

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:34:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498711

Documents (100)

1. [Words of Khomeini fuel gathering: IRAN / Those who believe in the Islamic revolution meet weekly](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

2. [Hate in the raw as mob rams UN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

3. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

4. [Thursday Countdown to the new season: Truce is unlikely as fighting still rages](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

5. [Israeli children dying too](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

6. [*The Iranian loose cannon: The man to watch in 2007 is a fusion of apocalyptic piety and politics*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

7. [*Cornell U. students face risks overseas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

8. [*Woman, 57, fulfils 'martyr' wish: Grandmother blows herself up in response to Israeli 'massacre'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

9. [*Why Muslims must rise up now and join the battle against extremism*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

10. [*World turns a blind eye to the suffering of Palestinians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed by

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

11. [*Police investigate Khatami as St Andrews honours him*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

12. [*Why the terrorists want to destroy you*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

13. [*Fantasia Blair has bankrupted himself on the world stage*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

14. [*A Journeyman's Most Harrowing Trip*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

15. [*Ideals become casualties of war*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

16. [*Muslim world's great divide*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

17. [*Negotiating a way around a nuclear stand-off America and Iran must find common ground.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

18. [*French Contender Makes Her Presidential Case*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

19. [*Right place, wrong time*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

20. [*Fear 'as bad as after 9/11' In Michigan and elsewhere, Muslims worry about hostile neighbors and surveillance*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

21. [Letters to the editor](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

22. [Iran 's mullahs don't pray all the time](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

23. [Blair's 'baffling' Middle East plan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

24. [Setting the record straight FBI schools screenwriters about its counterterrorism efforts](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

25. [Wayne State U. group ready to be self-governing, are you?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

26. [REALISM AND GRACEFUL EXIT](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

27. [Opinion Focus: Election battle lost, but war will go on](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

28. [Setting the record straight FBI schools screenwriters about its counterterrorism efforts](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

29. [Israeli arms expert slams Gaza shelling](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

30. [A touch more tongue and Bushy clacker banter wouldn't go amiss](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

31. [All style, with just a dash of substance: Tyler Brule's new Monocle magazine aims to be all things to certain people](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

32. [*Multicultural madness needs such antidotes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

33. [*Festival perceptions*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

34. [*FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

35. [*News Summary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

36. [*We must challenge the giants of evil in our quest for peace*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

37. [CARTOONS & COMMENT Viewpoints from around the world No obvious answers](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

38. [READERS WRITE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

39. [It is time for a new approach](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

40. [READERS WRITE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

41. [Federal pens: FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

42. [*News Summary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

43. [*VOICE FROM LEBANON*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

44. [*Gutless NATO action suggests alliance doomed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

45. [*Blast Kills 35 and Wounds 120 at Shiite Shrine in Najaf*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

46. [*Worries about Lebanon linger*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

47. [*Blair branded a killer as he flies in to Beirut*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

48. [*Family of kidnapped Israeli soldier visits UK*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

49. [*Killing glorified*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

50. [*Olmert ally to resign over harassment*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

51. [*Olmert ally to resign over harassment charge*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

52. [*Government of Israel pervaded by scandals*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

53. [READERS WRITE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

54. [EGYPT AGAIN CRACKS DOWN ON ISLAMISTS MUSLIM BRETHREN SAYS HUNDREDS HAVE BEEN
ARRESTED](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

55. [Looking Back, and Forward](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

56. [No, sheik, sorry isn't good enough](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

57. [US POLICY OF COUNTER-TERRORISM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

58. [*An Adviser With Expertise, and a Sandwich, Too*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

59. [*Artists against war: Cube Gallery's salon-style exhibition rallies some top names in Canadian art*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

60. [*A Farewell to Figaro*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

61. [*Amid Political Upheaval, Israeli Economy Stays Healthy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

62. [*Beating each other into submission not way forward*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

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

63. [*Talking to Syria and Iran would be a mistake*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

64. [*O Happy Day as Heaven arrives in the Square...*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

65. [*9/11 and five years of folly*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

66. [*Not bedfellows, but a political attraction*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

67. [*Heed the PM's call for women's rights*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

68. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

69. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

70. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

71. [Letter: Short ponts - IF blowing innocent](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

72. [Former minister guilty](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

73. [Pious people with lost souls](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

74. [MEAT JIBE MUFTI GETS THE CHOP](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

75. [Frontline news from the virtual war zone](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

76. [I was powerless to fight against the President, says alleged rape victim](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

77. [Memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace: Washington's unwillingness to talk to Somalia's Islamists is hindering efforts to halt a war that threatens to engulf the Horn of Africa. The Islamists have given Ethiopia until tomorrow to withdraw troops from Baidoa or face a full-scale assault, writes Martin Fletcher in Mogadishu .](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

78. [The click that forced a machine to vote no](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

79. [How memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

80. [The devil of the details](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

81. [In a Stormy Year, Peretz Raises and Then Forfeits Left's Hopes Anger Mounts as Labor's Once-fiery Leader Acquiesces in Rightist's Entry to Olmert Cabinet DATEL NE JER USALEM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

82. [World Report](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

83. [A bloody nose for Bush but his brutality goes on](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

84. [If this ISWorld War 3, whose side are we on?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

85. [Prelude to a genocide: Iranian leaders should be brought to justice by the international community for inciting the mass slaughter of Jews and the destruction of Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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

86. [Arab heroes of the holocaust](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

87. [Isn't retaliation justified?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

88. [Ex-minister's conviction may lead to cabinet change](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

89. [Isn't retaliation justified?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

90. [2006: The year in review: Murder of officer, downturn of casino and auto industries among top news stories](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

91. [Israel ends inquiry into Qana attack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

92. [Change of heart or change of strategy?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

93. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR New leaders, new policy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed by

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

94. [*Africa After War: Paths to Forgiveness - Ugandans welcome 'terrorists' back*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

95. [*'I do' at last for war brides*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

96. [*Letter: Yousay - Rap for Israel*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

97. [*World Briefing Middle East: Israel : Justice Minister To Quit Over Kiss Charges*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

98. [*Former Israeli minister guilty for forcibly kissing soldier*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

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

99. [Red herring](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

100. [Language used as weapon of war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

Words of Khomeini fuel gathering: IRAN / Those who believe in the Islamic revolution meet weekly

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

September 2, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. I9

Length: 834 words

Byline: Karl Vick, Washington Post

Dateline: TEHRAN, Iran

Body

TEHRAN, Iran -- The weekly gathering of those who still believe most in the Islamic Revolution was to start promptly at 5 p.m. The time was right there in the lower left-hand corner of Ya Lesarat al-Hussein, the hard-line weekly newspaper that sponsors the Sunday gathering.

The paper's name, which translates as Those Who Want to Avenge the Blood of Hussein, suggests the militant flavor the gathering is intended to nurse, 27 years after the revolution that brought the clerics to power in Iran. A couple of dozen of the faithful are already in the evenly lit basement of the capital headquarters of Ansar al-Hezbollah, or Friends of the Party of God, a paramilitary group whose members were called on many a time in the previous decade to break the ranks, if not the skulls, of student protesters.

Leaving their shoes in the racks at the top of the stairs, they pad past posters trumpeting the pan-Islamic goals -- "One Day the Land of Palestine Will Be Returned to the World of Islam" -- articulated by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, whose virtues the guest speaker will extol when he shows up. Meanwhile, they fold their legs under themselves and read.

A slender young man moves through the silence, newsprint hung over his forearm like a waiter's towel. He hands out Partosokhan, or "In the Light of Discourse." A balding man opens to an article on the lamentable state of Iranian textiles; the world's only Islamic theocracy is importing chadors, the enveloping black robes whose name literally translates as "tent."

Another problem: Many young women aren't even wearing them, preferring fashionable scarves and snug jackets that stretch the definition of hijab, or head covering. A second young man circulates handbills announcing a march against such immodesty, on the coming Friday, after prayers. (No one will show up.)

"Mourning songs?" asks another man, handing out CDs from a stack. His white beard is neatly trimmed and he wears a pinstriped double-breasted suit. The room he moves through has the feel of a weeknight function in a church basement, except everyone's sitting on the carpet.

The last gaps are disappearing -- elbows drawn in to make room, shoulders touched in greeting -- when Mehdi Koochakzadeh strides in on long legs. Slender, bearded, strings on his glasses, he takes the only seat in the room

Words of Khomeini fuel gathering: IRAN | Those who believe in the Islamic revolution meet weekly

and commences on the advertised topic: The thoughts and character of Khomeini. He waves a thick stack of quotations by the cleric whose charisma and religious authority held the Islamic Republic together through its first decade, until his death in 1989. Since then, there's been a certain amount of improvisation.

"We have no such thing as majority rule in Islam," Koochakzadeh proclaims. "If the majority says, 'We don't want an Islamic regime,' they have no right."

If it seems a strange statement from an elected member of parliament, this goes unremarked. But when, at 6:40, Koochakzadeh announces that "someone is picking me up at 7:15," a young man in the back pipes up: "Well, that's as usual. Officials are always coming to talk to us. They never listen. They never ask our opinion."

The speaker waves another quotation. Khomeini said: "What we should have in mind is the satisfaction of God, not the satisfaction of the people." The legislator adds: "They know nothing. They have no right to make a decision."

He has an eye on the clock. It's after 7. But the crowd is restless, and before Koochakzadeh can leave, someone sets a stack of papers on the desk -- written questions from the audience.

"There are several ladies in the place where I work who are not observing hijab and who make fun of me for being a Hezbolli. What should I do?"

Koochakzadeh looks up. To maintain public peace, Iran's conservatives have given youth a measure of freedom that somehow disempowers the men seated on the floor. "I understand your suffering," he says, counseling patience and the services of his office if circumstances grow intolerable. As he recites his phone number, every man in the audience appears to jot it down.

"For 27 years, you and yours have been running this country. Why is there still so much corruption?"

The reply, which runs for several paragraphs, ends with: "Most of the trouble we have has been plotted by the United States and our enemies. And part of it is you voted for people you shouldn't have." He mentions a "stupid" presidential candidate who offered every Iranian \$60 a month.

From the back, a man shoots back: "This person you're talking about was much closer to Imam Khomeini than many people in high positions."

Another man calls out: "There were others who promised to put oil money on the tablecloth!" The reference is to the candidate who won, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The speaker spreads his arms wide. It's 7:20. He's late.

"See how democratic we are? When a person wants to go and make a speech, he can go to an Ansar meeting!"

In the second row, a young man in a blue blazer stands. "I was beaten up by Ansar, myself." He smiles. "They broke a tooth."

Graphic

Photo: Karl Vick, Washington Post; Mehdi Koochakzadeh, a member of Iran's parliament, extols Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Load-Date: September 2, 2006

Words of Khomeini fuel gathering: IRAN | Those who believe in the Islamic revolution meet weekly

End of Document

Hate in the raw as mob rams UN

The Sun (England)

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: ISRAEL HALTS RAIDS FOR 48 HRS; MIDDLE EAST 2006

Length: 200 words

Byline: Nick Parker

Body

I WATCHED raw hate pour on to the streets of Beirut yesterday as a 5,000 strong mob vented their fury over the Qana horror.

Screaming protesters waving yellow Hezbollah banners used a makeshift battering ram to storm the city's United Nations headquarters.

They smashed and looted property, set the entrance of the building alight and broke windows with a hail of rocks and debris.

Mearvat Tallawi, UN secretary general Kofi Annan's permanent envoy in Beirut, was left cowering inside.

Hezbollah officials who orchestrated the violence had to persuade protesters not to drag her into the street.

Wailing

In 45 minutes of mayhem, the air was filled with the screams of women wailing "Death to Israel", smoke from burning debris and the ominous hum of Israeli warplanes high above.

Ringleaders led chants of "Victory to Hezbollah, Victory to God!"

Using walkie-talkies, they eventually ordered the mob to withdraw.

Virtually every ground-floor window was smashed before around 200 armed troops in riot gear backed by military police formed a cordon.

Feelings ran so high that no one dared attempt to halt the orgy of destruction sparked by the worst atrocity of the war so far -and there was not a single arrest.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The International Herald Tribune

August 4, 2006 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 7

Length: 82 words

Body

People in Europe are unfortunately forgetting that Hezbollah is a heinous terrorist organization that at the end of the day despises everything that is Western.

Hezbollah continues to use innocent Lebanese women and children as human shields.

Europeans have to start asking themselves what they would do if the lives of their children were constantly threatened.

If bombings in London and Madrid have not yet changed the European view, more bombings are sure to do so later.

Smadar Bakovic, Jerusalem

Load-Date: August 6, 2006

Thursday Countdown to the new season: Truce is unlikely as fighting still rages

Birmingham Post
August 1, 2006, Tuesday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 194 words

Body

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert yesterday said no ceasefire would be forthcoming in Israel's 20 day battle with Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon.

Olmert said that Israeli forces continued fighting in the air, from the sea and on the ground in Lebanon.

"Israel continues to fight," he said.

Olmert said Israel had no choice but to begin its attacks on Hezbollah after the guerrillas crossed over the border on July 12, killed three soldiers and kidnapped two others.

"We could not let the terror organisation on our border get stronger, let them get more missiles," he said. "If we had held off, the day would have arrived soon when they would have caused unprecedented damage."

He also said he was sorry for the deaths of women and children during raids in Qana.

Olmert said: "I am sorry from bottom of heart for all deaths of children or women in Qana," Olmert said. "We did not search them out ... they were not our enemies and we did not look for them."

Addressing the people of Lebanon, he told them that they were not Israel's enemy, but rather Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah -whom he accused of carrying out the policies of Syria and Iran - was.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Israeli children dying too

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

August 21, 2006 Monday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 115 words

Body

NOBODY likes to see innocent women and children hurt, not even because they were in the way as Hezbollah fire rockets from civilian locations.

Perhaps Bill and Kathy Smith may pause to consider the number of rockets that Hezbollah continues to fire into Israel, deliberately aiming at civilian targets, and that is why the Israelis are attacking back.

They may like to consider that more Israeli civilians are regularly lost to terrorists on a population percentage basis than America lost on 9/11.

They may like to consider that the terrorists hide in the middle of refugee camps and other civilian places so the collateral damage to civilians will reflect badly on Israel.

Peter Kraus,

Annandale.

Load-Date: August 21, 2006

***The Iranian loose cannon: The man to watch in 2007 is a fusion of
apocalyptic piety and politics***

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 7, 2007 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A15

Length: 1023 words

Byline: MICHAEL BURLEIGH, The Daily Telegraph

Body

One person we will be hearing much about in 2007 will be Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He's the hollow-eyed engineer and town planner (and former Revolutionary Guard) who in 2005 went from being Tehran's mayor to president of Iran. He's the fellow stringing along the international community while his scientists try to manufacture a nuclear bomb before America or Israel decides to degrade or destroy key experimental sites. He says appalling things with demented glee in his eyes.

According to Thursday's Spectator, Ahmadinejad might actually welcome such an attack, since this would "justify" a retaliatory strike against Israel with nuclear weapons acquired from the former Soviet Union. Certainly, Iran's dark role in arming Hezbollah, and even darker machinations in Iraq, suggest an almost wilful disregard for consequences.

Who is Ahmadinejad? In some respects, he resembles those with whom he consorts to ramble on about U.S. imperialism and the wretched of the Earth: Hugo Chavez, Robert Mugabe and Fidel Castro. Actually, Ahmadinejad is subtly different: You have to grasp a fusion of apocalyptic piety and politics to get what he is about.

Among the lesser-known godfathers of the 1979 Iranian Revolution was the French-educated Ali Sharati, who died of a heart attack two years before Ayatollah Khomeini came to power. Sharati's story reminds us of the extent to which various "indigenous" radicalisms are indebted to intellectual contaminants from Western academe.

Just as Pol Pot was a product of academic craziness imbibed at the Sorbonne, so Sharati was much taken with how Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre tried to revive Marxism through talk of cathartic revolutionary violence and the return to the supposed purity of the pre-modern collective. Sharati incorporated these worldly concerns with the Shia longing for the return of the Twelfth Hidden Imam, who departed this Earth in 874. The one cleric not to denounce Sharati as a heretic was Khomeini, himself responsible for the slogan "Islam is politics."

Ahmadinejad is unique, not because of his pronouncements about Israel, which he wishes wiped off the face of the Earth, but because he actively seeks to bring about an apocalyptic struggle between the righteous and the wicked to accelerate the return of the mahdi or Hidden Imam.

One might think that the prospect of U.S. or Israeli bombs raining down on Iran might sober this visionary. That would be a mistake. Khomeini actually incited war with Iraq in 1980, rejecting Saddam's offers of an armistice two

The Iranian loose cannon: The man to watch in 2007 is a fusion of apocalyptic piety and politics

years later. During the eight-year war, an enormous militia, called the Basij, was created under the aegis of the Revolutionary Guard. Boys age 12 to 17 were dispatched against the Iraqi army, each armed with a plastic key to paradise, manufactured in bulk in Taiwan. A ghostly pale rider occasionally appeared, whose phosphorous-painted face was supposed to be that of the Hidden Imam, to urge these suicide waves on. Mowing these children down - and perhaps as many as 100,000 were killed - was so traumatic that even battle-hardened Iraqi veterans declined to fire.

No Western-style commissions of inquiry have investigated these state-decreed mass suicides between 1980 and 1988. Instead, the Basij are celebrated, with the countenance of one 15-year-old suicide, who detonated himself against an Iraqi tank, evident in the watermark of 500 Rial bank notes.

The Basij have become part of Iran's morality police, poking into cars to sniff out drinkers or women wearing cosmetics, and this time last year cutting off the tongue of Massoud Osanlou, a bus driver who led a transport strike. These youths have also been recruited into a putative army of 54,000 potential suicide bombers, or into university science faculties to bolster Iran's "national security."

If Ahmadinejad and the Basij represent the apocalyptic strain in the Iranian Revolution, what of the so-called moderates, such as former president Hashemi Rafsanjani? Unfortunately, when Ahmadinejad uttered his nuclear threats against Israel, Rafsanjani remarked, "The application of an atomic bomb would not leave anything in Israel, but the same thing would just produce damage in the Muslim world," although he forbore to mention that the desired fate of Israel would be shared by much of Jordan, southern Lebanon and, above all, the Palestinians about whose plight Ahmadinejad and Rafsanjani are wont to emote.

How the West responds to these threats is an unavoidable question. It is likely that, within 12 months, Iran will complete the nuclear cycle needed to produce weapons grade uranium.

There are slight grounds for optimism. Because of Iran's Byzantine dual politico-religious power structures, Ahmadinejad is not in the same position as a Hitler or Saddam. Maybe wiser counsels will draw Iran back from the brink, if only because it would be a casualty of any war. That is why there is some point in exhausting every avenue of Western diplomacy. Given the lies told about WMD and Iraq, it might be that diplomacy will have to continue until Iran has tested a nuclear device, but before it achieves "weaponization." That calculation excludes the possibility of Iran supplying terrorist organizations with materials to construct a dirty bomb.

There is widespread resentment among Iranian students about the regime's interference in university life, many of the protests focused on Ahmadinejad himself. Many middle-class Iranians are fed up with having their tastes for whisky or satellite television curbed by interfering clerics, in a country that, despite the morality police, has two million heroin addicts.

So far, the international community has passed light sanctions, although whether these will deter German or Russian businessmen remains debatable. Stepped-up sanctions could deprive Iran of credit or damage its already creaking oil refining capacity. Meanwhile, U.S. warships will converge on the Persian Gulf while Israeli submarines practise firing missiles powerful enough to penetrate bunkers buried hundreds of metres underground.

One person will have brought the world to that epochal pass: the serenely smiling Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Graphic

Colour Photo: REUTERS; Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says Israel should be wiped off the face of the Earth.

The Iranian loose cannon: The man to watch in 2007 is a fusion of apocalyptic piety and politics

Load-Date: January 7, 2007

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Cornell U. students face risks overseas

University Wire

April 2, 2007 Monday

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Length: 1010 words

Byline: By Christine Ryu, Cornell Daily Sun; **SOURCE:** Cornell U.

Dateline: ITHACA, N.Y.

Body

Only one percent of students enrolled in higher-education programs choose to study abroad. At Cornell University, the number is significantly higher -- nearly one in five students choose to spend time studying outside of Ithaca. With 20 percent of Cornellians traveling to programs in nations from Japan to Ecuador, safety for students abroad has become a major issue.

According to Kristen Grace, associate director of the Cornell Abroad office, the study abroad field has seen huge growth in recent decades.

"Study abroad as we know it really came into being after World War Two," Grace said. "There was a realization that we really need to build international understanding."

This growth has led to an increased demand for comprehensive safety for students abroad.

Students who choose to study abroad are required to attend a pre-departure meeting conducted by the Cornell Abroad office.

"[The meeting] covers basic security and safety information, such as information the State Department puts out for travelers, good street-smarts and safety-awareness issues," Grace said.

Each student is also given a copy of the Student Abroad Safety Handbook, which touts itself as "the essential guide for Cornell University students going abroad." In addition to the general pre-departure meeting, the office also offers a series of recommended meetings that deal with areas from women's safety to issues specific to certain geographical regions.

Cornell Abroad works closely with the University to ensure safety for students studying abroad. Allen Bova, who works in the Risk Management department, said, "[the Risk Management office] plays a role relative to any emergencies abroad. ... We're also involved if there should be any emergency abroad relative to whatever response the University can make from Ithaca."

Although the University requires all students -- whether they are studying abroad or not -- to have health insurance, students who choose to go abroad are provided additional insurance through International SOS, a company that provides medical assistance and international healthcare for students abroad.

Cornell U. students face risks overseas

"We had a situation with an automobile accident that happened in Africa, we've had a situation with a serious medical incident in Europe. We had a student who had their passport and all of their money stolen -- we've had some serious incidents where we've had to rely on International SOS," Bova said.

When a student contacts International SOS while abroad, the company verifies the student's identity through the Risk Management office. Then, if necessary, it provides medical evacuation services for the student.

"One of the things that a lot of folks don't understand is that when we say medical evacuation, the goal is really to get you to a hospital that can provide you appropriate care. That may be going to a local hospital that can stabilize you before you're moved back to the States," Bova said.

International SOS maintains a list of appropriate clinics and runs clinics to provide those enrolled with what Bova described as "Western-style medicine anywhere in the world."

Upon arriving at a foreign university, students attend an orientation that deals with safety issues. "Issues [for students abroad] are similar to issues [for students in Ithaca], where big problems for students are automobile- and alcohol-related," Grace said.

The pre-departure meeting conducted by Cornell Abroad deals with these issues, and such issues are reiterated at each specific orientation. Since the majority of Cornell students study abroad through programs that are not directly run by the University, programs run either by other universities or by third-party study-abroad organizations, Cornell cannot provide safety personnel at every location. But at Cornell-run programs, including the popular Cornell in Rome program and the lesser-known Cornell Nepal Study Program, staff is available to deal with safety concerns.

According to Grace, the last major medical emergency abroad happened before Cornell began using International SOS. Medical evacuation services have been used to evacuate Cornell students in Nepal during the Nepalese civil war, a student in Africa with a broken leg, and over the past summer, when a student studying in Lebanon was evacuated during the conflict between Hezbollah and the Israeli military. The student purchased the medical evacuation independently, since Cornell does not run study-abroad programs over the summer.

In some cases, the potential safety risk of a country rules it out as a possible location for Cornell students to study abroad.

"Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and North Korea [come immediately to mind]," Bova said, but the safety of each country in question is examined before students are allowed to participate in programs there.

"There is a list of countries that are on the State Department's Travel Advisory list," he said. "When we have students or faculty -- we don't look at things differently for faculty -- we look very carefully at the specifics, what the programs are all about, and safety issues."

The most important part of safety for students abroad, Grace said, is maintaining a multi-faceted approach.

"You can't run a program in a country like Nepal unless you have a strong safety fabric locally and strong connections here."

To that end, a committee comprised of Bova, the vice provost for international relations, general counsel for the university, the dean of students and the head of the study abroad office reviews study abroad programs in State Department travel advisory countries.

"We're very accustomed to working together," Grace said.

Grace said that she advises students to become involved in their study abroad program as a way to both increase learning and safety.

Cornell U. students face risks overseas

"The more that students do to be part of the local culture, the more that helps them," she said. "The more integrated you are into the local culture, the more awareness you're going to have of what's safe and what's not safe, and the more likely you are to have people looking out for you."

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Load-Date: April 2, 2007

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Woman, 57, fulfils 'martyr' wish: Grandmother blows herself up in response to Israeli 'massacre'

Ottawa Citizen

November 24, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 957 words

Byline: Ken Ellingwood, The Los Angeles Times; with files from The Associated Press and Agence France-Presse

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Fighting in the Gaza Strip yesterday killed at least eight Palestinians, including a militant commander, as Israeli forces continued a drive to stop cross-border rocket attacks into southern Israel.

Amid the clashes, a 57-year-old Palestinian woman blew herself up near Israeli soldiers, slightly injuring three. The suicide bomber was identified by family members as Fatma al-Najar, a grandmother and member of the military wing of the ruling Hamas movement.

Female suicide bombers are relatively rare, and those older than 30 rarer still.

At the compound where her extended family lives near the Jebaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, her oldest daughter, Fatheya, explained the bomber's motives.

"They (Israelis) destroyed her house, they killed her grandson -- my son. Another grandson is in a wheelchair with an amputated leg," she said.

Another family member said Mrs. al-Najar, who left behind seven sons and two daughters, plus 41 grandchildren, said the suicide bombing was a direct response to the botched Israeli shelling in the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun that killed a family of 18, mostly **women** and children.

"She did this operation in response to the Beit Hanoun massacre. She was very moved by what happened," said Azhar, another daughter.

The Israeli army said the woman approached troops near the farming town of Beit Lahiya and set off the explosives after soldiers spotted her and hurled stun grenades to make her stop.

It was the second time in recent weeks that a **female** suicide bomber set off explosives near Israeli soldiers operating in northern Gaza. On Nov. 6, a woman blew herself up near soldiers during a raid in Beit Hanoun, lightly injuring one.

"I received the news with happiness. We are all proud of our mother. She was always hoping to be a martyr," said one of her sons, Fuad al-Najar, 32, as wellwishers handed out sweets and tossed flowers outside the family home.

Woman, 57, fulfils 'martyr' wish: Grandmother blows herself up in response to Israeli 'massacre'

The past few weeks have seen an increase in militant activity by women in Gaza, who have served as "human shields" defending the homes of militants that Israel has threatened to destroy.

Fatheyra said she and her mother had taken part in a rally at a Gaza mosque three weeks ago, where women defied a cordon of heavily armed Israeli troops to create a diversion for besieged Hamas fighters to slip away.

"She and I, we went to the mosque. We were looking for martyrdom," the daughter said.

Before setting out on her mission, Mrs. al-Najar filmed the video testament customary for suicide bombers. The video showed a petite woman wearing a white headscarf and black dress, toting an assault rifle on her shoulder and standing in front of a Hamas wall mural.

Reading from a sheet of paper, she dedicated her attack to the Hamas-led government and to the movement's military commander, Mohammed Deif.

Eight other Palestinians were killed yesterday. In Gaza, three militants from the Palestinian Resistance Committees were killed in an Israeli air strike on their car. The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades said one of its men, a 20-year-old, was killed in a clash. Two Hamas militants were killed in a gunbattle with Israeli forces, and another was shot dead as he was about to fire a rocket at Israel, the military said. Another man died of wounds in a Gaza hospital. It was not known whether he was a militant or a civilian.

Israeli military commanders have considered plans for a wide-scale incursion into Gaza to stem the rocket attacks into northern Israel, but a major offensive carries political risks for Israeli leaders and the possibility of high casualties on both sides.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has warned against expectations for a knockout blow against the rockets, which have killed two people in Sderot in the past nine days.

A failed offensive could further erode Mr. Olmert's popularity, already low after the summer's inconclusive war with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

Yesterday, Palestinian officials criticized the Israeli incursions into Gaza as a dangerous escalation.

"It's not enough for Israel to control every aspect of life in Gaza, it (seems it also) has to visit untold horrors on an imprisoned and embattled civilian population," said Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator. "This is a war crime that the international community must address."

The escalating violence added urgency to diplomatic efforts to defuse the conflict.

In one hopeful sign, the Damascus-based supreme leader of Hamas, Khaled Mashaal, began talks with Egyptian mediators in Cairo on a vital prisoner swap with Israel and formation of a Palestinian national unity government that could end months of crippling western aid sanctions.

No announcement was made after the talks between Mr. Mashaal and the chief of Egyptian intelligence, Omar Suleiman, Egypt's point man for the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

The capture in late June of an Israeli soldier by Hamas-linked militants set off the latest Israeli offensive in Gaza. Israel insists the soldier must be returned before other issues are discussed.

Hamas official Mussa Abu Marzouk said negotiations were centring on Israel's three-stage release of 1,400 Palestinian prisoners, including 400 children and women, in exchange for the soldier.

Mr. Mashaal, who is recognized as having the final say in Hamas, was expected to discuss prospects for replacing the current Hamas-led Palestinian cabinet with a more moderate coalition including President Mahmoud Abbas's more moderate Fatah party. Talks have been sputtering for months.

Woman, 57, fulfils 'martyr' wish: Grandmother blows herself up in response to Israeli 'massacre'

The West cut off funds to the Palestinian government in March, when Hamas took control after sweeping Fatah out of office in a parliamentary election. The U.S., Europe and Israel list Hamas as a terror group. A government with Fatah might satisfy western demands.

Graphic

Photo: Fatma al-Najar, a grandmother and member of the military wing of the ruling Hamas movement, is shown above in a 'martyr' video released by the Hamas media office after the woman blew herself up. 'She was always hoping to be a martyr,' said one of her sons.

Load-Date: November 24, 2006

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Why Muslims must rise up now and join the battle against extremism

The Times (London)

August 15, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 16

Length: 947 words

Byline: Shahid Malik

Body

ON FRIDAY last week I agreed to add my name to a letter to the Government from Oxfam, other non-governmental organisations and individuals to express, in the wake of the Middle East crisis, our commitment to the fundamental humanitarian principle that all innocent lives should be valued equally.

As has been made apparent to me over the past few days, the letter was open to several interpretations. It has never been my contention that the Government ought to change foreign policy because of terrorist threats within our borders. We must never be held to ransom by those who would deliberately shed innocent blood in the name of their cause. I firmly believe that justice, righteousness and national interest should be our policy compass. So when ministers such as Kim Howells and Douglas Alexander argue that "no government worth its salt would allow any policy to be dictated by threats of terror", we are at one.

I doubt if many would question my commitment to fighting terrorism. I have vociferously argued, ever since it was revealed that the leader of the 7/7 bombers was my constituent, that no policy, domestic or foreign, can ever justify or excuse British-born Muslims strapping on suicide belts.

Yes, foreign policy causes anger among many British Muslims but this does not in itself cause terrorism. Unquestionably, the lethal ingredient is a twisted, perverted interpretation of Islam whereby you can legitimately kill yourself and other innocent people, and you will go to Heaven.

The notion that you change foreign policy to save civilian lives in, say, Lebanon, or Palestine, by slaying innocent men, women or children in the UK or US is perverse and profoundly abhorrent. Furthermore, all it does is create tremendous misery for the overwhelming majority of Muslims who reject the terrorist ideology.

On a recent visit to the US, I was shocked to learn that tens of thousands of Muslims left their adopted country after 9/11 -with more planning to continue the exodus because of increased domestic hostility. Even in Britain, fear has propelled some Muslims to build homes abroad, just in case.

While being tough on terrorists, however, the Government should be flexible enough to listen to those who have genuine policy concerns. Today I, along with other Muslim MPs, will discuss with John Prescott some of the challenges ahead. The Prime Minister has also indicated that he is willing to meet those with concerns.

This is the way forward. Any British Muslims who are in disagreement with foreign policy must follow the path of others by exercising their right as citizens to influence policy through the established route: that is, by engaging in the political process.

Why Muslims must rise up now and join the battle against extremism

In this world of indiscriminate terrorist bombings, where Muslims are just as likely to be victims of terrorism as other British and US citizens, we have an equal stake in fighting extremism. But more importantly, given that these acts are carried out in our name (Islam), we have a greater responsibility, not merely to condemn but to confront. As an MP for the constituency with the country's highest BNP vote, I strongly believe that the BNP will only be defeated by white people taking leadership. Likewise, Muslims themselves must take the lead if we are to defeat the extremism within.

With the exception of a very few, mosques in Britain are extremely vigilant about who and what they allow on to their platforms. The greater danger is now posed in the virtual world, by the preachers of hatred accessible on the internet and based virtually anywhere, ever ready to prey on the angry and frustrated.

As I said to some 500 Muslims in a hall in Leeds on Saturday, a whole year on from the heinous acts of 7/7, the Muslim community has not yet risen to the challenge presented by extremism in its ranks. This was depressingly laid bare by a recent Times poll that stated that 13 per cent of British Muslims believed that the 7/7 attackers were martyrs.

And foreign policy issues are undoubtedly a factor in formulating such beliefs.

Is it a sane response to kill more than 1,000 civilians in Lebanon -mainly women and children -for the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers (not forgetting the 40 or so civilians killed by Hezbollah rockets)? The answer is unequivocally "no".

And that's before we even touch on Kashmir and Palestine, both of which have UN resolutions 59 and 39 years old respectively with no international will to deliver justice to these people. It is this perception of double standards that fuels anger and hatred and has single-handedly served to undermine our counter extremism arguments.

As a Muslim I believe that there is no better place in the world to live than Britain. After 7/7 we expected a backlash against Muslims but it didn't really materialise. Yet had 7/7 taken place in Pakistan and the perpetrators done it in the name of Christianity, how many Christians, one year later, would be dead? Ten or 100 or perhaps 1,000? A real-life analogy in that region came in 2002 when some 50 Hindus died on a train in Gujarat. What was the response? Some 3,000 Muslims were butchered, hundreds of women raped, businesses and homes looted and razed to the ground.

The freedoms and lifestyle we enjoy here cannot be matched in either the Muslim or non-Muslim world, but they do demand a price. Despite accusations of "sell out", a barrage of hate mail and the compromising of my personal safety, I would still support the Government's anti-terror legislation, including the 90-day pre charge maximum detention period.

For British Muslims the fight against extremism is not just for the very soul of Islam but for the freedoms we enjoy as Britons.

* Shahid Malik is Labour MP for Dewsbury

Load-Date: August 15, 2006

World turns a blind eye to the suffering of Palestinians

Western Mail

November 8, 2006, Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 20

Length: 1011 words

Body

Hours before, I had been in Gaza to see the situation at first hand. The start of the Israeli bombing cut short our visit. But I saw enough to recognise that Gaza has been turned into a giant prison camp full of despair and suffering.

I visited Israel and Palestine with 11 other MEPs to monitor the current situation. One clear message came through wherever we went: Palestinian public services were on the verge of collapse and life for Palestinian people was becoming unbearable.

Any doubt that Gaza is under siege was dispelled by the experience of crossing the Erez border point from Israel into Gaza. You have to pass through Israel to get into Palestine because the Palestinian airports have been closed by Israel. We were kept waiting over an hour for our passports to be checked. But compared with the treatment of the Palestinian people, our experience was straightforward. While we waited, a woman arrived with a toddler and baby, to be told she would have to wait there at least four hours for her pass. There was no problem with her application but it would take that long. This kind of intimidation is unacceptable.

When we arrived in Jerusalem on October 27 our first meeting was with the European Commission and consular representatives to get background information. Israel had illegally stopped the transfer of pounds 600m of customs dues on Palestinian own goods - two thirds of the Palestinian budget. Withholding this money has created massive financial crisis.

The European Union (EU) decided this year not to channel aid through the Palestinian government. Instead it set up a Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) to administer funding. Direct allowances are being given to the poorest - about 35,000 people, mostly women.

This has led to terrible scenes of people queuing on the streets to get meagre handouts. While emergency measures are needed in an emergency situation, creating dependence on EU payments is not helping the Palestinians to govern themselves nor rebuild their economy and 66% of families live below the poverty line.

On Saturday 28 we met members of the Palestinian Legislative Council from all parties. We were reminded that of their 132 MPs, democratically elected in January, 41 have been abducted by Israel. They are in prison, including members of the government and the speaker of the Council. None had been charged nor put on trial.

World turns a blind eye to the suffering of Palestinians

Negotiations were still under way in Palestine on forming a 'unity government' between the parties to negotiate with Israel and the international community. A document outlining a national minimum programme had been drawn up. All parties agreed on the need for this unity government and the need to make progress very quickly.

The other proposal that had unanimous support was the call for an international peace conference. With the 40th anniversary of the Israeli occupation of Palestine approaching next June, it is essential that the international community stops turning a blind eye and takes action to resolve the crisis.

The need for urgent action was also highlighted by our meeting with the union of public sector workers. 165,000 government employees have not been paid for seven months. The Palestinian public sector is on the edge of collapse. Banks have stopped all loans because they are already owed millions with little prospect of repayment.

Everywhere we went we saw different aspects of the same crisis. The Israeli wall had stolen 14,000 hectares of Palestinian land and isolated 50 of their groundwater wells. One million olive trees had been uprooted by Israel to make way for the wall. We met Palestinian farmers in Jerusalem who were unable to harvest their olives because they were prevented by soldiers or actually came under attack from Israeli settlers. Olives comprise 25% of the total agricultural income. The British Government talks about helping build the institutions of a future Palestinian state. Those institutions are being destroyed as you read this article. No one is stepping in to prevent Israel from continuing its aggression and the abuse of the human rights of the Palestinian people. That is why I will join other MEPs in calling on the European Union to suspend its trade agreement with Israel until Israel respects international agreements and United Nations resolutions. Jill Evans is Plaid Cymru MEP for Wales: Consequences of aggression: Touring Wadi Nisnas in Haifa brought home the consequences of military aggression. We saw the damage done to houses and areas where houses had been completely destroyed. Fifty Hezbollah rockets hit Haifa during the recent conflict and most found their targets, although fortunately none had hit any of the petrochemical industries located in Haifa. Thirty-nine people in Israel were killed by rockets, 46% of them Arabs. Yet only 30% of the emergency government fund was allocated to Arab areas where there were fewer bomb shelters.

Speaking to local residents, we heard of the terror and learned that three days after the war started 1,500 people had marched on the streets for peace. One woman told us how they had to send food to the Israeli soldiers in Lebanon who didn't even have the proper equipment. People were very angry at the cost of the war and this issue was high on the political agenda.: 'A slow death': At Shifa Hospital in Gaza we met the Palestinian Minister of Health together with medical staff working under the most difficult conditions. Since the money had been stopped in April this year, vaccination, school health programmes and pregnancy care had also stopped. After the bombing of the power plant in June the hospital had relied on borrowed emergency generators. Interrupted current flows had resulted in damage to equipment like renal dialysis machines and several were unusable. The Minister estimated that more than 70 children - mostly leukaemia sufferers - had died as a result of the siege. The occupation and siege had caused physical and psychological scarring. In the words of one of the surgeons '...the whole Palestinian population has been condemned to a slow death'.

Load-Date: November 8, 2006

Police investigate Khatami as St Andrews honours him

The Sunday Times (London)

October 29, 2006

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Section: HOME NEWS; Scotland News; Pg. 12

Length: 927 words

Byline: Mark Macaskill and Mary Braid

Body

THE former Iranian president, Mohammad Khatami, faces possible police questioning when he arrives in Britain this week to accept an honorary degree from St Andrews University.

The Metropolitan police confirmed they are investigating complaints lodged by two Iranian exiles who say they were falsely imprisoned and tortured under Khatami's regime. The two men, Safa Einollahi, 29, and Ali Ebrahimi, 34, told police that as president, Khatami, was responsible for the atrocities.

They want him arrested under the 1988 Criminal Justice Act, which allows for any individual, regardless of nationality, to be arrested for carrying out, condoning or colluding in crimes of torture anywhere in the world.

Khatami has been invited to open a new centre for Iranian studies on the Fife campus. He was to have been presented with an honorary doctorate by Sir Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat leader who is also the university's chancellor.

However, Campbell has pulled out of the engagement. While the official explanation is that he wants to attend the impeachment debate called by the SNP leader Alex Salmond, senior Lib Dem sources indicated that he has come under pressure to distance himself from the former Iranian leader.

His decision follows the publication of a letter signed by 12 parliamentarians, including Lord Waddington, a former Tory home secretary, Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, a former lord advocate in Scotland, Baroness Harris and Lord Russell-Johnston, both Lib Dem peers, urging Brian Lang, the university principal, to cancel the visit.

"I can't believe the university has been so dumb. The treatment by the Iranian regime of women, in particular, is unspeakable," said Lord Fraser. "They hanged a 16-year-old girl in public; her crime was holding hands in public with her boyfriend. They attached her to a noose and a lorry lifted her off the ground.

"I know there has been real influence brought to bear on Ming by his party not to meet this man. I am sure Ming is extremely happy that he doesn't have to present the honorary degree. I heard it was put to him, 'How could you touch this bloodied hand?'"

The choice of Khatami as an honoured guest has prompted strong criticism by a diverse group that includes exiled Iranians, the Israeli government, politicians and students. Khatami has also praised Hezbollah, likening the Lebanese terror group, to a "shining sun that warms up all oppressed Muslims".

Police investigate Khatami as St Andrews honours him

"They pretend that Khatami was a 'moderate' when he ruled and in comparison to his successor (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad) he was, but that is like describing Himmler as a moderate compared to Hitler," said Struan Stevenson, the Conservative MEP.

"Khatami presided over the torture and execution of thousands of opponents of his brand of Islamic fanaticism. Public hangings, stoning to death, amputations, eye-gouging and floggings became the currency of the Khatami presidency.

"(His) presence in Scotland would be an insult to freedom, democracy and human rights."

Einollahi, who now lives in London, says he was arrested in July 2003 after attending a student rally in Tehran.

"I was left blindfolded for eight hours in a room so tiny that I couldn't move," he told The Sunday Times. "Then I was interrogated by two agents who wanted the names of my activist friends. They beat me until I passed out. I was left bleeding and injured for a day in a cell with no light.

"Then the torturers came back and I was interrogated and beaten all over again.

When I was returned to the cell this time, I was bleeding so much it covered the cell floor. This went on and on. And all the time, I could hear screaming from other cells as people were being tortured."

A report prepared by his GP reveals how his torturers repeatedly thrust batons and bottles into his rectum in their attempts to break him. It says that he is awaiting surgery for a complete prolapse and loss of bowel control. There are other enduring physical injuries but the GP also emphasises the terrible psychological damage.

It is revealed that he is being treated with anti-depressants for anxiety because he still suffers from nightmares and has flashbacks of his time in the blood-splattered torture chamber. He frequently has suicidal thoughts and his GP, who concludes he is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, is trying to find him a psychiatrist.

Ebrahimi says he was arrested in 1999 for attending a "sit-in" protest at Iran's Shiraz university over the government's treatment of students. During his six-month imprisonment, he says he was strung up, whipped across the soles of his feet with thick cables and beaten with batons. One guard used pliers to wrench a nail from his finger. Another forced a bottle into his rectum.

"I feared for my life. They threatened me with the end, they said nobody knew where I was, nobody could do anything. I didn't know if it was day or night. I thought I would be executed. But somehow I survived.

"I feel I have been born again in Britain. I want to use my freedom of speech in Britain to speak out against what is happening to my people in Iran.

"It is unbelievable that the UK government is laying out the red carpet at Khatami's feet. He should be arrested by the British authorities and put on trial for what he has done."

A spokesman for the university said the decision to invite Khatami was based on his "vision and willingness to change". "Khatami's invitation is not about the past, it is about a desire to enable a better future by expressing a willingness to talk. If he is brave enough to seek dialogue, we ought to have the courage to respond."

Load-Date: November 10, 2006

Why the terrorists want to destroy you

The Sun (England)

September 1, 2006 Friday

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Section: BE AFRAID: HERE'S BEST REASON FOR WAR ON TERROR; OPINION

Length: 988 words

Byline: Dr Walid Phares, academic, adviser to President Bush and author of Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against The West

Body

IN the five years since the terror attacks of 9/11, Walid Phares has been consistently consulted by high-ranking US officials to explain who the jihadists are and to help the West prepare for what may come. Walid's study of the phenomenon of jihad -or Islamic struggle -for more than 25 years has enabled him to translate the intentions, justifications and goals of the terrorists who are determined to defeat America and her allies.

Here, he answers critical questions including: Who are the people who want to destroy the West and why do they want to hurt us?

Jihad: The masterplan

SINCE September 11 in New York, March 11 in Madrid and July 7 in London, questions have been forming among a stunned public -why do these people hate us, who are they and what do they want?

As someone who studied the jihadist movement for a quarter of a century on three continents, I find the questions indicate a greater drama -how can societies targeted for a systematic and global warfare by terrorist forces operating in the open for at least two decades be asking questions about their identification?

Instead, the Americans, British and Spanish should ask how the jihadists were able to strike successfully, how long they have been able to infiltrate democratic societies and who is helping them do it.

The real question is this -why are most British citizens, let alone Europeans and Westerners, lost about who the enemy is? How come they aren't able to see clearly, and who is blurring their vision and how?

Ironically, the debate about these concepts is raging in the West, on its university campuses and in its media, but not elsewhere.

Thus it is within Europe and other democracies that the real war of ideas is happening.

And as I have made the case for years, it is about the public being able, or enabled by those qualified, to learn about the root causes, the identity and strategies of the groups claiming jihadism and acting violently on behalf of this ideology.

What do they want?

Why the terrorists want to destroy you

THE terrorists who have been conducting suicide attacks, producing videos calling for violence and recruiting more terrorists among a radicalised pool of youth are acting on behalf of an old, sophisticated and totalitarian ideology, with long-range strategic objectives -jihadism, or al Jihadiya.

These jihadists aren't born overnight, nor are they an automatic response to state policies so far as -according to their own texts, chatrooms, books and ideologues -indoctrinated militants who have been made to believe that by killing and being killed, they are fulfilling a higher divine mission.

It is not about British policies so much as Russians, Indians, Americans, Spaniards, Arabs and all those who do not bow to the ultimate goal of "the return of the caliphate and its dominance of humanity".

These aren't some Star Wars movie themes but speeches delivered from Hyde Park to Osama's hideout.

In short, the jihadists believe in an ideology that wants to reshape the West's "evil world", particularly its most liberal, secular and democratic dimensions.

The ultimate worst enemies of the jihadists aren't Bush, Blair and Putin, but a new generation of Muslims opposed to fundamentalism in Tehran, Khartoum and beyond. Their war in the West is in fact a tool to obstruct the rise to freedom for women, minorities and youth in the Middle East and the Islamic world.

Evidence abounds from Morocco to Afghanistan.

Who are they?

THE jihadists borrowed heavily from what they claim is or was religion, while in fact they created an all-out ideology.

They shielded themselves by filling an immense gap created by the crushing of liberal Arabs and Muslims at the hands of dictatorships in the Middle East.

There are two "trees" of jihadism -the Salafists, who want a renewed caliphate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The other "tree" is the followers of Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran and their extension Hezbollah -they want to establish an imamate, competitive with the Salafists.

While described wrongly by Western observers as mere extremists and frustrated violent groups, in fact they are radical and have a very long-term strategic patience.

They have survived World War II, the Cold War, thought they had defeated the Soviets and methodically moved to finish off the other "infidels".

Strategies and tactics

THE main feature of the jihadists is their amazing ability to placate the societies - principally democratic -which they target.

Experts in political camouflage and students of both Islamic and Western institutions, they have carried out a long-term infiltration of societies on both sides of the Mediterranean using the appropriate means.

The fundamentalist militants skilfully use the legal protections provided by liberal democracies to insert themselves within ethnic communities and use democracies to shield their ideology in a robe of religion.

Their major success has been to mass "dis-educate" the public, hence they abuse collective tolerance as they convert their doctrines into the so-called "political correctness".

The latter is proportional to the public's awareness -the fewer citizens who know about this "ideology", the more the radicals have a free ride.

Why the terrorists want to destroy you

Hence it is crucial for the British and others around the world to learn as quickly as possible about the real "factory" producing the bombs.

Not the warehouses themselves, but the set of ideas that ideologues have been able to implant in the minds of many in this generation and are about to instill in the next.

In short, Muslim democrats in particular and informed British in general are the answer to future jihad.

Dr Walid Phares is the author of Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against The West. He is a visiting scholar at the European Foundation for Democracy and a Senior Fellow with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

futurejihad.com.Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against The West is published by Palgrave Macmillan, from £ 7 at bookshops.

The Sun Says -Page Six

Load-Date: September 1, 2006

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Fantasist Blair has bankrupted himself on the world stage

Yorkshire Post

August 7, 2006

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Length: 997 words

Body

Dr Eric Grove is director of the Centre for International Security and War Studies at the University of Salford.

IT has been another significant week for Tony Blair's foreign policy. On Tuesday, we had the speech in the United States (where else?) where the Prime Minister called for "a renaissance of our strategy to defeat those who threaten us".

It ended with Britain's humiliating exclusion from US-French discussions drawing up a Security Council resolution on Lebanon - an exclusion that no amount of dramatic delay to holiday plans in London could disguise. These two developments are not isolated. Indeed, they demonstrate why Mr Blair has bankrupted himself on the world stage.

In a rousing speech, that no doubt went down well with his transatlantic audience, Blair painted a picture of a worldwide conflict between good and evil, between "Reactionary Islam" and a "Modern Mainstream Islam" allied with the West. Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Chechnya and other conflicts were all "part of the same thing" - a worldwide struggle to defeat the Islamists and convert the world to a Western version of democracy.

Osama bin Laden must have nodded his head in approval and, perhaps, a little wonder that his strategy had succeeded so well. He had hoped that 9/11 would create perceptions of a global struggle between Islam and the West.

The trouble is that the world is a lot more complicated than the vision from Downing Street. The different conflicts around Blair's "arc of extremism" are not one and the same, despite the best efforts of the policy-makers in the White House, Number 10 and the Afghan caves to make them such.

Chechnya is a struggle about contending nationalisms; Iraq about a nation humiliated by a foreign occupation and conquest that has destroyed internal stability and order; Afghanistan about traditional nationalist opposition to any foreign invader; and Lebanon and Gaza about the fundamental Arab-Israeli dispute that has poisoned the Middle East since 1917.

But then Blair does not like his vision to be diluted with knowledge. When recently questioned about the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979, he needed to be reminded what it was. The Prime Minister's views on the origins of the Second World War, that it was fought when the world decided to do something about Nazi persecution of the Jews, would also not gain him many marks in a history examination. The way in which professional and regional advice was deliberately ignored before the invasion of Iraq was bound to lead to the chaos that has ensued.

Blair's speech showed a remarkable inability to learn from his own experience. He seemed positively to welcome the union of secular and religious anti-Westernism in the Middle East. Such divisions, that could be exploited by skilful diplomacy, do not fit his over-simplified analysis. Secular Syria and theocratic Iran were together threatened

Fantasist Blair has bankrupted himself on the world stage

with confrontation "if they did not come into the international community". This is hardly going to help in a conflict that Blair claims to be about "inspiring people, persuading them, showing what our values at their best stand for". Currently, to most in the Arab and wider Muslim world, those values stand for the destructive and murderous application of vastly superior military power. This is no way to win "hearts and minds".

Blair's problem is even more serious than strategic confusion. His fundamental objectives, greater "democracy" and the defeat of "reactionary Islam", are incompatible. Given the state of opinion in most of the Muslim world, largely confirmed by Anglo-American actions since 9/11, democracy means victory at the polls for the supporters of the ideas and connections that Mr Blair deprecates.

Never has "reactionary Islam" been more powerful than it is in post-invasion Iraq, as the plight of Iraqi women testifies. Also, Western actions in Iraq have done more in the region to confirm Islamist Iranian power than the opposite, something made clear by the vocal support given by the "liberated" Iraqis to their Hezbollah co-religionists in Lebanon.

In many places, the price of defeating the Islamists is political authoritarianism, slowly mellowing over time into a more democratic system that has roots in Islam rather than Islington, and respects the very different values of a foreign culture. It is extraordinary that Iraq has not demonstrated more clearly the futility of trying to impose democracy by force from the outside. Mr Blair seems to inhabit a kind of "post-modern" fantasy world where his media-driven "hyper reality" shuts out the complexities of the real world and where empty rhetoric substitutes for policy. He is right to argue that the essence of counter-terrorism is a campaign for hearts and minds, but he offers no practical initiatives to reclaim the Arab, and wider Muslim, street, be it in Blackburn, Beirut or Basra.

Indeed, Blair's backing for the Israeli bombing of Lebanon has done untold harm to Britain's reputation in the Muslim world and its wider diplomatic leverage. As the only ally clearly to align with the USA and Israel in this conflict, there was no way Blair could play the honest broker, even by "just talking" as he suggested to his master in the infamous overheard "Yo Blair" conversation. Even as the Blair vision was being evangelically expressed to his American public, the British at the UN were being informed that their close identification with the USA over Iraq made it inappropriate that they should be seen as independent contributors to the ceasefire talks.

Such is the price of ignoring the difficult realities of international politics. Questions are always complex; morality always murky. Mr Blair's speech showed too little sign of a real change of approach or a move away from Mr Bush's neo-conservative "War on Terror" agenda. The hubristic certainties and ideological fantasies of the Prime Minister simply do not correspond to difficult and complex realities. No wonder so few outside the USA listen to him any more.

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

A Journeyman's Most Harrowing Trip

The New York Times

August 11, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section D; Column 1; Sports Desk; Pg. 1; Sports of The Times

Length: 912 words

Byline: By HARVEY ARATON

E-mail: hjaraton@nytimes.com

Body

THE bus was old, hot, cramped and slow as a herniated snail. A ride that should have taken 3 to 4 hours took a harrowing 13.

An international journey embarked on more than a quarter century ago, ignited by a young boy's fascination with round objects, mainly a basketball and the globe, took an unscheduled detour last month through a Middle East war zone.

"Only the most optimistic person alive would have called it intimate," that boy, now 57, said earlier this week during a telephone interview from a hastily arranged sanctuary in Amman, Jordan. Meet Paul Coughter, coach of the Lebanese national basketball team and citizen of the world, by way of Flatbush, Brooklyn.

Meet the American who engineered his players' escape from the mountains outside besieged Beirut, through a convoluted and imperiled passage north, to Syria, then south, to Amman, on the way to the World Championship of Basketball beginning next week in Japan.

"The crisis began five days after we started our training camp," Coughter said. "After two days, we sent the players home to be with their families. Then we realized if we didn't get out, we never would.

"I think we got the last bus in Lebanon. We were in our own mini-world, trying to block out everything, barely anything to eat, stopping at gas stations, places where people would say, 'Ten minutes ago, a bomb landed over there.' They'd say, 'Look at that, it's still smoldering,' and then we're back on the bus, trying to convince ourselves that because one had already landed, it couldn't happen again."

Do you think Larry Brown has had a peripatetic career? Over 27 years, Coughter has coached on six continents, has stalked professional sidelines from Australia to Saudi Arabia to Taiwan, has also run the national teams of South Africa, Pakistan and Wales.

Do you believe Brown faced prohibitive odds with last season's Knicks? Coughter's manager and trainer both stayed behind last month to tend to their families, and his American-born center, Paul Khoury, was marooned in Idaho, unable to renew his Lebanese visa, when the Beirut airport was bombed. His best player, Fadi El Khatib, wouldn't leave the country unless there was room on the bus -- which was made -- for his wife and young child.

A Journeyman's Most Harrowing Trip

Want to hear the N.B.A. soldiers of fortune whine about the wider lane and mysterious refs when the Lebanese are dealing with the rules of war? For a team with aspirations normally no more grandiose than winning a game or two at the gathering of the world's basketball powers, there have been scant practices and serious sleep deprivation and incalculable stress.

Even Coughter, the globetrotting bachelor, the avowed adventurer who promises to retire soon and sail the world for the rest of his years on a custom-built yacht, called this latest chapter of A Coach's Life "beyond bizarre."

Lucky for him, he has never evaluated his career by the number of championships won, by the size of his paycheck. Ask for personal highlights and he tells of exploring an exotic island in New Zealand, of bunking with a Chinese family in Zimbabwe, of sipping coffee while gazing at the Mediterranean from the balcony of his most current address, the Zouk Hotel, 20 minutes from Beirut.

Coughter was born into a large Irish Catholic, basketball-loving Brooklyn family, his father having played at Erasmus Hall High School and his older brother for Joe Mullaney at Providence College. He remembers launching his first shot from his father's shoulders in Prospect Park, learning the game and using it to facilitate the ultimate road trip.

"It's like Larry Bird once said: 'Don't tell anyone, but I'd do this for free,' " Coughter said. "For me, the whole thing is experiential."

How else to describe the itinerary, from Lebanon to Syria to Jordan to Turkey to Slovenia, back to Jordan, on the way to the Philippines this week and then Japan to, as Coughter put it, "carry the Lebanese flag at a time the country needs to be seen"?

When the United States is perceived in the Middle East to be the power behind the invading Israelis, here is an American at a helm, with an Iraqi assistant, Koussay Hatem, who is married to a Lebanese woman and said in a telephone interview that he "must call home three, four, five times a day to see if everyone is O.K."

In every direction is a political tinderbox that a wise and wandering Yankee, dependent on the kindness and employment of strangers, knows enough to leave alone. As Coughter said, "One of my best friends in Beirut is from a family that is Hezbollah. We talk about basketball and women."

On the road, the Lebanese players and even Joseph Vogel, an American who has played professionally in the country long enough to become nationalized, discuss the war, but mostly as it relates to the future beyond Japan.

"The way it's going right now, who knows if Lebanon will even be open when the world championships are over?" said Vogel, a former player at Colorado State. "For me, it's a career at stake. For most of these guys, it's a country."

The coach recommends focus on the task at hand, on the journey, always the journey.

Coughter, in fact, will leave Japan the day after the last game to meet the country's junior team, which he also coaches, for the Asian championships. He will take three flights to reach a Chinese city near the Mongolian border. The way things are going in Lebanon, he may not get paid, but don't tell anyone, he'd do it for free.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

A Journeyman's Most Harrowing Trip

Photo: Paul Coughter, center, with the Lebanese team during a game in Amman, Jordan, on Tuesday. He has coached on six continents. (Photo by Nader Daoud/Associated Press)

Load-Date: August 11, 2006

End of Document

Ideals become casualties of war

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

August 14, 2006 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Opinion; Pg. 11

Length: 985 words

Byline: Paul Sheehan

Body

A minority causes collateral damage to the way we live.

ONE of the edges of the global clash between Muslims and the rest is a bottle shop in a small and ratty shopping mall in western Sydney. The owner of the bottle shop is suffering low-level but steady harassment from his neighbours, who want him gone. He's a Christian who has been told repeatedly: "This is a Muslim area," and he is selling alcohol, which is proscribed by Islam.

The one-hour parking zone outside the bottle shop is always occupied because local Muslims leave their cars there all day. The owner has written to the local council to complain, and nothing has been done. He does not want to be identified because he fears retribution. His reaction is sensible.

A friend of mine, Jenny D, used to live in Lakemba. She began receiving insults from people in the street, usually Muslim women wearing headscarves, and sometimes Muslim men. If she wore a short skirt, she could expect abuse or comment. She left Lakemba. Soon after, I moved to America, stayed away for 10 years, and thought nothing more of her story. But after I came back to Sydney I found Jenny's experience had been part of a larger pattern.

One particularly strong witness to this pattern was Judith, who managed an agency helping war widows, because she encountered "dozens" of cases where people were harassed by Muslim neighbours who wanted them gone. "It was common," she told me. "A lot of these ladies couldn't take it and moved out. It happened in Campsie, Belmore, Lakemba, Bankstown, Punchbowl ...

"It was everything ... throwing rubbish over the fence, screaming abuse, blocking the driveway, knocking fences down. One guy would throw coffee grains on the windows and bottles on the roof late at night ... I confronted some of them, and the men would call me a lot of names, mostly in Arabic."

Our Western multiracial ideals have been assaulted yet again this week, via the plan by Islamic jihadists to commit mass murder by blowing up airliners flying out of Heathrow Airport. Even in failure, the plot is producing immense collateral damage in disruption, fear and suspicion.

The collateral damage is particularly severe among the proverbial people "of Middle Eastern appearance". Apart from the majority of Muslims who are just trying to get on with the normalcy of live-and-let-live, most Australians do not appear to realise that the majority of immigrants from the Middle East are not Muslim but Christian. The

Ideals become casualties of war

harassed operator of the bottle shop, for instance, is an Arab Christian. The Maronite, Catholic and Orthodox Christians from Lebanon, the Christian Palestinians and Iraqis, and Coptics from Egypt, collectively outnumber Muslim immigrants from the Middle East in Australia.

This majority of Middle Eastern immigrants have been innocent bystanders in the cultural tensions in Sydney since the Cronulla riot and self-styled "intifada" that followed it in December. They are experiencing collateral damage just as Lebanon itself is suffering as Israel uses a sledgehammer on Hezbollah and Shiite Muslims, while causing enormous suffering to the Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims who had largely run Lebanon in partnership for many decades.

Anyone who traces the growth of problems in Sydney involving Muslims who began arriving from the Lebanese civil war in the 1970s and 1980s must encounter a two-way street, though you would never know it from most reporting. Not just the failure of government policies, high unemployment, and Australian distrust, but numerous episodes of racism or aggressive insularity that arrived as part of the cultural baggage of some refugees. The open contempt some Muslims have for non-Muslims is a common thread throughout the world where Muslims communities rub against the kafirs, or non-believers.

This is especially so in Britain, where Western liberalism, freedom and the rule of law have been used as tools to help make it an operational centre of global jihad. A report by British intelligence estimates a quarter of the 1.6 million Muslims living in Britain support jihad at least somewhere in the world.

It is a place where fanatical intolerance hides in plain sight. On February 3, between 500 and 700 men marched from the Regent's Park mosque to the Danish embassy in Knightsbridge to protest against the publication of cartoons deemed insulting to Islam. Demonstrators carried posters stating "Exterminate those who slander Islam", "Be prepared for the REAL holocaust", "Massacre those who insult Islam" and "Behead those who insult Islam".

No arrests were made. As a senior Scotland Yard officer explained after complaints by several British MPs: "We have to take the overall nature of the protesters into account. If they are overheated and emotional we don't go in. It's a risk assessment. If we went in to arrest one person with a banner the crowd would turn on us and people would get hurt."

The chairman of the Muslim Public Affairs Committee, Asghar Bukhari, said this demonstration should have been stopped by police. "The protesters did not represent British Muslims," he told the BBC. "The placards and chants were disgraceful and disgusting. Muslims do not feel that way. I condemn them without reservation."

But he didn't have to confront the mob. Police in Sydney reached a similar conclusion in December, as an incident report prepared by Bankstown police made clear: "On the evening of 12/12/05 numerous vehicles were sighted congregating in the vicinity of Punchbowl Park situated on Rose Street, Punchbowl. These vehicles and the crowd that had gathered were suspected to be Middle Eastern criminals who have been involved in malicious damage and civil disobedience offences throughout the Sutherland Shire and St George areas. A direction was given to police about midnight not to enter the area and antagonise these persons."

The armed and dangerous enemies of tolerance were hiding in plain sight.

Graphic

DRAWING: Michael Mucci

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Ideals become casualties of war

End of Document

Muslim world's great divide

The Toronto Star

November 21, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A05

Length: 976 words

Byline: Olivia Ward, Toronto Star

Body

On the eve of the American invasion of Iraq, the ancient city of Karbala was awash in Shia pilgrims, the black robes of the women sending up sprays of dust. And the language that prevailed in the street of the second-holiest shrine of Islam was not Arabic, but Farsi - the language of Iraq's neighbour, and often bitter enemy, Iran.

"It's true we fought a war and we all suffered terribly," said Zainab Emami, an Iranian woman with a deeply lined face and startlingly blue eyes. "But as Shiites there are no boundaries between us. Only the politicians have tried to divide us."

Her words were prophetic. For the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq has evoked both old and new divisions, turning the country into an earthquake zone, with aftershocks rebounding throughout the Middle East.

"When the U.S. government defeated Saddam Hussein it helped to set in motion a Shiite revival that will upset the sectarian balance in Iraq, and in the region, for many years to come," says Vali Nasr, author of *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*.

As Iraq's Shiite majority struggles for power it has long been denied, nearby Lebanon emerges from a war with Israel that has also torn open old wounds, with the Hezbollah militia staking a new claim to speak for the country's Shiite majority.

Aided by Iran, Shiites are seeking power, and changing the landscape of Sunni domination for the first time in decades. It is a landscape that Iran increasingly influences, through the radical regime of the ambitious Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"It is important for the Iranian regime to fulfill its political agenda in the Middle East by connecting all the Shia groups to each other," says Mehdi Khalaji, a visiting fellow of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and former seminarian at Qom, the centre of Iran's clerical establishment. "The destiny of the Shiites is connected to the destiny of Iran."

The colonial carve-up of the Middle East strengthened the hand of the Sunnis, with an Arabian ruler, King Faisal, on the throne of Iraq. In Saudi Arabia, the extremist Saud clan founded a royal dynasty that has entrenched Wahhabism in the country and exported it throughout the region, marginalizing the Shiite minority.

Iran's large Shia population fell under the influence of the West, after a coup that restored the Shah in 1953. But the Islamic revolution that followed 26 years later, under the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, radicalized Iran's leadership and established a strict religious regime.

Muslim world's great divide

Sunni leaders of the surrounding countries viewed it as a threat, and hardened their attitudes to Shiites as well as tightening their political control. The U.S. strengthened its alliances with Sunni leaders to combat a feared Iranian influence. When Iraq won the catastrophic Iran-Iraq War, with losses totalling more than 1 million overall, Sunni power in the region was consolidated.

Now, experts say that is beginning to unravel. Iraq's meltdown into chaos and sectarian violence is part of a power struggle rather than a religious war, they point out. But the balance of Sunni-Shia power in the region has been jolted, something Shia moderates, who are in the vast majority, say is overdue - and regional leaders fear will endanger their regimes.

"When the ethnic-religious break occurs in one country, it will not fail to occur elsewhere too," Syrian President Bashar Assad told Germany's weekly Der Spiegel.

Already changes are surfacing. Shiites in Saudi Arabia have turned out to the polls in record numbers, following the Iraq invasion. Those in Lebanon and Bahrain are feeling a new sense of power. Although Shiites form a minority in the Muslim world, Nasr points out, they have an impressive presence in the Middle East, representing an overwhelming number of Iranians, about 70 per cent of people in Persian Gulf countries, and 50 per cent of those "in an arc from Lebanon to Pakistan."

And, says Khalaji, Iran's leadership is making the most of the new landscape.

"Khamenei has achieved a build-up of a very large network covering different groups in the region. It has transformed the unorganized traditional Shiite clerical establishment into a systematic, highly effective political and financial network."

A "primitive but complicated" system ships money to and from Iran outside the banking system, using ports and transit points in the region, Khalaji says.

And, Khalaji and other experts say, even moderates like Iraq's Grand Ayatollah Ali Hussein al-Sistani - hailed as the Shia stabilizing force in Iraq - have financial interests in Iran and are compelled to co-operate with its regime. Meanwhile, Iran is winning friends by supporting a network of social welfare institutions throughout the region.

"By contrast, secular democratic forces have no institutions, no economic base," Khalaji says. "They have no way of expressing themselves. So in Shiite communities you see strong, rich, powerful radicals and poor, disadvantaged moderates. The real catastrophe is that it has empowered the radicals at the expense of the majority, who are moderate."

Experts say that ironically, the strengthening of Shia radicalism has decreased the chance that the moderates, who have longed for a fair share of power, will be able to gain it through peaceful transition. Whether that happens, and whether the "birth pangs of the new Middle East" are also a harbinger of death, depends on Iran's ability to temper its radicalism in dealing with the West, and Washington's adherence to diplomacy rather than military retaliation.

Much also depends on Iraq: "If (it) were to collapse, its fate would most likely be decided by a regional war," Nasr wrote recently in the journal Foreign Affairs. "Iran, Turkey and Iraq's Arab neighbours would likely enter the fray ... the whole Middle East could be at risk of a sectarian conflict between Shiites and Sunnis."

Load-Date: November 21, 2006

Negotiating a way around a nuclear stand-off America and Iran must find common ground.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

August 31, 2006 Thursday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. B9

Length: 916 words

Byline: By Roya Wolverson

Body

The daughter of an Iranian mother and an English father, I was born and raised in St. Louis during the Iranian hostage crisis. As a child, I called myself "Persian," rather than "Iranian." Even though I was too young to understand national identity, saying "Persian" saved me from the tension I sensed lurking in the air about the word "Iran."

Such mixed emotions continued through adolescence until I finally learned to embrace both my home -- the United States -- and my heritage. I became "Iranian" again and, like many in my position, have had countless conversations since then in which I've defended America to Iranians and defended Iran to Americans.

When President Bush first uttered the words "axis of evil" after 9/11 and applied them to Iran, an Iranian-American college friend called to ask -- jokingly -- if she needed to revert to her childhood habit of introducing herself as "the fair-skinned Indian girl."

I laughed. But lately, her comment strikes me less as a joke than indicative of a sad and foreseeable reality.

Not only for the Iranian people, but also for the United States, the Middle East and the wider world, I fear the growing possibility of U.S. military action against Iran. I am torn between concerns for the security for my American homeland and for safety for my grandmother in Tehran.

A colleague recently told me that he wished the United States could "hold hands and walk into the sunset with the Iranian people" but that "it will never happen." We are dealing with Iran's impossible leaders, he said, not its people. The comments sent a jolt through my mind.

If Bush and his colleagues are not dealing with both, it's time they reconsider. Iran's restless youth may be the key to reining in their president's nuclear ambitions.

Iranian national pride is as ancient as the Persian Empire itself, and it has helped fuel the current regime's ardency over uranium enrichment. But pride can cut both ways. By appealing to the pride of the people of Iran, particularly its young people, Bush might be able to shift the focus within the country from nuclear matters to Iranians' frustration with President Ahmadinejad's economic failures. Today's U.N. Security Council deadline for Iran to halt uranium enrichment offers the Bush administration just such an opportunity -- depending on its response.

Negotiating a way around a nuclear stand-off America and Iran must find common ground.

More than two-thirds of the Iranian population now is younger than 30, and they are a complex, dynamic generation. Unlike the hyperbolic hard-line Ahmadinejad, they lack the religious and ideological fervor that flourished in the 1980s under extreme cleric Ayatollah Khomeini. Iranian youth is enamored with Western gadgets, media and music, but also disillusioned with the stunted pro-liberalization movement of former President Khatami.

One thing all Iranian people are certain to oppose, however, is U.S. interference in the affairs of their country, whether through sanctions, so-called surgical strikes or, in the extreme, regime change. An intransigent U.S. response now surely would weaken pro-democracy forces within Iran and fuel regional conflicts that threaten U.S. interests.

But a different kind of U.S. strategy, one that illuminated the regime's moderate elements, could awaken and tap into the dormant democratic potential of Iran's youth.

Khatami's eight-year presidency courted cooperation and diplomatic openings with the United States. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khameni opposed liberalization -- which led to Khatami's ouster -- but even he embraced Khatami's pragmatic, internationalist approach to the outside world.

Ahmadinejad, elected as a "man for the poor," rolled the dice on nuclear pride, and he hasn't stopped. The Bush administration's unwillingness to engage in direct dialogue has played into his hands.

America still could offer Iranians the one thing they have wanted since being labeled part of the axis of evil and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq: a promise of regional security, a guarantee not to alter Iran's borders or topple its regime. Such an approach could relieve people's fears and remove national pride from the equation. It would go a long way toward reining in the Iranian regime's extremists and allow Iranians to focus on the domestic problems of dwindling jobs, low wages and bankrupt presidential promises.

Today's U.N. deadline is no time for either government to toe their hardest lines. Given the reinforced locations of Iran's nuclear facilities, U.S. air strikes might fail to halt Iran's nuclear push. And such attacks would increase support for anti-Israel groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, while distracting Iranian attention from democratic alternatives to extremism. Sanctions, no matter what form they took, would alienate Iranian civilians and confirm the economic justifications the regime offers for its nuclear ambitions.

It is time to address, openly and exhaustively, the origins of the conflicts between Iranian and U.S. interests in the Middle East. Meaningful concessions are needed from both sides: a promise not to invade and strong economic incentives from the United States; acceptance of serious nuclear restrictions and rigorous inspections by Iran.

At this key moment, smart diplomacy could invigorate the quiet yearning of the people of both countries, especially Iran's youth, for mutual understanding and peace.

Roya Wolverson is a masters' degree candidate in public policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. She is editor-in-chief of the Kennedy School Citizen.

Notes

IRAN OTHER VIEWS

Graphic

Negotiating a way around a nuclear stand-off America and Iran must find common ground.

PHOTO

PHOTO - A Iranian women rides her bicycle on Kish Island. The Islamic republic is hoping to attract Muslim tourists while observing its red lines including a strict Islamic dress code. Atta Kenare | AFP | Getty Images

PHOTO - Iranian youths in a shopping mall on Kish Island earlier this month. Atta Kenare | AFP | Getty Images

PHOTO - Roya Wolverson

Load-Date: August 31, 2006

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French Contender Makes Her Presidential Case

The New York Times
February 12, 2007 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11

Length: 1025 words

Byline: By CRAIG S. SMITH; Ariane Bernard contributed reporting.

Dateline: PARIS, Feb. 11

Body

France's Socialist presidential candidate, Segolene Royal, presented her long-awaited presidential program in a two-hour speech on Sunday, hoping to dispel criticism that she is a pretty face without fundamental policies and to reverse a slide in opinion polls.

Dressed in a bright red blazer and speaking to a hall of 15,000 cheering, flag-waving party loyalists, Ms. Royal promised a new kind of French politics based on closer attention to the will of the people through American-style town hall meetings, Internet-based dialogue and national referendums.

Her program was studded with promises and proposals meant to address desires filtered from the more than 700,000 people who attended what her campaign organization puts at 6,500 public meetings since November, together with tens of thousands of ideas left by visitors to her Web site.

"Today I offer you the presidential pact," Ms. Royal told the rally, held northeast of the capital in the industrial suburb of Villepinte. "One hundred proposals for France to rediscover a shared ambition, pride and fraternity."

It remains to be seen whether the speech will give her the momentum to recover her lead over her center-right opponent, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. But it failed to impress her harshest critics.

"In the end, she gave a nice speech for a minister of social affairs," said Alain Duhamel, a leading political analyst and the author of "The 2007 Pretenders," a book published in 2006 about France's presidential candidates whose first edition failed to include Ms. Royal at all because Mr. Duhamel did not take her seriously.

Ms. Royal, 53, the daughter of an Army colonel, graduated from the elite Ecole Nationale d'Administration and was appointed as an adviser to Francois Mitterrand after working on his successful 1981 presidential campaign. She served as minister of the environment and later as deputy minister of school education and as deputy minister of family and childhood. She has also served in Parliament for the Deux-Sevres department in western France; she was elected president of its regional council in 2004.

But her most visible position has been as photogenic partner to Francois Hollande, the head of the Socialist Party, with whom she has four children. She appeared early last year as a potential presidential candidate for the party, which was riven by rivalries among its aging bosses.

French Contender Makes Her Presidential Case

By the time she won the nomination last fall, Ms. Royal was polling far ahead of other potential candidates. But a series of blunders, particularly in foreign affairs, have added to criticism that she would be out of her depth as France's senior stateswoman.

During a Middle East trip last year, she met a Lebanese Parliament member from Hezbollah who compared Israel to Nazi Germany and criticized American "insanity." She responded, "I agree with a lot of the things you have said, notably your analysis of the U.S."

During a visit to China, where the time between arrest and execution can be a matter of weeks, she appeared to compliment her hosts in saying, "Sometimes the justice is swifter than in France."

Following a meeting in Paris with Andre Boisclair, head of Canada's pro-independence Parti Quebecois, she spoke to Canadian journalists of "common values, namely the freedom and sovereignty of Quebec," infuriating Canada's prime minister.

She has also run into problems at home. When asked on a radio talk show last month about the hotly debated merger of two French utility giants, Suez and Gaz de France, she turned to an aide and asked, "Where do we stand on that?"

When the interviewer asked her how many nuclear-armed submarines France had, she said one. The interviewer shot back, "No, seven," and Ms. Royal corrected herself, only to be told that it was four.

She has even appeared out of step with her partner, Mr. Hollande, who harbored presidential ambitions himself before she swept him aside. She was reportedly furious after he suggested, without consulting her, that a Socialist government would raise taxes on people earning more than about \$5,200 a month. He was forced to retract the statement.

Hounded by bad press, she has slipped by as much as nine percentage points in polls since last month, when the Union for a Popular Movement party endorsed Mr. Sarkozy as its candidate. He has since edged ahead. Sunday's speech was meant to help Ms. Royal regain the field.

Before she appeared on stage, the lights dimmed and techno music filled the hall, including a rendition of the rap hit "Don't Phunk With My Heart." But what followed was a fairly typical, though very long, Socialist Party stump speech, embellished with Ms. Royal's pet proposals.

The proposals are often seen as innovative (giving people who have rented state-subsidized housing for 15 years or more a chance to buy their apartments), impractical (allowing citizens who collect a million or more signatures to propose legislation) or simplistic (paying retirement pensions monthly instead of quarterly and offering free birth control to women under 25).

As with most politicians making promises on the campaign trail, she did not say how she would finance her plans.

She accused the current government of doing "nearly nothing" to address the problems of disenfranchised second-generation immigrant youth, who were responsible for a wave of urban violence in 2005. She warned that without action, there would be even more "extreme violence" that would not be limited to poor neighborhoods.

She avoided delving too deeply into foreign policy.

Of the United States, with which President Jacques Chirac has been at odds over the Iraq war, she said: "We will live with them, as a solid partner, trustworthy, but without complexes either. Size has nothing to do with principles. An imbalance of power is not a reason to stay silent, and we have seen it, indeed, with Iraq. The voice of France, as it was, unfortunately wasn't heard. But it didn't ring any less true.

"And I would like, in the future, for it to continue to ring true and I would like that, by speaking louder and stronger, our voice will carry further."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Segolene Royal promised a new kind of French politics based on attention to the will of the people. (Photo by Michel Euler/Associated Press)

Load-Date: February 12, 2007

End of Document

Right place, wrong time

Aberdeen Press and Journal
December 27, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 16

Length: 1107 words

Body

In the second of our features looking back over 2006, Mike Lawson focuses on some of the places that featured prominently in our news pages during the year

It Looked as though 2006 would be the year that the roof finally fell in on the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, when a failed roof beam threatened to create a number of unexpected by-elections.

Disaster was avoided, however, and MSPs returned eventually to their more familiar surroundings, where they had plenty of issues in plenty of places to keep them occupied.

Aberdeen's long-awaited bypass, for example, continued to create controversy, as did the future of road, rail and sea transport across the country.

There was a major scare when bird flu was discovered at Cellardyke, Fife, but with statistics suggesting that the national smoking ban is a success, perhaps some MSPs can feel that Scotland was, for once, the right place to be at the right time.

The death toll rises in the Bavarian ice rink disaster in Bad Reichenhall, Germany.

Rescuers race to save a whale swimming in the Thames in London. Sadly, it dies next day.

A stampede among Moslem pilgrims at the Hajj in Mecca leaves at least 363 dead.

Shell announces record UK profits of £12.93billion on the back of soaring oil and gas prices.

Protesters storm embassies in Syria as Mohammed cartoon row grows.

Some 1,000 passengers missing after Egyptian ferry sinks in the Red Sea.

Luciano Pavarotti sings Nessun Dorma at Winter Olympics opening ceremony in Italy.

Fraserburgh fish-processing company Scofish becomes first victim of mackerel fishing ban

£50million stolen from Kent Securitas depot in what is thought to be Britain's biggest robbery.

British Gas owner Centrica banks record profits of £1.51billion, days after hiking household bills by 22%.

Eight Gordonstoun pupils escape when their sail training boat hits rocks at Hopeman.

Right place, wrong time

Grampian TV's name ditched after 45 years as it merges into Scotland-wide STV.

RAF helicopter abandoned during rescue of injured climber in Cairngorms as gales and blizzards batter Scotland

A south-east water company can instal compulsory meters, says landmark ruling.

Scottish Parliament debating chamber evacuated after a wooden ceiling beam fails.

Broken lift repaired after stranding 12 elderly residents in Clashfarquhar House, Stonehaven, since Christmas Day

Overcrowding may have caused Bahrain boat to capsize, killing 57 including 15 Britons.

Fire in disused textiles factory in Aberdeen, leaves pall of heavy black smoke across city.

Protection zone placed round Cellardyke area of Fife after swan found dead with bird flu.

Peterhead's new £2.5million Tamar-class lifeboat, the first in Scotland, arrives at the port.

Hunters hired to kill rabbits on Shetland, with a 20p bounty on each tail.

An independent school and 19 luxury homes to make way for Aberdeen's new city bypass.

A musical mystery begins when the remains of an upright piano are found on Ben Nevis.

Competitors join thousands of spectators for world cup mountain bike event in Fort William.

Dozens face redundancy after fire guts McTavish's Kitchens restaurant in Fort William.

Nineteen passengers escape when City Star aircraft overshoots Aberdeen runway.

A £10.2million centre to be built in Inverness to archive the history of the Highlands.

Flash flooding disrupts roads throughout north-east Scotland following torrential downpours

Warship HMS Gloucester heads from Beirut to Cyprus with 180 Britons aboard fleeing war-torn Lebanon.

All-time record UK July temperature smashed as mercury hits 36.3C (97.3F) in Surrey.

Inverness Highland Games is most successful to date with estimated 10,000 visitors.

Shell announces intention to make Aberdeen a global hub for its business.

Sweltering weather jams Muirtown canal swingbridge, Inverness, causing traffic chaos.

Thunder and lightning damages houses and disrupts power in Macduff, Banff and Elgin.

New Deer residents celebrate opening of Royal Bank of Scotland branch to replace defunct Clydesdale Bank branch.

RAF Lossiemouth tipped to be future British launch pad to blast tourists into space.

Casino Royale set devastated by massive fire at Pinewood studios, Buckinghamshire.

Hezbollah fires barrage of rockets at Israel, killing 15.

Police and security services foil alleged plot to blow up planes, but new airport security rules cause chaos in aftermath.

Barratt HQ in north-east targeted by letter writer who puts white powder in envelopes.

Right place, wrong time

Religious leaders call for end to suffering in Darfur, Sudan, during day of campaigning.

Kenyan athletes win both men's and women's events at Baxters Loch Ness Marathon.

Contamination scare from former dump forces Stornoway children's playpark to close.

Fierce gales and rainstorms bring havoc to much of Scotland.

Scotland sit on top of Euro 2008 qualifying group after 1-0 win over France at Hampden.

Arbroath's Seaforth Hotel destroyed in huge blaze.

Garrogie Lodge, near Whitebridge, Inverness-shire, badly damaged by fire.

Thousands of Highland properties left without water after Scottish Water pumps fail near Inverness.

Canna is poised for population boost after 150 people apply to live there.

Two climbers, aged 18 and 23, die in Arctic whiteout conditions in Cairngorms.

Three children injured when school bus collides with lorry on Maryculter-Stonehaven road.

Milnathort swamped after River Queich floods during heavy rainfall. Met Office issues 15 flood warnings in Scotland, one of its highest daily totals.

Mohamed Al Fayed considers his Highland future after planning permission for windfarm on his land turned down.

£30million to be ploughed into improving the main A9 Perth-Inverness trunk road.

Health Minister Andy Kerr rejects plans to close maternity services in Aberdeenshire.

These places were all in the news in 2006, but can you remember why?

1. Curler Rhona Martin carried the British flag at the Winter Olympics, but where?
2. In which town was this seafront hotel destroyed by fire?
3. Where was this rescue helicopter having an ice day?
4. Which Scotland player sent the nation reeling by scoring the winner against France?
5. Could this become Scotland's own Cape Canaveral?
6. Where did a village bank on financial success?
7. Where was the Saltire pulled down for the last time?
8. Which town scored a lifeboat first this year?

1. Turin, Italy, 2. Arbroath's Seaforth Hotel, 3. Stranded at the foot of Coire an't Sneachda, Cairngorm, 4. Celtic's Gary Caldwell, 5. RAF Lossiemouth, tipped to be launch site for space trips, 6. New Deer, where the Royal Bank took over the closed Clydesdale Bank branch, 7. At Grampian TV, which disappeared in a merger with STV, 8. Peterhead, which took delivery of Scotland's first Tamar-class lifeboat.

Load-Date: December 28, 2006

Right place, wrong time

End of Document

Fear 'as bad as after 9/11'; In Michigan and elsewhere, Muslims worry about hostile neighbors and surveillance

USA TODAY

December 13, 2006 Wednesday

FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1060 words

Byline: Rick Hampson

Body

DEARBORN, Mich. -- The Arab Muslims who came here eight decades ago to work on Henry Ford's new assembly line believed their American future was limitless. But after five years on the home front in America's war on terrorism, many of their descendants are hunkering down, covering up and staying put.

In this and similar enclaves, like those in northern New Jersey and Brooklyn, many Arab Muslims say their community is turning in on itself -- shying away from a society increasingly inclined to equate Islam with terrorism.

"It's as bad as after 9/11," says Rana Abbas-Chami of the Michigan American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. "A lot of people are scared. They've changed how they do things."

Some stay put. They don't like to fly, cross the border with Canada or shop at malls outside the city. "It's a feeling that if you go too far outside Dearborn, anything can happen," says Osama Siblani, a local newspaper publisher.

Some blend in. They Anglicize their names (Osama Nimer, electrician, is now Samuel Nimer) or change them (Mohammad Bazzi, nurse, is Alex Goldsmith). They trim their beards. In public, they speak English instead of Arabic. They display the flag. They wear the Tigers cap.

Some lie low. They won't contribute to a Muslim charity, at least not by check or if it works overseas. They watch what they say, especially on the phone. They think twice before trying to rent a truck, get a hunting license or take a flying lesson.

Some regard Dearborn, center of the nation's largest Arab Muslim community, as an island of security; others see it as a potential trap.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, fears of domestic sabotage led to the internment of Japanese-Americans. Some Arab Muslims wonder if it could happen again -- especially if there's another domestic terror attack. People here speculate about spies and informers in their midst; government eavesdropping and surveillance; and, if there's another 9/11, concentration camps.

These themes emerged repeatedly in USA TODAY interviews with about two dozen Arab Muslims around the nation.

Fear 'as bad as after 9/11' In Michigan and elsewhere, Muslims worry about hostile neighbors and surveillance

After the terror attacks in 2001 -- the work of 19 Arab Muslims who'd moved around the country -- Arab Muslims living here hoped things would slowly return to normal. Then came prolonged, messy wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; post-Sept. 11 security initiatives such as the Patriot Act; al-Qaeda train bombings in London and Madrid; war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Michael Suleiman, a Kansas State University political scientist, says that discrimination against Arab Muslims is virtually inevitable given a government determined to prevent another 9/11 and a populace barraged by images of violence in Iraq and denunciations of what President Bush has called "Islamic fascism."

Now Arab Muslims -- even those never questioned by the FBI, hassled by the boss or heckled by the jerk in a passing car -- feel more vulnerable than ever.

"Each crisis makes it more difficult. They're always insecure," Suleiman says. "They ask, 'When is it we actually become Americans? When is the hyphen dropped?'"

Reports of anti-Muslim incidents in the nation jumped 30% last year, according to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which blames a "negative and politically charged" environment on the Internet and talk radio. The 1,972 complaints of harassment, violence and discrimination were the most since CAIR began totaling incidents in 1995.

Americans seem unsympathetic. Thirty-nine percent say they harbor at least some prejudice against Muslims, according to a USA TODAY/Gallup Poll earlier this year. The same percentage favor requiring U.S. Muslims -- citizens included -- to carry special IDs. About a third say U.S. Muslims sympathize with al-Qaeda.

Political leaders have given voice to such worries. In a campaign letter this fall, Rep. Pete King from Long Island -- generally viewed as a moderate Republican -- accused American Muslim leaders of insufficiently denouncing the 9/11 attacks. In the past, he has said that 85% of U.S. mosques have "extremist leadership."

Everyone has a story

In heavily Arab east Dearborn, almost everyone -- from the greenest immigrants to fourth-generation Americans who've never been to the Middle East -- has a story, or knows someone who does.

Stories like that of Farooq Al-Fatlawi, a bus passenger en route to Chicago, who was put off with his bags in Toledo after he told the driver he was from Iraq.

Other cases this year have attracted national attention:

- * Bay Area civil rights activist Raed Jarrar was barred from a plane for wearing a T-shirt that said "We will not be silent" in Arabic and English.

- * Six imams seen praying in a Minneapolis airport terminal were later removed from their flight after a passenger passed a note to a flight attendant saying that the men acted suspiciously on board.

The imams, who were handcuffed, questioned and released, have denied the accusations; five are seeking an out-of-court settlement with US Airways. The airline says the crew acted properly in having the imams removed from the flight.

- * Keith Ellison, the first Muslim elected to Congress, has been vilified for planning to take a ceremonial oath of office on a Quran.

Arab Muslims interviewed by USA TODAY say other Americans must understand that they pray five times a day, if necessary at work or on the road; they must give alms to the poor and are hard-pressed to do so when the government closes Islamic charities; women's head scarves and men's beards are signs of religious fidelity, not defiance of American custom.

And this: No one has more to lose from another terror attack than Arab Muslims.

Fear 'as bad as after 9/11' In Michigan and elsewhere, Muslims worry about hostile neighbors and surveillance

What intimidates some galvanizes others -- to vote, to speak out and to demand the American freedoms extolled by Franklin Roosevelt and Norman Rockwell. The result is a communal split personality, says Imad Hamad of the Anti-Discrimination Committee: "We are in limbo."

Daniel Sutherland, head of the civil rights division of the Department of Homeland Security, acknowledges the complaints from Arab Muslims. He says fighting terrorism while respecting civil rights involves "difficult challenges."

But Sutherland says the government needs the help of U.S. Arab Muslims to fight terrorism at home: "Homeland security isn't gonna be won by people sitting in a building inside the Beltway."

Contributing: Tamara Audi of the Detroit Free Press

Graphic

PHOTO, Color, Jennifer S. Altman for USA TODAY

PHOTO, B/W, Jeff Kowalsky for USA TODAY

Load-Date: December 13, 2006

End of Document

Letters to the editor

Lincoln Journal Star (Nebraska)

January 29, 2007 Monday

City Edition

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Section: B; Pg. 5

Length: 1055 words

Dateline: Lincoln, NE

Body

SIMPLE PARTIES BETTER

I have been waiting for the article in the Jan. 22 Lincoln Journal Star regarding the movement to simplify children's birthday parties. My husband and I have been talking about this for years!

Having four children ages 6-15, there have been months where our children combined have been invited to five parties in a month - pretty hard on the budget since gifts have moved from \$5 to \$10-\$15! Since schools encourage inviting the whole classroom to not exclude anyone, many children are mere acquaintances to our kids. I have been relieved to be invited to the rare few who ask that donations to charity be accepted in lieu of gifts.

As far as the grand themes go, last year we attended a fifth birthday where the parents had rented a big bounce house. This was preceded by their trip to Disneyland. A few weeks later, the friend called to ask if we could loan them money until payday. My children have never been to Disneyland or had a bounce house. We didn't loan the money.

Our children have rarely had "kid" parties - probably a handful between them. We prefer to have family parties, and invite a few close friends over for a slumber party. I am happy to report our children do not feel deprived.

Why are parents pressured to make each year bigger and better? Every "big" party we've attended has made the birthday child crabby and whiny and the parents flustered and irritated. Wouldn't it be great if the trend for simple parties started now?

Liz Hopkins, Lincoln

ABOUT MONEY, NOT CARE

Danelle Brown of Seward (LJS, Jan. 22) is just one of many victims of insurance health care management. It's not just Blue Cross/Blue Shield, it's Midland, Medicare, Medicaid, or any other health care insurance.

It's not about the care, it's about the almighty dollar. They tell you it's not, but take some time and drive by an office of BC/BS or any other insurance company office. They have state-of-the-art buildings, nicest yards, drive the nicest business cars. Makes you wonder how they get by, huh?

Letters to the editor

I've been in the same boat as Danelle Brown, and it is very stressful, and then have your illness on top of it all. It's a game where the patient loses always.

Do we need to see change? Yes, so people don't have to suffer.

By the way, if you don't pay premiums they can cut off insurance, but the insured don't have that right, do we?

Lee Carr, Wymore

ALWAYS DEFENDING ISRAEL

Albert Weiss' response (letter, Jan. 19) to Sitaram Jaswal's comments on the Israel/Palestinian conflict (letter, Jan. 5) seems to be his stock response to any criticism of Israel about that conflict. In his letter to the Lincoln Journal Star of July 13, 2003 (about 31/2 years ago), Weiss responded to Ruth Thone's criticism of Israel as follows: "If the Arabs of the British Mandate of Palestine had accepted partition in 1947 â? they already would have marked the 55th anniversary of a Palestinian state."

Now, in his current letter, although he does not express such certainty about the anniversary of a Palestinian state, he uses the same idea to suggest a happy outcome when he writes, "Had the Palestinians accepted this partition plan and live in peace, rather than go to war in 1948, one can only imagine how different this region would be today." And as I did when I then responded (letter, July 20, 2003), I ask again, "But how can he be any more certain of such a positive outcome than what might have happened had the British 'white paper' in May 1939, proposing an independent binational state in Palestine, been accepted by the Jews and Arabs?"

Weiss' continued simple expression of blame on the Palestinians, only, is grossly unfair, and I suspect he knows it. The history of the present Israeli/Palestinian conflict is severely complicated by events that occurred long before 1948, by events that occurred in Europe over a span of hundreds of years culminating in the horrors of the Holocaust and by promises and decisions made during and after World Wars I and II, events that accrued to the detriment of both Jews and Palestinians.

Equally or more troublesome is Weiss' subtle attempt at character assassination by writing that Sitaram Jaswal "hides the true intent of his message," suggesting that he has a hidden agenda, and then by linking Jaswal's position to " Hamas, Hezbollah or Iran," politically loaded language designed to mislead the reader into finding Jaswal guilty by association of ideas rather than considering the merit of his ideas, precisely what Weiss avoided completely in his response to Jaswal. Nothing in any of Jaswal's stated past positions has ever evidenced any agenda other than a desire for peace, justice, and fairness. I wish I could feel as confident about Weiss' agenda.

Eli Zietz, Lincoln

MAKE NEBRASKA A PLAYER

Here's an issue that Democrats and Republicans can agree on: an early presidential primary.

Currently, the Nebraska presidential primary coincides with the state primary, which is always held on the second Tuesday of May during every even year.

During the presidential election year, almost half the states (24 in 2004) hold their presidential primaries on the second Tuesday in March or up to two months earlier. If you include caucuses, it's around 30.

With nearly two-thirds of the states itching to choose their party's favorite candidates during the first three months of a presidential election year, the likelihood is quite high that by the time the current presidential primary occurs in Nebraska, the mystery is over. Everything is "cut and dried."

I conclude by saying: Let's put the presidential primary on or before the second Tuesday of March every fourth year.

Letters to the editor

Merlin L.Marlowe, Wilber

AN INSIGHTFUL COINCIDENCE

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Lincoln Journal Star for the story written by Colleen Kenney titled "Objects of Desire & Denigration" on Sunday, Jan. 14.

I found the story well written and especially poignant. The importance and challenges of choices and expectations were very well presented.

Also well presented and part of the same theme of "expectations and choices" was the article by Jonathan Peterson of the Los Angeles Times, "Women worry about price tag of retirement."

I am assuming the printing of the stories on the same day was an unplanned coincidence. I found the coincidence insightful. They worked well together.

Travis A. Wagner, Lincoln

Load-Date: February 2, 2007

End of Document

Iran's mullahs don't pray all the time

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 19, 2007 Monday

First Edition

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Section: BUSINESS; Pg. 21

Length: 1075 words

Byline: Eric Ellis - Eric Ellis is the South-East Asia Correspondent of Fortune Magazine.

Body

CORPORATE Iran. Now there's a term you don't see often.

Corporate America we know well. And, of course, Corporate Australia, recently banned by Canberra from Iran. But Corporate Iran, is there such a thing? Google yields just 100 results and most of them are copies of an article in a US business magazine lamenting the 2005 rise of the "anti-capitalist, anti-West" President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Corporate Iran does indeed exist and, as with most things in this by turns complex and often utterly charming country, a grasping mullah hovers in close proximity to its spigot.

And ayatollahs. Take the "Shah of Pistachios", Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran's once and perhaps future president and widely regarded by grumpy Iranians as their richest man. If you're looking for Corporate Iran, Hashemi's household is not a bad place to begin. The family's writ runs to airlines, caviar, oil, mining, automobiles, property and agriculture, which pretty much covers the entire economy. There's supposedly billions stashed in Swiss, Singaporean and Luxembourgish banks, property in France, Canada and booming Dubai and beach resorts in India and Thailand.

The ex-president's clan denies it but Iranians struggling by on \$2000 a year and seeing their leaders squander Iran's oil wealth in Hezbollah adventurism and the like snort that Rafsanjani doth protest too much. One intrepid local hack pried a little too far into Rafsanjani Inc a few years back and is now in jail. A blameless businessman I met is convinced he did three years inside in the '90s because he refused to yield when Rafsanjani's lieutenants fancied his profitable commercial farms. That or because he was Bahai, regarded as heretical by Iran's Shia mullahs. Either way it was a disgrace. But he was lucky. Tehran's small coterie of investigative journalists and corruption activists are still reeling from a spate of unsolved murders in 2000.

I repair to lunch at Nayebeh, in fashionable North Tehran. Elegant ladies-who-lunch in Jackie O sunglasses pick at grilled Alburz trout and salad, their table chatter gliding effortlessly between French, English and Farsi. The clientele is as urbane as any eatery in Paris' VIIe - smart Tehran tilts heavily to France - and the only hint we're in the heart of George W Bush's Axis of Evil is the hijab Iranian women are obliged to wear - lest they risk attacks from Islamist militias, the feared basijis.

The pressing demands of mosque and mode merge in expensive Hermes scarves, exposing sexy blonde-tipped fringes. Ring-heavy hands cradle Marlboro Lights and Kents.

Iran 's mullahs don't pray all the time

The Nayeby set's preferred tipples are probably Krug and Khomeini and his Islamist heirs are teetotal revolutionaries so the chic are making do with Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola? Marlboro? Hang on, isn't Corporate America - and now Corporate Australia - banned from doing business in Iran? Yes, but Washington bent the rules in 1999 for "foodstuffs", thus opening a door Pepsi and Coke burst through to join another battle in their globally waged Cola wars.

Operating through Irish subsidiaries in Drogheda, Coke has been selling product here since 1999 and Pepsi since 2001, after being kicked out in 1979. They've already grabbed about half Iran's \$2 billion beverage market and are taking aim at the sector leader Zamzam, named for the blessed well at Mecca. Theocrats want Iranians to shun "Great Satan" brands which they say send profits to "Zionist Israel to be converted into bullets piercing the chests of Lebanese and Palestinian children".

A hardliner like Mehdi Minai of the mosque-linked Public Demands Council loves denouncing Pepsi, which he says stands for "Pay Each Penny to Save Israel". Big Beverage dismisses such blather as, well, blather. They know Iran's trendy young consumers aren't at all engaged in the Palestinian conflict as might their Arab neighbours be, and anti-US protests in Tehran are pretty thin affairs these days. Most Iranians lament their government's stand-off with Washington, sentiment that weakens the bellicose Ahmadinejad.

"I joke with customers not to buy this stuff because it's American," says Tehran shopkeeper Reza Shahgholi, his store just around the corner from the old US Embassy, today an "American Atrocities Museum". "But they don't care, that only makes them want to buy it more."

Australian products aren't much evident in Iran but the region has been happily boycotting American beverages for years. A 1960s saying echoing round the region has it that "Coke is for Jews, Pepsi is for Arabs". Coke has endured persistent claims its logo insults the Koran and the whispering campaign got to the point where Atlanta posted a page called "Middle East Rumors" on its website to counter the claims. One entry refutes, with a letter from an Egyptian grand mufti, a widely held belief that Coke's curve swirl says "No Mohammed, No Mecca" in reverse. Coke's not The Beatles.

The best thing going for Coke and Pepsi here isn't their Americanness but probably because Zamzam is run by a bonyad. These are the religious charities Khomeini used to quasi-nationalise Iran's economy after 1979. Conceived to help Iran's needy, bonyads are no model of modern management. Many have become goldmines for the powerful, which in Iran means the pious, or those close to them. Zamzam's 17 plants are controlled by the Foundation of the Dispossessed, answering to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The cranky Minai is lobbying Khamenei to fatwa Coke and Pepsi out of Iran, and this is where Corporate Iran can be a trap for young players. A clerical ruling that could appear to be religious in intent might actually be about something quite different.

Bonyads control trillions of rials of assets, like the four international hotels that operated under the Hyatt, Hilton, Sheraton and Intercontinental banners in the 1970s. The old Hyatt is called the Azadi (Freedom) and is something of an official hotel for the regime's guests but the \$200-a-night tariff isn't being spent on upkeep. I expected Barry Gibb to emerge from one of the rooms; it's very '70s, which is probably the last time it was painted. Bizarrely, Mamma Mia muzak fills the lobby as junketing officials from Bahrain herd to the coffee shop - to drink Coca-Cola with their eggs. In Corporate Iran, there's no escaping Enqelab - as Iranians call Khomeini's revolution - but it's hard to avoid Corporate America as well.

Eric Ellis is the South-East Asia Correspondent of Fortune Magazine.

Graphic

PHOTO: Zamzam is the local soft drink made by the mullahs ... who are trying to get Coke and Pepsi thrown out of Iran. Photo: AP

Iran 's mullahs don't pray all the time

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

Blair's 'baffling' Middle East plan

Daily Mail (London)

November 15, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: ED 1ST; Pg. 12

Length: 1041 words

Byline: BENEDICT BROGAN

Body

TONY Blair's hopes of enlisting Iran's help for an Iraq exit strategy were in doubt last night amid signs of deep unease in Washington and outright contempt in Tehran.

With the situation in Iraq spiralling out of control following another day of mass slaughter, Mr Blair's talk of a new plan for the Middle East was met with widespread scepticism.

Downing Street and the White House used their spin machines to suggest it was time to end hostilities with Iran and Syria and enlist their help for ending the Iraq crisis.

But the idea prompted bafflement on both sides of the Atlantic and triggered rumours of a rift between Washington and London. Last night the State Department took the unusual step of issuing a public denial of divisions between the two allies, prompting speculation of a growing row behind the scenes.

In a blow to Mr Blair, the White House refused to budge on its tough line against Iran, as the fundamentalist regime prepared to hang 11 alleged bombers.

Only 24 hours earlier the Prime Minister signalled a potential massive policy shift by offering the prospect of talks and a 'new partnership' with a government identified as a major exporter of terrorism.

Yesterday Mr Blair urged Washington to tackle the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as a vital first step towards getting out of Iraq.

The Prime Minister made the plea during an unprecedented appearance by video-link before the high-level Iraq Study Group, which is chaired by former American Secretary of State James Baker and is drafting a change of policy for the White House.

Mr Blair used his hour-long session with the ISG to call for 'a plan for Iraq and the whole region'.

He singled out Iran as a 'strategic threat' to the Middle East that should be confronted by the West. But the Prime Minister's appearance before the ISG was met with ill-concealed derision in Iran.

And Syria has so far refused to respond to a diplomatic appeal for co-operation issued three weeks ago on a secret visit to Damascus by Mr Blair's policy adviser Sir Nigel Sheinwald.

Blair's 'baffling' Middle East plan

With both Mr Blair and Mr Bush now political lame ducks and the crisis in Iraq escalating by the day, there was an air of desperation in both Washington and London.

The two leaders appeared to be talking tough in public about the threat posed by the extremist regimes once labelled the 'axis of evil' by Mr Bush, while pleading for their co-operation behind the scenes to resolve the crisis in Iraq.

Mr Blair's offer of a 'new partnership' with the fundamentalist regime in Tehran in his Guildhall speech on Monday appeared to fall on deaf ears in Washington, where Mr Bush remained uncompromising.

Downing Street provided few details of the ISG meeting, which marked a rare opportunity for a British premier to influence formally U.S. foreign policy.

But Mr Blair appeared to have toned down his call for a talks with Iran if the regime can be persuaded to abandon its policy of exporting terror across the region.

His spokesman said: 'He told them that what he believed was needed was a plan for Iraq and a plan for the region as a whole focused firstly on resolving conflict between Israel and Palestinians.' Mr Blair described Iran as a 'strategic threat' to the region for its involvement in terrorist attacks against British forces in Iraq and its support for Hezbollah militias targeting Israel from Lebanon. He told the ISG both Syria and Iran need to be presented with a 'strategic choice' co-operation with the West to bring peace to the Middle East, or isolation.

Mr Bush, who met the ISG on Monday, said afterwards he still wanted to keep pressure on Iran over its attempts to develop nuclear weapons.

'It is very important for the world to unite with one common voice, to say to the Iranians that if you choose to continue forward, you'll be isolated, and one source of isolation would be economic isolation,' he said.

But there was defiance from Iran, where president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said his country would soon celebrate completion of its controversial nuclear fuel program.

And he claimed that the international community was caving in to Tehran's demands to continue its nuclear program.

He said: 'Initially, they (the U.S. and its allies) were very angry. The reason was clear: They basically wanted to monopolise nuclear power in order to rule the world and impose their will on nations.

'Today, they have finally agreed to live with a nuclear Iran, with an Iran possessing nuclear fuel cycle.' There was a glimmer of optimism as Syria welcomed suggestions that the U.S.

and UK wanted its help to stabilise Iraq.

'Syria is ready for dialogue with the United States to achieve security and stability and extends its hands sincerely as always waiting for a response. The ball is in their court,' a government newspaper said.

Analysts expressed scepticism that resolving the Israel-Palestine conundrum would end the bloodshed in Iraq, pointing out that it was not the priority of Shias and Sunnis killing each other on a daily basis, the cause of internecine warfare between rival Shia factions or the main motive of insurgents trying to oust the coalition.

THEIR RECORDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

IRAN has one of the highest number of recorded executions in the world.

Hanging is a common punishment for serious offences such as drug smuggling and murder.

Human rights groups are particularly concerned about the execution of children and of adults who were minors when they committed their crimes.

Blair's 'baffling' Middle East plan

Homosexuality and adultery are criminal acts punishable by life imprisonment or death.

Activists are pressing Iran to abolish stoning to death as a punishment, which has been mostly imposed on women convicted of adultery.

SYRIA'S leader Bashar al-Assad, a British trained eye doctor, inherited power six years ago amid hopes that he would liberalise the country. It had been ruled with an iron fist for nearly three decades by his father, Hafez.

But after a short-lived 'Damascus spring', Syria remains as much of a dictatorship as ever.

It is a one-party state ruled by the Baath party.

Five internal security organisations look for hints of dissent. There are hundreds of political prisoners.

Torture and ill-treatment are common.

Syria has the death penalty but does not publicise how many executions take place annually.

Load-Date: November 15, 2006

End of Document

**Setting the record straight; FBI schools screenwriters about its
counterterrorism efforts**

Philadelphia Daily News

January 12, 2007 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 38

Length: 1050 words

Byline: PAUL BOND, The Hollywood Reporter

Body

FBI memo to Hollywood: If it's not too much trouble, could you please portray our counterterrorism efforts with a bit more realism?

Hoping for an answer in the affirmative, the FBI hosted its first workshop for screenwriters Wednesday at the Federal Building in Westwood, Calif.

"FBI - Crime Essential for Writers" played well with the standing-room-only audience of executives and writers from major and minor studios. Enthusiastic attendees had more questions than time allowed answers for, and few if any left the four-hour event early.

The FBI, more so than even the Department of Homeland Security, is the primary agency designated to investigate terrorism in the United States, and the terrorist threat it is most focused on comes from radical Islam, FBI special agent Greg Wing said.

With that in mind, Wing and an undercover agent who asked that his identity not be revealed, presented a whirlwind history of Islam, beginning with Sunni-Shiite hostilities in 682 AD.

The major terrorist group aligned with Sunni Muslims is al Qaeda, while Hezbollah, "the best terrorist organization there is," are Shiite Muslims, the undercover agent said.

He showed flags and logos of terrorist groups and explained that the colors of turbans worn by terrorism suspects could have significance. He also showed photos and video of al Qaeda training camps and torture rooms and pictures of unfortunate Americans who had been captives there. He showed photos of the suicide bombers who killed 17 U.S. sailors aboard the USS Cole in 2000 and pictures of the house where they built their bombs.

The undercover agent played phone messages from passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 93, which went down in a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001, and inspired the film "United 93." He also played audio from the cockpit of American Airlines Flight 11, the airplane Mohamed Atta flew into the World Trade Center that day.

Setting the record straight FBI schools screenwriters about its counterterrorism efforts

"Amazing," attendee Dave DiGilio said after the event.

DiGilio wrote the film "Eight Below" and created the upcoming ABC series "Traveler," about a couple of graduate students who might have been framed for a terrorist attack. He said his show portrays both "the good and the bad" about the FBI.

"Seeing the extent of the organization, and the passion and intellect of the agents, was impressive," he said after the event. "They're very creative. It's not the way they're usually portrayed."

Quite the point, which is why FBI public affairs specialist Betsy Glick helped create the workshop. She said that last year the FBI helped lend authenticity to 649 projects, usually films, TV shows and books.

Michael Kortan, section chief for the office of public affairs, gave attendees a brief lesson in the history of the FBI in film and TV, beginning with the 1935 James Cagney movie " 'G' Men," which he said was one of the first gangster movies to tell a story from the FBI's perspective.

Shortly thereafter, J. Edgar Hoover conceived of something he called "The Dillinger Rule" - the FBI had great stories to tell, so Hollywood ought to tell them, and make sure that the FBI were the good guys. And he wanted to know about anything FBI-related that Hollywood had in the works.

The 1965 Disney film "That Darn Cat!" really had Hoover on edge, Kortan said, because he feared that a film about an allergic agent assigned to follow around a cat would make the FBI look a tad silly, a reputation the bureau didn't need during the tumultuous 1960s.

Too often, Kortan said, the FBI is seen on film, unrealistically, as heavy-handed, bumbling and antagonistic toward other law-enforcement agencies. Of course, Hollywood isn't always unfriendly to the bureau.

Witness "The Silence of the Lambs," for example. The 1991 film earned Jodie Foster the best actress Oscar for her portrayal of FBI agent Clarice Starling, and Kortan credited the movie for some of the FBI's success in recruiting women.

"This is half the reason people get in writing - to live vicariously and absorb the details," said attendee Luke McMullen, who wrote an episode of "Alias" and is developing a project called "Samurai Girl."

FBI agents also showed off a map of the 779 real investigations of potential terrorist activity ongoing in Los Angeles and photos of a list of possible targets that included Grauman's Chinese Theatre, the Hollywood sign and Disneyland. They also showed photos of some of the equipment the FBI will have on hand as they stake out the 64th annual Golden Globe Awards on Monday.

Hollywood has been considered a potential target of Islamic terrorists since shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, when the FBI warned that a major film studio might be next.

Special agent George Steuer recalled Wednesday how FBI agents met with studio heads back then to tell them, "Hey, you're in this fight on terrorism."

He said the threat emanated from phone and e-mail intercepts between suspected terrorists. Although the FBI sifts through about 300 terrorism leads a day, the one against film studios was initially deemed credible after some corroboration and background checks. Details, though, remain classified.

"Eventually we vetted it and decided that there were no links here, just overseas chatter," he said.

Nevertheless, the studios were encouraged then to beef up their security measures. Some, including Disney and Warner Bros., quickly hired FBI agents on their security staffs.

Steuer, who has been helping Hollywood with FBI requests for five years, said he was in Baghdad in 2005, witnessing the locals buying and selling pirated copies of "Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith" the day it

Setting the record straight FBI schools screenwriters about its counterterrorism efforts

was released theatrically, making the point that the FBI is uniquely aware of Hollywood's influence even in a war zone.

Speaking after the symposium, the undercover FBI agent whose identity is protected said he purposely avoids Hollywood's treatment of modern terrorism, staying away from such movies as "World Trade Center" and "United 93" as well as TV programs like "The Path to 9/11."

"Movies don't come close," he said. "We lived a very traumatic event. It's never far from my heart."

His primary message to screenwriters? "Keep the FBI out of politics," he said. "Don't tag me Republican or Democrat. Don't suggest the FBI was better or worse under this president or that one. What we care about is protecting American lives."

Load-Date: January 12, 2007

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Wayne State U. group ready to be self-governing, are you?

University Wire

December 13, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: COLUMN

Length: 1051 words

Byline: By Mike Staunch, The South End; **SOURCE:** Wayne State U.

Dateline: DETROIT

Body

In the course of this semester, Anti-Racist Action has accomplished many things. We have begun a divestment from Israel campaign that the administration, try as it may, cannot ignore. We have done so without ever registering as a student group, believing that as students, alumni and members of the community, we can organize on Wayne State's campus without the administration's approval.

When asked why we have refused to submit to registration, we have answered that requiring groups to register with the authorities was a tactic of the Nazi government, apartheid South Africa, and our own government during the era of McCarthyism. We have made the administration admit that it is racist and supports colonialism and white supremacy in Israel/Palestine. We have held numerous events on campus using campus facilities in spite of threats from the administration that if we did so, we would be escorted off our own campus by campus police.

We have defied and stood up to Homeland Security when it visited us at our homes. We, along with many students at Wayne State University, have denounced the racist Zionist Itamar Marcus as he attempted to slander the Palestinian people. As a last ditch effort to counter these successes, the administration has invented new rules to deal with us. This, too, we consider a victory.

We have done all this in spite of threats from the government of this country - our visit from Homeland Security - as well as threats from Zionists themselves. Allow me to briefly quote some of those Zionist threats posted on The South End's Web site: "Whomever [sic] messes with Israel should know they do so at their own peril."

"Look out ARA: you're being watched."

"What does ARA stand for? Assholes Reaming Assholes."

Here we have a direct threat to our personal safety, the threat of being put under surveillance and an obviously homophobic comment. In addition to these, Zionists have repeatedly misquoted us, and lied about us. They have said we support al Qaeda, *Hezbollah*, Saddam Hussein, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, and even compared me personally to Hitler. Many more comments, all equally vicious, are available for viewing online. ARA challenges anyone to produce proof of any of this in writing from our flyers, editorials we've published or recordings from one of our many public events.

Such is ARA's commitment to democracy and anti-racism. We have persevered in our campaign in spite of all these things. The university administration can expect more of the same next semester.

Wayne State U. group ready to be self-governing, are you?

We think it's fair to ask, given our demonstrated commitment to democracy and anti-racism throughout this semester, what have the Zionists and defenders of Israel done? In the fight against white supremacy, we haven't seen them on the frontlines by any means. Last October, ARA traveled to Toledo to ensure that white supremacists and Neo-Nazis were not allowed to march through the streets. ARA has learned from history that if you give racists an inch, they take a yard. If you allow them to march, before long they are organizing door-to-door in neighborhoods. Before too long, they are murdering Jews, people of color, women, gays and others. When we invited a Zionist to come with us to do the same, to fight against people who wanted to kill Jews, he said they have a right to march. That same person said that al Qaeda had a right to march, too. And they say we support terrorists!

Given these facts, the Zionists have no moral ground to stand on. ARA has organized for democracy and anti-racism. The Zionists have responded with death threats, homophobia, and attempts to limit our right to speak and organize. ARA asks, who is defending democracy and smashing racism? It isn't them. They don't want social change of any kind. They want to maintain the racist status quo.

In addition to these comments from rank-and-file Zionists, no less than the President of the university, Irvin Reid, declared in response to ARA's divestment rally, that "Wayne State opposes divestiture and has no intention of divesting itself of stocks in companies doing business with Israel or any other legitimate state." As this quote shows, we have forced the university to admit it supports white supremacy, apartheid and colonialism. We consider this a great victory for ourselves. In our society, politicians try to appear as benevolent as possible. They will usually do or say anything to prevent being exposed as the blatant racists and colonialists that they are. In spite of this, ARA has shown that Reid is a racist who supports Israeli apartheid and colonialism.

Next semester, we hope to involve more people on campus in the struggle for democracy. Thus far, it has been a few dedicated people who have raised these issues and acted as the conscience of Wayne State University in this matter. However, we in ARA realize that divestment and justice will not be the work of a few people alone.

Reid was never going to decide to divest out of the goodness of his heart. If we wait for the "goodness of his heart" to kick in, we should also wait for the sun to burn out. Both are equally unlikely in our lifetimes. If Reid has not yet made the decision to divest from the state of Israel, it is largely because the student body has not yet compelled him forcefully enough. To do so, we must make it clear to Reid and every racist bureaucrat at Wayne State that he has no choice in the matter. The choice is either divestment or unemployment. There is no other option. As much as Reid would like to continue supporting racism, colonialism and apartheid, he can only do so as long as the students at this university allow him.

ARA has overcome much in its campaign thus far, but we know that the success of this campaign cannot be accomplished by us alone. There is much that we can accomplish on a local, national and even world scale when students, alumni, working people and community members choose to be self-governing. We are aware of the difficulties for all involved. There are many risks in the fight to defeat white-supremacy and empire, as ARA's own experiences this semester show. Liberation has never been achieved at an easy price. We extend a hand to all those who need one to climb to the heights of democracy and anti-racism. We are ready and not afraid. Are you?

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Load-Date: December 13, 2006

REALISM AND GRACEFUL EXIT

The Nation (AsiaNet)

December 9, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 1072 words

Body

On November 30, President Bush under rising political, economic and military temperature at home met Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri-al-Maliki in Amman (Jordan) to discuss strategy to counter civil war in Iraq. During the meeting, he conveyed to Mr Maliki that the United States is not looking for a graceful exit from Iraq and would continue to provide whole-hearted support to his government, as he is the right guy for Iraq.

Will this king's horse win the bet, when his mentor's other loyalist at home and abroad have disgracefully crumbled on the treacherous issue of Iraq one after another? Bush's 140,000 strong force equipped with latest gadgetry duly supported by its allies have miserably failed to achieve even a single set political or military objectives. Maliki, who hails from Shia sect of Islam, took rein of Iraq with the support of Muqtada al-Sadr, the most powerful anti American cleric, backed by strong militia comprising thousands of followers. Al Sadr also seems to be parting ways with Maliki due to his recent meeting with Bush in Amman and has announced non-cooperation with the government. President Bush, who called himself a "realist" during the visit, said "this business about a graceful exit just simply has no "realism to it at all".

In the recent past the world community witnessed events, which some time back were conceived unrealistic. It is indeed not mandatory that laboratory research results or hypothetical analysis will match 100 percent in the empirical world too. Variations, ought to prevail due to immeasurable variables. Nonetheless, prudence dictates that one must understand the factual position and sense the wind of change. Refusal to accept facts and bring change in attitude leads to telling lies and increase complications manifolds. Thomas Jefferson recognised this effect in 1785: "He who permits himself to a lie once finds it much easier to do it second and third time, till at length it becomes habitual, he tells lies without attending to it and truths without the world believing him. This falsehood of the tongue leads to that of the heart and in time depraves all its good dispositions."

The United States mid-term elections of November 2006 were swept by the Congress party, primarily on the basis of Republican's flawed war strategy in Iraq. President Bush, a lame duck for all practical purposes, is no more in a position to dictate terms to the American public or to the world. North Korea went ahead with nuclear detonation programme, in spite of repeated threats from the US administration of facing dire consequences. The Bush administration has not only failed miserably in stopping nuclear proliferation in the world but virtually became a party to nuclear proliferation by striking a civil nuclear technology transfer deal with India, a non signatory of Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The ongoing turmoil in the Middle East and unexpected resistance offered to the coalition forces in Iraq signifies that agenda to carve new Middle East order by the Bush administration is in doldrums. Israeli myth of invincibility has received serious blow in the aftermath of Israel's brutal invasion of Lebanon. The "axis of evil" doctrine has proved counterproductive and decision not to establish direct dialogue with Iran, Syria and North Korea has indeed started fading away under disliked but hard realities for the United States administration. Syria last month decided

REALISM AND GRACEFUL EXIT

to establish full diplomatic relations with Iraq, which were suspended in 1982 for the Syrian support to Iran during the Iran-Iraq war.

The Iran-Iraq relationship seems getting back on the track in the wake of Iraqi President's visit to Iran after decades old hostilities and Hezbollah-led opposition parties' protests in Lebanon have literally incapacitated the pro-Western Lebanese government and have provided leverage to Syria and Iran on the bargaining table. The new emerging scenario is a reality, which dictates that if US wants stability in the Middle East, Iranian and Syrian support is imperative and can be secured by easing pressure on Iran and Syria in terms of nuclear and terrorism issues.

The chances of clash of civilisation is becoming a reality under the latest laws being passed in free and democratic societies of the world to prevent Muslim women from observing veil in public places, caring hoots for the so called human rights freedom.

The myopic policy to fight terrorism with an iron hand instead of dealing with core issues or root causes has further radicalised Muslim population around the world. Iraq, a moderate Muslim country with no track record of involvement in terrorist activities in any of its manifestation, is now a free-to-kill society with excellent breeding places for the radicalised Muslim population.

The recently held NATO summit in Riga (Latvia) failed to agree on additional troops for Afghanistan, which had been urgently demanded on a number of occasions by the IASF commander. France, Germany, Italy and Spain have refused to send their troops to the troubled heartland of southern Afghanistan, except under extreme emergency. The fact of the matter is that the US policy in Afghanistan has suffered serious setbacks due to US sponsored incompetent and non-representative set-up at the helm of affairs of a war torn country. Sense seems to prevail among some of the coalition partners, who, while accepting the ground realities have struck deals with the Taliban at local levels and now desire to establish a new, balanced and broad-based administrative set-up in Afghanistan.

President Bush pledge to carry out a speedier hand-over of security task to Iraqis is now a "reality," which will certainly be followed by a quick exit strategy as the United States has lost its credibility among common public at home and in Iraq. Its ability to control the strife-torn country has been completely neutralised by the insurgents with growing number of body bags of their loved one's.

The shock and awe strategy has transformed into a hue and cry with more than seventy billion dollars per annum being spent alone for Iraq adventure out of the tax money of American citizens with no significant gain in sight. Another unfolding reality is that the Bush administration would ensure that Saudi Arabia and Iran are entangled in Sunni-Shia strife before it completes a disgraceful exit from Iraq as the possibility of graceful exit has been overruled

Load-Date: December 13, 2006

Opinion Focus: Election battle lost, but war will go on

The Scotsman

November 9, 2006, Thursday

1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 32

Length: 1049 words

Byline: Allan Massie

Body

THAT the results of the mid-term American elections are a defeat for George Bush is clear enough. All presidents tend to become lame ducks towards the end of their time in office; he will now be lamer than most. All the same, one shouldn't exaggerate the magnitude of his defeat or the consequences for the president.

In the first place, although a win in Virginia will give the Democrats control of the Senate, Joe Lieberman, the former Democratic vice-presidential candidate, stood as an independent, held his seat thanks to Republican support and will probably vote with the Republicans on foreign policy questions, especially on Iraq. Second, it is by no means unprecedented for a president to have to deal with a hostile Congress: Bill Clinton was faced with a Republican majority in both the House and the Senate.

The main consequence will be that Mr Bush will now be shackled in domestic policy. He will have lost almost all power of initiative, though even with a Democratic Senate he will still have a certain freedom of manoeuvre.

But he will certainly be subject to a barrage of congressional inquiries and to close scrutiny. His ministers and aides will be required to testify to congressional committees. There will be investigations into the methods deployed in the struggle against terrorism, into the treatment of prisoners, and into the secret programmes of domestic surveillance.

The Democrats will be in a position to initiate legislation. The Californian Nancy Pelosi, who is likely to be the first **female** Speaker of the House of Representatives, is committed to "liberal" - ie, in American terms, left-wing - policies such as raising the minimum wage (from dollars 5.15 per hour to dollars 7.25), lowering the price of medicines and curbing the influence of lobbying firms. Mr Bush may temporise, or leave it to the Republicans in the Senate to chip away at these plans.

Of course, much American domestic policy either concerns us little, or arouses little interest beyond the US. Some of it does - environmental measures to combat climate change and trade policy, in which regard a Democratic House, indebted to the unions, may well adopt a more protectionist attitude. But, for the world in general, it is US foreign policy that is of most importance, and this is, for the most part, the prerogative of the president.

One must remember that the American constitution, with its separation of powers, is based on its framers' understanding of the 18th-century British constitution; and so the president is entrusted with the powers of an 18th-century British monarch. He is the commander-in-chief and is responsible for the direction of foreign policy. If the president's domestic powers are limited, Congress's powers with regard to foreign policy are equally so.

Opinion Focus: Election battle lost, but war will go on

So, Mr Bush's electoral rebuff will not bring an about-turn in Iraq. In any case, the Democrats themselves are divided on the issue of the war, and have no clear single policy. Only a few want an immediate withdrawal; most would be content with a gradual withdrawal and the publishing of a timetable for handing over responsibility to the Iraqi government.

This assumes, of course, that there will still be in a few months an identifiable and competent government there - a big assumption. Nevertheless, opinion polls suggest that a majority of Americans now want to see such a timetable in place; and there will be more pressure on Bush to satisfy this demand. So, his freedom of action is more constrained than it was.

In reality, however, Congress's influence on the Iraq war will remain marginal. It can refuse to allocate money for the prosecution of the war effort, but this would be a dangerous ploy: who wants to give the impression of letting down the troops on the ground? Nevertheless, 30 years ago, cuts in the military budget were one of the means employed to force a withdrawal from Vietnam.

So, there will be more uncertainty regarding the future direction of American policy, not so much in Iraq, where the freedom of manoeuvre is now very limited, but with regard to the other questions which agitate and disturb the Middle East.

For all the tough talk from the White House, it has already seemed unlikely that a military operation will be launched against Iran if it persists in its plans to develop nuclear weapons.

But what if there is a Hezbollah coup in Lebanon, backed by Syria? This is a real possibility, and a very dangerous one.

Paradoxical as it may seem, this electoral defeat may spur Mr Bush at last to make a real effort to revive the road map to peace between Israel and the Palestinians, if only because such an attempt offers his last chance to salvage something from his presidency. Certainly, Tony Blair, an even lamer duck than Mr Bush, will be urging him to move in that direction.

Anyone who hopes the Democratic victory will lead to the impeachment of the president is doomed to disappointment. Nancy Pelosi has ruled it out. "I don't want to hear a word about that," she has said. She has also warned that any commission of inquiry into the launching and conduct of the war won't be allowed to run out of control. No doubt, after years in opposition, revenge would seem sweet to many Democrats, but senior party figures know it would be a mistake to embark on such a campaign. After all, there is a presidential election only two years away, and the Democrats can't risk being portrayed as unpatriotic. In any case, a successful impeachment needs a two-thirds majority in the Senate, and there is no prospect of that.

Not all Republicans are dismayed by the defeat. Some think losing the House and the Senate might improve the party's chances in 2008, since the Republican candidate could then run as an outsider against Congress and Washington, always a popular, because populist, position.

Meanwhile, Mr Bush has a choice. Does he seek partners in Congress in order to govern as effectively as may be possible, or does he continue to attack the Democrats in order to prepare the ground for the presidential elections of 2008? Probably a bit of both. But anyone who looks for a sharp change in direction in Iraq is whistling in the wind. The war will continue, and it may well be that not even the rhetoric is modified. Mr Bush, after all, is not a pragmatist, but a true believer.

Load-Date: November 9, 2006

**Setting the record straight; FBI schools screenwriters about its
counterterrorism efforts**

Philadelphia Daily News

January 12, 2007 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 38

Length: 1050 words

Byline: PAUL BOND, The Hollywood Reporter

Body

FBI memo to Hollywood: If it's not too much trouble, could you please portray our counterterrorism efforts with a bit more realism?

Hoping for an answer in the affirmative, the FBI hosted its first workshop for screenwriters Wednesday at the Federal Building in Westwood, Calif.

"FBI - Crime Essential for Writers" played well with the standing-room-only audience of executives and writers from major and minor studios. Enthusiastic attendees had more questions than time allowed answers for, and few if any left the four-hour event early.

The FBI, more so than even the Department of Homeland Security, is the primary agency designated to investigate terrorism in the United States, and the terrorist threat it is most focused on comes from radical Islam, FBI special agent Greg Wing said.

With that in mind, Wing and an undercover agent who asked that his identity not be revealed, presented a whirlwind history of Islam, beginning with Sunni-Shiite hostilities in 682 AD.

The major terrorist group aligned with Sunni Muslims is al Qaeda, while Hezbollah, "the best terrorist organization there is," are Shiite Muslims, the undercover agent said.

He showed flags and logos of terrorist groups and explained that the colors of turbans worn by terrorism suspects could have significance. He also showed photos and video of al Qaeda training camps and torture rooms and pictures of unfortunate Americans who had been captives there. He showed photos of the suicide bombers who killed 17 U.S. sailors aboard the USS Cole in 2000 and pictures of the house where they built their bombs.

The undercover agent played phone messages from passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 93, which went down in a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001, and inspired the film "United 93." He also played audio from the cockpit of American Airlines Flight 11, the airplane Mohamed Atta flew into the World Trade Center that day.

Setting the record straight FBI schools screenwriters about its counterterrorism efforts

"Amazing," attendee Dave DiGilio said after the event.

DiGilio wrote the film "Eight Below" and created the upcoming ABC series "Traveler," about a couple of graduate students who might have been framed for a terrorist attack. He said his show portrays both "the good and the bad" about the FBI.

"Seeing the extent of the organization, and the passion and intellect of the agents, was impressive," he said after the event. "They're very creative. It's not the way they're usually portrayed."

Quite the point, which is why FBI public affairs specialist Betsy Glick helped create the workshop. She said that last year the FBI helped lend authenticity to 649 projects, usually films, TV shows and books.

Michael Kortan, section chief for the office of public affairs, gave attendees a brief lesson in the history of the FBI in film and TV, beginning with the 1935 James Cagney movie " 'G' Men," which he said was one of the first gangster movies to tell a story from the FBI's perspective.

Shortly thereafter, J. Edgar Hoover conceived of something he called "The Dillinger Rule" - the FBI had great stories to tell, so Hollywood ought to tell them, and make sure that the FBI were the good guys. And he wanted to know about anything FBI-related that Hollywood had in the works.

The 1965 Disney film "That Darn Cat!" really had Hoover on edge, Kortan said, because he feared that a film about an allergic agent assigned to follow around a cat would make the FBI look a tad silly, a reputation the bureau didn't need during the tumultuous 1960s.

Too often, Kortan said, the FBI is seen on film, unrealistically, as heavy-handed, bumbling and antagonistic toward other law-enforcement agencies. Of course, Hollywood isn't always unfriendly to the bureau.

Witness "The Silence of the Lambs," for example. The 1991 film earned Jodie Foster the best actress Oscar for her portrayal of FBI agent Clarice Starling, and Kortan credited the movie for some of the FBI's success in recruiting women.

"This is half the reason people get in writing - to live vicariously and absorb the details," said attendee Luke McMullen, who wrote an episode of "Alias" and is developing a project called "Samurai Girl."

FBI agents also showed off a map of the 779 real investigations of potential terrorist activity ongoing in Los Angeles and photos of a list of possible targets that included Grauman's Chinese Theatre, the Hollywood sign and Disneyland. They also showed photos of some of the equipment the FBI will have on hand as they stake out the 64th annual Golden Globe Awards on Monday.

Hollywood has been considered a potential target of Islamic terrorists since shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, when the FBI warned that a major film studio might be next.

Special agent George Steuer recalled Wednesday how FBI agents met with studio heads back then to tell them, "Hey, you're in this fight on terrorism."

He said the threat emanated from phone and e-mail intercepts between suspected terrorists. Although the FBI sifts through about 300 terrorism leads a day, the one against film studios was initially deemed credible after some corroboration and background checks. Details, though, remain classified.

"Eventually we vetted it and decided that there were no links here, just overseas chatter," he said.

Nevertheless, the studios were encouraged then to beef up their security measures. Some, including Disney and Warner Bros., quickly hired FBI agents on their security staffs.

Steuer, who has been helping Hollywood with FBI requests for five years, said he was in Baghdad in 2005, witnessing the locals buying and selling pirated copies of "Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith" the day it

Setting the record straight FBI schools screenwriters about its counterterrorism efforts

was released theatrically, making the point that the FBI is uniquely aware of Hollywood's influence even in a war zone.

Speaking after the symposium, the undercover FBI agent whose identity is protected said he purposely avoids Hollywood's treatment of modern terrorism, staying away from such movies as "World Trade Center" and "United 93" as well as TV programs like "The Path to 9/11."

"Movies don't come close," he said. "We lived a very traumatic event. It's never far from my heart."

His primary message to screenwriters? "Keep the FBI out of politics," he said. "Don't tag me Republican or Democrat. Don't suggest the FBI was better or worse under this president or that one. What we care about is protecting American lives."

Load-Date: January 12, 2007

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Israeli arms expert slams Gaza shelling

The Toronto Star

November 9, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A01

Length: 1079 words

Byline: Mitch Potter, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

One of the main architects of the Israeli weapons industry last night called on his government to end the tactic of artillery bombardment of the Gaza Strip after a volley of errant shells rained on civilian homes, killing 19 Palestinians.

Arms expert Bonen Zeev called the weapons system "too inaccurate to expect no civilian casualties."

The 15-minute Israeli cannon barrage over the hard-hit northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun killed 16 members of a single Palestinian family, the al-Athamnehs, including eight children aged 4 to 17 and seven women.

Several of the victims were killed in their sleep when the first of the shells blasted into two houses belonging to the Athamneh clan. The rest were cut down by shrapnel from 11 additional shell strikes after rushing outside to escape the early morning bombardment, which came just hours after the Israel Defence Force announced it was withdrawing from the besieged town after a weeklong hunt for Palestinian rocket launch crews.

Israeli leaders expressed regret and launched an immediate investigation into the circumstances of the attack, which injured 53 Palestinians, making it the worst single-day tragedy of its kind in four years. Palestinian leaders declared a three-day strike of mourning, amid vows of revenge from militant leaders in Gaza, the West Bank and Damascus.

The bloody scene at Beit Hanoun was eerily reminiscent of the explosion last June that killed eight members of a Palestinian family enjoying a picnic on a Gaza beach, an event that soon spiralled into tit-for-tat kidnappings and counterattacks that culminated eventually in Israel's war with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

A probe of the beach blast cleared the Israeli army of any wrongdoing, concluding a Palestinian-planted explosive was the likely cause.

Amid widespread international condemnation yesterday, military officials appeared to acknowledge responsibility for the shelling, which they described as "preventative" fire intended to strike a suspected Palestinian Qassam rocket launch site some 500 metres from the town.

Zeev, widely regarded as a founder of the Israeli military-industrial complex, told the Toronto Star Israel should end its practice of firing artillery into Gaza, calling the weapons system "too inaccurate to expect no civilian casualties."

Israeli arms expert slams Gaza shelling

"Artillery is a statistical weapon," said Zeev, using a military euphemism for devices designed to launch multiple projectiles over a wide area in the hope at least one will find its intended target.

"As such, it just isn't accurate. You feed in the co-ordinates, and 'dumb shells' fly, often 12 at a time. It is a mistake to use such weapons in built-up areas with a lot of civilians because it doesn't have the precision. No matter how precise your information is, mistakes can happen."

Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz yesterday halted the artillery fire, pending the outcome of an IDF probe, which is expected to provide preliminary answers as early as today.

The chorus of international concern was led by Alvaro de Soto, the UN Special Co-ordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, who said he was "shocked and appalled" at the shelling of Beit Hanoun, noting it came after assurances from Israeli officials that the weeklong IDF operation was coming to an end.

Israeli officials offered medical care for the wounded.

In a show of solidarity, Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas and President Mahmoud Abbas of the rival Fatah movement arrived together at one Shifa Hospital to donate blood for the wounded.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat condemned the killings, calling them "war crimes" that are certain to undermine Palestinian attempts to unite the militant Hamas party and secular Fatah movements under a unity government in the hope of resuming a political process with Israel.

"Israel must be told that its actions will not go unchecked and unpunished by the world. Palestinian lives are no less precious than Israeli, American or any other lives," he said.

Israel peace organizations, including B'Tselem and the Israel chapter of Physicians for Human Rights, called on the Israeli government to open a criminal investigation into the shelling.

Citing statistics showing as many as 96 Palestinian children have been killed in Gaza Strip during 2006, Physicians for Human Rights has joined other human rights groups to petition the Israeli High Court to outlaw artillery fire into the densely populated coastal territory.

Though Israel's operations in Gaza are intended to staunch the flow of homemade Qassam rockets into Israel, the country last night braced for a wave of deadlier Palestinian violence amid warnings from nearly every militant faction. Israeli officials were today expected to rule on whether to cancel a controversial gay pride parade scheduled for tomorrow in Jerusalem amid concerns an expected confrontation between marchers and opponents will provide too vulnerable a target for bombers.

The reaction of the ruling Hamas party exposed internal divisions when one prominent militant leader in Gaza urged the movement's supporters to attack American targets wherever they can find them, citing blanket U.S. support of Israel as justification. Officials with Hamas's political wing, which has long insisted its battle with Israel not spill beyond the region, renounced the statement, saying the movement's enemy remains Israel alone.

Khaled Meshaal, the exiled Hamas politburo chief, told reporters in Gaza the movement would "respond with deeds, not words."

The Beit Hanoun killings aroused new fears for the fate of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been held at an undisclosed location in Gaza since July after he was seized by Palestinian militant groups.

After months of Egyptian brokered talks for Shalit's release, Israel and the Palestinian leadership was believed to be close to a deal that would see the Israeli soldier go free in exchange for the release of as many as 1,000 of the estimated 9,000 Palestinians in Israeli custody. The deal is also believed to be tied to ongoing negotiations for a Palestinian unity government that would see the international community of aid donors, including Canada, end a nine-month boycott of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority.

Israeli arms expert slams Gaza shelling

Prime Minister Haniyeh yesterday called a halt to the unity talks in the wake of the Beit Hanoun attack, telling the Arabic news channel Al-Jazeera that Palestinians must instead "dedicate their efforts to face the Israeli aggression."

Graphic

KHALIL HAMRA AP Palestinians sit next to a pool of blood mixed with water in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun yesterday. Israeli tank shells killed at least 19 people, including eight children and seven women.

Load-Date: November 9, 2006

End of Document

A touch more tongue and Bushy clacker banter wouldn't go amiss

Canberra Times (Australia)

October 2, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 9

Length: 1024 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

BAD NEWS, I'm afraid, from Australia.

When sorrows come, they come not single spies but in battalions. First, the death by stingray of Steve Irwin, canoodler of crocodiles and copperheads. Next - as though the losing of one Australian male presages the loss of all - former leader of the Australian Labor Party Mark Latham - lamenting the overthrow of the fair dinkum Aussie battler by "metrosexual knobs and toss-bags".

And now the ruling by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission that while it remains allowable to call visiting English cricket supporters "Poms", "whingeing Poms" might just be pushing it.

Whatever it does to combat racism, that ruling settles the question for me of whether to go out this winter to support our cricketers in their attempt to keep the Ashes. If there's no prospect of my being called a whingeing Pom and having wine or worse thrown all over me, I might as well stay home and watch the whole sorry business solus on television.

I love the colours of Australia, I love the vastness of its skies, I love the hedonism of its people, their food, their drink, their laughter and their conversation, but most of all I love being on the receiving end of their rough companionship. To be called a "bastard" by a barload of emotional Australians - men or women - is right up there, as a humbling experience, with being hugged by stingrays.

But to have a mob of them in their little shorts and elasticated ankle boots - men or women - baying at you for being a whingeing Pom, is a privilege which exceeds even that. What the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities people never understand is that for Australians, abuse is music.

For them, invective is as melodious as lovetalk; indeed it is love talk, for they know no other way of showing their affection.

In Britain, we tell people we admire - or we would if we admired anyone - that they are wonderful human beings. In Australia you call them bastards, drongos, galahs, or, if they happen to be English, whingeing Poms. Myself, I favour the Australian way.

The other side of a compliment is always an insult. We saw that last week in the compliments Brown and Blair traded.

A touch more tongue and Bushy clacker banter wouldn't go amiss

Hypocrisy, we called it. But it isn't hypocrisy.

It is simply the slippery way of words.

At the heart of language is ambivalence. To praise is to hint at dispraise. To ridicule is to hint at esteem. Australians just dispense with the hint.

I accept that this emotional shortcut might be difficult for some to swallow. Mark Latham's tributary tears for the extinction of the Australian male - all those "mates and good blokes replaced by nervous wrecks, metrosexual knobs and toss-bags" - will not move everyone.

But I ask you to attend to the poetry of his oration. Never mind whether it's true. Never mind whether - as most Australian newspapers and every Australian feminist have been quick to point out - mates and good blokes are still as thick on the ground in Oz as those comatose snakes to which Steve Irwin was so unnaturally attached.

And never mind that Mark Latham is reported to have been somewhat over- blokish in the fist and sheila department himself. It's the music that counts. I'm not sure I even know what a metrosexual knob is, but anything that inspires such exuberance of insult can't be all bad.

If the more demented of our citizens could stand with their flaming placards in Trafalgar Square and chant "We are Hezbollah!", I see no reason why the less warlike of us shouldn't with equal pride proclaim "We are metrosexual knobs!" Toss-bags, I grant you, are another matter. Though here again the music is decisive. Allow the mellifluousness of metrosexual to linger in your mind long enough to wash over toss- bags as well as knobs - not any old toss- bags, but metrosexual toss-bags - and you have a picture of busy urban degradation - a city in a picturesque fervour of indecency - that Ben Jonson himself couldn't have bettered.

Have I mentioned that the title of the book from which I'm quoting is A Conga Line of Suckholes? If I'm not mistaken, that was how the author, when he was leader of the Opposition, described the Australian Government for supporting the war in Iraq.

A sentiment many people in Britain shared, though they lacked the eloquence and boldness to express it anything like so well. All right, suckholes isn't up to scratch, but a conga line is good, with its suggestion of fixed grins and automatus obedience, an indecorous and interminable procession, of one mind and therefore of no mind at all. As in a conga line of Anglo- Hezbollahists.

And now, if you are beginning to get a taste for this, may I draw to your attention Latham's personal attack on the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard - a man who "has got his tongue up Bush's clacker that often the poor guy must think he's got an extra haemorrhoid".

I don't ask you to dwell too precisely on the image, but "Bush's clacker" is masterful.

Onomatopoeic, ventriloquial, sublime in the heterogeneities it yokes together. As for Howard's tongue being a problem for Bush's clacker, rather than the other way around - a haemorrhoidal discomfort which furnishes the near impossible: a reason for pitying George Bush - such Rabelaisian grossness needs no commendation from me.

That Latham lost the election to John Howard only goes to prove how unreliable electorates are. Here was a man who spoke as the Australian people spoke, and the Australian people - the toss-bags! - rejected him. It would do our political system no harm, however, to import a little of Latham's louche demotic.

We have been bored rigid by politicians for weeks. We were bored rigid in Brighton.

And we will be bored rigid in Bournemouth in the weeks to come.

A touch more tongue and Bushy clacker banter wouldn't go amiss, it seems to me. A few more ministers forever imprinted on our minds in a conga line of suckhole acquiescence. The health of the nation would have been better

A touch more tongue and Bushy clacker banter wouldn't go amiss

served, anyway, had Brown and Blair long ago called each other toss-bag. And they might have learned to hate each other less. It's only when you've been comprehensively abused that you learn what mateship really is.

- The Independent

Load-Date: October 1, 2006

End of Document

All style, with just a dash of substance: Tyler Brule's new Monocle magazine aims to be all things to certain people

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

March 6, 2007 Tuesday

National Edition

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Section: ARTS & LIFE; Pg. AL1; Notebook

Length: 1052 words

Byline: Robert Fulford, National Post

Body

Those who bring a new magazine into the world feel called upon to explain why it meets a need, fills a niche, performs a function, does a job. Tyler Brule, the Winnipeg-born journalist who founded Wallpaper* in 1996 and now publishes Monocle, has learned how to explain why the world needs what he makes. Monocle's first issue runs 242 pages, sells in Canada for \$12 a copy and promises to be "a fresh focus on global affairs, business, culture, design and all you need in life."

Of course that describes half the magazines in the world, but Brule and his colleagues also plan to create "a community of the most interested and interesting people in the world." The staff considers Monocle truly global, published in London but expected to sell around the world, ideally about 200,000 copies 10 times a year. Like every editor's dream, it will be at once stylish and substantial. The first issue deals with increasing Japanese militarization as well as retro Italian bicycles and jackets made of what Monocle calls "baby Mongolian cashmere."

Readers, Monocle's promotion material insists, will be "well-heeled, well-informed opinion makers." Put plainly, Monocle is just what the world needs, another magazine for the rich. Its "serious" content (bit of politics, bit of finance) will appeal to people who fit The Economist's demographic but can't handle all those words.

The first issue begins with 16 pages of high-class advertising, starting with Cartier, but for Brule that's only one potential revenue stream. Ideally, the Web site and the printed magazine should work together, both bringing in money. One printed item deals with Robert Logevall's film, All God's Children Can Dance, based on a Haruki Murakami story. If you go to www.monocle.com you can see a trailer Logevall made just for the magazine. (The film looks deadly, but that's another topic.) Elsewhere, online items repeat what the articles say, but no doubt they'll soon produce material interesting enough to attract ads, the way publications like The New York Times and Slate do now.

Every printed issue will also include a Japanese manga comic book about a ninja who works in Copenhagen as a designer to hide his real profession, a secret agent for an emerging world power, Japan. Judging by the first effort, this isn't among Brule's finest ideas.

Monocle, like its advertisers, has products for sale. "Working with a team in Tokyo, we've developed a collection of bespoke bags." Photos show a shoulder bag, a tote bag and an overnight bag, all manufactured for Monocle

All style, with just a dash of substance: Tyler Brule's new Monocle magazine aims to be all things to certain people

readers, but surely the word "bespoke" is misapplied; it means "made to order," not "made to be advertised in a magazine."

The Monocle editors identify with retailers, manufacturers and designers as much as with consumers. They see the world as an infinity of sales opportunities for the ingenious. They tell us about a Norwegian, Johan Ringdahl, designer of "understated galoshes" in purple, green, black and brown, an update of the traditional overshoe. He's also about to launch an "idiosyncratic take on the classic umbrella." That last sentence sums up Monocle: Somehow, the umbrella that impresses them will be both classic and idiosyncratic. Who could ask for anything more?

From Monocle we learn about an underwear crisis in Saudi Arabia. The kingdom imports a vast quantity of lingerie but has trouble selling it. Since few women are allowed to work, men staff the lingerie shops; women find that embarrassing. "The Kingdom has remained torn between the need to shield its women from lecherous salesmen and the desire to keep them hidden from the public exposure that a sales job would bring." Another story says hanging out at the mall has become a fashion among young people in India, now that there are malls where they can hang out. India had two malls in 2000 and now has 250. The landlords think hanging out is good for business. The young buy clothes that will look good on their next visit to the mall.

Monocle editors haven't quite figured out how to address their readers. They don't pause to explain a term like USP (in advertising it means Unique Selling Proposition or Unique Selling Point), which many people won't recognize. On the other hand, they think they have to tell us that you can judge a city's prosperity by counting the construction cranes at work.

Monocle defines everybody, even tyrants, by what they wear. Describing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, for example, the editors pass over his nuclear bomb, racism and connections with Syria and Hezbollah, then buckle down to what really matters: His fashion strategy.

Ahmadinejad brands himself as a man of the people and apparently wants to look like a bus driver on his day off. He wears cheap loafers, white socks, polyester pants, and an open-necked shirt (mandator for revolutionary Muslims). The jacket is a bit of a surprise, usually a beige windbreaker, Chinese-made, which Ahmadinejad personally buys at Tehran's central bazaar for the equivalent of \$10 or \$15. As a fashion item it hasn't caught on, perhaps because educated Iranians find Ahmadinejad's populist style as humiliating as his Ph D in traffic management.

Monocle says the president consistently wears a five-day beard (though it looks more like 10 days to me). He never shaves but neatly clips. Shaving would be un-Islamic and an untrimmed full-flowing beard would look distastefully Sunni.

I think of Brule as Mr. Diacritical, because his self-invented last name applies two diacritical signs, a circumflex and an acute accent, to just five letters. He resembles in certain ways Bonnie Fuller, another Canadian editor working on the international scene. Her New York gossip magazines and his style magazines both project an emphatic self-image, both organize their material for instant impact and both cover most subjects in fewer than 500 words. Brule lacks Fuller's obsessive attention to detail (his picture captions, unlike hers, are cursory) but compensates by a wider curiosity.

The creation of any new magazine fills its publishers with a giddy sense of self-importance, but Monocle has come up with a spectacular new expression of this feeling. At monocle.com right now you can find a digital clock that tells the number of months, weeks, days, hours, minutes and even seconds we must wait for the appearance of the next issue.

Load-Date: March 6, 2007

All style, with just a dash of substance: Tyler Brule's new Monocle magazine aims to be all things to certain people

End of Document

Multicultural madness needs such antidotes

The Australian (Australia)
October 18, 2006 Wednesday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Opinion / Op Ed; Pg. 12

Length: 1134 words

Byline: JANET ALBRECHTSEN

Body

MATP

A twentysomething visitor from Britain brings us the message that there should be no special rules for Muslims

IN another sign of predictable cultural capitulation, a check-in employee with British Airways is banned from wearing a small Christian cross but Muslim and Sikh employees may wear turbans and the hijab. Little wonder, then, that Munira Mirza is so refreshing. This young woman, reared as a Muslim, says it's time to scrap multiculturalism and to stop defining people as members of a minority group. Specifically, it's time for our political leaders to stop engaging with Muslims as Muslims. They are citizens; no special rules apply.

Mirza pulls few punches when exposing the West's cultural surrender. We all know the problem. Free speech in the polite West is a little clogged up these days. A Dutch film-maker, Theo van Gogh, is slain for making *Submission*, a movie critical of Islam. The scriptwriter, Dutch political activist Ayan Hirsi Ali, is forced to live under threat of death. Amateurish Danish cartoons of the prophet Mohammed unleash orchestrated madness across the globe. A nun is killed in Somalia because local Muslims don't like the Pope musing about Muslim attitudes to violence. A French teacher is hiding, under police protection, after describing Mohammed as a "merciless war leader". And so it goes on.

When it's easier to stay quiet for fear of provoking violence from some Muslims or attracting accusations of racism from Western appeasers, then the West is already living under the shadow of Islamic fascism. We're stuck with silent feminists who prefer cultural rights and the burka over women's rights and the silly noise of some on the so-called progressive side of politics marching to the tune of "We're all Hezbollah now".

Which is why, in the battle of ideas, Mirza is a much needed and perhaps most unlikely warrior. This twentysomething petite British woman who visited Australia last week says multiculturalism has caused the West's cultural timidity. She isn't talking about the simple acceptance of diversity originally sold to us as multiculturalism and embraced by Australians. Multiculturalism has gone far beyond whether to eat Thai, Indian, Italian or Chinese food.

Particularly in her native Britain, but also across large swaths of the Western world, multiculturalism has become a far bigger and more insidious concept during the past three decades. Its basic proposition is cultural relativism: that all cultures are of equal value, none can be criticised (except for the majority one), and that encouraging integration is racist.

Multicultural madness needs such antidotes

In Mirza's Britain, this has delivered a tribalised society in which identity politics reigns supreme.

In this world, victimhood is especially prized. Mirza told The Australian that multiculturalism "encourages groups to claim exclusion in order to get attention. In order to get resources, you have to prove your weakness." In a competitive multicultural marketplace, groups vie for most victimised status. This political culture disenfranchises people as individuals, rejecting that they are moral agents responsible for their own future.

At a Centre for Independent Studies lecture last Wednesday, Mirza told her audience that when she was at school in Britain a decade ago, few Muslim girls wore headscarves. Now Muslim girls, even those whose mothers don't wear the scarf, are choosing to put it on as an identifier of difference and oppression, the oppressor being the West.

Multiculturalism makes the private part of you -- your religion -- your most valuable public asset. And it's off bounds to criticise any part of it.

Just ask Jack Straw, the leader of Britain's House of Commons, who was recently dubbed a terrorist guilty of inciting religious hatred for raising the problem of interacting with veiled Muslim women.

That powerful multicultural concoction of separateness and victimhood has left the West fractured, neutered of a confident and united identity. The consequences have been far ranging, according to Mirza. Most acutely, it has fuelled home-grown terrorism.

Young Muslim boys such as the London bombers -- born, reared and educated in the West -- have gone looking for meaning elsewhere because, Mirza says, "being British is so discredited in this country ... The most compelling thing about the al-Qa'ida identity is its victimhood status; it is the ultimate logic of multiculturalism, with its claim that it represents an oppressed minority."

The multicultural message has wrought other disastrous consequences documented by Mirza. Culture Vultures, a book she edited earlier this year, showcases how the arts have been subsumed by an ethnocentric emphasis that promotes wasteful projects with little artistic merit. In the workplace, multiculturalism has spawned diversity training because difference needs to be micro-managed. The premise is that without expert training in how to deal with difference, pudden-headed workers will succumb to their inherent bigoted, racist tendencies.

But, as Mirza points out, emphasising difference through diversity training ends up dividing us more. The ostensibly different ones are reminded of their difference, encouraged to treat every slight as an exhibition of racism. And the rest, their fellow workers, are left paralysed in their interactions for fear of being labelled a racist.

Australia has not yielded to the levels of multicultural madness infecting Britain and Europe, which is why Mirza's message is both a warning for Australia and a sign that perhaps the intellectual tide is turning in Britain. She says the answer is to stop the politics of tribalisation and start being unashamedly proud about the Enlightenment values that lie at the core of Western liberal democracies, values such as freedom of speech.

Where Mirza is less than convincing is in her tendency to ignore Islam as part of the problem confronting the West. When asked whether there was something about Islam that explained the rise of Islamic terrorism, she said all religions could be twisted to suit warped agendas of violence. Perhaps. But disaffected Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs are not plotting jihad: a point the Pope wished to raise in his speech at a German university before being pummelled into apologetic appeasement.

Following that fracas, Marcello Pera -- who in 2004 co-wrote with the then cardinal Joseph Ratzinger a book titled Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam -- told the International Herald Tribune it was legitimate for those in the West to ask if jihad is a necessary part of some interpretations of Islam. It's not a comfortable topic but it goes with the terrain of free speech. And on that score, as Mirza said at a lunch last week, "we could all do with a little more courage, frankly". Amen to that.

janeta@bigpond.net.au

Multicultural madness needs such antidotes

Load-Date: October 17, 2006

End of Document

Festival perceptions

Aberdeen Press and Journal

August 8, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 15

Length: 1068 words

Body

Sir, - Sorry, Lesley (Hart), but I'm with Nicola (Barry) on this one. You've been too egocentric on Nicola's comments (the Press and Journal, August 2), and your response (the Press and Journal, August 5) confirms that you took them unduly personally. This spat between the two *female* columnists over the Edinburgh Festival has arisen on account of the perspectives taken by each: while Nicola has viewed the event from the upper circle, Lesley speaks from centre stage. Therein lies the problem. While both arguments have their merits, Nicola's is surely the more circumspect.

I suspect Nicola's main gripe upon contemporary drama is the same as my own - the fact that all serious political themes have been kept in the wings. A key function of the theatre, that of precipitating political change, has tragically been upstaged by mundane, elitist, bourgeois preoccupations. Any hint of class conflict in society has been killed off even before the curtain rises.

Regrettably, discussions about etiquette and fine wines are indulged in to the conclusion of the third act. Now, it is unseemly for dramatists to sully theatres with any reference to the plight of those supine upon pavements, past whom the audience walk nonchalantly after the performance.

You've massively over-reacted on this one, Lesley.

Take it from someone who enjoys both your columns.

Archie Beaton,

93 Mackintosh Road,

Inverness.

Gatherings and games

SIR, - I thought it only right and proper to attempt to clear up the confusion in Christina M. Palmer's mind about the true definition of Highland gatherings and games (Letters, August 3).

It would appear that as far back as King Malcolm Canmore's time, so-called "gatherings" were held and feats of strength took place to pick out the fittest and strongest fighting men available.

Leaving out the fighting element, the gatherings have continued throughout the centuries to the present day.

Festival perceptions

Logically, of course, games could not take place without a gathering of people. The size of the event does not come into it.

Thus, the proper description of these proceedings would be "Highland gathering and games", the games part being ancillary to the whole. I would agree with Christina Palmer that the so-called celebrities now appearing at the Lonach are, indeed, draws for some people.

I would also agree that being proud and honoured to march annually with the famed Lonach Highlanders for the last 30 years, I am, indeed, a fan of the Lonach and the splendid people of Strathdon.

Iain D, MacCallum,

Cnoc Uane,

Braes of Kilmorack, Beaully.

Middle East situation

SIR, - I refer to Pete Salisbury's letter (the Press and Journal, August 4). Once again, we have the moral pressure of the Holocaust thrust upon us, as apparent justification for Israel's appalling action in the Middle East.

Convenient as it might be, history did not start with the action of *Hezbollah*, but is part of the ongoing anger, fear and resentment felt towards Israel for its deliberate policy of expansionism, deliberate control of crucial water supplies, deliberate restriction of movement of supplies/people and the deliberate destruction of infrastructure and the means whereby the population can earn a livelihood.

Couple this with the importation of 1.5million Jews from Russia and elsewhere to bolster the population, and yet deny the legitimate rights of 600,000 Palestinians to return to their homes, and the fact that Israel has consistently refused to adhere to repeated UN resolutions, then there should be no surprise that hostilities continue. I would suggest your readers start with the UN history of events and draw their own conclusions.

Graeme Craig,

Auld Kirk, Kennethmont.

Theory about road accidents

SIR, - I write with reference to your story headed "Accident expert in road deaths theory" (July 28). I feel that some salient points need clarification.

I realise that my history influences my interest in the more obscure reasons for road accidents, as my time at the Accident Investigation Branch (AIB) was wholly concerned with the "difficult" investigations.

These were all flying accidents. In the automotive sphere, I have always been intrigued by the regular, but thankfully rare, number of cases of vehicles suddenly and mysteriously leaving the road.

In a recent case, I noted that the vehicle was a van, and something clicked in my mind. Following the discovery of carbon-monoxide gas in aircraft, some tests were done on road vehicles, and square-ended vans figured prominently in the risk category.

In our two worst cases in aircraft, the gas came not from the exhaust but from the crankcase. In cars, the danger points were oil-filter caps, dipsticks and poorly fitting camcovers, all on the wrong side of the catalyser.

Your reporter's account of her conversation with the Automobile Association does not impress me. Back in the 1970s, horrendous accounts of poor garage work triggered a full investigation and a worrying report. The first body to leap to the defence of the garage industry was the AA.

Festival perceptions

I make no claim to infallibility, but a possible cause of about 3% of mysterious road accidents is carbon monoxide poisoning. The effect of such poisoning is increased vastly by even modest amounts of alcohol.

Rob Wilson,

21 Golf Road, Brora.

Fund for Marty

SIR, - I was deeply saddened to read in the Press and Journal that Marty Layman-Mendonca, who was allegedly attacked on the Great Glen Way, is unlikely to recover from being in a coma.

It is deplorable and shocking that her injuries were sustained while she was holidaying in Scotland. Now her family and friends are hoping to return her home, which no doubt will involve them in enormous cost. In the past, the people of Scotland have been most helpful and magnanimous with their kindness and generosity to visitors and it would be a magnificent gesture if a fund could be started to help this most unfortunate woman to return home to her loved ones.

I will kick off the fund with £100.

James Murray,

Murray & Esson,

250 George Street, Aberdeen.

Tommy Sheridan case

SIR, - I wonder if there is any significance in the fact that Tommy Sheridan's brother-in-law, Andrew McFarlane, (whose name cropped up in crucial evidence regarding alleged key sexual encounters) was not called as a witness? Which side would have benefited from his truthful evidence, I wonder?

The battle is far from over by the looks of things.

Gerald Cunningham,

62 Gladstone Place, Aberdeen.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes

hollywoodreporter.com

January 11, 2007 Thursday

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Section: HOMEPAGE; TOP STORY 3

Length: 1051 words

Byline: Paul Bond

Body

FBI memo to Hollywood: If it's not too much trouble, could you please portray our counterterrorism efforts with a bit more realism?

Hoping for an answer in the affirmative, the FBI hosted its first workshop for screenwriters Wednesday at the Federal Building in Westwood.

"FBI -- Crime Essential for Writers" played well with the standing-room-only audience of executives and writers from several major and minor studios. Enthusiastic attendees had more questions than time allowed answers for, and few if any left the four-hour event early.

The FBI, more so than even the Department of Homeland Security, is the primary agency designated to investigate terrorism in the U.S., and the terrorist threat it is most focused on comes from radical Islam, FBI special agent Greg Wing said.

With that in mind, Wing, along with an undercover agent who asked that his identity not be revealed, presented a whirlwind history of Islam, beginning with Sunni-Shiite hostilities in 682 AD.

The major terrorist group aligned with Sunni Muslims is al-Qaida, while **Hezbollah**, "the best terrorist organization there is," are Shiite Muslims, the undercover agent said.

He showed flags and logos of terrorist groups and explained that the colors of turbans worn by terrorism suspects could have significance. He also showed photos and video of al-Qaida training camps and torture rooms and pictures of unfortunate Americans who had been captives there. He showed photos of the suicide bombers who killed 17 U.S. sailors aboard the USS Cole in 2000 and pictures of the house where they built their bombs.

The undercover agent played phone messages from passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 93, which went down in a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001, and inspired the film "United 93." He also played audio from the cockpit of American Airlines Flight 11, the airplane Mohamed Atta flew into the World Trade Center that day.

FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes

"Amazing," attendee Dave DiGilio said after the event.

DiGilio wrote the film "Eight Below" and created the upcoming ABC series "Traveler," about a couple of graduate students who might have been framed for a terrorist attack. He said his show portrays both "the good and the bad" about the FBI.

"Seeing the extent of the organization, and the passion and intellect of the agents, was impressive," he said after the event. "They're very creative. It's not the way they're usually portrayed."

Quite the point, which is why FBI public affairs specialist Betsy Glick helped create the workshop. She said that last year the FBI helped lend authenticity to 649 projects, usually films, TV shows and books.

Michael Kortan, section chief for the office of public affairs, gave attendees a brief lesson in the history of the FBI in film and TV, beginning with the 1935 James Cagney movie " 'G' Men," which he said was one of the first gangster movies to tell a story from the FBI's perspective.

Shortly thereafter, J. Edgar Hoover conceived of something he called "The Dillinger Rule" -- the FBI had great stories to tell, so Hollywood ought to tell them, and make sure that the FBI were the good guys. And he wanted to know about anything FBI-related that Hollywood had in the works.

The 1965 Disney film "That Darn Cat!" really had Hoover on edge, Kortan said, because he feared that a film about an allergic agent assigned to follow around a cat would make the FBI look a tad silly, a reputation the bureau didn't need during the tumultuous 1960s.

Too often, Kortan said, the FBI is seen on film, unrealistically, as heavy-handed, bumbling and antagonistic toward other law-enforcement agencies. Of course, Hollywood isn't always unfriendly to the bureau.

Witness "The Silence of the Lambs," for example. The 1991 film earned Jodie Foster the best actress Oscar for her portrayal of FBI agent Clarice Starling, and Kortan credited the movie for some of the FBI's success in recruiting women.

"This is half the reason people get in writing -- to live vicariously and absorb the details," said attendee Luke McMullen, who wrote an episode of "Alias" and is developing a project called "Samurai Girl."

FBI agents also showed off a map of the 779 real investigations of potential terrorist activity ongoing in Los Angeles and photos of a list of possible targets that included Grauman's Chinese Theatre, the Hollywood sign and Disneyland. They also showed photos of some of the equipment the FBI will have on hand as they stake out the 64th annual Golden Globe Awards on Monday.

Hollywood has been considered a potential target of Islamic terrorists since shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, when the FBI warned that a major film studio might be next.

Special agent George Steuer recalled Wednesday how FBI agents met with studio heads back then to tell them, "Hey, you're in this fight on terrorism."

He said the threat emanated from telephone and e-mail intercepts between suspected terrorists. Although the FBI sifts through about 300 terrorism leads a day, the one against film studios was initially deemed credible after some corroboration and background checks. Details, though, remain classified.

"Eventually we vetted it and decided that there were no links here, just overseas chatter," he said.

Nevertheless, the studios were encouraged then to beef up their security measures. Some, including Disney and Warner Bros., quickly hired FBI agents on their security staffs.

Steuer, who has been helping Hollywood with FBI requests for five years, said he was in Baghdad in 2005, witnessing the locals buying and selling pirated copies of "Star Wars: Episode III -- Revenge of the Sith" the day it

FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes

was released theatrically, making the point that the FBI is uniquely aware of Hollywood's influence even in a war zone.

Speaking after the symposium, the undercover FBI agent whose identity is protected said he purposely avoids Hollywood's treatment of modern terrorism, staying away from such movies as "World Trade Center" and "United 93" as well as TV programs like "The Path to 9/11."

"Movies don't come close," he said. "We lived a very traumatic event. It's never far from my heart."

His primary message to screenwriters? "Keep the FBI out of politics," he said. "Don't tag me Republican or Democrat. Don't suggest the FBI was better or worse under this president or that one. What we care about is protecting American lives."

Load-Date: January 16, 2007

End of Document

News Summary

The New York Times
August 1, 2006 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1159 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-10

Israel Continues Airstrikes After Promising a Pause

Israel poured soldiers and artillery shells into southern Lebanon and vowed to press ahead with its war on Hezbollah. It also made a number of airstrikes after promising a 48-hour pause in its air campaign. A1

President Bush called the Israeli air attack on an apartment building in Qana, Lebanon, that killed more than 50 civilians "awful" but continued to resist calling on Israel to accept an immediate cease-fire.

A8

Tarek Mitri, left, Lebanon's acting foreign minister, asked the United Nations Security Council to press for an immediate cease-fire in the war with Israel and to order an international inquiry into the Israeli bombing of the southern Lebanese village of Qana that killed dozens of civilians, many of them children. A8

Iraqis Intensify Rebuke of Israel

Iraqi clerics and officials, including Vice President Adel Abdul-Mahdi, left, delivered their stiffest rebuke yet over the airstrikes on Lebanon, condemning Israel for the civilian casualties, even as shootings, bombings and mass kidnappings continued to plague their nation. A10

Castro Announces Surgery

Fidel Castro temporarily relinquished his presidential powers to his brother Raul and told Cubans that he had undergone surgery. A6

NATO Takes Afghan Command

NATO, in one of the most difficult tasks of its history, took over command of international forces from the United States in southern Afghanistan, where the fight against the Taliban insurgency has turned more deadly than at any time since American forces ousted the militant Islamist movement in 2001. A10

U.N. Gives Iran a Deadline

News Summary

In the United Nations Security Council's first move on the subject of the Iranian nuclear program, it passed a resolution demanding that Tehran suspend its uranium-enrichment and reprocessing work by the end of the month or face the possibility of sanctions. A3

Sri Lankan Truce May Be Over

The Sri Lankan truce between rebels and the government seemed in jeopardy as government forces and rebels clashed over control of an irrigation canal. A rebel leader said the government had started the war, forcing the rebels to retaliate, while the government said its advance was an attempt to secure access to water for 15,000 Sinhalese, who make up the country's ethnic majority. A6

Costly Russian Pipeline Leak

Roughly 11,000 gallons of crude oil leaked from the 2,500-mile-long Druzhba pipeline in Russia, briefly shutting down a major export route and causing prices to spike to about \$75 a barrel on world oil markets. A6

NATIONAL A11-13

School Board Election Focuses on Evolution

After a conservative Republican majority on the Kansas State Board of Education adopted science standards challenging Darwin's theory of evolution, moderate Republicans and Democrats are mounting a counterattack to retake power on the board in an election today. A1

Debate on Morning-After Pill

The Food and Drug Administration said it was moving toward endorsing the sale of the morning-after pill without a prescription for women 18 and older, signaling what may be the end of one of the most controversial health policy debates of the Bush administration. A1

Push for Redeployment

Leading Congressional Democrats have called on President Bush to begin a phased redeployment of troops by the end of this year, and for American forces in Iraq to make a transition to a "more limited mission." A13

Attacker's Parents Apologize

The parents of a Muslim man accused of shooting to death a woman and wounding five other people at a Jewish nonprofit agency last week wrote letters to Jewish groups saying they "don't want this to be seen as anything but the act of an ill person," a lawyer for the family said. A11

Guantanamo Leader Retires

Maj. Gen. Geoffrey D. Miller, left, who commanded detention operations at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and helped organize the interrogation process at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, retired from the military, officials said. A13

OBITUARIES B7

Ezra Fleischer

An Israeli poet and scholar whose work helped shed new light on the development of the early synagogue and Jewish prayer, he was 78. B7

NEW YORK/REGION B1-6

News Summary

As Heat Wave Threatens, Mayor Urges Conservation

Mayor Bloomberg, bracing for triple-digit temperatures, declared a heat emergency in New York and urged businesses, residents and city employees to conserve energy to avert a citywide blackout like the one that crippled western Queens for more than a week. A1

Abuse of Girl Was Suspected

A pediatrician who examined a 2-year-old Bronx girl who the police say died at the hands of her mother's companion, said he told a hospital that he suspected the girl was being abused, but did not contact child welfare officials -- as required by law -- saying he believed it was enough to notify the hospital. B1

Voters Shift in Connecticut

Thousands of unaffiliated Connecticut voters have registered as Democrats in recent weeks, apparently eager to vote in the tightly contested Aug. 8 Senate primary between Senator Joseph I. Lieberman and his antiwar challenger Ned Lamont. B5

SPORTSTUESDAY D1-6

Test Results Suggest Doping

Tests performed on the Tour de France winner Floyd Landis's initial urine sample showed that testosterone in his system came from an external source, and not from inside his own body, according to a person with knowledge of the results. D1

ARTS E1-10

New Marketing for Broadway

Live Theatrical Events, the product of a partnership between a corporate cousin of Nielsen's television rating unit and Broadway.com, is using Hollywood-style data-mining techniques and the Internet to contact hundreds of thousands of theatergoers and change the way shows are marketing themselves, on and off Broadway. E1

BUSINESS DAY C1-12

Doctors and Heart Implants

Until recently, defibrillators were typically implanted by highly trained heart device specialists. But since last year, when the government agreed to pay for tens of thousands of more patients annually to get such devices, many new practitioners have entered the field. A1

Investigation of Tax Shelters

So many super-rich Americans evade taxes using offshore accounts that law enforcement cannot control the growing misconduct, according to a Senate report that provides the most detailed look ever at high-level tax schemes. C1

Japan's Auto Milestone

Hitting a milestone, Japanese carmakers produced more vehicles abroad than at home for the first time last fiscal year, an industry group announced. C1

Black Images in the Media

News Summary

A caricature playing on stereotypes of heavy black women as boisterous and sometimes aggressive is starting to appear more often in television commercials, troubling some marketers and media scholars. C1

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<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

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We must challenge the giants of evil in our quest for peace

Yorkshire Post

August 16, 2006

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Length: 997 words

Body

John Sentamu

John Sentamu is the Archbishop of York. This week he has given up a planned seven-day family holiday in Austria to spend a week sleeping rough and living on a liquid diet to raise awareness and raise prayers for the conflict in Lebanon and Israel.

AROUND my neck I wear a cross given to me in South America soon after the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero. At its base are inscribed his words: "Peace will flower when love and justice pervade our environment."

The events of the past few weeks, both globally and domestically, show how far we are, as a world and as a nation, from that place which Romero describes.

Since the beginning of the crisis in the Middle East I have received letters and calls from people across Yorkshire and throughout the country asking: "What can I do?"

People have felt helpless, they have felt bewildered but they wanted to do something in response to the suffering they have been watching on their televisions, hearing on their radios and reading in their newspapers.

We can all do something. That is the message which I want to give to those who have been coming to join with me in prayers and lighting candles for peace. We can each of us make our own contribution to creating the more peaceful, loving and just environment which Romero described. Not only can we do it, but we must do it. And the time for such action is now.

During the coverage of the conflict in the Middle East I saw two images that had a deep impact and remain with me.

The first was of an eight-year-old Lebanese girl who had lost her right eye after as a result of an Israeli air strike. Her left eye was also damaged and the picture of her made it clear that it was going to take time for her to recover from her injuries.

Over the pictures of this hospitalised child, the voice of a reporter told of how truly desperate her situation had become - what she didn't yet know, was that her father, mother and brother had all died in the air strike.

The second image was of an 85-year-old woman in northern Israel. A Katyusha rocket fired by Hezbollah had landed right next to where she was living, leaving her lucky to be alive.

All her neighbours had fled the area, but some people had been left behind: the elderly, the infirm and the poor. This woman fell into all those categories and so she remained in northern Israel, wondering if the next incoming rocket was going to be the last sound she ever heard.

We must challenge the giants of evil in our quest for peace

These images remained with me because both of these innocent victims of the conflict could have been members of my own family. The little girl might have been my own niece, the Israeli woman my grandmother or mother.

Hopefully, the ceasefire now in place will mean that these two, and hundreds of thousands of others in the Middle East, can begin to rebuild their shattered lives. However, like those returning to their abandoned homes, for those of us committed to peace, the journey has only just begun.

We live in a small global village and that village is threatened by violence. Whether it is in the skies above the Middle East or our own skies, the threats of terror and violence are close at hand.

These threats to our common humanity need to be challenged, not with more violence, but with a form of resistance borne of love and peace.

As Martin Luther King wrote: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." For me, war is a journey of no return. We must find a better way.

My seven-day vigil of prayer and fasting is a rallying call to people of all faiths and none, to encourage them to feel that there is something that can be done.

The United Nations has a role, diplomacy has a role and the peacekeeping forces have a role to play in bringing this particular conflict to an end. But we as people also have a role to play in showing our common humanity with all those who are suffering.

If we are to challenge the violence that threatens our world, both domestically and globally, we need to begin first with ourselves.

Peace begins in our own hearts and our own homes, with our neighbours and colleagues. Peace requires each of us to make a sacrifice, which sometimes means putting our own needs second.

My fast is symbolic of this and is why I am asking others to join me in missing a meal for day, or giving up something else, and giving the money they would have spent to one of the charities working for reconstruction in the Middle East.

People from all over the country, and from abroad, have been speaking to me here in York Minster since I began my vigil, coming together for prayer and to light a candle for peace.

One man from South Africa changed his travel plans to Europe so that he could spend the week here, joining in with the vigil. A family from Australia said they could not leave the UK without first having come to spend time at the Minster in prayer for peace, while another man apologised for not being able to fast with me because of his diabetes. Rather, he said, he would give up his beer and drink tea instead. The £20 he would save has already been donated.

So my call to everyone is to join me in prayer, join me in fasting join me in providing a meal for every displaced person - especially women and children - and medicine for the sick; and at a future date be part of the reconstruction of the areas, in both countries, that have been destroyed.

Will you join me in standing up against violence as an unacceptable means of trying to change one another's views and lives?

Whether in our own skies or those above the Middle East, bombing and violence cannot be the way in which we seek to change that which we don't like in the world.

There has to be another way. Each one of us has to be the change we want to see in the world. We must challenge the great giants of evil: materialism, militarism and racism.

We must challenge the giants of evil in our quest for peace

That is why I am asking people from all over the country to join me in our common desire for peace and for love and justice to pervade our environment.

Load-Date: August 16, 2006

End of Document

CARTOONS & COMMENT Viewpoints from around the world No obvious answers

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

February 2, 2007 Friday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. C11

Length: 1142 words

Body

NO OBVIOUS ANSWERS

The suicide bombing in Eilat on Monday was a painful reminder of a reality that has been pushed to the periphery of public debate. . . .

The Shin Bet and the IDF have had great success in preventing attacks, to the point that this success is almost taken for granted, but there is no happy end to every case in this constant struggle. The Israel-Egypt border is porous, for the use of both terrorists and criminals, and no Israeli community is immune to attack either by Katyusha rockets or by suicide bombers.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that the hastily reached conclusion - that it is necessary to invest billions of shekels in a border fence, with sophisticated electronic equipment, from Eilat to Kerem Shalom, a total of 240 kilometers across desert and mountainous terrain - should be adopted. . . .

Overall, the Israeli security services have managed to limit the number of both attacks and casualties. They employ the proper tactics, and the proof of this is the decreasing frequency of the attacks.

This does not mean that the Palestinians and Egypt - either directly or indirectly - have no responsibility for the bombing in Eilat. The divided Palestinian government is not trying to prevent attacks. Hamas, the Resistance Committees and Islamic Jihad cooperated in the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit, and they continue to plan attacks and carry them out. Some sources allege that Fatah, which prides itself on its moderation and aspires to return to power, was also involved in the attack in Eilat.

Egypt does not insist on exercising its sovereignty over its territory or along its borders, neither that with the Gaza Strip nor that with Israel. A diplomatic effort to demand from these parties to assume their responsibility, in addition to maintaining the intelligence and military efforts to prevent attacks, will be more useful than the illusion of a costly fence. - Haaretz, Jerusalem

CLUSTER OF VIOLATIONS

It seems an Amnesty International report criticizing Israel for using cluster bombs in Lebanon's civilian areas in the final days of last summer's conflict with Hezbollah was right. After looking into the matter, the U.S. State Department has forwarded a preliminary report to the Congress. And the word coming from Washington indicates

CARTOONS & COMMENT Viewpoints from around the world No obvious answers

that Israel is "likely" to have violated terms of its arms deals with the former, which place restrictions on the use of such bombs.

Organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross have rightly called for a complete ban on cluster bombs in populated areas. The main reason is that upon use they scatter into hundreds of small bomblets over a wide range, causing indiscriminate deaths. . . .

As the U.S. Congress mulls an appropriate course of action, it will no doubt bear in mind that at \$2 billion per annum, America is by far Israel's biggest military donor. As such, much of the responsibility of Israel's excesses comes to eventually rest on Uncle Sam's shoulders.

That case is made stronger since Washington has been Israel's chief veto-cover in the U.N. and diplomatic shelter in the international community, defending its actions regardless of ground realities and humanitarian/political fallout. But with things falling apart across the Middle East, and American authority being called into question, surely it is time to re-evaluate the cost-benefit equation with such an upstart nation-state.

- Khaleej Times, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

HONOR DENIED

For the second time now, Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir has missed the chance to take over the mantle as chairman of the African Union. Instead, Ghanaian President, John Kufuor, is the new AU boss. Bashir has been denied the top post for the second time because of the protracted conflict in [Sudan's] Darfur region.

This, in our view, is the needed pressure by the continental body to get the Sudanese government more committed to ending one of Africa's embarrassing conflicts. Far too many people have been killed. . . .

Bashir's government has been accused of backing killer militias called the Janjaweed. Though his administration has persistently denied the allegations, independent groups including aid agencies have floated evidence suggesting that the Janjaweed are state-backed.

As it has been argued before, Africa needs to lead the way toward resolving some of the continent's wars. It does not make sense to glorify people working against African unity or the principles of the AU. It is good to see that there was pressure from African countries meeting in the Ethiopian capital.

This is the kind of pressure needed in other conflict areas elsewhere in Africa. Dictators and other wayward leaders flouting the general principles of oneness and [who] lack respect for human rights should know that they will never be left to have their way. They should be isolated as a measure to get them to realize that what they are doing is wrong. . . .

- Times of Zambia

TRUE OUTRAGE

There is a far greater scandal in our criminal justice system than the small number of men who are victims of malicious accusations: the vast number of men who are committing rape and getting away with it.

Less than six per cent of rape allegations in the UK result in conviction, one of the lowest rates in Europe. Few would suggest that 94 per cent of allegations of rape are false. This failure by our courts to hold so many to account must therefore be acknowledged as an outrage. It is certainly difficult to prove the charge of rape. But our courts should be doing far better than they are. . . .

According to a joint report by the Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, police forces are dismissing rape allegations in nearly one third of cases when they should be investigated further.

CARTOONS & COMMENT Viewpoints from around the world No obvious answers

The report shines a bright light on where the system is failing rape victims. For instance, it argues there is little consistency in the way forensic doctors are employed to examine victims. Call-out lists . . . for police officers who have been specially trained to deal with such crimes are poorly managed. Front-line police officers have very little training to deal with the crime before specialists arrive.

Proper police work at an early stage is essential to the prosecution case. All of these failures decrease the likelihood of conviction. The police and the prosecuting authorities must be made to understand by the government that their underperformance will not be tolerated. . . .

More women than ever are reporting rapes to the police. But anonymous surveys still suggest that only a small proportion of women who have been abused in this way are coming forward. Our criminal justice system is still not securing justice for the victims of rape. Ministers should devote their energies to putting this right before they turn their attention to other problems.

- The Independent, London

Notes

OTHER VIEWS

Graphic

GRAPHIC

GRAPHIC - (6 EDITORIAL CARTOONS)

Load-Date: February 3, 2007

READERS WRITE

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

August 7, 2006 Monday

Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 10A

Length: 972 words

Byline: SUSAN MCWETHY, LAINA VALENTINE, TOM ROGERS, RANA HAJJEH, JAMES HILL, GREG GIRTMAN, MARY GRABAR

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Electronic voting: Responses to Jay Bookman's column "The lame vote-rigging cries return," @issue, Aug. 3

Machines' flaws apparent

Jay Bookman's charge that "those making the allegations never offer any evidence or firsthand testimony that the voting machines were rigged" is absurd and incorrect.

It is absurd because obtaining evidence with electronic voting machines is impossible. That is the problem. It is incorrect because firsthand testimony has been obtained from thousands of voters who have experienced irregularities with voting machines. (In 2004 alone, 4,812 incidents were reported, according to the Verified Voting Foundation and Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility.)

I charge Bookman with intellectual sloth. He has buried his head in the sand on this issue and ignored the mounting evidence that paperless, privatized voting is a threat to democracy. The Government Accountability Office, the League of Women Voters, the Commission on Federal Election Reform and others have made suggestions to improve our current system.

So whom do we believe? Bookman and his corporate talking points, or evidence from prestigious organizations and thousands of voters?

SUSAN McWETHY, Decatur

Disdain for McKinney skews viewpoint

READERS WRITE

How disappointing that Jay Bookman has sold out to the right-wing propaganda machine. In 2002, the office of Georgia Secretary of State Cathy Cox cited problems with the Diebold machines. Those problems still exist, including votes jumping, machines that are easily hacked, not having a verifiable paper trail and exit polls not matching the machine results.

Regardless of political party affiliation, people should be concerned about these Diebold machines because our democracy is at stake. Because of his disdain for U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.), Bookman chose not to look at the facts (readily available) regarding the security and fairness of these machines. Does anyone feel comfortable voting into cyberspace?

LAINA VALENTINE, Norcross

Close all avenues that invite tampering

Jay Bookman overlooked a rather vital point in his vote-rigging column. As he very briefly mentioned, study after study has shown that electronic voting machines are incredibly susceptible to vote tampering. And without a paper trail, there is virtually no way to ensure that tampering did or did not occur.

Electronic voting machines were foisted upon us as a way to ensure fairness and accuracy in our elections. Security vulnerabilities should not be pooh-pooed; they should be sought out and fixed. While Bookman may not care if our voting machines are as accurate and tamper-resistant as they can be, I certainly do.

TOM ROGERS, Athens

U.S. shouldn't support Israeli aggression

The ongoing massacre in Lebanon is appalling and against all international and humane laws. This is what happens when the United States does not take a clear stand and refuses to demand an immediate cease-fire; this is what happens when Israel is given full chance to destroy not just Hezbollah, but also Lebanon and its innocent civilians.

We, as the American people, should be ashamed of letting our government support, with money and weapons, Israel's attacks on innocent civilians in Lebanon and the intentional destruction of this small country. It is unjustifiable by any moral standard. Should we accept without questioning that Israel is combating terrorism by killing innocent children?

Now that our government has chosen to blindly and unilaterally support Israel, it is time for the American people to urge our government to ask for an immediate cease-fire to stop the bloodbath in Lebanon.

RANA HAJJEH, Atlanta

Terms can't disguise Islamic bank's intent

Let's just dress up some sheiks in suits, carry a Quran around in a briefcase and claim that strict Shariah, with its ban on lending money at interest, can be compatible with capitalism ("Branching out, with limits," Business," July 30).

Hogwash.

So a lease buyout arrangement is not financing ? We're to believe that this Islamic bank, Arcapita, is not earning a return on debt? What a sham.

Arcapita's hypocrisy is not too different from that of our own Bible-thumping "values" investment con men. In this case, let's just pretend we're compliant with Shariah so we can grab rich sheiks' oil money and invest it somewhere to churn millions in return.

Where best to invest? You got it --- the home of the infidels! We'll just use terms such as "lease" and "fees" instead of "interest" and "debt."

READERS WRITE

Apparently, the desert princes and their oil money are not immune from the snake-oil salesman either.

JAMES HILL, Canton

Oil companies not among big profiteers

I keep hearing radio, TV and newspapers complain about the profit that Big Oil makes. I have gone to several of the oil companies' Web sites and looked over their quarterly and annual reports and do not understand what people are screaming about.

So far the highest profit margin that I have seen was about 10 percent. So what is wrong with 10 percent profit?

Maybe it is time for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution to show the profit margin of the top 100 companies in the United States, and then compare those to top companies from around the world. Maybe then the cries of unfair business practices would stop.

GREG GIRTMAN, Sharpsburg

Islamists share views with American left

Jim Wooten ("Complacency won't subdue ruthless foe," @issue, Aug. 1) succinctly described the nature of the conflict in the Middle East, which is part of the larger war on terrorism.

Wooten was right to point out that the left in America aids and abets the terrorists. The left's position on such matters as pornography and abortion reveals the similarities they share with the Islamic fascists: Both show a disdain for the values of the West, namely a respect for women and a desire to protect them and their children.

MARY GRABAR, Stone Mountain

Graphic

Photo: FileWith the arrival of election season, the debate over the effectiveness and potential for abuse of electronic voting machines has grown heated.

Photo: ALLEN SULLIVAN / SpecialCharles Ogburn is an executive director of Arcapita Inc., the U.S. arm of Bahrain-based Arcapita Bank, which makes investments based on Islamic law, known as Shariah. It prescribes how individuals and businesses should act.

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

It is time for a new approach

The Scotsman

August 11, 2006, Friday

1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 27

Length: 1021 words

Body

THURSDAY, 10 August, 2006, enters the list of iconic dates that will figure forever in the history of modern terrorism. Thankfully, this time, the plot was foiled. Without the diligent investigations and swift action of the security agencies, some ten passenger aircraft might have disappeared over the middle of the Atlantic, condemning perhaps three or four thousand men, women and children to a horrible death. The worst that we have suffered on this occasion is airport delays.

The plot has all the hallmarks of an al-Qaeda operation - co-ordinated, simultaneous attacks on civilian airliners designed to cause the maximum fear and economic disruption. The operation looks very similar to an earlier - foiled - plot by al-Qaeda in the mid-Nineties to bring down 11 passenger planes over the Pacific. Known as operation Bojinka, this was masterminded by Ramzi Yousef (who carried out the first World Trade Centre bombing in 1993) and Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the brains behind 9/11.

This earlier history of al-Qaeda is worth remembering, because it long pre-dates the overthrow of the Taleban, the invasion of Iraq to topple Saddam, or the current crisis in Lebanon. It reminds us that the conflict between the West and the extreme Jihadists is not new and cannot be explained merely as a response to more recent events or the alleged political failures of George Bush and Tony Blair.

The root cause of the Jihadist threat lies in the painful transition the Muslim - and particularly Arab - world is having to make towards political and economic modernity. This process has unleashed dangerous frictions between tribal, peasant communities and rapidly evolving urban society. It has produced insane differences in wealth between the oil elites and millions of unemployed Arab youth. It has undermined traditional values and community identities, leaving everyone from illiterate peasants to young PhDs feeling rootless and confused. In such a social maelstrom, people easily fall prey to extremist ideas and pat solutions.

Thwarted al-Qaeda plots

Understanding this does not lessen the need to counter Jihadist terrorism when inflicted on the West. There have been dozens of thwarted al-Qaeda plots since the 11 September attacks. Suicide bombers killed 52 people in London on 7 July, 2005; 58 in two attacks in Istanbul in 2003, and 202 in Bali in 2002. The Jihadists also murdered 191 people in Madrid on 11 March, 2004, and blew themselves up when the police closed in.

This pointless murder campaign has to be defeated and its proponents hunted down and brought to justice. If anything, yesterday's events indicate that it is time to redouble efforts to capture Osama bin Laden and ensure that the Taleban do not return in Afghanistan.

It is time for a new approach

Yet the past few years have also taught us in the West that it is too simplistic to conflate Hezbollah, Hamas, al-Qaeda, Saddam Hussein, Iran and suicidal Asian boys from the north of England into one amorphous movement under the banner "war against terrorism". The quagmire in Iraq and Lebanon is proof that we cannot bomb the Middle East into democracy.

But equally, those in the West who use the British and American failure in Iraq as a pretext to claim that the terrorist threat is a legitimate and rational response to western "imperialism" or American support for Israel are even more deluded than those US neoconservatives who thought toppling Saddam would bring instant peace to the Middle East. Bombing innocent passengers in aircraft or the London Tube is not rational politics. It is mass murder of the innocent perpetrated by fanatics who don't want to see a political solution in Palestine or anywhere else.

It is also the case that the young suicide bombers and would-be suicide bombers recruited among Britain's Muslim communities were disaffected long before Iraq and for reasons that have nothing to do with Tony Blair, geopolitics or the clash of civilisations. Iraq is merely the excuse for their misguided actions.

Long-term goals needed

If we are ever to return to a world where it is safe to get on an aeroplane, we need long-term goals as well as short-term security alerts. We require a new approach in the West towards engaging with the Arab world. One that combines a robust response to the Jihadist and Iranian threats to our own interests with a new, more multilateral approach to Arab governments. All that has been on offer so far is either extreme.

In Iraq, we are approaching a time when Britain and America will have to set a date for withdrawal. The main Sunni governments in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and even Turkey need to be persuaded that they will have to play a deeper role in Iraq post-withdrawal or risk seeing an Iranian Shia protectorate emerge.

In Lebanon, it is wrong to attempt a peace initiative that does not involve Syria, particularly if that splits Damascus from its unholy alliance with Tehran. In Palestine, Britain and America have to get Israel and Fatah's President Abbas back into negotiations in order to indicate that there is a way forward. None of these moves may produce instant results, but it is essential to fill the current diplomatic vacuum which allows al-Qaeda to flourish and win adherents.

Here in Britain, we have our own work to do. It is clear that Tony Blair should consider leaving office sooner rather than later in order to defuse the passions that have built up under his leadership and to give the UK a fresh diplomatic face.

It is also very important to ensure that yesterday's events do not blow up in the government's face. We are taking it on trust that the government's presentation of the plot to blow up the airliners with liquid bombs is correct. Regrettably, there have been occasions in the past when intelligence has proved inaccurate or when a potential threat was exaggerated for political purposes. That had better not be the case in this instance, or public confidence in the government's ability to protect its citizens and find a way to live with the Muslim world will be fatally undermined.

That said, we have survived another potential disaster. Congratulations are in order to the security forces.

Load-Date: August 11, 2006

READERS WRITE

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

October 25, 2006 Wednesday

Main Edition

Copyright 2006 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 14A

Length: 965 words

Byline: JERRY ROBB, STEVE NESTOR, KEN SISSEL, TERRY MCAREE, PATRICIA BINGHAM, JEFF MORRISON, KEVIN MCKINNEY

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

United Nations

Responses to "Reality casts light on vital U.N. purpose," @issue, Oct. 23

Organization's influence pernicious

Regarding Ted Turner's lavish praise of the United Nations: He is correct in stating that most U.N. workers are in the field. That's where the members of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon aid and abet Hezbollah in its attacks on Israel; where they "had meetings" while 900,000 Tutsis and Hutus were murdered in Rwanda; where they are "having meetings" now while 300,000 in Darfur, Sudan, have been murdered. The United Nations had numerous meetings on Iraq, passing one resolution after another. And I can go on.

The United States may not contribute to the 100,000 U.N. "peacekeepers," but the United States does take care of the rest of the world.

I'm sorry that Turner hates his country, hates President Bush, hates Christianity and hates Judaism. It just shows that being rich and smart are not a given.

JERRY ROBB, Duluth

Turner's claims of successes off base

Ted Turner is the one out of touch with reality when it comes to the value and success of the United Nations. The United Nations may have some value when it comes to passing out Turner's millions for humanitarian aid, but he is off the wall in claiming that the "United Nations has succeeded in its essential mission of preventing World War III."

READERS WRITE

Turner probably doesn't accept that the current war on terrorism is in fact WWII because, like all lefties, he considers the terrorists "criminals" at worst, who need to be tried in the courts. At best he considers them unhappy with U.S. foreign policy and thinks we should change.

Turner is obviously referring to a nuclear WWII, which he credits the United Nations with preventing. Wrong again! It was the United States' nuclear umbrella and President Ronald Reagan's military spending policies that broke the Soviet Union, not the useless United Nations.

STEVE NESTOR, Kennesaw

His version of reality fooling nobody

Ted Turner has a purposely selective rendition of reality. He has personally bought into the huge chunk of baloney being sliced up every day by the international group of self-serving career diplomats, which is French for hucksters.

Socialists such as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and murdering kidnappers and terrorists such as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad use the U.N. forum to condemn the United States. Terrorist nations such as Syria are on the Security Council? What a joke.

I'd rather eat a raw buffalo steak every day for breakfast than work another hour to pay for the "reality" being pumped out by the United Nations.

KEN SISSEL, Lilburn

Story of redemption a timely reminder

As someone who grew up north of the South in the 1960s, I have often wondered how I would have responded to racism and persecution had I lived in a place like Americus ("A tale of remorse and reconciliation in Americus," Page One, Oct. 22). Would I have had the courage to stand against the popular sentiment of the times, as Greg Wittkamper and others did? Or would I have hidden behind the mainstream thoughts?

The excellent portrayal of faith and perseverance as well as redemption reminds me that it is never too late for any of us to speak out and act against popular thoughts that denigrate and seek to destroy other humans for we can all learn through the mistakes of others.

Thank you for the wonderful story, AJC!

TERRY McAREE, Roswell

DeKalb Farmers Market hard to beat

While I support all of the ink being spent on the exciting new openings of Whole Foods markets and Trader Joe's ("Store brands: Generics out, upscale in," Page One, Oct. 23), it seems appropriate to recognize a market that has been around several decades and is still one of the best --- DeKalb Farmers Market. For really good prices for fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh fish, excellent lamb, lots of cheeses and a huge selection of spices, it is hard to beat.

When we first moved here from Europe in 1980, the DeKalb Farmers Market was where I shopped every week. Even since we moved to Norcross 11 years ago, I still make the trip at least twice a month.

It has truly stood the test of time.

PATRICIA BINGHAM, Norcross

UGA football fans too hard on player

As a graduate and football fan of the University of Miami, it had been a long week, as the inappropriate behavior of our players became national news once again (Q&A, Metro, Oct. 23). However, during a week when college football

READERS WRITE

fans rightly condemned the lack of class in the Miami program, I was completely unprepared for what happened in Athens last weekend.

As a proud father of two University of Georgia students, I have enjoyed attending games in Athens, and I have also been impressed with the class with which the Georgia program conducts itself. Therefore, I was stunned to witness a large number of adults booing a 19- or 20-year old college kid and then mockingly applauding his departure from the field after he dropped a pass.

The actions of these adults were disgusting and unacceptable. All true Georgia fans should send the young man a formal apology.

JEFF MORRISON, Marietta

President must do more than just recommit U.S. forces to Iraq

President Bush and the GOP maintain their commitment in Iraq, citing the necessity of defeating terror.

If it is indeed so vital that we defeat terror, then will we see the Bush administration resume the draft to put another 140,000 troops in theater? Raise taxes to pay the enormous financial costs of this debacle? Seek to mend fences with vital allies who have been needlessly antagonized? Seek all qualified advice, not just that of administration yes men?

Until we do, the Bush administration will be in the unenviable position of appearing to care more about their own image than the lives of American and allied servicemen and women.

KEVIN McKINNEY, Snellville

Graphic

Photo: JON C. HANCOCK/ Associated Press Growing up in the late 1950s near Americus, Ga., Greg Wittkamper was ostracized in high school as a Communist and a race-mixer. He began receiving letters this year from classmates asking him to come to a reunion.

Load-Date: October 25, 2006

Federal pens: FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes

The Hollywood Reporter
January 11, 2007 Thursday

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Length: 1050 words

Byline: Paul Bond

Body

FBI memo to Hollywood: If it's not too much trouble, could you please portray our counterterrorism efforts with a bit more realism?

Hoping for an answer in the affirmative, the FBI hosted its first workshop for screenwriters Wednesday at the Federal Building in Westwood.

"FBI -- Crime Essential for Writers" played well with the standing-room-only audience of executives and writers from major and minor studios. Enthusiastic attendees had more questions than time allowed answers for, and few if any left the four-hour event early.

The FBI, more so than even the Department of Homeland Security, is the primary agency designated to investigate terrorism in the U.S., and the terrorist threat it is most focused on comes from radical Islam, FBI special agent Greg Wing said.

With that in mind, Wing, along with an undercover agent who asked that his identity not be revealed, presented a whirlwind history of Islam, beginning with Sunni-Shiite hostilities in 682 AD.

The major terrorist group aligned with Sunni Muslims is al-Qaida, while Hezbollah, "the best terrorist organization there is," are Shiite Muslims, the undercover agent said.

He showed flags and logos of terrorist groups and explained that the colors of turbans worn by terrorism suspects could have significance. He also showed photos and video of al-Qaida training camps and torture rooms and pictures of unfortunate Americans who had been captives there. He showed photos of the suicide bombers who killed 17 U.S. sailors aboard the USS Cole in 2000 and pictures of the house where they built their bombs.

The undercover agent played phone messages from passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 93, which went down in a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001, and inspired the film "United 93." He also played audio from the cockpit of American Airlines Flight 11, the airplane Mohamed Atta flew into the World Trade Center that day.

"Amazing," attendee Dave DiGilio said after the event.

Federal pens: FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes

DiGilio wrote the film "Eight Below" and created the upcoming ABC series "Traveler," about a couple of graduate students who might have been framed for a terrorist attack. He said his show portrays both "the good and the bad" about the FBI.

"Seeing the extent of the organization, and the passion and intellect of the agents, was impressive," he said after the event. "They're very creative. It's not the way they're usually portrayed."

Quite the point, which is why FBI public affairs specialist Betsy Glick helped create the workshop. She said that last year the FBI helped lend authenticity to 649 projects, usually films, TV shows and books.

Michael Kortan, section chief for the office of public affairs, gave attendees a brief lesson in the history of the FBI in film and TV, beginning with the 1935 James Cagney movie " 'G' Men," which he said was one of the first gangster movies to tell a story from the FBI's perspective.

Shortly thereafter, J. Edgar Hoover conceived of something he called "The Dillinger Rule" -- the FBI had great stories to tell, so Hollywood ought to tell them, and make sure that the FBI were the good guys. And he wanted to know about anything FBI-related that Hollywood had in the works.

The 1965 Disney film "That Darn Cat!" really had Hoover on edge, Kortan said, because he feared that a film about an allergic agent assigned to follow around a cat would make the FBI look a tad silly, a reputation the bureau didn't need during the tumultuous 1960s.

Too often, Kortan said, the FBI is seen on film, unrealistically, as heavy-handed, bumbling and antagonistic toward other law-enforcement agencies. Of course, Hollywood isn't always unfriendly to the bureau.

Witness "The Silence of the Lambs," for example. The 1991 film earned Jodie Foster the best actress Oscar for her portrayal of FBI agent Clarice Starling, and Kortan credited the movie for some of the FBI's success in recruiting women.

"This is half the reason people get in writing -- to live vicariously and absorb the details," said attendee Luke McMullen, who wrote an episode of "Alias" and is developing a project called "Samurai Girl."

FBI agents also showed off a map of the 779 real investigations of potential terrorist activity ongoing in Los Angeles and photos of a list of possible targets that included Grauman's Chinese Theatre, the Hollywood sign and Disneyland. They also showed photos of some of the equipment the FBI will have on hand as they stake out the 64th annual Golden Globe Awards on Monday.

Hollywood has been considered a potential target of Islamic terrorists since shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, when the FBI warned that a major film studio might be next.

Special agent George Steuer recalled Wednesday how FBI agents met with studio heads back then to tell them, "Hey, you're in this fight on terrorism."

He said the threat emanated from telephone and e-mail intercepts between suspected terrorists. Although the FBI sifts through about 300 terrorism leads a day, the one against film studios was initially deemed credible after some corroboration and background checks. Details, though, remain classified.

"Eventually we vetted it and decided that there were no links here, just overseas chatter," he said.

Nevertheless, the studios were encouraged then to beef up their security measures. Some, including Disney and Warner Bros., quickly hired FBI agents on their security staffs.

Steuer, who has been helping Hollywood with FBI requests for five years, said he was in Baghdad in 2005, witnessing the locals buying and selling pirated copies of "Star Wars: Episode III -- Revenge of the Sith" the day it was released theatrically, making the point that the FBI is uniquely aware of Hollywood's influence even in a war zone.

Federal pens: FBI seminar hosts H'wood scribes

Speaking after the symposium, the undercover FBI agent whose identity is protected said he purposely avoids Hollywood's treatment of modern terrorism, staying away from such movies as "World Trade Center" and "United 93" as well as TV programs like "The Path to 9/11."

"Movies don't come close," he said. "We lived a very traumatic event. It's never far from my heart."

His primary message to screenwriters? "Keep the FBI out of politics," he said. "Don't tag me Republican or Democrat. Don't suggest the FBI was better or worse under this president or that one. What we care about is protecting American lives."

Load-Date: January 16, 2007

End of Document

News Summary

The New York Times
December 7, 2006 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1111 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-25

Iraq Panel Rebukes Bush And Offers Different Tack

A bipartisan commission warned that "the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating," and handed President Bush both a rebuke for his current strategy and a detailed blueprint for a fundamentally different approach, including the pullback of all American combat brigades over the next 15 months. A1

Reaction to the commission's recommendations varied among Iraqi politicians, who expressed appreciation, anger and ambivalence at sections of the report.

A25

Senate Confirms Gates, 95-2

The Senate voted overwhelmingly to confirm Robert M. Gates as defense secretary in a 95-to-2 vote. The decision came after a confirmation hearing and floor debate that unfolded in less than 48 hours, reflecting the bipartisan sentiment that a course change in Iraq is vital. A24

Israeli Official Discusses Iran

Israel's new minister for strategic affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, left, is a West Bank settler who has advocated killing the leaders of Hamas and reducing the number of Arabs who are Israeli citizens. Yet his portfolio is among the country's most sensitive -- developing Israel's strategy for dealing with Iran. A10

Captive Israelis Were Wounded

The two Israeli Army reservists whose capture in a cross-border raid set off Israel's war with Hezbollah last summer were seriously wounded in the attack, an Israeli military report was quoted as saying. The report was the first official word since the capture on July 12 on what may have happened to the reservists. A8

British Call Poisoning Murder

News Summary

Russian and British investigators jointly questioned at least one of two Russian businessmen who met the former K.G.B. agent Alexander V. Litvinenko on the day he became ill, officials said. In London, the police said they were treating the death as a case of murder. A3

U.S. Anti-Torture Law Invoked

The son of Charles G. Taylor, Liberia's former president, was charged with two counts of torture during interrogation of an opposition figure in Monrovia, according to a federal indictment brought in Miami. The case is the first to invoke the anti-torture law, which bans extreme interrogation methods. A5

THURSDAY STYLES G1-14

Art of the Online R.S.V.P.

Each month, more than 10 million invitations are sent through Evite.com, and a number of them encourage people to not only reply, but to also write a personal comment that can be viewed by everyone on the guest list. Such transparency has transformed the private act of declining an invitation into a public performance. G1

NATIONAL A26-37

Jewish Group to Allow Ordination of Gay Rabbis

The highest legal body in Conservative Judaism, the centrist movement in worldwide Jewry, voted to allow the ordination of openly gay rabbis and the celebration of same-sex commitment ceremonies. A26

Anti-Abortion Bill is Rejected

The House rejected a Republican-backed anti-abortion measure, a bill requiring medical personnel to inform women that a fetus could experience pain and offer the option of anesthesia for the fetus. A36

Louisiana Disputes FEMA Bill

Louisiana officials have gone to court to try to prevent the Federal Emergency Management Agency from collecting about \$60 million from the state, saying they are not responsible for the federal government's mistakes in handing out disaster aid to the wrong people. A34

Democrats Set to Press Bush

Leading Senate Democrats put the Bush administration on notice that they intend to press for a fuller accounting on a wide range of counter-terrorism programs, including wiretapping and data-mining operations and the interrogation and treatment of detainees. A37

Debate Over Cheney Pregnancy

Mary Cheney, the daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney, is expecting a baby with her partner of 15 years, Heather Poe, Mr. Cheney's office said, prompting new debate over the administration's opposition to gay marriage. A36

Missing Man Found Dead

A California man missing for 11 days in the snowy mountains of Oregon's Coast Range was found dead four days after he set out alone in the cold wilderness to seek help for his stranded family. A35

SCIENCE/HEALTH

News Summary

New Signs of Water On Mars

Pictures of Martian gullies taken several years apart strongly suggest that water still flows at least occasionally on the surface of the planet, scientists announced. A30

NEW YORK/REGION B1-10

Green Onions Identified As Source of E. Coli Cases

Government investigators began an intensive search to identify the source of contaminated green onions used at Taco Bell restaurants that have been linked to an E. coli outbreak. The outbreak continued to spread, with the total number of cases across in three Northeastern states swelling to 99. A1

9/11 Cleanup to Resume

The federal Environmental Protection Agency announced plans to start a final indoor cleanup of sites contaminated by dust from the collapsing World Trade Center more than five years ago. But critics said the plan was seriously flawed. B1

New Heights in Real Estate

Tishman Speyer Properties has agreed to sell the 41-story skyscraper at 666 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan for \$1.8 billion, the highest price ever paid for a single office building in the United States. B1

Neediest Cases B5

SPORTSTHURSDAY D1-7

Pettitte Plans to Play

Andy Pettitte has decided to play in 2007, his agent said. If Pettitte wants to stay home, he will continue to pitch for the Houston Astros. But if he wants the most money -- and a reunion with his former teammates -- he will return to the Yankees. D1

HOUSE & HOME F1-12

Computer-Guided Christmas

A growing number of Christmas decorators are using computerized displays of synchronized lighting and sound to produce a kind of musical extravaganza, pushing the ever-mounting stakes in the competitive sport of decking the halls. F1

OBITUARIES C15

David Bronstein

A Ukrainian-born grandmaster who played bold and intuitive chess and came within one draw of becoming world champion, he was 82. C15

BUSINESS DAY C1-14

Oil Royalty Payment Errors

News Summary

An investigation by the Interior Department's chief watchdog has found pervasive problems in the government's program for ensuring that companies pay the royalties they owe on billions of dollars of oil and gas pumped on federal land and in coastal waters. C1

Fannie Mae Lowers Earnings

Fannie Mae said that it would reduce its earnings by \$6.3 billion to correct several years worth of accounting problems in one of the nation's biggest financial scandals. C1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A38-39

Editorials: Welcome political cover; cherry-picking campaign promises; at the end of the book; Lawrence Downes on fighting a war from Pearl Harbor.

Column: Bob Herbert.

Bridge E6

Crossword E6

TV Listings E11

Weather D8

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo

Load-Date: December 7, 2006

VOICE FROM LEBANON

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 11, 2006 Friday

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Length: 986 words

Body

It has been a month now to the mindless death and destruction wrought by Israel in the defenceless Lebanon. With no end to the conflict in sight, no one in the world to thwart the brutal Israeli might and the suffering Lebanese having no respite, how can the tears, the cries and woes of the tormented stop? Mayssoun Sukarieh writes an emotionally moving blog from Beirut titled 'Words Fail as the Bombs Fall'.

I have not been able to write. Words irritate me these days. Words distorted and twisted by power, words reused by journalists and analysts like parrots. A country waging a war becomes a country under siege, resistance groups become terrorists. I do not want to use the language the new rulers of the world are using. I get irritated listening to myself uttering a single word they use.

I have not been able to write also because words fail. I sat yesterday in front of the TV set, watching a broadcast about the Shayyah massacre where 43 people died. It is at the funeral; there are interviews with bereaved mothers: "They won't scare us, I lost twelve of my family members, they are all martyrs but I say to the Israeli cowards killing us, we are not scared, I lost twelve, I am still here and I am and we are all for the resistance and for Hassan Nasrullah," a woman said tearfully.

Though how can I put in words what she was feeling, the mixture of deep pain over the loss of family members, yet the spirit of defiance, of steadfastness and the willingness to offer more of herself, of her family members for the resistance and for Lebanon? Words fail. A father, holding his child - you know what I mean - his dead child, he refused to put him in the coffin, hugged him between his hands.

He was walking and hugging the child wrapped in the Lebanese flag... taking him not to the beach, not to Luna Park, but to his coffin. Tell me please how can one put in words how this dad must be feeling? Oh, by the way, oriental dads also feel the pain, they cry over the dead too in case you are told the opposite. Tell me please how can one put in words how this dad will live? Words fail.

Funeral procession, women sitting on the tombs of beloved people, crying silently, other women from afar waving their hands and saying goodbye. Words fail. Funeral procession, a scream, and sounds of a bomb, people panic and leave their dead unburied. Israel hit Beirut with five raids during this funeral. How can one put in words their barbarism? Words fail.

Faint sounds of explosions, my friend Mona calls from the outskirts of Shatila Camp: "They're dropping flyers over our area now. They are telling Burj el Barajneh, Hay el Solom and Shayyah residents to evacuate, saying they will escalate if Hezbollah will not stop. The flyers end with a call to people to revolt against Hassan Nasrullah and his criminals." "But what are these sounds?" I ask. Mona says, "They put the flyers in missiles that explode in the air and make a firework sound."

VOICE FROM LEBANON

Then we start to see them coming down like drops of rain at first. Then you start to see the shape of the papers. People run into the streets to catch one, to see what awaits us. Is it an evacuation of our area? Anything other than that nobody cares we read and laugh. They decide our destiny, you know. Where will we go if they ask us to leave? Do you think they will hit us here too, will they escalate?" Fears, worries..., and words that fail.

US Middle East envoy David Welch is visiting, trying to pressure the Prime Minister to accept the US-French resolution on Lebanon, at a time when the Israeli government decides to escalate and enlarge their ground invasion. News Flash: Terje Larsen, the EU representative, is coming to Beirut on a mission to resolve the "conflict." George Peterson, Kofi Annan's right hand man is coming to Beirut to help resolve the conflict... Pressure and more pressure.

Why is it they come here to ask us to accept and to sign for our colonization? Why is it us who have to accept? Why does no one go to Israel to ask its leaders to respect the law, to abide by the Geneva Conventions, to stop the war... to...? Flyers... Bombing... Diplomacy... Psychological war... pressure and more pressure, from the air, the land the sea. How can one... words utterly fail.

I am sitting, reading news, a loud explosion, it was louder than the ones we hear when they are hitting the southern part of the city. I jump from the table. It is close. It is not close. They have not started to hit Beirut... It is louder, but maybe they are using stronger bombs, the biggest bunker buster ever. Ideas are racing in my head; people start to scream in the street below. I look outside. People throw what they were buying from the supermarket and run in all directions. I run to the TV, I start surfing... Al-Jazeera, NTV, LBC, Al-Manar... back and forth, back and forth. The phone starts to ring, my parents from Bekaa... "They hit Beirut?" "I do not know." Panic... fear... how... ? Words fail.

News Flash: two "MK" missiles on the old lighthouse between the French school and the Lebanese American University - in other words caused the explosions heard in Beirut, by the house of the former Prime Minister Rafique Hariri. A few more missiles to put more pressure on the government, more pressure on civilians by killing dozens of their loves ones, hitting the roads, committing massacres, and ... yet ... words fail. Twisted words, distorted words... terrorism is now called "pressure."

The bombs hit just a few blocks to the right in a street I walked yesterday with my brothers... and an idea, a fleeting idea, that at any time the roads I have walked thousands of times, houses I have visited, people I know, might disappear in one blow. How can I...? I have no words. Indeed, there are no words to describe this mess. However, for the pain and anguish of those who put up with this conflict on a daily basis, no soothing words on our part would do as well.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

Gutless NATO action suggests alliance doomed

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

September 16, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: FORUM; Pg. A14

Length: 1014 words

Byline: The StarPhoenix

Body

The weak-kneed response this week by NATO members to a request for more assistance in southern Afghanistan is an illomen for the future of the organization.

Defence ministers for the alliance agreed in July that it was critical, not only for the success of the Afghan mission but also for NATO's future, that member countries successfully bring security and development to this troubled nation. They did so knowing that parts of Afghanistan were extremely violent and that the mission would be the toughest in NATO's nearly six decades of existence.

On Wednesday, most members of this once-proud organization stared at their feet or sat on their hands when told that 2,500 more fighters would be needed quickly to secure the Kandahar region where the Canadians, Dutch and British forces have been locked in pitched battles with insurgents.

This leaves NATO forces -- and most critically, Canadian troops -- in a bind in the south. Without more soldiers to secure the area, it is impossible to deliver the development that rich European nations have suggested is critical to the long-term viability of the nation. And without that development and peace, the support of local Afghanis will surely be eroded, placing the front-line NATO forces in ever-greater peril.

Canada announced Friday it's bolstering its Afghan presence by a net 200 infantry troops and engineers, and Leopard I tanks.

That Canada has been willing to step up to the plate when it comes to the heavy lifting may be reason for national pride, but the cowardly reaction of its allies threatens to leave it boxed into a corner from which there is no easy escape.

And the European nations that rushed for the exits when the request for more troops came forward can't claim ignorance.

For example, this spring Germany's Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung stated publicly that NATO had a duty to help stabilize Afghanistan and the alliance's secretary-general assured Canadians the organization's military might would back Canadians when the fighting got tough.

Gutless NATO action suggests alliance doomed

But just as was the case when it became clear armed might would be needed to secure Lebanon and disarm the Hezbollah, those rich countries closest to the crisis -- the very nations that aspire to the glory from their colonial past -- couldn't muster the courage to do the right thing.

It reminds one of the 1964 Kitty Genovese murder in New York, when 38 people were reported to have witnessed either part or the entirety of her 30-minute assault but, despite her screams, didn't want to become involved.

Psychologists call this the "bystander effect," where crowds are prone to stand about like Jack Layton NDPers, twittering and sputtering and expecting someone else -- anyone else -- to stop the violence and right the wrong without actually having to get involved personally.

It is this "me-first" attitude that allowed the Taliban to retain control of Afghanistan, enslave its people, torture its women and demean its children. It is this attitude that's contributing to the slow mobilization of development resources that has forced Afghan farmers to revert back to poppy profits, limited the positive impact of the first period of freedom many Afghans have had in two generations and (if one can believe Afghan president Hamid Karzai) has forced the country's government into the arms of the drug lords and corrupt warlords.

But the syndrome doesn't stop on the slopes of the Hindu Kush.

Since its birth, the United Nations has been structurally dysfunctional and unable to step up when innocents needed it to stop the malevolence of dictators, the genocidal rages of failed states or the criminal pillaging of militias, insurgents and terrorists.

It was for that reason that the world stood in horror as hundreds of thousands of Tutsi were slaughtered, Bosnians, Croats and Albanians were ethnically cleaned, Central and West African children were forced to rape, murder and mutilate their mothers and brothers, Sudanese were raped and driven from Darfur, and millions of Congolese were murdered, raped and driven from the homes by band of thugs that included modern biological warriors: HIV-infected rapists.

NATO was to act as a rapid-response agency that could give the UN some clout. That would require courage, however.

It's tough in democratic countries to accept having young citizens returning in coffins for trying to do the right thing.

But if we all remained silent as evil comes for our fellow humans, we will be like the quiescent intellectuals in Martin Niemöller's immortal poem about the Nazis.

"When they came for me, there was no one left to speak out."

NO ORDINARY JOE'S

The Leung family may not represent the stereotypical image one has of Saskatchewan pioneers or local heroes, but when Dave and Gina put a "For Sale" sign on Joe's Diner this summer, Saskatoon lost a bit of its soul.

David's father, Joe, came to Saskatoon during one of the darkest periods in Canada in its treatment of Chinese immigrants. The Asian Exclusion Act barred family reunification, a head tax put excruciating debt on the immigrant, and there was open and systemic discrimination. A decade after he arrived, Saskatoon knocked down the city's small Chinatown and displaced its residents. Yet the Leung family worked endless hours to make Saskatoon a better place and to provide their children with a solid foundation.

For that reason the diner's customer base included the influential, the near-indigent and all in between.

And those lucky enough to stumble up its steps and through its door to find a seat in its 1960s decor were treated not only to the good food but to a visit with a family that helped form the heart of a city.

Gutless NATO action suggests alliance doomed

It is understandable Gina and Dave have decided to retire. But this fall their regulars will no longer have the bottomless cups of coffee to wash down the lumps in their throats.

- - -

"Democracy cannot be maintained without its foundation: free public opinion and free discussion throughout the nation of all matters affecting the state within the limits set by the criminal code and the common law." - The Supreme Court of Canada, 1938

Load-Date: September 16, 2006

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Blast Kills 35 and Wounds 120 at Shiite Shrine in Najaf

The New York Times

August 11, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 1049 words

Byline: By EDWARD WONG; An Iraqi employee of The New York Times contributed reporting from Najaf for this article.

Dateline: BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 10

Body

A belt packed with explosives worn by a man who apparently intended to blow himself up inside one of the holiest shrines of Shiite Islam exploded on Thursday during a police pat down at a checkpoint near the shrine, Iraqi officials said. At least 35 people were killed and more than 120 others were wounded, including Iranian pilgrims, the officials said.

The blast, in Najaf, 100 miles south of Baghdad, ripped into a crowd of Shiite pilgrims who had traveled to the golden-domed Shrine of Imam Ali on the anniversary of the death of Zaineb, the granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad.

The bombing of a Shiite shrine in the city of Samarra in February set off a wave of revenge attacks on Sunni Arabs and counterattacks on Shiites in which hundreds of people were killed within days.

The explosion on Thursday underscored the degradation of security in the spiritual heart of the Shiite-dominated south, an area once believed to be under the tight control of Iraqi and American forces. The most revered Shiite cleric in Iraq, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, lives just blocks away from the shrine.

Other attacks around Iraq, mostly aimed at civilians, brought the death toll for the day to at least 48, even as additional Iraqi and American troops continued to deploy across Baghdad to try to bring a modicum of security to the capital.

The shrine attacked in Najaf sits at the center of downtown, surrounded by a labyrinth of narrow alleyways, and is a memorial to Ali, the prophet's son-in-law and the first martyr in the epochal seventh-century split between Sunni and Shiite Islam.

The bomber walked up to a police checkpoint about 60 feet from the shrine at 10:15 a.m. and his explosives detonated as a policeman searched his body, said local officials and the Iraqi prime minister's office. A ball of flame engulfed the police officers at the checkpoint, killing at least five of them, said Dr. Munthir al-Athari, director of the health bureau in Najaf. At least eight women were among the dead.

The shrine was apparently not damaged.

Blast Kills 35 and Wounds 120 at Shiite Shrine in Najaf

Policemen and rescue workers wheeled victims sliced with shrapnel into the city's main hospital. Women in black robes wailed. People sprawled across beds and clutched limbs swathed in bandages soaked through with blood.

"I was in the market heading to visit the shrine when a huge explosion took place," said Shakir Ubaid Hassan, who was among those being treated for wounds. "A lot of people were killed and injured, and I was hit in my head."

The country's top leaders, including the president and the prime minister, denounced the assault in separate statements.

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, a staunch Shiite, pinned the blame on loyalists of Saddam Hussein and "takfiris," a term that refers to fundamentalist Sunni Arabs who consider Shiites to be infidels.

"Such barbaric carnage reveals the nature of the Saddamists and takfiri terrorists who seek to start sectarian unrest between Iraqi people," Mr. Maliki said in a written statement. "We ask God Almighty to take the martyrs into his heaven and grant patience to their families and heal the wounded."

Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, a spokesman for the American command, issued a statement saying the attack was the work of "a vicious death squad who targeted innocent Iraqis practicing their faith at one of the holiest sites in Iraq."

Najaf's economic growth is dependent on a steady stream of religious tourists, including many from neighboring Iran. Under Mr. Hussein's rule, few Shiites from outside Iraq were allowed to make pilgrimages to the Shrine of Ali. Now, thousands stream into the city each day, Iraqi officials said.

Powerful Shiite parties with militias have control of the security forces in the province encompassing Najaf, and the area was once considered a haven shielded from the incessant bombings that plague central Iraq. But a recent series of deadly attacks has eroded the sense of security. On July 18, a suicide bomber in a van set off his explosives after luring day laborers into his vehicle outside a Shiite shrine in the neighboring city of Kufa, killing at least 53 people and wounding more than 100.

On July 6, a suicide car bomber rammed his sedan into two busloads of Iranian pilgrims near another Shiite shrine in Kufa, killing at least 12 people, including 5 Iranians, and wounding dozens.

The bombings in Kufa seemed intended to provoke the militant Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, whose militia is accused by American officials and many Sunni Arabs of killing Sunnis in attacks across Baghdad and elsewhere. Mr. Sadr's chief mosque is in Kufa, and he occasionally preaches there on Fridays.

Mr. Sadr's main office is next to the Shrine of Ali in Najaf, as are those of some of the country's leading ayatollahs. The city is home to the marjaiya, considered by many Shiites to be the top four clerics of their faith, and the base for the Hawza, a venerable seminary. Prominent Shiites have lived or studied in Najaf, including Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, and Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The governor of Najaf, Assad Abu Ghalal al-Taiee, belongs to one of the country's leading Shiite parties, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. The party has a military wing, the Badr Organization, that helps provide security for Najaf. Other militias also operate openly in the city, including that of Mr. Sadr.

The Shiite movement began in earnest when Ali and his son Hussein were killed in separate incidents in the seventh century. The term Shiites originally meant partisans of Ali. Shiites have clung to the notion that those directly descended from Ali, and thus from the Prophet Muhammad, are the proper rulers of the Islamic empire.

Ali's body is said to lie in a tomb inside the shrine, which Mr. Sadr's militia used as a base during battles against American forces in 2004.

The other reported violence on Thursday unfolded mostly in Baghdad. Four civilians were killed when the Sadr militia clashed with other armed men, Iraqi officials said. A bomb exploded in a restaurant, killing at least six people

Blast Kills 35 and Wounds 120 at Shiite Shrine in Najaf

and wounding three. Three people were killed and three wounded when Iraqi commandos fought gunmen near a bazaar.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: A suicide bomber's explosives detonated yesterday at a police checkpoint about 60 feet away from the Shrine of Imam Ali in Najaf, Iraq. The Shiite shrine honors Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. (Photo by Alaa al-Marjani/Associated Press)

Load-Date: August 11, 2006

End of Document

Worries about Lebanon linger

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

August 3, 2006 Thursday

THIRD EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: METRO; Pg. D1

Length: 858 words

Byline: By Kavita Kumar ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Body

As the weekly lunchtime crowd at St. Raymond's Maronite Catholic Church's hall feasted on kibbie, spinach pies and tabouleh, the Rev. Andre Mhanna hustled around the large hall on Wednesday, greeting one parishioner and friend after another in a reunion of sorts.

So good to have you back, they told him. We prayed for you, they said. We lit candles for you.

"I'm glad to be back," he replied with a gentle somberness. "But it's very hard."

He told them about the sights and sounds of the bombing, and of the scarcity of food and fuel in Lebanon. He told of the rocky seven-hour boat ride from Beirut to Cyprus that made nearly every passenger sick. He told about how the holding area in Cyprus felt like a concentration camp, where many children were ill, holding on to their stomachs as they cried.

And he told them about his sadness over the destruction and despair that has befallen his native country. "Such a beautiful country," he said.

Mhanna, rector at St. Raymond's, returned Monday night from what began as a business and personal trip but turned into a mass evacuation and humanitarian relief effort when fighting broke out between Israel and *Hezbollah* a few weeks ago.

St. Raymond's is the seat of one of two U.S. dioceses of the Maronite Catholic Church, an ancient Eastern Rite branch of Catholicism based in Lebanon.

Mhanna said all of the 15 or so families affiliated with St. Raymond's who were trapped in Lebanon have returned safely to St. Louis. The Rev. Lawrence Biondi, St. Louis University president, had been traveling with Mhanna. Biondi arrived in St. Louis nearly two weeks ago.

After Biondi fled on a rescue ship, Mhanna stayed behind at a five-star hotel just outside of Beirut. From there, he helped many of the St. Raymond's families secure safe passage on ships to Cyprus. He would get them in a line as early as 3 a.m. to assure a spot on the buses that would take them to the harbor.

Mhanna left Beirut himself about a week ago with his sister-in-law, Carmen, and her two young sons and another St. Louis family. They arrived at the Beirut harbor early, hoping to secure one of the nicer boats. They ended up on

Worries about Lebanon linger

a two-story boat with about 450 people, many of them women and children, jammed onto it -- Christians and Muslim alike.

There was no food during the long trip. The boat was going so fast and the waves were so strong that Mhanna spent much of the time finding bags for people to vomit into and handing out glasses of sugar water.

Meanwhile, helicopters flew overhead toward Beirut, where those aboard ship could see bombing in the distance.

"It's like fireworks, except with lots of smoke," Mhanna said. "It's an ugly noise -- it pierces through you."

He reflected, "It's a noise with consequence."

On the boat, he met a Muslim woman who is nine months pregnant. While in Cyprus for a week, Mhanna tried unsuccessfully to help her and his own family -- his brother, sister, mother and their families who live in Lebanon -- to obtain permission to come to the U.S.

The pregnant woman's children are American citizens, but her application for a U.S. visa was denied. She is still stuck in Cyprus.

On Wednesday, Mhanna spoke with her on a cell phone during lunch. He told her to be patient, that he was talking to local politicians whom he hoped would help her. At the very least, he hopes to bring her to St. Louis to have her baby.

Mhanna spoke at lunch with U.S. Rep. Russ Carnahan, D-St. Louis, about the situation. Carnahan kept in close touch with Mhanna while he was in Lebanon. The congressman said he is working to bring Mhanna's family to St. Louis.

Andre Tarabay, 25, a student at SLU, has been back since Thursday. He had accompanied Biondi and Mhanna on the trip.

It's nice to be back, he said. But it was also hard to leave his friends and relatives behind, he said. Sad images of the suffering have stayed with him -- a girl who lost an eye, and a boy, maybe 13 years old, who lost a leg. Both of them were taken to Canada.

He said he's not sure what is going to happen to Lebanon and doesn't know what to think with all of the mixed messages in the news. Meanwhile, he spends much of his time watching CNN and a Lebanese television station to stay up on the latest reports.

Mhanna's brother, Fadi, who also lives in St. Louis, is relieved to have his wife, Carmen, and their two sons home again. She had gone to Lebanon for her father's funeral and returned with their sons last week.

When Fadi Mhanna met them at the airport, 5-year-old Charbel hugged him and said, "I'm never leaving again without you."

As for 10-month-old son Marc Anthony, it seemed he didn't recognize his father at first. But after a couple hours and after Dad gave him a bath, it came back to him, Fadi Mhanna said.

"What really worries me is my wife," Fadi Mhanna said. "She lost a lot of weight, and I need time to make her feel safe again."

They came back without their luggage. They will take some time to recover. Carmen had been a cook at the Lebanon Cafe in south St. Louis, which closed when she left on her trip.

Their worries will likely stick around for awhile.

"Our heart is still there," he said. "I have half of my family there."

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Returning home from chaos: The Rev. Andre Mhanna greets Joan Soaib (center) and her sister-in-law, Pila Soaib, at the St. Raymond's Maronite Catholic Church hall on Wednesday. Mhanna and some parishioners were trapped in Beirut, Lebanon, when Israel attacked. Dawn Majors| Post-Dispatch PHOTO - The long journey: People leave the Vittoria M cruiser July 25 in Limassol, Cyprus, after arriving from Beirut, Lebanon. The ship carried St. Raymond's Maronite Catholic Church parishioners out of Lebanon. AFP/Getty Images

Load-Date: August 3, 2006

Blair branded a killer as he flies in to Beirut

The Evening Standard (London)

September 11, 2006 Monday

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London Evening Standard

Section: LL 04; Pg. 4

Length: 182 words

Byline: JOE MURPHY; JASON BEATTIE

Body

THOUSANDS of chanting demonstrators turned out to protest as Tony Blair arrived in Beirut today.

They held up placards branding him a "killer" for supporting Israel's bombing campaign in the Lebanon this summer.

An estimated 25,000 people filled the huge Bishara Khouri square and riot police were on standby.

"Blair you killer, go to hell," said one placard. Another, with a photograph of a bomb victim, said: "This is what your intelligent bombs have done."

Meanwhile, the most senior Islamic leader, Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, branded Mr Blair a "killer of children, women and the elderly". The Prime Minister later faced a snub from the speaker of the Lebanese parliament Nabih Berri, a key mediator with Hezbollah extremists, who pulled out of talks and flew to Iran instead.

On the last day of his three-day Middle East tour, Mr Blair acknowledged the "terrible suffering" inflicted during 34 days of intense bombing Lebanon suffered when Israeli forces entered the country to take on Hezbollah fighters. But he made clear he had equal sympathy for Israelis murdered by terrorism.

Graphic

MID-EAST TOUR: TONY BLAIR AND PALESTINIAN PREMIER MAHMOUD ABBAS

Load-Date: September 11, 2006

Blair branded a killer as he flies in to Beirut

End of Document

Family of kidnapped Israeli soldier visits UK

Yorkshire Post

August 2, 2006

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Length: 187 words

Body

THE wife of an Israeli soldier whose kidnapping triggered the continuing Middle East conflict made an emotional appeal for his return yesterday.

Karnit Goldwasser, 30, is touring Europe and America to highlight her husband Ehud's plight.

The 31-year-old was abducted near the Israel-Lebanon border on July 12 with another reservist, Elad Regev, 26 - an event that sparked fighting between the Israeli Army and Hezbollah guerrillas.

Speaking in central London, Mrs Goldwasser said: "We came here to appeal for Ehud's and his colleague's release and we came to bring their story to the whole world.

"We are trying to look for people who know people who know people who eventually might know Hezbollah and try to convince them to bring us a sign Ehud is still alive, because until now we don't have any sign or any proof he's alive."

Mrs Goldwasser was joined in London by her mother Daniela Avni and her father-in-law Shlomo who said: "We are not happy about all the deaths, we are not happy when we hear about casualties, about children, women and civilians dying - it scratches our hearts, both for Israeli and Lebanese deaths."

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

Killing glorified

Ottawa Citizen

July 31, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 185 words

Byline: Albert M. Jabara, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Re: First you cut Hezbollah off, then you kill it, July 29.

I have no problem with freedom of speech or with columnist David Warren's opinions about Hezbollah.

However, I do have a problem with the Citizen allowing Mr. Warren to glorify the destruction of more than 70 per cent of Lebanon's infrastructure.

I have no doubt that Mr. Warren has already seen fragmented Lebanese civilian bodies, mostly children, women and elders, constantly flashed on TV screens. Yet Mr. Warren seems to lack all six human senses since he is not moved by the civilian death toll throughout Lebanon. Mr. Warren brings decisive and targeted shame to all Canadians.

As a human being, I suffer for all losses of life, regardless of creed, race or colour. I am, however, surprised that Jews and Arabs still have not realized that, by the end of every war, both sides will have suffered destruction and civilian casualties and the enemies of the Middle East will have added more scores to their bulletin boards.

I am certain Mr. Warren does not represent all Canadians with his warped views on the killing of civilians.

Albert M. Jabara,

Ottawa

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Olmert ally to resign over harassment

Ottawa Citizen

August 19, 2006 Saturday

EARLY Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 182 words

Byline: Ian MacKinnon, The Times, London

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Israel's justice minister will resign tomorrow over allegations that he forcibly kissed a teenage **female** soldier during a farewell party at government offices in Tel Aviv on the day the war with **Hezbollah** erupted.

Haim Ramon said he would fight his indictment for sexual harassment.

"I am sure that I will succeed in court," he said in a statement. "A kiss of two, three seconds, based on the version of the complainant, cannot be turned into a criminal act. I am certain of my innocence, and I will prove it in court."

But the impending resignation of a minister seen as a close ally of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has added to a sense of crisis. The government was already on the defensive as other scandals emerged amid growing public anger over mismanagement of the war against **Hezbollah** that achieved none of its key aims.

Mr. Olmert, whose Kadima-led government was elected March 28, conceded yesterday that his central electoral plank of unilaterally withdrawing from parts of the West Bank had been shelved because of the upsurge in violence in Gaza and the conflict in Lebanon.

Graphic

Photo: Havakuk Levison, Reuters; Israeli Justice Minister Haim Ramon maintains he did not sexually harass a **female** soldier.

Load-Date: August 19, 2006

Olmert ally to resign over harassment charge

Ottawa Citizen

August 19, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

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Graphic

Photo: Havakuk Levison, Reuters; Israeli Justice Minister Haim Ramon maintains he did not sexually harass a **female** soldier.

Load-Date: August 19, 2006

Government of Israel pervaded by scandals

The Philadelphia Inquirer

January 23, 2007 Tuesday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A01

Length: 1171 words

Byline: Ned Warwick, Inquirer Staff Writer

Body

Few democratic countries are able to completely avoid having the bad odor of corruption rise every so often off the body politic. But the citizens of Israel must be wondering these days what in heaven's name is going on in their country, founded on the mightiest of ideals.

Right now, the government of Israel seems at times like an application list for a rogues' gallery.

The prime minister is under investigation for allegedly helping friends in a bank deal; members of his inner office have been arrested in an ugly tax scandal; the president is being investigated on sex-abuse charges, the former justice minister for sexual harassment, and the finance minister for embezzlement; and charges may soon be brought against the defense minister - and head of the Labor Party - for illegal vote-getting. And the list goes on. In addition, two key members of the out-of-power Likud Party also are under investigation.

Is Israel suffering an acute breakdown in government morality? Is this a problem that has been around since the beginning and is just now getting more attention? Or is Israel, in fact, a country where government oversight and the country's laws are tougher on official wrongdoing than elsewhere?

Many who observe and who have participated in Israeli politics say the problem stems from a combination of factors, including Israel's change over the years from a quasi-socialist society to a full-steam-ahead capitalist country, as well as the imposition of tough - some say draconian - laws, zealously upheld.

"On the one hand, the fact that there are so many investigations going on shows that it is a serious disease," said Elad Shraga, the founder and chairman of Movement for Quality Government in Israel. "On the other hand, the fact that there are so many investigations, so many policemen, also proves that there are many doctors for the disease."

Transparency International ranks Israel 34th in the world on its Corruption Perceptions Index. Finland, Iceland and New Zealand are perceived to be the least corrupt, and the United States is 20th.

Hardly a day passes that the Israeli papers don't have something new on the corruption front. Recently, Army Radio here aired a radio play in which Ariel Sharon awakens from his coma and discovers that he is no longer prime minister and that there is a new defense minister who is a former labor boss.

Government of Israel pervaded by scandals

Surprised, he asks for a series of people, including his son, personal lawyers, the justice minister, the president, and the Israeli police chief who was in office at the time of Sharon's stroke to visit him and help sort things out. He is soon dismayed to discover all of them are under investigation for wrongdoing and are not available. He gratefully returns to his coma.

"You definitely have today more suspicions than ever in the past," said Avraham Diskin, a respected political scientist and political commentator from Hebrew University. "Beyond that, though, you have to remember that, in many cases in the past two decades, the accused were found innocent and were acquitted."

Indeed, every prime minister since Yitzhak Shamir, who first took office in 1983, has been investigated at least once for wrongdoing; Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been investigated three times.

Part of the increasing prevalence of investigations, Diskin says, reflects how Israel has evolved from a struggling and relatively impoverished country built on socialist ideals into a developed one with a robust free-market economy.

As a result, "Israeli politicians have become much more self-concentrated, more devoted to their personal careers... than in the past," Diskin said.

"Today, the top value is money," said good-government advocate Shraga. "Money disrupts people's radar system. I have no doubt this is a process."

But others also argue that the laws in Israel are extremely strict and that there are more government watchdogs than ever before. One law in particular, these experts say, is too tough and does not exist in other developed countries.

Roughly translated, it is known as the Breach of Trust law. Under this conflict-of-interest legislation, even if no one illegally benefits from an association, it is still a criminal offense to have relationships where benefit could be provided, and is subject to three years in prison.

Several Israeli experts pointed out that British Prime Minister Tony Blair's vacationing over Christmas in Florida at the home of a one-time member of the rock band the Bee Gees would be a criminal offense in Israel.

"I think that is a totally absurd position," said Yehuda Ben Meir, a former member of the Knesset and now a senior research fellow at the Jaffee Center of the University of Tel Aviv. He says aggressive prosecution under the law "means the civil service is taking over the country and neutralizing politicians."

The attorney general's office is investigating whether Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, while he was acting finance minister, intervened on the behalf of friends who were bidding to buy the just-privatized Bank Leumi.

The sex charges against President Moshe Katsav and former Justice Minister Haim Ramon reflect an altogether different problem in Israel.

A powerful military led by strong men has historically played a crucial role in Israel's sense of itself. Within that ethos, women have often suffered a form of sexual harassment that was regarded as the inevitable offshoot of a patriarchal society. That is changing.

"In Israel, we have turned patriarchal behavior patterns into a criminal offense," said Orit Kamir, who teaches law at Hebrew University and helped draft new sexual-harassment legislation for the country. "It is forbidden now for a man in power to use women in order to show how powerful he is." This law is regarded as one of the toughest of its kind in the world. In the United States, sexual harassment charges are generally pursued in civil rather than criminal courts.

Katsav and Ramon have both professed innocence.

Government of Israel pervaded by scandals

"In Israel, the laws have become much stricter and the standards of behavior have declined," said Amnon Rubinstein, the founder of the liberal Shinui Party and currently president of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya. "And now the two have collided."

Israeli Military Gets New Chief of Staff

A former infantry officer who commanded Israeli troops against **Hezbollah** in southern Lebanon for many years was appointed yesterday as the military's new chief of staff.

Gabi Ashkenazi, 52, a former general and currently the director general of the Defense Ministry, was chosen to replace Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, who resigned last week after heavy criticism of his handling of the war in Lebanon last summer.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Defense Minister Amir Peretz agreed on the appointment at a meeting yesterday evening, the prime minister's office said. The nomination still must be approved by the cabinet and a government committee.

-N. Y. Times News Service

Contact staff writer Ned Warwick at nwarwick@phillynews.com. Correspondent Sharon Pazner contributed to this article.

Load-Date: January 23, 2007

End of Document

READERS WRITE

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

August 21, 2006 Monday

Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 10A

Length: 1074 words

Byline: STEPHEN J. PASIERB, LEOLA REIS, ANITA VAN HOUTEN, CAROL MOODY, JAY STANHOPE, MARIAN TEMPEST, BRUCE T. JACOBS JR., MICHAEL KANE

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Steer teens in right direction

The recent survey highlighting teen drug and alcohol abuse is a frightening example of the growing disconnect between parents and their children when it comes to discussing harmful behaviors ("Parents home? Teens say pass the pot anyway," Page One, Aug. 17). Knowing what your kids are up to, who they hang out with, and how they spend their free time are just some of the ways in which you can help your child to avoid dangerous substances.

However, communication is the most effective tool when teaching your teen about drugs and alcohol. Our research shows that young people who learn about the danger of substance abuse at home are up to 50 percent less likely to experiment. Sadly, less than one-third of teens say they get this message from their parents.

Frank discussions about drug and alcohol use are often awkward and uncomfortable, but they may ultimately save your child's life.

STEPHEN J. PASIERB

Pasierb, who lives in Norwalk, Conn., is president and CEO of Partnership for a Drug-Free America, headquartered in New York.

Planned Parenthood makes earthly mark

How fun to see the play on words of our organization's name in the headline of a front-page story about the solar system ("Planned planethood," Page One, Aug. 16).

READERS WRITE

We can only dream about the day when the efforts of Planned Parenthood to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies, screen for cancers and educate young people so that they can make healthy choices makes it to the front page. Surely the importance of women's health and family planning here on Earth eclipses that of what it means to be among the stars.

LEOLA REIS

Reis, of Decatur, is vice president of communications, education and outreach for Planned Parenthood of Georgia.

Puppies deserve responsible owners

Recently, on my way to work, I saw two precious puppies wandering in the middle of Cherokee County's Lower Birmingham Road. Somehow, I managed to avert disaster as I got them into my car. The puppies are now safe at the Cherokee County Humane Society and are, I hope (along with so many other loving animals), up for adoption to caring people.

To the person who cruelly dumped these puppies on the side of the road (and to others like you) --- for crying out loud, take responsibility for your pets! Care for their health needs, have them spayed or neutered and, now the really good part, love them. They'll love you back.

ANITA VAN HOUTEN, Canton

Too quick to praise use of atomic bombs

In a recent letter ("Atomic bomb omission," Aug. 13), the writer suggested that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki might have shortened World War II, prevented the planned invasion of Japan and saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of U.S., allied and Japanese soldiers and civilians.

The claim is speculative and used out of context.

The war might have ended without bombings or invasion had we admitted that we were not going to force unconditional surrender. Postwar history would have played out differently had we stopped the bomb program when Adolf Hitler was defeated. The entire Cold War, and the blowback we are dealing with now, might have been avoided.

It is still too soon to close the balance sheet on our use of atomic bombs. Discounting the moral case and focusing solely on American lives and economic productivity, the use of the bombs has costs that we do not yet appreciate.

CAROL MOODY, Atlanta

Democrats' attack on Perdue misguided

Once again the leadership of the Democratic Party of Georgia has stuck its foot in its mouth ("Democrats blast Perdue's land deal," Metro, Aug. 17). I am a loyal Democrat who sees nothing wrong with Gov. Sonny Perdue's land purchase in Florida. In fact, it appears that his purchase was well thought out with regard to conflict of interest and ethics.

Bobby Kahn, chairman of the Democratic Party, needs to be fired. This type of knee-jerk condemnation of anything the governor does is political suicide and must stop if Democrats ever want to lead the great state of Georgia again. Did Kahn do any type of fact-finding before spouting off that Perdue "should go to prison" for this transaction? I think not.

Kahn's comments are an insult to fair-minded people, and I, for one, am tired of the petty partisan bickering that characterizes much of politics today.

JAY STANHOPE, Acworth

READERS WRITE

Get punctuation, grammar correct

I read with interest the article about the importance of grammar and punctuation in applying for a job ("Write it right," AJC Jobs, Aug. 13). It should be just as important in keeping a job. I get tired of seeing "phase" written when the writer means "faze" "sunk" when the sentence calls for "sank" "memento" rather than "memento." These are just a few of the literary clinkers I have seen in the AJC, although the problem also extends to magazines, radio and television.

My recommendation to everyone involved in writing on a regular basis is: Purchase (and read) a dictionary and "The Elements of Style."

MARIAN TEMPEST, Marietta

U.S. can't ignore role in its vulnerability

As an airline employee, I can't help but wonder when and how this security cat-and-mouse game will end. A new threat is detected, the Department of Homeland Security reacts with more cumbersome directives, and we make do until the next threat emerges.

We are drawn into ugly debates about increased surveillance, passenger profiling and the erosions of our civil liberties. Even with the latest threats, I am confident that air travel remains, by far, the safest way to go.

However, I can't see how our overarching thirst for oil, the debacle in Iraq or the American-made rockets killing innocent civilians in Lebanon are making us any more secure (or popular).

BRUCE T. JACOBS JR., Athens

U.S. shouldn't always kowtow to Israel

Your best friend calls to say he's taking a jaunt with Maurice Claret, with a gram each of crack and crystal meth and several assault rifles. He decides to go to Las Vegas with Michael Jordan, Pete Rose and the kids' college fund.

This type of friendship carries with it an obligation to tell your homie that some things may not be a good idea.

The world has come out strongly against the Israeli campaign to eradicate Hezbollah, fearing World War III. Now Israel wants more deadly missiles. As the White House often scolds us, Israel is our best friend in the Middle East. Should we send Israel whatever munitions it wants --- or demand it find negotiated common ground?

MICHAEL KANE, Snellville

Graphic

Photo: Associated Press fileA mushroom cloud rises over Hiroshima, Japan, after an atomic bomb was detonated on Aug. 6, 1945. At least 140,000 people were killed. A similar bomb dropped from a U.S. plane a few days later on Nagasaki killed at least 60,000 instantly.

Photo: A computer keyboard's delete button

Load-Date: August 21, 2006

READERS WRITE

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EGYPT AGAIN CRACKS DOWN ON ISLAMISTS; MUSLIM BRETHREN SAYS HUNDREDS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

February 18, 2007 Sunday

FIVE STAR EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-7

Length: 1227 words

Byline: MEGAN K. STACK AND NOHA EL HENNAWY, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Dateline: CAIRO, Egypt

Body

Egypt's regime is seizing upon a moment of regional chaos and U.S. inattention to crack down aggressively on the country's most popular opposition group and shore up its hold on power, analysts here say.

In a bald push against the Muslim Brethren, the secular government in recent weeks has arrested hundreds of activists, unveiled new restrictions on political Islam and published a stream of anti-Brethren propaganda in the state-run media. More than 80 members were jailed on Thursday alone, officials in the banned group said.

"This is the most brutal campaign against the Brothers since [Egyptian President Hosni] Mubarak came to power," said Amr Shobaki, a political analyst and Muslim Brethren expert at the Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo.

With the U.S. distracted by the war in Iraq and increasingly nervous about the regional rise of political Islam, Mr. Mubarak's regime appears free to squeeze the Brethren, which has long been officially outlawed -- though tolerated -- as an Islamist opposition force.

About 300 Brethren members have been imprisoned in recent arrests, including at least 100 senior activists. Some of the prisoners' assets were frozen by order of the government. Meanwhile, Egyptian officials and their media mouthpieces have accused the group of creating armed militias and receiving aid from Iran.

"The banned Muslim Brethren group is dangerous to Egypt's security," Mr. Mubarak told an Egyptian newspaper in a recent interview. If the group gets more powerful, "investments will stop and unemployment will increase. ... Egypt will be completely isolated from the rest of the world."

The leeway given the Brethren has shrunk since 2005, when the group stunned the country by capturing one-fifth of the parliamentary seats in national elections. Back then, U.S. officials said the invasion of Iraq would deliver democracy to the Arab world, and Egyptian officials portrayed the empowerment of the Brethren as a necessary step toward democratization.

"Democracy cannot progress in Egypt without deciding what to do with them," a ruling party official said at the time.

EGYPT AGAIN CRACKS DOWN ON ISLAMISTS MUSLIM BRETHERN SAYS HUNDREDS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED

But voting has empowered Islamists across the board: Hamas in the Palestinian territories, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iranian-backed Shiite parties in Iraq, in addition to the Muslim Brethren.

Formed in the 1920s to advocate Islam and oppose secular and Western influence, the Brethren has a history of battling Egypt's governments. With its vast network of social services, it is deeply popular among religious Egyptians who regard it as a non-corrupt answer to cronyism and decadence. But secular Egyptians fear its empowerment, and U.S. diplomats have a policy of shunning its leaders.

Mr. Mubarak has controlled Egypt for a quarter of a century, permitting virtually no dissent. As the one movement he hasn't been able to squelch, the Brethren is his nemesis. At the same time, it allows Mr. Mubarak and his inner circle to justify their repressive style of rule by claiming that the only other option is an Islamic state administered by the Brethren.

The elections played neatly into that argument. Many analysts here believe the Bush administration began to back away nervously from its democracy push when it saw Islamists winning at the polls across the Middle East.

Egypt's hand also has been strengthened by the instability in Iraq and the Palestinian territories, conflicts that have forced the United States to call on powerful Sunni allies in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan for diplomatic and political backing.

Nabil Abdel Fattah, an analyst at the Al Ahram Center, said the war in Iraq "has given more weight to the Egyptian foreign policy, which will give the government leeway in dealing with the Muslim Brethren."

"The regional and international atmospheres have become convenient," Fattah said. "Attacks against the group will continue in order to send strong messages."

A criminal court acquitted a handful of prominent Brethren detainees last month, but they were immediately locked back into prison while their cases were sent to military court.

In the most startling and incendiary charge, the Egyptian government has begun to accuse the Brethren of forming and training underground militias. In news stories short on details, officials say they have seized documents proving that the Brethren has secret cells dedicated to provoking civil disobedience.

The groups are quietly toiling toward a "sacred mission," Interior Minister Habib Adli told an Egyptian newspaper recently.

The accusations mark a serious departure from the status quo between the regime and the Brethren, considered the only opposition group with any serious street popularity.

The old understanding was simple: The Brethren was officially outlawed but treated with grudging tolerance. The Islamist group didn't try to overthrow the government, and in exchange, the regime looked the other way when the movement slipped its leaders into parliament by running them as "independents."

Lately, the mounting pressure seems to have pitched the group into crisis, forcing it to cast about for ways to cement its foothold in the government.

Brethren leaders have taken pains to tailor their words for an intellectual, even Westernized, audience. Their speeches are carefully moderate, scrupulously tolerant and reverent toward democracy.

Seeking to calm fears that it would morph into another Taliban if it gained power, the group has reached out to Egyptian Christians. Seeking to ease concern about women's rights, it fielded a female candidate in last year's elections. (She lost.) And in an improbable move, a Brethren leader recently told the Times that the Islamic head scarf was a choice for women, not an obligation.

But the group's quest for credibility has been badly undercut by a series of public relations disasters.

EGYPT AGAIN CRACKS DOWN ON ISLAMISTS MUSLIM BRETHERN SAYS HUNDREDS HAVE BEEN
ARRESTED

Brethren lawmakers raged in parliament after Culture Minister Farouk Hosni told a female reporter that the head scarf was a sign of "backwardness" and "regression."

They demanded that Mr. Hosni be replaced by someone who "respects the constitution and the Islamic Sharia," and they called unanimously for a no-confidence vote. Veiled women marched in protest; clerics issued a storm of condemnations.

Though the uproar eventually died down, it left feminists and secular-leaning Egyptians more leery than ever about the Brethren.

But the woes in parliament were nothing compared with the scandal that erupted at Al Azhar University, the storied seat of Sunni Muslim learning.

In December, young men from the Brethren's student group dressed in black and staged a military-style parade, complete with martial arts demonstrations, to protest restrictions on student political activities at Al Azhar. The action shocked a nation where public demonstrations have been banned since President Anwar Sadat was shot dead by soldiers in a 1981 military procession, and it fueled fear that the Brethren might have secret militias.

"This militia show defied the state and contradicted all the peaceful ideas the Muslim Brethren talks about," Mr. Fattah said.

Despite the tension, or perhaps in reaction to it, the Brethren has announced that members are drawing up a political platform for a party. Although the regime is unlikely to consider giving the group a license, the move is widely seen as an attempt to continue the Brethren's push into mainstream politics.

Load-Date: February 20, 2007

Looking Back, and Forward

The Forward

January 5, 2007

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Section: Letters; Pg. A8

Length: 1206 words

Body

In a world that seems ever more dark and gloomy with each passing year, the year that just ended, 2006, managed to leap up a notch or two and leave us gloomier and more troubled, by several orders of magnitude, than most of us had thought imaginable.

It was a year that opened, as soberingly as any year could, with a worldwide outburst of Muslim rage over the publication of a handful of cartoons in a Danish newspaper a few months before, depicting the Prophet Muhammad in human and sometimes comic form. Millions of Westerners who had hitherto hoped Muslim-Western tensions might be just a misunderstanding began to sense that something far worse was under way.

It was a year when Iraq slipped from turmoil into bloodstained chaos, forcing the vast majority of Americans if not their leaders to acknowledge the catastrophic folly of our nation's 2003 decision to invade.

It was a year when Iran strutted to the center of the world stage, free at last of its Ba'athist nemesis in Baghdad, and contemptuously dismissed the demands of a united world community that it halt nuclear development. To demonstrate the depth of its disregard for the values of humanity, it staged not one but two international events to mock the Nazi Holocaust—an exhibition of cartoons in August and an academic conference of neo-Nazis, cranks and madmen in December.

It was a year when Israelis rallied themselves to elect, for the first time, a coalition of parties committed to ending the occupation of the West Bank and seeking good neighborly relations with an independent Palestine and when Palestinians elected a government committed to rejecting coexistence and destroying the State of Israel.

It was a year when Israelis suffered their worst-ever military setback in a four-week war against the Lebanese **Hezbollah**, shattering their faith in their revered military and forcing them to acknowledge the magnitude of the threat they faced in the Islamist militias that had grown up along their borders.

It was a year when America's trade deficits and its national debt shattered new records and some international financial institutions began to talk, for the first time and in quiet tones, about moving assets into other, safer economies.

It was a year when the world community finally decided, through the Security Council, to take action in the face of the threeyear orgy of bloodletting in the Darfur region of Sudan, but did nothing as the killing raged on. It was a year when 1 million Africans died of malaria, among the most preventable of diseases, and the global death toll from AIDS reached a new peak.

Looking Back, and Forward

It was a year that saw a shocking explosion of violent attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions across the globe on a scale not seen in decades. They included dozens of firebombings and armed assaults against synagogues, Jewish schools and community centers from Melbourne to Montreal, from Oslo to Seattle. They included, for the first time, a worldwide rash of assaults against Jewish individuals, leaving at least three dozen injured, including a 12-year-old schoolgirl beaten unconscious on a London bus, and two people dead, in Seattle and Paris. (The previous year, by contrast, had seen just a handful of attacks and only six injuries.)

Perhaps worse, it was year that saw some of America's most prominent public voices, including a Harvard dean and a former president, openly blaming the Jews of Israel and their American Jewish cousins for the violent disorder sweeping the globe.

Above all, it was a year when great sheets of ice began to break away from the melting polar ice caps and an island in the Bay of Bengal became the first inhabited landmass to disappear beneath the rising seas, terrifying symbols of the environmental disintegration that looms, just a few decades away now, as human enterprise continues to pump greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and heat up the planet.

And yet

And yet, it was also a year that ended with the first, halting acknowledgments by the governments of the United States and China, the world's worst greenhouse gas offenders, that the threat to humanity from global warming is real.

It was a year in which the guns began to fall silent and machetes dropped to the ground in Congo, the world's bloodiest killing ground, and when the peoples of Sierra Leone and Liberia began to emerge from the horrors of civil strife and rebuild their lives, all thanks to the presence of United Nations troops. It was a year when Uganda began to awaken from the 20-year nightmare of its hidden war in the north.

It was a year when the tide began to turn, slowly but perceptibly, in the fight against starvation and disease in many parts of Africa, as billions of dollars in humanitarian aid began at last to pour into the suffering continent. Hundreds of thousands of lives were saved this year, reversing the bitter trends of the past three decades. It was due partly to the tireless statesmanship of Tony Blair, partly to the prodigious philanthropy of Bill and Melinda Gates and partly to the quiet work of President Bush, who decided, without fanfare, to triple American aid to Africa.

It was a year when leaders of the major Sunni Arab nations, principally Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, began openly seeking to play a moderating role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to build some sort of common front with Israel, their de facto ally in the face of Islamist radicalism.

It was a year when women were chosen as leaders for the first time in Chile, Liberia, Germany and the United States House of Representatives.

It was a year when the American public finally decided to punish its leaders at the ballot box for their arrogance and incompetence, removing Republicans from control in both houses of Congress and restoring the balance needed in our divided system of government. It was a long, bitter campaign, fought state by state and neighborhood by neighborhood, a nail-biter to the end. It turned at the last moment because if we may be permitted to say so the previously unbeatable Republican Senator George Allen of Virginia had offered an opportunity to melt down before the television cameras, following the publication of little-known facts about his family background in a feisty Jewish newsweekly in New York.

For all these reasons, 2006 ended with glimmers of light here and there that allow us to hope for something better in 2007. We may hope that Israel, Syria and the Palestinians will find a way to seize the olive branches they are offering to one another and to begin ironing out their problems around the negotiating table. We may hope that the Democrats in Congress will find a way to start moving forward, not just on the small gestures they have promised, like raising the minimum wage and reforming campaign gifts, but on the big, essential issues: halting the growth of the nation's indebtedness, rebuilding a productive economy with real jobs and reducing the carbon-fuel addiction that is at the heart of the global warming crisis.

Looking Back, and Forward

Nobody expects to complete these tasks in 2007, but neither are we free to desist. The solutions lie near at hand. They are not in heaven.

Load-Date: January 4, 2007

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No, sheik, sorry isn't good enough

The Australian (Australia)

November 1, 2006 Wednesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Opinion / Op Ed; Pg. 14

Length: 1154 words

Byline: JANET ALBRECHTSEN

Body

MATP

For too long the West's unreciprocated tolerance has allowed fanatical Muslim leaders such as Taj Din al-Hilali to spawn a new generation of Islamic radicals who reject our values

THIRTY years ago, Elton John may have crooned that "sorry seems to be the hardest word", but these days the sorry word rolls off the tongue too easily. So it's no surprise that Muslim cleric Taj Din al-Hilali thought a few apologies would get him off the hook for claiming that women in short skirts who smile and sway their hips are to blame for unleashing unlawful sexual appetites in men.

The mufti was tapping into the modern-day disease of apologetis. Say you're sorry and endless Western tenderness and tolerance will forgive all. The West has mistakenly believed tolerance begets tolerance. Having discovered that it spawns intolerance, we are finally getting back into the values debate. That means realising that sorry just won't cut it any more.

But right on cue, the first reaction from Abdul El Ayoubi of the Lebanese Muslim Association was: "We did accept his apology and we want to move on." Whoa. Before we move on, let's figure out precisely why sorry does not work any more. The sheik's apology has the distinct smell of someone being sorry that he was caught. There was no hint of contrition from Hilali in the weeks between his speech and The Australian reporting it. His faint-hearted mea culpa once the media arrived looked more like one of those PR-spun apologies. You know the kind, like the one AWB was advised to make but declined.

Going into further damage control last Friday, the wily cleric from Sydney's Lakemba mosque said his words were misinterpreted just like the Pope's address at Regensburg University. Full marks for cunning, with Hilali and his supporters believing that if good-hearted people cut a Christian leader some slack, then a Muslim leader deserves the same courtesy. The argument fails on logic. The Pope is entitled to ask whether violence is part of Islam in an attempt to encourage Muslim leaders to talk openly about what it is within Islam that encourages jihadists. The validity of that question was instantly proved by the violent response it triggered. By contrast, Hilali's medieval comments about women as meat pose no valid question. They are unacceptable in an enlightened world.

Let's put the mad sheik to one side. De-sheiking him is only part of a bigger problem. Fanatical Muslim leaders have been pandered to by Western leaders who should know better. They have been too frightened to make judgments for fear of incurring a cultural wrath. And Muslim communities living in Western liberal democracies have

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failed to hold their leaders to account for their extremism. Remember that 500 Muslims listened to the sheik's poisonous remarks at Lakemba mosque last month. Not one person went public to immediately declare them unacceptable.

Criticism from some Muslims came only after The Australian reported the speech. But for the media, we would not have flushed out this madness and Hilali would be quietly fomenting more extremism under cover of the mosque.

This is a point Australian Federal Police boss Mick Keelty may want to mull over, given his remarks last week blaming the media for fuelling vilification of Australian Muslims, which he said was encouraging home-grown terrorism.

Let's focus on the real problem here. Notwithstanding Hilali being benched for a few months, and then choosing to step aside indefinitely, many Muslims support his outpourings of hate. The paralysis of the Lebanese Muslim Association attests to that.

And when the sheik returned to Lakemba mosque last Friday, 5000 people turned up to listen and cheer.

As Peter Costello remarked about Hilali on Monday: "These kinds of attitudes have actually influenced people ... So you wonder whether a kid like [gang rapist] Bilal Skaf had grown up hearing these kinds of attitudes and you wonder whether kids rioting down at Cronulla have heard these kinds of attitudes."

Those attitudes are found in the most unlikely places. A straw poll by The Sydney Morning Herald of Muslim women in their 20s and 30s -- women one might expect to have a more enlightened view -- revealed that some supported the view that women must cover up to prevent men from raping them. Little wonder some Muslim boys are growing up to view short-skirted Western women as "asking for it".

Now for the biggest problem of all. Western nations have long taken the view that by setting themselves up as role models of best practice on the tolerance front, tolerance would be forthcoming from other quarters. Specifically, it was thought that those from other cultures who make their home in the West would embrace tolerance as a Western virtue. We also hoped that other less tolerant nations would see the light and follow suit. It's what the Pope calls reciprocity.

That plan is coming unstuck in the clash between modernity and Islam. In Western countries, the tolerance virtue is being used by the likes of Hilali to spout venom. In Britain it has led to what English columnist Melanie Phillips has dubbed Londonistan. A moral vacuum over the worth of Western values effectively handed control of the debate to rabid Muslim leaders. As Marcello Pera wrote in his introduction to the 2006 edition of a book he co-authored with the Pope: "Try saying that Western institutions are better than the institutions in Islamic countries. A warrant will be sworn for your cultural arrest."

The same timidity has infected Europe, now nicknamed Eurabia. Hamas's al-Aqsa television station is planning to beam its ideology of hate against the West into European homes. It's a clever recruitment drive for the Palestinian terrorist group given that these days Western-born terrorists are the ones more likely to be loading up their backpacks with explosives. We think we have a problem with the Western media convincing tweenies to buy lip gloss and low-slung jeans. As The Wall Street Journal reports, in a recent edition of Hamas's online magazine aimed at children, young readers are treated to a cartoon of a smiling child riding a rocket. Let's hope Europe is quick to shut down Hamas's hate TV channel. It took them years to shut down Hezbollah's al-Manar TV.

Every time we take our eye off the ball, the other side scores. This is why the values debate matters. For more than 20 years, the West abandoned that debate. We gave ourselves over to Western self-loathers, cultural relativists and romantic primitivists. We allowed Muslim leaders such as Hilali to use their tolerant host countries to spawn a new generation of Muslims who reject Western values.

The good news is that Western nations are reclaiming the values debate after discovering that tolerating subversion signals Western weakness and encourages more subversion.

The bad news is that reclaiming the ground is going to take more than getting rid of one mufti.

No, sheik, sorry isn't good enough

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Load-Date: October 31, 2006

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US POLICY OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

The Nation (AsiaNet)

November 2, 2006 Thursday

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Length: 1222 words

Byline: JUSTICE (RETD) KHALIL-UR-REHMAN KHAN

Body

The US Government sees the US as a military power with its war machinery, opted to adopt repression strategy to crush terrorism and any individual, group, organisation or state suspected to be involved in any act which as per its own perception amounts to terrorism or against US interests in any part of the world. Commentators observe that civilian and military mindsets have merged in the US and this potentially has adverse consequences for maintaining strong Civilian Authority. Thanks to the fear phobia created by the media with the help of timely release of video and audio cassettes of Osama Bin Ladin and other statedly Al-Qaeda operatives, US public opinion measures such as dialogue between cultures or combating poverty (when such measures are done with the aim of discouraging terrorism) as 'appeasement' rather than as part of an effective strategy to combat terrorism.

The American policymakers completely ignore the viewpoint of people in Europe who at least believe that terrorism cannot be defeated purely by military means and underlying causes should be confronted. Such a view also emerges from the following extract of the UN Committee Report: "Lack of proper economic development, unequal distribution of material resources, failing states, the lack of respect for human rights and equal opportunities ... if we want to free the world from terrorism and crime we will have to strengthen our efforts to solve these problems as well. Preventing and combating terrorism is one side of the coin, eliminating its sources and root causes the other."

The view of the European scholars is that promotion of human rights, democracy, social justice and the rule of law is in the long run the surest foundation for stability and peace and the true remedy to combat terrorism. The US policymakers pay lip service to such a view by proclaiming that they too want to usher in the democratic norms and institutions in Middle East and Islamic countries but in practice promote and support dictators, military rulers and kings as they prove handy and gullible for achieving their objectives.

The duly elected representative in Muslim countries eg Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon are not acceptable as to America only such a brand of democracy, which through engineered and managed elections returns only its stooges is acceptable.

As the opposite faction, people and the Muslim States are not in a position to offer any resistance. US Military machinery is free to subjugate any country, be it Afghanistan or Iraq and to install puppet governments so that its hegemony and sway over the region is ensured. Any resistance is met with brutal force.

The people struggling for the liberation of their lands land in torture cells of Guantanamo Bay or Abu Gharib where they are treated worse than animals and insects. Even animals receive some compassion but the Islamist militants are condemned to worst indignity, torture, maltreatment, pain and punishment as such freedom fighters are dubbed as "Enemy Combatant".

US POLICY OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

The world for the first time heard and saw 'dance of the dead' as under the protection and glare of US Army, the dead were made to dance by igniting the dead bodies after filling them petrol. The media reported a letter written from Abu Gharib jail by an Iraqi detainee, Fatima, describing the manner in which she and her fellow Iraqi women were raped and other indignities and torture was being inflicted night after night. This is the story of all the secret cells all over the world to which all the persons even remotely suspected of working against the interest of America are secretly condemned. The US Supreme Court's long-awaited judgment was announced on 29th July by Justice Stevens in which Justice Souter, Justice Ginsburg and Justice Breyer joined and Justice Kennedy concurred in part while Justice Scalia, wrote the dissenting Judgment to which Justice Thomas and Justice Alito joined.

Each of the Learned Judges recorded reasons for their respective agreement or dissent. The majority judgment, *inter alia*, held that certain guarantees of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) would apply to combatants even those whose status is not clear, including Al-Qaeda combatants; that as a minimum Article 3 of the Geneva Convention would apply which provides that all detainees whether prisoners of war, civilian or so called unlawful combatants be treated humanely in all circumstances and that detainees may not be subjected to 'cruel treatment' and torture' or outrages upon personal dignity in particular humiliating and degrading treatment."

The US Supreme Court further held that trial by Military Commissions created by a November 13, 2001 Military order issued by President Bush authorising the trial of persons suspected of terrorism was violative of Doctrine of separation of powers under which Executive branch may not usurp the authority of judiciary. Moreover, as required by Article 5 of the Third Geneva Convention, the captured combatants should have been treated as PoWs unless a competent tribunal determined otherwise.

Despite this judgment, the right groups have opined that the status of many suspects and those scooped off the battlefields in Afghanistan in 2001 remained unclear. They remarked that it was uncertain whether the US reversal would apply to some of the most prized captives like Khalid Sheikh Muhammad (who is alleged to be the mastermind of September 11 terrorist attacks), being held in the secret location by the CIA. A CIA spokeswoman refused to comment on the ramifications of the memo sent by Deputy Defence Secretary, Gordon England, which requires military personnel to adhere to

Common Article Three of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The administration had previously declared in an order by President George Bush in February 2002 that the Geneva Conventions do not apply' to Al-Qaeda or Taliban detainees. But in a statement to the New York Times late on Tuesday, the White House said 'as a result of the Supreme Court decision, that portion of the order no longer applies'.

Mr Michael Ratner, a human rights lawyer and President of the Centre for Constitutional Rights which represents a number of Guantanamo Bay detainees said that he does not think that it is 100 percent clear, at a minimum, the government needs to now start providing ICRC access to these prisoners.

The Report published in an English daily on 13-7-2006 adds that legal position would be tested if the International Committee on the Red Cross (ICRC) requested access to a secret CIA prison - and how the government would act remain uncertain. Another area of contention is the administration's position that it was already applying the spirit of Article Three of the Geneva Conventions to war on terror suspects or unlawful combatants as administration had been denying the techniques used to interrogate terror suspects amount to torture.

The time would only tell whether the detainees will receive a fair treatment and a fair trial and whether the secret cells and the X-Ray camps at Guantanamo Bay are closed because the Supreme Court left out the important question of whether detainees can be held indefinitely or whether Guantanamo Bay should be closed. The writer is Chairman, Sharia Advisory Board, Emirates Global Islamic Bank and a former Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

US POLICY OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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An Adviser With Expertise, and a Sandwich, Too

The New York Times
August 14, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section B; Column 1; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1103 words

Byline: By JENNIFER MEDINA

Dateline: HARTFORD, Aug. 11

Body

As he prepared to leave his room at the Goodwin Hotel here Tuesday night to acknowledge defeat in his Democratic primary battle against Ned Lamont, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman turned to his wife, Hadassah.

"I want you to be up," he told her, according to advisers who were in the room. "If you're up, I'm up."

He then went downstairs to take the stage and, while conceding defeat, vowed to fight on to the general election as an independent candidate. It was a decision that has roiled the national political landscape and that stemmed in part, these advisers say, from Mrs. Lieberman's feeling that her husband had to move forward and fight for his own political beliefs.

"I just tell him: the best thing you have going for you is you," Mrs. Lieberman said in a telephone interview on Friday. "What you see with Joe is what you get. And if some people don't like it, that's their problem. Being a leader doesn't mean you take polls every time to tell you what to believe."

Some of the senator's former advisers have said that his political problems have stemmed from an overreliance on loyalists who have the same world view as he. And perhaps nobody is a more loyal or more trusted adviser than Mrs. Lieberman.

But she is a force of her own. At several points this summer, she marshaled energy and enthusiasm among staff members, encouraging them to stay upbeat despite troubling poll numbers and to find ways to put Mr. Lieberman's best face forward.

If that were not enough, Mrs. Lieberman has also juggled the responsibility of helping to plan their elder daughter's wedding. [It was held Sunday, after having been postponed from just before the primary.]

In addition, the youngest of the Liebermans' four children, who just graduated from high school, is soon leaving to study in Israel for a year. And soon, the couple will move from their home of more than two decades in New Haven to an apartment there. When they married in 1983, Mr. Lieberman had two children from a previous marriage and Mrs. Lieberman had one.

An Adviser With Expertise, and a Sandwich, Too

Mrs. Lieberman, 58, has always been an ardent campaigner, with her own political know-how. She earned a master's degree in international relations from Northeastern University, worked at Hill & Knowlton public relations as a senior counselor in health and pharmaceuticals and has frequently delivered speeches on women's health care.

She is not one to shy away from complicated topics. At one campaign stop at a center for the elderly, several women approached her to ask fine points about Social Security. Mrs. Lieberman quickly called over an aide, asked her to get the phone number of a woman complaining and promised to get back to her about what she could do to get more money.

A few moments later, Mrs. Lieberman took the microphone herself from the senator to discuss Social Security's inequities.

"I want you all to know that Joe knows about this, and he is working to change it," she said. The women applauded wildly before going back to their bingo game.

Mrs. Lieberman rose to national prominence when her husband did, when he ran for vice president in 2000. At the time, in the harsh spotlight, some handlers picked her wardrobe and directed her not to talk too much.

During this campaign, Mrs. Lieberman has been a steady presence, particularly for much of Mr. Lieberman's bus tour across Connecticut in the last days of his primary race. She routinely sat next to him during interviews with reporters, occasionally chiming in with her own thoughts.

When one reporter pressed Mr. Lieberman about his views on the war in Iraq, Mrs. Lieberman intervened. "What more is there left to say?" she asked, not waiting for an answer.

In ways public and private, Mrs. Lieberman is not shy about showing her admiration for her husband. She watches him closely, urging him on when she thinks he's doing the right thing, or nudging him when she doesn't.

She was there at a small Italian festival in Norwalk at the end of last month, warmly greeting supporters and trying to sway detractors. Yes, she assured them, Mr. Lieberman would defend the rights of immigrants. Mrs. Lieberman, who was born in Czechoslovakia, reminded them that she, too, was an immigrant, the child of Holocaust survivors. But as Mr. Lieberman continued to push through the crowds, Mrs. Lieberman took a short break to sit down with two young staff members.

"Joey," she called after Mr. Lieberman. "See, Joey, they think you do very well here, that you reach more people than by doing things on television. You really connect to people here, Joey, right, boys?"

The two staff members nodded politely, taking the fried pizza dough Mrs. Lieberman was thrusting into their hands.

On the campaign trail, Mrs. Lieberman is not hesitant to play the role of a doting wife and mother. Between campaign stops one Friday, she furiously exchanged e-mail messages with one of her daughters to make sure she could get home in time for the Sabbath dinner.

Another morning, at a diner in Norwalk, Mrs. Lieberman pushed her husband to finish a conversation with several reporters.

First: "Joey, drink your water."

A moment later, Mrs. Lieberman brought him half a tuna sandwich, which sat untouched for several minutes as Mr. Lieberman discussed the threat from Hezbollah.

"Joey, eat your sandwich," she implored.

Then Mrs. Lieberman looked urgently at her watch. It was past 1 p.m., and they were on the verge of missing a flight back to Washington, she said.

An Adviser With Expertise, and a Sandwich, Too

"Joey, Joey, we have to go soon," she said. But she always said it with a smile.

Mr. Lieberman laughed in mock offense. "Honey, we're discussing world events here."

Like many of the senator's loyalists, Mrs. Lieberman was frequently angered during the last month of the campaign, as it became more apparent that he could actually lose the primary. She, like Mr. Lieberman, repeatedly contended that Mr. Lamont's campaign had twisted his record.

"Sometimes I go ---- I think, 'Oh my God, Joey, the patience that you have,' " Mrs. Lieberman said in an interview on Tuesday. "Really, I am being honest, the rest of us, the normal person"

She trailed off.

On Friday, with the primary behind her, she said she was eager to get back to being a "normal person."

Just before she headed to Manhattan for the wedding Sunday, she stopped at a mall in Hamden, Conn., to search frantically for costume pearls (she left the real ones in Washington) to wear that day.

"There I am, running around and trying to hide, and people come up to me," she said. "That's how it is, we campaign unbeknownst to me."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Hadassah Lieberman with her husband, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, before voting on Tuesday in New Haven. She has been a steady presence in this year's race. (Photo by Darren McCollester/Getty Images)(pg. B1)

Hadassah Lieberman with her husband in 1988 as he announced his bid for the U.S. Senate. Then state attorney general, he won the race. (Photo by The Hartford Courant via Associated Press)(pg. B5)

Load-Date: August 14, 2006

Artists against war: Cube Gallery's salon-style exhibition rallies some top names in Canadian art

Ottawa Citizen

August 31, 2006 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: ARTS; Pg. E1 ; Art and the City

Length: 1085 words

Byline: Paul Gessell, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Ever arrange a demonstration for or against some hot-button issue?

It can be a real gamble. First of all, you have to worry that nobody will come. Then you have to worry about those who do come. Will the protesters really agree with your point of view? Will they just be rabble-rousers? Will they leave you embarrassed? Or worse?

Don Monet, owner of Cube Gallery, faced such questions when he put out a call for artists a few weeks ago to contribute artwork to an unjuried, salon-style exhibition of anti-war art.

The call for submissions came amid the recent war between Israel and *Hezbollah*. Anti-war sentiments were in the air. More than six dozen artists from across Canada responded. Some were big names, including two winners of the Governor General's Visual Arts Awards -- Lynne

Cohen, who left Ottawa for Montreal a few years ago, and Jamelie Hassan of London, Ont. Familiar Ottawa names include Farouk Kaspaules, Claude Latour, Norman Takeuchi and Tamaya Garner.

Hassan especially jumped on

Monet's bandwagon. Hassan is of Lebanese origin and was horrified by the destruction and death in her homeland. She rallied the art world in London, which was, at last count, to send works from 15 artists in that Ontario city.

Among the participants in the show, Art Against War, is Vancouver's Jayce Salloum. You may remember him from the Arab-Canadian art exhibition held in 2001 at the Canadian

Museum of Civilization, right after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

The museum tried to cancel the show but was ordered by Parliament to continue with it. The biggest problem for the museum was Salloum's anti-American, anti-Israeli video. Most of the rest of the show contained politically neutral works.

Artists against war: Cube Gallery's salon-style exhibition rallies some top names in Canadian art

When interviewed, Monet said he was unsure what Salloum was sending to Ottawa this time. However, Monet seemed unconcerned. He conceded that he may not agree with the point of view expressed in every artwork in his show. But he did not feel it was his job to censor artists.

This column had to be written when Monet still only had a small sampling of the work he had to hang, at the last minute, for yesterday's opening. Among those initial works: Generic anti-war art, including Garner's sculpture of a peace-loving child atop a globe; scenes of horror inspired by the Israeli bombing of Lebanon, including the mixed media work of a mutilated child by London's Abdul Hadi Shala; the destruction of Iraq, including a photo-based depiction of hell created by Ottawa's Raymond Roy; and extremely subtle and somewhat puzzling works, such as Cohen's photograph of an empty child's chair beside a statuette of chicken-loving Col. Sanders.

This is the third anti-war art exhibition Monet has organized in the past seven years. The other two were at Gallery 101. One suspects it won't be the last. The show continues until Sunday.

like yoko ono, minus singing

Germaine Koh is like Yoko Ono, only better. The former Ottawa artist, now based in Berlin, resembles the world's most famous rock widow in that the two both create minimalist, cheeky conceptual art.

But there are important differences. Koh is more technically savvy. There's usually a hidden computer manipulating Koh's art in strange ways. Rarely are there secret moving parts in Ono's art. Another difference: Koh does not try to sing. The two women are similar, however, in their love of the absurd.

As Koh said of her work when she recently led a tour of her new solo show at the Ottawa Art Gallery: "All of these things are kind of absurd." It was unclear whether she was confessing or bragging about her absurdist art.

One of Koh's three installations bears a title that is simply three dots -- ... -- like an ellipsis. In this room-sized piece, thousands of tiny ball bearings randomly fall from overhead pipes onto the floor or even onto your head. They are like metallic raindrops, ping, ping, pinging away.

There's a zen-like tranquillity to this work. Yet, danger lurks, along with a sense of uncertainty: Will those balls hurt when bounced off your head?

Koh created this work in 2000 when she was invited to participate in an exhibition at the Japanese-Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto. Each artist in the show was to produce a work of art referencing the contents of the centre's collection of mainly Japanese cultural products. Koh chose to reference pachinko balls used in the pinball-like games very popular in Japan.

Another room is connected to four light sensors rigged onto the exterior of Arts Court. As the sunlight outside diminishes, so do the electric lights inside the room.

Of course, one just has to look through the window in this room to realize clouds have suddenly obscured the sun. But that's all part of the absurdity inherent to this piece, entitled Fair-weather Forces(sun: light), 2005.

The third work is Call. This is a telephone in an Arts Court hall. Pick up the phone and it randomly dials the number of one of 20 or so volunteers. Consider it an opportunity to engage in some guerrilla theatre with an unseen stranger.

Ono created a work similar to this many years ago, except that when a gallery visitor picked up the phone, Ono was supposed to answer. Apparently, she did, but only rarely. Koh's work is far more complex. Ono would surely be jealous.

nudes in nature

Artists against war: Cube Gallery's salon-style exhibition rallies some top names in Canadian art

Ottawa's School of the Photographic Arts is one of the greatest additions to the city's visual art scene in the past year. Its students consistently produce work of excellent quality that can be found at the school's in-house Red Wall Gallery and in other art galleries in the city.

The school's latest exhibition is called Lolaland 8. The show contains eight images captured by four students participating in a two-day master class, led by Ottawa's Pedro Isztin, on photographing the nude in nature. The location was Lolaland, the Outaouais hideaway of ceramic artist Jim Thomson.

Andrew Balfour was the only full-time professional photographer among the four "students," the others being an engineer, an architect and a bureaucrat, but all with considerable photographic experience. Balfour's work is certainly the strongest in the Lolaland 8 show, which continues until Sept. 13.

The four students spent one day with a ***female*** model at Lolaland and another day with a male model. Supervising was Isztin, whose stunning series of nudes in nature has been globetrotting for years in galleries across the Americas.

Isztin will be leading another master class on this topic near Wakefield in September. An exhibition of those works will open in December.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Ottawa's Raymond Roy offered this photo-based depiction of hell as his contribution to the new Art Against War exhibition.;

Photo: Andrew Balfour's work, including this photograph, is certainly the strongest in the Lolaland 8 show, which continues until Sept. 13 at Ottawa's School of the Photographic Arts.

Load-Date: August 31, 2006

A Farewell to Figaro

New York Sun (Archive)

October 5, 2006 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 11

Length: 1224 words

Byline: DANIEL JOHNSON

Body

When Senator McCain agreed to give the keynote speech to the British Conservatives at their convention in Bournemouth this week, his hosts reckoned it was quite a coup. Despite the anti-American tone of British politics - including, lately, even the Tories - it seems that a prerequisite for anybody who hopes to be prime minister is to gain the endorsement of an Uncle Sam figure from across the Atlantic.

Last week the Labor Party had been wowed by Bill Clinton, who poured a barrelful of schmalz over Gordon Brown, the man who is determined to succeed Tony Blair next year. But Mr. Clinton is yesterday's man, whereas Mr. McCain's presidential ambition belies the fact that, as he told the Tories, "I am older than dirt and have more scars than Frankenstein."

In most respects, the senator played his part well. Interviewed in the London Times, he compared David Cameron, the Conservative leader, to FDR and JFK - both sufficiently remote in history to be uncontroversial here and, as Democrats, appropriate role models for a self-styled "liberal conservative."

Mind you, I do wonder what Mr. McCain really thought of Mr. Cameron's speech to an American audience on last month's anniversary of 9/11. Asked about it, he chose his words carefully: "I was not troubled by it when I read the whole speech." Mr. McCain would have enjoyed hearing himself quoted calling for "European leadership" and would have agreed with Mr. Cameron that Guantanamo Bay is "illiberal" or that American "unilateralism" has failed to defeat terrorism. He might have been less comfortable with Mr. Cameron's criticism of Israel's "disproportionate bombing of Lebanon," let alone the implication that anti-Americanism was America's own fault.

I doubt, though, that any Republican presidential candidate would say, as the Tory leader did, that the West must address "the perception by many Muslims that Islam is under attack ... and the belief that the West deliberately fails to resolve issues of crucial concern to Muslims, like Palestine." This scarcely coded plea for appeasement would be electoral suicide in America - and rightly so.

When it came to Mr. McCain's own speech, it was his turn to make the Tories feel uncomfortable. For this was one of the few conservative speeches that the Conservatives have heard this week.

He began by praising Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, two ghosts from the past that Mr. Cameron would rather lay to rest. Both are associated with what Mr. McCain called "a short-list of self-evident truths: love of country; the importance of strong national defense; steadfast opposition to threats against our security and values that matches resources to ends wisely; the integrity of the rights of individuals and the values of families and local

A Farewell to Figaro

communities; the wonders of free markets; encouraging entrepreneurship and small business; low taxes; fiscal discipline; and generally, the government that governs best governs least."

The trouble is that the Tories were unwilling to trumpet any of these principles this week. Instead, they had a very different shortlist of self-evidently insincere untruths: that the right response to climate change is new carbon taxes; that tax cuts threaten "stability," and that the public does not want a smaller state or less government. Mr. Cameron has no time for President Bush, but he goes into raptures about Al Gore's campaign against global warming. He castigates Mr. Blair for supporting Israel against Hezbollah and thereby alienating the "moderate Muslim world," but his only policy proposal yesterday was to open more state-subsidized Muslim schools. A teacher friend tells me that many of her Muslim pupils, like their parents, are Holocaust-deniers - and this is at a non-Muslim school. Yet Mr. Cameron wants Muslim children to have teachers who may share their parents' prejudices.

Mr. McCain is probably as liberal a Republican as any in the Senate - but he is still much more conservative than Mr. Cameron on any issue you care to name. That gulf may reflect a deep cultural difference between Europe and America, but as the example of Mrs. Thatcher reminds us, it ain't necessarily so.

Despite his criticisms of the Pentagon, Mr. McCain was wearing a "Support Our Troops" wristband. The Tories have rightly demanded that the meager pay of British troops in Iraq and Afghanistan should not be taxed so heavily. But Mr. Cameron is eager to woo the "moderate" Muslim vote. He has yet to mention the soldier who was wounded in Afghanistan and woke up in a Birmingham hospital to find a fanatic threatening him for having "killed our Muslim brothers." British military hospitals no longer exist, so wounded servicemen and women feel vulnerable at home and prefer to be treated at American facilities in Germany. This is shameful.

Mr. McCain told the Tories in no uncertain terms that "we will not be vanquished by forces that scorn the dignity of Man, and the laws and ideals that protect us." This is an uncongenial message for many Tory voters, a third of whom want us to admit defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan. And we haven't heard a peep out of the Conservative Party leadership about threats to free speech here in the West, either.

The case that has been exercising me is that of the philosophy teacher in France who has been driven into hiding after writing an op-ed for *le Figaro*, the leading conservative newspaper, in which he supported Pope Benedict XVI. Robert Redeker denounced Muhammad as "a merciless warlord, a looter, a mass murderer of Jews and a polygamist." He argued that, in contrast to Judaism and Christianity, "Islam exalts violence in its everyday rites and sacred book." This is strong language, but well within the bounds of fair comment.

Mr. Redeker was instantly threatened with murder, and the publication of his address and photograph on the Internet forced him to go underground. In a letter to his friend, the philosopher Andre Glucksmann, he pleaded for help: "So the Islamists have succeeded in punishing me on the territory of the Republic as if I were guilty of a thought crime." Most of the leading thinkers in France, including Bernard-Henri Levy and Alain Finkielkraut, have called on the government to help Mr. Redeker.

So far, however, ministers have been singularly reluctant to condemn the campaign of intimidation unequivocally. You can almost hear Prime Minister de Villepin squirming in this comment: "Everyone has the right to express his views freely - while respecting others, of course." Of course. What Mr. de Villepin means is that in France you are free to criticize anything - except Islam.

Most disgraceful of all has been the conduct of *le Figaro*, the editor, Pierre Rousselin, appeared on Al Jazeera to apologize for publishing an "Islamophobic and heinous article." Having met Mr. Rousselin, I am shocked but not surprised. There has been a sad decline at that once-great newspaper since the days of Raymond Aron, the cold warrior whose columns adorned *le Figaro* from 1947 until 1977. He wrote once: "A love of truth and a horror of falsehood - this, I believe, lies at the very heart of my way of being and thinking. And in order to be able to express the truth, one must be free." I cannot imagine Aron grovelling to Islamists, any more than he did to Nazis or Communists. His successors at *le Figaro* should hang their heads in shame.

A Farewell to Figaro

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Amid Political Upheaval, Israeli Economy Stays Healthy

The New York Times
December 31, 2006 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1166 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Dec. 26

Body

For Israel, it has been a typically tumultuous year: Ariel Sharon, then the prime minister, collapsed into a coma on Jan. 4, the radical Islamic group Hamas won Palestinian elections later that month, and Israel fought a monthlong war in Lebanon this summer.

But despite the political turmoil and spasms of violence, Israel, it seems, has figured out how to keep its economy charging forward.

It was the country's third straight year of strong growth, with the economy expanding nearly 5 percent. The stock market has been hitting record highs; unemployment is at a 10-year low. Israel's central bank is lowering interest rates to 4.5 percent on Jan. 1, putting them well below rates in the United States, an almost unprecedented development. The Israeli shekel is trading at 4.2 to the dollar, its strongest level in five years.

Further, Warren E. Buffett, the billionaire investor, paid \$4 billion for an Israeli company, and Donald Trump is developing a 70-story luxury residential tower on the outskirts of Tel Aviv.

"Israelis look at the economy, and they've essentially been through these disturbances in the past, and they know the economy is pretty robust and it tends to come back," said Stanley Fischer, the governor of the Bank of Israel. "Things that happen here have a smaller impact on markets than I think they would abroad."

While the Israeli economy has been thriving, the Palestinian economy has moved in the opposite direction, contracting by an estimated 10 to 15 percent this year, according to the Palestine Monetary Authority.

For Israel, the business that best illustrates the economy's resilience this year is the company Mr. Buffett bought, Iscar Metalworking Company, a global leader in the manufacture of precision metal-cutting tools.

In May, Mr. Buffet bought 80 percent of the company, which has its headquarters on an isolated hilltop in northern Israel that offers a panoramic view of the nearby border with Lebanon.

Barely two months later, a cross-border raid by Hezbollah guerrillas ignited 34 days of fighting that pushed Israeli troops into Lebanon and drew heavy rocket barrages against northern Israel.

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One rocket slammed into the Tefen Industrial Park, where Iscar is situated, causing minor damage to a building belonging to another company. Many more rockets crashed nearby during the weeks of war.

Many Iscar workers moved their families away from the border region, but the company maintained production, with only occasional slowdowns.

"It took us a brief time to adjust, but we didn't miss a single shipment," said Eitan Wertheimer, Iscar's chairman. "For our customers around the world, there was no war."

The northern city of Haifa came under almost daily rocket attacks, and ships stopped entering Haifa's port, the country's largest. Some exporters shipped their goods by air at much higher expense in order to meet deadlines.

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, which has been setting records throughout the year, seemingly shrugged off the war; it was slightly higher at the end of the conflict in August than before it started in July.

At the beginning of the year, Israel's economy was forecast to grow at around 5.5 percent, and will come in at about 4.8 percent, according to Mr. Fischer, who attributed the dip to the war.

The Palestinian economy, meanwhile, has been devastated. During the peace talks of the 1990s, the Israelis and Palestinians increased cooperation, and by 2000, both sides were growing rapidly and nearly 150,000 Palestinians entered Israel daily. Most were workers who accounted for a large slice of the Palestinian economy.

When the Palestinian uprising began in September of that year, both sides took an immediate economic hit, but for the Palestinians, the downward spiral has yet to end.

Israeli security forces greatly increased the web of restrictions in the Palestinian areas to prevent attacks, and the measures have also imposed great hardships on Palestinian economic life. The Palestinians grew increasingly dependent on aid as their access to Israel's economy dwindled. The problems worsened into crisis this year after Hamas came to power, and Israel began withholding Palestinian tax revenues and Western countries cut off direct aid to the Palestinian government.

The Palestinian per capita gross domestic product, which was about \$1,800 annually at the beginning of the uprising, plummeted to \$1,200 last year and continues to fall.

For Israelis, per capita gross domestic product has risen over the last six years from a little over \$15,000 a year to around \$18,000, according to government figures.

Israel turned the corner on a two-year recession in 2003, and for the past three years the economy has expanded at 4.4 percent to 5.2 percent annually, with a similar forecast for next year. The growth comes from technology, service and other modern industries, and trade mostly with the United States, Europe and East Asia.

Plagued by hyperinflation in the 1980s, Israel has an inflation rate hovering around zero percent this year, and it has been averaging less than 1 percent annually for the past five years.

The economic tide is not lifting every Israeli boat, however. Despite the economic growth, the number of Israelis living below the poverty level has been edging up, from 18 percent in 2002 to more than 20 percent last year, according to the government's National Insurance Institute.

Critics say this is because Israelis who are struggling economically have seen their benefits fall sharply, while they remain unemployed. The unemployment rate is at its lowest level in a decade, but still relatively high at 8.4 percent.

Benjamin Netanyahu, who as finance minister pushed aggressive open-market policies from 2003 to 2005, was also widely criticized for cutting social programs in a country where couples often have many children and depend heavily on such subsidies.

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"The basic problem is that economic growth has been very uneven," said Shlomo Swirski, the academic director of Adva, a research institute that focuses on the poor.

Job growth, he said, has been concentrated in sectors that require a high level of education. Economic growth has been greatest in Tel Aviv and surrounding areas, the economic hub of the country, while the less developed Galilee in the north and Negev Desert in the south have seen much less progress, Mr. Swirski added.

"We're looking at growth that is highly concentrated geographically, economically and socially," he said.

Economists note that many of the poor come from two groups, Israeli Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews, that have large families and low participation rates in the work force. Among Israeli Arabs, few **women** have formal jobs. Among the ultra-Orthodox, many men do not work.

"We still see a strong debate over income distribution," said David Levhari, an economics professor at Hebrew University. "But overall, I think we're looking at an economy that should continue to do pretty well."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: An Israeli company that produces armor for military vehicles. Israel has had three years of solid growth and unemployment is at a 10-year low. (Photo by Rina Castelnuevo for The New York Times)

Palestinians waited recently to receive part of their salaries in Hebron. The Palestinian economy has been ravaged over the past several years. (Photo by Hazem Bader/Agence France-Presse)

Load-Date: December 31, 2006

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Beating each other into submission not way forward

Canberra Times (Australia)

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 11

Length: 1143 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

RECENTLY, I sat at a table with a group of people desperately seeking peace in Lebanon and Israel. There were people of all ages, both sexes and from a great diversity of ethnic backgrounds. There were Muslims and Christians of differing persuasions and those professing no particular belief.

Despite the great diversity, there was a deep sense of unity based on our common humanity and our desperate yearning for peace.

I dreamed that if this microcosm of the human family were able to influence the rest of that family, surely we would have begun on the path to peace. There will be no lasting peace in the Middle East or in any other part of the world without an underlying sense of justice which recognises the dignity of every human person.

In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, I asked the question, "Is an Iraqi life of any less value than a British, an American or an Australian life?" During the current conflict, I ask, "Is a Lebanese or a Palestinian life of less value than an Israeli life or the life of a citizen of a Western country?" I believe we got it wrong in 2003 and I fear that we are getting it horribly wrong right now.

Globalisation need not be a dirty word, if it enables us to realise that we are part of the one human family. Such realisation will have implications in the way we view the world's resources and the welfare of other human beings, wherever they happen to live.

Since the terrible events of September 11, 2001, George W. Bush and his supporters have been outdoing each other in proclaiming a war on terror. I have never understood exactly what such a war involves, apart from increasing fear in every part of society. It seems to me that it is much more constructive to talk about a war on poverty, rather than a war on terror.

With all the rhetoric of the past five years, it is obvious that terrorism is now a much greater threat because the divide between "them and us" has grown far greater. The notion that one side can be beaten into submission by the other is a recipe for conflict rather than peace. It builds up a climate of fear, hate and suspicion alienating rather than bringing people together.

The UN Millennium Development Goals, adopted in 2000, aim at implementation by 2015. They offer a way to peace, security, development, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all peoples.

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They seek to: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Achieve universal primary education.

Promote gender equality and empower women.

Reduce child mortality.

Improve maternal health.

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Ensure environmental sustainability.

Develop a global partnership for development.

An unequivocal commitment to such goals by the richer countries of the world would send a clear message to less fortunate people that they are not being forgotten; indeed, that they have fundamental rights to an equitable share in this world's goods. As it is, the prosperous countries of the world seem to be selfishly looking after their own narrow concerns, often at the expense of developing nations.

The obscene use of oil and the raping of the environment are two cases in point. In fact, one might ask how much the greed for oil is not behind much of the conflict and tension gripping the world at the moment.

The adage "Live simply so that others can simply live" is an imperative.

The world reaction to the Boxing Day tsunami gave me some hope that we might be moving in the right direction. For a few brief weeks the rest of the world seemed ready to reach out to the victims of this natural disaster. Some old divisions and enmities were set aside, while genuine human aid was delivered to those in need.

It seemed an encouraging model as to how we might live as one human family.

In any family there will be disagreements which need to be worked through. Dialogue and negotiation, rather than beating each other into submission, need to be the way forward. Genuine dialogue involves listening, trying to see the other person's point of view and putting ourselves in the shoes of the other. In this context, inter-religious dialogue is so important in today's world. No longer can we allow old divisions to erupt into hatred and war. It is blasphemous when such fighting takes place in the name of God. The tentative steps being taken in Australia for dialogue between Muslims, Jews and Christians are to be commended. Hopefully, these positive steps towards peace will continue. Of course, there will always be extremists who want no part of such dialogue, but while moderate people on all sides show what is possible, one can only hope that sanity will prevail.

Peace in the Middle East is clearly crucial to world peace. I believe that if the Muslim world could see that the West was serious about helping to find a just solution for the Palestinian people, the hatred towards the United States and its allies would be reduced. The continuing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, the deprivation of food, water and medical supplies, the building of a wall which further impedes already limited movement of Palestinians, the heartless destruction of olive groves and the deployment of heavy armament against a relatively soft target are hardly recipes for peace. While the United States, Australian and other like-minded governments give a wink and nudge to Israel as it continues on such a course, they become complicit in the escalation of the conflict. Instead of undermining the United Nations, our governments should be giving it every support trying to broker peace for Palestine, Israel and the world.

Is it too much to ask that there be daring gestures which show that all parties are serious about peace and are prepared to give something themselves rather than be demanding of others? Is it possible for the Israeli Government to say sorry to the people of Lebanon and Gaza? Already I have heard many individual Israelis express such sentiments. Are countries such as the US and Australia prepared to help seriously rather than in a token way in the reconstruction of the towns and villages destroyed in the recent conflict? Is Hezbollah prepared to

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return the captured Israeli soldiers and guarantee that there will be no further attacks on Israel provided that it is prepared to withdraw from Lebanon and desist from any further attack on that country? Can the cooperation of the Pakistani Government in the thwarting of the British terrorist attacks be acknowledged as a positive sign of an Islamic country contributing to world harmony?

Peace at any level, and especially world peace, will never be easily achieved. But unless individuals and governments begin to take a less selfish and self-righteous attitude and show what it means to belong to one human family, the future of our planet will be bleak.

(Bishop) Power is Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Load-Date: August 14, 2006

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Talking to Syria and Iran would be a mistake

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

December 11, 2006 Monday

0 South Pinellas Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 16A

Length: 1142 words

Series: YOUR LETTERS

Body

Talking to Syria and Iran could benefit the Mideast and the United States? The last time I checked, Lebanon, Israel and Kurdistan are all in that region, and not only would they not "benefit" from such talks, they would also be placed in a much more precarious situation than they face now.

The Syrians would demand that the United States look the other way as they continued to subjugate the Lebanese government using their proxy bullies in Hezbollah. The Iranians would ask for a free pass on their nuclear program, which threatens the existence of Israel. The Kurds would once again fear reprisals, and the resulting establishment of a Shiite crescent of power from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean would destabilize the entire region.

And we are to believe that schmoozing with Syria's Bashar Assad and Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a coherent plan?

Richard Scott, Clearwater

'Stay the course' is failing, report says | Dec. 7

Set a firm timetable

I appreciate the Times analysis of the report by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. The article combined the panel's strong call for the use of diplomacy and political processes with the analysis that our president will not change course.

Each day, each hour, that this "grave and deteriorating" war continues is unbearable. We care about our women and men in Iraq and about the Iraqi people. To remain silent is unconscionable. It is time for "we the people" to demand that the senators, the representatives and the president who work for us immediately begin work to incorporate the core elements of the Iraq Study Group proposals with a firm timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

A clear declaration of the U.S. intent to withdraw all military forces and bases from Iraq and a short timetable to do so are essential to move the all-important political and diplomatic process forward. The Iraq Study Group itself recommended that the United States launch a new diplomatic initiative before the end of this month. Yet, your article makes clear in bold print that the "Panel won't follow up on recommendations."

Talking to Syria and Iran would be a mistake

It seems that it is up to us, the citizens of this country, to follow up. I urge all my fellow citizens to call and write to Sens. Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez as well as your representatives in the House and the president and demand that we implement the recommendations of this panel and set a firm timetable for withdrawal of our forces and bases from Iraq.

Karen Putney, Tampa

Saudis reportedly financing insurgency | Dec. 8, story

Off target

Imagine my surprise when I read the Saudis are sending millions in private funds to the insurgents in Iraq.

Most of the individuals who participated in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were Saudi nationals. The Saudis also regularly have fundraisers to support the families of suicide bombers.

When are the American people going to realize we invaded the wrong country?

Sam Jordan, St. Petersburg

McCain's plans on Iraq are fueled by arrogance | Dec. 8, column

Popular vs. right

If President Franklin Roosevelt had followed Susan Estrich's advice about placing popular opinion ahead of leadership, we might be speaking German now.

Lou Kirschbaum, Largo

'Naughty Corner'

The recent suggestion that the United States bar exports of grown-up toys sought by North Korean leader Kim Jong Il made me realize that my daughter's use of the "Naughty Corner" with my grandchildren would provide a far better model for our relations with other countries, especially those our president has labeled the "Axis of Evil."

When the children exhibit an inappropriate behavior, they are warned; if the behavior continues, they are sent to the "Naughty Corner" to reflect. The amount of time spent in the corner varies depending on the age of the child and the nature of the behavior.

The isolation lasts no longer than five minutes and then the child is asked to describe the behavior that led to the placement, suggest or develop a better alternative, and then is welcomed back into the family with a hug. After the process is over, no one brings the issue up again.

Imagine if our country and president subscribed to the above procedure in our relations with Iran, Syria and North Korea. We would actually be talking to these countries, attempting to develop alternative behaviors and then moving on, with a fresh slate until the next time they needed a few days in the "Naughty Corner." A far better and more effective process than simply taking away their toys.

John H. Mason, Clearwater

In Turkey, pope calls for dialogue with Muslims | Nov. 29, story

Message to Islam

Had I been Pope Benedict XVI's speechwriter when he apologized for recent remarks concerning the Islamic religion, I would have suggested that he might have put it this way:

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"Many years ago, the Catholic Church suffered a stain on its reputation when the 'holy' crusaders killed 'unbelievers' in the name of the church. Finally this distortion of Christian doctrine was disowned and no longer tolerated. It is my prayer that my good Muslim brethren shall speak out loud and clear that terrorism is not condoned by true Islam, and all terrorists shall be driven from their midst. This battle also falls on your shoulders to correct the misconception.

"In this fight I am with you, brethren - not against you. Terrorists should not be allowed to hide behind the robes of religious faith!"

Elizabeth Noone, St. Petersburg

Get with the Gators

The Florida Gators have presented themselves to everyone for a great unified holiday season.

Attention, snowbirds, Hurricane fans, Florida State University fans: Support the Gators in their championship bid.

Congratulations to all the Gator fans, and congratulations to the Gators!

I am a Notre Dame fan. However, here in Florida, all should root for the Gators. When you are in Rome ...

By the way, did you know that the University of Florida maintains a 90 percent graduation rate among its athletes?

Sly Thomas, St. Petersburg

Football above all

I began visiting Florida rather frequently when my parents bought a home and moved to Dunedin more than 40 years ago. After a few visits, I discovered that there was an Eleventh Commandment in Florida: Thou shall not speak ill of Florida football.

I told my friends back home that compared to Florida citizens, Ohio State fans were mere casual observers of the game.

I must confess that after I moved to Florida several years ago my attitude toward the extraordinary emphasis on football in the universities in the state turned from amusement to a slight irritation. It seems that there is nothing more important than college football.

You certainly bolstered that opinion when football pre-empted your front page headlines on Sunday and Monday of last week. Then you followed with a featured editorial on Tuesday. Apparently, there was nothing more important in the world to report.

F. Darrell Thomas, Trinity

Load-Date: December 12, 2006

O Happy Day as Heaven arrives in the Square...

The Scotsman

August 14, 2006, Monday

Festival Edition

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Section: Pg. 5

Length: 1202 words

Body

JACKIE KAY

AN AUSPICIOUS beginning to the Book Festival: the sun shining, the Soweto Gospel Choir singing O Happy Day, and Jackie Kay in fine fettle. Gavin Wallace, the Scottish Arts Council's head of literature, summed up the mood in his introduction: "If there is literature heaven, this is it."

Kay is a versatile writer whose work ranges through poetry, short stories, novels and plays. She read a range of poetry, including a new poem just written in tribute to the Book Festival itself, and two stories from her recent collection, *Wish I Was Here*, interspersed with sparkling wit.

In her writing, she is a master of illuminating the meaningful in the everyday. Her short story *Blinds* is ostensibly about nothing more than a man coming to fit blinds in a woman's new home. But, full of humour and insight, it opens doors into other lives and other relationships, including the one the narrator has just left.

It was a reading full of good humour, but punctuated by a sense of loss. In an extract from another story, *What Ever*, she writes about a woman whose husband has died, conveying the savage reality of grief while making us laugh at the trite platitudes it produces in other people. Humour and sadness coexist in her stories and poems, as they do in life.

NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND DEBATE

IT IS a tribute to the fledgling National Theatre of Scotland that, just six months after its inception, there is enough material to fuel a lively discussion at the Book Festival. Playwright John Byrne and theatre critic Lyn Gardner, who joined NTS artistic director Vicky Featherstone on the panel, had profound praise for what the organisation has achieved so far.

Credit was given to the model on which the organisation was based - a commissioning structure without building or permanent company of actors - which allows it to draw on the strengths of the whole theatrical community, while undertaking projects that are diverse in scale and in flavour.

There was praise from the panel and from the floor for the NTS co-production on the Fringe, Gregory Burke's *Black Watch*, which has already won a Fringe First Award.

Featherstone, however, acknowledged that projects such as this begin with taking a risk. As the organisation becomes more firmly established, maintaining that spirit of risk will become more challenging.

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Key to its success so far has been the breadth of talent in the theatre community in Scotland, and the depth of commitment of Scottish theatre audiences. Although it's early days, the NTS, has the potential to develop a body of work which allows us to examine who we are as Scots, in the words of John Byrne, "a difficult people".

IRVINE WELSH

SOME people in the audience know what's coming when Irvine Welsh reads about Danny Kibbie and the White Witch of Tranent. It's his new party-piece: a gross-out scene in which a young man has sex with an incontinent, flabby, filthy 85-year-old woman.

Most don't. They laugh, with shock or embarrassment. And some really are shocked, but Welsh being the Bard of Hard, and still having a residual aura of cool 13 years after *Trainspotting*, they try to hide it.

So they ask questions about that scene. Surely it's misogynistic, they say, and Welsh bats back, no it's not - misanthropic and ageist maybe, but not misogynistic.

They try again: surely he's just milking the woman's suffering for gratuitous laughs. Not at all, says Welsh, the demands of the characterisation, plot, the echoes of *Macbeth* and so on.

What no-one says is this: it's bad writing, but writing by someone with an expert grasp of what people want him to be. Bad writing, but delivered with such bravura that you almost have to laugh. Bad writing, yet from a man whose honesty you can't help but warm to, the oddly likeable rogue male of Scottish letters.

For in conversation, whether he's talking about addiction, fame, or life in Dublin or Leith, it's easy to see there's more to Irvine Welsh than meets the eye. It's just that with something like that scene from *The Bedroom Secrets of the Masterchefs*, it's increasingly hard to say the same about what he writes.

WILL SELF & RICK MOODY

RICK Moody admits he doesn't like appearing in public - he's a writer so that he can hone his thoughts, because they never come out the way he wants them to the first time. This isn't a problem that seems to afflict Will Self, who raises the adroit sardonic grumble and articulate verbal slap to art forms.

Yet here Self wasn't remotely in Grumpy Old Man mode, plugging Moody's *The Diviners* as "the best novel in Edinburgh this week". Though set around the time of the US election in 2000, he pointed out, it contained the future just as surely as those "pregnant chads" from the Florida voting machines.

It is also, on occasions, hilarious, as in the scene he read out, at which the plastic-surgeon guest of honour at Santa Monica's first Botox party promised the women guests that they would soon have all the beauty of the Mona Lisa. They might face unfortunate side-effects, such as infections and headaches, and some of the muscles might no longer work quite so well, but it would restore radiance - and at least they would be good at poker.

Given that Moody is just as effusive an admirer of Self's *The Book of Dave*, in which he gets inside the head of a foul-mouthed London cabbie maddened by the world around him, this could easily have been little more than a literary love-in. Fortunately, Self went off in search of other targets for his vitriol and came back with anti-modernists such as John Carey and Americans who write "like Hemingway on Mogadon". Moody, remembering creative writing classes where he'd heard teachers telling him to kill off adjectives, concurred.

Self denied snobbishly picking on working-class attitudes. "Is it snobbery when you loathe people equally?" he asked, forgetting for a second that at least as far as Rick Moody is concerned, he doesn't.

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

WHO to blame for the mess that is Iraq? How about the fall of Communism? All those years of Cold War, all those billions on WMD, and when it finally collapses, does so not with a big bang but within a few months and at the cost

O Happy Day as Heaven arrives in the Square...

of a couple of hundred lives? Watched hawkishly from Washington, what does that tell you? That Iraqi opposition can be toppled as easily as Saddam's statue? Of course it does.

I simplify wildly, because in the first of a potentially scintillating series of RSA lectures, Professor Fukuyama's geopolitical tour d'horizon had a sophistication and sweep that, viewed from this side of the pond, classical US neo-conservatism lacks. Fukuyama has turned his back on its brutal simplicities - and did so, he insists, way before their failure became apparent on the streets of Baghdad.

American hard power, he now argues, is alarmingly weak against such opponents - just as, he predicts, the Israelis will find in applying their own military might against Hezbollah. So goals should be pragmatic and achievable: if the US can't even raise sink high schools' grades in Washington DC, it has no business kidding anyone it can easily build democracy half a world away.

Soft power, not hard, he now realises, builds democracies. If only he could have persuaded his president a bit earlier ...

Load-Date: August 14, 2006

End of Document

9/11 and five years of folly

Yorkshire Post

September 11, 2006

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Length: 1161 words

Body

Lord Howell of Guildford was a Minister in the governments of Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher. From 1987-97, he was chairman of the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee.

JUST for a moment after 9/11, the United States held the goodwill of almost the entire world in the palm of its hand.

From Beijing to Delhi, from Paris to Moscow, from Tehran, from Damascus and, yes, even from Baghdad, came expressions of support for wounded America in its agony.

What had been perpetrated was so obviously evil, so obviously against all principles of human civilisation, and so threatening to the existence of every nation state, that it had virtually no approval - at least among governments.

Only the ugly picture of Palestinian women, apparently jumping up and down in glee at the slaughter, marred the image of almost universal sympathy and commiseration at what had occurred.

And it was more than just perfunctory words. Promises of positive co-operation flowed from numerous capitals in rounding up the people behind the perpetrators, cornering Osama bin Laden and his henchmen, sweeping the terrorism-friendly Taliban out of Afghanistan and bringing peace, democracy and freedom to an autocratic and unsettled Middle-East, the apparent hothouse of alienation and violence, as well as the repository of two-thirds of the world's oil reserves.

Five years later, not one of these objectives has been achieved.

Blood-soaked Iraq is more infested with terrorists than ever. Iranian influence and power to make trouble has been enlarged. Peace between Israel and Palestine is as remote as ever. Extremist groups have multiplied and grown more violent. Support for Hezbollah and Hamas is stronger than ever.

Worst of all, the reputation, image and influence of the United States, its "soft power", has gone into steep decline almost everywhere in the world, taking Britain's reputation a good part of the way with it.

For Americans, this has been not five years of gaining new strength from alliances and friendships to fight terrorism, but five years of losing friends and the power to shape events, its vast military arsenal and reach notwithstanding.

This must surely have been one of the most damaging periods in the history of the United States on the international stage.

All the examples set by America's giant post-war statesmen, such as Harriman, Marshall and Truman, on how to handle the rest of the world sensitively and diplomatically, have seemingly been forgotten.

9/11 and five years of folly

Instead of firm diplomacy, the war on terror was launched, Western values and versions of governance were going to be imposed, and everyone who did not agree - or behave like a compliant friend - was declared an enemy. That was it.

Some in Britain argue that when it came to both the war on terror strategy, and to the subsequent Iraq invasion, Tony Blair had little choice but to follow George W Bush along his chosen warpath, potholed as it was, with misunderstanding of the subtleties and dynamics of Middle-East politics and cultures.

The only choice facing him, so the contention went, was between supporting America and the Atlantic alliance or siding with the overtly anti-American Continental powers, as well as with Russia and China.

But, of course, there was a third course for Britain - one which it had followed wisely way back at the time of the Vietnam war - which was to stay uninvolved, not hostile or openly critical, but developing its own robust diplomatic strategy for dealing with the new situation and drawing on its own unrivalled experience in dealing both with Middle-Eastern and Asian power and societies.

That was not Blair's way. Plainly lacking any deep experience of international affairs (or, indeed, any Ministerial experience at all except life in No 10), he signed up straightaway to the flawed Bush strategy for "A New Middle East", where "democracy and freedom" would be applied like sticking plasters and soldered on as necessary by "overwhelming force".

At Suez 50 years ago, another British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, plunged into a disastrous Middle-East venture, on that occasion in defiance of an all-powerful America.

This time, the British Prime Minister joined forces in a military venture with weakened America in defiance of warnings almost everywhere else about the quagmires into which it would lead. He has thus become a sort of Eden-in-reverse, assured of a place in history, but not the one that he would have wished for.

The Conservative Opposition offered no alternative way forward. Led at the time by the courageous but also highly-inexperienced Iain Duncan Smith, it found itself committed to the Bush world view almost from day one.

Later, when it emerged that the Iraq invasion prospectus had been dodgy, and there were no weapons of mass destruction in Saddam's hands, and no discernible links with the 9/11 terror network, a new leader, Michael Howard, tried to distance himself from the Washington approach, and got slapped down by the Bush White House for his pains.

David Cameron will presumably inch that way as well when he expands his ideas on the new international scene.

Hints have also drifted into the Press from the Gordon Brown camp, that when his time comes he also will change, amend, adjust, re-assess (or whatever) the unqualified commitment to the Bush strategy.

But amend it to what? Can we possibly escape at this late stage being tied to the American chariot wheel? Can we just pull British troops out of Iraq in short order and leave the Americans struggling on, trying to stem the unending flow of killings?

A change of tone in dealing with Washington would certainly be possible, and maybe a change in the line-up of Britain's partners. There are plenty of countries who are by no means anti-American but who are prepared to speak with candour and force to the present administration in Washington and to urge a change of strategy - not to appeasement of terror and extremism, but to a skilled and firm diplomatic engagement with every state, including some of the Middle-East awkward squad such as Syria and Iran, who in the end are just as much threatened by non-state terror and anarchy as anybody else.

This would be a big step. Britain would need to take the lead, not so much with its unreliable European partners, many of whom remain incurably anti-American, as with the other "cutting-edge" nations, now coming to the global forefront.

9/11 and five years of folly

India, Japan, Australia, Canada, some from "New Europe" such as Poland and the lively Baltic three - these are the team players representing, along with Britain, a large chunk of the world's population and GNP, to whom America might just listen.

Is there any hope of this kind of fresh start? Probably not until Blair goes, and not until Bush goes. Both are irredeemably committed to the present path, with its immensely damaging consequences for the interests of both the US and its chief ally.

Only when these two are gone can we start to bring a dismal period of five years of folly to a close.

Load-Date: September 12, 2006

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Not bedfellows, but a political attraction

The Australian (Australia)

January 16, 2007 Tuesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Opinion / Op Ed; Pg. 10

Length: 1187 words

Byline: Tanveer Ahmed

Body

MATP

Despite some obvious differences, Islamic groups and leftist ideologues are finding common cause, warns Tanveer Ahmed

AS a new year begins, the combination of Saddam Hussein's execution, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca by Muslims and another outburst by the cartoon-like Sheik Taj Din al-Hilali maintain the place of politics and Islam at the centre of world affairs.

Meanwhile, many progressive groups are increasingly finding common cause with radical Muslims.

Political outrage towards international conflicts, especially with regard to the Middle East, conjures up some odd images in the modern era. For example, during protests against last year's war in Lebanon, alliances between left-wing and Muslim groups produced images of union leaders wearing the kaffiyeh, the headgear made famous by Yasser Arafat, of the Socialist Alliance marching adjacent to the *Hezbollah* flag, and of environmental supporters trying to mouth an occasional "Allahu Akbar".

It is indicative of a growing convergence between some Islamic groups and the wider Left, most clearly reflected in the realm of foreign policy, where many non-Muslims view Islamic radicalism as a kind of resistance force against the global hegemony of the West.

But the rise of many Islamist groups has as much to do with Western trends as it does with Islam, in particular the Western tradition of individual and pessimistic revolt in search for an elusive ideal world. This kind of identification with Islam is more a form of social protest than a celebration of God.

While many intellectuals continue to cast Islam as the otherness of the West, its flip side is that it can form the basis of an alternative identity for those disaffected groups seeking a reactive identity.

This is true for many second-generation Muslims living in the West, some of whom feel disconnected from their adopted home as well as the land of their parents. Their religiosity, so often stronger than that of their parents, is a reaction to their marginal status.

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It is particularly reflected in this year's pilgrimage to Mecca, where there was a marked increase in the number of young people.

What is traditionally a ritual attended by those in their 50s and 60s this year showed a sharp spike in the numbers of people in their late 20s and early 30s.

They were primarily from the West, in particular Britain. Young Australians figured prominently, seeking solace in a religious identity. It is their form of social protest as they feel increasingly isolated from what they see as an anti-Muslim discourse in their home countries.

Religion was also a form of protest for the Lebanese and Pakistani boys involved in two of the most notorious gang rapes in Sydney, where they repeatedly made allusions to Islam and shouted "Allahu Akbar" during the trial. After the race riots, the reprisal attacks by some Lebanese boys were held aloft as some kind of jihad. This is despite the young men showing little inclination towards practising their faith before their outbursts.

And it is clearest of all among Western converts, from "Jihad" Jack Thomas to shoe bomber Richard Reid. So often from troubled backgrounds, usually criminal, their conversion to Islam was a mark of their place on society's fringes. The growth of Muslim converts among those in jail, from blacks in the US to Aborigines in Australia, can also be seen in this light. Stripped of its many ethnic flavours, Muslim converts are a purer example of the modern symbolic appeal of the religion.

One of the few outlets for radical protest now is through Islamic groups. As the French convert Lionel Dumont, who fought in Bosnia, said: "Muslims are the only ones to fight the system." A couple of decades ago he would have joined a leftist organisation, because both movements recruit from the same demographics: outcasts from the educated middle classes and dropouts from the working class. They also have the same distaste for the bourgeois and make similar claims about the international nature of their cause.

Instead of the international working class, Islamists refer to the ummah. Even controversies about whether to resort to violence within Islam are remarkably similar to those experienced by the early communists. The Red Brigade was to socialism, to some degree, as al-Qa'ida is to Islam.

oliver Roy, a French scholar on European Islam, notes that: "Islam has replaced Marxism as the ideology of contestation. When the Left collapsed, the Islamists stepped in."

The links between Islamists and the Left should be seen as part of the modern history of social protest. It is a new version of the old, a modern cry for the modern age. Disguised as religion, it remains very much the stuff of politics.

There is a strong historical basis to the phenomenon. The practise of Islam is dominated by the world's poor. It is attractive to them because of its strong egalitarian flavour, and especially attractive to low-status groups in hierarchical societies. One such case is in the subcontinent, where the untouchables of the caste system rapidly embraced Islam, freeing themselves from a life of bondage. The large number of high-caste Hindus who look down on Muslims today has its roots in this phenomenon.

In the West, Muslims were often among the poorest arrivals. This is true of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Britain, North Africans in France and Lebanese refugees in Australia. The latest influx of African refugees into Australia is also dominated by Muslims. These groups often perceive themselves as marginalised or undervalued in their society and thereby feel a connection with the "real" poor and dispossessed Muslims in other parts of the world.

As a result, it is no surprise that the Left is likely to show sympathy for some Islamist causes, feeling a natural concern for the poor and vulnerable. How far is it likely to go?

There is just too much of a gulf between Islamic groups and the Left in the areas of civil liberties to sustain any meaningful bond. Islam openly despises homosexuality and views the liberation of women suspiciously, believing it is the leading cause of an apparent breakdown in the family. Many leftist groups also have a strong anti-religious flavour.

Not bedfellows, but a political attraction

Their potential for overlap and co-operation remains largely limited to foreign policy, where their ideological alliances are clearer.

Their growing overlap with Islamist interests should, however, worry large sections of the Left. A desire to avoid offending their new allies is likely to hamper their voice in condemning human rights abuses within the Islamic world, occurrences that are all too common.

But in seeing their urges for social protest mirrored within Islamic groups, leftist organisations and sympathisers risk undermining their hard-won gains, as well as preventing the spread of civil rights throughout the developing world.

Tanveer Ahmed is a Sydney-based psychiatry registrar and writer. He is writing a book about Islam in Australia to be published by ABC Books later this year. This is adapted from "The unholy alliance" in the summer edition of Policy magazine, published by the Centre for Independent Studies.

Load-Date: January 15, 2007

End of Document

Heed the PM's call for women's rights

The Australian (Australia)
September 6, 2006 Wednesday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Opinion / Op Ed; Pg. 12

Length: 1192 words

Byline: JANET ALBRECHTSEN

Body

MATP

By turning a blind eye to beatings, intimidation, genital mutilation, forced marriages, domestic slavery and honour killings, feminists and so-called progressives are letting down Muslim sisters

THE young Turkish mother never stood a chance. Standing at a Berlin bus stop one February night last year, 23-year-old Hatin Surucu was gunned down at point-blank range, three bullets tearing into her face. This was no random killing in the heart of progressive Europe. Three of Surucu's Muslim brothers were arrested. This was an honour killing.

According to foreign newspaper reports, Surucu was pulled out of her German school in Year 8 and sent back to Istanbul where, at 16, she was forced to marry an older Turkish cousin. She was killed because she rebelled. She fled Turkey, taking her young son to Berlin. She discarded the Islamic headscarf. She moved into a women's shelter, finished school and enrolled in a technical school. In the eyes of her family, that display of female independence brought dishonour on them. She was slaughtered to restore their honour. Her youngest brother, who allegedly bragged to friends about killing her, confessed to the murder. In his statement, he said: "She wanted her own circle of friends ... It was too much."

What shocked Germany even more came in the weeks after the slaying. According to German magazine Der Spiegel, during a classroom discussion of the murder at a school not far from the murder site, 14-year-old Muslim boys mocked Surucu for getting what she deserved. One boy said: "The whore lived like a German."

So let's not beat about the bush. John Howard was right to point to the inequality confronting some Muslim women. But it is a shame the Prime Minister did not elaborate further. This is not about the banalities bandied about by Australian feminists obsessed with glass ceilings, pay discrepancies and men not changing the right number of nappies.

Though rarely reported in the Australian media, for some Muslim girls living in liberal Western nations, a lack of equality means being yanked from school lest they get too educated. It means genital mutilation, forced marriages, beatings, intimidation, domestic slavery. And for some who want to dress and live like the rest of us, it can mean becoming another victim of honour killings.

Heed the PM's call for women's rights

Last year there were eight honour killings in Berlin. According to Papatya, a Turkish women's group, there have been 40 such cases across Germany in the past decade. Some reports suggest the numbers are higher. It makes for horrifying reading. A girl beaten to death by her brothers with a hockey stick because she slept with her boyfriend. A young girl strangled by her father because she had a boyfriend.

Earlier this year, a court in Denmark sentenced nine members of a family for the honour killing of 18-year-old Ghazala Khan. She had married an Afghan man against her father's wishes.

According to The Brussels Journal, Khan's brother, who pulled the trigger, went to prison along with her father, her aunt, two uncles and other family members who colluded in her slaying at a local train station.

It's happening in Britain, too. In 2002, a Kurdish immigrant from Iraq stabbed his 16-year-old daughter and slashed her throat over a bathtub. Her crime? She had an 18-year-old boyfriend. Since then, there are reports that a police review of 22 domestic homicides last year led to 18 being reclassified as "murder in the name of so-called honour" and to Scotland Yard reopening investigations into more than 100 suspicious deaths during a 10-year period that may have involved family conspiracies to murder Muslim women. It may only be the tip of the iceberg. Other Muslim girls are sent back to Muslim countries where they are murdered away from prying Western eyes.

In Australia, we need to be asking some serious questions. We know we have problems, though not on the same scale as Europe, with a small group of Muslims refusing to integrate and rejecting the most basic Western values. Last month Faheem Khalid Lodhi was sentenced to 20 years for terrorism. Muslim boys have been jailed for a horrible series of gang rapes. If we have no idea about oppression meted out to Muslim women at the hands of Muslim men in Australia, that's because those in a position to know are not talking.

Instead, any attempt to highlight the problems is met with a swift and predictable response. After Howard's comments last week, out came the cry of discrimination. Muslims would be alienated, said our Muslim leaders. If these are the responses from so-called moderate Muslim leaders, it's little wonder they are fast losing credibility on a crucial issue confronting Western nations. That same reaction kept the murder and mistreatment of Muslim women under wraps in Europe for too long. As Blair government minister Mike O'Brien said years ago, multiculturalism became an excuse for "moral blindness".

Most disappointingly, this multicultural moral blindness has silenced our feminists. Instead, it's left to a conservative Prime Minister, derided by feminist critics as Mr 1950s Picket-Fence Man, to make headlines about the inequality facing some Muslim women. Meanwhile, our feminists have been making headlines with their trivial pursuits.

Just over a week ago, 400 feminists gathered at the NSW Parliament House for their annual boo-in. These women jeered and howled, with the loudest boos determining the winner of the Ernie Awards for the most sexist comments. In July, their American sisters at the National Organisation for Women celebrated their 40th birthday with a three-day conference. The program listed sessions on fashion and feminism, music and feminism, political blogging and feminism and something called "womanopoly", where the audience was asked to imagine a feminist budget. It was feminism at its most tired and trivial. I searched and searched but there was no mention in the program of the problems facing Muslim women.

NOW's younger activists, who convened that same weekend for the Young Feminist Summit, hardly raised the bar. Conference manager Bonnie Rice asked participants: "Are you ready to change the world?" She then reported that NOW's Women of Action award would go to a group of Pennsylvania gals who forced clothing giant Abercrombie & Fitch to pull its "attitude" T-shirts from stores.

Go, girls.

Fortunately, a handful of brave Muslim women is confronting the real calamities facing some of its number. Women such as Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who, as a Dutch parliamentarian, blew the lid on what was happening in The Netherlands. And Canada's Irshad Manji. Some Western feminists are waking up, too. Self-styled 1970s feminist Pamela Bone recently wrote on this page she would wear the right-wing tag if that's what comes from fighting to protect women from the rise of Islamic extremism. But a few wise voices does not a groundswell make. True reform

Heed the PM's call for women's rights

will come only when women stop marching under banners screaming "We are all Hezbollah now" and are willing to side with a conservative Prime Minister, even if that means admitting that on this issue, at least, we are all right-wing now.

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Load-Date: September 5, 2006

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Australian (Australia)
August 30, 2006 Wednesday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 15

Length: 2584 words

Body

MATP

Al-Qa'ida connection should attract full force of the law

MOST TALKED ABOUT

JIHAD JACK

IT is no surprise that "Jihad" Jack Thomas has been placed under a control order, and claims by his family that this represents persecution are a bit rich.

What on earth does the Thomas family think was going to happen to a man who, through his own admissions, had met Osama bin Laden, received weapons training, including the use of explosives, and had other dealings with senior al-Qa'ida operatives.

Al-Qa'ida represents the most dire threat to Western societies and anybody stupid enough to get involved with it should expect that the full force of the law will be applied to them. Is the Thomas family so naive as to believe that Jack Thomas is an innocent? Such claims are arrant nonsense and he deserves everything he gets.

Mike Gabriel

Woodford, Qld

I HOPE many of my fellow Australians share my concern about the operation of the law in the case of Jack Thomas. We should tolerate illiberal laws only to the extent that they are needed for safety and security, but this man was prosecuted arbitrarily three years after his alleged offence, without establishing that any risk was thereby averted. Indeed, on the facts, Thomas appears to be guilty of little more than naivety.

What should worry us is that the assessment of danger in Thomas's case is typical, and that the AFP and ASIO spend their now considerable resources on the letter of the law, instead of enforcing its intent. The case should also remind us that liberty is a casualty of fear -- as that other unfortunately naive detainee David Hicks knows too well.

John Price

Ipswich, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WHAT amazes me about the Jack Thomas affair is that having been found guilty, by a jury, on the evidence, he is released on a technicality. Surely the jury's finding has some relevance?

An immediate retrial would be the appropriate response. To see this man enjoying time with his family, a privilege he trained to deny others by killing them, sickens me.

John Grundy

Chiswick, NSW

"TAMPA Thomas" would be a more apt sobriquet for Jack Thomas than the media's "Jihad Jack". Slapping on a control order after a defeat in the courts is a neat way of stoking the fear of terrorism that proved so useful to John Howard in 2001 when unfortunate asylum-seekers were labelled possible terrorists.

Amy Wood

Wagga Wagga, NSW

JACK Thomas represents no threat to Australia. Like the anti-terror laws, control orders are supposed to be for protecting Australia from danger. Their use against Thomas shows they can be misused by the Government and security agencies for political purposes. The Jack Thomas debacle shows us where the real danger lies -- in an Attorney General with totalitarian predispositions and security agencies willing to act as political police.

Colin Mitchell

Brunswick, Vic

WHILE the Roman empire's justice system is not renowned for its respect of human rights, even Pontius Pilate asked, "What evil has this man done?" [Luke 23:22] before handing Jesus over to be crucified.

In contrast, your legal affairs editor, Chris Merritt, consistently advocates a lynch-mob approach to the guilt or otherwise of Jack Thomas.

Rather than accuse the ABC's Media Watch program of having "a tenuous understanding of reality" ("No suburban burglar, this is war", 29/8), Merritt -- and The Australian -- should examine how connected to judicial reality is the suggestion that Thomas should suffer a fate similar to that dealt out to "Nazi sympathisers and suspected saboteurs" after World War II.

Stewart Rose

Burbank, Qld

WHETHER or not one believes Jack Thomas's claims in his Four Corners interview that he recoiled from the idea of committing acts of violence in Australia, it's highly unlikely that his would-be recruiters would retain the slightest interest in someone whose cover has been so comprehensively blown. The idea that he might still pose a grave threat to the community defies common sense.

Greg Egan

Tuart Hill, WA

CHRIS Merritt would destroy our democracy to prevent terrorists from destroying it. He would have us subjectively apply the law to certain accused people by removing the freedoms and legal rights of our democracy enjoyed by other accused people. If we follow that path, we become no better than the Taliban and our democracy is no more.

Cameron Jeffries

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Oakden, SA

CHRIS Merritt doesn't go far enough in condemning Jack Thomas as a bad person who should be severely dealt with. Putting him behind bars is insufficient punishment for a person who got close to, discovered and divulged that Osama bin Laden does not like a lot of kisses. What a despicable betrayal of privacy!

Doug Cadioli

Victoria Point, Qld

Many of Chipp's priorities were ahead of their time

DON Chipp's unique place in Australian history is secure -- he led a parliamentary party formed to advance the common good rather than the economic interests, religious beliefs or desire for personal aggrandisement of its members and backers.

Personally compassionate and sensitive in his dealings with all around him, Don extended his belief that everyone was entitled to a fair go and he remained ever ready to go to bat for them. I can't think of another political leader who chose to go to an election with the slogan "You can change the world!", as he did in 1984.

Don was at his most passionate in his uncompromising opposition to nuclear arms and his fervent advocacy for the environment, both being at the centre of his concern for the future of our children and grandchildren.

He should be remembered less for the "Keeping them honest" slogan, a quixotic endeavour at best, than for the substance of these and other policies he so insistently and courageously took into the public arena. Many of his priorities were ahead of their time in the 1980s, when he secured a bridgehead for the Australian Democrats by advocating unpopular causes such as a capital gains tax, a place for women in Australian politics, drug law reform, and justice for indigenous Australians, including sitting down with their leaders for three days in Alice Springs, long before the term reconciliation was coined.

I was one of several Australia Party members who had urged him to have a go at changing the world, and have a go he did. Later, when I worked with him on a daily basis, I came to respect him for his honesty, his sincerity, his passionate belief that the impossible could be achieved. He came close.

Sid Spindler

(Don Chipp's senior adviser, 1981-1986;

Victorian Democrat senator, 1990-1996)

Balwyn, Vic

WHILE I was the Whitlam government's minister for health, Don Chipp was the opposition's health spokesman. I accepted some of his amendments, in particular to consult with the state concerned before funding any community health service or project. It would be a great step forward for humanity if political parties and governments gave priority to his principle of seeking consensus more than conquest in state, national and international policy-making.

Doug Everingham

Middle Park, Qld

I OWE a lot to Don Chipp. I will forever cherish the day my wife Sue and I had lunch with him during the 2004 election campaign. If it were not for that lunch, I'm sure I would not be a senator today.

I write this in a state of shock because only last week did I arrange to catch up with Don again in his Patterson Lakes, Victoria home. We were scheduled to meet yesterday morning, which is why I feel so sad.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Senator Steve Fielding

Leader, Family First

Blaming the wrong party

IN claiming Darrell Hair denied Pakistan due process, fair play and justice, Ramesh Thakur ("When an umpire's decision is fatal", Opinion, 29/8) lays the blame for the ball-tampering controversy on the wrong party.

A cricket umpire (as in all sports) is required to make decisions without consultation with either team. On a practical level, the game could not function otherwise. If a team is aggrieved by a decision, they can protest to the match umpire so that it can be reviewed at a later stage. The vast majority of cricket-playing nations accept this process.

By acting like petulant children in refusing to continue play rather than follow the correct procedures, it was the Pakistan team, not Hair, who put themselves above the law.

Damien Hollingsworth

Randwick, NSW

I MUST be one of those Australians with, in Ramesh Thakur's words, a "warped sense of the cricketing code".

Thakur sees cricket's code as resting on the assumption of umpiring infallibility, an assumption necessary to uphold authority. I've always thought it was the exact opposite. Players know that umpires are very fallible indeed, and since they know that human error is common and inevitable, they happily accept the umpire's decision as final. Otherwise, the game degenerates into a series of "I say, you say" disputes, if not a full-blown power struggle to assert influence over the umpire. Players know that hard luck falls in strange ways but evens out in the end. You win some, you lose some. That's life.

The umpire's authority is irrelevant. It's the games authority -- its laws -- that are paramount. Fight for the right ones before you go on to the field. But by taking the field, you've accepted that code.

And if Malcolm Speed's release of a confidential email that his own subordinate had sought from Darrell Hair was a "very diplomatic and effective way of defusing a full-blown crisis", what would Thakur suggest was necessary to really pour oil on the fire?

Josh Dowse

Balgowlah, NSW

Courage of her conviction

JUDITH Wheeldon ("Why words fail us", Opinion, 29/8) is right -- high-achieving young people aspiring to be teachers are defending their career choice and apologising that they did not become a doctor, lawyer or an economist. There is an inherent, unspoken "only" in front of "teaching" when high achievers announce what they are doing at university.

I speak from personal experience. Despite feeling the pull towards teaching after gaining a UAI of 98.95, I was swayed by the notion that teaching is a second-rate option, taken by those who can't hack it in a real career. This is grossly unfair, but it took me two very long, difficult years to realise it while pursuing a prestigious, highly-paid but unsatisfactory scientific career, before I had the courage to pack it in and enrol in a graduate diploma of education for 2007.

And I do mean courage -- workmates raised eyebrows, bosses warned against it, and family members threw their hands up in horror. But I have a genuine passion for introducing young adults to how exciting and interesting science can be, and now I have the conviction to act upon it, no matter how naff that sounds!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please don't make it this hard for the next crop of teaching students -- help to raise the level of respect for the profession by raising teachers' pay.

Catherine King

Stawell, Vic

What water shortage?

URBAN water supplies have definitely suffered because of politics ("Slippery when wet", Editorial, 29/8) but the negative effects of no-growth puritan environmentalists leaning on state and territory governments should not distract us from the fact that monopoly price-gouging of city water users has become standard practice by these governments.

Under the guise of environmental flows and saving a so-called scarce resource, state and territory treasuries have seized water revenues for consolidated revenue, often using a compliant regulator to approve pricing which includes illegal excises and taxes. The resultant lack of investment in urban water infrastructure has been exposed by the current drought. What also has been exposed is the distortion of water-pricing mechanisms where artificial water scarcity has benefited treasuries at the public's cost.

As the belated use of Shoalhaven water to supply Sydney shows, there is plenty of water around for urban supply -- it's just that the government guardians of it are keeping it from the taxpayers who are its owners.

John McCarthy

Pearce, ACT

Saving trees with our taxes

YOUR article "Plan to pay farmers for trees" (29/8) reaffirms that sensible solutions can be applied to complex environmental issues. The Southern Cross Group (SCG) should be applauded for its pragmatic approach.

However, the kicker at the end of the article, where Jeff Angel says a sustainable forest industry was a community requirement, needs clarifying.

Mr Angel just doesn't (or won't) acknowledge that freehold land was purchased with a commercial intent. Yes, it does come with an implied requirement to continue to increase all of its values. If the current forest estate wasn't being retained and managed for that intent, it simply wouldn't be there.

For over a decade, Mr Angel has been unable to point to any independent analysis that shows the detriment he claims is actually happening. Fundamentally, that's the problem Mr Angel has. If a mechanism such as that suggested by the SCG, is implemented, then the legislative controls he aspires to won't be necessary. Ultimately, that's what the environmental movement wants -- rigid control over farmers' activities.

Warwick Ragg

Chief executive, Australian Forest Growers

Deakin, ACT

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

Oh, brilliant. Now the excruciating boredom of long-haul flights will enter a new realm of torture as we are held captive to countless inane mobile phone conversations. Thank you, Qantas ("Mobiles take to the skies", 29/8).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stacey Lang

Kenmore, Qld

A Future Fund filled with Telstra shares must make commonwealth public servants feel secure.

Tony Quick

Sellicks Beach, SA

Spare a thought for the T3 marketers. It's hard enough to put lipstick on a pig, let alone one in a poke.

M.F. Horton

Alice Springs, NT

It seems that the Queensland coalition doesn't have a Flegg to stand on.

Len Kane

Birkdale, Qld

John Mark Karr, who is no longer facing charges connected to the murder of JonBenet Ramsey after DNA tests showed he was not at the crime scene, found one helluva way to get a free trip home to the US from Thailand.

Ray Duncan

Smithfield Heights, Qld

If **Hezbollah** leader Hassan Nasrallah regrets seizing two Israeli soldiers in light of the subsequent attack on Lebanon by Israeli forces, why did he dig tunnels and bunkers for six years, and amass thousands of rockets, many of which were fired into Israel? Why didn't he give back the Israeli soldiers, which would have stopped the war? The only thing Nasrallah really regrets is that **Hezbollah** didn't kill more Israelis.

Henry Herzog

Elwood, Vic

No, Alan Smailes (First Byte, 29/8), we do not live in strange times. Patrick Smith is in transition: cricket is a filler between AFL and the annual antics of Little Lleyton.

Robin Flannery

Buddina, Qld

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Load-Date: August 29, 2006

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Australian (Australia)

August 4, 2006 Friday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 17

Length: 2559 words

Body

MATP

MOST TALKED ABOUT

ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

It's within the country's power to lower interest rates

IT appears that interest rates are being determined by underlying inflation and little else. This can be explained by the need for banks to maintain a real rate of return on money lent and this requires the interest rate to be kept ahead of the inflation rate.

If this is so, then the only way to control interest rates is by first controlling inflation. This is a difficult task when the main driver of inflation is the price of oil, largely determined by external factors.

The price of oil can be expected to continue to rise as overseas supplies decrease and demand increases. The inflationary effect will flow on to all industries transporting goods or using oil products in manufacture.

We need to adopt strategies that decrease our dependency on oil if inflation and interest rates are to be controlled. The use of renewable energy sources and ethanol as a fuel should be adopted where possible as alternatives to oil. The upgrading and expansion of public transport and interstate rail systems will also reduce our oil requirements.

Geoff Richardson

Glen Iris, Vic

BRENT Howard (Letters, 2/8) makes an interesting argument that we should not expect the economic debacle under Paul Keating to occur under a Beazley government. He fails to note that Kim Beazley was a cabinet minister in 1990 and was partly responsible for economic mismanagement at the time. As finance minister, Mr Beazley allowed government debt to hit record highs when unemployment was high.

Brent Howard also points out that inflation is caused by wage growth in excess of productivity gains. Mr Beazley's industrial relations policy would make this worse as he would allow unions to make claims based on industrial militancy rather than productivity. This was a cause of the high interest rates during the previous Labor government.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Australians have every reason to expect the same sort of mismanagement the next time Mr Beazley has a role in government.

Aaron Dhanaraj

Winthrop, WA

COULD the impact of new IR laws combined with higher costs of living, personal debt and interest rates affect public opinion in the run-up to next year's federal and NSW elections? I think so. The battle will surely shift into high gear as more and more people find themselves on struggle street. The problem with some voters is many couldn't care less who is running the country until they are personally affected on an economic level.

John McPhilbin

Miller, NSW

THE three little pigs fairytale is a parable for the state of the Australian economy, which resembles the flimsy houses of the two short-sighted pigs because our prosperity is based on unaffordable consumption and unsustainable private debt. For the past decade, instead of investing in the nation's future through education and training, infrastructure, industry, research and development, resources have been squandered on electoral bribes, tax cuts, middle-class welfare and subsidies. We can already see the cost of this neglect.

The reaction to a small interest rate increase shows how fragile the economy is and the wolf has yet to huff and puff.

Peter Rutherford

Barwon Heads, Vic

SURELY we should be questioning why the banks lend hundreds of thousands of dollars to people whose spending habits or income can't afford an interest rate rise. How on earth would people like the Polgars ("Million dollars in debt to bricks and mortar", 3/8) cope with job loss or illness if they can't afford an extra \$36 a week? Perhaps we should all start living within our means.

T.G.McIntyre

New Farm, Qld

STEVE Lewis ("Small dent for Coalition but memories die hard", 3/8) would also be able to recall that etched in the minds of many voters is the Fraser-Howard legacy of the 1982-83 recession and an 11 per cent inflation rate and 10 per cent unemployment. These gave us the 14-15 per cent real interest rates of the 1980s. Under Mr Howard as treasurer, interest rates (April 1982) hit 21.39 per cent, higher than at any time under Hawke-Keating (19.56 per cent in December 1985).

Garry Wong

Wanniassa, ACT

INTEREST rates in Australia are higher than the rest of the world because unlike most other developed countries, Australia has not had a recession in the past decade. Most economists agree that the ideal rate for Australia is a neutral rate between 5 and 6 per cent -- at which a balance is struck between steady growth and low inflation. Australia's interest rate is currently within these parameters. Some suggest that rates would be no different under Labor. One of the reasons why rates hit 17 per cent was that high government debt made financial markets unstable, reducing the incentive to invest and therefore requiring a higher rate of return.

Economically irresponsible policies like Medicare Gold would certainly send the government back into debt and create a similar situation. So until Labor shows it can produce economically responsible policies -- something we

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

have not seen thus far -- then Mr Howard's contention that rates will be higher under Labor is accurate. If you want to blame the Government for rate rises then focus on laws that allow people to borrow more money than they can realistically repay.

Jonathan Whybird

Upper Kedron, Qld

Spare asylum-seekers berths on floating prison hulk

AFTER many refugees seeking asylum in Australia have suffered from the cruelty and sometimes incompetence of immigration authorities, it might have been expected that federal Government ministers would be cautious about breaching human rights.

It seems that Australia is to return to Dickensian days ("Illegals to be held on Customs prison hulk", 3/8). Some would argue that illegal fishermen deserve no better treatment. However, innocent victims of circumstance, and women and children seeking asylum in our country, must be spared such incarceration.

David Dyer

Ballarat, Vic

IS there no end to this Government's little shop of horrors when it comes to keeping asylum seekers out of Australia? Do they have some sort of sadistic office in Canberra to think up cruel ways of keeping people who are fleeing persecution away from our shores? Why would a ship of this kind need mounted machineguns? Could they possibly sink to even further depths of callousness? This Government has a gaping vacuum when it comes to moral and ethical judgment.

Pamela Dempster

South Yarra, Vic

THE Government's latest idea to keep illegals on a prison hulk is to be applauded. When these undesirables become too numerous and conditions are overcrowded, they can always be transported to Britain and Ireland.

Liam Garvey

Arlington, Virginia, USA

IF the Government really wants to punish asylum seekers why not just send them on a P&O cruise?

Sethe Richardson

Surry Hills, NSW

I THINK a prison ship at \$10 million is an excellent idea, but would it include the additional deterrent that the ship only sails in shark or crocodile infested waters?

Mike Honeychurch

Indooroopilly, Qld

Bald facts on rare parrot

IF federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell is so concerned about the truth getting lost in the politics over the orange-bellied parrot and wind farms (Opinion, 2/8) he ought to be less selective about the facts.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Victorian Environment Department did indeed say the Bald Hills wind farm could increase the cumulative risk the industry poses to the parrots, and recommended a conservative approach. The part Senator Campbell left out was its submission recommending investigation of habitat management, not knocking back the project.

The department distributed its submission to everyone involved. Its findings and recommendations were mentioned in a final report, a copy of which was sent to the federal Government. So, far from the cover-up claimed, the submission and its findings were then, and still are, publicly and readily available.

Unlike Senator Campbell, we heeded the advice from the independent panel, which assessed expert submissions and recommended that the Bald Hills wind farm be approved. Bald Hills is now in court because of his actions, after Senator Campbell received the same advice and ignored it.

As for the wind farm increasing the cumulative risk to the parrots, the department did not quantify the risk. Senator Campbell's consultants, Biosis, did quantify the risk, and their modelling found it to be potentially one dead parrot every 1000 years. And as revealed in The Weekend Australian (29-30/7), even that risk assessment was based on theoretical parrot movements because there are no records of the species being observed at the Bald Hills site.

Which brings us to the Yaloak wind farm, which the state Government did not approve on account of the risk posed to wedge-tailed eagles. The critical difference Senator Campbell seems unable or unwilling to grasp is that people with relevant expertise had actually found there to be a serious risk to the eagle whereas no one with any expertise has ever recommended that Bald Hills be refused.

Rob Hulls

Victorian Planning Minister

Melbourne, Vic

Mel's ham-acting offends

AMAZING isn't it? An actor gets booked for drunk driving, let's everyone know he doesn't like Jews and the letter writers attack Jews for being overly sensitive. Now that's anti-Semitism.

Frankly, most of us couldn't give a rat's arse about Mel Gibson's anti-Semitism. It's hardly a surprise. What offends our sensibilities is his ham acting.

Barry Cohen

Bungendore, NSW

I FOUND the cartoon (3/8) on the letters page to be offensive, as it alleged that "Jesus fell out with the Jews 2000 years ago and is still on the outer". The reverse is true; it is his followers who have not "forgiven" the Jews. What is Jesus to us but a wayward son and false prophet, whose believers have for 2000 years persecuted, expelled and killed us in his name?

Judith Rona

Bondi, NSW

Atheist is misinformed

THE president of the Atheist Foundation's response to the Middle East conflict (Letters, 3/8) is a shallow attempt to demonise religious beliefs held by a few billion people. David Nicholls ignores the enormous positive contributions made to society here and elsewhere by people of faith acting on their convictions.

Contrary to his misinformed claim that Christianity, for one, "relies solely on infant indoctrination", a number of Christians who have enriched our world have come to faith in adulthood. There is still time for Mr Nicholls! Perhaps

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

instead of his negative attack on others' beliefs, he could tell us which atheistic nations he considers to be showing the way for the rest of us.

Rev David Devine

Rowville, Vic

Nazi comparison is offensive

JOE de Bruyn is histrionic when he likens early human embryo research to Nazi medical experimentation (3/8). In doing so, he equates the ethical value of a few cells with that of a post-natal human. A 10-day-old blastocyst is no more an independent human life than a house deposit is a mansion. And Mr de Bruyn's position writes off the ethical value of any potential therapies.

How offensive to the memory of those who suffered during Nazi experiments. How offensive to people who could be cured by embryonic stem cell therapies.

Similarly, the circularity of Tony Abbott's logic is breathtaking. Yesterday, he pronounced that there is "very little evidence embryonic stem cell research is the health nirvana". In this regard, he is guilty of a dereliction of duty, stifling therapeutic research in spite of extensive community consultation and considered professional opinion. For Mr Abbott, researchers are "guilty of over-peddling hope to vulnerable people", yet he is guilty of denying those same people any hope.

It is high time that conservatives, whether from the Left or Right of politics, take a more balanced ethical view.

Charles Herdy

McDowall, Qld

Fluoride's cancer risk

QUEENSLAND president of the Australian Dental Association Robert McCray (Letters, 3/8) believes it is a dental disaster that Queensland's water supply has not been laced with fluoride. Teeth, however, are only a small part of one's body. A paper published this year by Harvard researchers found an association between fluoride exposure in drinking water during childhood and the incidence of osteosarcoma among males. Osteosarcoma is a rare bone cancer that is mostly fatal. The ADA understandably cannot see the wood for the trees.

Dr Tom Cunneen

Paddington, NSW

Future of Medibank Private

I REFER to "A prescription for competition: sell Medibank Private in pieces" (2/8) which describes a report on the proposed sale. The Government will introduce legislation permitting the sale of Medibank Private in the coming parliamentary session and has engaged Carnegie Wylie to advise on timing and method of sale.

While the Government has not made any decisions, I have expressed a prima facie disposition in favour of a public offering of shares in Medibank Private and selling the company as a whole. While we await Carnegie Wylie's advice, I remain to be persuaded that this great company should be broken up and sold off in bits.

Nick Minchin

Finance Minister

Canberra, ACT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FIRST BYTE

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With all the hoo-ha over banana prices, remember they are still half the price of a Mars bar. I know which one I would rather have in my children's lunch box.

Malcolm Brown

Conondale, Qld

Our major food chain store had just 33 bananas on display. The price is inflated but we spend very little on this product, despite its effect on inflation. Check your use-by date?

Jon lawson

Middleton, SA

At my local supermarket where bananas are \$13.99 a kilo, nobody is buying them. So, of course, the bananas are going brown making them even less desirable. My guess is, they get thrown away.

George Bennett

North Sydney, NSW

With moderate Islamic clergymen urging the Prime Minister to take Hezbollah off the list of terrorist organisations, has the term "moderate Muslim" become an oxymoron?

Thomas Smith

Paddington, Qld

Any honest, rational person can accept that Hezbollah is an evil organisation that exists solely to finish what Hitler set out to do. Yet moderate Muslim leaders say that its aims are legitimate and it should be de-classified as a terrorist organisation. If this is the moderate view among Australia's 400,000 Muslims, then we have a serious problem.

David Plummer

Warwick, Qld

The debate on twin-engined planes reminds me of a flight from Winton to Birdsville. Determined to live forever or die in the attempt, I lamented to the pilot that there was but one engine. "Mate, the second one just takes you to the scene of the accident", came the reply.

Jim Muir

Highgate Hill, Qld

Is the federal Government subsidising Queensland petrol prices or is the NSW Government simply profiteering?

Greg Jones

Kogarah, NSW

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Load-Date: August 3, 2006

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Australian (Australia)

March 27, 2007 Tuesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 15

Length: 2543 words

Body

MATP

John Howard is engaging in untruthful scare tactics

MOST TALKED ABOUT

WORK CHOICES

IN his latest defence of Work Choices, John Howard claimed the IR reforms had not penalised any employees and warned that if they were reversed, Australia would be going back to "stagnant jobs growth" ("PM vows no IR backdown", 26/3).

Really? The period 1998-9 to 2003-4 under the previous industrial relations system was a "golden age" of strong productivity, employment and real wage growth. Since the new legislation was implemented a year ago, these indicators have generally shown less buoyancy -- not more.

The Prime Minister can put a plausible case for his reforms. He can argue that, over time, they will make it easier for the fringe jobless to enter the workforce and that the pain caused to many low-paid workers will be only transitional. He can also argue that while there are other policy means of achieving the same employment outcomes, they would involve an "unacceptable" increase in the tax burden. Many economists will challenge even such an assessment as much too rosy. But at least it would be an honest defence. Instead, John Howard is engaging in untruthful scare tactics.

Fred Argy

Nicholls, ACT

THE claims by the Howard Government that the buoyant job market is due to the Work Choices legislation are not supportable without factual statistics regarding AWAs. It's more logical to conclude that the favourable job situation is due mainly to the economic boom resulting from high commodities exports. Until the job market moves into a position closer to equilibrium, the effects of Work Choices cannot be fully evaluated.

The Government's reluctance to release detailed information on AWAs places greater doubt on its positive claims about the Work Choices legislation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ray Sanderson

South Yarra, Vic

THE faith of the Howard Government in the stupidity of voters is touching. It quotes figures on AWAs as if they are true across the board. Mine workers in booming Western Australia are doing well, and good luck to them. But I suspect I'm not the only employee to ask what that's got to do with my pay and conditions?

Marcia Turner

Gosford, NSW

THE big problem for the Howard Government on IR is that it appears to believe its own spin. John Howard, Peter Costello and Joe Hockey trot out statistics purporting to show that employees are financially better off under Work Choices. That cuts no ice with individuals who draw their conclusions directly from the size of their pay packets. The same individuals would also be better placed than any government spin doctor to make a risk assessment of their employment security and financial prospects.

Agnes Mack

Chatswood, NSW

AFTER the NSW election result, is there anyone who'd bet there won't be a huge taxpayer-funded "public education" publicity campaign before the upcoming federal election to tell us how wonderful Work Choices really is?

Gordon Drennan

Burton, SA

IT was interesting to hear NSW Premier Morris lemma announce that his re-election was all about voter concern over Work Choices: he's five minutes back in the job and the spin starts again. At least we know what to expect.

Labor's re-election was not about Work Choices, but a choice between an incompetent and arrogant premier who has managed to run the state into the ground while lurching from one crisis to the next, and an opposition leader who can't run his own party, throws away a winning lead by sheer incompetence and would, in all possibility, have messed up the NSW economy even more.

R. Sherriff

Winmalee, NSW

I REFER to Laurie Oakes's interview with Morris lemma on the Nine Network's Sunday program in the wake of Labor's re-election in NSW, specifically to Mr lemma's comments alleging that voters at Wattle Grove in the Menai electorate in Sydney's south complained to him about the federal Work Choices legislation.

As Mr lemma was aware, I was also near the door of the Wattle Grove polling booth on Saturday. If these claims were true, why didn't Mr lemma refer those voters to me, as I am their federal member and Work Choices is federal legislation? As I was only a matter of steps away from Mr lemma, why didn't those voters also take the opportunity to raise their concerns with me?

In the two hours or so I was at this booth, the single constituent who raised Work Choices with me subsequently agreed her concern was not about this legislation at all. Putting it into perspective, since the legislation was introduced 12 months ago, only 14 constituents out of almost 90,000 have raised any concern with me regarding Work Choices.

Danna Vale

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Federal Member for Hughes

AS someone who was giving out how-to-vote cards last Saturday, the most common message I kept hearing from voters was, "We will give Morris one more chance, we hate John Howard's industrial relations laws".

Con Vaitsas

Ashbury, NSW

Iran is copying Hezbollah's ploy in Israel-Lebanon war

IN taking 15 British sailors and marines as prisoners on what appear to be trumped-up charges of trespassing into Iranian territory ("Iran may charge Brits as spies", 26/3), Iran is copying the tactics of Hamas and Hezbollah in the recent Israel-Lebanon war. It's looking for bargaining chips (in case of sanctions against its nuclear enrichment program) and point-scoring to show its own people that it's not afraid to take on the might of the West. Britain (and the US) must respond firmly but with a well-thought-out strategy that shows the Iranians that such behaviour is a very punishable offence.

E.Moses

Melbourne, Vic

THE capture of British military personnel by Iranian forces adds to the pictures painted by the pro-invasion lobby of the aggressive nature of Islamic states. It might be more sensible to view this action from the Iranian perspective.

George W. Bush has denounced Iran as part of the "axis of evil" and threatened to bomb and/or invade the country in very explicit terms. The fact that he has backed away from such threats now does nothing to reassure the Iranians who, despite their public bravado, would have to be scared witless by the possibility. With Britain acting as President Bush's deputy in the Iraq atrocity, any British forces wandering close to Iranian territory are going to be seen as a very real threat, or at least as an opportunity to send a warning to the US that Iran will not readily allow territorial incursions.

Keith Gregg

West Perth, WA

THE Shatt al-Arab has long been a disputed waterway at the head of the Persian Gulf between Iran and Iraq. The British made a treaty with Iran in 1937, whereby the Shatt went almost entirely to Iraq, the frontier line following the low-water mark on the Iran side in several places. From 1965, Iran has sought a new treaty whereby the waterway would be equitably divided, the frontier line passing along the median line. Border sinuosities based on rivers are like theological arguments: it's what you want to believe.

Mike Fogarty

Weston, ACT

UK friend and ally Saudi Arabia should threaten to dramatically lower the price of oil, which would wreck Iran's economy and foment the ouster of the volatile Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The mere threat by the Sunni oil sheiks will do more to secure the release of the British sailors from the Shi'ite clerics than waves of cruise missiles.

Dan Piecora

Kirkland, WA

Labor's union hacks

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IT looks like Greg Combet could enter politics at the next election. Do we need another union official to join the swelling ranks in Canberra? We already have Simon Crean, Jennie George and Martin Ferguson -- all past secretaries or presidents of the ACTU -- sitting in parliament. Bill Shorten, national secretary of the Australian Workers Union, is an endorsed Labor candidate for a Melbourne-based seat at the next election. Isn't it time that the ALP looked to broaden its recruitment pool for candidates beyond union hacks looking for a sinecure in the federal parliament?

Robert Pallister

Punchbowl, NSW

Indigenous entrepreneurs

IF Kevin Rudd has suddenly discovered that economic development is the key to the problems of indigenous communities ("Labor to push Aboriginal economic development", 23/3), he should start by convincing the Labor premiers to reform their Aboriginal land acts.

Currently, potential indigenous entrepreneurs cannot leverage their assets such as homes and buildings to secure loans to establish or expand businesses, because someone else owns the land and other restrictions apply. Home ownership is important, as more than 70 per cent of new businesses are financed by loans on homes in the rest of Australia. The premiers should revise legislation to allow freehold in township areas, or at least 99-year leases. They should adopt the ACT's approach, including the right of renewal of leases at any time. This gives both entrepreneurs and lending institutions confidence and security because leases come to resemble freehold.

Trevor Lee

Indooroopilly, Qld

No ifs and no buts

THE AFL's ludicrously ineffective three-strikes policy and the fact that footballers are handsomely paid with too much time on their hands can all be drawn together in one major policy change.

That is, if a player is found to have taken drugs and is tested positive, then the team losses 4 points immediately. No ifs and no buts. It's a team game after all and the team should suffer. If you want players to look after their mates, the clubs to exercise their responsibility and the AFL to be serious about drugs in sport, then introduce this change and see how quickly the house is brought to order.

Such a change would reinforce the team and club culture as paramount over the cult of the individual. Come on, AFL.

Michael O'Neil

Belair, SA

Gratuitously grinding axes

KEITH Windschuttle's article ("Breaking the shackles", Inquirer, 24-25/3) was an interesting and welcome account of the anti-slavery efforts of many of the British involved in the colonisation of Australia.

One factual correction: the British were not the first people in the world to abolish the slave trade; that honour belongs to the French, who, in 1794, at the height of the Revolution, abolished not only the slave trade but slavery itself, though it was re-established later when the Revolution took a turn to the Right. Nevertheless, this common error does not much diminish the worth of the article, nor the credit due to the British abolitionists whom it rightly celebrates.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What a pity, therefore, that Windschuttle could not resist the chance to take a swipe at leftist historians whom he blames for the omission in our historical narrative of the anti-slavery work of the early British colonists, an attack in dubious taste which spoiled an otherwise good article.

There are many reasons why aspects of our history are neglected, and scarcity of resources is at least as important as any bias. Rather than devoting space to a whinge about leftist historians, The Weekend Australian might better use its pages to present to a wider audience some of the fascinating but undeservedly neglected stories in our history, without feeling it necessary to provide an accompaniment of the discordant sound of gratuitously grinding axes.

L.M. Salter-Duke

Spotswood, Vic

Depth of Hilali's damage

I FEEL sick to think that I failed to raise my voice to express outrage at the comments by Muslim cleric Sheik Taj Din al-Hilali and that he has now been left as mufti of Australia, even if for a short period ("Hilali to be stripped of mufti title", 26/3).

Not that the Muslim leaders would have listened to me, but perhaps if our society as a whole had expressed its views more widely, the leaders would have understood the depth of the damage that Sheik Hilali has caused.

As the mother of a 16-year-old girl at the time of the Sydney gang rapes and having heard stories of young girls on our beaches being told to cover up by middle-aged Muslim men, I'm outraged at this presumption.

I'm sure if I were the parent of one of the young men who committed the rapes and who now languishes in jail, I would also be outraged at the mufti's remarks. He is showing the worst kind of leadership, justifying such heinous acts against women.

Sheila Davis

Mudgeeraba, Qld

PNG: another Zimbabwe?

AUSTRALIANS should stop worrying about the Mugabe regime in Africa and turn their attention to the emergence of a similar situation on our doorstep as Papua New Guinea spins out of control into fiscal collapse and bankruptcy.

PNG is showing all the signs of a melt-down into the chaos and tribal disorder which produced Zimbabwe's current rampant inflation and dictatorial rule. International criminal syndicates, including the feared Asian Triads, are now firmly established in PNG with links to corrupt politicians and senior public servants and everything from a driver's licence to a logging concession for millions of superfeet of rare rain forest timber is for sale if you have the right contacts.

Brian Darcey

Cairns, Qld

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I'll try to be quick -- I'm on the internet, e-mailing this. I live 30 minutes by car from the Adelaide GPO. People out my way get 20kb/s, a third the speed of the cheapest modem, and have to redial every 5 minutes. All you people who don't like your 500kb/s, can you send it our way when you get your upgrades? Thanks.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Garry Trethewey

Cherryville, SA

Glenn Milne (Opinion, 26/3) reckons Peter Debnam's incompetence and lack of competitiveness was his undoing on Saturday. Is that true, or was it because he bears a striking resemblance to Frank Spencer?

Doug Cadioli

Victoria Point, Qld

Labor's victory in NSW proves you should never underestimate the power of the complacent voter.

B. Worrall

Mosman, NSW

And I thought South Australian politics was the national laughing stock.

Peter Robin

Maylands, SA

Santo Santoro told The Weekend Australian that he took an overdraft on his home and a personal loan to raise \$700,000 to fund the share trading that torpedoed his political career. Then he overlooked the whole thing. Hello?

David Harris

Manly, NSW

Swans fans may be livid (Letters, 26/3) that Ben Cousins was allowed to whip them in the 2006 grand final, but at least it proves one thing: so-called recreational drugs do not undermine or detract from a footballer's playing skills. If anything, the manufactured high fills a player with gusto and bravado. Quite clearly, these drugs must be prohibited in sport. One strike and you're out.

Greg Jones

Kogarah, NSW

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: March 26, 2007

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Letter: Short ponts - IF blowing innocent

Liverpool Daily Echo
August 17, 2006, Thursday
Main Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 20

Length: 55 words

Body

IF blowing innocent **women** and children to bits is not an act of terrorism, then I don't know what is. It is no different to **Hezbollah** and Hamas. It is all evil and Judgement Day is yet to come.

It is always the innocent that pay the price for the evil-doers at the top, who make sure that they are well protected.
D J Jones, Belle Vale

Load-Date: August 17, 2006

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Former minister guilty

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A24; World In Brief

Length: 67 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: TEL AVIV

Body

TEL AVIV -- An Israeli court convicted former justice minister Haim Ramon yesterday of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier, a stunning censure of a top official.

Ramon, 56, who faces up to three years in prison, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 21-year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer.

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

Pious people with lost souls

The Toronto Star
August 13, 2006 Sunday

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Section: IDEAS; Pg. D10

Length: 4323 words

Body

Language, like terrorism, keeps evolving.

So when the media cite the menace of "jihad", the word is now used without translation and understood to mean Islamic Holy War against infidels.

Except that it doesn't, not quite.

To mainstream Muslims, jihad also translates as "struggle"; a personal striving.

It also describes what I experienced during two overseas postings for the Toronto Star - a journalistic journey that evolved into a personal struggle, a kind of journalistic jihad, to understand the roots of religious radicalism and the pull of ethnic extremism.

How does faith mutate into fundamentalism? What motivates young men to massacre innocents in pursuit of martyrdom? Why does ethnic identity - and the quest for self-determination - descend into intolerance or tribalism?

These questions became the focal point of my decade-long odyssey, leading me down blind alleys and into the occasional dead end. There are no certainties when faith, ethnicity and extremism are involved.

I watched these volatile ingredients form a combustible mix that fuelled terrorism. Together, they are the transcendent forces of our time.

And much misunderstood. Many Canadians still equate fundamentalism almost exclusively with Islam; more often than not, Muslims get all the bad press thanks to the gruesome exploits of groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Al Qaeda.

My travels exposed me to the reality that no one is immune to religious radicalization. I encountered the pogroms of Hindus against Muslims in India, the bloody-mindedness of Buddhists against minority Hindus in Sri Lanka, the misplaced messianism of Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, and the deep-rooted intolerance of Christians towards Muslims in the Philippines.

From the desert religions of the Middle East to the mystical faiths of Asia, fundamentalism holds a powerful, universal appeal for people of all faiths.

Leaving Canada for Jerusalem in the mid-1990s as the Star's Middle East correspondent, I landed in the middle of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: a tale of two faiths fighting a Hundred Years War. In the battle between Jewish settlers and Palestinian martyrs, rivals became soulmates by jointly undermining the fledgling peace process.

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Fundamentalist Jews took land, Islamic jihadis took lives. And each side dehumanized the other.

Amid the symbiotic self-destructiveness, both claimed spiritual justification for their transgressions and profited from the fallout: a renewed Palestinian intifada and predictable retaliation from Israel's armed forces. And as the peace process unravelled, terrorism moved into the void to capture the world's attention.

In Jerusalem, terror had its own special sound: the dull thud of a suicide bombing followed by the wailing of sirens and the moaning of victims.

The most unnerving part of my job was rushing to the scene of a bomb blast, like the one that exploded at a crowded food market near our office. I remember threading my way past throngs of panicked shoppers fleeing in the opposite direction. Using my notebook as a kind of psychological shield, I moved through the carnage: Cobs of corn strewn among severed limbs and shards of glass. Bits of human flesh splattered on market stalls. Chunks of watermelon immersed in pools of blood. Elderly victims slumped amid the detritus of the daily market, groaning in pain or eerily silent from the shock. The charred, decapitated torso of a bomber splayed on the street alongside the corpses of his victims. United in death.

Surrounded by the misery, I tried to fathom the method behind the madness. The bomber's family, brimming with pride, would invariably erect a mourning tent to celebrate the good deed, distributing sweets to mark the happy occasion. There would be talk of how the "martyr," by righting Israeli wrongs, could look forward to 72 virgins in paradise.

I had presumed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict placed me at the epicentre of terrorism, but it didn't take long for the growing popularity of suicide bombings to create an arc of terror stretching across the Middle East, with Muslims slaying Muslims over theological disputes.

The next leg of my journey took me to Algeria and Egypt on the trail of mujahedeen Holy Warriors who thought nothing of planting bombs in holy places. On assignment in Yemen, I visited the tribal battleground that doubled as a recruiting ground for Osama bin Laden. In Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam and latter-day crucible of intolerance, I found a place of faith and loathing, where pious bombers attacked civilians with impunity. In Sudan, I covered the civil war over the imposition of Sharia (Islamic law) and brutal mistreatment by tribal militias.

In Iran, the testing ground for an Islamic revolution that promised a kinder, gentler theocracy, I saw a regime lapse further into brutality toward its own citizens. In Lebanon, I listened as Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's leader, defiantly laid out his anti-Israel agenda from his heavily guarded South Beirut headquarters, and vowed never to disarm his Iranian-backed fighters. Across town in his fortress-like prime ministerial offices, a fearless Rafik Hariri described his vision of peaceful coexistence - a patriotic voice silenced, last year, by Syrian assassins.

Posted four years later to the Asia Bureau, I felt the puritan terror of Taliban Afghanistan and the menace of Pakistan's jihadis well before 9/11. Their rudimentary reading of Islamic scriptures, superimposed upon centuries-old tribal laws, wrought intolerance toward both family and foreigners. Afghanistan became the breeding ground for the conspiracies of Al Qaeda and fostered the Talibanization of Pakistan, where attacks against minority sects were rife.

It is nightfall in Karachi, October 2001; time for evening prayers as American warplanes rain bombs across the border in Afghanistan. A month after the carnage of 9/11, the United States is at war next door, and this port city of 12 million people is on edge. Pakistan is a flashpoint in the West's fight against the neighbouring Taliban, but it is also a country at war with itself: Muslim against Muslim, moderate against extremist, Shiite against Sunni.

Together with my translator, I am awaiting a rendezvous on a dimly lit street with one of Pakistan's most notorious militant groups: the Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet, soon to be banned by Pakistan's military government for inciting hatred and assassinating enemies. A spotter in flowing robes and sandals looks us over from a distance. Satisfied, he leads us through winding alleys to the group's headquarters in a heavily guarded mosque. After a final invocation of "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great), the head of the Karachi wing emerges from evening prayers and summons me for an audience.

Pious people with lost souls

With his untrimmed beard and white skullcap, Ilyas Zubair is a picture of piety - and possessed of a charismatic brand of Islam that can be lethal. His group accuses Christians and Jews of conspiracies against Islam and condemns fellow Muslims from the minority Shiite sect as infidels. Inconveniently for my translator and me, we fit both descriptions: Shiite Muslim and Canadian Jew collaborating on a reporting assignment.

"The Shiites are anti-Islamic," Zubair complains bitterly in rapid bursts of Urdu, rendered into English by my increasingly nervous translator.

"They are not Muslims, they are kaffirs (infidels)," he continues, fingering his prayer beads reflectively. "They should not be allowed in mosques, nor in Mecca. My feeling is the same as if a Jew were entering Mecca."

With Zubair's blessings, assassins have gunned down dozens of Shiite physicians in the waiting rooms of Karachi. Thousands more Shiites have been slain in the city's honeycomb slums or soaring mosques. Young disciples sit at Zubair's feet on the carpeted floor, listening raptly as he outlines a jihad against perfidious Jews and heretical Shiites.

The sermon concluded, we are offered sweet tea and pleasantries before being escorted to the door. A guard clutching an AK-47 springs to attention as farewells are exchanged in the courtyard. Unfamiliar with my Jewish surname, the militants offer a warm embrace and tell me to go in peace. But my translator, Hussain Askari, tarred by his identifiably Shiite name, is refused a handshake or a glimmer of eye contact. On this occasion, at least, the Jew felt safer than the Muslim.

But such luck cannot always be counted on. A few weeks later, another Jewish journalist attempting a story about Karachi's tangled web of terrorism meets a different fate: Wall Street Journal correspondent Daniel Pearl is kidnapped by the Islamic extremists he sought to interview. Instead of the Islamic salutation and hug bestowed upon me, he is beheaded.

I had crossed paths with Pearl on assignment in Iran - where we shared the same translator - and again in Israel. As his death sank in, fellow journalists warned that my own conspicuously Jewish surname put me in danger: Along with my notebook and Nikon, I carried the extra baggage of being a Cohn in the lion's den. No longer could I venture into hostile territory with the comforting assumption that a Canadian passport granted any kind of protective immunity.

Years earlier, when I had ventured into Hezbollah's South Beirut headquarters to interview Nasrallah, his personal gatekeeper, Ibrahim, had questioned me closely about the Toronto Star. Oblivious to my own background, he demanded to know whether my newspaper was "pro-Israel," if any Zionists worked there, and how many Jews were on staff.

"About average for Canada," I deadpanned. Thus reassured, he gave armed guards the signal to hustle me into a utility vehicle with black curtains drawn for the drive to Nasrallah's salon. For more than an hour his protectors meticulously checked my belongings for any incriminating evidence, until at last I was ushered into a room with his translator.

The encounter seemed to go well until my post-interview chat with the trusty Ibrahim. The press aide caught sight of my official Lebanese government press card listing my surname, "Cohn," ahead of my given names, "Martin Regg." He had approved the interview on the assumption that my surname was "Reggcohn."

Turning pale, Ibrahim interrogated me feverishly.

"Cohn - is this really your name?" he sputtered. "Isn't this a Jewish name?"

I nodded, Yes.

"But are you a Jew?" He seemed in a state of shock. I wasn't sure who was in greater peril - me for being Jewish or Ibrahim for having allowed a Jew into the inner sanctum. After an interminable silence, he calmed down.

"No problem, we are not fanatics here," he mused.

On other occasions, my surname had a calming effect, like the time I encountered a gun-wielding Jewish settler in the West Bank. No one had ever pointed a gun at me before, not until Noam Shapiro came speeding down from his hilltop settlement of Yizhar to confront us. With his wife and baby watching blithely from the back seat, the bearded settler was dressed for battle: a machine gun in hand, a kippa prayer cap on his head, and the prayer fringes of an orthodox Jew on his waist. Shapiro was the first fundamentalist of any faith to take aim at me, only to remove his finger from the trigger upon inspecting my press pass.

In Beirut and the West Bank, I had come a little too close for comfort. Now, in the wake of Pearl's death, the comfort zone was narrowing even more.

Leaving the Middle East behind to travel through the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, I was reminded that far more Muslims live in Asia than the Middle East, and that they tend to be more moderate. The often violent Islamic extremism of the Middle East - radiating out of the Arabian Desert as far as Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan - is quite unlike the nuanced, mystical Islam practised in most of Asia.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Islamic country with 200 million Muslims, remains a bulwark of moderation and pluralism. Islam came to the archipelago only in the 14th century, long after Hinduism and Buddhism had taken root, so Indonesians adapted Islam's more mystical Sufi strain and melded it with their own animist beliefs to forge a tolerant faith that endures to this day.

India's Muslim population, the world's second largest, has been heralded as among the most progressive, democratic and successful anywhere. As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reminded me in an interview, Indians "take pride in the fact that these 150 million Muslims live as peaceful citizens of our country, that there is not a single incident of their being involved in Al Qaeda and other international terrorist groups."

Despite the relative restraint shown by India's Muslim minority, the same could not always be said for its Hindu majority, nor for the Buddhists in its northern territory of Ladakh and in neighbouring Sri Lanka.

My first exposure to India's religious extremism came in Ayodhya, a graceful town of temples and mosques. The streets are lined with gentle Hindu priests and sadhus (ascetic holy men), marking it as one of Hinduism's holiest sites - but also its bloodiest.

Overflowing with pilgrims, it brims with hate. Fifteen years ago, zealots demolished a mosque to make way for a Hindu temple. Hindu fundamentalists have camped out at the site ever since and taken the entire nation hostage. I listened as the Hindu hardliners taunted the Muslim minority with fundamentalist slogans.

"Hindi Hindu Hindustan," they chanted, which translates roughly as "India for the Hindus and the Hindi-speakers."

"Katua Bhago Pakistan," they continued: "Circumcised (men) run to Pakistan" - a reference to Muslim men for whom circumcision is a religious obligation.

Hindutva, or Hinduization, has been dubbed the "saffronization" of India: the rooting out of Islamic or Western influences that are deemed "foreign" to the population of one billion.

Back in 2002, Hindutva was the declared ideology of the governing BJP party in New Delhi and the western coastal state of Gujarat, where tensions over Ayodhya culminated in anti-Muslim pogroms that claimed as many as 2,000 lives.

At the scene of the Gujarat massacre, I came upon one of the survivors, Abeda Begum. From her perch along the muddy, garbage-strewn alley where chickens and cows jostled for space with pedestrians, Begum had witnessed the slaughter that spared the domestic animals but claimed her loved ones. There is a dead end where the Hindu mob doused her Muslim neighbours with kerosene and burned 92 of them to death. Among them were the mother and sister of Begum's husband.

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When I visited, she was looking after one of the orphaned survivors, 12-year-old Samina Begum. Together they rolled incense sticks with their blackened hands for 30 cents a day, their only income since Begum's husband was let go by Hindu employers in an economic boycott.

"I'm doing all this work because the Hindus won't keep Muslim workers any more and our houses were destroyed, so we have to start from scratch," Begum told me plaintively, adjusting the folds of her purple sari.

I was struck by her clothing and manners. The flowing saris worn by women like Begum often leave their midriffs partly exposed, which might appear immodest for Muslims elsewhere in the region. But in Gujarat it was the local Hindu fashion, and so it had been adopted by Muslims as their own in a state where people of both religions wore the same clothes, spoke the same local dialect, and watched the same movies.

Yet they remained worlds apart in Gujarat, fearing for their lives in the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi. The killing fields of this coastal state were a reminder that nearly six decades after Gandhi's dream of a pluralist state for Indians of all faiths, the country is still haunted by the ghost of communal violence.

India's disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir, where Muslims are in the majority, adds another dimension to the country's religious tensions. It is not only the minority Hindus who feel besieged here, but also the Tibetan-Buddhists living along Kashmir's northern border with China.

In the high-altitude enclave of Ladakh, I listened to Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, the 86-year-old chief lama, explain why his fellow Buddhists were struggling to separate from Kashmir's Muslims. Swathed in scarlet robes in his monastery residence, he argued passionately that Buddhists wanted nothing to do with Muslims, because their religions were so utterly incompatible with one another: "We have nothing in common."

I had a chance years later to recount those xenophobic musings to Tibet's Dalai Lama at his residence-in-exile in the nearby Indian hill town of Dharamsala. His Holiness tried to laugh off the chief lama's combative remarks but later turned deadly serious about the subject of Buddhist fundamentalism:

Every religion, he acknowledged, is susceptible to extremism, and Tibetans are no exception. The only difference, he argued, is that Buddhist fundamentalists tend to take potshots within their own faith, rather than attacking others.

Not so in Sri Lanka, where warmongering monks have long raised a battle cry against the Hindu minority. This small South Asian island of 18 million people, which claims to be the centre of Buddhism, has transformed itself into a textbook case of religious radicalism and tribal identity run amok - a microcosm of the planet's ethnic conflicts.

When I visited their temples, Sri Lanka's most influential religious leaders cast the Sinhalese majority as custodians both of Buddhism's sanctity and the island's territorial integrity. To be sure, they feared separation by the Hindu Tamils in the northeast, but they bitterly opposed the very policies that could easily have fostered national unity, such as equal rights, official bilingualism and local empowerment for the minority. The monks cited a mythological prophecy that Buddhism would be entrusted to this island off India's southeast coast for 5,000 years, with the Sinhalese deemed a chosen people on a sacred mission.

Years of incitement against the minority Hindus gave rise to one of the world's most feared guerrilla movements, the Tamil Tigers. Rebelling against Buddhist chauvinism, government discrimination and army atrocities, ordinary Tamils rallied to the guerrillas despite their often grisly tactics that plunged the country into two decades of blood-curdling violence.

The Tigers claim credit for pioneering the phenomenon of suicide bombers long before it became identified with Islamist visions of religious martyrdom. They are an avowedly secular fighting force, yet they encourage cult-like loyalty toward their supreme commander, high-school dropout Velupillai Prabhakaran. Cyanide pellets dangle from the necks of recruits to avert capture. Female fighters, pledging blind obedience to their leader, are selected for the most daring suicide attacks.

When I travelled to the jungle headquarters of the Tigers' political leader, S.P. Thamilselvan, he painted a portrait of earnest young women yearning to be selected for the elite Black Tigers force so they might lay down their lives

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for the leader. Unlike Islamic suicide bombers, he stressed, the Tigers don't martyr themselves in hopes of entering paradise. They do it so their fellow Tamils can walk freely in their own homeland.

I let his words sink in during a stroll through the nearby Tiger cemetery, where a calligrapher was adding names to the thousands of headstones bearing the bones of slain guerrillas. Some had swallowed their cyanide capsules, others had incinerated themselves as suicide bombers.

They didn't do it for Allah. They did it for their kin, their cause, their cult - in the thrall of ethnic extremism.

We forget, amid today's heightened fear of fundamentalism, that so-called freedom fighters seeking ethnic and religious homelands have all evoked their own brand of terror in our time: not just the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, for example, but the Sikh warriors who took up arms in India's Punjab in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Canada endured a bitter taste of their tactics in 1985 when the terrorist bombing of an Air India flight claimed the lives of all 329 people aboard. Now, the fight for a separate Khalistan seems a footnote to history, one of the few violent separatist movements ever to fizzle out.

On a visit to Amritsar's Golden Temple, the centre of Sikh worship, the ordinary voices of the devout told the tale: alienated by the gratuitous criminality of so many separatists, the local populace gradually sided with the iron fist of the Indian security forces, providing vital intelligence to wipe out terrorism in their own land.

The pacification of the Punjab is a rare exception to the rule that old self-determination movements fade away but never die. Nearly six decades after independence, India is still struggling to wipe out perennial rebellions along its border regions. Apart from Kashmir, more than 30 rebel armies clustered in five tribal states along India's northeastern fringe still bitterly resist central rule; in the east coast state of Andhra Pradesh, Maoist Naxalite rebels wage ideological warfare with a peasant-style rebellion.

And the list goes on. The Indonesian archipelago was the battleground for three distinct separatist movements - in East Timor, West Papua and Aceh.

In southern Sudan, the Christian minority wanted to break away from an Islamic government, while on the southern Philippines island of Mindanao a Muslim minority tried to separate from the Christian majority.

In China's remote western frontier province of Xinjiang, Uyghur Muslims wanted a separate state of their own.

Covering the competing claims for nationhood in India and beyond, I soon found myself suffering from self-determination fatigue.

Throughout my travels, Muslim intellectuals would not let me forget the plight of their peoples, but I couldn't help noticing their lack of empathy for that of non-Muslims - be it the suffering of southern Sudan's Christian minority at the hands of Islamic militias, or the military occupation of East Timor and West Papua by Indonesia's Muslim soldiers.

Deal with our demands, Islamic intellectuals averred, and the violence would vanish. Yet the grievances invariably depended on the geography of the aggrieved: to Pakistanis, the suffering of Kashmiris was the strongest evidence of Western perfidy; in the Arab world, the Palestinian cause was the priority; Indonesians blamed the West after "losing" sovereignty over East Timor; Arab sympathizers of Al Qaeda cited the presence of American troops on sacred Saudi soil as justification for Osama bin Laden's attacks. Today, Iraq and Lebanon top the Islamic world's list of grievances.

To be sure, resolving these problems would reduce resentment against the West; but the Islamic perception of victimization - and the Islamist path of violence - won't magically melt away if any or all of those perennial trouble spots recede from the horizon.

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After a decade abroad, I came to the view that fundamentalism, tribalism and terrorism cannot be so easily explained away or wished away. It's not just about poverty. It's not solely about schooling. It's not entirely about injustice. And it's not really about Islam or other religions.

Craving status and purpose, aspiring martyrs find a raison d'etre in their jihad - a mission, an opportunity to rise above their dreary surroundings. The closer I came to these pious men, the more they looked like lost souls. They sought death not so much as a shortcut to paradise but as a quest for purpose in a mundane life.

We learned shortly after 9/11 that the roster of bombers was dominated by well-off Egyptians and Saudis leading privileged lives abroad. And we now have an inkling, after the arrests of 17 accused terrorist plotters in the GTA, that young Muslim men living comfortably in the banality of suburbia can become intoxicated by fantasies of saving the world by blowing up targets in Toronto.

Much has been written in recent times about the fight for Islam's soul, manifested by a battle between moderates and fundamentalists. We pay great attention to the small number of bombers who do the most damage, but it is also the believers - who make up the mainstream among the world's 1 billion Muslims - who must be engaged, along with those of other faiths.

In my travels across Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, I had always assumed that the fanatics were on the fringes. In fact, it was not only the foot soldiers of fundamentalism who had been pedalling poisonous ignorance, but many of the best minds, as well - either for what they said or left unsaid.

Most condemned the violence, but I found a surprising number who condoned it, excused it, or lapsed into denial. On assignment, I came across prominent, educated Muslims in every walk of life - scholars, doctors, politicians, generals - who blamed 9/11 and other attacks on Israel's Mossad secret service while exonerating Al Qaeda.

Quite apart from their readiness to vilify Jews, I marvelled at the willingness of so many in the Islamic world to besmirch one another as apostles, infidels, or inferior Muslims.

Equally, ultra-orthodox Jews excelled at self-hatred when vilifying their fellow Jews; Hindus excoriated their brethren of lesser castes or questionable orthodoxy; and Buddhists spouted insults at believers from rival sects.

Fundamentalism, like revolution, eats its own children.

Canadians can no longer turn a blind eye to the world beyond our borders; the globalization of terrorism has shattered our splendid isolation. Overseas, there is a different mentality: You are your tribe, and your tribe is you.

Fundamentalism and tribalism, once so alien to the Canadian psyche, have migrated from foreign war zones to our own shores. If we want to maintain our Canadian values of tolerance and harmony at home, we need to wake up to the terror and hatred abroad - not only infecting the Middle East but now poisoning the rest of the planet.

Martin Regg Cohn is the Star's Deputy City Editor.

Graphic

photos by martin regg cohn Above: A hardline Hindu sadhu (sage) stands near soldiers deployed in Ayodhya, India, to keep fundamentalists from praying on the site of a mosque they demolished in 1992. Left: A Muslim boy poses with a toy gun at a pro-Taliban street rally Lahore, Pakistan, shortly after 9 11. The rally was organized by religious groups. Martin Regg Cohn A village girl in Sri Lanka is guarded by local Buddhist militia against attacks by Tamil Tiger fighters.

Pious people with lost souls

Load-Date: August 13, 2006

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MEAT JIBE MUFTI GETS THE CHOP

Sunday Herald Sun (Australia)

April 8, 2007 Sunday

THIRD Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 21

Length: 94 words

Body

AAP

CONTROVERSIAL Muslim leader Sheik Taj el-Din al Hilaly -- who likened scantily-clad women to uncovered meat and said Muslims had more right to be in Australia than Europeans -- has been sacked.

And the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils who ousted him has also abolished the role of mufti, severed all ties with the sheik and stopped paying his salary, according to a newspaper report.

The ousting of Sheik al Hilaly comes as Federal Police investigate allegations that he gave charity funds to supporters of the al-Qaeda and Hezbollah terrorist organisations.

Load-Date: April 10, 2007

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Frontline news from the virtual war zone

The Sunday Times (London)

February 25, 2007

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Section: FEATURES; In Gear; Pg. 30

Length: 1323 words

Byline: Andrew Mueller

Body

The web offers an unparalleled chance to experience the reality of life in the firing line, says Andrew Mueller

You read about them every day: 24-hour rolling news bulletins are obsessed with them and politicians attend summits to solve them. But what is life really like in the world's hotspots and war zones?

A growing number of westerners are deciding to travel to places such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq on "extreme travel tours", escorted by armed guards.

But there is an easier, safer and less morally dubious way to understand people's routine existence in places where curfews and exclusion zones are a fact of life.

The internet gives much closer access to such places than has ever previously been possible, making Gil Scott-Heron's prediction that the revolution would not be televised only half right.

In fact revolutions, wars, insurgencies, invasions and riots are being blogged, photographed, uplinked and delivered to your lap in real time by combatants, eyewitnesses and reputable news sources. While it is -as ever with internet content -always worth confirming the veracity of what you're reading, especially when it comes to material posted by bloggers, an unprecedented amount of information about the history of warfare and today's war zones is literally only a click away.

Be warned, however, that some of the websites (none of those reviewed here) may contain images too graphic for many to stomach. But while there is an undoubted subculture of tasteless blogging, there is also an incredible amount of sensitive and intelligent comment posted by people whose interest is not in shocking viewers, rather in educating them to the reality of life on the ground.

TRUSTED SOURCE

Your first port of call for a view from the ground should be a reputable news source such as the Times Online website, where experienced foreign correspondents from across the globe regularly share their insight and opinion (www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world).

Alongside up to the minute news, you can watch a host of video diaries from Iraq.

Reports from award-winning Sunday Times correspondents Christina Lamb and Hala Jaber, with a regular "inside Iraq" weblog by Stephen Farrell and Ned Parker - both Times journalists -complete the package.

Frontline news from the virtual war zone

From Kabul to Tikrit, Kevin Sites, a veteran war reporter from CNN, has been to them all, and his passport reads like a where's where of world conflict. For two years he has been visiting the world hotspots on his own and transmitting filmed reports back to a website (hotzone.yahoo.com) for visitors to view.

THE LOCALS

Any journalist who has worked in a war zone knows that you have no hope of making any sense of anything until you have found, and agreed a day rate with, a clued-up local. Known as fixers, these people often make the difference between getting a coherent story and running around in a state of utter hopelessness.

War-zone bloggers, when you find the good ones, are the armchair tourist's equivalent. The genre's pathfinder, Baghdad blogger Salam Pax, whose site documented life immediately after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, worked as a fixer for foreign correspondents and blogs sporadically at justzipit.blogspot.com. Many more have taken up the torch and the best provide a unique sense of immediacy, understanding and passion. The eloquently furious riverbendblog.blogspot.com, by an anonymous young Iraqi woman, has succeeded Salam Pax as the online voice of Iraq; her work has recently been compiled into a book. A-mother-from-gaza.blogspot.com is what it says it is an astute rumination about the difficulties of raising a son in one of the world's worst places. And desertpeace.blogspot.com chronicles one man's efforts to encourage the perpetually querulous peoples of the Middle East towards reciprocal niceness.

THE SOLDIERS

The memoirs of war by the individual soldier are an established literary genre.

However, such books are by necessity reflective, written after the event. Thanks to the web, it is increasingly possible -for the first time in the history of warfare -to read and view real-time dispatches from the front. Among the present picks are snipereye.blogspot.com (a US soldier in Iraq who files excellent, if breathless, insights into combat); traversa.typepad.com (a US officer in Afghanistan with many photo albums), and israeli-diary.blogspot.com (the intermittent but nonetheless interesting thoughts of an Israeli soldier).

A visit to YouTube will turn up a wealth of amateur-shot footage made by frontline troops. Material filmed by American National Guardsmen during their year-long tour of duty in Iraq has been compiled into a 90-minute documentary called The War Tapes that you can watch on YouTube.

It's also worth searching MySpace for people located in Iraq or Afghanistan -American soldiers in particular are using the social networking site to post their photos and keep in touch with home.

The best one-stop outlet for military blogs is the comprehensive www.milblogging.com, which contains links to hundreds of blogs by soldiers of different nationalities from 29 countries around the world.

THE TOURIST TRAIL

They may be war zones, but many boast a rich historical background that you can discover on the web. Kabulguide.net, for instance, provides a handy online tour of Afghanistan's capital. Also try www.mustafahotel.com to lend further authenticity to your virtual trip to Kabul.

One of the principal attractions of visiting a dodgy destination is the chance to stuff your rucksack with souvenirs that, back home, will confer upon your suburban hutch the aura of an adventurer's base camp. Happily, these trophies can be ordered without the inconvenience of so much as changing out of your pyjamas, never mind into a flak jacket. Afghanistan's most famous souvenirs are woven war rugs depicting motifs of warfare, which you can find at www.warrug.com.

Three years since the toppling of Saddam's regime, the once-ubiquitous Saddam wristwatches, rugs, stamps and posters aren't as common in Iraq as they once were, and going out to find them is not recommended at this time.

Frontline news from the virtual war zone

But then that's what eBay is for. At the time of writing, Saddam watches -depending on quality were going for between \$51 (£ 26) and \$322 (£ 165).

PHOTO VIEWS

The received wisdom of what war zones look like is dominated by news images - gun-toting miscreants, despairing refugees, heaped rubble. Now there are as many views as there are people on the spot with digital cameras, and their perspectives can be illuminating. The absorbing www.militaryphotos.net contains acres of pictures and yards of video, from faintly fetishistic collections of women in uniform to rare film of North Korean army parades.

A British take can be found in the galleries of the terrific (if highly unofficial) Army Rumour Service site at www.arrse.co.uk/cpgn2/coppermine.html. Also, startling revelations can be had by typing the relevant war zone into www.flickr.com, the photo-sharing website, which includes many unexpectedly beautiful pictures of war-torn Somalia.

LOCAL NEWS

Local newspapers are an excellent source of colour that can show a different perspective about a particular region. The evocatively named Frontier Post, covering Pakistan's fractious North-West Frontier Province, is just one example (www.thefrontierpost.com). Local television stations are also a reminder that there's more than one way of looking at the same story - Hezbollah's al-Manar channel has an English-language site at www.almanar.com.lb, and streams its content live. Other sites such as www.globalsecurity.org make a virtue of up to the minute news from the ground, and provide fascinating background information on a conflict zone. Comebackalive.com contains a "Dangerpedia" section that encourages input from people who are there now.

Similarly, www.iraqslogger.com brings inside tips from Iraq, including such detail as black market exchange rates, and currently circulating viral e-mails and jokes.

Load-Date: February 25, 2007

I was powerless to fight against the President, says alleged rape victim

The Australian (Australia)

February 12, 2007 Monday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 12

Length: 1255 words

Byline: Marie Colvin

Body

The Sunday Times

IN a hotel room in Tel Aviv, a young assistant who worked in the office of Israeli President Moshe Katsav is acting out the moves she alleges he made when he raped her.

"I went into his office with a book I needed to put away," she said. "He was sitting at his desk and there's a big wall of books behind him. I was reaching up to put the book away when he came up behind me."

She crosses her hands on her stomach and hunches. You can almost see the big arms trapping her hands under his.

"He was behind me in a kind of hug," she continued. "It was like my hands were tied. He is not a big person, but he is strong. I said, 'What are you doing?'"

"I don't know why I said that. I was shocked. He said: 'I want you. I want you to love me. Why don't you love me? I want to have sex with you.' I think I said again, 'What are you doing?'"

Katsav pushed her on to the corner of his desk, she claims. She rises from her chair to demonstrate how her hips were allegedly forced on to the table as he turned her to face him.

"My hands were on the table and his hands were over mine on the table. I'm not weak. (But) I had this feeling I never felt before -- you can't do anything.

"Before I even understood, he opened his belt (she starts unbuckling hers to demonstrate the action) and he pulled up my skirt. I started saying: 'I'm leaving, I'm quitting.' I was sure that he would stop."

She draws on a cigarette and grimaces. "Maybe I didn't struggle enough," she said. "I was shocked. I was thinking: 'What if people know? What if I don't have a job?' He penetrated me."

She has been seeing a psychotherapist for six months and says it has given her a new perspective.

"I didn't shout. But I did say no, strongly. I know I did. I said, 'Don't touch me'."

Afterwards, she says, he warned her: "Don't tell anyone."

I was powerless to fight against the President, says alleged rape victim

She went to a public garden nearby and sat for hours, she says, smoking one cigarette after another before taking a taxi home. "I was thinking, 'Why me? What did I do wrong? Did I do something wrong?' I saw my life ruined in just one moment.

"I took a shower and went to bed," she said.

"I wanted to wash away his touch. He was all over me."

The young woman now divides her life into two parts: before and after the rape.

Before, her interests were simple. She loved her job. She had a boyfriend and a car and she socialised when she could outside the long hours of work in the president's office.

Now, she shies away from the company of all but good friends. "I don't listen to music any more, I don't go shopping. I'm not the same person," she said.

The President vigorously protests his innocence of her allegations, saying that years had gone by before she made them, and vowing to fight until his last breath to clear his name. Nevertheless, he is facing indictments not only for raping the aide, but also for charges of sexual misconduct against three other women.

The young assistant, who cannot be named by law, is at the centre of a swirl of sexual and financial scandals in the Israeli Government that have brought public confidence in the country's leaders to an all-time low.

The justice minister, Haim Ramon, was forced to step down last summer. Last month, he was convicted of committing an indecent act by forcibly kissing a 20-year-old female soldier as he arrived at the Prime Minister's office for a meeting on the day when Israel decided to go to war against Hezbollah.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert faces inquiries into his alleged role in promoting the interests of two friends in the privatisation of a bank and also over claims of corruption in property deals.

However, it is the sex scandal surrounding 61-year-old Katsav that is gripping the nation.

In a speech broadcast live on Israeli television, he claimed there was a conspiracy against him by the police, the prosecutors and the media. Then he got into a shouting match with a Channel 2 television correspondent who tried to ask him a question.

Katsav, the first Israeli president from a Muslim country, was born in Yazd, Iran, and came to Israel with his family at the age of six, joining the hundreds of thousands of Jews emigrating after the 1948 war that ended with the foundation of the Jewish state. At a modest bungalow in Kiryat Malachi, he and his wife, Gila, have raised five children.

The assistant joined Katsav's staff soon after he became President and did menial work before rising to a more responsible job. She was young, naive, poorly educated and in awe of him.

Looking back, she says she can now see that his advances began gradually.

"The President would call me on my private line," she said.

"He would stop by my desk and say, 'You look pretty', or 'I like your skirt'."

It was flattering to have the attention of such a powerful man, but matters soon became uncomfortable. "He would stand too close or seek out my company too much. I thought, well, it's only talk. What can I say? I didn't want to lose my job. My father is not a Rothschild."

She knows it seems suspicious that she walked out for 10 days after the alleged rape and then came back to work for a month before fleeing the country.

I was powerless to fight against the President, says alleged rape victim

She struggles to explain herself, but says she had resolved to put the rape behind her and try to survive in a situation that had overwhelmed her.

Asked why she did not report the rape immediately, she ponders for a moment. Then the words come pouring out.

"I thought, 'Who would believe me?' I was scared, ashamed. I didn't want anyone to know. He was calling and threatening me, saying, 'Don't tell anyone. If you do, you will never even work as a waitress again'."

She stayed away from Israel for several months. The manner of her return has raised further questions about her account.

She says she contacted Katsav because she needed a reference, and in return he asked her to write a letter of appreciation for her time in his office.

He then offered to set up three job interviews for her. "I knew it was not a good solution," she said. "He could never fix what he did to me, but I thought if he wants to do this little thing, I will accept it. I need a job."

A confrontation with Katsav in his office followed, after he had failed to arrange a single interview after four months. "I could have killed him at that moment. It felt like he was still driving into my body."

By then, she claims, someone -- a journalist, she believes -- had come into an office where she was on menial duties, offering her \$US500,000 to tell her story.

According to her account, she told Katsav about this during their confrontation, which was taped. The exchange culminated in her shouting: "Not even for \$2million would I forget what you did to me."

By now, other claims of sexual misconduct were beginning to circulate, and the President approached the Attorney-General, Menachem Mazuz, claiming he was being blackmailed.

This prompted a police investigation during which 10 women, including three who had worked at the presidential residence, made allegations against him.

The police said they had enough evidence to indict in four alleged cases, including one of rape and one of "forced sexual intercourse involving abuse of authority", which is said to apply when the victim did not tell anyone at the time.

The Attorney-General is expected to make a final decision on indictments later this year after hearing an appeal from Katsav.

Olmert has urged Katsav to resign and Mazuz ordered him to move out of the official residence. The Knesset, the Israeli parliament, last month approved his suspension from the presidency for three months.

Load-Date: February 11, 2007

**Memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace:
Washington's unwillingness to talk to Somalia's Islamists is hindering
efforts to halt a war that threatens to engulf the Horn of Africa. The Islamists
have given Ethiopia until tomorrow to withdraw troops from Baidoa or face a
full-scale assault, writes Martin Fletcher in Mogadishu.**

Ottawa Citizen

December 18, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 1237 words

Byline: Martin Fletcher, The Times, London

Body

At a primitive training camp 50 kilometres up a crumbling highway north of Mogadishu, just past the rusting hulk of a Soviet tank, 70 young, ragged, would-be soldiers march proudly through the bush chanting "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great). As they recede, other wannabe warriors, helmets festooned with vegetation, wriggle through the scrub clutching AK-47s. They cheer and punch the air as a baby-faced 18-year-old, Abdulm Kadar Mohammed, declares: "I am ready to die for my religion and my country."

The performance is obviously stage-managed for a visiting journalist, but it makes the point. Somalia is girding itself for war.

The Somali Islamic Courts Council (SICC) that forms the country's de facto government has given Ethiopia, its traditional foe, until tomorrow to withdraw the thousands of troops protecting Somalia's official government, holed up in the town of Baidoa, 240 kilometres from the capital.

Mogadishu's imams, in trucks with loudspeakers, exhort Somalis to prepare for battle. Newspapers carry photographs of Somali **women** dressed in niqabs and brandishing AK-47s. Businesses contribute the heavy weapons used for security. A hospital has been commandeered for casualties. Ethiopia and the United States are denounced at mass rallies for supporting a government that most Somalis detest.

"War is imminent ... the guns are loaded," said Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, the council's pre-eminent leader. He also appealed for a last-minute intervention from Europe to persuade Ethiopia to withdraw.

The stakes are high. A war between Muslim Somalia and Christian-ruled Ethiopia could rapidly engulf the entire Horn of Africa, sucking in neighbouring Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and even Yemen. It would give Islamic jihadists the chance to establish a new front in Africa after Iraq and Afghanistan, and to wage another proxy war between East and West. For Somalis, war would shatter the first six months of peace they have enjoyed in 15 years, the result of the council's banishment of the warlords who had turned Somalia into one of the world's most dangerous and lawless countries.

Memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace: Washington's unwillingness to talk to Somalia 's Islamists is hindering efforts to halt a war that....

The chances of a last-minute compromise have been seriously undermined by a deepening rift between the U.S. and governments in Europe over the nature of the problem and how to address it.

"The Americans are simply not prepared to listen to anyone else's point of view," one diplomat complained angrily. "They have made their mind up."

The U.S., still haunted by memories of Somalis triumphantly dragging American corpses through Mogadishu after shooting down two Black Hawk helicopters in 1993, says that the council is run by Islamic extremists, a new Taliban that will turn Somalia into a haven for terrorists.

The U.S. believes the council is harbouring the al-Qaeda cell that bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and a Kenyan beach resort used by Israeli tourists in 2002.

The Bush administration backed the warlords in their losing battle against the Islamists last spring, and now tacitly backs Ethiopia, an increasingly repressive state that fears that the council's success in Somalia would foment trouble among its own rapidly growing Muslim population.

"The SICC is now controlled by al-Qaeda cell individuals," Jendayi Frazer, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Africa, declared last week, calling the council's leaders "extremist to the core".

The problem with the U.S. approach is that it ignores the will of the Somali people. Most Somalis approve of the council because it restored peace and security to their country. And they detest the official government because it includes many of the warlords who were banished in June, including President Abdullahi Yusuf, widely regarded as the original Somali warlord and an Ethiopian stooge.

The official government -- the product of the international community's 14th attempt since 1991 to restore order to Somalia -- was cobbled together in 2004 after two years of tortuous negotiations in Kenya between rival Somali factions. Unwilling to return to war-torn Mogadishu, the government moved to Baidoa, where it was overtaken by events on the ground, and now sits impotent, crippled by mass desertions and sustained only by the forces of Somalia's blood enemy.

A prominent Somali journalist said that any attempt to impose the official government on the Somali people was bound to fail. "It's like going to New York and saying openly, 'I will back the Mafia, and the Mafia will bring back law and order.' " European diplomats contend privately that the Bush administration's preoccupation with Islamic terrorism is distorting its judgment. "The Americans see an extremist under every Muslim stone," one protested. They say that the U.S. should accept reality, engage with the council's leaders as the Europeans are doing, and attempt to broker a compromise between the council and the official government.

This month, Britain pointedly refused a request from Washington to co-sponsor a United Nations resolution partially lifting an arms embargo on Somalia so that a regional force could enter to protect the government. The council called the resolution an act of war.

Whether the council is really run by a bunch of Islamic extremists is a matter of intense debate. It has been praised by Osama bin Laden and Sheik Aweys, a former army colonel known as the Red Fox, appears on both the U.S. and UN lists of terrorist supporters. A recent UN report alleged that fighters, weapons and trainers were pouring into Somalia from Syria, Iran and Hezbollah as well as neighbouring Eritrea, and Baidoa has recently suffered two suicide car bombings reminiscent of al-Qaeda-style attacks.

In his interview with the Times, Sheik Aweys angrily denied all such charges. "Americans say all Muslims are al-Qaeda and terrorists," he snapped, before launching into a lengthy defence of attacks such as 9/11 on the grounds that they were the only way Muslims could hit back at a country that deprives them of freedom, sovereignty and weapons.

The council does undoubtedly harbour Islamic hardliners, including the Shabbab, a band of militant young ideologues led by a man called Aden Hashi Ayro, who allegedly trained in Afghanistan.

Memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace: Washington's unwillingness to talk to Somalia 's Islamists is hindering efforts to halt a war that....

European diplomats and other observers say that the West's priority should be to boost the relative moderates who presently hold sway with the apparent blessing of Sheik Aweys -- men such as Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed, a former teacher who heads the council's executive, and Ibrahim Hassan Addow, an American who is the council's foreign affairs minister.

The real concern is that the Bush administration's charges could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. A war against Ethiopia, which Somalis regard as U.S.-inspired, would play into the hands of radicals and hardliners, said a European diplomat. Ali Sharmarke, who runs HornAfrik, Somalia's leading independent radio station, said: "If the West's concern is international terrorism, its priority should be to bring security to Somalia, not keep it in chaos."

Sheik Aweys and Sheik Yusef Mohammed Siad Inde'Adde, the council's military chief, told the Times that in the event of war, the council would welcome Muslims fighters of any sort to Somalia, and would expect them to come in large numbers.

"If Ethiopia is supported by the Americans, why should we not get support from the Muslim world?" asked Sheik Inde'Adde, adding: "If you shut a cat in a room and beat it, it will jump at you."

Graphic

Colour Photo: Jerome Delay, The Associated Press; Somaligovernment soldiers patrol the streets of Baidoa, Somalia, onSaturday. Somalia's powerful Islamic courts movement and its weakEthiopian-backed government have moved closer to a war that couldengulf the Horn of Africa, which includes Eritrea and Djibouti.

Load-Date: December 18, 2006

End of Document

The click that forced a machine to vote no

The Sun Herald (Sydney, Australia)

September 3, 2006 Sunday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Extra; Pg. 61

Length: 1266 words

Byline: Catharine Munro

Body

A small but effective team of activists is causing a stir with its creative campaigns, but not everyone is onside, Catharine Munro writes.

IT WAS one of those clear winter days in Canberra when the sky turns deep-space blue. Students at the Montessori school looked up to read an unsteady and cryptic message in puffy white letters: GetUp! Vote No.

Only one mum got it. "I knew what was happening moments into the formation of the 'G'," says the woman, who does not want to be named.

The online campaign group GetUp! was urging MPs to reject last month's immigration bill under which all boat people would have been processed in offshore detention centres, even if they reached the Australian mainland.

Half an hour after the aerial sign-writer had finished it emerged that the Prime Minister had decided, for the first time as leader, to withdraw a bill before it could be shot down in the Senate.

That night the message was broadcast across Australia.

GetUp!, the group whose stomping ground is the virtual world of the internet, is starting to make a very physical mark on Australia.

Formed last year by US-based political thinkers Jeremy Heimans and David Madden, GetUp! uses the web for its campaign on issues such as funding of the ABC, women's reproductive rights and the AWB scandal.

It is roughly based on the US online group MoveOn, which is credited with providing a source of funding to the Democratic Party that matches that of the Republicans.

But unlike MoveOn, GetUp! is avowedly non-aligned. Strongly focused on the workings of Canberra, the organisation bears no allegiance to any party.

And while Getup!'s approach is being hailed as innovative, some of its strategies are certainly traditional. Executive director Brett Solomon's team urges its recipients to write to their federal representative; the difference is they use email rather than snail mail.

The click that forced a machine to vote no

Those making crucial decisions in Parliament have found themselves on the receiving end of great slabs of email, prompting the ire of many in government. Attempts by Liberal senator Eric Abetz to put a cloud over the group's funding arrangements failed when the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission rejected his complaint. Others still accuse it of being a front for the ALP.

"This is highly irresponsible, this is spam, this is spam," backbencher and long-time Liberal strategist Andrew Robb told the ABC last year.

As the contact list lengthens, the group is amassing legitimacy as a force that MPs should get to know. "What we are doing is giving people a voice," Solomon says.

"MPs who ignore the internet and see their increased traffic as spam do so at their own peril because in effect they are ignoring the views of their constituents."

But as political strategists struggle with how to use the internet in their campaigns, there is a strongly held view in activist circles that an email has less impact than a traditional letter.

However, one seasoned campaign director, ALP assistant secretary David Feeney, says those who send emails have higher expectations than letter writers. While working with Victorian Premier Steve Bracks, he found that a response had to come within two or three days. "When you fire off an email, they are short, abrupt communications," he says. "There's an expectation from the sender that they will attract quick responses."

The group is armed with a formidable list of more than 100,000 email addresses - all of them classed as GetUp! members; major political party memberships can only be counted in tens of thousands.

But as Feeney points out, all a GetUp! member has to do is click their mouse, not attend a branch meeting and pay annual party fees.

Solomon dismisses the point. "Nobody goes to those meetings any more, it's just an outdated form of organisation." Just how much commitment is there in clicking a mouse? Does commitment even matter if a group can achieve its aim of highlighting an issue enough to embarrass MPs into reconsidering their vote?

Unlike the vast machines of the ALP and the Liberal Party, GetUp! consists of three staff: Solomon, his political campaigner Lilian McCombs and online specialist Nick Moraitis.

THEY are governed by a board that consists of internet multimillionaire and ALP member Evan Thornley, AWU secretary Bill Shorten, Orica chairman and former university chancellor Don Mercer, environmentalist Cate Faehrmann, community organiser Amanda Tattersall and its founders, Heimans and Madden.

Decisions on what to campaign on are made by the trio alone out of their windowless office in Sydney.

As a seasoned activist who has worked with Oxfam and Amnesty International for years, Solomon is careful about the image he presents for GetUp!.

Even the organisation's street address is kept secret. "Our location is our website," he says.

But the group does intend to move out of the abstract world of the internet into the physical realm, with neighbourhood parties and street protests, such as one held last month in Adelaide to call for the release of Australian Guantanamo Bay inmate David Hicks.

Seats in Parliament, however, are not on the agenda. And intractable issues such as the Israel-Hezbollah conflict are left alone.

Nor does GetUp! want to bring down the Government.

"We are campaigning for all political parties to be more progressive," Solomon says.

The click that forced a machine to vote no

While Government MPs have accused GetUp! of being a front for the ALP, it's a label he angrily rejects.

Refusing to be aligned with any established group, the best description remains "progressive". But who decides what it means to be progressive? For GetUp!'s purpose, the definition of progressive is social justice, economic fairness, economic responsibility, diversity.

The terms "just" and "fair" used to be easily decided, a belief wedded in collective ownership for communists or individual enterprise for capitalists.

And there was a time in the United States when "progressive" had a specific meaning, says political biographer and journalist Andrew West.

"It originally came from the late 19th century. It was a kind of populism of the little guy against the big corporations, particularly the railroads," West says.

"My view is that it's a mushy term for people who favour social liberalism but are not quite sure where they stand on economic questions."

When the trio meet every morning to discuss strategies, the reference point is their gut feeling.

Solomon, 36, values his 23-year-old political campaigner McCombs for her ability to sniff the wind of popular opinion. Such freedom from political structure makes the group nimble and quick to respond.

When one member, an immigration lawyer, contacted them to point out the implications of the immigration bill, they were able to begin work on a television advertisement and a web campaign by the end of the day.

"We decided . . . this [bill] was a major retrograde step and that it was going to result in the detention of children and it would result in the real possibility of indefinite detention," Solomon says.

During the campaign they managed to convince some of the country's biggest corporate names to sign a letter to the Government, including the CEO of the National Australia Bank, Ahmed Fahour.

"The battleground is the social agenda," West says.

Meanwhile, the message in Canberra's skies last month did exactly the job that Solomon wanted: got people on the ground talking. In the schoolyard, a public servant, who did not wish to be identified, discovered that other mums were upset about the immigration bill. She says: "That simple act connected people who may not otherwise have realised their shared values on this issue."

Graphic

PHOTO: VOTE NO: GetUp! executive director Brett Solomon, third from right, at a press conference with Greens leader Bob Brown on August 15 before the immigration bill was pulled. Picture: ANDREW TAYLOR

Load-Date: June 20, 2007

How memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace

The Times (London)

December 18, 2006, Monday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 26

Length: 1363 words

Byline: Martin Fletcher in Mogadishu

Body

Fears of war between Somalia's Islamists and Ethiopia are rising as a rift develops between Western powers trying to avert it

At a primitive training camp 30 miles up a crumbling highway north of Mogadishu, just past the rusting hulk of a Soviet tank, 70 young, ragged, would-be soldiers march proudly through the bush chanting "Allahu akbar" ("God is Great"). As they recede, other wannabe warriors, helmets festooned with vegetation, wriggle through the scrub clutching AK47s. They cheer and punch the air as a baby-faced 18-year-old, Abdulm Kadar Muhammad, declares: "I am ready to die for my religion and my country."

The performance is obviously stage-managed for a visiting journalist, but it makes the point. Somalia is girding itself for war.

The Sharia Islamic Courts Council (SICC) that forms the country's de facto government has given Ethiopia, its traditional foe, until tomorrow to withdraw the thousands of troops protecting Somalia's official Government, holed up in the town of Baidoa, 150 miles from the capital. The imams of Mogadishu, in lorries with loudspeakers, exhort Somalis to prepare for battle. Newspapers carry photographs of Somali **women** dressed in niqabs and brandishing AK47s. Businesses contribute the heavy weapons used for security. A hospital has been commandeered for casualties.

Ethiopia and the United States are denounced at mass rallies for supporting a Government that most ordinary Somalis detest.

"War is imminent...the guns are loaded," said Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, the council's pre-eminent leader. He also appealed for a last-minute intervention from Europe to persuade Ethiopia to withdraw.

The stakes are high. A war between Muslim Somalia and Christian-ruled Ethiopia could rapidly engulf the entire Horn of Africa, sucking in neighbouring Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and even Yemen. It would give Islamic jihadists the chance to establish a new front in Africa after Iraq and Afghanistan, and to wage another proxy war between East and West. For ordinary Somalis, war would shatter the first six months of peace they have enjoyed in 15 years, the result of the council's banishment of the warlords who had turned Somalia into one of the world's most dangerous and lawless countries.

The chances of a last-minute compromise have been seriously undermined by a deepening rift between the US and governments in Europe over the nature of the problem and how to address it. "The Americans are simply not

How memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace

prepared to listen to anyone else's point of view," one diplomat complained angrily. "They have made their mind up."

The US, still haunted by memories of Somalis triumphantly dragging American corpses through Mogadishu after shooting down two Black Hawk helicopters in 1993, says that the council is run by Islamic extremists, a new Taleban that will turn Somalia into a haven for terrorists.

The US believes that the council is harbouring the al-Qaeda cell that bombed the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and a Kenyan beach resort used by Israeli tourists in 2002. The Bush Administration backed the warlords in their losing battle against the Islamists last spring, and now tacitly backs Ethiopia, an increasingly repressive state that fears that the council's success in Somalia would foment trouble among its own rapidly growing Muslim population.

"The SICC is now controlled by al-Qaeda cell individuals," Jendayi Frazer, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, declared last week, calling the council's leaders "extremist to the core".

The problem with the US approach is that it ignores the will of the Somali people.

Most Somalis approve of the council because it restored peace and security to their country. And they detest the official Government because it includes many of the war lords who were banished in June, including President Yusuf, widely regarded as the original Somali warlord and an Ethiopian stooge.

The official Government -the product of the international community's 14th attempt since 1991 to restore order to Somalia -was cobbled together in 2004 after two years of tortuous negotiations in Kenya between rival Somali factions.

Unwilling to return to war-torn Mogadishu, the Government moved to Baidoa, where it was overtaken by events on the ground, and now sits impotent, crippled by mass desertions and sustained only by the forces of Somalia's blood enemy.

A prominent Somali journalist said that any attempt to impose the official Government on the Somali people was bound to fail. "It's like going to New York and saying openly, 'I will back the Mafia, and the Mafia will bring back law and order'." European diplomats contend privately that the Bush Administration's preoccupation with Islamic terrorism is distorting its judgment. "The Americans see an extremist under every Muslim stone," one protested. They say that the US should accept reality, engage with the council's leaders as the Europeans are doing, and attempt to broker a compromise between the council and the official Government.

This month Britain pointedly refused a request from Washington to co-sponsor a United Nations resolution partially lifting an arms embargo on Somalia so that a regional force could enter to protect the official Government. The council called the resolution an act of war.

Whether the council is really run by a bunch of Islamic extremists is a matter of intense debate. It has been praised by Osama bin Laden and Sheikh Aweys, a former army colonel known as the Red Fox, appears on both the US and UN lists of terrorist supporters. A recent UN report alleged that fighters, weapons and trainers were pouring into Somalia from Syria, Iran and Hezbollah as well as neighbouring Eritrea and Baidoa has recently suffered two suicide car bombings reminiscent of al-Qaeda-style attacks.

In his interview with The Times, Sheikh Aweys -who sports a tuft of henna stained red beard, has 20 children by four wives and believes he is about 60 -angrily denied all such charges. "Americans say all Muslims are al-Qaeda and terrorists," he snapped, before launching into a lengthy defence of attacks such as 9/11 on the grounds that they were the only way Muslims could hit back at a country that deprives them of freedom, sovereignty and weapons.

He also urged the West to accept Somalia's right to pursue its faith, and argued that Bin Laden could, like Nelson Mandela, eventually come to be seen as a freedom fighter, not a terrorist.

How memories of Black Hawk Down cast shadow over hopes for peace

The council does undoubtedly harbour Islamic hardliners, including the Shabbab, a band of militant young ideologues led by a man called Aden Hashi Ayro, who allegedly trained in Afghanistan.

European diplomats and other neutral observers say that the West's priority should be to boost the relative moderates who presently hold sway with the apparent blessing of Sheikh Aweys -men such as Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a former teacher who heads the council's executive, and Ibrahim Hassan Addow, an American who is the council's foreign minister.

The real concern is that the Bush Administration's charges could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. A war against Ethiopia, which Somalis regard as US-inspired, would play into the hands of radicals and hardliners, said a European diplomat. Ali Sharmarke, who runs HornAfrik, Somalia's leading independent radio station, said: "If the West's concern is international terrorism, its priority should be to bring security to Somalia, not keep it in chaos."

Sheikh Aweys and Sheikh Yusuf Muhammad Siad Inde'Adde, the council's military chief, told The Times that in the event of war, the council would welcome Muslim fighters of any sort to Somalia, and would expect them to come in large numbers.

"If Ethiopia is supported by the Americans, why should we not get support from the Muslim world?" asked Sheikh Inde'Adde, adding: "If you shut a cat in a room and beat it, it will jump at you."

Sheikh Abdurahim Mudday, the council's information minister, told The Times an old Somali story to reinforce the point. A mad woman runs through a village of straw huts with a burning torch. An alarmed villager warns her not to set the village alight. "You've just reminded me," the mad woman said. And she starts burning down the homes.

Load-Date: December 18, 2006

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The devil of the details

The Times (London)

November 4, 2006, Saturday

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Section: FEATURES; Books; Pg. 6

Length: 1286 words

Byline: Tim Teeman

Body

Ben Schott's arcane facts sell in their millions but the author refuses to see himself as a writer, he tells Tim Teeman.

BEN SCHOTT WOULD PREFER it if everything that you knew about him came from his books -that he has a quirky, interrogating view of the world, approaching with equal diligence the Pakistan-Kashmiri earthquake and the contenders in this year's Big Brother.

He has published three Miscellanies, and is on to his second annual Almanac; books that burst with facts and concise breakdowns of big subjects. In four years Schott, 32, has sold more than two million books and he would rather talk about research methods than himself.

Given the books' beautiful, arcane design, you might expect Schott to wear plus fours and a monocle. But no, he's very much the overgrown public schoolboy in Sunday best: dark pinstripe jacket, pink shirt, blue jeans and brown loafers, topped off with a curtained quiff. So what's hot in Schott's Almanac 2007?

"With Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (the President of Iran) I went through around 60,000 words of reports," he says excitedly. "Family background. The mercurial mix of firebrand and philosopher. He was in the World Mayor finals with Mayor Bloomberg (of New York) and Ken Livingstone -which is funny on two levels. The fact he was in them and that there is something called the World Mayor Finals."

The books drip with eccentricity and anoraky fervour. Schott denies that he possesses either, yet he researches, writes and designs everything almost single-handedly, apart from the illustrations. Recently he took on assistants: one in Germany and one in New York -tough for a self-confessed control freak who says that he can spend hours making a page look just right.

The Miscellanies and Almanacs have a certain tone of voice, he claims, "politically neutral but with a sense of texture", that he hopes does not reveal what he thinks of I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!, the Eta ceasefire or wire-tapping.

He likes to pull together strands of high and low culture -"It's a mistake to think that they are separate" -and prefers footnotes to the big story: "I'll write about who wore what dress at the Oscars, not what won Best Foreign Language film. The Almanac is about taking a step back from the 24-hour news cycle."

The devil of the details

Schott grew up in Hampstead, North London. His father is a doctor, his mother a nurse. "My father wrote rococo papers about Leonardo's handwriting and the evolution of the male and female signs in different cultures. From him I got a love of the quirky footnote."

He went to the private University College School, wasn't particularly academic but "worked out what they wanted in exams. The school embraced eccentricity. I did a lot of photography and theatre lighting. I didn't know who the head of rugby was, but I knew all the good actors and debaters. It was much more about the liberal arts than muddy playing fields."

Schott toyed with becoming a photographer but studied social and political science at Oxford. In the library one day, immersed in Foucault, he came across a list, quoted by Foucault, that Borges had entitled "Celestial Empire of Benevolent Knowledge" and which defined all animals in 14 absurd ways, such as "tame", "if seen from a distance, look like flies" and "belonging to the Emperor".

"It made me laugh out loud, much to the annoyance of others in the library," he recalls. "The craziness of the listing challenged everything about traditional taxonomy and was the seed for much of the character, layout and haphazard juxtaposition of the Miscellanies." (The whole list is on page 14 of his first book.) Schott became an account manager at the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson, but hated how uncreative it was, leaving after four months.

He set up as a photographer and his subjects included John Prescott who was rude, and Sir Roy Strong, who had "the most wonderful, doleful eyes" and told him: "You must realise I'm awfully photogenic." Tony Blair asked Schott if he'd like to see then-baby Leo; Cherie barked at him not to take too long as they were about to have lunch.

The Miscellanies took shape when Schott began putting facts on Christmas cards to friends and clients: trivia particular to photographers (light temperatures), wine bottle sizes, shoelace lengths. In 2002 he produced 50 Miscellanies for himself.

One was sent to Nigel Newton, the founder and chief executive of Bloomsbury, who commissioned a book.

"I'm not a crazy pop-quiz person," Schott insists. "I'm terrible at Trivial Pursuit." He professes to be completely thrown by the books' success. "We sell in America, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Korea and, hopefully, next South East Asia. Perhaps people like it because the world is a hugely chaotic place and there is something pleasing about taxonomy, grids and order. I want the voice of the books to be sceptical, interested, unpompous but semi-serious, with a sparkle in the eye."

Schott denies that the formats are now tired and little more than cash cows.

"That's a very media criticism. Something's good, then it's too good, then no one likes it, then there's a comeback. As long as they continue to give people pleasure, I am thrilled."

However, he knows his limitations. He shies from describing himself as a writer.

"I would never write a novel, on oath," he says sternly. "I have no facility for prose and I am terrible at dialogue."

He would, however, like to write nonfiction, particularly a biography of John Heartfield, the German montagist whose work was banned by the Nazis, and a survey of British politics.

There will be almanacs for at least another two years and he is planning to contribute his distinctive charts to newspapers: The New York Times ran one recently, which broke down five years of American involvement in Iraq into categories that included George W. Bush's weight and blood pressure and average real estate prices in Manhattan.

Schott claims that there is "a lot of himself" in the way that he presents figures and refuses to offer personal opinions. "I'm a curator of information," he insists. He sees his voice as akin to Jeremy Paxman's, "informative and sceptical, giving information to people for them to make up their own minds".

The devil of the details

He is "extremely sceptical" about the nature of truth: one of the hardest figures to substantiate, he says, is the number of civilian deaths in Iraq. One thing that he cannot deduce, despite much research, is the meaning of the colours of ministerial boxes.

Schott says that he is private - "When you work as a photographer you think: 'Why are they (the subject) answering these questions?'" -but he is also a tease: he has written a "personal miscellany" for us, printed alongside this article, which is "70 per cent true, 30 per cent not".

He relaxes by swimming and "breaking bread with friends". He loves wine and flies regularly between London and New York where he has a girlfriend who works for the style website Daily Candy. They met when she approached him at a book event and said, "Is this guy for real?" to which Schott's oh-so-British rejoinder was: "Yes, sadly he is."

Is Schott a perfectionist? "Yes," he admits crisply. Does that drive him a bit nuts? "Yes. Each book is 140,000 words. The pressure is intense. I lose my temper only at small things, such as not being able to see the cinema screen because of the hair of the person in front of me."

Schott's puppyish enthusiasm sustains him - "the responsibility I feel for every last comma and being reasonable about Hezbollah as well as Israel". He pauses, then adds with some profundity: "Whether I like it or not, Kerry Katona is in my life."

SCHOTT'S ALMANAC 2007. by Ben Schott. Bloomsbury, £ 16.99; 352pp. £ 15.29 (free p&p) 0870 1608080

timesonline.co.uk/booksfirst

Load-Date: November 4, 2006

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In a Stormy Year, Peretz Raises and Then Forfeits Left's Hopes; Anger Mounts as Labor's Once-fiery Leader Acquiesces in Rightist's Entry to Olmert Cabinet; DATEL NE JER USALEM

The Forward

November 3, 2006

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Section: News; Pg. A1

Length: 1368 words

Body

Two soldiers wearing olive-drab ski masks against the autumn chill stood last weekend at a checkpoint on the road into Bir Nabalah, a West Bank village north of Jerusalem. Palestinian cars waited in line 100 yards away. One by one, they moved up to the checkpoint, where one of the Israeli soldiers glanced inside each car, sometimes waving it by and sometimes asking for identification papers.

What are you checking for? asked a volunteer from Machsom Watch, a leftwing Israeli women's organization that sends observers to checkpoints to report on human-rights issues.

Nothing definable, the soldier replied, nonplussed. To the volunteer, that uncertain answer seemed to be clear evidence that the checkpoint accomplished little beyond making Palestinian life difficult. The drivers, she argued, are not entering Israel but traveling from one part of the West Bank to another; the security value is not obvious.

Military sources told the Forward that the checkpoint is meant to stop terrorists who can and do slip into Israel proper via Bir Nabalah. Local Palestinians countered that would-be infiltrators can circumvent the roadblock by crossing the hills on foot.

Whatever its security merits, the Bir Nabalah checkpoint does prove one thing: Having appeared there last June a month after Labor Party leader Amir Peretz became defense minister it has become one more symbol of the Israeli left's burning disillusionment with Peretz. The onetime trade union chief captured the leadership of Labor one year ago, promising a new wave of activism and energy on the left. He's since become the latest Israeli symbol of political haplessness.

Last Sunday, while the Machsom Watch volunteer was visiting Bir Nabalah, the Labor Party's Central Committee was meeting in Tel Aviv. At Peretz's urging, the committee voted overwhelmingly not to pull Labor out of the government despite Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's addition of the far-right Yisrael Beiteinu party to his ruling coalition, and of its leader, Avigdor Lieberman, to his security Cabinet. Peretz's very public acquiescence in the Lieberman appointment only added to the despair in his natural constituency.

Peretz's November 2005 victory in a party primary over octogenarian Shimon Peres appeared to resuscitate a party that was commonly seen as having lost direction and purpose. Peretz, a trade unionist from the poor Negev town of Sderot, put socioeconomic issues back on Labor's agenda.

In a Stormy Year, Peretz Raises and Then Forfeits Left's Hopes Anger Mounts as Labor's Once-fiercy Leader Acquiesces in Rightist's Entry to Olmert Cabinet DATEL

He also promised a more clearly dovish direction for Labor. Unlike the aging Peres, he had no mixed feelings about the settlement effort; he was

unabashedly opposed to it. Amir Peretz doesn't want to be an occupier. He doesn't want to rule over another people, not without posts and not with bypass roads. He believes that Israel's presence in the West Bank is immoral, his spokesman told me as a turbulent national election campaign gained momentum.

Peretz's ascent reshuffled Israeli politics. It spurred then-prime minister Ariel Sharon to quit the Likud and create his centrist Kadima ticket. It also spurred Peres to abandon Labor, his home of over half a century, and move to Kadima. After a stroke felled Sharon in January, Olmert took over as Kadima's prime ministerial candidate.

When Olmert won the March election, he immediately sought to bring Labor into his coalition. But with his pro-business agenda, Olmert resisted Peretz's demand for an economic role. Instead, he unexpectedly offered to make Peretz his defense minister. Equally unexpected, the Labor leader accepted, despite his glaring lack of experience in military matters. It's widely assumed that he hoped to strengthen his security credentials ahead of a future race for prime minister.

At that point, those who expected Labor to return to its social democratic roots were starting to feel let down. But Labor did win a promise of a staged increase in the minimum wage. It also managed to keep Lieberman, the firebrand who has called for disenfranchising Israeli Arabs and bombing Egypt, on the opposition benches.

And for doves, Peretz's role as defense minister did have apparent advantages. In contrast to ex-generals, they hoped, he would assert strong civilian control over the military. As the minister responsible for the West Bank, he could ease living conditions for Palestinians. He promised action against the small settlement outposts that had sprung up on hilltops over the past decade without government approval starting with those whose residents had been involved in violence against neighboring Palestinians.

But the war in Lebanon last summer raised doubts about Peretz's capability to handle military issues and to stand up to generals. The initial decision to launch a major air campaign against Hezbollah had come just hours after the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers on the Lebanese border. The war initially enjoyed broad public support. But Peretz, Olmert and their top generals soon came under heavy criticism for lack of a clear battle plan or achievable diplomatic goals in the war.

Further damaging Peretz's reputation, the budget that was approved by the government after the war postponed one stage of the promised minimum wage increase, Peretz's signature economic vow.

As for Peretz's promises regarding the West Bank, they've yet to be realized. In mid-October, the defense minister ordered the army to prepare plans for evacuating several outposts even while reportedly holding talks with settlement leaders on a compromise under which some outposts would be legalized in return for voluntary removal of others. Asked this week about Peretz's intentions on the issue, his spokesman did not respond before press time.

Meanwhile, the number of checkpoints in the West Bank has risen to 83 in September from 66 in April, just before Peretz took office, according to a recent report by the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Asked to comment, the IDF Spokesman's office sought official numbers for two days but was unable to provide any. A spokeswoman noted, however, that temporary checkpoints are sometimes erected in response to intelligence warnings that a terrorist will be passing along a specific route. It is not clear whether the OCHA figures include such temporary roadblocks.

What is clear is that the left has lost faith in Peretz. A total failure, exclaimed Knesset member Ran Cohen of the leftwing Meretz party. Who would have believed that under Peretz, not one illegal outpost would be evacuated? He added that the increase in the number of checkpoints also doesn't testify to great success in relation to the Palestinian civilian population.

In a Stormy Year, Peretz Raises and Then Forfeits Left's Hopes Anger Mounts as Labor's Once-fierce Leader Acquiesces in Rightist's Entry to Olmert Cabinet DATEL

Now Peretz will be sitting at the Cabinet table with Lieberman. On Monday, following the Labor approval vote, the Knesset certified Lieberman's appointment as deputy prime minister and minister in charge of strategic affairs, a title indicating responsibility for dealing with the Iranian threat. Science and Culture Minister Ophir Pines-Paz, who had led the opposition to Lieberman within Labor, quit the Cabinet. I couldn't sit in a government with a minister who preaches racism, he wrote to Olmert in his resignation letter.

On the other hand, Labor lawmaker Ephraim Sneh insisted that Lieberman will have little influence. Sneh, who was appointed deputy defense minister this week in a gesture to Labor (and a crutch to Peretz), said: We hold the Defense Ministry, in charge of preparing Israel [militarily]. Tzipi Livni is responsible for diplomacy. Olmert gave [Lieberman] a nice title. He is in charge of talking.

Yet while Lieberman talks, Labor has lost a clear message. The central committee vote was widely taken to show that Peretz had a firm grip on the party machine if on little else and that most of Labor's legislators feared losing a grip on power more than anything. Peretz's slim chances of restoring his political fortunes depend now, more than ever, on using the power he has to convince those who once cheered him that he still can fulfill his promises.

Graphic

IMAGE

IMAGE: Out: Science Minister Ophir Pines-Paz, above, quit the Cabinet to protest her refusal of Amir Peretz, lower left, to lead Labor into opposition.; photos: getty images

Load-Date: November 6, 2006

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World Report

Windsor Star (Ontario)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. B2; World Report

Length: 1254 words

Byline: Compiled from Star News Services

Body

SOUTH AMERICA

CHAVEZ GRANTED POWER TO ENACT LAWS BY DECREE

CARACAS, Venezuela - A congress wholly loyal to President Hugo Chavez approved a law Wednesday granting him authority to enact sweeping measures by decree.

Meeting at a downtown plaza in a session that resembled a political rally, legislators unanimously approved all four articles of the law by a show of hands.

"Long live the sovereign people! Long live President Hugo Chavez! Long live socialism!" said National Assembly President Cilia Flores as she proclaimed the law approved. "Fatherland, socialism or death! We will prevail!"

Chavez, who is beginning a fresh six-year term, says the legislation will be the start of a new era of "maximum revolution" during which he will consolidate Venezuela's transformation into a socialist society. His critics are calling it a radical lurch toward authoritarianism by a leader with unchecked power.

EUROPE

INTRUDER NABBED AT PRINCE CHARLES' HOME

LONDON - A man carrying a pitchfork was arrested after breaking into the grounds of Prince Charles' country home in southwest England, British police said Wednesday.

The 55-year-old man dodged security at the heir to the throne's Highgrove estate but was grabbed by officers before dawn Tuesday as he approached Highgrove House, police said.

Charles and his wife Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall were asleep inside, newspapers reported.

TOOTH-CRACKING COOKIE A 'WORK-RELATED INJURY'

STOCKHOLM, Sweden - A ceramic stove salesman who chipped a tooth on a cookie while visiting a customer is entitled to compensation for his dental work after a court ruled it a work-related injury.

World Report

The Swedish Supreme Administrative Court ruled in favour of a claim by Calle Montell for state compensation, saying the injury was work-related because it occurred while he was on the job.

"I'm very happy," Montell, 50, said Wednesday. "Everyone who is out on a job can have a snack knowing that they are covered by occupational safety laws."

The Jan. 18 ruling ended a legal battle that began on Oct. 31, 2002, when Montell bit into a cookie offered by a customer and cracked his tooth on a cherry pit.

The local social insurance office denied him state compensation for the C\$670 it cost to repair the damage, rejecting his claim that the injury was work-related.

BERLUSCONI'S WIFE DEMANDS AND GETS PUBLIC APOLOGY

ROME - It was domestic drama at its best, the kind Italians love: a scorned wife airing her dirty laundry for the world to see.

In this case it was Veronica Lario, the usually private wife of former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who chose to make her anger over his flirtations public in an open letter in a daily newspaper.

By day's end, the 70-year-old billionaire, Italy's richest man, was figuratively on his knees.

"Dear Veronica, here's my apology," Berlusconi said in his letter, made public by the conservative leader's Forza Italia party. "Forgive me, I beg you. And take this public show of my private pride giving in to your fury as an act of love. One of many."

Lario, 50, had voiced her complaints Wednesday in La Repubblica, saying her dignity had been offended by her husband's behaviour.

She was reacting to comments that Berlusconi reportedly made last week during a VIP party after a TV awards show broadcast by one of the media baron's Mediaset channels.

"If I weren't married, I would marry you immediately," Berlusconi told one woman, according to reports widely carried in the Italian media. "With you, I'd go anywhere," he reportedly told another.

ANTARCTICA

CRUISE SHIP RUNS AGROUND OFF REMOTE ANTARCTIC ISLAND

OSLO, Norway - Nearly 300 passengers were awaiting rescue Wednesday from a Norwegian cruise ship that ran aground off a remote Antarctic island, damaging its hull.

The M/S Nordkapp got off the rocks under its own steam and sought shelter in a nearby harbour, where it was awaiting the arrival later Wednesday of another Norwegian Coastal Voyage ship, the M/S Nordnorge, the cruise operator said.

The company said no one was hurt in Tuesday's mishap and the Nordkapp was not in danger. "The ship is now at anchor in Walker Bay, and is being met by M/S Nordnorge," said Hanne Kristiansen, a spokeswoman for Norwegian Coastal Voyage.

NORTH AMERICA

BIDEN ENTERS PRESIDENTIAL RACE FOR DEMOCRATS

WASHINGTON - Democratic Senator Joseph Biden has long been known on Capitol Hill for having a mouth that won't quit.

World Report

But the Delaware lawmaker, a White House aspirant who usually saves his rhetorical blasts for President George W. Bush, learned the dangers of having loose lips Wednesday after a trash-talking tirade against Democratic presidential frontrunners Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and John Edwards.

Biden, who announced his own presidential campaign Wednesday, infuriated Democratic colleagues by referring to Obama as "the first mainstream African-American who is articulate, bright and clean," belittling Clinton as unlikable and dismissing Edwards as a foreign policy lightweight.

The remarks about Obama, in particular, produced charges of racial insensitivity and predictions Biden's campaign may be over before it really begins.

"I mean, you got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy," Biden said in an interview, published Wednesday by the New York Observer. "I mean, that's a storybook, man."

Biden, 64, is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and considered one of the party's leading thinkers on foreign affairs.

MISS USA GETS TAKING COCAINE OFF HER CHEST

NEW YORK - Miss USA, who narrowly kept a hold of her tiara last month after admitting that she had been boozing it up in New York, has now revealed she has taken cocaine.

"I have done cocaine, yeah," Tara Conner said in an interview due to be aired on the NBC network today, extracts of which were released Wednesday. She said making the revelation "gets it off my chest."

"The more that I get off my chest, the better I feel about myself. It's not healthy for my recovery to sit here and hold things back," she said.

MIDEAST

FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER CONVICTED OF FORCED KISSING

TEL AVIV, Israel - An Israeli court convicted former justice minister Haim Ramon on Wednesday of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier, a stunning censure of a top official that could reshape the Israeli cabinet.

Ramon, who faces up to three years in prison, joined a growing list of politicians who have fallen from grace, including Israel's president, who is facing rape charges.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 21-year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer. Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman, who cannot be identified under Israeli law, had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

CAR BOMBS TARGET SHIITES IN BAGHDAD

BAGHDAD - Car bombs struck mostly Shiite targets in Baghdad on Wednesday, and the bodies of three Sunni professors and a student were found days after they were seized while leaving their campus in a Shiite part of the city. At least 43 people were reported killed across the country, including a U.S. soldier.

A mortar attack struck a predominantly Sunni neighbourhood in northern Baghdad in apparent retaliation for the bombings, killing at least six people and wounding 20, police and hospital officials said.

The violence underscored the extreme difficulties facing the capital's six million residents as they try to go about their daily business even as U.S. and Iraqi forces gear up for a planned security sweep.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Alaor Filho, Associated Press; **ACCUSED GOLD DIGGER ARRESTED FOR MURDER:** Adriana Almeida, centre, is escorted by police officers in Rio de Janeiro. Police have accused Almeida, the young widow of a legless multi-millionaire lottery winner, of setting up his murder, in a crime that has gripped Brazil and generated public fury against a woman widely viewed as a ruthless gold digger. Police spokesman Marcelle Mendes said Almeida will be held for at least 30 days while prosecutors decide whether to charge her in the death of 54-year-old Renne Senna, whom she married after he hit the US\$24.4-million jackpot. Globo TV reported Wednesday that police also are looking for four men suspected of involvement in the killing. ;

Colour Photo: Hugo Chavez ;

Colour Photo: Veronica Lario ;

Colour Photo: Tara Conner ;

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

A bloody nose for Bush but his brutality goes on

Daily Mail (London)

November 11, 2006 Saturday

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Section: ED IRE; Pg. 19

Length: 1317 words

Byline: EAMON DUNPHY

Body

AS THE results of Tuesday's midterm Congressional elections filtered out, the world reacted joyfully.

First the Republicans lost the House of Representatives. Within hours the despised Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was sacked.

The Senate race was close; even Democrats didn't expect to win. However, win they did when George Allen the incumbent Republican senator for Virginia conceded to his Democrat rival Jim Webb on Thursday. That Allen's defeat should hammer the final nail in George W Bush's political coffin was ironic.

A fortnight ago Allen held a doubledigit lead over his Democrat opponent.

Poised for a big win, Allen was touted as a possible Republican candidate for the presidency in 2008. Then, at a campaign stop a week ago, his handsomely glib religious-right mask slipped.

A young man of Indian descent working for Jim Webb heckled Allen. The would-be Republican president responded by calling the Democrat volunteer a 'macaca' a racial slur that denotes a species of monkey.

The Bush presidency is over. Sanity has prevailed. The hope now must be that the world's most powerful nation will be reconciled with the international community.

Buried along with Bush are the unelected architects of his foreign policy which has cast the world

The neocons occupied key positions in Bush's administration from the start.

Paul Wolfowitz was Rumsfeld's No.2 at the Pentagon. Doug Feith was No.3.

Lewis 'Scooter' Libby, a Wolfowitz protege was Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff.

John Bolton, the notorious rightwing hardman now U.S. Ambassador to the UN, kept his neocon eye on Colin Powell at the State Department.

Elliott Abrams was appointed to head Middle East policy at the National Security Council. Until forced to resign because of a lobbying scandal, the malevolent figure of Richard Perle was chairman of a Defence Department advisory body.

A bloody nose for Bush but his brutality goes on

Working assiduously to promote war outside the administration was James Woolsey, former director of the CIA. It was Woolsey who tried repeatedly to link Saddam Hussein to 9/11 and to anthrax letters allegedly discovered in Washington.

These men sowed the seeds of war. Their connections will be of interest to historians analysing the origins of the Iraq adventure. The neocons are part of America's so-called Jewish lobby. And that has close links to the religious right, Bush's electoral base.

The neocons are not representative of most Jewish Americans, who vote Democrat. Curiously, the most fervent Jewish lobbyists in the United States are Southern Protestant fundamentalists. They believe that God gave all of Palestine to the Jews.

It's not so long since Donald Rumsfeld sneeringly referred to Old Europe France and Germany as irrelevant. The United Nations was similarly dismissed by Rumsfeld and the shadowy unelected neocons who pulled his strings. The UN was damned as a 'talking shop'.

Which, of course, it is. Imperfect, like the world we live in. If they possessed a core principle, the neocons who hijacked U.S. foreign policy on Bush's watch believed in realism.

According to such people, the 21st century would be shaped by America.

With its economic and military power, America was not obliged to engage with troublesome nations which didn't share its world view. Hence Old Europe was regarded with contempt.

Limp-wristed liberals offered another target. Appeasers and compromisers, appeasing dictators, compromising on core values.

A key tenet of neoconservative thought was that America's enemies were emboldened by liberal weakness.

Clinton, the quintessential liberal hate figure, had, after all, failed to punish Osama bin Laden for his attacks on U.S. interests.

Israel was, obviously, another neocon cause, besieged by hostile neighbours, the terrorists of Hamas and Hezbollah, yet restrained by successive U.S. administrations from retaliating with the brutal force we have seen in recent years.

9/11 was a godsend for the neocons.

Proof that America's enemies were winning. It was time to take the gloves off; time to unleash American power; time to teach the world a lesson. That was the neocon story.

AFGHANISTAN was America's first target. It was from there that bin Laden planned 9/11, therefore Afghanistan was a legitimate target. That brief campaign yielded little. Bin Laden remained elusive, no tangible result was possible.

A larger, softer target was required to avenge 9/11. Enter Saddam Hussein.

It was Bush's Secretary of State Colin Powell who first described the neocons as crazies.

He was on the money but failed to convince his president. Instead of resigning, Powell told lies to the UN Security Council.

Others among them Bill Kristol editor of the must-read conservative magazine the Weekly Standard provided the intellectual case for war. How crazy these guys are can be gauged by reading a Weekly Standard editorial penned six weeks ago which urged the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities.

'It's going to happen eventually,' Kristol argued, 'why not do it next week?' Hubris, evaporated by this week's vote.

A bloody nose for Bush but his brutality goes on

In the 12 months post 9/11, Bush settled his determination to take out Saddam.

Polls taken during that period showed that more than 60 per cent of Americans believed that Saddam was responsible for 9/11. The American media has a lot to answer for in this regard, Fox News and the rightwing radio shock jocks in particular.

The idea that Osama bin Laden and Saddam were collaborators was preposterous. Bin Laden was anathema to the tyrant, his brand of Shia fundamentalism poison to the secular Butcher of Baghdad.

But Bush needed blood, Muslim blood, so the case for war was concocted.

The new Democrat Congress will doubtless investigate the falsehoods presented to the American people, and the United Nations, to make the case for war.

In truth there was no war, merely a brutal invasion codenamed Shock 'n' Awe, followed by a bloody occupation.

RUNNING parallel, the sickening war crimes, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, the binning of the Geneva Convention and the redefinition of torture by Alberto Gonzalez, Bush's handpicked Attorney General.

Extraordinary rendition entered the English language. Suspected terrorists captured and flown to secret destinations in countries where torture is permitted.

This dreadful dark period in the history of the United States is without precedent. Last Tuesday's vote may bring it to an end. There are, however, troubling features of the past three and a half years that will linger indelibly in the mind.

How little we protested as human rights were trampled upon. How slyly mute our own Government remained to stay onside with those conducting this criminal campaign.

How easily Bush's lapdog Tony Blair could bind his country and his New Labour party to the neocon obscenities which were far worse than Vietnam.

The impotence of Europe, with a few honourable exceptions.

The re-election of George W Bush in 2004 was one of the worst moments.

That the American people would return this bloodsoaked fool to the White House spoke ominously of their ignorance, perhaps indifference.

With every atrocity committed in our name came the uneasy feeling that we were being propelled ever closer to a conflict with our Muslim brothers. The War On Terror is a war on Islam. If you have no quarrel with Muslims and in Ireland we don't you are accused of weakness.

Racist elements in the Irish media sought to exploit cultural differences that are entirely manageable in a tolerant society. Which is what we are fortunate enough to have, something to cherish and guard.

This week's welcome vote in the United States will not erase the shame of Bush's Middle East adventure.

Too many have died, been tortured or otherwise abused. On the day that Rumsfeld fled from office, the Israelis slaughtered 18 Palestinians from a single family in Gaza, 14 of the victims women and children.

The brutal oppression in the Middle East will continue by other means.

There is nothing we in Ireland can do, except stand idly by.

A bloody nose for Bush but his brutality goes on

Graphic

BLOODTHIRSTY: BUSH ON A CARRIER WHEN HE APPEARED WITH A 'MISSION ACCOMPLISHED' BANNER

Load-Date: November 12, 2006

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If this ISWorld War 3, whose side are we on?

Daily Mail (London)

August 5, 2006 Saturday

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Section: ED IRE; Pg. 15

Length: 1277 words

Byline: EAMON DUNPHY

Body

A SUMMER day in Ireland.

The sun shines (occasionally). Our people enjoy unprecedented prosperity.

The beautiful escapism of the Galway Races, the hurling, football, horse racing and the World Cup.

The young worry about house prices, urban dwellers fret about the traffic and bitch about a government that has been in office long enough to be offensively arrogant.

Our troubles as a nation are few. It is not impossible to conceive of a future generation looking back to 2006 with fondness, claiming that this was a good time to be alive. In this country, at least.

However, unless you are brain dead, a not unknown condition among the Irish nouveau riche, it is impossible to ignore the suffering of millions in the Middle East, the victims of American foreign policy.

The murder of innocent people, many of them children, by the U.S. armed Israeli army is an unmitigated evil.

According to one of the Republican Party's most influential politicians, Newt Gingrich, the Third World War has already begun. During the Clinton presidency, the Republicans gained control of both houses of Congress. The Christian Right formed the base for this success.

Those God-fearing folk hold the key to electoral success in the United States.

They are against abortion and sexual promiscuity. They are for Israel. An estimated 80 million of those fundamentalists believe in The Rapture, a concept you may know little about. At the moment.

With The Rapture will come the end of life as we know it. Some terrible event for example, a mutually destructive nuclear conflict between America and Israel's enemy, Iran will consume the world.

Only those who have been 'saved' by Born Again Christianity will ascend to heaven to find everlasting peace.

NO NEED, therefore, to worry about house prices, traffic on the M50 or the destiny of the next World Cup.

Of rather more concern is the probability that Rapture Man and Woman will determine who governs the United States for the foreseeable future.

If this ISWorld War 3, whose side are we on?

The existence of this Christian Coalition is the reason why no ambitious American politician dissented when Iraq was invaded.

Hillary Clinton approved of Iraq.

She refuses to condemn the evil we are witnessing in the Lebanon.

Mrs Clinton is, for now, the most powerful Democrat in America.

She is unlikely to reach the White House, but she knows that whatever slender hope there is depends on Middle America's Enraptured Believers. The same applies to all Democrats and Republicans. Newt Gingrich fell from grace several years ago, infidelity his crime. But he is back, rehabilitated, a possible runner for the Republicans in the 2008 Presidential election.

So we must consider seriously the Third World War as he defines it.

Who will fight who, and for what?

In Newt's view, the war will be against terror. On BBC's Newsnight last week, he identified the enemy as those who don't share his values. Or Israel's. Or, indeed, the values of America's most powerful electoral constituency, the Christian Coalition.

Every warmonger needs an enemy.

In Newt's case, there are some obvious candidates, the Iranian theocracy being the most visible.

Hezbollah, a relatively small Islamist militia which currently threatens Israel, is also on the list.

Hamas, the Palestinian equivalent of the IRA, is another foe.

Osama Bin Laden and other disparate elements of Al Qaeda are, for obvious reasons, high on Newt's list.

More significant than those on the Gingrich list are those who are not. The totalitarian kleptocracy of China poses no threat to U.S. interests, at the moment.

Maybe the Chinese will fight the coming war on Newt's side.

Russia, where democracy diminishes by the day, is now a U.S. ally and a supplier of energy. So we can safely count Russia out.

Nominally, North Korea is on Newt's hit list, but with a mad leader, nuclear weapons and a famished population, we can assume that no U.S.-led invasion of Korea is imminent.

For Europeans, a serious question arises: whose side will we take in Newt's Third World War?

If the question is serious, the answer is obvious. We have no choice: Newt will have to be our man.

At the core of European despair as we witness the murderous destruction of Lebanon lies the certainty that we can do nothing to influence events.

Like the Pope, who last Sunday pleaded for mercy for those innocent yet dying, we have no battalions. America regards us with contempt.

And without America and the cheap energy that derives from its conquest of the Middle East, the prosperity in which we presently wallow would disappear.

To be fair to the Government and the Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee, the disgust of Irish people has been expressed.

If this ISWorld War 3, whose side are we on?

But expressions of concern provide little comfort for the Lebanese as they watch their country being destroyed - or for the Palestinians caged in Gaza like animals by America's ally, Israel.

Our prison is more comfortable.

Marred only by whatever guilt we feel at our dependence on the country Newt may one day lead.

When Newt or someone of his ilk assumes the leadership of the so-called free world, there will be very little cause for rapture. The War on Terror will continue.

And surely after Iraq and the obscenities of the past three weeks, there will be many more Islamic terrorists to fight.

Tragically, we may well be witnessing the catalyst for a Third World War.

Without a just settlement of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, a prospect now almost inconceivable-Islamic terrorism will grow exponentially.

In this country, we know something about terrorism and the oppression that causes it.

Over the past decade, compromise has led to peace. A peace that is imperfect, but infinitely preferable to the wanton slaughter we knew before.

Intriguingly, the minority in this country who support Israel/ America's brutal oppression of the Palestinian people also deride the historic achievement of all who contributed to Irish peace.

Most disgracefully slandered are the Sinn Féin leaders, who possessed the courage, wisdom and guile to call off their war.

For now, the Middle East, bereft of such leadership, must endure never-ending pain.

A final reflection on Israel and its origins perhaps explains that country's iron fist approach to the present conflict.

Terrorism was introduced to Palestine by Jewish terrorists.

Through the Thirties and Forties, the Irgun terrorists committed the most heinous atrocities in pursuit of a Jewish state.

JUST three weeks ago, as Israel prepared to destroy Lebanon or 'set the clock back 20 years' in the words of an Israeli cabinet minister a small group of surviving Irgun members met to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their decision to blow up Jerusalem's King David Hotel.

This was a defining moment in Irgun's quest for a Jewish home.

Ninety-one people were slaughtered, 28 of them British.

Irgun did not favour suicide bombing. However, the carnage was just as bloody and random.

Buses, marketplaces and cafes were targeted.

In one terrible incident, the Irgun 'freedom fighters' murdered the entire population of a village 251 men, women and children were shot.

Less virile than Newt, the Brits then launched no War on Terror.

Irgun achieved its goal and one of its bravest sons, Menachem Begin, went on to become prime minister.

Two members of the present Israeli cabinet will be familiar with Irgun and its heroic terrorist deeds.

If this ISWorld War 3, whose side are we on?

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert spent the first three years of his life in a terrorist training camp while his parents worked as gunrunners.

Tzipi Livni, Israel's Foreign Minister who greeted Condi Rice last week, is also, as it were, connected.

She is the daughter of Irgun's Director of Military Operations, effectively the brain behind so much civilian killing.

Anyone for World War Three?

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

End of Document

Prelude to a genocide: Iranian leaders should be brought to justice by the international community for inciting the mass slaughter of Jews and the destruction of Israel

Ottawa Citizen

December 27, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A19; Irwin Cotler

Length: 1454 words

Byline: Irwin Cotler, Citizen Special

Body

The outrage over Iran's hosting of a Holocaust denial conference has tended to overshadow what should be a greater outrage -- Iran's state-sanctioned incitement to commit genocide.

Simply put, the denial of genocide became a media event, but incitement to genocide -- in violation of the prohibition against the "direct and public incitement to commit genocide" in the Genocide Convention (the "Never Again" Convention) -- is greeted with a yawn.

In a similar vein, the international community celebrated the adoption by the United Nations of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine so as to authorize intervention to protect populations from genocidal acts, but it ignores the Responsibility to Prevent obligation mandated by the Genocide Convention. Yet this is regarded as *jus cogens*, a peremptory norm of international law -- binding on us all.

This juridical anomaly is not only of academic interest, for we are witnessing -- and have been witnessing for some time -- the emergence of state-sanctioned incitement to genocide, whose epicentre is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Iran. Here, you have the toxic convergence of the advocacy of the most horrific of crimes -- genocide -- embedded in the most virulent of hatreds -- anti-Semitism -- and underpinned by a publicly avowed intent to acquire nuclear weapons for that purpose, as former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani put it.

Nor should the words of Mr. Rafsanjani -- characterized as the "moderate" victor in the recent Iranian elections -- be dismissed as overheated rhetoric only. For the Argentinian judiciary recently determined that it was this same Mr. Rafsanjani who planned, organized and ordered the mass terrorist bombing of the Argentinian Jewish community centre in 1994, resulting in the deaths of 85 people and 300 wounded.

In a fortuitous, yet chilling reminder, the Argentinian prosecutors' decision calling for arrest warrants to be issued against the Iranian leadership was released on the same day that President Ahmadinejad called yet again for the disappearance of Israel; and on the anniversary of Mr. Ahmadinejad's first public and direct call for the destruction of Israel -- on Oct. 25, 2005 -- when, as he put it, "Israel must be wiped off the map, as the imam says."

The imam in this instance is former ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, who had previously declared that "there is only one solution to the Middle East problem, namely the annihilation and destruction of the

Prelude to a genocide: Iranian leaders should be brought to justice by the international community for inciting the mass slaughter of Jews and the destruction o....

Jewish state," while otherwise using epidemiological metaphors in calling for Israel "the cancerous tumour of a state" to be "removed from the region."

Indeed, the Iranian leadership's denial of the Nazi genocide against the Jews of Europe -- together with the demonization of the Jews as "evil incarnate" and the delegitimization of Israel as the defiler of Islam -- appear to be prologue to and justification for a new genocide, indeed, the constituent elements of a genocidal program.

Lest there be any doubt about this, Mr. Ahmadinejad has presided over the parading of a Shahab-3 missile draped in the emblem that Israel be "wiped off the map" while exhorting the assembled thousands in their chants declaring "Death to Israel," as in the Tehran conference on a "World without Israel."

Moreover, calls for the destruction of Israel by the most senior figures in the Iranian leadership are frighteningly reminiscent of calls for the Rwandan extermination of Tutsis by the Hutu leadership. The crucial difference -- and which makes the Iranian genocidal threat even more dangerous -- is that the Hutus were equipped with the simplest of weapons -- such as machetes -- while Iran, in defiance of the world community, continues its pursuit of the most destructive of weaponry, nuclear weapons, while having already succeeded in developing a long-range-missile delivery system for that purpose.

The failure to stop past genocides, as in the unspeakable, preventable genocide of Rwanda, caused United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to lament as follows on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide in 2004: "We must never forget our collective failure to protect at least 800,000 defenceless men, women and children who perished in Rwanda 10 years ago. Such crimes cannot be reversed. Such failures cannot be repaired. The dead cannot be brought back to life. So, what can we do?"

The answer is for the international community to pay heed to the not-so-distant early warnings of genocide -- and incitement has been demonstrated to be a predictor of the genocide to come -- and to act now, as mandated under the Genocide Convention, to prevent this threat not only to Israel and the Jewish people, but to the Middle East, and to international peace and security.

Indeed, what is often ignored in Mr. Ahmadinejad's incitement to genocide are his warnings to any Muslim who supports Israel that they will burn in the Umma of Islam, that the West should beware of propping up this disappearing state, while invoking the eschatological character of this genocidal incitement that emerges as an apocalyptic precursor to the elimination of Israel and the Messianic coming of the 12th Imam Mahdi.

The Responsibility to Prevent obligation in international law requires that the following actions be undertaken with all deliberate speed:

- We should support the execution of arrest warrants issued by the Argentinean judiciary for the named Iranian authorities -- including former Iranian president Rafsanjani -- and Hezbollah operatives.
- State parties to the Genocide Convention, such as the United States or Canada, have not only a right, but a responsibility, to enforce the convention, particularly as regards the prevention of genocide. Accordingly, pursuant to the Genocide Convention, state parties should refer the horrific criminal incitement to genocide by President Ahmadinejad and other Iranian leaders to the appropriate UN agencies for account. It is astonishing that this genocidal incitement has yet to be addressed by the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, or any other body or agency of the United Nations.
- State parties should initiate in the International Court of Justice an inter-state complaint against Iran, also a state party to the Genocide Convention, for its "direct and public incitement to genocide" in violation of the Genocide Treaty.
- The situation of the international criminality of President Ahmadinejad, and other Iranian leaders, should be referred by the UN Security Council to the special prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for investigation and prosecution.

Prelude to a genocide: Iranian leaders should be brought to justice by the international community for inciting the mass slaughter of Jews and the destruction o....

- State parties to the Genocide Convention, which have enabling domestic legislation, should prepare criminal indictments for President Ahmadinejad, former president Rafsanjani, and other Iranian leaders on the basis of the "universal jurisdiction" principle embodied in the Genocide Convention.
- Pursuant to the Statute for an International Criminal Court, a group of international lawyers are preparing an indictment of President Ahmadinejad and other Iranian leaders for the violation of the prohibition in both the Genocide Convention and the International Criminal Court Treaty against the "public and direct incitement to genocide."
- The UN secretary general should refer the genocidal incitement of President Ahmadinejad and other Iranian leaders to the UN Security Council, as a matter threatening international peace and security, pursuant to Article 99 of the UN Charter.
- President Ahmadinejad and other designated Iranian leaders should be placed on a "watch list" by concerned countries preventing their entrance as "inadmissible persons."

There has been a good deal of discussion about holding Iran accountable for its international criminal conduct, particularly its defiance of UN Security Council resolutions calling for the suspension of its uranium enrichment process as a prelude to acquiring nuclear weapons. The recommended options have included everything from UN sanctions to military strikes.

It is time that these juridical options be initiated, which might also embolden progressive forces within Iran while holding the responsible individuals accountable. Indeed, recent history has taught us that sustained international juridical remedies can bring about the indictment of seemingly immune dictators, such as Slobodan Milosevic and Augusto Pinochet.

This is an opportunity for countries such as the United States and Canada to exercise leadership in regard to one of the most important threats confronting the international community.

Irwin Cotler is member of Parliament for Mount Royal, and former minister of justice and attorney general of Canada. He is professor of law (on leave) at McGill University.

Graphic

Photo: Jeff Zelevansky, Reuters; The international community must enforce the Genocide Convention by calling to account Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and other Iranian leaders before the United Nations and other world bodies.

Load-Date: December 27, 2006

Arab heroes of the holocaust

The Gazette (Montreal)

October 14, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. B5

Length: 1241 words

Byline: ROBERT SATLOFF, Washington Post

Body

Virtually alone among peoples of the world, Arabs appear to have won a free pass when it comes to denying or minimizing the Holocaust. Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah has declared to his supporters that "Jews invented the legend of the Holocaust." Syrian President Bashar al-Assad recently told an interviewer he doesn't have "any clue how (Jews) were killed or how many were killed." And Hamas's official website labels the Nazi effort to exterminate Jews "an alleged and invented story with no basis."

Such Arab viewpoints are not exceptional. A Holocaust research institution recently reported Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia all promote Holocaust denial and protect Holocaust deniers. The records of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum show only one Arab leader at or near the highest level of government - a young prince from a Persian Gulf state - has ever made an official visit to the museum in its 13-year history. Not a single official textbook or educational program on the Holocaust exists in an Arab country. In Arab media, literature and popular culture, Holocaust denial is pervasive and legitimized.

Yet when Arab leaders and their people deny the Holocaust, they deny their own history as well - the lost history of the Holocaust in Arab lands. It took me four years of research - scouring dozens of archives and conducting scores of interviews in 11 countries - to unearth this history, one that reveals complicity and indifference on the part of some Arabs during the Holocaust, but also heroism on the part of others who took great risks to save Jewish lives.

Neither Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to Holocaust victims, nor any other Holocaust memorial has ever recognized an Arab rescuer. It is time for that to change. It is also time for Arabs to recall and embrace these episodes in their history. That might not change the minds of the most radical Arab leaders or populations, but for some it could make the Holocaust a source of pride, worthy of remembrance - rather than avoidance or denial.

The Holocaust was an Arab story, too. From the beginning of the Second World War, Nazi plans to persecute and eventually exterminate Jews extended throughout the area that Germany and its allies hoped to conquer. That included a great Arab expanse, from Casablanca to Tripoli and on to Cairo, home to more than half a million Jews.

Though Germany and its allies controlled this region only briefly, they made substantial headway toward their goal. From June 1940 to May 1943, the Nazis, their Vichy French collaborators and their Italian fascist allies applied in Arab lands many of the precursors to the Final Solution. These included not only laws depriving Jews of property, education, livelihood, residence and free movement, but also torture, slave labour, deportation and execution.

Arab heroes of the holocaust

There were no death camps, but many thousands of Jews were consigned to more than 100 brutal labour camps, many solely for Jews. Recall Major Strasser's warning to Ilsa, the wife of the Czech underground leader, in the 1942 film *Casablanca*: "It is possible the French authorities will find a reason to put him in the concentration camp here." Indeed, the Arab lands of Algeria and Morocco were the site of the first concentration camps liberated by Allied troops.

About one per cent of Jews in North Africa (4,000 to 5,000) perished under Axis control in Arab lands, compared with more than half of European Jews. These Jews were lucky to be on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, where the fighting ended relatively early and where boats - not just cattle cars - would have been needed to take them to the ovens in Europe. But if U.S. and British troops had not pushed Axis forces from the African continent by May 1943, the Jews of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and perhaps even Egypt and Palestine almost certainly would have met the same fate as those in Europe.

The Arabs in these lands were not too different from Europeans: With war raging around them, most stood by and did nothing; many participated fully and willingly in the persecution of Jews; and a brave few even helped save Jews.

Arab collaborators were everywhere. These included Arab officials conniving against Jews at royal courts, Arab overseers of Jewish work gangs, sadistic Arab guards at Jewish labour camps and Arab interpreters who went house to house with SS officers pointing out where Jews lived. Without the help of local Arabs, the persecution of Jews would have been virtually impossible.

Were Arabs, then under the domination of European colonialists, merely following orders? An interviewer once posed that question to Harry Alexander, a Jew from Leipzig, Germany, who survived a notoriously harsh French labour camp at Djelfa, in the Algerian desert. "No, no, no!" he exploded in reply. "Nobody told them to beat us all the time. Nobody told them to chain us together. Nobody told them to tie us naked to a post and beat us and to hang us by our arms and hose us down, to bury us in the sand so our heads should look up and bash our brains in and urinate on our heads. ... No, they took this into their own hands and they enjoyed what they did."

But not all Arabs joined with the European-spawned campaign against the Jews. The few who risked their lives to save Jews provide inspiration beyond their numbers.

Arabs welcomed Jews into their homes, guarded Jews' valuables so Germans could not confiscate them, shared with Jews their meager rations and warned Jewish leaders of coming SS raids. The sultan of Morocco and the bey of Tunis provided moral support and, at times, practical help to Jewish subjects.

In Vichy-controlled Algiers, mosque preachers gave Friday sermons forbidding believers from serving as conservators of confiscated Jewish property. In the words of Yaacov Zrivy, from a small town near Sfax, Tunisia, "The Arabs watched over the Jews."

I found remarkable stories of rescue, too. In the rolling hills west of Tunis, 60 Jewish internees escaped from an Axis labour camp and banged on the farm door of a man named Si Ali Sakkat, who courageously hid them until liberation by the Allies. In the Tunisian coastal town of Mahdia, a dashing local notable named Khaled Abdelwahhab scooped up several families in the middle of the night and whisked them to his countryside estate to protect one of the women from the predations of a German officer bent on rape.

And there is strong evidence that the most influential Arab in Europe - Si Kaddour Benghabrit, the rector of the Great Mosque of Paris - saved as many as 100 Jews by having the mosque's administrative personnel give them certificates of Muslim identity, with which they could evade arrest and deportation. These men, and others, were true heroes.

According to the Quoran: "Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world." This passage echoes the Talmud's injunction, "If you save one life, it is as if you have saved the world."

Arab heroes of the holocaust

Arabs need to hear these stories - both of heroes and of villains. They especially need to hear them from their own teachers, preachers and leaders. If they do, they might respond as did that one Arab prince who visited the Holocaust museum. "What we saw today," he commented after his tour, "must help us change evil into good and hate into love and war into peace."

Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, is author of *Among the Righteous: Lost Stories from the Holocaust's Long Reach into Arab Lands*.

Graphic

Photo: GIL COHEN MAGEN, REUTERS; An Israeli couple hugs during a visit to the Holocaust Memorial of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The U.S. Holocaust Museum records show only one senior Arab leader has ever made an official visit.

Load-Date: October 14, 2006

End of Document

Isn't retaliation justified?

UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is Lancashire

August 31, 2006 Thursday

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Section: LETTERS

Length: 107 words

Byline: Telegraph letters

Dateline: Lancashire Evening Telegraph

Body

A LETTER in the LT (July 27) said: "Israel didn't start this conflict.

Hezbollah and Hamas did by capturing Israeli soldiers."

Israel has been capturing hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians over the last few years, including many *women* and children, and keeping them in prison without trial.

So surely if your letter writer can justify Israel bombing Lebanon and Gaza in response to three of their nationals being kidnapped, you can't argue against the other side doing the same when hundreds of civilians are captured.

Or is an Arab civilian's life worth a lot less than an Israeli soldier's?

ERSKINE MORRIS, Pleckgate Road, Blackburn.

Load-Date: August 31, 2006

Ex-minister's conviction may lead to cabinet change

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A6

Length: 101 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Body

Former Justice Minister Haim Ramon was convicted yesterday of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier -- a case that rivetted the country's attention and added a layer of scandal to Israel's beleaguered leadership.

The verdict was expected to clear the way for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to launch a major cabinet shakeup.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 18-year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer. Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

Isn't retaliation justified?

UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is Lancashire

August 5, 2006 Saturday

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Dateline: Lancashire Evening Telegraph

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ERSKINE MORRIS, Pleckgate Road, Blackburn.

Load-Date: August 5, 2006

2006: The year in review: Murder of officer, downturn of casino and auto industries among top news stories

Windsor Star (Ontario)

January 3, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 2686 words

Byline: Windsor Star

Body

Jan. 1 - Windsor police arrest a man in connection with the stabbing death of Tomislav Cepo, 40, who was found dead in his Drouillard Road apartment building on New Year's Eve. Charged is Anjalo Malin Abeywickrema, 47.

Jan. 2 - Live racing at Windsor Raceway is sidelined while the Ontario Harness Horse Association investigates the legality of an agreement raceway officials signed with another organization purporting to represent horsepeople.

Jan. 11 - Veteran Cab drivers walk off the job after a raucous meeting where their union leadership urged immediate strike action.

Jan. 13 - Windsor police arrest a man in connection with the beating death of a disabled senior, Colin Johnson, 67, who died Jan. 9 as a result of his injuries.

Jan. 22 - Conservative Leader Stephen Harper begins the last day of the federal election campaign with an early-morning rally at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Windsor. Harper would go on to become prime minister, ending 13 years of Liberal rule.

Jan. 30 - About 200 striking Veteran Cab drivers pack city council chambers demanding an opportunity to speak but are denied. Following an outburst, they were escorted from the chambers by police.

Feb. 13 - Windsor Spitfires owner Steve Riolo holds a news conference announcing the sale of the club to former NHLers Bob Boughner and Warren Rychel and financial adviser Peter Dobrich.

Feb. 14 - Nine Windsor residents and a Leamington man are among 17 people arrested for their alleged part in a ring that charged illegal aliens thousands of dollars to be smuggled across the border in trucks, autos, boats and rail cars.

Feb. 23 - The family of murdered Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital nurse Lori Dupont retains lawyer Greg Monforton to launch a lawsuit against the hospital.

Feb. 23 - CAW Local 195 president Mike Renaud is among five people arrested when the seven-week Veteran Cab strike erupts into violence during a rally by non-striking cabbies at the union's hall.

2006: The year in review: Murder of officer, downturn of casino and auto industries among top news stories

Feb. 23 - Teaching assistant Nancy Quick, 40, is run down by a stolen minivan outside her Emeryville school. She would die days later in a Detroit hospital and police treat her death as a homicide. It remains unsolved.

Feb. 28 - Meghan Agosta of Ruthven arrives at Windsor Airport after winning the gold medal with the women's hockey team at the Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy.

March 7 - Three brothers originally from LaSalle are missing and feared kidnapped in Venezuela. John Bryan Faddoul, 17, Kevin Faddoul, 13, and 12-year-old Jason Faddoul are abducted along with their driver on their way to school and would later be found murdered.

March 12 - A Roseville, Mich., woman wins big at Casino Windsor, taking away C\$2,423,487 from a progressive slot machine that is part of Megabucks, a provincewide accumulated jackpot.

March 16 - Unsanitary conditions at the Windsor Jail are cited in a reduced sentence for a "common petty criminal" on two counts each of theft and unauthorized use of a credit card. Three days' credit is given for each day spent in the jail, where complaints of soiled mattresses and backed up toilets are common.

March 17 - Point Pelee loses its tip after a storm stirs up large waves on Lake Erie.

March 26 - A group of parishioners at Riverside Presbyterian Church stage a sit-in at the church to protest its impending closure.

March 30 - A 95-year-old woman is left tied up and helpless for six hours after falling prey to a home invader in Windsor's west end.

March 30 - Two Windsor men are identified as being wanted by the FBI in connection with an alleged smuggling operation that helped fund Hezbollah, a Lebanese terrorist organization.

April 1 - Leamington District Memorial Hospital narrowly averts a weekend shutdown of its emergency room when a doctor agrees to work extra hours at the last minute.

April 4 - Police officers armed with metal detectors are posted at the entrance of the Ontario Court of justice after security concerns caused by a man who slashed his wrists in court earlier prompted a walkout by court staff.

April 7 - MoneySense magazine names Leamington as the country's best place to live among 108 cities and towns across Canada.

April 11 - A report by the Transportation Safety Board on the 2004 plane crash that killed 10 people off Pelee Island finds the pilot of the plane was tired and the craft was overloaded and coated with ice.

April 12 - Leamington native and former Detroit Red Wing Darren McCarty files for bankruptcy, owing US\$6.2 million to banks, credit card companies and casinos.

April 17 - Mourners in Chatham say goodbye to biker gang leader and native son John Muscedere, one of the eight men found dead in a farmer's field in Shedden the previous week.

April 20 - Travel from the United States to Canada sinks to a record low as U.S. companies with a history of running tours to Windsor remove it from their itinerary.

April 20 - Casino Windsor's director of surveillance is arrested and charged by the OPP with fraud and accepting a \$100,000 bribe in connection with the awarding of a digital surveillance system contract at the casino.

April 26 - A Windsor man is presumed drowned in the Detroit River after his canoe capsizes near LaSalle. He told rescuers to save his friend first and return for him but slipped below the water.

April 29 - The Catholic diocese announces it is closing or restructuring 21 churches in Windsor and Essex to combat the cost of failing buildings, declining numbers of parishioners and a dwindling pool of priests.

2006: The year in review: Murder of officer, downturn of casino and auto industries among top news stories

May 5 - Windsor police Const. John Atkinson, 37, is gunned down while breaking up a suspected drug deal outside a convenience store five blocks from his home. He is the first Windsor police officer to be killed on the job in the department's 120-year history.

May 17 - A Harrow man, Larry Strangway, 41, is gunned down in his home. Essex police call in detectives from the OPP to assist in the investigation. No charges have been laid in his death.

May 22 - Canadian customs inspectors walk off the job, causing traffic backups at the Ambassador Bridge and the Windsor-Detroit tunnel, after receiving a bulletin that an armed and dangerous traveller was expected to cross into Canada.

May 21 - Christine Caron, 44, is struck by a car and killed while walking home from her birthday celebration. The driver flees but is later identified and charged.

May 23 - Windsor-St. Clair MPP Dwight Duncan is bumped from his post as finance minister back to energy minister after former finance minister Greg Sorbara is cleared of wrongdoing in a business fraud investigation.

May 25 - Windsor is listed among the top cities in Canada to visit in a survey conducted by the American Bus Association. The city ties for third with Montreal and Winnipeg behind Niagara Falls and Toronto.

May 31 - Smokers in bars and restaurants throughout Windsor and Essex County take one last puff before a provincewide smoking ban goes into effect.

June 1 - A Lakeshore man, Okey Fabian Eze, 29, is arrested by the OPP in connection with a multimillion-dollar vehicle smuggling ring that ferried stolen luxury SUVs from Canada to Africa.

June 3 - A group of senior women trying to raise money for Willistead Manor by selling egg salad sandwiches at Art in the Park are visited by inspectors with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, who intentionally spoil their egg salad by pouring bleach on it. The inspectors questioned the safety of the salad because it was prepared at the ladies' homes.

June 9 - Former Liberal cabinet minister and Canadian ambassador to the United Nations Allan Rock announces at the annual Negev Dinner that he plans to move to Windsor to resume his law career.

June 14 - St. Clair College will get the keys to the Cleary International Centre and about \$3 million in cash from the City of Windsor in a multimillion-dollar deal that will create a college campus downtown.

June 20 - The province's Special Investigations Unit announces that Windsor police officers used reasonable force during the April arrest of Brian Dukic, 42, who later died. The officers will not be charged.

June 25 - Hundreds of Hells Angels from across Canada wrap up a gathering at their Howard Avenue clubhouse in Amherstburg that marked the fifth anniversary of several chapters in Ontario.

June 26 - Ontario health minister George Smitherman announces that Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital will receive a stand-alone angioplasty unit, eliminating the need for hundreds of patients to travel to Detroit, London and Toronto for treatment.

June 26 - A jury finds Windsor optometrist Jack Klundert not guilty of tax evasion even though he refused to pay nearly \$350,000 in taxes over five years.

June 28 - On the night of the fireworks on the Detroit River, a Windsor woman allegedly stabs her two-year-old son to death, walks along Huron Church Road while carrying his body, and then stabs a Windsor police officer attempting to arrest her.

July 5 - The Brentwood Recovery Home is forced to slash its treatment programs for alcoholics and drug addicts in half after funding problems come to a head.

2006: The year in review: Murder of officer, downturn of casino and auto industries among top news stories

July 9 - Windsor's Italian community take to Erie Street in droves to celebrate Italy's victory over France in the World Cup. The Azzurri won 2-1 on penalty kicks.

July 12 - The killer of a nine-year-old boy, Brandon Burchill, pleads guilty to a lesser charge of second-degree murder in connection with the 2005 asphyxiation death. Burchill's family is outraged at the plea agreement.

July 13 - An early morning drive to work turns tragic when a Leamington man, John Dyck, 42, and his 14-year-old son Abram die in a collision with a cement truck on County Road 34.

July 16 - A 31-year-old Windsor man is charged with second-degree murder after an altercation with another man, Daniel Rauth, 50, during a Molly Hatchet concert at Bluesfest. Rauth is rushed to hospital where he later dies.

July 19 - Casino Windsor announces more than 300 layoffs, citing a declining exchange rate, border issues, gas prices and the provincewide smoking ban as blows to its revenue and attendance.

July 19 - A Detroit man, Steven Williams Jr., is convicted of assault with intent to commit great bodily harm and possessing a firearm in the commission of a felony in connection with the January shooting of a Windsor man, Salvagio Vonatti, outside a Detroit gay bar.

July 23 - Several Windsor residents of Lebanese origin begin arriving back home after being evacuated from war-torn Lebanon by the Canadian government.

July 24 - Damage is estimated in the millions of dollars after a fire at a Lakeshore plastics plant, Quality Models Ltd. Nearby residents are advised to remain indoors because of fears over air quality.

July 26 - A Canadian Forces soldier and former Windsor resident, Maj. Paeta Derek Hess-von Krudener, is killed by Israeli rocket fire at a United Nations observation post in Lebanon.

Aug. 1 - An Amherstburg plastics recycling company with a history of fires, Enviro-Tech Plastics Ltd., is hit by another blaze, forcing residents living near the warehouse to evacuate and sending up a plume of smoke that could be seen more than 50 kilometres away.

Aug. 2 - CBC Bingo Limited, the operator of six of the city's seven bingo parlours, is placed in receivership, the result of a significant decline in American bingo players because of the provincial smoking ban, border hassles, the rising Canadian dollar and high gas prices.

Aug. 15 - Windsor native Ashley Coulter, 23, is voted off Canadian Idol but vows she won't return to her day job as a grocery store cashier.

Aug. 18 - The Canadian Food Inspection Agency issues a health hazard advisory for the Windsor area as a result of tampered cans of baby formula found in local stores in recent days. The packages all have slits cut in the sides and the formula removed to be replaced with what appears to be laundry detergent.

Aug. 18 - In an unprecedented move, the London diocese of the Roman Catholic church announces it will consider asking the Vatican to defrock all eight of its convicted pedophile priests.

Aug. 22 - The city announces that its share of profits from the Windsor-Detroit tunnel, once considered a cash cow, will be slashed in half from \$6 million to \$3 million because of declining revenue from decreased American travel.

Aug. 25 - Local Ford workers are jolted with the news that there will be far more severe layoffs locally, with 518 production workers to be laid off by mid-October.

Aug. 25 - Embattled Belle River physician Dr. Charles Nicholas Rathe, with a history of drug abuse and who was found guilty of professional misconduct -- for swearing at, pushing and emotionally abusing some of his patients -- is fined \$5,000 and will have his registration suspended for up to six months by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons.

2006: The year in review: Murder of officer, downturn of casino and auto industries among top news stories

Aug. 27 - Troy Hutchinson, a 28-year-old restaurant cook, is fatally shot in the stomach in an east-end neighbourhood. Three people are later charged with his murder.

Sept. 7 - Windsor police announce they have used DNA evidence to solve the 1985 murder of Judy Sawchuk. Gerald Dennis Hillman, 24, who died of a drug overdose 19 months after the murder, had confessed to someone else about the killing.

Sept. 20 - A Windsor man, Karim Hassan Nasser, 36, pleads guilty in a Detroit federal court to his role in a global smuggling ring that funnelled money to the militant Lebanese group Hezbollah.

Sept. 29 - Windsor is dealt a blow when the owners of Windsor Raceway and their partners in the Ice Track project unveil a \$55-million deal with the Town of Tecumseh.

Oct. 1 - Kendall Hebert, a 17-year-old drag racer from Tecumseh, is killed instantly when her rocket-propelled car goes out of control and slams into a concrete wall at 500 km/h at Toronto Motorsport Park near Cayuga.

Oct. 6 - Cheers and sobs erupt in a Chatham court when officers handcuff retired priest Charles Sylvestre and take him away, after a judge sentenced him to three years in prison for decades of sexual abuse against 47 young girls.

Oct. 13 - Windsor reaches a final settlement with the former MFP and recoups a final

\$6 million, closing the books on one of the municipality's most shameful chapters.

Oct. 18 - A Windsor boy, Max Musyj, 6, becomes a good luck charm for Detroit Tigers pitcher Kenny Rogers during the World Series. Musyj, who sits by the bullpen holding a "Kenny Rogers is my Hero" sign, is handed the last warm-up ball by the pitcher at each home playoff game he pitches.

Oct. 30 - The provincial government announces 303 new long-term care beds for Windsor and Essex County, a measure that is hoped to reduce wait times in local emergency rooms.

Nov. 2 - Sutherland Global Services, a high-tech business service company operating in seven countries with 12,500 employees worldwide, announces plans to locate in Windsor, providing about 1,000 jobs.

Nov. 13 - Municipal elections see Mayor Eddie Francis easily re-elected and three new faces on Windsor city council. Veteran David Cassivi loses out in Ward 4. New mayors are elected in Tecumseh, Lakeshore and LaSalle.

Nov. 20 - A Lakeshore autoparts plant, Johnson Controls, that was slated to close in May will remain open, thanks to an agreement between two companies and the union.

Nov. 22 - Champion disabled swimmer Danielle Campo breaks down in tears as she tells a disciplinary hearing in Toronto that a former Tecumseh teacher called her "gimpy" in front of her classmates.

Nov. 28 - Windsor is one of the worst cities for flushing raw sewage into the Great Lakes behind Cleveland and Detroit, a report by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund reveals.

Dec. 5 - Spurred by a tripling of gun incidents and a proliferation of drugs and gangs, Windsor police say they will spend almost

\$2 million to hire 14 extra officers, buy more than a dozen new vehicles and purchase high-tech equipment to quickly retrieve electronic evidence.

Dec. 15 - The Ontario Court of Appeal overturns a decision awarding more than \$340,000 in 2005 to a Windsor man who saw a dead fly in a bottle of water delivered to his home.

Dec. 20 - The London diocese admits it had police evidence that Rev. Charles Sylvestre was sexually abusing little girls since at least 1962. -- compiled by Chris Thompson/Star Staff Reporter

2006: The year in review: Murder of officer, downturn of casino and auto industries among top news stories

Graphic

Colour Photo: Rob Gurdebeke, Star photo; HOMECOMING: Olympic hockey player Meghan Agosta, of Ruthven, is welcomed home by her parents Charlynn and Nino in February. Agosta and the Canadian women's team won gold at the Turin Olympics.;

Colour Photo: Jason Kryk, Star photo; BUTT OUT: A pedestrian walks past a pile of ashtrays with a self-explanatory sign in front of Koko Pellies bar in downtown Windsor. A provincewide smoking ban which came into effect in June was later called a factor in Casino Windsor layoffs. The casino also blamed the declining exchange rate, border issues and gas prices for a drop in attendance. ;

Colour Photo: Sharon Hill, Star photo; LABOUR DISPUTE: CAW Local 195 president Mike Renaud sits on the ground after he was arrested in February during a Veteran Cab strike confrontation.;

Colour Photo: Mike Hensen, London Free Press; PRISON TERM: Sex offender priest Charles Sylvestre, 84, carries a book to hide his face as he walks into court in Chatham on Oct. 6.

Load-Date: January 3, 2007

End of Document

Israel ends inquiry into Qana attack

The Gazette (Montreal)
August 3, 2006 Thursday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 126 words

Byline: AP

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The Israeli military's inquiry on the bombing of a building in the southern Lebanese village of Qana that killed 56 civilians admits a mistake but charges that Hezbollah guerrillas used civilians as shields for their rocket attacks, according to a statement today.

Israeli planes attacked an apartment house in Qana in the early hours of Sunday. The house collapsed, and rescue workers pulled the bodies of civilians, most of them women and children, out of the rubble. The attack drew widespread international condemnation.

In a statement summarizing the inquiry report, the Israeli military said Israel did not know there were civilians in the building. "Had the information indicated that civilians were present ... the attack would not have been carried out."

Load-Date: August 3, 2006

Change of heart or change of strategy?

Hindustan Times

August 21, 2006 Monday 4:17 PM EST

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Length: 2152 words

Byline: Report from the Asian News International brought to you by the Hindustan Times

Dateline: London

Body

London, Aug 21 -- Not for the first time in life I am attacked, accused and abused because of my political views.

Some of these people genuinely, though wrongly, think that I am at fault; and by criticising me they are doing a service to Pakistan and the Kashmiri struggle. Others are doing it because they are told to do it, and it brings them rewards. These people are manipulated to believe that opposition to a Pakistani government is a direct attack on integrity of the State, especially if it is coming from a Kashmiri.

They perhaps don't know that it was not people of East Pakistan who were at fault; it was wrong policies of the mafia which ruled Pakistan that pushed them against the wall. It was hiding of facts and 'criminal silence' of the majority that encouraged this mafia to continue with their policies, hence Pakistan lost East Pakistan.

This ruling mafia did not learn any lessons from the disaster of 1970/1. They have created similar conditions for Pakistan once again; and this time they have betrayed the Kashmiri struggle as well. If my Pakistani brothers want to sleep walk in to this disaster, or want to bury their heads in sand hoping that the danger will go away, then I cannot help this.

But I have a duty to perform. For my actions I am answerable to my people and my conscience, and not to these critics some of whom don't even know what they are criticising. No matter what is the strength of this opposition, as long as I know I am on the right path I will continue with my jihad to caution people of forthcoming dangers- this is a 'sunat' of our prophets. Before I write anything I have certain criteria in mind. For example:

What contribution is it going to make to the debate at hand;

How is it going to help the cause of Kashmiri peoples right of self determination?

Is it going to promote Kashmiri nationalism?

Is it going to promote tolerance and peace?

Is it going to oppose forces of extremism, hatred and violence?

Is it going to expose those hidden characters who have harmed our struggle and continue to do so?

Is it factually true?

Change of heart or change of strategy?

If my proposed article satisfies some of the above, then I go ahead with it and widely circulate it without any fear of reprisals, because I know I am doing a jihad. I am fighting those forces who want to hide truth, spread hatred and extremism, and who oppose unification and independence of Jammu and Kashmir.

Some of my critics have asked me why I don't write about seven hundred thousand Indian army which is stationed in Jammu and Kashmir; and which has killed more than hundred thousand Kashmiris and raped women etc. In their opinion this is due to my change of heart.

For their information I have criticised the role of Indian army and government many times, and at that time it was only few of us doing this jihad, as 'rewards' for doing this were not available. Now that ample rewards are available to highlight this and an army of professionals are busy doing it; and this matter is widely discussed, documented and observed by many human rights organisations, I wonder if there is any need for me to do it as well. And if I do, what new am I going to add to this information? Who doesn't know that more than half million Indian army is stationed there; and that there has been killings, rapes and destruction?

Some critics ask me to present a balanced view. I totally agree with this. A view has to be balanced otherwise it loses its credibility. In order to provide a balanced view I have to ask why that army is there. Was it there in this number before 1989/0 and was it killing Kashmiri people and raping women before 1989/0? Is only Indian army to be blamed for rapes and killings or there are non state actors-militants involved in this crime as well? What is going on there is it jihad or has it become a business?

There is ample evidence that some militants are also involved in killings and rapes; and different kinds of human rights abuse takes place on this side of LOC as well, but our Pakistani brothers and some Kashmiris don't want to listen to this, as this, in their opinion, will divert attention away from India. Is this good enough reason to ignore crimes committed by some militants who also defame holy name of jihad? This crime, in my opinion, should be widely highlighted that culprits could be punished; and that they do not deceive more innocent people.

No one can deny or justify human rights abuse on the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir or for that matter in any part of the world, but culprit in this case is not only men in uniform; some culprits are hiding under masks. I am not going to waste my time telling people what they already know; rather I will use my time and skills to expose those who hide their faces under those masks. And for this jihad if I am accused, attacked or abused by those who are agents of those forces who want to hide truth, and those who have created great problems for Pakistan in the past and are even now sowing seeds of communalism and hatred, I think it is price worth paying.

As for killing of Kashmiri people is concerned it is a big loss, and my heart goes to the families of the deceased, but we have to ask ourselves why did they lose their lives and who killed them? Are they all killed by the Indian army or there are other actors involved in this? We are educated people with God given gift of brain and ability to analyse things. Most of the killings occurred in cross firing because these 'mujahids' decided to attack army personnel in populated areas and return fire killed innocent people; or by bombs which normally go astray and land at bus stops or market places. Not to mention deaths caused by group fightings, ideological fightings and revenges.

At present Pakistan army is fighting Muslim militants in Waziristan and in Balochistan, and in this fight hundreds of Muslims have lost their lives including innocent women and children. Those who are killed are Muslims and those who kill them are also Muslims, and it is difficult to tell who shaheeds are in this deadly conflict. Without going in to rationale of this 'war', I just want to give one example. If some members of banned Balochistan Liberation Army opens fire at Pakistan army personnel in a main bazaar of Quetta, and Pakistan army returns this fire and in this cross firing innocent Pakistani Muslims lose their lives. Who should be blamed for this killing: Pakistan army or members of Balochistan Liberation Army?

I know many people won't like this, but facts are facts whether we like them or not; all armies are trained to kill. Pakistan army when ordered killed tens of thousands of innocent Pakistanis in East Pakistan; and they are doing the same thing again-killing their own Muslim brothers in Waziristan and Balochistan, because Pakistani rulers think these people are 'terrorists' and are anti state.

Change of heart or change of strategy?

No matter what we think, in view of Indian rulers those who are fighting their rule in Jammu and Kashmir are 'terrorists' and are anti state, hence they order their army to kill them. Why does this surprise us? If we throw stones at our enemy we will be foolish to expect bouquet of flower in return, especially when that enemy is stronger and cleverer than us.

I am for complete independence of Jammu and Kashmir from both India and Pakistan, and at one time supported militancy; but after some years realised that we Kashmiris were 'manipulated' and 'used'. Those who started this militancy their purpose was not liberation of Jammu and Kashmir, but to 'keep India busy' or more precisely 'keep India bleeding'.

I had no role in starting this militancy and nor I was in a position to stop this 'guerrilla war' which was supposed to be fought in jungles and mountains of Jammu and Kashmir rather than in Lal Chowk of Srinagar, most busy part of the city. Basic rule of any guerrilla war is that enemy is killed and their supply routes are destroyed with minimum loss to themselves, as Hizbullah has demonstrated in Lebanon.

'Guerrilla war' in Jammu and Kashmir was strange: it was 'fought' in city centres and populated areas, and it resulted in death of more than fifty thousand Kashmiris with death toll of 'enemy' only in hundreds.

And disturbing part of this episode is that still 'struggle' is not recognised as a Kashmiri struggle - it is still regarded as a dispute between India and Pakistan which they have to decide between them. There is a big reason why it is taken like this by the international community. Those who planned this 'struggle' had no strategy for the liberation of whole of the State; and moreover they only talked of Indian side of Kashmir implying that only this area is disputed.

With bomb blasts, killings, kidnappings, and waves of propaganda we have all made Indian side of Kashmir disputed, with this message to the international community that we only want liberation of that area, as we on the other side of the divide are happy with the status quo. And introduction of jihadis from various countries gave completely different perspective to the struggle as it was linked with the Islamic fundamentalism; hence it looked not a Kashmir struggle but something very 'sinister and dangerous'.

We true nationalists of Jammu and Kashmir didn't want this outcome, so we analysed the situation and drew up a strategy. This strategy had many dimensions. As we wanted unification and independence of the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, we wanted to ensure that the whole State is seen as disputed, and not the areas under India as Pakistan wanted. We therefore decided that activists living under 'occupation' of India should expose India, and those living under 'occupation' of Pakistan should expose Pakistan that the entire State is seen as disputed. And minus a few pro Pakistan leaders with 'nationalist hat', majority in Azad Kashmir and Gilgit and Baltistan are following this strategy.

We also wanted to oppose jihadis who came from other countries and changed the complexion of our struggle: before it was a Kashmiri struggle for right of self determination, and after their entry and interviews that they were there to do a jihad and establish Islamic law it transformed it in to a fundamentalist struggle.

This Islamic aspect of the struggle was introduced to deprive the Kashmiri struggle of international support. Also in practise it meant that non Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir keep away from the struggle as they have no love for Islam. This also meant preparing grounds for the division of the State, hence we witness somersault of Pakistan on Kashmir issue- self governance and joint management.

Kashmiri struggle was for right of self determination, and it was Pakistan which proposed in the UN that it should be curtailed: Kashmiri should only have two options to either join India or Pakistan. Pakistani government has said good bye to its previous stand on Kashmir, obnoxious as it was to nationalist Kashmiris; and now Pakistani government is talking of 'self rule' and 'joint management'.

Instead of talking about exact number of Indian army in Kashmir and deaths there which we all know, and there is an army of people to do this anyway; I would like to discuss policy shifts of Pakistan which could prove to be disastrous to the Kashmiri struggle. Remember India has never claimed that it is fighting or supporting for Kashmiri peoples independence, if anything their policies are designed to keep Kashmir at all costs.

Change of heart or change of strategy?

Pakistani brothers need to ask themselves, if their government's policy on Kashmir was a correct one then why is it that not a single country in the world supports it; and why is it that Pakistan feels compelled to change it every now and again. Only last Thursday 17 th August, President Musharaf said that both India and Pakistan were not "in favour of their (Kashmir's) independence"; and that they want to have a "joint framework for self-governance".

Formulas of 'Self governance' or 'joint control' are all recipes for the division of Kashmir, and unfortunately they are coming from Pakistani governments. First time Pakistani governments agreed for division of Kashmir was in mid 1950s, and then in 1963. We Kashmiris, like any other nation, don't want division of our motherland. Pakistani governments have betrayed the Kashmiris; and to me tragedy is not in their betrayal, as they have betrayed Qaaid e Azam and his ideals as well, but in this demand by Pakistani brothers that we should not even complain about this.

If Pakistan wanted to settle for a division of Kashmir then this could have been achieved many years ago. It could have been achieved before Kargil fiasco. Who is responsible for these deaths and rapes if objective is division of the sate? Friends and brothers, you call me what you like I will do what I think is correct for my struggle.

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Load-Date: August 22, 2006

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; New leaders, new policy

The International Herald Tribune

December 7, 2006 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 121 words

Body

John Vinocur ("2 women candidates: The likeness ends there," Politicus, Dec. 5) omits a detail that I hope has not eluded his readers. Senator Hillary Clinton might learn a thing or two about Mideast diplomacy from Segolene Royal's meeting with Hezbollah: respect for and dialogue with disenfranchised Arabs and Muslims.

In a region where every statement or action by a Western leader seems to take us further from peace and reconciliation, it is high time that America adopted a more helpful approach toward the Mideast.

Royal should trust her instincts she might start a positive trend in relations between the West and the Mideast. Richard Nixon had the same idea when he visited Maoist China in 1972.

*

Alexander Asseily, Beirut

Load-Date: December 7, 2006

Africa After War: Paths to Forgiveness - Ugandans welcome 'terrorists' back

Christian Science Monitor

October 23, 2006, Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 1

Length: 2128 words

Byline: Abraham McLaughlin Staff writer of the Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: PATONGO, UGANDA

Highlight: In the first of a four-part series, the Monitor examines how Africans are developing a unique form of reconciliation based on community and forgiveness.

Body

Today a doe-eyed 20-something named Betty Atto, a former member of one of the world's most-brutal rebel armies, finally gets to take her first step toward redemption - toward the forgiveness she now seeks from the people she terrorized for so long.

It's a sun-drenched afternoon here in Africa's heartland, and Betty stands beneath a "blessing tree," fidgeting with the pleats in her fanciest skirt. She's waiting with 400 other former rebels for a ritual to begin that will welcome them back into their community.

"We did bad things," Betty says of her six years in the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a group infamous for chopping off lips and other body parts of civilians - and forcing children to become sex slaves and soldiers.

Today's main event involves Betty and other ex-rebels stepping on an egg - an act that symbolically breaks open a new life and returns them to innocence. It's the first step in a long process of earning forgiveness from their community. And it stands as one example of how African notions of justice differ from the approach typical in the US and other Western nations.

Indeed, Western civilization - with its emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities - might tilt toward severely punishing people like Betty and her one-time commander, LRA chief Joseph Kony. After all, Mr. Kony presides over a "terrorist" group largely responsible for as many as 200,000 civilian deaths during two decades of war. Last year, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague issued indictments for Kony and his top commanders for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Yet here in Uganda, there's serious talk of reconciling even with Kony if peace talks succeed. Such an impulse echoes Nelson Mandela's famous forgiveness of his South African captors. It emerges from a unique continental ethos of communalism, in which the desire to punish individuals for their crimes is balanced against the need to restore wholeness to the community - to unite victims, perpetrators, and their families. Indeed, it's often a practical response enshrined in tribal jurisprudence: Villages in small, poor communities need every last person to survive. These days, the tendency is often magnified by the spread of Christianity - with its focus on forgiveness - across the continent.

Africa After War: Paths to Forgiveness - Ugandans welcome 'terrorists' back

But Africa's reconciliation ethos now faces several difficult tests. The number of major armed conflicts on the continent has fallen, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, from 11 in 1999 to just three in 2005. Yet the aftermath of war is not simply peace. As conflict-weary societies such as Burundi, Rwanda, and Liberia start to rebuild, a common conundrum looms: How to reconcile bitter enemies so all can move forward, while also ensuring justice for those who committed atrocities.

If these nations succeed - as South Africa largely did a decade ago - they may stand as models of how victims and their attackers can move out of the violent past. With its "uncomfortable commitment to bringing the perpetrator back into the family," says Alex Boraine, deputy chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "Africa has something to say to the world."

* * *

It wasn't as if Betty Atto wanted to become a "terrorist."

During a raid on her village when she was a teenager, she was kidnapped and forced to become a sex slave and soldier in a rebel group the US has labeled a terrorist organization. If she dared refuse an order from a commander, she faced almost-certain death. So, gradually, she became an active member of the LRA, which, diplomats point out, has killed more people than Al Qaeda (not including insurgents in Iraq), Hizbullah, and Hamas combined.

Then, early one morning in 2004, after six years of captivity, she and three others made a risky escape, running through high grass to a Ugandan Army barracks.

Suddenly, Betty was free. But her homecoming was complicated. During her absence, her two brothers had been killed by the LRA - the same army Betty had been forced to join. It contributed to "many problems" Betty has with her family and community. Fellow villagers mutter "terrorist" as she and others walk past.

In some ways, the war in northern Uganda is a vicious family feud. The LRA is dominated by the Acholi ethnic group. When rebels began their quest to overthrow the Ugandan government in 1987, they had tacit support from many Acholis, who complained of economic and political marginalization by the government. But amid wartime destruction, civilian support waned. Then the LRA turned on villagers, raiding their houses for recruits and food - and killing or maiming resisters. It is one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Most of the region's 2 million displaced survivors now cluster for safety in fetid camps rampant with alcoholism and crime.

But recently the LRA has lost momentum, in part because of declining support from its longtime sponsor, Sudan. A cease-fire was signed in August as a prelude to a comprehensive peace agreement that so far remains elusive.

This weekend, Uganda's president Yoweri Museveni met LRA negotiators in Sudan for the first time since the talks began in July. Although the meeting reportedly consisted of a bitter, five-minute exchange, his appearance was intended to demonstrate the government's commitment to the talks.

The moves toward an accord have meant an influx of ex-rebels coming home. Increasingly, the Acholis face a tough decision: How to treat the returning "terrorists" who are often members of their own ethnic group - and even their own families. A poll last year by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) in New York highlights the problem: 76 percent of Ugandans want wrongdoers "held accountable," yet 65 percent support amnesty for ex-LRA members.

Betty, meanwhile, feels the hostility. She constantly, almost reflexively, looks over her shoulder in fear. Sometimes she considers going back to the LRA. At least there she has a "husband" - a rebel commander who made her his wife. She has a lot riding on today's egg-stepping ceremony.

Indeed, the ritual's practical purpose is to begin to reunite families and communities divided by war - to help siblings, parents, and cousins resume lives together. Then they can try to lift themselves out of the region's crushing poverty.

Sounding unsure, Betty says of the ritual, "I hope it will help."

Africa After War: Paths to Forgiveness - Ugandans welcome 'terrorists' back

* * *

Ugandans, and other Africans, don't usually advocate instant forgiveness - a snap absolution of sins. The process can take years. In one case in northern Uganda, for example, a murder in 1977 wasn't resolved through traditional means until 2005.

But in all cases, restoring harmony is paramount.

If, for instance, a man from one clan kills a man from another clan, traditional justice dictates an immediate separation of the two groups. Members of each clan don't dare draw water from the same well or go to the same market. It's a cooling-off period meant to avoid revenge killings.

Then the wait begins. The perpetrator is never forced to divulge his crime. Instead, many Ugandans believe that spirits - or departed ancestors - will punish him until he confesses. If a string of misfortunes befall a person, it's assumed he's covering up a misdeed.

Seen from this paradigm of truth-getting, the logic of Western justice seems flawed. As many here see it, when Western lawyers duel before a judge or jury, they're simply trying to outsmart each other - and avoid having the truth about their client come out. Latim Geresome, an adviser to the Acholi paramount chief, says of Western justice, "You stand up and swear on the Bible to tell the truth, the whole truth, and then it's lies, lies, lies all the way."

Here, once the wrongdoer confesses, shuttle diplomacy begins: An elder mediates an agreement by which the perpetrator's clan agrees to pay the victim's clan a certain amount. Traditionally, the currency was cows. Now it's often cash.

When a deal is struck, every member of the perpetrator's clan pitches in to fund the settlement. All in the group are seen as responsible for allowing the perpetrator to err. So punishment is distributed. Each family is assigned an amount. "A child does not belong to the parents alone," Mr. Geresome explains. "And the crime has affected the whole clan," so all must pay.

With details arranged, a final ceremony is set. One ritual involves each group bringing a goat to a neutral spot. Each animal is cut in half, and two halves are swapped. Symbolically, this creates two goats that are whole again.

In a society still heavily reliant on groups of people to haul water, build houses, and do other tasks, normal life could fall apart if two groups were forever separated. Reconciliation is crucial, explains Erin Baines, a Canadian researcher working in the region. "It's all about ensuring the unity and harmony of the clans."

* * *

The prelude to the egg-stepping ceremony includes a phalanx of about 30 dancers with ostrich-feather headdresses who are high-kicking, shout-singing, and beating drums in a raucous display for the tribal chiefs.

The royal dance seems like a throwback to primal times. Yet peeking out from beneath the dancers' cow-skin skirts are nylon gym shorts like those sold at Target - stamped with names such as "Sport Collection."

Traditionally, the egg-stepping ceremony was used to welcome villagers home from long journeys. Now Acholi chiefs are trying to adapt it to help salve, or end, Africa's longest civil war. And many Ugandans put great faith in age-old methods. In the ICTJ poll, 30 percent of residents said peace could be achieved through dialogue; 26 percent through amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation; 14 percent through military means; and just 5 percent through justice.

The dialogue-and-reconciliation focus, including the ceremonies, is "part of a cultural revival," says Dr. Baines. By sponsoring the rituals, she explains, the chiefs are saying, "We're really trying to put our house in order" - in a traditional African way.

Africa After War: Paths to Forgiveness - Ugandans welcome 'terrorists' back

They're also trying to head off the imposition of Western-style justice: The ICC issued arrest warrants for five top LRA leaders last October, trying to end the conflict by punishing the individuals responsible. The move raised hackles among tribal chiefs, who see it as contradictory to their conciliatory approach. Yet their traditional method has major flaws. With so many atrocities, for instance, it's not clear which perpetrators hurt which victims, and one-on-one reconciliation is impossible.

There's also plenty of skepticism. "The ICC is a good idea," says Edward Ochken, a dissenting chief. After all that the LRA leaders have done, he adds, "No one can say they should not be tried." Indeed, 66 percent of residents say top commanders should be punished, according to the poll. Many, however, distinguish between the leaders and young soldiers who were following orders.

Yet, according to the survey, 22 percent would forgive even the top LRA leaders. In a community full of traditional beliefs, spirits are often assumed to be controlling people. A wiry ex-rebel named Samuel Watmon explains how he would approach Kony, the LRA's mystical leader: "I would say to him, 'It was a ghost that was leading you, so let's forget about the past.' "

* * *

As the sun grows hotter, the returnees, including Betty, wait in long, snaking lines for their official welcoming to begin. With a forceful stomp, the first ex-rebel in line sends bits of shell and yoke splattering. Hundreds of onlookers cheer.

One by one, the former rebels step on the ever-dwindling remains of the egg. Then they pass through a gantlet of smiling chiefs who shake their hands vigorously. Many women returnees carry babies who were born in the bush, often as a result of rape. When they arrive at the egg, the avuncular elders insist the children's feet be placed on the egg, too. A spirit of reconciliation is in the air.

Afterward, as night falls, Betty relaxes. "I feel cleansed," she says. After a day of being welcomed and celebrated, she adds, "Some of the bad things in my heart: they are gone."

What is the LRA?

* The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) emerged in the late 1980s among northern Uganda's Acholi ethnic group, who have long complained of being neglected by the government.

* Led by Joseph Kony, the LRA is one of Africa's most brutal rebel armies, uprooting some 2 million people and abducting about 25,000 children as soldiers and sex slaves.

* Five of its top commanders are wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court.

* Most LRA members are now in two camps in Sudan. A cease-fire was signed in August. But negotiations for a permanent peace deal between rebels and the Uganda government have stalled.

Source: Reuters, BBC.

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Load-Date: October 22, 2006

'I do' at last for war brides

The Advertiser (Australia)
August 16, 2006 Wednesday
State Edition

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 32

Length: 123 words

Byline: BENJAMIN HARVEY, TEL AVIV

Body

AP

THERE was one rabbi, 50 couples, a hundred Jewish mothers-in-law and the only explosions were from popping corks and breaking glasses.

The mass wedding yesterday for couples from Israel's north, who had to cancel their weddings as more than 4000 **Hezbollah** rockets hit their region in the past month, was planned during the war but happened on the first day of the ceasefire. That was added cause for celebration.

Brides danced with fathers, grooms danced with mothers. **Women** in body paint danced on pedestals. It was all free, with Israeli companies pouring in \$2.5 million, organisers said, to sponsor the ceremony at a nightclub in Tel Aviv's old port.

"This is the answer to our enemy," said one of Israel's two chief rabbis, Yonah Metzger.

Load-Date: August 15, 2006

Letter: Yousay - Rap for Israel

Liverpool Daily Echo
August 21, 2006, Monday
Main Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 24

Length: 130 words

Byline: C. E.

Body

RECENT propaganda by Israeli diplomats and politicians is really incredible. To compare Israel's facing up to Hezbollah with Churchill's defiance of Nazi Germany beggars belief.

Israel has nuclear weapons, a modern navy and a large well equipped army, against adversaries who have none of these.

In 1939 it was Germany not UK, that had the vastly superior forces.

Secondly the idea of Israeli pilots being humanitarian as they bomb men, women and children, Red Cross ambulances, UN observers, hospitals, funerals, etc, is just ridiculous.

It is the US policy as an honest broker that is the root cause of the Middle East problem. Their big firms are all over Saudi Arabia, and soon will be lining up to get the huge construction contracts for Lebanon.

C. E., Moreton (full name supplied)

Load-Date: August 21, 2006

World Briefing Middle East: Israel: Justice Minister To Quit Over Kiss Charges

The New York Times

August 19, 2006 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 114 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE (NYT)

Body

Justice Minister Haim Ramon said he would resign and face charges of sexual harassment lodged by a ***female*** soldier who had said Mr. Ramon forcibly kissed her in a government office last month. The announcement came a day after Menachem Mazuz, the attorney general, said he planned to indict Mr. Ramon, who is considered a close ally of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. The incident took place on July 12, the day ***Hezbollah*** staged a cross-border raid, igniting the fighting with Israel. "I am sure that I will succeed in court," Mr. Ramon said in a statement. "A kiss of two, three seconds, based on the version of the complainant, cannot be turned into a criminal act." GREG MYRE (NYT)

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: August 19, 2006

Former Israeli minister guilty for forcibly kissing soldier

Kamloops Daily News (British Columbia)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. B7

Length: 138 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: TEL AVIV, Israel

Body

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) -- An Israeli court convicted former justice minister Haim Ramon on Wednesday of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier, a stunning censure of a top official that could reshape the Israeli cabinet.

Ramon, who faces up to three years in prison, joined a growing list of politicians who have fallen from grace, including Israel's president, who is facing rape charges.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 21-year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer. Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman, who cannot be identified under Israeli law, had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

With its salacious details and high-profile defendant, the case captured the country's attention for months.

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

Red herring

Ottawa Citizen

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 145 words

Byline: Charlie Cahill, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Re: Arab and Jewish Lives are equally valuable, July 26.

Letter-writer Betty Ann Kinsella would have us accept her observation that only Israel and its leaders are guilty of crimes in that war-torn area.

Surely we all accept that all human beings have worth. But that is just a red herring in her criticism of columnist Brigitte Pellerin's astute observations about Prime Minister Stephen Harper's "moral clarity."

But then Ms. Kinsella shows her true colours by associating Mr. Harper with attacking Lebanon and Gaza "disproportionately." She ignores the **Hezbollah** terrorists who have bombed innocent **women**, children, schools, buses and cafes from their vantage points in Southern Lebanon since those areas were returned to Lebanon. The war is not with the Lebanese but with the terrorists who are given free access in Lebanon to bombard Israel daily.

Charlie Cahill,

Ottawa

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Language used as weapon of war

The Toronto Star
August 3, 2006 Thursday

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Section: LETTER; Pg. A27

Length: 147 words

Body

Ceasefire must be lasting, MacKay says

Aug. 1.

Referring to Hezbollah as a "cancer" cheapens the political discourse on Lebanon, and is reminiscent of the Arab nationalist reference to the State of Israel as a "cancer" in the Middle East.

Referring to human political actors using the language of zoology and pathology is part of the dehumanization of the other, and is a perennial psychological weapon of war. Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay's reference specifically tends to lend "scientific" justification for the massive Israeli use of force, most recently directed against non-combatant Lebanese children and women.

The hopes for an early ceasefire and eventual political reconciliation require a new lexicon, the lexicon of democracy and human rights. Canada could have been expected to take the lead in this regard. Clearly, MacKay is not up to the task.

Naftali Lavie, Toronto

Load-Date: August 3, 2006