progress toward establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel, the ultimate goal of long-standing peace negotiations here.

Israel lets food and fuel into Gaza But Olmert vows to get captive back

"If you are going to have a two-state solution you need a viable Palestinian state," de Soto said. "So actions such as these which tend to undermine or weaken the Palestinian institutions obviously are not helpful at all."

Meanwhile, hopes for any negotiated end to the standoff looked increasingly bleak. Egypt has taken the lead in finding compromise, but according to media reports, it has been frustrated by apparent divisions inside <u>Hamas</u>, split into parts in Gaza and in Syria, where its political leader, Khaled Meshal, lives. <u>Hamas</u> has demanded the release of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and Palestinians prisoners under the age of 18 in Israeli jails exchange for Shalit, who Palestinian officials say is in good health.

Load-Date: July 5, 2006



Israeli warns of military action if soldier harmed

Irish News

July 4, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 29

Length: 551 words

Body

A senior Israeli Cabinet minister yesterday warned of a harsh military response in the Gaza Strip if an abducted Israeli is harmed by his Palestinian captors.

Justice minister Haim Ramon made the threat after the militants holding Cpl Gilad Shalit implied the soldier would be killed if Israel does not begin releasing Palestinian soldiers by this morning.

"If, God forbid, they should hurt the soldier our operations will be far far worse," Mr Ramon said.

Mr Ramon is a close ally of the prime minister, Ehud Olmert.

Israel already has ground troops inside Gaza and has carried out numerous air-strikes in the area since Cpl Shalit was abducted in a cross-border raid on June 25.

The three Palestinian militant groups that captured an Israeli soldier have given Israel until 6am today to start releasing Palestinian prisoners or "pay the full future consequences".

The statement did not say what those consequences would be.

"We give the Zionist enemy until 6am tomorrow," the fax said.

"If the enemy does not respond to our humanitarian demands mentioned in previous leaflets on the conditions for dealing with the issue of the missing soldier ... we will consider the current file of the solider to be closed ... and then the enemy must bear all the consequences of the future results."

The fax was posted on the official *Hamas* military wing website.

It had the same letterhead and font as three earlier statements the factions released.

Cpl Shalit (19) was captured on June 25 in a cross-border raid by militants linked to the Palestinians' ruling *Hamas* party, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam.

The group initially demanded the release of around 500 **women** and children prisoners, then raised its demands to include an additional 1,000 prisoners.

Israel has publicly said it would not negotiate Cpl Shalit's release but privately political and defence leaders have not ruled out releasing some prisoners not involved in actual attacks on Israel.

Israeli warns of military action if soldier harmed

Last week Israel launched a military campaign in the Gaza Strip to pressure militants to free the soldier.

It holds the *Hamas* government responsible for Cpl's Shalit's capture on Israeli territory.

There has been no sign of evidence of the soldier's condition, although Israeli officials have said they think he is alive.

Earlier Mr Olmert stepped up pressure on the Palestinian government, ordering his military to "do all it can" to free the abducted soldier and hinting Israel may arrest *Hamas* leaders in Gaza.

Mr Olmert's threat, just hours after an Israeli air strike blasted the Palestinian prime minister's office yesterday, signalled that the government was losing patience with diplomatic efforts to end the crisis and was planning to escalate its military offensive.

Israeli aircraft, gunboats and artillery have pounded the Gaza Strip since Israeli troops and tanks took up positions in southern Gaza on Wednesday in an operation aimed at pressuring Palestinians to free Clp Shalit.

"These are difficult days for Israel but we have no intention of giving in to any form of blackmailing," Mr Olmert said.

"Everyone understands that giving in to terror today means an invitation to the next act of terrorism and we will not act that way."

Meanwhile, Israel reopened a cargo crossing into Gaza to allow food and fuel shipments into the territory.

Load-Date: July 4, 2006



Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

The Australian (Australia)
July 13, 2006 Thursday
All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 721 words

Byline: Martin Chulov Middle East correspondent

Body

MATP

IRANIAN-backed Hezbollah militants have kidnapped two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid that threatens to drag Lebanon and Syria into all-out war with Israel.

The Israeli Defence Force last night confirmed two soldiers had been seized by Hezbollah guerillas during a rocket barrage and immediately launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon to find them. As many as seven Israeli soldiers are believed to have been killed in the strike.

The attack takes to three the number of Israeli soldiers being held hostage and is set to spark the most significant flashpoint in the western Middle East in more than a decade.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declared the guerilla attack to be "an act of war" and vowed the response would be "very, very, very painful".

Less than an hour after the soldiers were seized, Israeli warplanes attacked three bridges in southern Lebanon to prevent the guerillas from taking their captives north.

Hezbollah positions destroyed by artillery three months ago were also under heavy attack. A rapid-deployment reserve division of 6000 troops headed for Israel's northern border last night ahead of a mooted full-scale invasion into parts of Lebanon from which the Israeli military withdrew in 2000.

Israel was preparing for an all-out assault against Hezbollah's supporters, which could include targets in Syria and Beirut that provide the Shia-backed militants with weapons and money. Israel has previously said Hezbollah's main benefactor, Iran, is not out of reach of its warplanes.

Mr Olmert warned: "There are elements from the north and from the south who threaten our stability and threaten to test our determination.

"They will fail and will pay a heavy price for their deeds."

He added that the raid was not an act of terror but an attack by a sovereign state on Israel.

The Lebanese Government, of which Hezbollah is a part, "must bear full responsibility", he said.

Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

Israel's cabinet was to meet overnight to approve additional military activity in Lebanon, Mr Olmert said.

Six Israeli soldiers were injured in the Hezbollah assault, five civilians were wounded and a tank destroyed by a landmine.

The operation was seen as a diversion from the two-week siege of Gaza designed primarily to find a third Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was seized from a tank by *Hamas*-aligned militants late last month.

It came hours after the Palestinian militant most wanted by Israel for more than a decade apparently escaped a fourth attempt to kill him after surviving a strike by an F-16 jet on a building in central Gaza.

The 227kg bomb dropped at daybreak on Wednesday Israeli time killed six people and wounded 36 others, including civilians. But Mohammed Deif, the head of *Hamas*'s military wing, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, is believed to have fled the building.

Israel claims he was wounded in the strike. However, a spokesman for <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing strongly denied the claim.

After the border fight, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said: "For the second time in two weeks, we have been attacked in an unprovoked manner by jihadist groups.

"This underscores their true agenda. We withdrew to UN-sanctioned borders in accordance with international agreements and we continue to be attacked.

"This is proof that what we are seeing here is a continued push by global jihadi groups bent on Israel's destruction."

Within hours of seizing the captives, Hezbollah released a statement saying it was prepared to trade their freedom for the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails. "In the frame of our will to free Islamic resistance prisoners and detainees, we kidnapped two Israeli soldiers on the northern border of Palestine," the statement said.

"The two soldiers have been taken to a safe place."

<u>Hamas</u> officials have tried for the past two weeks to trade Corporal Shalit for <u>female</u> and juvenile prisoners jailed in Israel, but their attempts have been met with staunch refusals by the Israeli cabinet. Israel has repeatedly accused Syria of backing the Damascus-based head of <u>Hamas</u>'s politburo, Khaled Meshaal, who it accuses of being behind the Shalit kidnapping.

Over the past two years, it has also blamed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for sponsoring Hezbollah.

Lebanon and Syria remain sworn enemies of the Jewish state.

Load-Date: July 12, 2006



InShort

The Irish Times

June 5, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 9

Length: 565 words

Body

A round-up of today's others stories in brief.

Hamas rejects Abbas call for referendum

JERUSALEM - The <u>Hamas</u> government has rejected as "illegal" plans by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas to call a referendum unless the Islamist group agrees in principle by tomorrow to recognise Israel and negotiate a two-state solution.

<u>Hamas</u> appears paralysed by Mr Abbas's ultimatum for it to accept a document drawn up by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails that accepts a final settlement with Israel of two states living side by side.

<u>Hamas</u> says it is unable to agree to the document in its present form, but it is also concerned about the political damage it will suffer if, as opinion polls suggest, a large majority of Palestinians back Mr Abbas and the prisoners' document. - (Guardian service)

Mosque targeted after arrests

TORONTO - Vandals smashed windows of a Toronto mosque after a weekend police sweep that netted 17 suspected al-Qaeda sympathisers accused of plotting bomb attacks. Canadian Muslims expressed fear yesterday that a backlash had begun.

Mohammad Alam, the president of the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, said the incident may be the beginning of religiously motivated reprisals against the country's Muslim population, estimated at more than 600,000.

The suspects, all from Ontario, remained in custody ahead of their next court appearance tomorrow. Police say the men had amassed explosives and were planning to blow up targets in Ontario, Canada's political and economic heart. - (Reuters)

Eight oil workers freed in Nigeria

ABUJA - Kidnappers in Nigeria have freed eight foreign oil workers, two days after they were seized in an unprecedented raid on a rig far offshore that heightened fears in an oil industry hurt by a series of militant attacks.

Gunmen had captured six Britons, one American and one Canadian from a rig 40 miles out to sea on Friday. The abductions followed a series of attacks earlier this year that have shut down a quarter of Nigeria's oil output . - (Reuters)

InShort

Somalia militias capture town

MOGADISHU - Islamic militias have captured a strategic town north of Mogadishu, strengthening their grip on Somalia during some of the worst violence in nearly 15 years of anarchy.

At least 15 people were killed and 20 wounded in the three-hour fight for Balad, about 20 miles from the capital. The town had been a base for a secular alliance of warlords that is fighting the Islamic militias for power in Somalia.

The growing power of the Islamic militias is raising fears that the nation could follow the path of Taliban Afghanistan into the hands of al-Qaeda. - (Reuters)

Women to run in Kuwait elections

KUWAIT CITY - Thirty- two <u>women</u> will be among 402 parliamentary candidates standing for election in Kuwait on June 29th, the first time in the history of the Gulf Arab state that <u>women</u> will be allowed to seek office.

Some 340,000 voters of whom 195,000, or 57 per cent, are <u>women</u>, are eligible to choose the new 50-seat house that replaces the previous assembly. - (Reuters)

Pakistan bans 'Da Vinci Code'

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has banned The Da Vinci Code following calls from both minority Christians and majority Muslims. "The film is sacrilegious to all religions, that's why we did this," said Jalil Abbas, secretary of the ministry of culture.

Police had been ordered to conduct raids and confiscate pirated copies of the film available in markets. - (Reuters)

Load-Date: June 5, 2006



In Gaza, a grim struggle against poverty; Chaos and conflict destroy economy

The International Herald Tribune September 15, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 869 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: KHAN YUNIS, Gaza Strip

Body

For the last week, Zidan Abu Reziq has been sleeping outside, next to his plantings on a small square of sand he expropriated.

The Abu Reziqs, like many of the large, destitute refugee families in this shrapneled, tumbledown slum, need to plant to eat. They took the land and planted it with vegetables, an investment of about \$50, most of the money that the UN Relief and Works Agency gave them to buy school uniforms for the children.

Zidan's wife, Tamam, admits her 51-year-old husband sleeps with his plants because he needs to protect their investment in the lawless chaos of Gaza. His own small theft of land, 17 square meters, or 180 square feet, that belongs to the government, is dwarfed by the huge expropriations by gangs and families and militia groups that have taken over much of the best land left behind when the Israelis pulled out their settlers a year ago.

It is difficult to exaggerate the economic collapse of Gaza, with the Palestinian Authority cut off from funds by Israel, the United States and the European Union after *Hamas* won the legislative elections of Jan. 25.

Since then, the authority has paid most of its 73,000 employees here, nearly 40 percent of the Gaza work force, only 1.5 months' salary, resulting in a severe economic depression and growing signs of malnutrition, especially among the poorest children.

Few here are using the UN grants for school. More than \$20 went straight to the local grocer, Tamam said, as a down payment on the credit extended to the family, which still owes more than \$200

About \$11 went to buy the ingredients, including two chickens, for the couscous dish that Tamam and her daughter, Fatma, 29, were making early one morning, kneading relief agency flour in big aluminum bowls, pouring in relief agency oil, rubbing the flour over a screen to get the right consistency.

The result will serve 15 people, Tamam said. "We want to feed the people who helped us with the land," she said, and some of their neighbors, who are even worse off than they are.

The Gaza situation has worsened since Palestinian gunmen, including some from <u>Hamas</u>, killed two Israeli soldiers and captured a third on June 25. Israel re-invaded Gaza and has killed more than 240 Palestinians.

In Gaza, a grim struggle against poverty Chaos and conflict destroy economy

An Israeli airstrike on the only electrical power plant in Gaza means that most Gazans now get only 7 to 12 hours a day of electricity, at unpredictable hours, with running water largely dependent on electric pumps.

Fishermen, prevented from going more than a few hundred meters from shore by the Israeli Navy, are using hand-thrown nets from the beach to catch sprats and sardines.

Jan Egeland, the UN under secretary general for humanitarian affairs, said Gaza was "a ticking time bomb."

The UN Conference on Trade and Development warned Tuesday that the Gaza economy could shrink next year to the level of 15 years ago and unemployment could rise to more than 50 percent.

The World Bank expects gross domestic product to decline by 27 percent this year.

Those pressures have forced <u>Hamas</u> to agree to a proposal by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, for a national-unity government, to allow Israel and the West to resume transferring funds and aid.

The Abu Reziqs are hopeful, like many Palestinians, that a new government will be better, but they are reluctant to blame *Hamas*, which, Zidan said, "was never given a chance to succeed."

Still, it is unclear whether the new government, when there is one, will be seen to meet Western demands that it recognize Israel, forswear violence and accept previous Israel-Palestinian agreements.

<u>Hamas</u> promised security in its victorious election campaign. But it has failed at that, said Hamdi Shaqqura of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights.

"There is security chaos and no respect for law," he said. A prime reason is the involvement of the police and security forces, many of them from Fatah, in the lawlessness, and the constant clashes with militia and gunmen affiliated with *Hamas*.

"People who are supposed to protect the law are the people who break it," he said, "and no one is brought to justice." For this chaos, he said, "I must blame the Palestinian Authority," not Israel.

Tamam, 49, recalls a near-riot here when cooking gas was in short supply and there was a delivery of canisters. The police were called, she said. "They took canisters for themselves and then left," she said, shrugging.

Zidan used to work in the nearby Israeli settlement of Neve Dekalim. But after the outbreak of the second Intifada, in 2000, he was not allowed to enter the settlement. Now, Zidan is lucky to get three days a month of casual construction work.

His son, Muhammad, is a Palestinian Authority policeman who is supposed to make \$340 a month, but who has been paid only \$500 since Feb. 1. "He spends little time at home," Fatma says, "because he hasn't a shekel in his pocket and he's ashamed."

The small welfare check Fatma, a divorced mother, used to get has stopped coming and the **women**'s group for which she used to do embroidery has collapsed with the death of its leader.

Tamam's son, Suleiman, 20, watches television until the electricity suddenly dies. "I'd like to have any job," he said simply. "Any job at all."

Load-Date: October 3, 2006



Cut off, Gaza sinks into despair; Months of sanctions cripple the economy

The International Herald Tribune September 15, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 905 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: KHAN YUNIS, Gaza Strip

Body

For the last week, Zidan Abu Reziq has been sleeping outside, next to his plantings on a small square of sand he expropriated.

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Few here are using the UN grants for school. More than \$20 went straight to the local grocer, Tamam said, as a down payment on the credit extended to the family, which still owes more than \$200

About \$11 went to buy the ingredients, including two chickens, for the couscous dish that Tamam and her daughter, Fatma, 29, were making early one morning, kneading relief agency flour in big aluminum bowls, pouring in relief agency oil, rubbing the flour over a screen to get the right consistency.

The result will serve 15 people, Tamam said. "We want to feed the people who helped us with the land," she said, and some of their neighbors, who are even worse off than they are.

The Gaza situation has worsened since Palestinian gunmen, including some from <u>Hamas</u>, killed two Israeli soldiers and captured a third on June 25. Israel re-invaded Gaza and has killed more than 240 Palestinians.

Cut off, Gaza sinks into despair Months of sanctions cripple the economy

An Israeli airstrike on the only electrical power plant in Gaza means that most Gazans now get only 7 to 12 hours a day of electricity, at unpredictable hours, with running water largely dependent on electric pumps.

Fishermen, prevented from going more than a few hundred meters from shore by the Israeli Navy, are using hand-thrown nets from the beach to catch sprats and sardines.

Jan Egeland, the United Nations' top humanitarian affairs official, said Gaza was "a ticking time bomb."

The UN Conference on Trade and Development warned Tuesday that the Gaza economy could shrink next year to the level of 15 years ago and unemployment could rise to more than 50 percent.

The World Bank expects gross domestic product to decline by 27 percent this year.

Those pressures have forced <u>Hamas</u> to agree to a proposal by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, for a national-unity government, to allow Israel and the West to resume transferring funds and aid.

The Abu Reziqs are hopeful, like many Palestinians, that a new government will be better, but they are reluctant to blame *Hamas*, which, Zidan said, "was never given a chance to succeed."

Still, it is unclear whether the new government, when there is one, will be seen to meet Western demands that it recognize Israel, forswear violence and accept previous Israel-Palestinian agreements.

<u>Hamas</u> promised security in its victorious election campaign. But it has failed at that, said Hamdi Shaqqura of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights.

"There is security chaos and no respect for law," he said. A prime reason is the involvement of the police and security forces, many of them from Fatah, in the lawlessness, and the constant clashes with militia and gunmen affiliated with *Hamas*.

"People who are supposed to protect the law are the people who break it," he said, "and no one is brought to justice." For this chaos, he said, "I must blame the Palestinian Authority," not Israel.

Tamam, 49, recalls a near-riot here when cooking gas was in short supply and there was a delivery of canisters. The police were called, she said. "They took canisters for themselves and then left," she said, shrugging.

Zidan used to work in the nearby Israeli settlement of Neve Dekalim. But after the outbreak of the second Intifada, in 2000, he was not allowed to enter the settlement. Now, Zidan is lucky to get three days a month of casual construction work.

His son, Muhammad, is a Palestinian Authority policeman who is supposed to make the equivalent of \$340 a month, but who has been paid only \$500 since Feb. 1. "He spends little time at home," Fatma says, "because he hasn't a shekel in his pocket and he's ashamed."

The small welfare check Fatma, a divorced mother, used to get has stopped coming and the <u>women</u>'s group for which she used to do embroidery has collapsed with the death of its leader.

Tamam's son, Suleiman, 20, watches television until the electricity suddenly dies. "I'd like to have any job," he said simply. "Any job at all."

The United Nations is now helping to feed 830,000 people in Gaza, an increase of 100,000 since March, while the World Food Program helps to feed 220,000, an increase of 25 percent since March.

Load-Date: October 3, 2006



Israelis given 6am deadline to meet demands for release of captured soldier: Palestinian groups warn 'case will be closed': Olmert says he will not give in to extortion

The Guardian - Final Edition
July 4, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 14

Length: 702 words

Byline: Conal Urguhart, Beit Hanoun

Body

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, yesterday rejected an ultimatum from the Palestinian captors of an Israeli soldier that ordered Israel to begin releasing prisoners or "bear all the consequences".

Mr Olmert said in a statement that he held the Palestinian Authority fully responsible for the welfare of Corporal Gilad Shilat. "Israel will not give in to extortion by the Palestinian Authority and the <u>Hamas</u> government, which are led by murderous terrorist organisations . . . We will not conduct any negotiations on the release of prisoners," he said.

The three militant groups holding Cpl Shalit have demanded the release of all <u>women</u> and children prisoners and a further 1,000 inmates.

In a fax to news agencies also posted on a <u>Hamas</u> website, the captors - who are led by <u>Hamas</u> - gave the "Zionist enemy" until 6am today. "If the enemy does not respond to our humanitarian demands mentioned in previous leaflets on the conditions for dealing with the case of the missing solder . . . we will consider the soldier's case to be closed . . . And then the enemy must bear all the consequences of the future results."

Amir Peretz, the defence minister, said Israel also held Syria responsible for the fate of the soldier. "I suggest that (the Syrian president) Bashar Assad, who is trying to operate with his eyes shut tight, open his eyes, because he is responsible," he said. Syria hosts Khaled Mashal, the *Hamas* leader who is believed to have authority over the soldier's captors.

Israeli forces continued their low-level military campaign to pressurise militants to give up the soldier, who was captured during a raid on Israeli positions on June 25. Aircraft bombed targets and ground forces moved into areas of north Gaza around Beit Hanoun. Israeli forces, who have already occupied part of southern Gaza, shot dead three Palestinians they accused of being about to attack them.

While Israeli forces have inflicted severe damage to Gaza's infrastructure and killed several people, their operations have not yet matched the bellicose rhetoric of Israeli politicians.

In Beit Hanoun, crowds on street corners watched to see if Israeli forces would move further into their town. Soldiers had taken over two houses on the outskirts and forced the families to remain in a single room, a common practice during Israeli incursions. The Israeli soldiers use the houses as advanced sniping positions.

Israelis given 6am deadline to meet demands for release of captured soldier: Palestinian groups warn 'case will be closed': Olmert says he will not give in to e....

Jamal Masri, 35, a relative of the two families, said the soldiers had moved in at around 4am amid some shooting. He was waiting to see if the troops advanced, at which point he and his 13 children would take shelter in their basement. "We cannot leave. We have nowhere else to go. Even now they are bringing up more tanks on transporters to the border," he said.

There were few signs of preparations to resist the Israeli advance into Beit Hanoun. Further west, in Jabaliya refugee camp, men dug holes for explosives and prepared sandbagged emplacements.

A spokeswoman for the Israeli army said it had moved into areas near its border fence close to Beit Hanoun and its aircraft had hit targets in Beit Lahiya and Gaza City. One missile hit a first-floor flat in a tower block east of Beit Lahiya. Residents said it was uninhabited.

Hussein Nuizin, 22, who lived below, said the missiles struck at 2.30am, shaking the building. His bed was covered in debris from the flat above. Mr Nuizin, who was paralysed by an Israeli bullet in 2000, said a friend had just moved him from his bed before the missile strike.

Efforts to break the deadlock continued as the Israeli press reported that Israel was considering freeing Palestinian prisoners without "blood on their hands".

The families of Palestinians in Israeli jails held their weekly vigil at the Gaza City office of the Red Cross. Dozens of mothers and wives held framed photographs of their sons and husbands. Fatima Hassanein said her son, Hazan, 25, had been sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment for membership of *Hamas*. "The kidnapping of the Israeli soldier has given me hope that somehow my son can be freed. If the soldier is freed without the release of Palestinian prisoners in return, I will be very angry," she said.

Comment, page 26 > guardian.co.uk/israel >

Load-Date: July 4, 2006



TENSION Militants demand start of prisoner release; Ultimatum for Israel

The Advertiser (Australia)
July 4, 2006 Tuesday
State Edition

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 25

Length: 379 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK, GAZA CITY

Body

AΡ

THE three Palestinian militant groups which captured an Israeli soldier gave Israel until today to start releasing Palestinian prisoners or "bear all the consequences".

The ultimatum - which was faxed to news agencies yesterday - did not say what those consequences would be, but implied the soldier could be killed.

"We give the Zionist enemy until 6am tomorrow morning (12.30pm SA time), Tuesday, July 4," the fax said.

"If the enemy does not respond to our humanitarian demands mentioned in previous leaflets on the conditions for dealing with the case of the missing soldier . . . we will consider the soldier's case to be closed . . . And then the enemy must bear all the consequences of the future results."

An Israeli military official yesterday rejected the deadline. "We are studying the statement and for the moment are sticking to the official position expressed by the Prime Minister rejecting any negotiations with the kidnappers or giving into any blackmail," the official said.

Corporal Gilad Shalit, 19, was captured on June 25 in a cross-border raid by militants linked to the Palestinians' ruling <u>Hamas</u> party, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam. The last two groups have ties to **Hamas**.

The captors initially demanded the release of about 500 women and children prisoners held in Israeli jails.

They later raised their demands to include an extra 1000 prisoners. The ultimatum suggested that Israel would only have to begin freeing the prisoners by this morning, by demanding that Israel "start" fulfilling the demands by the deadline.

Last week, Israel launched a military campaign in the Gaza Strip to pressure militants to free the soldier. It holds the *Hamas* government responsible for Shalit's capture on Israeli territory.

Hours before yesterday's communique, Israeli tanks and armoured bulldozers pushed into the northern Gaza Strip in what an Israeli military source described as a "pin-point operation" to locate tunnels and explosives near the border fence.

TENSION Militants demand start of prisoner release Ultimatum for Israel

There has been no sign of life from the soldier since his seizure, and no concrete evidence of his condition, though Israeli officials have said they think he is alive.

A Palestinian official has quoted mediators as saying Shalit was alive after being treated for wounds.

Load-Date: July 3, 2006



It's the occupation, stupid. But which one?

The Toronto Star July 9, 2006 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A17

Length: 731 words

Body

In the drama that is the Middle East, any death, Palestinian or Israeli, is tragic. Now, without belittling all the other recent tragedies, it is the fate of two Jewish teens - a settler and a soldier - that sparked the current crisis.

One youth, Eliyahu Asheri, 18, was kidnapped and killed near Ramallah by the Popular Resistance Committee, a coalition combining Islamic Jihad and <u>Hamas</u>. The other youth, Gilad Shalit, 19, was taken hostage by the same group just outside Gaza. Speaking on Al-Jazeera TV, the PRC described the incidents as revenge for Israeli strikes. But the backgrounds of the two Israelis represent a problem that lies at the heart of the conflict. And it's not about revenge.

Asheri's killers picked him up while he was hitchhiking to a Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Limited attention has been paid to his death. Some might argue that a settler living on land occupied since 1967 elicits little support either in the West or, for that matter, in the current Israeli government.

Shalit, on the other hand, was a soldier whose family home is in the Galilee. Israel's response to his abduction has been massive and determined, enlisting its full military power.

Why the harsh response to the soldier's kidnapping? After all, aren't soldiers as close as you get to legitimate targets in conflict zones?

Is it possible that Israel has begun to differentiate between its own citizens, placing a higher value on young people depending on their political stance?

Human rights groups, including those most critical of the settler movement, say there can be no such distinction. In its July 2002 report on terrorism, Amnesty International made it clear that attacks against Israeli civilians - including settlers and especially <u>women</u> and children in settler communities - are criminal acts. The humanity and rights of Jewish settlers in the West Bank are every bit as fundamental as they are for any other human beings.

The Israeli government clearly understands this. And while there may be differences of opinion between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the settler movement on the ultimate shape of Israel's borders, a youngster killed on his way to his home in a West Bank settlement evokes the same heart-rending emotions as any other violent death. So, while both incidents have moved an entire nation in grief, why has one of them moved an army?

The answer, perhaps surprisingly, lies not with the Israelis but with those who are busy condemning them.

It's the occupation, stupid. But which one?

The Canadian Arab Federation, for example, has called for a boycott of Israel in response to the current military campaign, asking the government of Canada to impose sanctions "until Israel withdraws from all occupied territories, dismantles all settlements, and tears down the apartheid wall."

These words have now become standard for criticizing Israeli actions.

Indeed, CAF's language is a refinement on the sardonic expression that the Palestinians, mimicking U.S. President Bill Clinton on the economy, have long used to express their most fundamental grievance: "It's the occupation, stupid." Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashwari, among others, has repeatedly said the occupation is the root cause of the whole problem.

Which brings us back to Shalit's kidnapping. The massive response followed months of rockets fired from <u>Hamas</u>-ruled, unoccupied Gaza onto Israeli towns.

Corporal Shalit was on the Israeli side of the border, defending not the occupation, but the internationally recognized 1967 boundary. If it's all about the occupation, where was Shalit supposed to be stationed?

Last week also saw <u>Hamas</u> negotiating over the Palestinian "prisoners' document" as a formula for dealing with Israel. In the words of <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Sami Abu Zuri broadcast on the BBC, "We do not object to the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders without that leading to the recognition of the occupation's legitimacy." In other words, the "occupation" still exists in vacated Gaza, and will continue to exist even after Israel vacates the West Bank and the Palestinians have their state.

It may be all about the occupation, but Israelis are not that stupid. They have to ask, which occupation? Under the <u>Hamas</u> vision, every Israeli, no matter where they live and work, is a potential Shalit. If you're wondering what makes a country mobilize its forces, you need look no farther.

Anna Morgan is a Toronto writer.

Load-Date: July 9, 2006



Deadly double standards sow terror

The Australian (Australia)
July 18, 2006 Tuesday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Opinion / Op Ed; Pg. 12

Length: 971 words

Byline: Antony Loewenstein

Body

MATP

Israel's response to the abduction and killing of its soldiers is disproportionate and counter-productive, warns Antony Loewenstein

ISRAEL is fighting on two fronts and against two forces it helped create. <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah gained their political capital by resisting Israeli occupation in Palestine and Lebanon. The past decades have proven that the harder Israel tries to destroy these movements, the greater their credibility and political power.

And what does Israel have to show for countless years of military opposition to terrorism? A region that supports growing Islamic resistance movements and Arab populations that when given the chance vote for them in overwhelming numbers.

Tragically for innocent civilians caught in the ideological crossfire, the escalation in the Middle East has taken a predictable path.

Terrorism is followed by righteous revenge. Israel views itself as the aggrieved party, the victim of unwarranted violence towards its soldiers and citizens. After the abduction of three Israeli officers by <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah, the Jewish state, backed by the Bush administration, has unleashed its military might against Palestine and Lebanon.

The ramifications of such disproportionate and illegal force are disturbing and potentially dangerous in this unstable region. In the short term, the moral case for Israel has taken an inevitable battering.

During the past week, civilians have been murdered by Israeli air strikes and artillery. Infrastructure, such as bridges, roads, power plants and airports, has been destroyed.

The Geneva Conventions specifically state that such behaviour is a war crime. Israel and its supporters ignore these legal niceties while demanding enemy forces abide by them. Many Western governments, including Australia, are ignoring this double standard but the Arab world has a long memory, and the stakes are higher than ever in the present geopolitical climate. The US and Israeli response towards the democratically elected <u>Hamas</u> Government in Palestine is clear: no negotiations, no financial support and relentless punishment of the Palestinian people for electing the wrong party.

Deadly double standards sow terror

The recent reoccupation of Gaza -- although Israel never really left, controlling all sea, air and road entries into the territory -- is aimed at destroying the newly elected Palestinian Government. The imprisonment of dozens of <u>Hamas</u> politicians inevitably will radicalise the Palestinian population. Is a siege mentality now endemic to the Israeli national psyche?

For the international community the Middle East is once again a hot spot: the local drama of conflicting national aspirations sits alongside the twin global interests of nuclear power and petro dollars. In this larger context Iran and Syria are volatile players. They are clear ideological soul mates of <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah and are using their proxies to battle Israel and the US. Although Arab governments have long used the Palestinians as a convenient political football, support for the Palestinians can only increase as the occupation continues.

After the abduction of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, the Western world was bombarded with information about his background and family. He was humanised. But what of the countless Palestinians imprisoned without trial in Israel jails or the numerous Palestinian <u>women</u> and children regularly taken from their homes in the middle of the night? The Israeli army is a people's army; the Israeli state is founded on the principle of a freed people. By contrast, the Palestinian struggle for freedom is constructed as an illegitimate terrorist plot.

In any other retelling of the imperial-colonial story across the 20th century, the Palestinians' struggle would be an honourable fight for freedom and independence. The suffering of the Palestinians is clearly now not worthy of examination. During the present crisis, it seems as if Israelis are the only victims of terrorism, that Hezbollah rocket attacks are unjustifiable aggression.

The Bush administration's "war on terror" requires us to believe that the West must fight terror in Lebanon, West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Africa, Asia and South America. According to Israeli spin, Lebanon is an "axis of terror" and the Jewish state is "fighting terror on all fronts". The Palestinians are, as always, caught in the crossfire between Israel's view of its place in the region and the Arab world's indifference to their plight.

Israel and the international community are facing a moment of truth. Negotiations are the inevitable conclusion of the present violence, as is the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails in exchange for the return of abducted Israeli soldiers. With the UN Security Council becoming a toothless vehicle for the US to stifle any action against Israel, uncomfortable questions need to be asked. The West's blank cheque towards Israel since 1948, primarily due to Holocaust guilt, can no longer excuse, justify and fund a supposed democracy that occupies a neighbouring state and bombs its civilians.

<u>Hamas</u> Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh recently wrote in The Washington Post that the American people should open their eyes to Israeli behaviour in the occupied territories. "If Israel will not allow Palestinians to live in peace, dignity and national integrity", he concluded, "Israelis themselves will not be able to enjoy those same rights."

It is now more than ever in Israeli and US interests to ensure a democratic and economically viable Palestine is constructed. For those of us committed to finding a just and peaceful solution, one that honours the legitimate national aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians, this is a matter of urgency.

Antony Loewenstein is the author of My Israel Question, to be released in August by Melbourne University Publishing.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006



Abduction that led to chaos

Sunday Express
July 16, 2006 Sunday
U.K. 1st Edition

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Section: NEWS; 10 Length: 204 words

Body

JUNE 25: Gaza militants snatch Israeli soldier Cpl Gilad Shalit.

JUNE 26: Militants demand release of all Palestinian <u>women</u> and children held in Israeli prisons in return for information about the soldier.

JUNE 27: Israeli troops move into southern Gaza and warplanes blast bridges and Gaza's power station.

JULY 4: Militants launch a homemade rocket into the heart of the Israeli city of Ashkelon.

JULY 5: Israeli tanks and troops move into the northern Gaza Strip and occupy residential areas.

JULY 8: Israel broadens Gaza offensive, sending troops and 15 tanks into eastern part of the strip.

Hamas government calls for a cease-fire but fails to offer Shalit's release.

Israel refuses.

JULY 12: Lebanese Hezbollah guerrillas snatch two Israeli soldiers and kill eight others in a raid on Israel's northern border.

Israel responds with an air assault and a ground thrust into southern Lebanon.

JULY 12: Israeli air force drops a quarter-ton bomb on a home in an attempt to assassinate top *Hamas* fugitives.

Nine members of a Palestinian family, including seven children, are killed.

JULY 13: Israeli forces blockade Lebanese ports and bomb runways at Beirut airport. Hezbollah guerillas fire rockets at three Israeli towns including Haifa.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006



Guardian.com June 28, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 912 words

Highlight: The Israeli army entered southern Gaza today after threatening a major offensive to try to secure the

release of an Israeli solider taken hostage by Palestinian militants.

Body

The Israeli army entered southern Gaza today in an attempt to prompt the release of an Israeli soldier taken hostage by Palestinian militants.

Tanks and soldiers began taking up positions in two locations east of the town of Rafah under the cover of tank shells. Palestinians dug in behind walls and sand embankments, bracing for a major offensive.

An Israeli army spokeswoman confirmed the troops had moved into Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

A <u>Hamas</u> leader urged fighters to confront the Israeli soldiers, Reuters reported. "Fight your enemies, who came to their deaths. Grab your rifles and resist," Nizar Rayan said in a radio message.

It was the first Israeli ground offensive in Gaza since it pulled out of the territory last summer, tearing down all 21 Jewish settlements and evacuating all troops.

Israeli planes also attacked three bridges and the main Gaza power station, knocking out electricity in most of the coastal strip.

The Israeli military said that the object of the attacks on the bridges in Gaza was "to impair the ability of the terrorists to transfer the kidnapped soldier".

No casualties were reported in any of the attacks.

Israeli military officials said that the prime minister, Ehud Olmert, had approved a "limited operation" for southern Gaza, aimed at "terrorist infrastructure".

The strikes came amid intensive diplomatic efforts in the Arab world and by the UN. The US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, urged Israel to "give diplomacy a chance".

Israeli TV reported that international mediators involved in talks with the kidnappers had given up, saying negotiations were going nowhere. An Egyptian official said that talks with <u>Hamas</u> officials in Gaza were "on hold" but insisted negotiations were still taking place with <u>Hamas</u> leaders in Syria.

<u>Hamas</u> yesterday agreed to surrender control of the Palestinian government in favour of a power-sharing administration committed to a negotiated two-state settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

It struck a deal with the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, who belongs to the rival Fatah party, that commits all parties in the Palestinian government to recognise Israel.

But Israel said only freedom for the captive soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, 19, could defuse the crisis, not a political agreement.

Cpl Shalit was abducted by Palestinian militants during a raid on an Israeli army post near Gaza on Sunday in which two Israeli soldiers and two militants were killed.

"We want to bring our soldier home, that is our only goal," said the Israeli minister of national infrastructure, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, a retired general and former defence minister.

"The goal is not to search [for Cpl Shalit], the goal is to cause them to send Gilad home ... They have to understand we won't just sit quietly."

The Israeli justice minister, Haim Ramon, said Israel would try to assassinate a <u>Hamas</u> leader based in Damascus, Khaled Mashaal, who Israel believes gave the order for the kidnapping.

"He is definitely in our sights ... he is a target," Mr Ramon told army radio. "Khaled Mashaal, as some who is overseeing, actually commanding the terror acts, is definitely a target."

Overnight, Israeli planes fired at least nine missiles at Gaza's only power station, cutting electricity to 65% of the Gaza Strip, engineers at the station said.

The attack raised the spectre of a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, as water pumps in the strip are powered by electricity. Some power in Gaza City was restored by tapping into electricity supplied by Israel in northern Gaza.

Warplanes also flew low over Gaza City, rocking the city with sonic booms and shattering windows.

Early today, Israeli warplanes attacked one of the bridges for a second time, Palestinian security officials said. A public works official said it would take three months to repair the main bridge linking northern and southern Gaza, a coastal area that is home to about 1.3 million Palestinians.

Masked militants from various armed factions took up defensive positions around Gaza City in the northern part of the strip, instructing drivers to turn off headlights.

Militants said they fired a rocket at the Israeli village of Nahal Oz, where Israeli forces are concentrated in a staging area.

An Associated Press reporter saw tanks moving on the Israeli side of the border fence.

In the Shajaiyeh neighborhood of Gaza City, not far from the fence, armed militants took up positions across from the blaring headlights of Israeli vehicles, and Israeli attack helicopters hovered overhead. Earlier today, Israeli forces fired machine guns at the empty streets, witnesses said.

The militants told residents to leave the area. They piled gasoline-soaked tires in the streets. Earlier, bulldozers blocked some of the main roads with piles of sand and dirt to try to slow down Israeli tanks.

The militants who seized Cpl Shalit have demanded the release of hundreds of Palestinian <u>women</u> and children held in Israeli jails in exchange for information about the captured soldier.

Complicating matters was a new claim by the <u>Hamas</u>-linked Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), one of the three groups that carried out Sunday's assault, that it had also kidnapped a Jewish settler in the West Bank.

An Israeli police spokesman, Micky Rosenfeld, told Associated Press the report was being taken "very seriously," and military officials said there was "rising fears" the claim was true.

After Israel launched its Gaza assault, the PRC threatened to kill its hostage.

Load-Date: June 28, 2006



Guardian.com June 28, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 939 words

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Load-Date: June 28, 2006



World Ticker

The Toronto Star February 5, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 567 words

Body

United States

2 died in capture of

gay-bashing suspect

A teenager suspected of a rampage in a Massachusetts gay bar was captured in Arkansas yesterday but only after two people were killed: a police officer gunned down when he tried to stop the suspect's car and a <u>female</u> passenger in the teen's vehicle, caught in a shootout with police several minutes later, state police said.

Jacob Robida, 18, was taken to hospital, Arkansas police said. Investigators had searched for Robida since Thursday's attack at a bar in New Bedford, Mass. Three men were wounded, one critically, with a hatchet and a gun. The hatchet used in the attack was found outside the bar but detectives believed Robida still had the gun.

Gaza

Hamas, Abbas hold

talks on government

A <u>Hamas</u> leader said yesterday the Islamic militant group hoped to form a Palestinian government later this month after agreeing with President Mahmoud Abbas to convene parliament on Feb. 16.

Abbas did not formally ask <u>Hamas</u> to put together a cabinet. But Abbas's spokesman confirmed that <u>Hamas</u>, having won 74 seats in the 132-member legislature last month, would be chosen to head a government.

Israeli aircraft fired three missiles at a building used by militants in Gaza City today, killing three people and wounding five, Palestinian hospital officials said. The three were senior field operatives of Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the hospital said.

Yemen

Al Qaeda members

break out of jail

World Ticker

Thirteen Al Qaeda militants convicted in the attacks on the U.S. warship Cole and the French supertanker Limburg in Yemen were among 23 men who broke out of jail in Sanaa, a state-run website said. The September 26 site quoted unnamed sources saying the 13 convicts included top militants Jamal Badawi and Fawaz al-Rabe'ie, who fled the central prison by digging a 70-metre-long tunnel.

Rabe'ie, leader of the group convicted of bombing the Limburg in 2002, was facing the death sentence, while Badawi was serving 15 years in jail for the bombing of the Cole in 2000. Badawi had escaped from prison in 2003 but was later arrested, the site said.

Brazil

Three killed in crush to see pop group

Three people were killed and 38 hurt when a barrier collapsed as fans of the Mexican teen group RBD waited for an autograph session in a shopping mall in Sao Paulo yesterday, officials said. Most of the casualties were teenagers, a Sao Paulo state health official said.

About 5,000 fans had lined up at the Fiesta mall in southern Sao Paulo since Friday night for the event but organizers had only prepared for about 100 autograph opportunities, local media said. The band stars in the Mexican soap opera Rebelde.

The barrier collapsed as fans surged toward a van in which they believed the band was arriving.

Iraq

Sunnis warn of

civil war after 14 slain

Sunni politicians warned of civil war yesterday after the bullet-riddled bodies of 14 Sunni Arab men were found in Baghdad - apparently the latest victims of sectarian death squads. One person was killed and 12 injured when a mortar shell exploded near a Shiite mosque north of the capital.

Sunni leaders claimed the 14 men were seized last week by Shiite-led security forces. There was no confirmation from the Shiite-led interior ministry that government troops were responsible.

Leaders of several major Sunni Arab political organizations insisted that the interior ministry was responsible for the killings.

FROM THE STAR'S WIRE SERVICES

Load-Date: February 5, 2006



Israeli troops enter Gaza; In a bid to protect soldier, strikes knock out power and two bridges.

The Philadelphia Inquirer June 28, 2006 Wednesday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A01

Length: 938 words

Byline: Laura King and Ken Ellingwood, Los Angeles Times

Body

Israeli troops entered the Gaza Strip early today after aircraft had blown up two bridges and a power station, cutting off electricity in most of the area and sending loud booms reverberating across Gaza City.

Earlier, Palestinians girded for a feared attack, bulldozing mounds of barbed-wire-topped sand into place along urban thoroughfares and laying what appeared to be homemade explosives in the expected path of Israeli tanks massed just across the border.

The Israeli military described the air strikes as an effort to ensure an Israeli soldier being held by Palestinian extremists was not moved.

Against the volatile backdrop of battle preparations on the part of both sides, the Palestinians' ruling <u>Hamas</u> movement and the rival Fatah faction announced they had tentatively agreed on a common political platform that could lead to negotiations with Israel.

However, the move appeared to be more of an effort to present a symbolic united front at a time of crisis than to genuinely alter the hard-line stance that has led to the <u>Hamas</u>-dominated government's diplomatic and economic isolation. **Hamas** stressed that it was still not willing to acknowledge Israel's right to exist.

The standoff with Israel was sparked by an audacious cross-border raid Sunday in which Palestinian extremists captured an Israeli soldier and killed two others. Two of the Palestinian attackers were killed as well.

The incident represented the most serious confrontation to erupt since Israel's unilateral withdrawal of soldiers and Jewish settlers from the seaside strip last summer. Beginning Monday, Israel deployed tanks and troops along the Gaza frontier in readiness for what it said could be a sweeping assault on the coastal territory.

The consortium of <u>Hamas</u>-linked groups claiming to hold the Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, warned yesterday against any attempt to rescue him, saying it would result in failure and bloodshed.

Israeli troops enter Gaza In a bid to protect soldier, strikes knock out power and two bridges.

That was a chilling and probably deliberate reminder to Israelis that the last time Palestinians managed to seize an Israeli soldier, in 1994, he was subsequently killed in an Israeli rescue raid.

"The soldier is in a secure location to which the Zionists' reach does not extend," Mohammed Abdelal, a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees, one of three groups thought to have taken part in the raid, told reporters in Gaza City.

The purported captors have demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners who are <u>female</u> or under the age of 18 in exchange for information about Shalit, but have so far provided no concrete proof he is alive and well.

Israel said no prisoner exchange was being contemplated.

Israeli military sources said they believed Shalit was being held in southern Gaza, a stronghold for Palestinian groups that have engaged in abductions of foreigners and Palestinian political rivals.

Despite the Israeli military buildup along the border with Gaza, where clanking tanks and armored vehicles kicked up enormous clouds of dust visible from miles away, Israel was seen as likely to hold off on either a large-scale assault or even a pinpoint raid unless it was convinced diplomatic efforts to free the captured soldier would not succeed.

The Israeli military said in a statement that the object of the attacks on the bridges was "to impair the ability of the terrorists to transfer the kidnapped soldier," the Associated Press reported.

Knocking down the bridges would cut Gaza in two, Palestinian security officials said. The strike on the power station cut power to much of the Gaza Strip.

Israeli military officials said Prime Minister Ehud Olmert approved a "limited operation" for southern Gaza, aimed at "terrorist infrastructure." The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters, the AP reported.

Palestinian security forces said that Israeli tanks were on the move near the Israeli village of Nahal Oz, a main Israeli staging area just outside Gaza, but that they had not yet entered the territory. An Associated Press reporter saw tanks moving on the Israeli side of the border fence.

The announcement of a political agreement by <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah came after weeks of negotiations, and after Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said he would put the question of whether to recognize Israel to Palestinian voters in a referendum. Under the tentative agreement, Abbas would be empowered to hold negotiations with Israel, but any agreements reached would require the approval of the <u>Hamas</u>-dominated parliament. The draft document appeared to fall far short of international and Israeli demands. Israel dismissed the accord as a "diplomatic nonstarter."

"It is disappointing that on a day when the international community is demanding from responsible Palestinian leadership that it act decisively to bring about the release of Cpl. Shalit and deescalate the current crisis, that Palestinian leaders devoted time and energy to something that is, in the framework of this crisis, a peripheral issue," said Mark Regev, a spokesman for Israel's Foreign Ministry.

Searching for Peace

Complex mediation efforts led by Egypt, aimed at ending the latest Israeli-Palestinian crisis, continued yesterday.

Because the captive Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, holds dual French-Israeli citizenship, French diplomats were also involved, but closemouthed about their role. The United States, too, urged restraint on Israel's part while a peaceful resolution was being sought.

"There really needs to be an effort now to try and calm

Israeli troops enter Gaza In a bid to protect soldier, strikes knock out power and two bridges.

the situation," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told reporters while en route

to Pakistan.

Los Angeles Times

Load-Date: June 28, 2006



QUOTES

Financial Times (London, England)

April 21, 2006 Friday

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Section: FT REPORT - RUSSIA; Pg. 3

Length: 376 words

Body

The views of Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, in an FT interview.

ON THE US: A priority. Russia accepts honest criticism but not "highly-politicised reports" such as the recent US State Department report highlighting the absence of a law in Russia banning the harassment of <u>women</u>.

Disagreements are normal but the main agenda is cooperation on "the real problems that we have to resolve" including energy, space, global security, nuclear non-proliferation and terrorism. "This is where the real job is done. This is where the real co-operation takes place."

ON THE EU: In general relations are satisfactory. But, contrary to Russia's wishes, Russia has uneasy relations with some new EU member states which are affecting Russia-EU relations.

"If the ideas of those members, on many questions which concern Russia, becomes the basis for the EU's Russia policy then strengthening the EU-Russia partnership will indisputably face serious challenges. I don't think the EU wants this."

ON THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES: Gas prices for Ukraine and other CIS states will move to market levels. Russia respects its partners' multi-directional foreign policies. External countries' activities in the CIS should be transparent.

"We are ready to respect their interests as long as they respect ours."

ON CHINA: A growing power with a stabilising role in central Asia and elsewhere in the world. "The increasing influence of this successfully developing state is not a threat for the rest of the world."

ON IRAN: US-led efforts to involve the United Nations Security Council in the dispute over Iran's nuclear programme risk politicising the dispute and undermining the work of the IAEA inspectors.

There is "a parallel" with the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war. "(But) I don't approve of what the Iranian side is doing. The quite arrogant statements don't help create the necessary business-like atmosphere for the IAEA to finalise its work."

ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE RECENT MOSCOW VISIT OF <u>HAMAS</u> LEADERS: "Nobody expected <u>Hamas</u> to change overnight but the signs of a move in the right direction are certainly visible. We certainly expect <u>Hamas</u> to show some progress on the ground."

ON HIS OWN JOB: "Frustration isn't something I can afford. I have a job to do."

QUOTES

Load-Date: April 20, 2006



Canada right to suspend aid

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

March 31, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Byline: The StarPhoenix

Body

In a part of the world where geography is measured more in time than its limited space, events this week in Israel and the Palestinian territories seemed particularly focused on a distinct future.

Hours after Israeli voters made it known at the polls that they want their next government to withdraw from at least some of the West Bank, Ismail Haniyeh -- a member of the terrorist group <u>Hamas</u> who spent six years in jail for hunting down Palestinian informers -- was sworn in as prime minister of the Palestinian Authority. Haniyeh was mealy-mouthed in describing his priorities, and refused to assure the world that he'd renounce violence and terrorism, or recognize the reality of Israel's right to exist.

In reaction to that refusal, Canada immediately withdrew all aid meant for the Palestinian Authority, and became the first country (after Israel) to do so. Canada, which lately has gained a reputation for dithering on such important statements of principle, garnered international attention with this world-leading declaration. Except for a few of the more extreme members of Haniyeh's government, however, Canada's actions were seen as a signal of what most of the world community will do unless the Palestinian government led by the terrorist group, <u>Hamas</u>, opts to join the ranks of the civilized world by clearly renouncing its violent ways.

The Canadian government promised to continue to help non-governmental organization and the United Nations provide direct relief to the Palestinian people. However, Prime Minister Stephen Harper should have gone further and increased the assistance Canada delivers to the Palestinian people independent of the <u>Hamas</u> government, particularly in areas such as education, <u>women</u>'s aid organizations and basic humanitarian help.

It's important for Palestinians to see that, while the international community may not like the choice they made in January's election, direct aid to their government is not being withdrawn to punish them. It must be made clear that morally -- and in many cases, legally -- nations such as Canada cannot support terrorist organizations.

And given the history of <u>Hamas</u> -- particularly the hundreds of innocent people it has murdered, including its own duped suicide bombers -- it is imperative that it strenuously and unambiguously reject violence as a means of achieving its goal of an independent nation. This is critically important.

The Fatah party, which claimed to be the voice of the Palestinian people for decades, tried to have it both ways -by pretending to negotiate peace, even as it secretly supported various terrorist factions. This allowed Fatah leaders to play the politics of victimization that helped them cling to power, while also maintaining a web of corruption within the territories that made them rich.

Canada right to suspend aid

It is the frustration brought about by duplicitous Palestinian leaders that led to the events this week on the other side of the fence. Israelis voted in historically small numbers and they certainly didn't give Ehud Olmert a runaway mandate, but they did make it clear they wanted Israel out of much of the occupied West Bank.

The hard-line parties (most notably Likud, which has ruled Israel for most of the last 30 years by pushing for a "Greater Israel" that would include much of the occupied lands) were left devastated. Likud was reduced to 11 seats. While Olmert's nascent Kadima party only got 28 of the Knesset's 120 seats, 69 per cent of the votes went to parties that would give up some of the West Bank in return for security.

Olmert has promised to redefine Israel's borders permanently within four years. While he is determined to accomplish this even if he must work unilaterally (including building a wall to keep out terrorists), it is in the interest of Palestinians that they join the negotiating process, something that only can happen if their leaders legitimately and demonstrably renounce terrorism.

For that, time is of the essence, and Canada's move should help bring that message home.

One hopes other countries will follow suit -- particularly Russia and France, which have been wavering on their commitment to withhold aid until <u>Hamas</u> repudiates terrorism, recognizes Israel's right to exist and begins legitimate negotiations with Olmert on where he should draw the line.

And Olmert, who is frantically trying to forge a government out of those who support his West Bank plan, should understand that the border he draws must leave a contiguous and viable Palestine.

Load-Date: March 31, 2006