

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:39:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498850

Documents (100)

1. [*Livni favoured to take over Israeli party leadership from Olmert*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

2. [*Israel 'broke law' with use of cluster bombs Human Rights Watch details 'war crimes'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

3. [*Rights charter hateful work; Arbour's judgment suspect after initial support of charter*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

4. [*Pro- Israeli professor speaks out at Hillel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

5. [*Freed prisoners receive hero's welcome in Ramallah . Abbas: PA won't rest until all prisoners are free *
Netanyahu, Mofaz slam release as 'big 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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

6. [*Time for Muslim community to move on OUR VIEW The Sun-Herald*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

7. [*Hair today goon tomorrow*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

8. [*Politics colours the cutting edge of the Beirut hairdresser*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

9. [*Israel 'broke law' with use of cluster bombs Human Rights Watch details 'war crimes'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

10. [*Israel 's latest indicted minister steps down ARAB MP QUILTS OVER SECRET CHARGES*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

11. [No Styling, No Highlights](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

12. [A cut and colour is a snip: keeping the peace is harder](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

13. [Iranian filmmaker bridges deep political divides with irreverence](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

14. [The Obama -Bush presidency](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

15. [Turkey 's abandonment of the West](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

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

16. ['He is still our family member'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

17. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

18. [Look further, think harder, don't take it at face value](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

19. [Patience urged in Mideast Israeli foreign minister insists talks still on track, but not on schedule, for accord with 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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

20. [No other country](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

21. [*Emotional wounds of war may persist in hospital workers, Haifa study finds*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

22. [*An open letter to Senator Obama*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

23. [*Bomb attacks kill at least 50 people as new wave of violence hits Iraq : Bus blast leaves 40 dead and 70 hurt in Baaquba: Militia groups filling a vacuum, aid group warns*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

24. [*Gaza conflict will shake the Arab world*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

25. [*World digest*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

26. [Northern Israel on alert after second attack As Palestinian death toll nears 1000, PM Olmert under pressure from his cabinet and American allies](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

27. [Northern Israel on alert after second attack As Palestinian death toll nears 1000, PM Olmert under pressure from his cabinet and American allies](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

28. [Hamas ends six month truce in Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

29. [THE ISRAELI OFFENSIVE IN GAZA: PRO: Yes, free Gaza --- from terrorist tyranny](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

30. [Hamas ends truce on Gaza border; Islamic group blames military moves against group in ending truce](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

31. [Between West and East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

32. [Digest](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

33. [AUSTRALIANS DESERVE A MODERATE MUFTI](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

34. [OSTRICH FARMER REBUILDS IN LEBANON](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

35. [Draft dodgers should bear 'Mark of Cain': Israeli minister; One in four evades summer conscription](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

36. [Many Egyptians want to steer clear of Gaza trouble](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

37. [Lebanon as a door to understanding BOOKS & IDEAS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

38. [Israel 's Labour leadership race heads for runoff Ex- prime minister Barak to face political rookie Ayalon in comeback try](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

39. [Frustration for Bush as pledge to Saudis fails to win oil concession](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

40. [Between dust and deliverance; COMMENTARY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

41. [Anti-Semitism is finding new allies on both Right and Left](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

42. [*A master of political survival Embattled Israeli PM exploits coalition partners' reluctance for another election*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

43. [*Eliminating Hezbollah, Hamas will bring peace*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

44. [*Israel set to widen its assault on Gaza Death toll surpasses 300 in third day of airstrikes fury rises in Arab world*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

45. [*ISRAEL KEEPS UP ASSAULT ON GAZA; ARAB ANGER RISES*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

46. [*Israel set to widen its assault on Gaza Death toll surpasses 300 in third day of airstrikes fury rises in Arab world*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

47. [*UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel - Hamas ceasefire*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

48. [*Touted as traitors*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

49. [*Rockets are fired from Lebanon into north Israel Possibility of second front in war seen*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

50. [*Egypt uses water cannons to keep Palestinians out*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

51. [*Protest elsewhere*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

52. [Too alarmed to be alert](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

53. [TO FUEL QUEST, HEZBOLLAH HARNESSSES YOUTH PIETY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

54. [Israel's Livni calls for Olmert's ouster](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

55. [Suicide bomb aimed at cops](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

56. [TO FUEL QUEST, HEZBOLLAH HARNESSSES YOUTH PIETY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

57. [*Nine die as gunman opens fire on student rabbis in Jerusalem*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

58. [*Gunman was Arab working at the school*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

59. [*India tests lethal chopper*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

60. [*Cartoon fallout*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

61. [*Peace activists 'hypocritical'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

62. [*Israeli Arab shot students, say police*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

63. [National Briefs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

64. [Yes, we know there's a war on ?; ?and we're trying to stop it](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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

65. [His final salute](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

66. [International briefs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

67. [Video shows beheading](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

68. [*Israel continues to bombard 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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

69. [*Say no more: Transsexual Israeli tops Lebanese song chart*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

70. [*DIGEST*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

71. [*Calls for moderation mark opening of Al-Amin Mosque*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

72. [*Israelis only want peace*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

73. [Israelis only want peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

74. [Lebanon 's Shiites still angry about missing imam](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

75. [Gaza 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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

76. [Keenan tells of desire for death in Beirut captivity](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

77. [International: Boost for Middle East summit as Syria joins in: Annapolis summit hopes to kickstart negotiations: Broad Arab support, but expectations are low](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

Jan 31, 2009

78. [NEWS IN BRIEF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

79. [Beirut's nights LEBANON : The Lights Are Going Out in Beirut](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

80. [Legacy of Terror](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

81. [Controversy follows outgoing mufti at Muslim changeover](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

82. [IRAN 'S DEADLY GAME EXCLUSIVE NUCLEAR CAT AND MOUSE COULD THREATEN US ALL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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

83. [IN SEARCH OF MODERN ARABIA COLLEGE GRADS ARE LEAVING IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE AND NIHILISM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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

84. [Defence Minister warns about massive ground operation MIDEAST: Not Another Ground Assault](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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

85. [ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA BY AIR AGAIN ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA FOR 2ND DAY STRIKES CONTINUE FOR SECOND DAY; TROOPS AND TANKS MASS ALONG BORDER](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

86. [Government contortions, public anger](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

87. [One Gaza, under Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

88. [*Israel's next prime minister?; Tzipi Livni has become one of her country's most important political figures*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

89. [*As goest Israel ...; If the Jewish state can't survive the onslaught of militant Islam, neither can the rest of the civilized world*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

90. [*Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

91. [*Richie leaves jail after 82 minutes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

92. [*Israel's Lesson in 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: Apr 15, 2007 to Jan 31, 2009

93. [*The king & Peres*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

94. [Pelosi: Israel 'bears the brunt' of Iranian threat, but it's the world's problem](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

95. [JACKSON FIVE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

96. [World Digest](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

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

97. [The Mideast's ground zero](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

98. [In Praise of Being Cut Off](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

99. [*In praise of being cut off Globalist*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

100. [*'I'M THE BOSS' SPIRIT OF CHANGE IN A KNIFE-WIELDING BAPTISM.. PRIME MINISTER BROWN :
DAY 1*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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

Livni favoured to take over Israeli party leadership from Olmert

The Australian

September 15, 2008 Monday

2 - All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 13

Length: 537 words

Byline: Martin Chulov, Middle East correspondent

Body

TZIPI Livni will make a high-stakes play on her way to becoming Israel's first ***female*** prime minister in 35 years on Wednesday when she contests a party primary vote to replace the incumbent she helped to oust, Ehud Olmert.

Israel's perennially troubled 12th leader now has a maximum of 45 days left to serve, but only three of them as leader of the Kadima party -- a position he inherited from the former prime minister, Ariel Sharon, 33 months ago.

Mr Olmert will remain caretaker prime minister after the Kadima vote for as long as whoever replaces him in the party ballot takes to cobble together a coalition government, which will lead the country until the next general election that most pundits expect to be held early next year.

But with faltering talks with Syria and the Palestinians, a dwindling mandate, a cancer scare and possible criminal charges from a corruption investigation hanging over him, Mr Olmert's effort as a peacemaker appears to have failed.

What remains of Mr Olmert's legacy -- particularly on the Palestinian peace track -- will now probably be inherited by Ms Livni, the ambitious foreign minister who turned on her one-time sponsor in the wake of the failed 2006 war with ***Hezbollah***.

Ms Livni is favoured to roll two rival candidates, Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz and Security Minister Avi Dichter, to become Kadima's second leader, and then run for the prime ministership. Polling shows she has a slight edge on Mr Mofaz and a strong lead over Mr Dichter.

Broader opinion polls show the 50-year-old mother of two rivals the hard right-wing Likud party leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, as preferred prime minister.

A win in the Kadima ballot would put Ms Livni within striking distance of joining Golda Meir to become the country's second ***female*** leader.

Ms Meir resigned in the wake of Israel's 1973 Yom Kippur war with Egypt and Syria. However, she is fondly remembered by many in Israeli society, who fear the next development in the Jewish state's political life might edge its people further away from peace than ever.

Livni favoured to take over Israeli party leadership from Olmert

Although currently coming from similar political viewpoints, Ms Livni and Mr Mofaz have vowed to lead the country on sharply different tracks if elected.

Ms Livni wants to pull together a centre-left coalition and Mr Mofaz has pledged to look towards the Right. Ms Livni favours continuing the peace talks with the Palestinians -- a project instigated by the Bush White House and backed by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Ms Livni lays claim to being Israel's most powerful woman -- and she and Dr Rice have become close during the past 11 months of often fruitless talks between the Olmert Government and the Palestinian Authority led by President Mahmoud Abbas.

However, Ms Livni does not back the second peace track, instigated by Mr Olmert, of indirect talks with the Syrians, claiming it to be a ruse by the Syrians to win favour with the US. She is widely expected to stop the discussions, brokered by Turkey, until Syrian President Bashar al-Assad shows signs of moving away from his key partners, Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah, all seen as enemies by Israel.

Ms Livni is campaigning on a message that she is the only candidate who can defeat Mr Netanyahu in a general election.

Load-Date: September 14, 2008

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**Israel 'broke law' with use of cluster bombs Human Rights Watch details
'war crimes'**

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

February 18, 2008 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 8489 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

The Israeli military issued a short statement on December 24, 2007, on the results of an internal inquiry into its controversial use of cluster munitions during the 34-day war in Lebanon in July and August 2006. During that short conflict, the Israeli military rained an estimated 4 million submunitions on South Lebanon.

Report

Editor's note: The following is the first section of a report issued by Human Rights Watch on Sunday, entitled "Flooding South Lebanon: Israel's Use of Cluster Munitions in Lebanon in July and August 2006." **The Daily Star** will publish the rest of the report on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Israeli military issued a short statement on December 24, 2007, on the results of an internal inquiry into its controversial use of cluster munitions during the 34-day war in Lebanon in July and August 2006. During that short conflict, the Israeli military rained an estimated 4 million submunitions on South Lebanon, the vast majority over the final three days when Israel knew a settlement was imminent. The inquiry was the second internal Israeli military investigation into the use of the weapon, and like its predecessor it exonerated the armed forces of violating international humanitarian law (IHL). Neither a detailed report nor the evidence supporting conclusions has been made public, however, making it impossible to assess whether the inquiry was carried out with rigor and impartiality, and whether it credibly addressed key issues about targeting and the lasting impact of cluster munition strikes on the civilian population.

Human Rights Watch's researchers were on the ground in Lebanon throughout the conflict and after, and our findings paint a quite different picture of the Israeli military's conduct.

Research in more than 40 towns and villages found that the Israeli military's use of cluster munitions was both indiscriminate and disproportionate, in violation of IHL, and in some locations possibly a war crime. In dozens of towns and villages, Israel used cluster munitions containing submunitions with known high failure rates. These left behind homes, gardens, fields and public spaces - including a hospital - littered with hundreds of thousands and possibly up to one million unexploded submunitions. By their nature, these dangerous, volatile submunitions cannot

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distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, foreseeably endangering civilians for months or years to come.

Israel continues to have a duty to investigate publicly, independently, impartially and rigorously these extensive violations of international humanitarian law.

Investigation should include a thorough examination of whether individual commanders bear responsibility for war crimes - that is, for intentionally or recklessly authorizing or conducting attacks that would indiscriminately or disproportionately harm civilians.

The continuing failure of the government of Israel to mount a credible investigation one and a half years after the end of the 2006 conflict in Lebanon - and failure on the Lebanese side of the border to investigate Hizbullah's compliance with international humanitarian law - reaffirms the need for the secretary general of the United Nations (UN) to establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes, committed by both sides during the conflict. The commission should formulate recommendations with a view to holding accountable those on both sides of the conflict who violated the law. The findings of this report by Human Rights Watch indicate that Israel's use of cluster munitions should be part of the commission's mandate.

Cluster munitions are large, ground-launched or air-dropped weapons that, depending on their type, contain dozens or hundreds of submunitions. During strikes they endanger civilians because they blanket a broad area, and when they are used in or near populated areas, civilian casualties are virtually guaranteed. They also threaten civilians after conflict because they leave high numbers of hazardous submunitions that have failed to explode on impact as designed - known as duds - which can easily be set off by unwitting persons. As yet these weapons are not explicitly banned. However, their use is strictly limited by existing international humanitarian law on indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. Moreover, global concern at the impact of cluster munitions, all too graphically manifested in South Lebanon, is lending impetus to international efforts to develop a legally binding instrument banning those that have an unacceptable humanitarian effect.

Israel's strikes in 2006 were the most extensive use of cluster munitions anywhere in the world since the 1991 Gulf war. Based on its own field response and a review of public reports, the UN Mine Action Coordination Center South Lebanon (MACC SL) estimated, as of January 15, 2008, that Israel fired cluster munitions containing as many as four million submunitions in 962 separate strikes. According to information provided to Human Rights Watch by Israeli soldiers who resupplied Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) units with cluster munitions, the number of submunitions used could be as high as 4.6 million. That is more than twice as many submunitions used by coalition forces in Iraq in 2003 and more than 15 times the number used by the United States in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002.

The Israeli military's cluster munition strikes were spread over an area of approximately 1,400 square kilometers north and south of the Litani river, an area comparable in size to the US state of Rhode Island (1,214 square kilometers). Within the 1,400 square kilometer area, deminers have so far confirmed an aggregate area of 38.7 square kilometers, including at least 4.3 square kilometers of urban land, 20 square kilometers of agricultural land, and 4 square kilometers of woodland, as directly contaminated by submunitions. Looking at the number of submunitions they have cleared compared to the number of strikes, clearance experts have indicated that the failure rates for many of Israel's submunitions appear to have averaged 25 percent, leaving behind vast numbers of hazardous unexploded submunitions.

Based on their personal observations, experts from Human Rights Watch and the UN have judged the level and density of post-conflict contamination in South Lebanon to be far worse than that found in Iraq, Afghanistan or Kosovo following the use of cluster munitions in those countries. However, it is not just civilians in areas currently known by deminers to be directly contaminated whose lives have been severely affected - people living throughout the 1,400 square kilometer area have had their lives disrupted, as they cannot live in safety until their homes and fields have been inspected and, if necessary, cleared by demining crews. The cluster munitions fired by Israel into South Lebanon caused serious and ongoing civilian harm. While immediate civilian casualties from the explosions

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appear to have been limited, the long-term effects in terms of injuries, deaths, and other loss have been considerable. As of January 15, 2008, according to MACC SL, the explosion of duds since the cease-fire had caused at least 192 civilian and 29 deminer casualties.

The huge number of submunitions used and the high dud rates have severely damaged the economy by turning agricultural land into de facto minefields and interfering with the harvesting of tobacco, citrus, banana, and olive crops.

In the first two weeks of the conflict, Israel launched a relatively small number of cluster munition strikes. Attacks increased in the days after the 48-hour partial suspension of air strikes from July 31 to August 1, 2006; Israeli soldiers serving with an MLRS unit told Human Rights Watch that it was in August that they fired many of their cluster rockets.

The overwhelming use of cluster munitions took place during the final 72 hours of the conflict, when Israel engaged in saturation cluster bombing, hitting more than 850 strike sites with millions of submunitions. According to the United Nations, 90 percent of Israel's cluster munition strikes took place over this brief period. A commander of an Israeli military MRLS unit told a Haaretz reporter, "What we did was insane and monstrous; we covered entire towns in cluster bombs." He said that, in order to compensate for the cluster rockets' imprecision, his unit was ordered to "flood" the area with them.

These strikes occurred after the UN Security Council had adopted Resolution 1701 on August 11 calling for an immediate cease-fire, but before the Lebanese and Israeli cabinets met individually to set the time for the formal cease-fire to take effect on August 14. At that time, Israel knew a settlement was likely to be imminent. At this late stage of the war, the majority of civilians had fled the area, but the imminent settlement would clearly lead civilians to return to their homes, many now either directly contaminated by duds or surrounded by contaminated land. It is inconceivable that Israel, which has used cluster weapons on many previous occasions, did not know that that its strikes would have a lasting humanitarian impact.

Israel has repeatedly argued that its use of cluster munitions in South Lebanon was in accordance with "the principles of armed conflict" and was a response to Hizbullah's deployment and camouflaging of missile launchers "in built-up areas and areas with dense vegetation." According to the Israeli military, the decision to use cluster munitions "was only made after other options had been examined and found to be less effective in ensuring maximal coverage of the missile launching areas." The Israeli government has told Human Rights Watch that its forces directed all cluster munition fire at legitimate military targets and that for humanitarian reasons "most was directed at open areas, keeping a safe distance from built up areas." When the Israeli military used cluster munitions in "residential areas/neighborhoods," it claims it did so "as an immediate defensive response to rocket attacks by Hizbullah from launching sites located within villages." The Israeli military says "significant measures were taken to warn civilians to leave the area."

Human Rights Watch's researchers visited the sites of cluster munition strikes and talked to local people. They found that cluster munitions affected many villages and their surrounding agricultural fields - locations used intensively by the civilian population.

Human Rights Watch also found that many of the cluster attacks on populated areas do not appear to have had a definite military target. Our researchers, who focused their investigation immediately after the cease-fire on cluster strikes in and around population centers, found only one village with clear evidence of the presence of Hizbullah forces out of the more than 40 towns and villages they visited. While some Israeli cluster attacks appear to have been instances of counter-battery fire, in many of the attacks in populated areas that we examined the few civilians present at the time of the attacks could not identify a specific military target such as Hizbullah fighters, rocket launchers, or munitions.

At this late stage, the final three days of the fighting, the majority of potential eyewitnesses had either fled or were hiding inside buildings or other shelter, making it difficult for them to see activity around them and thus for Human Rights Watch to prove definitively the presence or absence of Hizbullah military targets from interview testimony alone. However, the apparent absence of legitimate military targets in these populated areas matches our broader

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findings into the conduct of Hizbullah during the war, which revealed that Hizbullah fired the vast majority of its rockets from pre-prepared positions outside villages.

Furthermore, the staggering number of cluster munitions rained on South Lebanon over the three days immediately before a negotiated cease-fire went into effect puts in doubt the claim by the Israeli military that its attacks were aimed at specific targets or even strategic locations, as opposed to being efforts to blanket large areas with explosives and duds. Treating separate and distinct military objectives in a single populated area as one target is a violation of international humanitarian law, and if done intentionally, a war crime.

IHL, which governs conduct during armed conflict, requires belligerents to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants and prohibits as "indiscriminate" any attacks that fail to do so. Cluster munition attacks on or near population centers, like those launched by Israel, give rise to a presumption that they are indiscriminate, as the weapons are highly imprecise with a large area effect that regularly causes foreseeable and excessive civilian casualties during strikes and afterwards. Furthermore, none of the cluster munition carriers used by Israel was precision-guided. Only a small number of carriers had any type of guidance mechanism. None of the submunitions was guided in any way. These factors support the view that these weapons were used in circumstances in which they were incapable of distinguishing between any actual or potential military objects and the civilians actually or soon to be in the area.

Even in cases where the Israeli military was attacking a specific military target, its use of cluster munitions violated the principle of proportionality, the legal requirement that the attacker should refrain from launching an attack if the expected civilian harm outweighs the military advantage sought. There is increasing international recognition that when cluster munitions are used in any type of population center, there is a strong, if rebuttable, presumption that the attack is disproportionate, both because of the immediate risk to civilians and the predictable future harm from cluster duds.

In calculating expected civilian harm, Israel needed to consider the presence of civilians. Throughout the war, Israel issued general warnings to civilians in South Lebanon to leave through Arabic flyers and radio broadcasts. Large numbers of civilians fled the area. However, Israel undoubtedly knew that some civilians were unable or unwilling to go because they were poor, elderly, afraid of being killed on the roads, unable to secure transport, or responsible for family property. These civilians thus remained vulnerable to cluster munition attacks. This was the case in the 1993 conflict between Israel and Hizbullah in South Lebanon, and indeed during the course of the 2006 conflict the media was filled with stories on Lebanese civilians dying in Israeli strikes or trapped in place.

In any event, giving warnings does not allow the warring parties then to disregard the continuing presence of some civilians for the purpose of determining whether a planned attack is either indiscriminate or disproportionate. In the latter case, all potential harm to civilians remaining must still be weighed against the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated from an attack, and the attack cancelled if the damage to civilians is disproportionate. Furthermore, given the nature this weapon type and Israel's overwhelming use of it in the final days of the conflict, the lasting impact of duds must also be a factor in determining whether a planned attack is indiscriminate or disproportionate.

Given the extremely large number of submunitions employed and their known failure rates, harm to remaining and returning civilians was entirely foreseeable. Israel's use of old weapons and the conditions under which they were fired (often low trajectory or short-range) radically increased the number of duds. Israel was well aware of the continuing harm to Lebanese civilians from the unexploded duds that remained from its prior use of munitions in South Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. Unexploded cluster submunitions from weapons used more than two decades ago - though far less extensively than in 2006 - continued to affect Lebanon up to the beginning of the 2006 conflict. Furthermore, testimony from soldiers and the reported Israeli military prohibition of firing cluster munitions into areas it would subsequently enter indicate that the dangers posed by duds were known to the Israeli military.

Neither Human Rights Watch's research nor the limited information offered by the Israeli military provides affirmative evidence that Israel's cluster attacks had potential military advantage greater than the significant and ongoing harm that they caused. The paucity of evidence of specific military objectives, the known dangers of cluster

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munitions, the timing of large scale attacks days before an anticipated cease-fire, and the massive scope of the attacks combine to point to a conclusion that the attacks were of an indiscriminate and disproportionate character. If the attacks were knowingly or recklessly indiscriminate or deliberate, they are war crimes, and Israel has a duty to investigate criminal responsibility on the part of those who authorized the attacks.

Finally, the cluster munitions strike on the Tebnine Hospital on August 13, 2006, appears to have been in violation of the prohibition under international humanitarian law of attacking medical personnel, facilities and protected persons, including persons hors de combat because of their injuries. We have found no evidence that the hospital was being used for military operations, was housing combatants other than patients (i.e., those rendered hors de combat), or was being used for any other military purpose. These acts, too, must be investigated as violations of the laws of international armed conflict, and as potential war crimes.

Israel's cluster strikes prompted several investigations after the conflict. The internal inquiry results made public in December 2007 were a follow up to an initial internal Israeli military "operational inquiry" that had exonerated the Army of violating IHL, but which found that the Israeli military fired cluster munitions into populated areas against Israeli military regulations, and that the Israeli military had not always used cluster munitions in accordance with the orders of then Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz. Some Israeli military commanders vehemently rejected this charge, saying that they acted within their orders.

Israeli military statements have provided only generalized observations to justify cluster munition attacks, rather than case-by-case information justifying attacks on specific targets. For example, while indicating that there were deviations from orders not to target built up areas, Israeli military statements do not provide case-by-case information justifying why deviations occurred. Instead, the Israeli military claims summarily that "Israeli military forces used the resources in their possession in an effort to curtail the relentless rocket fire at Israeli civilians." Their statements do not explain the high saturation of towns and villages across South Lebanon. They do not give any reasons why dud rates were so high. The statements do not acknowledge the foreseeable future effects on civilians of high dud rates.

Two UN inquiries concluded that Israel's use of cluster munitions contradicted the IHL principles of distinction and proportionality. The US State Department concluded that Israel may have violated classified agreements with the United States regarding when and how US-supplied cluster munitions could be used. Human Rights Watch believes that cluster munitions stand out as the weapon category most in need of stronger national and international regulation to protect civilians during armed conflict. Urgent action is necessary to bring under control the immediate danger that cluster munitions pose to civilians during attacks, the longterm danger they pose after conflict, and the potential future dangers of widespread proliferation. Human Rights Watch believes that parties to a conflict should never use unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions. In 1999 Human Rights Watch was the first nongovernmental organization (NGO) to call for a global moratorium on their use until their humanitarian problems have been resolved. Governments should bear the burden of demonstrating that any cluster munition is accurate and reliable enough not to pose unacceptable risks to civilians during and after strikes.

International awareness of the need to address cluster munitions is growing rapidly. Most notably, on February 23, 2007, in Oslo, Norway, 46 countries agreed to conclude a treaty banning cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians by 2008. Another eight states joined the movement in a follow-up meeting in Lima, Peru, in May 2007, and a total of 94 states were on board by the end of the next meeting in Vienna, Austria, in December. The treaty will "prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians" and have provisions for clearance, victim assistance, risk education and stockpile destruction.

In 2008, governments will develop and negotiate the treaty at meetings in New Zealand and Ireland. "We have given ourselves a strict timeline to conclude our work by 2008. This is ambitious but necessary to respond to the urgency of this humanitarian problem," said Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. This initiative, which closely mirrors the Ottawa process banning antipersonnel mines, follows years of advocacy by Human Rights Watch, the Cluster Munition Coalition, which Human Rights Watch co-chairs, other NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and states. Lebanon has been a vocal participant in the "Oslo Process," while Israel has stayed away.

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States are also pursuing domestic measures to address cluster munitions. Belgium became the first country to adopt a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions in February 2006, and Austria followed suit in December 2007. Norway declared a moratorium on use in June 2006 and Hungary in May 2007. Parliamentary initiatives to prohibit or restrict cluster munitions are under way in numerous countries. Many countries have in recent years decided to remove from service and/or destroy cluster munitions with high failure rates, and some have called for a prohibition on use in populated areas.

International humanitarian law on the use of cluster munitions is in the process of development, but a consensus is developing that their use in populated areas is a violation, on account of the likelihood of indiscriminate or disproportionate harm to civilians both at the time of the attack and in the future because of unexploded duds.

The preamble of the final declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), for example, recognizes "the foreseeable effects of explosive remnants of war on civilian populations as a factor to be considered in applying the international humanitarian law rules on proportionality in attack and precautions in attack." States parties, including Israel and the United States, adopted this language on November 17, 2006.

Human Rights Watch believes that the international community should move to establish predictable future effects as not only a violation of IHL but also as a basis for criminal responsibility. The tragedy that has taken place in Lebanon should serve as a catalyst to both national measures and a new international treaty on cluster munitions.

Methodology

This report is based on Human Rights Watch's on-the-ground research in Lebanon and Israel, supplemented most notably with information provided by MACC SL. It also draws on more than a decade of field research and documentary research on cluster munitions by Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch researchers were in Lebanon throughout the conflict and were the first to confirm Israel's use of cluster munitions when they documented the Israeli military's attack on Blida on July 19, 2006. At the same time, Human Rights Watch researchers working in northern Israel confirmed the widespread presence of cluster munition artillery shells in the arsenals of Israeli military artillery teams stationed along Israel's border with Lebanon.

Immediately after the cessation of hostilities, Human Rights Watch researchers traveled to south Lebanon, the location of the most intense cluster munition contamination. They spent six days surveying the extent of the damage from cluster attacks and conducting interviews. Researchers returned to south Lebanon in mid-September 2006 for several days and spent another week in late October 2006 documenting the ongoing aftereffects of the submunitions.

Our researchers investigated more than 50 cluster munition strikes, including strikes in more than 40 towns and villages in South Lebanon. They collected physical evidence of the strikes, took photographs, visited hospitals, and interviewed dozens of civilians who had been directly affected by the cluster munition attacks, including numerous men, women and children who had been injured by submunitions or submunition duds. Researchers spoke to many Lebanese in their towns and villages just as they were returning home. Human Rights Watch also met with demining professionals from the Lebanese Army, the UN, and NGOs who were cataloguing and clearing the vast fields of deadly submunition duds in Lebanon. Those civilians that had remained in these villages and towns at the time of the attacks, however, were usually taking shelter from bombardment, and so often unaware of whether there were any military targets or military movements in the vicinity.

During the conflict, Human Rights Watch on several occasions made inquiries with Israeli officials regarding use of cluster munitions, especially following the attack on Blida. Human Rights Watch made further inquiries immediately after the conflict, as the scope of use in the final days became clear. Human Rights Watch also called on Israel to provide information about its use of cluster munitions in press releases and public presentations.

In October 2006, Human Rights Watch researchers met with Israeli officials and soldiers in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to discuss the use of cluster munitions. Most notably, the researchers interviewed four soldiers in MLRS and

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artillery units that used clusters in July and August. In July 2007, another Human Rights Watch team met with lawyers from the Israeli military, who provided an overview of the Israeli military's position but no specifics about discrete military objectives. In this report, Human Rights Watch has utilized all of the publicly available statements on cluster munitions issued by the Israeli government, as well as statements reported in the media. It also relies on the interview with Israeli military lawyers and an Israeli document sent in response to Human Rights Watch inquiries, which briefly discusses use of cluster munitions and is annexed to this report.

Recommendations

To the government of Israel

I Prohibit the use, transfer, and production of unreliable and inaccurate

cluster munitions, including all of those types used in Lebanon, and destroy all existing stockpiles.

I Constitute and empower an independent inquiry to examine all relevant data and investigate impartially and independently the Israeli military's use of cluster munitions in Lebanon to assess carefully whether the munitions were used in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law. The investigation should address questions about deliberate use in populated areas, the timing of attacks, the quantity and reliability of cluster munitions used, the specific military objectives for each attack (or lack thereof), whether separate and distinct military objectives were treated as a single one for the purpose of bombardment, and whether there was knowing or reckless disregard for the foreseeable effects on civilians and other protected objects. The results of the investigation should be made public.

I Hold accountable, including through disciplinary action or prosecution if the facts warrant, those responsible for using cluster munitions in violation of international humanitarian law.

I Immediately provide to the UN the specific locations of cluster munition attacks, including the specific types and quantities of weapons used, to facilitate clearance and risk-education activities.

I Provide all possible technical, financial, material, and other assistance to= facilitate the marking and clearance of submunition duds and other explosive remnants of war.

To the secretary general of the United Nations

Consistent with recommendations made to the UN secretary general in the separate reports "Civilians under Assault: Hizbullah's Rocket Attacks on Israel in the 2006 War," published in August 2007, and "Why They Died: Civilian Casualties in Lebanon during the 2006 War," published in September 2007:

I Use your influence with Israel and Hizbullah to urge them to adopt measures to better comply with international humanitarian law.

I Establish an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes, in Lebanon and Israel and to formulate recommendations with a view to holding accountable those on both sides of the conflict who violated the law. Include investigation into the use of cluster munitions in the mandate of the inquiry.

To the government of the United States

I Press the Israeli government to mount a credible independent and impartial investigation into the Israeli military's use of cluster munitions.

I Cancel the delivery of 1,300 M26 cluster munition rockets for Multiple Launch Rocket Systems requested by Israel and prohibit any future transfer of unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions.

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I Make public the findings of its investigation into Israel's use of cluster munitions in Lebanon, as well as the agreements it has with Israel regarding the use of US-supplied cluster munitions.

I As the supplier of most of the cluster munitions and other weapons that Israel used in Lebanon, accept special responsibility for assisting with the marking and clearance of submunition duds and other explosive remnants of war.

I Prohibit the use, transfer, and production of unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions and begin destruction of existing stockpiles.

To all governments

I Take steps to ban cluster munitions that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm by participating in the international effort initiated by Norway to negotiate a treaty.

I Take national measures to prohibit the use, transfer, and production of unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions and destroy stockpiles of such cluster munitions.

I Prohibit the use of cluster munitions in or near populated areas.

I Provide support for submunition clearance, risk education, and victim assistance activities in Lebanon.

Cluster Munitions and International Humanitarian Law

Background on Cluster Munitions

Cluster munitions are large weapons that contain dozens and often hundreds of smaller submunitions. After being dropped from the air by planes or helicopters or fired from the ground by artillery or rocket launchers, cluster munitions open up in the air and release their submunitions over a wide area. The submunitions from airdropped cluster munitions are called bomblets, and those from ground-delivered cluster munitions are called grenades. The submunitions often have both antipersonnel and anti-armor effects. With very few exceptions, both cluster munitions and submunitions are unguided weapons. All of the submunitions used in the conflict in Lebanon were unguided.

The military values cluster munitions because of their wide footprint; they can destroy broad, relatively soft targets, like airfields and surface-to-air missile sites.

They can also be effective against targets that move or do not have precise locations. The military advantages of cluster munitions, however, must be weighed against their documented harm to civilians both during and after strikes.

The humanitarian effects of a cluster munition attack are often more serious than those of other types of attacks because of the submunitions' wide dispersal. Even if a cluster munition hits its target, which is not guaranteed because it is usually unguided, the submunitions may kill or injure civilians within the footprint. The inherent risks to civilian life and property increase when a party uses these weapons in or near populated areas. If cluster munitions are used in an area where combatants and civilians commingle, civilian casualties are almost assured.

Cluster munitions also produce deeply problematic aftereffects because many of the submunitions do not explode on impact as intended. While all weapons have a failure rate, cluster munitions are more dangerous because they release large numbers of submunitions and because certain design characteristics, based on cost and size considerations, increase the likelihood of submunition failure. Manufacturers and militaries have typically indicated that failure rates for submunitions under test conditions range between 5 and 20 percent. Actual failure rates in combat conditions have been higher, including in south Lebanon. As a result, every cluster munition strike leaves some unexploded ordnance. The dud, or initial failure, rate (i.e., the percentage that does not explode) not only reduces the immediate military effectiveness of cluster munitions but also puts civilians at great risk. Unexploded bomblets

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and grenades are often highly unstable and can explode at the slightest touch or movement, becoming de facto landmines that kill or injure civilians returning to the battle area after an attack.

At least 14 states and a small number of non-state armed groups have used cluster munitions in at least 30 countries and territories. While the number of conflicts in which cluster munitions have been used is still relatively limited, the danger of the problem growing exponentially is great. A total of at least 76 countries stockpile cluster munitions. Thirty-four countries have produced over 210 different types of cluster munitions, and at least 13 countries have transferred over 50 different types of cluster munitions to at least 60 other countries, as well as non-state armed groups.

International Humanitarian Law

During the war in Lebanon, Israeli and Hizbullah forces were bound by international humanitarian law, which requires parties to an armed conflict to respect and protect civilians and other persons not or no longer taking a direct part in hostilities. It also limits permissible means and methods of warfare. The most relevant IHL provisions are the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, to which Israel is party, and the First Additional Protocol of 1977, to which it is not. Protocol I codified and in some measure expanded upon existing law, particularly relating to the conduct of hostilities. Today, many, if not most, of its provisions are considered reflective of customary international law.

The principle of distinction is the keystone of the law regulating protection of civilians during hostilities. It requires parties to a conflict to distinguish at all times between combatants and civilians. Parties may not attack civilians and civilian objects and may direct attacks against only military objectives.

Military objectives are members of the armed forces, other persons taking a direct part in hostilities, and "those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage." IHL prohibits attacks "of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction."

Indiscriminate attacks include those that "are not directed at a specific military objective," those that use means that "cannot be directed at a specific military objective," and those that "employ a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited." Bombardments that treat as a single military objective a number of clearly separated and distinct targets are indiscriminate as well.

Another key principle is that of proportionality. Attacks that violate the principle of proportionality are indiscriminate because they are "expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians [or] damage to civilian objectives ...which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated" from that attack. When conducting military operations, parties to a conflict must take constant care to spare the civilian population and civilian objects from the effects of hostilities.

Precautions include:

I Doing "everything feasible to verify" that the objects to be attacked are military objectives and not civilians or civilian objects or subject to special protection.

I Taking "all feasible precautions in the choice of means and methods" of warfare so as to avoid and in any event minimize "incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects."

I Refraining from launching attacks "expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, [or] damage to civilian objects ...which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage expected."

I When circumstances permit, giving "effective advance warning ... of attacks which may affect the civilian population."

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I "When a choice is possible between several military objectives for obtaining the same military advantage," carrying out the attack that may be "expected to cause the least danger to civilian lives and civilian objects."

I Avoiding "locating military objectives within or near densely populated areas."

I Endeavoring "to remove the civilian population ... from the vicinity of military objectives."

The enemy's failure to respect one or more of these precautions does not permit the other party to the conflict to ignore precautions on its side.

Medical establishments benefit from special protection under international humanitarian law. Hospitals and other medical units must be "respected and protected" and must not be the object of attack. They must not be used "to shield military objectives from attack." They lose this protection, however, if they are used to commit "acts harmful to the enemy."

With respect to individual responsibility, violations of international humanitarian law when committed with criminal intent are war crimes. This would include deliberate attacks on civilians, as well as indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks when committed with knowledge or reckless indifference to their illegal character.

Individuals may also be held criminally liable for attempting to commit a war crime, as well as planning, instigating, assisting in, facilitating, aiding, or abetting a war crime. Commanders and civilian leaders may be prosecuted for war crimes as a matter of command responsibility when they knew or should have known about the commission of war crimes and took insufficient measures to prevent them or punish those responsible.

International Humanitarian Law Applied to Cluster Munitions

Cluster munitions raise serious concerns under the above provisions. Cluster munition strikes in or near population centers are likely to be indiscriminate because the weapons cannot be precisely targeted. Cluster munitions are area weapons, useful in part for attacking dispersed or moving targets. Most cannot, however, be directed at specific fighters or weapons, a limitation that is particularly troublesome in populated areas, even if there is a specific legitimate military target within the area. When cluster munitions are fired into civilian areas, civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure are difficult to avoid.

Whether a cluster strike is discriminate must be judged not only on its immediate impact but also its later effects. Cluster duds do not distinguish between combatants and civilians and will likely injure or kill whoever disturbs them. The effects become more dangerous if the submunitions litter an area frequented by civilians or the dud rate is high (due to poor design, age, use in inappropriate environments, or delivery from inappropriate altitudes or distances). The large number of submunitions released by cluster munitions combined with a high dud rate makes the aftereffects in civilian areas particularly deadly. In that situation, the unexploded duds take on a character similar to antipersonnel landmines, which have been banned under international law.

The lawfulness of an attack may also be determined by its disproportionate effect on civilians. A cluster attack will be unlawfully disproportionate if expected civilian harm outweighs anticipated military advantage.

This does not just mean immediate civilian losses, but also encompasses casualties over time - it is increasingly accepted that long-term effects should be a factor in judging the proportionality of cluster munition attacks. The preamble of the final declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons recognizes "the foreseeable effects of explosive remnants of war on civilian populations as a factor to be considered in applying the international humanitarian law rules on proportionality in attack and precautions in attack."

States parties, including Israel and the United States, adopted this language on November 17, 2006.

Taking into account both strike and post-strike civilian harm greatly increases the likelihood that the loss will be excessive in relation to the military advantage, especially if an attack occurred in a populated area or an area to which people might return. Based on its field research in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, as well as Lebanon,

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Human Rights Watch believes that when cluster munitions are used in any type of populated area, there should be a strong, if rebuttable, presumption that an attack is disproportionate.

States are legally bound to minimize civilian harm. Taking "all feasible precautions" to do so entails a legal obligation to choose means and methods of attack that would minimize harm to civilians, or even to cancel or refrain from attack where the attack can be expected to cause disproportionate harm to civilians. Given the high potential for cluster weapons to be disproportionate and indiscriminate, states should avoid strikes in or near population centers and minimize the long-term effects of duds.

Israel and Cluster Munitions

Israel has made few public remarks regarding its general policy toward cluster munitions, despite its long history of use, production, and trade of the weapon.

Israel is party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons but did not support a proposal at the CCW Review Conference in November 2006 to begin negotiations on cluster munitions within the CCW.⁵⁰ Israel was also not among the states that gathered in Oslo in February 2007, Lima in May 2007, and Vienna in December 2007 to commit to negotiating a new cluster munitions treaty outside the CCW. Israel has not ratified CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, although it participated in the development of the protocol in 2003 and has expressed support for it. The protocol has provisions regarding the obligations of the user of weapons that become explosive remnants, including cluster munitions, to assist with the cleanup.

Use, Production, Trade, and Stockpiling

Prior to 2006, Israel had used cluster munitions in Syria in 1973 and in Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. During the 1978 and 1982 Lebanon conflicts, the United States placed restrictions on the use of its cluster munitions by Israel, although this appeared to have little impact. Indeed, in response to Israel's use of cluster munitions in 1982 and the civilian casualties that they caused, the United States issued a moratorium on the transfer of cluster munitions to Israel. The moratorium was lifted in 1988. Unexploded cluster submunitions from the weapons used more than two decades ago - though far less extensive than in 2006 - continued to affect Lebanon up to the beginning of the 2006 conflict.

Israel is a major producer and exporter of cluster munitions. Israel Military Industries (IMI), an Israeli government-owned weapons manufacturer, has produced, license produced, and exported artillery projectiles (105mm, 122mm, 130mm, 152mm, 155mm, 175mm, and 203mm), mortar bombs (120mm), and rockets (TCS, EXTRA, GRADLAR, and LAR-160) with submunitions.

Most notably, it has produced artillery projectiles and ground rockets containing the M85 Dual Purpose Improved Conventional Munition (DPICM) submunition equipped with a back-up pyrotechnic self-destruct fuze. Experts have touted the M85 as among the most reliable and sophisticated submunitions in existence, but as discussed in the Civilian Harm chapter below, it performed poorly in Lebanon in 2006. IMI reported that by 2002 it had produced more than 60 million M85 DPICM submunitions. IMI concluded licensing agreements in 2004 with companies in India (Indian Ordnance Factories) and the United States (Alliant Techsystems) to produce M85 DPICMs. Companies in Argentina (CITEFA), Germany (Rheinmetall), Romania (Romtecnica), and Switzerland (RAUG Armasuisse) have assembled or produced these submunitions under license to Israel.

Israel also produces several types of air-dropped cluster munitions. The Rafael Corporation is credited with producing the ATAP-300, ATAP-500, ATAP-1000 RAM, TAL-1, and TAL-2 cluster bombs, as well as the BARAD Helicopter Submunition Dispenser.

Israel has imported M26 rockets with 644 DPICMs each from the United States for its MLRS launchers. Experienced Israeli non-commissioned officers leading platoons with an MLRS unit told Human Rights Watch that prior to the 2006 conflict, the Israeli military's stockpile of M26 rockets totaled approximately 18,000. These weapons would contain about 11.6 million submunitions.

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Israel has also imported from the United States M483A1 155mm artillery projectiles with 88 or 72 DPICMs each, Rockeye cluster bombs with 247 Mk 118 bomblets each, and CBU-58B cluster bombs with 650 BLU-63 bomblets each.

In addition to the US-supplied M26 rockets, IMI has produced a new MLRS rocket called the Trajectory Correction System (TCS). Dubbed "Destroyer" by the Israeli military, Israeli media first reported its use in Lebanon on July 17, 2006. According to IMI, the TCS "improves the accuracy of free flight artillery rockets to that of conventional tube artillery ... By providing in-flight trajectory correction, the system simultaneously controls up to 12 rockets in the air, increasing engagement potential while reducing the number of rockets needed per target."⁶¹ The TCS underwent operational testing in April 2006 and reportedly reduces the circular error probable (the radius of the area in which half of rockets can be expected to fall) for rocket impact to less than 50 meters at a maximum range of 40 kilometers. The number of M85 dual-purpose submunitions contained in each TCS rocket is not publicly known. The US company Lockheed Martin won a contract in 1998 to produce 1,974 rocket motors for integration with the TCS warhead.

Types of Cluster Munitions and Submunitions Used in Lebanon

In the 2006 conflict in Lebanon, Israel used cluster munitions delivered by artillery projectiles, ground rockets, and aircraft bombs carrying five main types of submunitions: M42, M46, M77, M85 (with and without self-destruct devices), and BLU-63. These submunition types are unguided weapons that pose grave danger to civilians because of their inaccuracy, wide dispersal pattern, and high dud rates. Human Rights Watch researchers documented each of the five types lying unexploded in villages and surrounding fields in South Lebanon.

The M42, M46, M77, and M85 submunitions are DPICMs whose purpose is to injure persons and pierce armor. The majority of submunitions found in Lebanon have been DPICMs. These submunitions are cylinder shaped; civilians often describe them as resembling batteries. Connected to the top of each of these submunitions is a white ribbon that unfurls when the submunition is released. The ribbon both releases the firing pin, thus arming the submunition, and orients the submunition so that it falls with its shaped charge facing downward. The shaped charge is a concave copper cone inside a DPICM designed to explode and pierce armor when it hits perpendicular to its target. A metal fragmentation cylinder is designed to explode and kill people.

M42 and M46 submunitions are delivered by M483A1 155mm artillery projectiles. Each projectile carries 88 M42 and M46 submunitions. Both the submunitions and the projectiles were made in the United States. The submunitions are able to penetrate more than 2.5 inches of armor. The test condition failure rate of these two submunitions is between 3 and 14 percent.

As of January 2008, clearance personnel have destroyed 46,082 unexploded M42 and M46 submunitions, 33 percent of the total number of duds destroyed.

Israel also widely used the M77 in Lebanon. M77 submunitions are delivered by M26 MLRS rockets. The launchers, rockets, and submunitions were produced in the United States. Each rocket contains 644 M77 submunitions, and each MLRS can fire up to 12 rockets at once. A typical volley of six rockets would release 3,864 submunitions over an area with a one-kilometer radius. Called "Steel Rain" by Gulf War soldiers, the submunitions can pierce up to four inches of armor. The M77, visually distinguishable from the M42 and M46 by its white stripe, has a reported test condition failure rate of 5 to 23 percent.⁶⁹ The US use of M26 rockets in Iraq in 2003 caused hundreds of civilian casualties. Deminers in Lebanon have cleared more M77s than any other type of submunition - 57,271 submunitions, which represent 41 percent of the total.

M85 submunitions are delivered by M395 and M396 155mm artillery projectiles, which contain 63 and 49 M85 submunitions, respectively. The submunitions and the projectiles were made in Israel. Israel has produced at least two versions of the M85 submunition, an older model similar to the M42, M46, and M77, and a newer model with a self-destruct device. Many military experts consider the newer version to be one of the most reliable and sophisticated submunitions in existence.

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The submunition's reported failure rate is 1.3 to 2.3 percent under test conditions. Based on a study of strike locations where the self-destruct models landed, however, both weapons experts and MACC SL estimate that the self-destruct M85s had an actual failure rate 10 percent or higher. Clearance groups have destroyed 6,892 M85s with and without self-destruct systems, 5 percent of the total number of submunitions found in Lebanon.

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Rights charter hateful work; Arbour's judgment suspect after initial support of charter

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Byline: Calgary Herald

Body

Human rights are just that -- rights for all humans, regardless of political ideology, ethnicity, religion or other category. That simple message seemed at first to be lost on Louise Arbour, the UN high commissioner for human rights, when she uttered her support for an Arab charter on human rights that states "efforts must be deployed for (the) elimination" of Zionism.

Arbour backed away from those comments a day later, claiming she actually had qualms about the charter's wording. Someone behind the scenes must have told her that cherry-picking among human rights by political ideology brilliantly evokes that Orwellian observation from *Animal Farm*: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." As a Canadian, her cheerleading for a charter whose declarations reflect the stated goal of Hamas, Hezbollah and the late Yasser Arafat, of wiping out Israel, was a shameful mark on Canada, whose government has unequivocally affirmed its support for the only democracy in the Middle East. Arbour's early stance was also a reflection of the sadly misguided position of the left, which sees itself as a champion of the underdog. In this case, the underdogs are deemed to be the Palestinians, although unwilling to look any further into the reasons for that, this faction fails to comprehend that the Palestinians are underdogs because they are forced to live under the thumb of oppressive, dictatorial regimes. They are the victims, not of Israel, but of their own despotic leaders. Their poverty, lack of job opportunities, low levels of literacy and failure to make economic progress are the direct effects of living under such regimes, not of being neighbours with Israel. Those who attack "Zionism" which is merely the right of Israel to exist, would be highly unlikely to attack "Americanism" or "Canadianism," denying those countries the right to exist, in the same manner they deny Israel.

This type of skewed thinking also leads to the fostering of selective wrath -- for example, Israel is often bitterly assailed for building a wall in the West Bank, but the wall between Egypt and Gaza, erected by Arab nations, goes unmentioned and uncriticized. Israel continues to be the only nation that is condemned for defending itself against attack, and the only democracy that comes under fire by people living in other democratic countries, for trying to defend the principles of democracy which these same people otherwise approve. This type of thinking is epitomized by Naomi Klein in her new book, *The Shock Doctrine*, when she accuses Israel of attacking Lebanon in the summer of 2006, without ever mentioning that thousands of missiles fired by Hezbollah had rained down upon Israel first before Israel finally moved to retaliate and defend itself.

It was equally shameful for Arbour to be seen supporting a document which makes a mockery of Arab women's rights with its backhanded acknowledgment of "positive discrimination" established for women "by the Islamic

Rights charter hateful work; Arbour's judgment suspect after initial support of charter

sharia (and) other divine laws." Had Arbour never heard of how women suffer under sharia and other so-called "divine" laws, including everything from not being allowed to drive cars to the fairly common occurrence of honour killings of women by their own brothers and fathers?

Arbour should never have lent any stamp of legitimacy to this profoundly flawed Arab charter. True declarations of human rights advocate peaceful co-existence and equal rights for everyone. Arbour needs to re-read her copy of Animal Farm.

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Pro-Israeli professor speaks out at Hillel

The Daily Cougar: University of Houston

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University Wire

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Body

There wont be an easy answer for a long-lasting peace in Israel as long as Palestinians continue to actively promote violence in the region, Harvard visiting professor and former Deputy National Security Advisor in Israel Chuck Freilich said.

"I think the amazing thing is that Israel has tolerated this as long as it has," Freilich said.

The Houston Hillel, a branch of the national organization for Jewish campus life, invited Freilich to speak Thursday at the A.D. Bruce Religion Center.

Freilich believes that Israel has attempted a number of times to offer a fair agreement to the Palestinians, but terrorist organizations like *Hezbollah* and Hamas want all or nothing when it comes to land concessions.

The country has offered land concessions to the Palestinians as recently as 2006, the New York Times reported. Israel, in an attempt for peace, withdrew from the Gaza Strip in September 2005.

"Seventy seven percent of Israelis favor major land concessions," he said.

Freilich said he would be in favor of Israel having discussions with Hamas if it meant that the discussions would result in peace.

"Im tired of morality and ideology-III talk to anyone," Freilich said. "Anything more than a temporary ceasefire. Its got to be long-term to be worthwhile."

Since September 2000 approximately 1,033 Israelis and more than 4,000 Palestinians have been killed by in the conflict, according to www.ifamericansknew.org.

Despite the violence in the region, Israel is prospering. The cultural life in the country is endlessly amazing and it is an up and coming silicon valley when it comes to technology, Freilich said.

Freilich did concede that Palestinians are not in an easy situation right now.

"Palestinians are in a really unenviable condition," Freilich said.

Pro- Israeli professor speaks out at Hillel

He said the Iranians have not helped the situation by contributing to organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, but that support could be stemmed if sanctions were involved.

"Iran is very vulnerable to international sanctions if the international community ever gets its act together," Freilich said.

As a world leader, the United States has an obligation to help promote peace in the region, Freilich said.

"Theres a price to being a superpower," he said.

The West Bank isnt the only region in the Arab world with its share of problems. Saudi Arabia severely restricts the rights of women, and Iraq is in turmoil with no end in sight.

"If the Arab world wants to live in dictatorships and autocratic regimes, it is their problem," Freilich said. "The Mideast isnt just dealing with its own problems, its exporting them to the rest of the world."

Eventually the Palestinians must stop depending on Israel and the rest of the world for economic support and build their own economy, he said.

Freilich also wondered how to strengthen somebody who is himself a good person, but who represents an organization that launches rockets at civilians and wages an onslaught of daily terror, including suicide bombings.

Israel is in a difficult situation because it wants peace, but it has the responsibility of defending its citizens from suicide bombers and rocket attacks.

"The Israeli governments responsibility is to Israeli people to provide security for Israelis, its not to take care of the Palestinians," Freilich said.

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Freed prisoners receive hero's welcome in Ramallah. Abbas: PA won't rest until all prisoners are free * Netanyahu, Mofaz slam release as 'big mistake'

The Jerusalem Post

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Byline: DALIA NAMMARI, AP; Gil Hoffman contributed to this report.

Body

Israel freed nearly 200 jailed Palestinians on Monday - including a terrorist mastermind from the 1970s who became the Jewish state's longest serving Palestinian prisoner - in a goodwill gesture made hours before US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's latest peace mission to the region.

At the start of her visit, Rice praised the Israeli gesture: "This is something that matters a lot to the Palestinians, it matters a lot to the Palestinian people and it is obviously a sign of goodwill."

The prisoners received a hero's welcome upon their return to the West Bank, where thousands of people joined celebrations at the Ramallah headquarters of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and elsewhere throughout the West Bank.

"We will not rest until the prisoners are freed and the jails are empty," Abbas told the cheering crowd.

However, a moment of tragedy marred the joyous occasion when, according to the mayor of Yamoun, a crowded balcony gave way in the village, killing a nine-year-old girl and injuring 16 others. Relatives had crowded onto the rickety balcony to await the arrival of Muhammad Abahra, freed after eight years in prison.

In Israel, the government came under fire for freeing Palestinian prisoners without receiving anything in return.

Opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu said that releasing the prisoners would weaken Israel and would not strengthen moderate Palestinians.

"The crumbling Kadima government continues to demonstrate weakness that causes national humiliation," Netanyahu said.

Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz, who is running for leadership of the Kadima Party and who voted against the prisoner release in the cabinet last week, again voiced his opposition on Monday, saying Israel should only be freeing prisoners for captured soldier Gilad Schalit.

"I ask: Why are we releasing prisoners with blood on their hands?" Mofaz said. "We will have to release prisoners for Gilad Schalit. We need more determined leadership that will know how to maintain the interests of Israel - and the interest of Israel is to release Gilad Schalit. For that we need to keep prisoners to use in exchange for him. Releasing prisoners now is a very big mistake."

Freed prisoners receive hero's welcome in Ramallah . Abbas: PA won't rest until all prisoners are free *
Netanyahu, Mofaz slam release as 'big mistake'

The prisoners arrived in Ramallah after being released at a military checkpoint near Jerusalem. The prisoners, some waving black-and-white checkered keffiyeh headdresses as they stepped off Israeli buses, kissed the ground before boarding Palestinian vehicles.

Among the 198 Palestinians freed was Said al-Atba, who served 31 years of a life sentence for masterminding a 1977 market bombing that killed one woman and wounded dozens of others in Petah Tikva. Al-Atba, 57, was the longest serving Palestinian inmate in Israel and is widely seen by Palestinians as a symbol of all the prisoners.

"I feel like I've been born again," al-Atba told The Associated Press. "This is a victory over the handcuffs," he added, but noted that thousands of prisoners remain behind. "We salute them and we must do all that we can to liberate them."

His brother, Hisham, came from Saudi Arabia, where he works, to greet him. "I feel great, great joy," he said. "We had lost hope that my brother would be released because he's been in prison for 32 years."

Al-Atba's sister, Raida, said she had prepared her brother's favorite food, stuffed grape leaves and zucchini.

The fate of the roughly 9,000 prisoners in Israeli jails is emotional for Palestinians, many of whom know somebody behind bars or have themselves served time. Abbas, who is struggling to show his people the fruits of the peace talks, has repeatedly urged Israel to carry out a large-scale release.

"It's not easy for Israel to release prisoners. Some of the individuals being released today are guilty of direct involvement in the murder of innocent civilians," Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev said. "We believe this action can support the negotiation process and create goodwill."

Upon her arrival, Rice praised the Israeli gesture. "This is something that matters a lot to the Palestinians, it matters a lot to the Palestinian people and it is obviously a sign of good will," she said, calling on both sides to carry out more confidence-building measures.

Rice, making her seventh trip to the region since peace talks were relaunched last year, has been trying to broker a peace agreement by the end of the year.

Speaking to reporters on her plane, she acknowledged it was unlikely the sides would meet their year-end target, but said all sides remain committed to that goal. The talks have been complicated by Israeli political turmoil and Palestinian infighting.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is battling a corruption investigation, has said he will step down after the Kadima party chooses a new leader next month. It remains unclear who his successor will be, and whether the government will be able to stay in power.

On the Palestinian side, Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip from Abbas's forces last year. Israel has said it will not carry out any peace deal until Abbas regains control over Gaza. Both Israel and the US have labeled Hamas a terrorist group.

In the presidential compound in Ramallah hung a giant poster with pictures of Abbas, al-Atba and another veteran prisoner being freed, Mohammed Abu Ali, a lawmaker from Abbas's Fatah party.

Abu Ali was jailed in 1980 for killing 20-year-old yeshiva student Joshua Saloma in Hebron and later convicted of killing a Palestinian in jail he accused of collaborating with Israel.

In the festive Ramallah crowd was Abu Ali's wife Suad, 51, and the couple's three children: Ibrahim, 32, Palestine 29, and Leila, 27.

"When Muhammad was arrested I was 22 years old, my children were babies," she said. "My family's life has begun today."

Freed prisoners receive hero's welcome in Ramallah . Abbas: PA won't rest until all prisoners are free *
Netanyahu, Mofaz slam release as 'big mistake'

Also among those freed were a 16-year-old girl who had been jailed for trying to stab an Israeli soldier and a young mother who had been incarcerated since January 2007 and had been raising a baby behind bars. She was sentenced for ties to Hizbullah.

Wearing a long loose robe and a face veil, 30-year-old Khawla Zeitawi held her young daughter on her hip as she paused before the grave of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Palestinians say 74 women are in Israeli jails.

Israel has released prisoners to Abbas in the past, most recently last December. But it has balked at releasing Palestinians serving time for deadly attacks. It appears to be easing its criteria following a prisoner swap last month with Hizbullah. Under that deal, Israel exchanged Samir Kuntar, a Lebanese man convicted in a notorious triple murder, for the remains of two Israeli soldiers, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser.

Eager to bolster Abbas in his rivalry with Hamas, Israel says the latest release is meant to show the Palestinians that dialogue, not violence, is the best way to win concessions.

Hamas is demanding Israel free of hundreds of prisoners in exchange for Gilad Schalit, an Israeli soldier captured by Palestinian militants in a cross-border raid two years ago.

Graphic

2 photos: RELEASED PRISONER Said al-Atba is carried on the shoulders of a jubilant crowd in Nablus while in Ramallah, a dove is released as PA President Mahmoud Abbas speaks to released prisoners upon their arrival at the president's headquarters. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Time for Muslim community to move on; OUR VIEW The Sun-Herald

The Sun Herald (Sydney, Australia)

April 15, 2007 Sunday

First Edition

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Body

IF EVER a man only opened his mouth to change feet, that man is Sheik Taj el-Din al Hilaly, the controversial Muslim cleric sacked last week by the peak Islamic body that in 1989 appointed him mufti of Australia.

In a time of desperate need for an Islamic leader dedicated to espousing what unites Muslim and non-Muslim Australians, rather than what divides them, al Hilaly was the supposed voice of his people.

Yet no one could have been less suited for the position.

The sheik became notorious for pronouncements that might have been shrugged off as patently silly had they not been made by a person of considerable influence.

Infamously, he likened scantily clad women to uncovered meat, defended the September 11 terrorists and claimed Muslims had more right to be in Australia than Europeans, all the while insisting his mission was to promote "peace, security and harmony".

He was recently quoted as urging Australian Muslims to "stand in the trenches with the Islamic Republic of Iran". And his latest outburst included declaring himself more Australian than John Howard, who he described as an "almost Saddam Hussein-like dictator".

In the wake of each dizzy dictum, the sheik's apologists have insisted something vital was lost in translation; that what he meant to say was, in fact, the complete opposite of what he said.

Little wonder he has been labelled "a joke" by the Prime Minister and "an embarrassment" by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, while Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd has called for a review of the sheik's Australian citizenship.

A further shadow has been cast over the sheik's standing by allegations that he gave financial aid to supporters of terrorist groups. The Australian Federal Police is investigating claims that on a visit to Lebanon last year the sheik gave charity funds - donated to the Lebanese Muslim Association to help victims of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict - to supporters of al-Qaeda and Hezbollah.

Despite all the obfuscating by the sheik and other Australian Muslim leaders, the accumulation of issues reflects a man and a community in crisis.

Time for Muslim community to move on OUR VIEW The Sun-Herald

Last week The Sun-Herald reported that the sheik had been sacked by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC). The newly formed Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) voted to make the position redundant and replace it with a committee of clerics, and plans to meet this week to decide whether to terminate a three-month period of grace it offered al Hilaly.

From now on, since al Hilaly represents no one but himself, his rants should be denied the oxygen of publicity he seems to crave.

For the committee of clerics, the challenge is to present a new voice of Muslim Australia, speaking with unity and clarity, and to commit to healing a Muslim community rent by disunity and mistrust. Until this happens, the perception of that community will continue to suffer.

Responsibility for election comment in this issue is taken by Simon Dulhunty, 201 Sussex Street, Sydney, 2000.

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Hair today goon tomorrow

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8 - IE Edition

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Byline: CLARK FORBES

Body

COMEDY

YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN

(110 minutes, M)

The players: Adam Sandler, Emmanuelle Chriqui, John Turturro

Behind the scenes: Directed by Dennis Dugan, written by Adam Sandler and Jude Apatow

The plot: An Israeli Mossad agent fakes his death so he can re-emerge in New York City as a hairdresser

In short: Shuttle comedy

***1/2

A DAM Sandler is surely the most curious talent working in Hollywood today.

He's a chameleon. In the time it takes to figure out the former Saturday Night Live comic, he is back on the screen in a whole new persona.

Just when Sandler appears to be growing up -- witness films such as the melancholic post-9/11 *Reign Over Me*, or the anger-management exercise of the thoughtful *Punch Drunk Love* (2004) -- he flutters off like Peter Pan in the bizarre *Click*, or insists on remaking, very badly, *The Longest Yard*.

But his fans are forgiving. They know that, before long, Sandler can't help returning to his roots in freaky stuff such as the crazed, bad-taste outings of *Happy Gilmore* or *Billy Madison*.

And that's exactly the cue for *You Don't Mess With the Zohan*, Sandler's first collaboration with co-writer and Hollywood comedy guru Judd Apatow (*The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, *Knocked Up*, *Talladega Nights*).

The pair has reinvented Bad Sandler and he is in deliciously devious form, playing a sort of Israeli James Bond for the Mossad security service. Zohan is so tough he brushes his teeth with hummus and tosses off gravity-defying, no-hands push-ups.

Hair today goon tomorrow

No.1 on Hezbollah's Most Wanted list and with his super-sized crotch he's irresistible to women, but what he really wants to be is a hairdresser in America.

After faking his death in a ping-pong game of hand grenades with his Palestinian arch-enemy, the Phantom (John Turturro), Zohan flees the Middle East for New York.

Armed with a photo album of 1987 Paul Mitchell hairdos, Zohan reinvents himself as Scrappy Coco and lands a job in a hair salon run by Palestinian beauty Dalia (Emmanuelle Chriqui).

Before you can say ``blue rinse", he's offering the elderly female

clientele a lot more heat than a curling wand.

In the curious world of Zohan, horniness can save the world. But peace still proves elusive, with a Palestinian cabbie (an insanely funny Rob Schneider), who has a goat and a grudge or two to settle, hot on Zohan's trail, and a suburb-wrecking developer (Michael Buffer) stooping low to clear the way for a shopping mall.

John Turturro's Phantom, a sort of Palestinian Jackal, who also runs a fast-food chain, is a fine comic match for Zohan and Laine Kazan proves she is brave and up for anything.

And there are some of Sandler's trademark cameo roles, with the likes of John McEnroe, Chris Rock, Mariah Carey and Henry Winkler offering their talents in nifty vignettes.

Better still, Dennis Dugan, directing his fourth Sandler feature, has finally discovered he needs to drive it with the pace of an incoming scud missile.

And if the message of one big melting pot is a little bit too sentimental to swallow, you can't help wishing that Hezbollah and Olmert shared Sandler and Apatow's dreams.

Load-Date: June 21, 2008

Politics colours the cutting edge of the Beirut hairdresser

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

November 30, 2007 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 11

Length: 494 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Beirut

Body

RONI Nacouzi is a hairdresser by trade, a diplomat by necessity. As tensions in Lebanon soar his discreet little salon, a favourite with Beirut's political class, has turned into a minefield.

"People are very depressed and worried, and when women come in it's natural for them to start talking with their hairdresser about the situation," said Nacouzi, 32.

"But with things the way they are it doesn't take much to get people angry. I dread dialogue and I check on my employees all the time. We have eye signals we use when a political conversation is getting too heated, to tell the staff to change the subject back to the hair."

Expensive cars might be crammed onto the pavement outside, but the salon itself is a low-key and friendly neighbourhood establishment.

The well-heeled customers dress down for visits, and bodyguards have to wait outside.

Although he is too discreet to mention names himself, Nacouzi's regular clients include the glitzy wives of some of Lebanon's most senior politicians and generals, as well as female ambassadors and leading businesswomen.

But Lebanon's present bitter political and sectarian stand-off, pitting the ruling coalition of Sunni Muslims, Christians and Druze against the Syrian-and Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim movement Hezbollah, is making itself felt in Nacouzi's salon.

Not only are the various sects divided against each other but the Maronite Christian community - whose elite are among the best customers of Nacouzi's principal salon in Christian east Beirut - has split between supporters of prime minister Fouad Siniora and followers of former general Michel Aoun, a Maronite ally of Hezbollah.

Nine prominent opponents of Syrian influence have been mysteriously murdered since February 2005, prompting 40 government lawmakers to take refuge in a heavily guarded downtown hotel.

None of this does much for the social atmosphere, so Nacouzi has to juggle when women from rival factions want to get their hair done at the same time.

"You try and make sure that you book them at different times," he said. "If that doesn't work you put one under the dryer when the other is being shampooed, turn up the music so they can't hear each other - that sort of thing."

Politics colours the cutting edge of the Beirut hairdresser

He tries to maintain a strict neutrality, not always successfully: his salon's crossed-scissors logo happens to be the same orange shade as General Aoun's political emblem.

"The wife of one (MP) who was assassinated doesn't come to my place any more. I think maybe she thinks I'm an Aounist."

Nacouzi said that fewer clients were venturing out now and many had left the country.

But those who do still visit his salons are generally spending a lot more money, as if keeping up appearances is a form of comfort to them.

"A lot of them are getting their colour done much more often, so that they will look all right if there is a real crisis and they can't come here any more. A lot of the women don't even look at what's being done to them. They are too worried to care."

Graphic

PHOTO: Roni Nacouzi juggles the needs of the high-profile, often very political, clients at his Beirut salon.
PICTURE: JEROEN KRAMER

Load-Date: November 29, 2007

**Israel 'broke law' with use of cluster bombs Human Rights Watch details
'war crimes'**

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

February 18, 2008 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

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Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

The Israeli military issued a short statement on December 24, 2007, on the results of an internal inquiry into its controversial use of cluster munitions during the 34-day war in Lebanon in July and August 2006. During that short conflict, the Israeli military rained an estimated 4 million submunitions on South Lebanon.

Report

Editor's note: The following is the first section of a report issued by Human Rights Watch on Sunday, entitled "Flooding South Lebanon: Israel's Use of Cluster Munitions in Lebanon in July and August 2006." **The Daily Star** will publish the rest of the report on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Israeli military issued a short statement on December 24, 2007, on the results of an internal inquiry into its controversial use of cluster munitions during the 34-day war in Lebanon in July and August 2006. During that short conflict, the Israeli military rained an estimated 4 million submunitions on South Lebanon, the vast majority over the final three days when Israel knew a settlement was imminent. The inquiry was the second internal Israeli military investigation into the use of the weapon, and like its predecessor it exonerated the armed forces of violating international humanitarian law (IHL). Neither a detailed report nor the evidence supporting conclusions has been made public, however, making it impossible to assess whether the inquiry was carried out with rigor and impartiality, and whether it credibly addressed key issues about targeting and the lasting impact of cluster munition strikes on the civilian population.

Human Rights Watch's researchers were on the ground in Lebanon throughout the conflict and after, and our findings paint a quite different picture of the Israeli military's conduct.

Research in more than 40 towns and villages found that the Israeli military's use of cluster munitions was both indiscriminate and disproportionate, in violation of IHL, and in some locations possibly a war crime. In dozens of towns and villages, Israel used cluster munitions containing submunitions with known high failure rates. These left behind homes, gardens, fields and public spaces - including a hospital - littered with hundreds of thousands and possibly up to one million unexploded submunitions. By their nature, these dangerous, volatile submunitions cannot

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distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, foreseeably endangering civilians for months or years to come.

Israel continues to have a duty to investigate publicly, independently, impartially and rigorously these extensive violations of international humanitarian law.

Investigation should include a thorough examination of whether individual commanders bear responsibility for war crimes - that is, for intentionally or recklessly authorizing or conducting attacks that would indiscriminately or disproportionately harm civilians.

The continuing failure of the government of Israel to mount a credible investigation one and a half years after the end of the 2006 conflict in Lebanon - and failure on the Lebanese side of the border to investigate Hizbullah's compliance with international humanitarian law - reaffirms the need for the secretary general of the United Nations (UN) to establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes, committed by both sides during the conflict. The commission should formulate recommendations with a view to holding accountable those on both sides of the conflict who violated the law. The findings of this report by Human Rights Watch indicate that Israel's use of cluster munitions should be part of the commission's mandate.

Cluster munitions are large, ground-launched or air-dropped weapons that, depending on their type, contain dozens or hundreds of submunitions. During strikes they endanger civilians because they blanket a broad area, and when they are used in or near populated areas, civilian casualties are virtually guaranteed. They also threaten civilians after conflict because they leave high numbers of hazardous submunitions that have failed to explode on impact as designed - known as duds - which can easily be set off by unwitting persons. As yet these weapons are not explicitly banned. However, their use is strictly limited by existing international humanitarian law on indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. Moreover, global concern at the impact of cluster munitions, all too graphically manifested in South Lebanon, is lending impetus to international efforts to develop a legally binding instrument banning those that have an unacceptable humanitarian effect.

Israel's strikes in 2006 were the most extensive use of cluster munitions anywhere in the world since the 1991 Gulf war. Based on its own field response and a review of public reports, the UN Mine Action Coordination Center South Lebanon (MACC SL) estimated, as of January 15, 2008, that Israel fired cluster munitions containing as many as four million submunitions in 962 separate strikes. According to information provided to Human Rights Watch by Israeli soldiers who resupplied Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) units with cluster munitions, the number of submunitions used could be as high as 4.6 million. That is more than twice as many submunitions used by coalition forces in Iraq in 2003 and more than 15 times the number used by the United States in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002.

The Israeli military's cluster munition strikes were spread over an area of approximately 1,400 square kilometers north and south of the Litani river, an area comparable in size to the US state of Rhode Island (1,214 square kilometers). Within the 1,400 square kilometer area, deminers have so far confirmed an aggregate area of 38.7 square kilometers, including at least 4.3 square kilometers of urban land, 20 square kilometers of agricultural land, and 4 square kilometers of woodland, as directly contaminated by submunitions. Looking at the number of submunitions they have cleared compared to the number of strikes, clearance experts have indicated that the failure rates for many of Israel's submunitions appear to have averaged 25 percent, leaving behind vast numbers of hazardous unexploded submunitions.

Based on their personal observations, experts from Human Rights Watch and the UN have judged the level and density of post-conflict contamination in South Lebanon to be far worse than that found in Iraq, Afghanistan or Kosovo following the use of cluster munitions in those countries. However, it is not just civilians in areas currently known by deminers to be directly contaminated whose lives have been severely affected - people living throughout the 1,400 square kilometer area have had their lives disrupted, as they cannot live in safety until their homes and fields have been inspected and, if necessary, cleared by demining crews. The cluster munitions fired by Israel into South Lebanon caused serious and ongoing civilian harm. While immediate civilian casualties from the explosions

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appear to have been limited, the long-term effects in terms of injuries, deaths, and other loss have been considerable. As of January 15, 2008, according to MACC SL, the explosion of duds since the cease-fire had caused at least 192 civilian and 29 deminer casualties.

The huge number of submunitions used and the high dud rates have severely damaged the economy by turning agricultural land into de facto minefields and interfering with the harvesting of tobacco, citrus, banana, and olive crops.

In the first two weeks of the conflict, Israel launched a relatively small number of cluster munition strikes. Attacks increased in the days after the 48-hour partial suspension of air strikes from July 31 to August 1, 2006; Israeli soldiers serving with an MLRS unit told Human Rights Watch that it was in August that they fired many of their cluster rockets.

The overwhelming use of cluster munitions took place during the final 72 hours of the conflict, when Israel engaged in saturation cluster bombing, hitting more than 850 strike sites with millions of submunitions. According to the United Nations, 90 percent of Israel's cluster munition strikes took place over this brief period. A commander of an Israeli military MRLS unit told a Haaretz reporter, "What we did was insane and monstrous; we covered entire towns in cluster bombs." He said that, in order to compensate for the cluster rockets' imprecision, his unit was ordered to "flood" the area with them.

These strikes occurred after the UN Security Council had adopted Resolution 1701 on August 11 calling for an immediate cease-fire, but before the Lebanese and Israeli cabinets met individually to set the time for the formal cease-fire to take effect on August 14. At that time, Israel knew a settlement was likely to be imminent. At this late stage of the war, the majority of civilians had fled the area, but the imminent settlement would clearly lead civilians to return to their homes, many now either directly contaminated by duds or surrounded by contaminated land. It is inconceivable that Israel, which has used cluster weapons on many previous occasions, did not know that that its strikes would have a lasting humanitarian impact.

Israel has repeatedly argued that its use of cluster munitions in South Lebanon was in accordance with "the principles of armed conflict" and was a response to Hizbullah's deployment and camouflaging of missile launchers "in built-up areas and areas with dense vegetation." According to the Israeli military, the decision to use cluster munitions "was only made after other options had been examined and found to be less effective in ensuring maximal coverage of the missile launching areas." The Israeli government has told Human Rights Watch that its forces directed all cluster munition fire at legitimate military targets and that for humanitarian reasons "most was directed at open areas, keeping a safe distance from built up areas." When the Israeli military used cluster munitions in "residential areas/neighborhoods," it claims it did so "as an immediate defensive response to rocket attacks by Hizbullah from launching sites located within villages." The Israeli military says "significant measures were taken to warn civilians to leave the area."

Human Rights Watch's researchers visited the sites of cluster munition strikes and talked to local people. They found that cluster munitions affected many villages and their surrounding agricultural fields - locations used intensively by the civilian population.

Human Rights Watch also found that many of the cluster attacks on populated areas do not appear to have had a definite military target. Our researchers, who focused their investigation immediately after the cease-fire on cluster strikes in and around population centers, found only one village with clear evidence of the presence of Hizbullah forces out of the more than 40 towns and villages they visited. While some Israeli cluster attacks appear to have been instances of counter-battery fire, in many of the attacks in populated areas that we examined the few civilians present at the time of the attacks could not identify a specific military target such as Hizbullah fighters, rocket launchers, or munitions.

At this late stage, the final three days of the fighting, the majority of potential eyewitnesses had either fled or were hiding inside buildings or other shelter, making it difficult for them to see activity around them and thus for Human Rights Watch to prove definitively the presence or absence of Hizbullah military targets from interview testimony alone. However, the apparent absence of legitimate military targets in these populated areas matches our broader

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findings into the conduct of Hizbullah during the war, which revealed that Hizbullah fired the vast majority of its rockets from pre-prepared positions outside villages.

Furthermore, the staggering number of cluster munitions rained on South Lebanon over the three days immediately before a negotiated cease-fire went into effect puts in doubt the claim by the Israeli military that its attacks were aimed at specific targets or even strategic locations, as opposed to being efforts to blanket large areas with explosives and duds. Treating separate and distinct military objectives in a single populated area as one target is a violation of international humanitarian law, and if done intentionally, a war crime.

IHL, which governs conduct during armed conflict, requires belligerents to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants and prohibits as "indiscriminate" any attacks that fail to do so. Cluster munition attacks on or near population centers, like those launched by Israel, give rise to a presumption that they are indiscriminate, as the weapons are highly imprecise with a large area effect that regularly causes foreseeable and excessive civilian casualties during strikes and afterwards. Furthermore, none of the cluster munition carriers used by Israel was precision-guided. Only a small number of carriers had any type of guidance mechanism. None of the submunitions was guided in any way. These factors support the view that these weapons were used in circumstances in which they were incapable of distinguishing between any actual or potential military objects and the civilians actually or soon to be in the area.

Even in cases where the Israeli military was attacking a specific military target, its use of cluster munitions violated the principle of proportionality, the legal requirement that the attacker should refrain from launching an attack if the expected civilian harm outweighs the military advantage sought. There is increasing international recognition that when cluster munitions are used in any type of population center, there is a strong, if rebuttable, presumption that the attack is disproportionate, both because of the immediate risk to civilians and the predictable future harm from cluster duds.

In calculating expected civilian harm, Israel needed to consider the presence of civilians. Throughout the war, Israel issued general warnings to civilians in South Lebanon to leave through Arabic flyers and radio broadcasts. Large numbers of civilians fled the area. However, Israel undoubtedly knew that some civilians were unable or unwilling to go because they were poor, elderly, afraid of being killed on the roads, unable to secure transport, or responsible for family property. These civilians thus remained vulnerable to cluster munition attacks. This was the case in the 1993 conflict between Israel and Hizbullah in South Lebanon, and indeed during the course of the 2006 conflict the media was filled with stories on Lebanese civilians dying in Israeli strikes or trapped in place.

In any event, giving warnings does not allow the warring parties then to disregard the continuing presence of some civilians for the purpose of determining whether a planned attack is either indiscriminate or disproportionate. In the latter case, all potential harm to civilians remaining must still be weighed against the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated from an attack, and the attack cancelled if the damage to civilians is disproportionate. Furthermore, given the nature this weapon type and Israel's overwhelming use of it in the final days of the conflict, the lasting impact of duds must also be a factor in determining whether a planned attack is indiscriminate or disproportionate.

Given the extremely large number of submunitions employed and their known failure rates, harm to remaining and returning civilians was entirely foreseeable. Israel's use of old weapons and the conditions under which they were fired (often low trajectory or short-range) radically increased the number of duds. Israel was well aware of the continuing harm to Lebanese civilians from the unexploded duds that remained from its prior use of munitions in South Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. Unexploded cluster submunitions from weapons used more than two decades ago - though far less extensively than in 2006 - continued to affect Lebanon up to the beginning of the 2006 conflict. Furthermore, testimony from soldiers and the reported Israeli military prohibition of firing cluster munitions into areas it would subsequently enter indicate that the dangers posed by duds were known to the Israeli military.

Neither Human Rights Watch's research nor the limited information offered by the Israeli military provides affirmative evidence that Israel's cluster attacks had potential military advantage greater than the significant and ongoing harm that they caused. The paucity of evidence of specific military objectives, the known dangers of cluster

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munitions, the timing of large scale attacks days before an anticipated cease-fire, and the massive scope of the attacks combine to point to a conclusion that the attacks were of an indiscriminate and disproportionate character. If the attacks were knowingly or recklessly indiscriminate or deliberate, they are war crimes, and Israel has a duty to investigate criminal responsibility on the part of those who authorized the attacks.

Finally, the cluster munitions strike on the Tebnine Hospital on August 13, 2006, appears to have been in violation of the prohibition under international humanitarian law of attacking medical personnel, facilities and protected persons, including persons hors de combat because of their injuries. We have found no evidence that the hospital was being used for military operations, was housing combatants other than patients (i.e., those rendered hors de combat), or was being used for any other military purpose. These acts, too, must be investigated as violations of the laws of international armed conflict, and as potential war crimes.

Israel's cluster strikes prompted several investigations after the conflict. The internal inquiry results made public in December 2007 were a follow up to an initial internal Israeli military "operational inquiry" that had exonerated the Army of violating IHL, but which found that the Israeli military fired cluster munitions into populated areas against Israeli military regulations, and that the Israeli military had not always used cluster munitions in accordance with the orders of then Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz. Some Israeli military commanders vehemently rejected this charge, saying that they acted within their orders.

Israeli military statements have provided only generalized observations to justify cluster munition attacks, rather than case-by-case information justifying attacks on specific targets. For example, while indicating that there were deviations from orders not to target built up areas, Israeli military statements do not provide case-by-case information justifying why deviations occurred. Instead, the Israeli military claims summarily that "Israeli military forces used the resources in their possession in an effort to curtail the relentless rocket fire at Israeli civilians." Their statements do not explain the high saturation of towns and villages across South Lebanon. They do not give any reasons why dud rates were so high. The statements do not acknowledge the foreseeable future effects on civilians of high dud rates.

Two UN inquiries concluded that Israel's use of cluster munitions contradicted the IHL principles of distinction and proportionality. The US State Department concluded that Israel may have violated classified agreements with the United States regarding when and how US-supplied cluster munitions could be used. Human Rights Watch believes that cluster munitions stand out as the weapon category most in need of stronger national and international regulation to protect civilians during armed conflict. Urgent action is necessary to bring under control the immediate danger that cluster munitions pose to civilians during attacks, the longterm danger they pose after conflict, and the potential future dangers of widespread proliferation. Human Rights Watch believes that parties to a conflict should never use unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions. In 1999 Human Rights Watch was the first nongovernmental organization (NGO) to call for a global moratorium on their use until their humanitarian problems have been resolved. Governments should bear the burden of demonstrating that any cluster munition is accurate and reliable enough not to pose unacceptable risks to civilians during and after strikes.

International awareness of the need to address cluster munitions is growing rapidly. Most notably, on February 23, 2007, in Oslo, Norway, 46 countries agreed to conclude a treaty banning cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians by 2008. Another eight states joined the movement in a follow-up meeting in Lima, Peru, in May 2007, and a total of 94 states were on board by the end of the next meeting in Vienna, Austria, in December. The treaty will "prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians" and have provisions for clearance, victim assistance, risk education and stockpile destruction.

In 2008, governments will develop and negotiate the treaty at meetings in New Zealand and Ireland. "We have given ourselves a strict timeline to conclude our work by 2008. This is ambitious but necessary to respond to the urgency of this humanitarian problem," said Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. This initiative, which closely mirrors the Ottawa process banning antipersonnel mines, follows years of advocacy by Human Rights Watch, the Cluster Munition Coalition, which Human Rights Watch co-chairs, other NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and states. Lebanon has been a vocal participant in the "Oslo Process," while Israel has stayed away.

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States are also pursuing domestic measures to address cluster munitions. Belgium became the first country to adopt a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions in February 2006, and Austria followed suit in December 2007. Norway declared a moratorium on use in June 2006 and Hungary in May 2007. Parliamentary initiatives to prohibit or restrict cluster munitions are under way in numerous countries. Many countries have in recent years decided to remove from service and/or destroy cluster munitions with high failure rates, and some have called for a prohibition on use in populated areas.

International humanitarian law on the use of cluster munitions is in the process of development, but a consensus is developing that their use in populated areas is a violation, on account of the likelihood of indiscriminate or disproportionate harm to civilians both at the time of the attack and in the future because of unexploded duds.

The preamble of the final declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), for example, recognizes "the foreseeable effects of explosive remnants of war on civilian populations as a factor to be considered in applying the international humanitarian law rules on proportionality in attack and precautions in attack." States parties, including Israel and the United States, adopted this language on November 17, 2006.

Human Rights Watch believes that the international community should move to establish predictable future effects as not only a violation of IHL but also as a basis for criminal responsibility. The tragedy that has taken place in Lebanon should serve as a catalyst to both national measures and a new international treaty on cluster munitions.

Methodology

This report is based on Human Rights Watch's on-the-ground research in Lebanon and Israel, supplemented most notably with information provided by MACC SL. It also draws on more than a decade of field research and documentary research on cluster munitions by Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch researchers were in Lebanon throughout the conflict and were the first to confirm Israel's use of cluster munitions when they documented the Israeli military's attack on Blida on July 19, 2006. At the same time, Human Rights Watch researchers working in northern Israel confirmed the widespread presence of cluster munition artillery shells in the arsenals of Israeli military artillery teams stationed along Israel's border with Lebanon.

Immediately after the cessation of hostilities, Human Rights Watch researchers traveled to south Lebanon, the location of the most intense cluster munition contamination. They spent six days surveying the extent of the damage from cluster attacks and conducting interviews. Researchers returned to south Lebanon in mid-September 2006 for several days and spent another week in late October 2006 documenting the ongoing aftereffects of the submunitions.

Our researchers investigated more than 50 cluster munition strikes, including strikes in more than 40 towns and villages in South Lebanon. They collected physical evidence of the strikes, took photographs, visited hospitals, and interviewed dozens of civilians who had been directly affected by the cluster munition attacks, including numerous men, women and children who had been injured by submunitions or submunition duds. Researchers spoke to many Lebanese in their towns and villages just as they were returning home. Human Rights Watch also met with demining professionals from the Lebanese Army, the UN, and NGOs who were cataloguing and clearing the vast fields of deadly submunition duds in Lebanon. Those civilians that had remained in these villages and towns at the time of the attacks, however, were usually taking shelter from bombardment, and so often unaware of whether there were any military targets or military movements in the vicinity.

During the conflict, Human Rights Watch on several occasions made inquiries with Israeli officials regarding use of cluster munitions, especially following the attack on Blida. Human Rights Watch made further inquiries immediately after the conflict, as the scope of use in the final days became clear. Human Rights Watch also called on Israel to provide information about its use of cluster munitions in press releases and public presentations.

In October 2006, Human Rights Watch researchers met with Israeli officials and soldiers in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to discuss the use of cluster munitions. Most notably, the researchers interviewed four soldiers in MLRS and

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artillery units that used clusters in July and August. In July 2007, another Human Rights Watch team met with lawyers from the Israeli military, who provided an overview of the Israeli military's position but no specifics about discrete military objectives. In this report, Human Rights Watch has utilized all of the publicly available statements on cluster munitions issued by the Israeli government, as well as statements reported in the media. It also relies on the interview with Israeli military lawyers and an Israeli document sent in response to Human Rights Watch inquiries, which briefly discusses use of cluster munitions and is annexed to this report.

Recommendations

To the government of Israel

I Prohibit the use, transfer, and production of unreliable and inaccurate

cluster munitions, including all of those types used in Lebanon, and destroy all existing stockpiles.

I Constitute and empower an independent inquiry to examine all relevant data and investigate impartially and independently the Israeli military's use of cluster munitions in Lebanon to assess carefully whether the munitions were used in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law. The investigation should address questions about deliberate use in populated areas, the timing of attacks, the quantity and reliability of cluster munitions used, the specific military objectives for each attack (or lack thereof), whether separate and distinct military objectives were treated as a single one for the purpose of bombardment, and whether there was knowing or reckless disregard for the foreseeable effects on civilians and other protected objects. The results of the investigation should be made public.

I Hold accountable, including through disciplinary action or prosecution if the facts warrant, those responsible for using cluster munitions in violation of international humanitarian law.

I Immediately provide to the UN the specific locations of cluster munition attacks, including the specific types and quantities of weapons used, to facilitate clearance and risk-education activities.

I Provide all possible technical, financial, material, and other assistance to= facilitate the marking and clearance of submunition duds and other explosive remnants of war.

To the secretary general of the United Nations

Consistent with recommendations made to the UN secretary general in the separate reports "Civilians under Assault: Hizbullah's Rocket Attacks on Israel in the 2006 War," published in August 2007, and "Why They Died: Civilian Casualties in Lebanon during the 2006 War," published in September 2007:

I Use your influence with Israel and Hizbullah to urge them to adopt measures to better comply with international humanitarian law.

I Establish an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes, in Lebanon and Israel and to formulate recommendations with a view to holding accountable those on both sides of the conflict who violated the law. Include investigation into the use of cluster munitions in the mandate of the inquiry.

To the government of the United States

I Press the Israeli government to mount a credible independent and impartial investigation into the Israeli military's use of cluster munitions.

I Cancel the delivery of 1,300 M26 cluster munition rockets for Multiple Launch Rocket Systems requested by Israel and prohibit any future transfer of unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions.

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I Make public the findings of its investigation into Israel's use of cluster munitions in Lebanon, as well as the agreements it has with Israel regarding the use of US-supplied cluster munitions.

I As the supplier of most of the cluster munitions and other weapons that Israel used in Lebanon, accept special responsibility for assisting with the marking and clearance of submunition duds and other explosive remnants of war.

I Prohibit the use, transfer, and production of unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions and begin destruction of existing stockpiles.

To all governments

I Take steps to ban cluster munitions that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm by participating in the international effort initiated by Norway to negotiate a treaty.

I Take national measures to prohibit the use, transfer, and production of unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions and destroy stockpiles of such cluster munitions.

I Prohibit the use of cluster munitions in or near populated areas.

I Provide support for submunition clearance, risk education, and victim assistance activities in Lebanon.

Cluster Munitions and International Humanitarian Law

Background on Cluster Munitions

Cluster munitions are large weapons that contain dozens and often hundreds of smaller submunitions. After being dropped from the air by planes or helicopters or fired from the ground by artillery or rocket launchers, cluster munitions open up in the air and release their submunitions over a wide area. The submunitions from airdropped cluster munitions are called bomblets, and those from ground-delivered cluster munitions are called grenades. The submunitions often have both antipersonnel and anti-armor effects. With very few exceptions, both cluster munitions and submunitions are unguided weapons. All of the submunitions used in the conflict in Lebanon were unguided.

The military values cluster munitions because of their wide footprint; they can destroy broad, relatively soft targets, like airfields and surface-to-air missile sites.

They can also be effective against targets that move or do not have precise locations. The military advantages of cluster munitions, however, must be weighed against their documented harm to civilians both during and after strikes.

The humanitarian effects of a cluster munition attack are often more serious than those of other types of attacks because of the submunitions' wide dispersal. Even if a cluster munition hits its target, which is not guaranteed because it is usually unguided, the submunitions may kill or injure civilians within the footprint. The inherent risks to civilian life and property increase when a party uses these weapons in or near populated areas. If cluster munitions are used in an area where combatants and civilians commingle, civilian casualties are almost assured.

Cluster munitions also produce deeply problematic aftereffects because many of the submunitions do not explode on impact as intended. While all weapons have a failure rate, cluster munitions are more dangerous because they release large numbers of submunitions and because certain design characteristics, based on cost and size considerations, increase the likelihood of submunition failure. Manufacturers and militaries have typically indicated that failure rates for submunitions under test conditions range between 5 and 20 percent. Actual failure rates in combat conditions have been higher, including in south Lebanon. As a result, every cluster munition strike leaves some unexploded ordnance. The dud, or initial failure, rate (i.e., the percentage that does not explode) not only reduces the immediate military effectiveness of cluster munitions but also puts civilians at great risk. Unexploded bomblets

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and grenades are often highly unstable and can explode at the slightest touch or movement, becoming de facto landmines that kill or injure civilians returning to the battle area after an attack.

At least 14 states and a small number of non-state armed groups have used cluster munitions in at least 30 countries and territories. While the number of conflicts in which cluster munitions have been used is still relatively limited, the danger of the problem growing exponentially is great. A total of at least 76 countries stockpile cluster munitions. Thirty-four countries have produced over 210 different types of cluster munitions, and at least 13 countries have transferred over 50 different types of cluster munitions to at least 60 other countries, as well as non-state armed groups.

International Humanitarian Law

During the war in Lebanon, Israeli and Hizbullah forces were bound by international humanitarian law, which requires parties to an armed conflict to respect and protect civilians and other persons not or no longer taking a direct part in hostilities. It also limits permissible means and methods of warfare. The most relevant IHL provisions are the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, to which Israel is party, and the First Additional Protocol of 1977, to which it is not. Protocol I codified and in some measure expanded upon existing law, particularly relating to the conduct of hostilities. Today, many, if not most, of its provisions are considered reflective of customary international law.

The principle of distinction is the keystone of the law regulating protection of civilians during hostilities. It requires parties to a conflict to distinguish at all times between combatants and civilians. Parties may not attack civilians and civilian objects and may direct attacks against only military objectives.

Military objectives are members of the armed forces, other persons taking a direct part in hostilities, and "those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage." IHL prohibits attacks "of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction."

Indiscriminate attacks include those that "are not directed at a specific military objective," those that use means that "cannot be directed at a specific military objective," and those that "employ a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited." Bombardments that treat as a single military objective a number of clearly separated and distinct targets are indiscriminate as well.

Another key principle is that of proportionality. Attacks that violate the principle of proportionality are indiscriminate because they are "expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians [or] damage to civilian objectives ...which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated" from that attack. When conducting military operations, parties to a conflict must take constant care to spare the civilian population and civilian objects from the effects of hostilities.

Precautions include:

I Doing "everything feasible to verify" that the objects to be attacked are military objectives and not civilians or civilian objects or subject to special protection.

I Taking "all feasible precautions in the choice of means and methods" of warfare so as to avoid and in any event minimize "incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects."

I Refraining from launching attacks "expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, [or] damage to civilian objects ...which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage expected."

I When circumstances permit, giving "effective advance warning ... of attacks which may affect the civilian population."

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I "When a choice is possible between several military objectives for obtaining the same military advantage," carrying out the attack that may be "expected to cause the least danger to civilian lives and civilian objects."

I Avoiding "locating military objectives within or near densely populated areas."

I Endeavoring "to remove the civilian population ... from the vicinity of military objectives."

The enemy's failure to respect one or more of these precautions does not permit the other party to the conflict to ignore precautions on its side.

Medical establishments benefit from special protection under international humanitarian law. Hospitals and other medical units must be "respected and protected" and must not be the object of attack. They must not be used "to shield military objectives from attack." They lose this protection, however, if they are used to commit "acts harmful to the enemy."

With respect to individual responsibility, violations of international humanitarian law when committed with criminal intent are war crimes. This would include deliberate attacks on civilians, as well as indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks when committed with knowledge or reckless indifference to their illegal character.

Individuals may also be held criminally liable for attempting to commit a war crime, as well as planning, instigating, assisting in, facilitating, aiding, or abetting a war crime. Commanders and civilian leaders may be prosecuted for war crimes as a matter of command responsibility when they knew or should have known about the commission of war crimes and took insufficient measures to prevent them or punish those responsible.

International Humanitarian Law Applied to Cluster Munitions

Cluster munitions raise serious concerns under the above provisions. Cluster munition strikes in or near population centers are likely to be indiscriminate because the weapons cannot be precisely targeted. Cluster munitions are area weapons, useful in part for attacking dispersed or moving targets. Most cannot, however, be directed at specific fighters or weapons, a limitation that is particularly troublesome in populated areas, even if there is a specific legitimate military target within the area. When cluster munitions are fired into civilian areas, civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure are difficult to avoid.

Whether a cluster strike is discriminate must be judged not only on its immediate impact but also its later effects. Cluster duds do not distinguish between combatants and civilians and will likely injure or kill whoever disturbs them. The effects become more dangerous if the submunitions litter an area frequented by civilians or the dud rate is high (due to poor design, age, use in inappropriate environments, or delivery from inappropriate altitudes or distances). The large number of submunitions released by cluster munitions combined with a high dud rate makes the aftereffects in civilian areas particularly deadly. In that situation, the unexploded duds take on a character similar to antipersonnel landmines, which have been banned under international law.

The lawfulness of an attack may also be determined by its disproportionate effect on civilians. A cluster attack will be unlawfully disproportionate if expected civilian harm outweighs anticipated military advantage.

This does not just mean immediate civilian losses, but also encompasses casualties over time - it is increasingly accepted that long-term effects should be a factor in judging the proportionality of cluster munition attacks. The preamble of the final declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons recognizes "the foreseeable effects of explosive remnants of war on civilian populations as a factor to be considered in applying the international humanitarian law rules on proportionality in attack and precautions in attack."

States parties, including Israel and the United States, adopted this language on November 17, 2006.

Taking into account both strike and post-strike civilian harm greatly increases the likelihood that the loss will be excessive in relation to the military advantage, especially if an attack occurred in a populated area or an area to which people might return. Based on its field research in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, as well as Lebanon,

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Human Rights Watch believes that when cluster munitions are used in any type of populated area, there should be a strong, if rebuttable, presumption that an attack is disproportionate.

States are legally bound to minimize civilian harm. Taking "all feasible precautions" to do so entails a legal obligation to choose means and methods of attack that would minimize harm to civilians, or even to cancel or refrain from attack where the attack can be expected to cause disproportionate harm to civilians. Given the high potential for cluster weapons to be disproportionate and indiscriminate, states should avoid strikes in or near population centers and minimize the long-term effects of duds.

Israel and Cluster Munitions

Israel has made few public remarks regarding its general policy toward cluster munitions, despite its long history of use, production, and trade of the weapon.

Israel is party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons but did not support a proposal at the CCW Review Conference in November 2006 to begin negotiations on cluster munitions within the CCW.⁵⁰ Israel was also not among the states that gathered in Oslo in February 2007, Lima in May 2007, and Vienna in December 2007 to commit to negotiating a new cluster munitions treaty outside the CCW. Israel has not ratified CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, although it participated in the development of the protocol in 2003 and has expressed support for it. The protocol has provisions regarding the obligations of the user of weapons that become explosive remnants, including cluster munitions, to assist with the cleanup.

Use, Production, Trade, and Stockpiling

Prior to 2006, Israel had used cluster munitions in Syria in 1973 and in Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. During the 1978 and 1982 Lebanon conflicts, the United States placed restrictions on the use of its cluster munitions by Israel, although this appeared to have little impact. Indeed, in response to Israel's use of cluster munitions in 1982 and the civilian casualties that they caused, the United States issued a moratorium on the transfer of cluster munitions to Israel. The moratorium was lifted in 1988. Unexploded cluster submunitions from the weapons used more than two decades ago - though far less extensive than in 2006 - continued to affect Lebanon up to the beginning of the 2006 conflict.

Israel is a major producer and exporter of cluster munitions. Israel Military Industries (IMI), an Israeli government-owned weapons manufacturer, has produced, license produced, and exported artillery projectiles (105mm, 122mm, 130mm, 152mm, 155mm, 175mm, and 203mm), mortar bombs (120mm), and rockets (TCS, EXTRA, GRADLAR, and LAR-160) with submunitions.

Most notably, it has produced artillery projectiles and ground rockets containing the M85 Dual Purpose Improved Conventional Munition (DPICM) submunition equipped with a back-up pyrotechnic self-destruct fuze. Experts have touted the M85 as among the most reliable and sophisticated submunitions in existence, but as discussed in the Civilian Harm chapter below, it performed poorly in Lebanon in 2006. IMI reported that by 2002 it had produced more than 60 million M85 DPICM submunitions. IMI concluded licensing agreements in 2004 with companies in India (Indian Ordnance Factories) and the United States (Alliant Techsystems) to produce M85 DPICMs. Companies in Argentina (CITEFA), Germany (Rheinmetall), Romania (Romtechnica), and Switzerland (RAUG Armasuisse) have assembled or produced these submunitions under license to Israel.

Israel also produces several types of air-dropped cluster munitions. The Rafael Corporation is credited with producing the ATAP-300, ATAP-500, ATAP-1000 RAM, TAL-1, and TAL-2 cluster bombs, as well as the BARAD Helicopter Submunition Dispenser.

Israel has imported M26 rockets with 644 DPICMs each from the United States for its MLRS launchers. Experienced Israeli non-commissioned officers leading platoons with an MLRS unit told Human Rights Watch that prior to the 2006 conflict, the Israeli military's stockpile of M26 rockets totaled approximately 18,000. These weapons would contain about 11.6 million submunitions.

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Israel has also imported from the United States M483A1 155mm artillery projectiles with 88 or 72 DPICMs each, Rockeye cluster bombs with 247 Mk 118 bomblets each, and CBU-58B cluster bombs with 650 BLU-63 bomblets each.

In addition to the US-supplied M26 rockets, IMI has produced a new MLRS rocket called the Trajectory Correction System (TCS). Dubbed "Destroyer" by the Israeli military, Israeli media first reported its use in Lebanon on July 17, 2006. According to IMI, the TCS "improves the accuracy of free flight artillery rockets to that of conventional tube artillery ... By providing in-flight trajectory correction, the system simultaneously controls up to 12 rockets in the air, increasing engagement potential while reducing the number of rockets needed per target."⁶¹ The TCS underwent operational testing in April 2006 and reportedly reduces the circular error probable (the radius of the area in which half of rockets can be expected to fall) for rocket impact to less than 50 meters at a maximum range of 40 kilometers. The number of M85 dual-purpose submunitions contained in each TCS rocket is not publicly known. The US company Lockheed Martin won a contract in 1998 to produce 1,974 rocket motors for integration with the TCS warhead.

Types of Cluster Munitions and Submunitions Used in Lebanon

In the 2006 conflict in Lebanon, Israel used cluster munitions delivered by artillery projectiles, ground rockets, and aircraft bombs carrying five main types of submunitions: M42, M46, M77, M85 (with and without self-destruct devices), and BLU-63. These submunition types are unguided weapons that pose grave danger to civilians because of their inaccuracy, wide dispersal pattern, and high dud rates. Human Rights Watch researchers documented each of the five types lying unexploded in villages and surrounding fields in South Lebanon.

The M42, M46, M77, and M85 submunitions are DPICMs whose purpose is to injure persons and pierce armor. The majority of submunitions found in Lebanon have been DPICMs. These submunitions are cylinder shaped; civilians often describe them as resembling batteries. Connected to the top of each of these submunitions is a white ribbon that unfurls when the submunition is released. The ribbon both releases the firing pin, thus arming the submunition, and orients the submunition so that it falls with its shaped charge facing downward. The shaped charge is a concave copper cone inside a DPICM designed to explode and pierce armor when it hits perpendicular to its target. A metal fragmentation cylinder is designed to explode and kill people.

M42 and M46 submunitions are delivered by M483A1 155mm artillery projectiles. Each projectile carries 88 M42 and M46 submunitions. Both the submunitions and the projectiles were made in the United States. The submunitions are able to penetrate more than 2.5 inches of armor. The test condition failure rate of these two submunitions is between 3 and 14 percent.

As of January 2008, clearance personnel have destroyed 46,082 unexploded M42 and M46 submunitions, 33 percent of the total number of duds destroyed.

Israel also widely used the M77 in Lebanon. M77 submunitions are delivered by M26 MLRS rockets. The launchers, rockets, and submunitions were produced in the United States. Each rocket contains 644 M77 submunitions, and each MLRS can fire up to 12 rockets at once. A typical volley of six rockets would release 3,864 submunitions over an area with a one-kilometer radius. Called "Steel Rain" by Gulf War soldiers, the submunitions can pierce up to four inches of armor. The M77, visually distinguishable from the M42 and M46 by its white stripe, has a reported test condition failure rate of 5 to 23 percent.⁶⁹ The US use of M26 rockets in Iraq in 2003 caused hundreds of civilian casualties. Deminers in Lebanon have cleared more M77s than any other type of submunition - 57,271 submunitions, which represent 41 percent of the total.

M85 submunitions are delivered by M395 and M396 155mm artillery projectiles, which contain 63 and 49 M85 submunitions, respectively. The submunitions and the projectiles were made in Israel. Israel has produced at least two versions of the M85 submunition, an older model similar to the M42, M46, and M77, and a newer model with a self-destruct device. Many military experts consider the newer version to be one of the most reliable and sophisticated submunitions in existence.

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The submunition's reported failure rate is 1.3 to 2.3 percent under test conditions. Based on a study of strike locations where the self-destruct models landed, however, both weapons experts and MACC SL estimate that the self-destruct M85s had an actual failure rate 10 percent or higher. Clearance groups have destroyed 6,892 M85s with and without self-destruct systems, 5 percent of the total number of submunitions found in Lebanon.

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Israel's latest indicted minister steps down; ARAB MP QUILTS OVER SECRET CHARGES

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

April 24, 2007 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 8

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Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Jerusalem with GUARDIAN

Body

ISRAEL'S Finance Minister Avraham Hirschson has stepped down temporarily to fight allegations of embezzlement, the latest in a series of Government leaders to face criminal investigation.

The minister is a key ally of embattled Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, himself the subject of two ongoing fraud investigations. His departure from the cabinet further weakens the Government only days before the scheduled release of an official report on the conduct of last year's war against Lebanon's **Hezbollah**.

Mr Hirschson, 66, is accused of involvement in the embezzlement of around 10 million shekels (\$A2.94 million) from a trade union he chaired and an associated charity.

Among the senior politicians being considered to replace Mr Hirschson is former justice minister Haim Ramon, forced to resign in January after being convicted of forcibly kissing a **female** soldier in his office. He is currently serving a 180-hour community service order working with horses.

Israel's head of state, President Moshe Katsav, has also temporarily suspended himself after prosecutors indicted him on charges of rape and sexual assault against several **female** employees in the President's office and in his previous government ministries.

Minister for Strategic Threats Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the anti-Arab Yisrael Beitenu party, is being questioned this week over an offshore bank account through which he allegedly received secret payments.

And the head of the Knesset foreign security committee, Tzachi Hanegbi, will soon be on trial accused of bribery and perjury in relation to a number of appointments he made while police minister.

Meanwhile Israel's most prominent Arab MP, Azmi Bishara, resigned from the Knesset at the Israeli embassy in Cairo this week in the face of undisclosed secret charges thought to concern his contacts with Syria and **Hezbollah** during last year's Lebanon war.

Dr Bishara had failed to return from a foreign trip last month in the face of mounting media speculation that he would be jailed upon arrival in Israel.

Israel 's latest indicted minister steps down ARAB MP QUITs OVER SECRET CHARGES

Last week an Israeli court lifted a gagging order forbidding the media from reporting that Dr Bishara was under investigation, but it maintained a ban on reporting the nature of the charges. Supporters of the Nazareth-born politician say he has long been a target for the Israeli political and security establishment because of his campaign to change Israel's status as a Jewish state, saying it should be a state in which all citizens have equal legal rights.

Israel's internal intelligence agency, the Shin Bet, recently defined this campaign as a "strategic threat" to the state. Last month Mr Olmert's office wrote to an Arab newspaper warning that the Government would act against any organisation seeking to challenge Israel's status as a Jewish state, even if they employed only legal means.

Dr Bishara, whose Balad party has three seats in the 120-seat Knesset, has been abroad under mysterious circumstances since early April. He told al-Jazeera Arabic television on April 15 that he had been questioned by police twice before leaving Israel.

Dr Bishara, whose aides say he is the victim of a political witch-hunt, said his options were to become "a martyr, a prisoner or an exile".

He is being investigated by the International Crimes Unit of the Israeli police, which deals with serious crimes committed either at home or abroad. -- With GUARDIAN

Load-Date: July 3, 2007

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No Styling, No Highlights

Evening Herald (Ireland)

August 14, 2008 Thursday

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Section: ENTERTAINMENT; Film

Length: 526 words

Body

In any other year it would take the turkey prize, but Adam Sandler has somehow dodged a bullet with this tripe, says GEORGE BYRNE

YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN

(comedy. Starring Adam Sandler, Emmanuelle Chirqui, John Turturro, Lainie Kazan, Rob Schneider. Directed by Dennis Dugan. cert 12A)

The state of mainstream comedy has reached such a low this year that I confidently assured friends I'd seen probably the worst movie of 2008 after the press screening of this abomination only for five days to pass before having to endure Mike Myers' execrable *The Love Guru*, a truly vile piece of work which makes *You Don't Mess with the Zohan* seem merely deplorable in comparison.

With the bar set at such subterranean levels by Myers, it looks as if Adam Sandler has dodged a bullet with this mean-spirited, ill-judged and largely despicable film. Co-scripted by Apatow, Robert Smigel (yet another Saturday Night Live stalwart chancing his arm and getting paid for it) and Sandler himself, with Dennis Dugan (the comedy mastermind who gave the world *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*) at the helm, what we have here is probably the worst premise for a movie to come along in several years.

In the hands of talented people you might, and it's a big 'might', turn some comedic capital out of the notion that Israel's top counter-terrorist operative (Sandler) would fake his own death in order to travel to New York and live out his dream of becoming a hairdresser. Instead, once a barely passable action sequence kicks things off, we dive remorselessly to the bottom of the barrel as Sandler's character fails to attract the attention of the salon of his choice but eventually finds work in a less-than-salubrious outlet.

And guess what -- it's run by a beautiful Palestinian (Emmanuelle Chirqui) who *The Zohan* quickly falls for. What larks, especially when you'll figure out a mile off that she'll just happen to be the sister of his deadly ***Hezbollah*** foe *The Phantom* (a wildly mugging John Turturro). However, before we get to the inevitable point where the Israeli and Palestinian shop-owners put aside their differences to thwart the aims of a nasty property developer, we have to endure almost two hours of rampant homophobia, racial stereotypes, lazycelebrity cameos, a baffling running gag

No Styling, No Highlights

concerning hummus and a series of mind-bogglingly gross asides in which The Zohan provides sexual services for the salon'selderly **female** clientele.

There's one vaguely amusing sequence in which a group of would-be terrorists contact a **Hezbollah** help-line, but apart from that You Don't Mess with the Zohan is a nasty and offensive film, one which should cause most viewers to question the mindset of the ostensibly intelligentpeople who'd deliberately sit down and foist such amisanthropic script on the world and expect to pass it off as a comedy. The writers should really be ashamed of themselves but probably reckon they wormed their way out of trouble by shoehorning a 'Hey, we're all the same underneath the skin' message in at the end -- but by that stage it's way, way too late to save the day.

H (if only for the fact that it's not as bad as the TheLove Guru)

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A cut and colour is a snip: keeping the peace is harder

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

November 30, 2007 Friday

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Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Beirut

Body

RONI NACOUZI is a hairdresser by trade, a diplomat by necessity. As tensions in Lebanon soar, his discrete salon, a favourite with Beirut's political class, has turned into a minefield.

"People are very depressed and worried, and when women come in it's natural for them to start talking to their hairdresser about the situation," Mr Nacouzi said.

"But ... it doesn't take much to get people angry. I dread dialogue and I check on my employees all the time. We have eye signals we use when a political conversation is getting too heated, to tell the staff to change the subject back to the hair."

Expensive cars may be lined up outside, but the salon itself is surprisingly low-key and friendly, with none of the chrome and glass, techno muzak and haughtiness you might expect in swish money-loving Beirut.

The well-heeled customers dress down for visits, and bodyguards wait outside. Although the 32-year-old is too discrete to mention names, his regular clients include the glitzy wives of some of Lebanon's most senior politicians and generals, as well as female ambassadors and leading businesswomen. Lebanon's most glamorous political consort, Nora Jumblatt, wife of the quasi-feudal Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, is among the habitués.

But Lebanon's present bitter political and sectarian stand-off, pitting the ruling coalition of Sunni Muslims, Christians and Druze against the Syrian- and Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim movement Hezbollah, is making itself felt in Mr Nacouzi's salon.

Not only are the various sects divided against each other but the Maronite Christian community - whose elite are among the best customers of Mr Nacouzi's principal salon in Christian East Beirut - has split between supporters of the Prime Minister, Fouad Siniora, and followers of the former general Michel Aoun, a Maronite ally of Hezbollah.

Nine prominent opponents of Syrian influence have been mysteriously murdered since February 2005, prompting 40 government MPs to take refuge in a heavily guarded Beirut hotel.

None of this does much for the social atmosphere, so Mr Nacouzi has to juggle when women from rival factions want to get their hair done at the same time. "You try and make sure that you book them at different times," he said. "If that doesn't work you put one under the dryer when the other is being shampooed, move them to opposite sides of the salon, turn up the music so they can't hear each other - that sort of thing."

A cut and colour is a snip: keeping the peace is harder

Mr Nacouzi says that fewer clients are venturing out now and many have left the country. But those who do still visit his salons are generally spending much more money, as if keeping up appearances is a form of comfort to them. "A lot of them are getting their colour done much more often, so that they will look all right if there is a real crisis and they can't come here any more."

Graphic

PHOTO: Born diplomat ... Roni Nacouzi, second from left, in his busy Beirut salon, which is the haunt of the rich and famous - from all sides of politics. Photo: Jeroen Kramer

Load-Date: November 29, 2007

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Iranian filmmaker bridges deep political divides with irreverence

Christian Science Monitor

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Byline: Scott Peterson Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: Tehran, Iran

Body

Masoud Dehnamaki's office is no longer made up to resemble the front line of the Iran-Iraq war, with sandbags, helmets, and gas masks - and a sign requiring preprayer ablutions before entering.

And few hints remain that this slight, black-bearded former militant was once a leader of violent vigilantes called Ansar-e **Hizbullah**. In the late 1990s he wielded a club - and the pen of the hard-line newspapers he edited - to provoke lethal clashes with students and attack reformists.

But Mr. Dehnamaki is a serial iconoclast, and remains so even as he shifts targets.

Today, those right-wing credentials are enabling the war veteran-turned-film director to challenge prevailing myths about the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, an event that defined Iran like no other since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Perhaps only Dehnamaki, among the pantheon of Iran's gifted film directors, could get away with the irreverent portrayal of the war in his film "Ekhrajiha," ("The Outcasts"). In taking that tack, he reveals how the sanctity of the "sacred" war, as the conflict is called here, is being redefined.

"The message is that this country is for everyone, with different political tendencies," says Dehnamaki, who volunteered at 16 to fight and spent three years on the front line.

"It's breaking the cliches, and many people did not like that," he says of the film. "In 'Ekhrajiha,' we knew how to play with those red lines [about the official version of the war], but did not cross them."

Such political moderation was once sacrilege to Dehnamaki, who in 1999 told the Monitor, "When you see some people here dressed in American-style clothes, you are seeing the bullets of the West."

That year, he was present during a brutal attack at a university where students had protested peacefully over the closure of a reform paper. The incident was reported to have left up to nine students dead and sparked the most violent street protests since the revolution. Dehnamaki was detained and interrogated; the official investigation found that the sheer presence of a "famous member" of Ansar "was provocative, because students recognized him."

Dehnamaki's leap across Iran's political divide - from hidebound regime enforcer to the director of a groundbreaking film that raked in a record \$1 million in 28 days - hasn't been easy.

Iranian filmmaker bridges deep political divides with irreverence

The director had already raised conservative hackles with two documentaries, one exploring a taboo subject in "Poverty and Prostitution." "Ekhrjiha" also brought stinging criticism from many quarters, and Dehnamaki's former Ansar-e **Hizbullah** comrades even made their own documentary to counter the film.

Even before he directed "Ekhrjiha," The New York Times noted that Dehnamaki's outspoken documentaries had made him "Iran's Michael Moore." He told the paper he had made mistakes in the past, by blaming people instead of "our rulers, who have become used to corruption and cannot fulfill the promises of the early days of the revolution about social justice and equality."

Dehnamaki refused to take the prize for the Audience Favorite film at the prestigious Fajr Film Festival last year, saying he wanted more recognition for his crew. But armed with popular kudos, the director is preparing to break new ground again.

A sequel that will have the largest cast in Iranian cinema history is under way. The manuscript sits enticingly on a couch in his office. And the project has grown further, into a trilogy of full-length films - another Iranian first.

"Even when I was a member of Ansar, I was a cliché-breaker," says Dehnamaki, whose short beard and long-sleeve shirt buttoned at the wrists speaks to a conservative style. "I tried for everything to be real, to show the reality of the war. When you show the fear alongside bravery, and defeat along with victory, people will accept it."

The story is based on the young men Dehnamaki eventually led at the front, a motley crew whose victory - sometimes measured in terms of survival against a superior Iraqi force - speaks to the wider beliefs veterans hold about the war. "We resisted eight years and defeated the enemy," Dehnamaki says. "This is a source of pride for every Iranian."

Cloaked in comedy, "Ekhrjiha" tells of a gang member named Majid who gets out of prison and explains his absence by pretending to be returning triumphantly from the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. But he is found out, and the woman he loves dismisses him as unworthy. Majid and several friends - irreverent misfits, junkies, and thieves who are disdainful of the official revolutionary zeal of the time - decide to prove themselves by signing up to fight.

The men are challenged by religious men as they try to sign up and are tested. How often have they been to Friday prayers? "Yes, I went, but I was caught in traffic and arrived at 3 p.m., so it was closed," replies one joker. "They said to come back on Saturday."

When the men finally make it to the front line, they are again dismissed by those who are ready to become martyrs, and who fight in God's name, out of spiritual devotion. "Their presence destroys the order of the war," one officer confides to another.

In the process, Majid is transformed. He risks his life, stepping across a minefield that has claimed several soldiers. Some of those who appeared to be much more religious turn out to be cowards or weak. "God, why did you bring me here to show me that they changed and I didn't?" implores one religious man who hides during a firefight. "God, you've won."

There was even a scent of subversion on the set, according to a "behind the scenes" film made by Dehnamaki that can be bought on the street. "Look, my whole body is trembling for the sake of these dialogues that are given to us," complains one older actress, worried about controversy and unaware the camera is recording.

She says she took the job for the "lowest wage" to pay for her own trip to Mecca, swear "upon the Koran" that she is not the kind of person who would normally say such things, and then hopes the film will finally not be approved by Iran's official censors.

"This is all the work of Mr. Dehnamaki," says the actress. "In this job you do not even have one moment of peace. Every moment your heart is about to sink, [expecting] they are going to come and arrest us."

But the film has had a spellbinding effect on its audience. Dehnamaki provided a "recipe of salvation," says one veteran observer, for Iranians deeply divided between hard-liners - many of them veterans who look down on those

Iranian filmmaker bridges deep political divides with irreverence

who did not make similar sacrifices - and reformists, who deem the war a historical footnote with little connection to their Western-leaning lives.

"In the audience you had all-chadored [black-cloaked conservative] women, and bad-hejabi girls [with loose head scarves]," says the observer. "He brought them together, side by side."

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The Obama-Bush presidency

The Jerusalem Post

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Byline: CAROLINE B. GLICK

Highlight: COLUMN ONE

Body

US Democratic presidential candidate Senator Barak Obama's trip to the Middle East has been a boon for his campaign's photo archive. The past week has seen the presumptive Democratic nominee feted by the leaders of Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Obama's foreign policy pronouncements have been a source of concern in the region, particularly in Iraq and in Israel. As The Washington Post noted Wednesday, Obama's announced timeline calling for the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq within 16 months is opposed by the US commander in the country, Gen. David Petraeus, as well as by Sunni tribal leaders. Moreover, although Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki seemed to support Obama's withdrawal timeline when he told Der Spiegel Saturday that he supports a withdrawal of US forces from Iraq by 2010, he later backtracked on that statement, telling Obama that the date needs to be flexible and based on conditions on the ground.

While visiting Israel, Obama said that he is willing to use military force to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. But he undercut his own message by continuing to insist that he favors direct US negotiations with Iran.

As for the Palestinian conflict with Israel, Obama says that he views the peace plan laid out by former president Bill Clinton as a reasonable "starting point" for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The Clinton plan calls for an Israeli withdrawal from some 95 percent of Judea and Samaria, and the division of Jerusalem, with Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount.

If that is the "starting point" for negotiations, it is worth considering what the "endpoint" would be.

Then, too, as Israel's withdrawals from Gaza and Lebanon demonstrated, all areas transferred to the control of terror forces become active bases for terror and jihad. Given the jihadist state of Palestinian society, how can Obama think that the reenactment of that same failed policy in Jerusalem and the outskirts of Tel Aviv will bring different results than it has in Gaza and Lebanon?

Obama presents his foreign policy plans as a way to "fix the damage" that he claims has been caused by the Bush administration's foreign policy mistakes. But the plain truth is that there is little difference between the policies he espouses and those of the Bush administration.

Indeed, any residual disparities between the Bush administration's policies and those Obama recommends were erased over the past month. As Obama works to project the image of a centrist pragmatist in foreign affairs ahead

The Obama -Bush presidency

of the US general election, over the past few weeks President George W. Bush has moved sharply to the left, feverishly implementing all of Obama's most radical preferred policies.

On Wednesday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice held a meeting with her North Korean counterpart, Ro Tong Il, in Singapore. The meeting followed North Korea's recent submission of an 18,000 page "declaration" of its nuclear activities.

North Korea was supposed to submit that document 16 months ago. As if tipping their hat to their own brazen mendacity, the North Korean report was printed on paper contaminated with enriched uranium that the North Koreans claim they do not possess.

Yet in spite of its lateness and its obvious mendacity, the Bush administration wasted no time announcing that Pyongyang's radioactive declaration was the major breakthrough Washington had been waiting for.

Immediately upon receiving the North Korean declaration, and while refusing to release its contents to the public, Bush announced that he is removing North Korea from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism. As far as Bush is concerned, Pyongyang - which has been actively involved in Iran's nuclear program and built a clone of its Yongbyon nuclear reactor in Syria - is no longer a US enemy.

As former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton wrote in The Wall Street Journal, "the administration has accepted a North Korean 'declaration' about its nuclear program that is narrowly limited, incomplete, and almost certainly dishonest in material respects."

For his part, Obama applauded Bush's about-face on North Korea. In his view, the only thing wrong with Bush's policy is that Bush hasn't yet met face-to-face with North Korean dictator Kim Jung Il.

BUSH'S DECISION to abandon even the pretense of seriousness in his handling of North Korea's nuclear program and its proliferation activities in exchange for a few photo opportunities is just one capitulation among many. Over the past week, it has been matched by a near- identical capitulation on Iran's nuclear weapons program - a capitulation backed up by a US nod to Teheran's quest for hegemony over Iraq.

Last Saturday, Bush broke his last remaining red line for dealing with Iran's nuclear weapons program by dispatching his No. 3 diplomat, Undersecretary of State William Burns, to Geneva to meet with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili in spite of the fact that Iran refuses to suspend its uranium enrichment.

From media reports of Burns' encounter with Jalili, it is fairly clear that Iran used the opportunity of American knee buckling to humiliate Uncle Sam for its gesture of good faith. Jalili presented Burns and his colleagues with an Iranian "none-paper."

A "none-paper" is a misspelled "non-paper" or a nonbinding position paper. Apparently, the misspelled title was just a prelude to the syntactically and grammatically incoherent Iranian essay whose content essentially boiled down to a longwinded Iranian call for the US to shove it.

Rice reacted to Iran's display of contempt with angry words this week. Rice said that Iran's paper was "not serious" and that if Teheran doesn't accept the US-European "carrots," within two weeks, the US will move to impose stronger sanctions on Iran for its nuclear weapons program.

It is far from clear though that stronger sanctions are even a remote possibility. Moscow apparently interpreted Bush's decision to dispatch Burns to kowtow to Jalili as a sign of American weakness. In the wake of Saturday's embarrassing exchange, senior Israeli defense sources told Reuters that Russia is planning to begin shipping its advanced S-300 anti-aircraft systems to Iran in September. The S-300 batteries can track 100 targets simultaneously and fire on planes 120 km. away. Once they are operational, it will be far more difficult for Israel or another military force to attack Iran's scattered, hardened nuclear installations from the air. It is hard to imagine Russia would go through with the controversial deal if Moscow believed that the US would do anything to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

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The day before Jalili embarrassed Burns, Bush made a move that calls into question the viability of his most hard-won foreign policy accomplishment - the independence of post-Saddam Iraq. Until last Friday, Bush had been clear that US combat forces will remain in Iraq for as long as necessary to prevent Iran from taking control of Iraq and to protect the oil-rich Gulf state from jihadists who share Iran's plan to transform Iraq into the next Lebanon.

Then last Friday, Bush signaled that perhaps staying the course is no longer his preferred policy. In a joint statement with Maliki, Bush announced that the two leaders have set a "time horizon" for transferring security responsibility over the country to the Iraqi government. While Bush and his surrogates have been quick to make a distinction between his "time horizon" and Obama's "timeline" for withdrawal, it is undeniable that by introducing a "time horizon" for withdrawal he has made it more difficult to argue against Obama's planned withdrawal "timeline."

Obviously US forces shouldn't remain in Iraq longer than necessary. But to ensure Iraq's continued independence and viability as a terror-fighting, pro-Western state, US forces will have to stay there for a considerable period. If the US commits to a "timeline" or "horizon" for leaving Iraq, it will induce Iraqis to begin cutting deals with Iran. This is the lesson of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon.

IN THE months leading up to the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, more and more soldiers and officers from the IDF-allied South Lebanese Army began defecting to Hizbullah. They saw the writing on the walls. They knew they would be no match for Iran's foreign legion in Lebanon without IDF support. And so they did what they needed to do to stay alive.

And if the US goes ahead with its withdrawal, it will find itself presented in the future with the same unenviable options that Israel faces with today's Hizbullah-dominated Lebanon.

It will either have to turn its back on Iraq - and on the memory of the 4,100 US servicemen and women who have given their lives in the Iraqi campaign - and allow Iran to take over, or it will have to reinvade the country - at much higher cost in blood and treasure than maintaining the current force in place. And like Israel's 2006 war with Hizbullah, a renewed US invasion will be carried out with far less leadership commitment and national resolve than is necessary to see that next round of war through to victory.

Then there is Bush's recent mania for the swift establishment of a Palestinian state despite the obvious fact that such a state would be a jihadist-run, Iranian- allied terror state. Here, too, there is no light between Bush's policies and Obama's policies. Like Bush, Obama is perfectly capable of visiting bombed-out Sderot and failing to notice that Sderot's fate is the consequence of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. While loudly proclaiming his commitment to Israel's security, Obama calls for an Israeli withdrawal from Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, and due sensitivity to the "plight" of the Palestinians who democratically elected Hamas to govern them.

This of course, is no different from Rice's repeated calls for Israel to curtail its counterterror operations in Judea and Samaria and to allow Hamas to remain in power in Gaza in the interests of "strengthening" Hamas-allied, terror supporting PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas.

When Bush entered office in 2001, he was faced with a raging Palestinian terror war against Israel. That war was the direct consequence of his immediate predecessor's decision in his waning days in power to throw caution to the wind in a vain attempt to leave a diplomatic legacy of peace treaties that would perhaps earn him a Nobel peace prize.

Yet in fairness to Bill Clinton, his intellectual collapse, which occurred on only one front, was nowhere near as radical or as strategically dangerous as Bush's abandonment of prudence on all fronts. Moreover, unlike Bush's behavior, which contravenes any possible political logic, Clinton's actions were more or less aligned with the interests of his party. In contrast, Bush is personally legitimizing all of Obama's radical foreign policies and doing so to the direct detriment of Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain's campaign.

Bolton wrote that Bush's policies have brought about "the early start of the Obama administration." Just imagine where we will be in the second, third and fourth year of the Obama era.

The Obama -Bush presidency

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Turkey's abandonment of the West

The Jerusalem Post

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Byline: CAROLINE B. GLICK

Highlight: OUR WORLD

Body

Russia's invasion of Georgia should serve as proof that there are some regimes that simply cannot be considered strategic allies of the West. And as the US and NATO try to assess the wreckage of their attempt to forge a post-Soviet alliance with Russian dictator Vladimir Putin, another erstwhile ally is showing that it too, cannot be trusted.

On Wednesday, Iran's genocidal, nuclear weapons- seeking leader, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, will arrive in Istanbul for a "working visit" with Turkish leaders. This visit represents a diplomatic triumph for Teheran. Since assuming office three years ago, Ahmadinejad has feverishly pursued diplomatic ties with Western-allied states in an effort to weaken the West's will to take action to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Turkey is the first NATO member to welcome him to its territory.

According to media reports, during his visit Ahmadinejad is scheduled to meet with President Abdullah Gul and with Prime Minister Recip Tayyip Erdogan. On the agenda are Iran's nuclear program and Turkish-Iranian financial ties. Turkey favors advancing both.

In recent months, the Turkish government has become one of the most outspoken advocates of Iran's nuclear program. At least publicly, Turkish leaders credulously accept Iran's dubious assertions about the peaceful intent of its nuclear program - which it refuses to fully expose to the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors.

As for financial ties with Iran, Turkey is working feverishly to expand them. From 2002, when Erdogan's and Gul's Islamic fundamentalist AKP party first assumed leadership of the country through 2007, Turkey's trade with Iran expanded from \$1.2 billion to \$6.7 billion. In July 2007, Turkey signed a \$3.5 billion deal to develop one of Iran's oil fields. Over US objections, Turkey is planning to finalize that deal with Ahmadinejad this week. Trade between the two countries is expanding so quickly that most Turkish businessmen will tell you that Iran is their hottest market.

TURKEY'S WARM ties with Iran are matched by its embrace of Iranian satellites and proxies like Syria and **Hizbullah**. Turkey was the first Western-allied state and NATO member to host Syrian President Bashar Assad on a state visit after Assad's regime assassinated former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. In 2006, Turkey sided with **Hizbullah** in its war against Israel. It even allowed Iran to transfer weapons to **Hizbullah** through Turkey.

Then there is Turkey's open support for Hamas. After Hamas's victory in the January 2006 Palestinian legislative elections, Turkey became the third non-Arab state after Iran and Russia to openly embrace Hamas. Hamas's Syrian- based leader Khaled Mashaal paid an official visit to Ankara where he met with then foreign minister Gul and senior AKP party officials a month after his Iranian- sponsored terror group's electoral victory.

Turkey 's abandonment of the West

The Turkish government's support for Hamas is complemented by its support for al Qaida financiers. In the summer of 2006, Erdogan endorsed his top advisor's donations to senior al Qaida financier Yasin al-Qadi after they were exposed in the Turkish media. And since entering office, Erdogan, Gul and their AKP colleagues have repeatedly accused Israel and the US of committing genocide against Muslims in Gaza, Lebanon and Iraq.

While both the US and Israel have voiced their displeasure with Turkey's embrace of their enemies, neither country has taken any steps to either discredit Ankara or to distance themselves from the Turkish government. To the contrary, both Israel and the US continue to praise Turkey as a strategic ally. Both insist that under the AKP, Turkey is demonstrating that it is possible to be Islamic fundamentalist and pro-Western. And both are enabling and indeed encouraging Turkey to act as an intermediary between them and their sworn enemies.

In Israel's case, Turkey has been mediating the Olmert-Livni-Barak government's negotiations with Syria. And in the US's case, it appears that Turkey has played a mediation role between Washington and Teheran. On July 17, both US National Security Advisor Steven Hadley and Iranian Foreign Minister Manoucher Mouttahi just happened to be visiting Ankara on the same day. Two days later, US Assistant Secretary of State William Burns met with Iran's nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili in Geneva.

In both cases, it is far from clear that either Israel or the US have benefitted from Turkey's increasingly prominent role in their foreign policy. In fact, in both cases, Israel and the US have weakened their position by allowing Turkey to serve as a mediator between them and their adversaries.

IN THE case of Syria, as Assad's recent visit to Teheran showed clearly, Israel's attempt to use negotiations with Syria to pry Damascus away from its strategic alliance with Teheran has failed. To date, the only thing its decision to hold indirect negotiations with Syria in Turkey has done is end Syria's isolation from the West.

As for Iran, the Bush administration's decision to allow Turkey to mediate between it and the ayatollahs has arguably emboldened Turkey to move forward with its Iranian oil deal. Beyond that, Turkey's success in convincing the Americans to actively pursue diplomacy with the Iranians paved the way for the US's humiliation in Geneva last month. During that meeting, Jalili made no attempt to reach an agreement with the US and its partners. And by joining the Europeans and the Russians in directly engaging Iran, the US facilitated Russia's announcement last week that it sees no reason to impose additional UN Security Council sanctions against Iran for its failure to agree to temporarily suspend of its uranium enrichment activities.

Like Russia under Putin, Turkey under Erdogan's leadership has masked its rapid transformation from a flawed but pro-Western democracy under its previous governments into an anti-Western - and in Turkey's case Islamist - regime by paying lip service to the West even as it has taken steps to purge its power structure of pro- Western voices. Just as Putin's popular government has taken brutal action against his political, intellectual and financial foes, so too, Erdogan's popularly elected Islamic fundamentalist regime has worked steadily to discredit, criminalize and intimidate its pro-Western rivals.

SINCE TAKING office in 2002, the AKP under Erdogan has taken control over Turkey's bureaucracy. It has weakened women's rights. It has launched brutal campaigns against its foes in the media, taking over opposition television stations and arresting and intimidating anti-Islamic editors and reporters. It has taken over the Turkish secret police and regular police forces. It has stacked the Turkish courts with its loyalists. It has enabled the opening of radical Islamic madrassas. It has penetrated the military and demoralized and intimidated the senior officer corps. It has ignored court judgments against it.

Through the police, it has launched a massive wire tapping campaign against its political opponents and has leaked embarrassing transcripts of these tapped phone calls to its loyalist press to humiliate and intimidate its rivals. It has used wiretaps of opposition journalists in police interrogations of their editors.

The only remaining secular check on Erdogan's government is Turkey's Constitutional Court. Last week, the court narrowly rejected the court's chief prosecutor's lawsuit calling for the outlawing of the AKP party on the grounds that it is seeking to overthrow Turkey's secular constitutional order. In their ruling, ten out of eleven judges did agree that the AKP is seeking to weaken Turkey's secular identity and ruled that it be denied government funding.

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In an apparent bid to both distract the public from the court case and to further delegitimize its opponents, the government claims that it uncovered a conspiracy by senior opposition officials, including leading journalists, businessmen and generals, called the Ergenekon plot to overthrow the government. It alleges that most of the terror attacks carried out by Islamic terrorists over the past several years were actually carried out by members of this secularist cabal. Last month the police arrested two retired generals, a prominent industrialist and a respected journalist along with 17 others in its prosecution of the Ergenekon plot.

In all of this, of course, Erdogan and his associates are mirroring Putin's actions in Russia since he assumed office in 2000. Like Putin, the AKP replaced a deeply corrupt, unpopular pro-Western government. While Putin has built his popularity on xenophobia and hatred of the West, Erdogan and the AKP have built their popularity on a rejection of secular Turkish nationalism in favor of pan- Islamism and hatred of the US and Israel. And as they have moved their countries away from the West, both Putin and Erdogan have managed to maintain good relations with Washington by going through the motions of supporting its war against terror even as they have both embraced terrorists and their state sponsors.

THE LESSON moving forward from all of is not that Israel and the US should turn their backs on Turkey. In an international environment that is increasingly hostile to liberal democracies, there is no reason to cut off ties with hostile regimes just because they are hostile. But at the same time, neither the US nor Israel should delude themselves by thinking that Turkey remains their strategic ally. It is not. And there are consequences to this fact.

For the US, beyond ending immediately Turkey's role as an intermediary with Iran, it would make sense to float the notion of removing Turkey from NATO due to its expanding ties with Iran. Just the suggestion of such a move would no doubt have a profound effect on the Turks. Certainly, the US should be reaching out to regime opponents and calling for Erdogan and his associates to end their attempts to repress the anti-Islamic media and secular politicians, businessmen and military commanders.

If the US is concerned about inflaming Turkish sentiment against it through such moves it should consider that since Erdogan took power, and as the US has bent over backwards to be nice to him, anti-US sentiment in Turkey has risen steeply. According to a recent Pew international opinion poll, today the Turks are the most anti-American society in the world.

For its part, Israel should reassess its willingness to sell sensitive military equipment to Turkey given its close ties to Israel's enemies. It should certainly stop its Turkish-mediated talks with Syria and reject Turkish offers to mediate between Israel and the Palestinians.

Like Russia, Turkey's anti-Western regime is promoting itself to the West by pretending not to be anti-Western. And as was the case with Russia up until it decided to invade defenseless Georgia over the weekend, the US and its allies have been willing to endanger their strategic interests to believe this lie.

It can only be hoped that the West will abandon this policy before it inadvertently paves the way for a new Iranian-allied axis of evil populated by the likes of Russia, Turkey and Pakistan. All of these governments owe much of their power to the West's willingness to believe that their anti-Western regimes could be trusted as strategic allies until it was too late.

Graphic

Photo: TURKEY'S LAND Forces Commander Ilker Basbug. Might the suggestion of removing the country from NATO scare it out of pan-Islamism? (Credit: AP)

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Turkey 's abandonment of the West

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'He is still our family member'

The Jerusalem Post
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Byline: KSENIA SVETLOVA

Highlight: On the surface, everything is normal in Jebel Mukaber. But to the more perceptive observer, the neighborhood bears the mark of last week's attack

Body

An IDF jeep stands at the entrance to Jebel Mukaber, a neighborhood in east Jerusalem. It's been parked here for almost seven days - since last Thursday when sounds of shootings exploded inside Mercaz Harav Yeshiva.

A few reporters wander around the block with cameras and microphones, looking for an unusual picture or a bold statement. But Jebel Mukaber disappoints them - when you drive along its quiet streets there is nothing to attest to the horror that shook Jerusalem a week earlier.

There is not a single picture of Ala a-Din Abu Dhaim, a 25-year-old terrorist who shot to death eight young Israelis and wounded many others, no green Hamas flags or yellow Hizbullah cloths. A few women run errands and children hurry home from school. On the surface everything is normal, just like Abu Dhaim was, according to his family.

Only an Arabic reader would notice one or two Hamas writings on the walls (most of the writings were erased and freshly painted) and Koranic verses that call for vengeance. And only after making a few rounds does one feel that life in Jebel Mukaber is anything but ordinary or normal.

Bearded men with rosary beads enter the house of the Abu Dhaim family - the stream of mourners still hasn't dried up. A large mourning tent with dozens of pictures of the terrorist is situated in the backyard of his father's house. The family elders sit on the mats, while younger men read newspapers - Hebrew and Arabic - in another corner.

Almost 90 percent of Jebel Mukaber residents hold Israeli residency cards, and many speak Hebrew well. Dozens of journalists have been here during the last few days, and everybody in the tent knows the procedure. The reporter is offered coffee and then immediately taken to the mukhtar - the family elder - who was designated by the clan to talk to the press.

He is eager to read the statement that says that "Shaheed Ala a-Din didn't show any suspicious behavior. He was engaged and about to be married this summer and everything that happened was a complete surprise for the family."

The old man repeats that he, just like everyone else, was surprised about what happened, but of course, everything is in God's hands. He denies that Ala a-Din or any member of the Abu Dhaim family belongs to or supports Hamas.

'He is still our family member'

As for the Hamas and Hizbullah flags that were hanging in the neighborhood immediately after the terrorist attack, he claims these were brought by other people "who came from outside."

He neither denounces the killing, nor does he praise it, but argues that the family is entitled to hold a mourning tent for Ala a-Din. "He is still our family member. Where do you want us to sit for him - on the sun?" he asks.

Well-phrased, smooth sentences leave the mukhtar's mouth while the rosary beads slide in his hands. The rest of the family is instructed not to talk to the press, although many would like to. One of the members of the clan approaches me on my way out.

"We never had any problems with our neighbors here, and we don't want to have any problems now. We just want to bury him and forget about everything," explains Nader (not his real name) who says that he learned about the shootings while watching Channel 2 news.

While answering a question about the significance of what happened, Nader will neither condemn nor praise the attack - like the mukhtar, he says he doesn't understand much about politics.

I ask him why Abu Dhaim did what he did - opened fire on innocent school boys. "Who knows, maybe it's Allah's will that he will die like this," says Nader reluctantly and disappears inside the house.

Muhammad, the owner of a small supermarket on the edge of the neighborhood also says that he was very surprised and scared by what happened, especially since he also works in Bikur Holim Hospital in the center of Jerusalem. "Abu Dhaim was just one person and I'm afraid that now all of us here will pay the price for what happened," he says.

On Tuesday, Tali Fahima, who was in prison for helping the head of the Aksa Martyrs Brigade in Jenin, visited the tent.

"I was with the family, and I have no doubt that the Israeli security forces are mainly just exacerbating [the situation] and causing civilians to be killed, like the yeshiva students, because of the years-long policy of occupation," Fahima told Israel Radio.

While some in Jebel Mukaber wish to forget about everything and move on, just a two-minute drive away some high school students stand holding handwritten signs. "Don't give a tent to terrorism" and "You, who killed - inherited," the signs read.

The protesters, most of them the same age as the Mercaz Harav students who were killed in the terrorist attack, knew some of the victims. They can't and won't forget what happened to their friends and peers.

One of the organizers, Moshe Jacobs, 16, says that originally they wanted to build a tent of their own where they could study Torah as a form of protest against the mourning tent in Jebel Mukaber; however their request was denied by the police.

"We got permission to stand here with the signs and this is what we will do," he says. He adds that he is appalled by the fact that while Jordanian authorities didn't allow Abu Dhaim's family to establish a mourning tent in Amman, they were allowed to erect one in Jerusalem.

"We demand that this mourning tent be destroyed because it will boost the growth of Islamic fundamentalism here, in the heart of Israel. This is a complete disgrace," a teenager says.

An old woman passes by the small demonstration. "Good for you guys," she says with tears in her eyes.

Livna Kohen has lived in nearby Armon Hanatziv for more than 15 years and says she was completely shocked by the attack. "I could never believe that just around the corner live hundreds of Hamas sympathizers. Come on, it's not Gaza or Jenin, it's Jerusalem we are talking about!" she says. "I guess Gaza is closer to home than we thought... no one there denounces this horrible killing! I'm afraid things will never go back to normal now."

'He is still our family member'

Back in Jebel Mukaber things go on as usual. The relatives of Abu Dhaim sip strong, black coffee and wait for the news indifferently. Their tent is still standing.

Graphic

2 photos: The mukhtar of the Abu Dhaim family. 'Everything that happened was a complete surprise for the family.' Hamas graffiti in Jebel Mukaber. Jordan didn't allow a mourning tent for Ala a-Din Abu Dhaim in Amman, but there is one in Jerusalem. (Credit: KSENIA SVETLOVA)

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Letters

The Jerusalem Post

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Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Selective solidarity?

Sir, - Jewish peace activist Edith Lutz, who lives Germany, boasts that her quest, following the biblical principle of "solidarity with the suffering," is to "help the suffering people of Gaza" ("We aren't lefties," Letters, July 29).

However, one gathers that for her and her fellow activists that principle does not hold regarding the tens of thousands of Israeli Jewish victims of Palestinian terror; nor the 8,000 Jews expelled from Gaza who are now living in insecurity and penury.

One wonders why a trip to Sderot to show solidarity with the seven-year-long suffering of its citizens from some 5,000 missile attacks from Gaza is not on her group's itinerary, for the sake of showing at least a vestige of "evenhandedness." The heavy toll those missile attacks have taken in human lives and physical and mental injury - mainly of children - as well as the resultant financial woes, have almost turned Sderot into a ghost town.

So, Ms. Lutz, how about your movement doing something to show it is not one-sided on the Arab-Israel conflict?

TRUDY GEFEN

Kiryat Ono

Sir, - I was deeply perturbed by Edith Lutz's letter, and would assert that she and her friends appear to be suffering from a pathological astigmatism which totally impairs their vision.

She quotes scripture - "Love thy neighbor as thyself" - but then defiles those sacred words by misdirecting her love toward those who educate and train their children for hate-filled terrorist acts and shows disdain for Israel when it attempts to safeguard its borders against these contemptible villains.

As Shakespeare pointed out, the devil can (also) cite Scripture for his purpose."

ZEV CHAMUDOT

Petah Tikva

Letters

Sir, - Edith Lutz proclaims her sense of injury that "our peaceful action was reported against the background of many people's fear that Iran might send weaponry to Gaza." Can she explain how her actions are going to prevent future Iranian weapons shipments?

GILBERT SIEVERS

Jerusalem

Raising eyebrows,

though not hopes

Sir, - Imad Mustafa's seven-minute interview raised my eyebrows not just one, but two notches ("Syrian ambassador to US tells Israel: Let's end the state of war," July 28).

In the first place, he spoke to a forum of Americans for Peace Now, which in itself speaks volumes. The group's representatives are already running wild with glee, as if peace with Syria was not only around the corner if Israel capitulates, but within arm's reach.

Yet Mustafa uttered not one word about keeping the Golan Heights demilitarized, or anything of the sort; nor a word about Syria's very inimical relations with Hizbullah and Iran.

I view the ambassador's comments as a sort of Trojan Horse - best left outside for very careful scrutiny before bringing it inside, if it is brought in at all.

YONATAN SILVERMAN

Beit Shemesh

Mistaken blame

Sir, - MJ Rosenberg is correct in pointing out that the last eight years have not been wonderful for Israel. But he is mistaken in laying the blame on the US administration that took over in 2000.

Yasser Arafat launched the "Oslo War" while President Clinton was still in the White House, having derived inspiration from Israel's capitulation to Hizbullah and retreat from Lebanon under the Barak government. Also, while Rosenberg claims that the years 1997-1999 were virtually "terror-free," according to the Foreign Ministry Web site, 65 Israelis were murdered in terror attacks during that period.

I hardly think their loved ones look back at that time as being one of tranquility ("When 'pro-Israel' means not giving a damn about Israel," July 29).

JOSH HASTEN

Jerusalem

Sir, - MJ Rosenberg attributed the quote "You can't be too rich or too thin" to Jackie Kennedy, when, as most people know, these famous words were uttered by the Duchess of Windsor.

JJ GROSS

Riverdale, New York

Every drop of

reporting counts...

Letters

Sir, - You have reported on the dire and dangerous lack of water in our land ("Knesset orders commission of inquiry into water shortage," July 29). Please continue. An ongoing bombardment of facts and figures by learned experts, as well as suggestions for water conservation from scientists, health officials and engineers is needed to break the pervasive "It'll be fine" mentality and help combat the attitude of "My using too much water won't make a difference anyway."

There is no greater public-service task for your respected paper to undertake.

C. T. HOLLANDER

Jerusalem

...when it

comes to water

Sir, - We are known as a nation that acts only after the fact; we never anticipate. This is a terrible mind-set when it comes to disturbing facts that have been long known.

When I came on aliya, people were aware that they shouldn't waste water. Water desalination was under way and Israel Bonds made a great fuss about hopes for the Dead Sea-Mediterranean canal. We have since worked extremely slowly in constructing more desalination plants.

Today there seems to be no public shame over wasting water and the Dead-Med project is still on the drawing board.

We have given water to Jordan, and continue to do so in the interests of peace. We are continuing to destroy our aquifers, and there is even talk of handing them over to a people that will squander the water and cause us increasing hardship.

We need an all-out, immediate national project focusing on short- and long-term solutions to our water problem. We dare not quibble about the cost, but must just go ahead and find the national and political will. When that exists, so will the solution.

If ever there was an issue to unite all Israelis, it is the issue of water.

TOBY WILLIG

Jerusalem

Separation bus

Sir, - Har Nof is home to all segments of the religious world, although the majority (not, however, 95 percent, as you reported) are haredi. When we moved in 20 years ago, there were about 10 secular families here (not 50% of the population).

The 15A bus line was started about six months ago. It runs mainly in the mornings and is an express route to the Geula neighborhood, where many men learn in yeshiva. It runs only about eight times a day, and is an added line, not coming instead of the regular No.15. I've gotten on it once, and neither the driver nor anybody else told me where to sit.

While I understand the reasoning behind this "strictly kosher" line - it is not always comfortable to have to move past men on a crowded bus - it has its problems. I have only boys, and would like to sit together with them. And what about women who get sick riding in the back?

Still, the 15A is a bus for men traveling to their yeshivot, and the general population can use the regular 15, which has not decreased in frequency.

Letters

What's nice about Har Nof is that we live in relative harmony ("Eged opens another 'mehadrin' sex-segregated bus line in Jerusalem," July 29).

BATYA BERLINGER, Jerusalem

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Look further, think harder, don't take it at face value

Canberra Times (Australia)
January 14, 2009 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 11

Length: 888 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

A temporary ceasefire in Gaza that simply allows Hamas to obtain more lethal weapons will assure a repetition of Hamas's win-win tactic of firing rockets at Israeli civilians while using Palestinian civilians as human shields.

The best example of Hamas's double war crime tactic was last Tuesday, when it succeeded in sending a rocket to a town fewer than 35km south of Tel Aviv and injuring a child. At the same time, it provoked Israel to attack a United Nations school from which Hamas was launching its rockets. Residents of the neighbourhood said two Hamas fighters were in the area at the time, and the Israeli military said they had been killed.

The Hamas tactic of firing rockets from schools, hospitals and mosques dates back to 2005, when Israel ended its occupation of Gaza.

Several months ago, the head of the Israeli air force showed me a videotape (now available on YouTube) of a Hamas terrorist deliberately moving his rocket launcher to the front of a UN school, firing a rocket and then running away, no doubt hoping that Israel would then respond by attacking the rocket launcher and thus killing Palestinian children in the school.

This is the Hamas dual strategy: to kill and injure as many Israeli civilians as possible by firing rockets indiscriminately at Israeli civilian targets, and to provoke Israel to kill as many Palestinian civilians as possible to garner world sympathy.

Lest there be any doubt about this, recall the recent case of Nizar Rayan, the Hamas terrorist and commander killed in Gaza by an Israeli missile strike on January 1. Israeli authorities had warned him that he was a legitimate military target, as was his home, which was a storage site for rockets. This is the same man who in 2001 sent one of his sons on a suicide mission to blow himself up at a Jewish settlement in Gaza. Rayan had the option of moving his family to a safe area. Instead, his four wives and children remained with him and became martyrs as Israel targeted his home for destruction.

Hamas leaders have echoed the mantra of Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, that, "We are going to win because they love life and we love death". It is difficult to fight an enemy that loves death in a world that loves life.

The world tends to think emotionally rather than rationally when it is shown dead women and children who are deliberately placed in harm's way by Hamas. Instead of asking who was really to blame for these civilian deaths, people place responsibility on those who fired the fatal shots.

Look further, think harder, don't take it at face value

Consider a related situation: An armed bank robber kills several tellers and takes a customer hostage.

Hiding behind his human shield, the robber continues to kill civilians. A police officer, trying to prevent further killings, shoots at the robber but accidentally kills the hostage.

Who is guilty of murder? Not the police officer who fired the fatal shot but the bank robber who fired from behind the human shield.

The international law of war, likewise, makes it a war crime to use human shields in the way Hamas does. It also makes it a war crime for Hamas to target Israeli civilians with anti-personnel rockets loaded with ball bearings and shrapnel designed to kill as many civilians as possible.

In Lebanon in 2006, Hezbollah used this same tactic in its war with Israel, setting up civilians to be in harm's way of Israeli responses to rocket fire. When Israel accidentally killed civilians, Hezbollah celebrated them as martyrs. Similarly, the Hamas leadership quietly celebrates the deaths they provoke by causing Israel to fire at its rocket launchers, treating the dead Palestinian civilians as martyrs. The New York Times reported last Friday that a wounded fighter was smiling at the suffering of civilians, saying, "They should be happy," because they "lost their loved ones as martyrs".

The best proof of Hamas's media strategy of manipulating sympathy is the way it dealt with a rocket it fired the day before Israel's airstrikes began. The rocket fell short of its target in Israel and landed in Gaza, killing two young Palestinian girls.

Hamas, which exercises total control of Gaza, censored any video coverage of those deaths. Although there were print reports, no one saw pictures of these two dead Palestinian children because they were killed by Palestinian rockets rather than by Israeli rockets. Hamas knows that pictures are more powerful than words. That is probably why Israel mistakenly in my view has kept foreign journalists from entering the war zone. Israel must continue to try to stop the Hamas rockets that endanger more than one million Israeli civilians. It also must continue to do everything in its power to avoid Palestinian civilian casualties, not only because that is the right thing to do but because every Palestinian death plays into the hands of Hamas' leaders.

A bad day for Hamas is a day in which its rockets fail to kill or injure any Israeli civilians and Israel kills no Palestinian civilians. That is what Israel and the world must strive for.

Hamas knows that the moment it ends its policy of firing rockets at Israeli civilians from behind the shield of Palestinian civilians, Israel will end its military activities in Gaza.

That is precisely the result Hamas does not want to achieve.

Los Angeles Times Alan M. Dershowitz is a professor of law at Harvard University.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Patience urged in Mideast; Israeli foreign minister insists talks still on track, but not on schedule, for accord with Palestinians

The Toronto Star

August 22, 2008 Friday

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Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA01

Length: 916 words

Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The content of an eventual peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is more important than the timing, says Israeli foreign minister - and leadership front-runner - Tzipi Livni.

"We need to create new realities on the ground, and this takes time," the 50-year-old politician told foreign journalists here yesterday. "Until everything is agreed, nothing is agreed."

But, she warned, the clock also imposes its own special urgency in a region where moderate Muslim regimes are locked in a sometimes violent and potentially disastrous struggle for power against Islamist extremists, led by an ascendant Iran, still widely thought to be developing nuclear weapons.

"The extremists are getting stronger," Livni said. "Time works against the moderates."

The woman many regard as the favourite to become Israel's 13th prime minister - replacing an embattled and scandal-prone Ehud Olmert, who has agreed to step down - barely paused for breath during an hour-long media conference at a Jerusalem hotel.

If successful, Livni would be the first **female** prime minister in Israel since Golda Meir, who resigned in 1974.

Dressed in a sleek black pantsuit, the one-time Mossad agent who rose to political prominence under the mentorship of former prime minister Ariel Sharon, seemed poised and confident as she provided a brief but detailed tour d'horizon of domestic, regional, and international politics. She spoke without notes in serviceable but sometimes convoluted English, one of three languages she speaks, in addition to Hebrew and French.

At times, Livni expressed herself as though she were prime minister already, possibly a sign of confidence that she has what it takes to hold down what must surely rank among the world's most difficult jobs - running a notoriously fractious land in a region dominated by hostile states.

Married with two sons, Livni is accustomed to living life at a frenetic pace. In addition to serving as foreign minister, she is also Israel's deputy prime minister and, for the past nine months, has spearheaded her country's participation in tortuous, closed-door peace negotiations with Palestinian moderates, led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Patience urged in Mideast Israeli foreign minister insists talks still on track, but not on schedule, for accord with Palestinians

Launched under U.S. tutelage at a conference in Annapolis, Md., last November, the latest in a long succession of Middle East peace initiatives was intended to produce a comprehensive accord by this year's end, leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.

But progress has been painfully slow, and the scope of the anticipated agreement has been whittled back, so that it is now difficult to know what to expect, if anything.

Yesterday, Livni insisted negotiations remain on track - although apparently not on schedule - to produce an accord capable of being implemented eventually.

The main obstacle to a Palestinian state, she said, is the role now played by Hamas, the militant Islamist group that seized power last year in the Gaza Strip, leaving the more moderate Fatah faction in charge of the West Bank.

"Hamas doesn't represent the aspiration of the Palestinians for a state of their own," Livni said. "Hamas is a problem for Palestinians even more than it is a problem for Israel."

She said she'd continue Israel's current policy of promoting Palestinian moderates while taking measures to ostracize or delegitimize Hamas, which does not formally acknowledge Israel's right to exist.

Hamas espouses violent struggle against the Jewish state, although an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire has lately brought hostilities between the two sides to a near halt.

Livni also spoke out yesterday on a range of other issues that involve Israel or Israeli interests.

She said the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran is unacceptable, both to Israel and to the world, but insisted tougher international sanctions can still force Tehran to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

"Unfortunately, the need for consensus (among world leaders) led to some compromises," she said. "This is the reason more sanctions are needed."

She blamed Iran and Syria for continuing to support violent Muslim organizations in other countries and said international peacekeepers have failed to block the supply of arms from Syria to Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

"They are getting stronger," she said, warning a possible outbreak of renewed hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah would follow a very different course from the month-long conflict two years ago that ended in a standoff and a United Nations-brokered truce.

Since then, Hezbollah has wrested a decisive role for itself in the Lebanese government, she said, and so a future war would be waged between states rather than between Israel and a guerrilla organization.

Livni predicted Israel would prevail in such a conflict "in days."

Next month, Livni will seek the leadership of the Kadima party, which currently dominates a fragile coalition government. Kadima is expected to choose a leader as early as Sept. 17.

It's a race that pits Livni against several male adversaries, two of whom boast the top-level military or security credentials that typically accompany political success here.

If triumphant, Livni said she would try to salvage the present coalition and continue to govern. But her partners may have other ideas, possibly causing the coalition to collapse.

In that case, new general elections would have to be held.

"This is not my choice," Livni said, once again speaking a little as though she were prime minister already. "It is theirs."

Patience urged in Mideast Israeli foreign minister insists talks still on track, but not on schedule, for accord with Palestinians

Graphic

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni expected to replace Ehud Olmert.

Load-Date: August 22, 2008

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No other country

The Jerusalem Post

March 11, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 1155 words

Byline: LIAT COLLINS

Highlight: Here is my home. The question is: How to protect it? First published in the International Edition of March 7, 2008.

Body

Recently I found myself humming a version of the popular Israeli song which starts: "Ein li eretz aheret, gam im admati bo'eret," "I have no other country, even if the ground is burning."

I'm not sure whether I had picked it up because the radio - covering what has become known as "The War in the South" to distinguish it from any other war - had been playing it. Maybe it was just dredged up from my subconsciousness where it lives most of the time since lyricist Ehud Manor and musician-performer Corinne Allal released it in 1986.

To relieve tension, I tried playing around with the words: replacing the "even if the ground is burning" to "even if the sun is scorching" or, warming to my theme, "even if people are annoying."

You can't, of course, really improve an Ehud Manor song, although you might argue over which version - Allal's, Gali Atari's or their duet - is best.

Voted more than once as Israel's most popular song, "I have no other country," has a message that still rings true.

While masked militants were shouting "in blood and fire we'll free Palestine," across what to all intents and purposes serves as a border, I returned to Manor's lyrics:

Just a word in Hebrew

pierces my veins and my soul -

With a painful body, with a hungry heart,

Here is my home.

THE SONG is more a social history than just another hit. Manor wrote it as a tribute to his brother, Yehuda, who fell in the War of Attrition in 1968.

He gave the song to Allal to write the music in 1982 - at a time the country was suffering from what was to become known as the First Lebanon War. When it was released in 1986 it was initially considered an anti-war anthem, expressing despair at the relentless deaths of soldiers. Gradually it came to be adopted across the political

No other country

spectrum, some emphasizing the helplessness, some stressing the hope, all realizing the infallible truth: We have no other country. Or as the song puts it: Kan hu beiti, "Here is my home."

No wonder it remains relevant through wars and intifadas.

What is true on a national level also holds on a local level. I once asked my friend why she remains in Sderot where the Kassams dictate the rhythm of her life, and she replied: "Because if I move, the missiles will follow me." It wasn't that she felt personally targeted by Hamas and Fatah firing out of Gaza, she just assumed that if the population flees instead of standing fast, the terrorists will be encouraged to reach out ever further.

Her answer came back to me as the Mediterranean resort of Ashkelon and the usually pastoral villages and communities nearby came under fire - not quite out of the blue (few did not expect it to happen) but certainly a devastating bolt nonetheless.

IT REVERBERATED like the sound of a gunshot after the shooting of the yeshiva students in Jerusalem.

So if this is home, and moving is not in the equation, the question is how to protect it. And here the answer, like the meaning of Manor's lyrics, is open to interpretation, particularly between the Left and the Right.

The country is, if not burning, certainly uncomfortably hot at the moment. How do we stop flames from leaping up? And how do we do this without getting burned in the world press and diplomatic arena?

As the rocket fire died down to "just" a few missiles a day, Israel allowed Palestinian cargo to leave Gaza and permitted "humanitarian aid" to enter. According to news reports, hidden in containers marked "oil" was a quantity of chemicals which could potentially be used in terror attacks. Obviously not everybody wants to stop fanning the flames of war.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice paid a visit to Jerusalem with a message from the Palestinians - not those in Gaza, mind you, the Palestinian leadership based in Ramallah. Rice promised that the PA is willing to renew talks with Israel. Although talking peace with Mahmoud Abbas at the moment is probably about as effective as me humming a song in response to The Situation. While the South is under fire from the Gaza Strip, despite the complete removal of all the Jewish communities there two years ago, and a terrorist whom someone armed - (Hamas? Hizbullah?) - can go on a killing spree in Jerusalem, it seems to be a strange time to talk about more compromises.

Operation Hot Winter, the IDF's initial ground response to the Gaza rockets, predictably cost the lives of Israeli soldiers. And - as the world's press and politicians keep reminding us using that wonderfully tricky phrase "proportionate response" - there were also Palestinian civilian casualties along with the hits on those firing the rockets.

Well, what did they expect? If Hamas uses its civilian population - women and children first - as human shields and fodder for eager foreign news footage, it is obvious they are going to get hurt no matter how hard Israel tries to avoid it. So the question becomes whose innocent kids do you want to protect most.

The unequivocal answer for those of us who have, as Manor put it, "Hebrew piercing our veins and souls," is those in our own home. In Sderot, in Ashkelon; in the North still under the threat of Katyushas; and everywhere in between. Because, if we don't succeed in stopping the rockets and attacks, their range will surely continue to increase. And let us remember that Hamas, unlike the IDF, is specifically targeting the civilian population. The Israelis who are getting hurt are not launching rockets. They are people like my friend and her family trying to get on with their everyday lives: mothers who surrealistically worry about their kids getting hit by a car as they cross the road - or getting hit by a missile. Or youngsters celebrating the new month ahead of Purim in a Jerusalem yeshiva.

Israel is not carrying out a scorched-earth policy. It is trying to avoid being engulfed by flames. Instead of putting pressure on Egypt to stop the weapons flow into Gaza, and backing Israel's right to respond to the attacks, the EU and UN are actually helping Hamas - albeit unwittingly - by focusing on Gazan casualties of Israel's response.

No other country

If we had Canada as a neighbor, we wouldn't be at war either. We wouldn't have to find a way to respond to an ongoing missile and terror onslaught on our cities and towns.

Curiously enough, as soon as Israel started hitting back, the number of rocket attacks dropped and Hamas started hinting that it might accept a tahadiye, a cease- fire or truce. Israel, on the other hand, doesn't want a temporary cease-fire: It wants peace.

It's up to Hamas to decide whether it also wants peace or if it just wants a time-out from the hostilities in order to stock up on more weapons (and improve its world standing).

In the meantime, Israelis Left, Right and Center can carry on singing in unison, if not in harmony: "Ein li eretz aheret... " - "I have no other country..." It contains a message for Hamas and **Hizbullah**: "Kan hu beiti," here is my home, or as they say in Arabic: "Hon beiti." Learn to live with it.

Graphic

Photo: TAKING IN the enormity of the terrorist attack last Thursday night in Jerusalem. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Emotional wounds of war may persist in hospital workers, Haifa study finds

The Jerusalem Post
January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 526 words

Byline: JUDY SIEGEL

Body

Nine out of 10 medical staffers at Rambam Medical Center in Haifa developed at least one symptom of stress during the Second Lebanon War in 2006, hinting at the possible effect of Gaza rockets on doctors and nurses in the South during the present confrontation.

A study on the need to treat medical professionals for psychological stress during war was just published in the Journal Depression and Anxiety by Prof. Ehud Klein, chief of psychiatry at Rambam, along with colleagues at the hospital and the University of Haifa's psychology department.

Barzilai Medical Center, which is the hospital closest to the front and itself rocket target, is holding workshops for its doctors and nurses to relieve their stress and try to prevent the onset of post-traumatic stress syndrome.

The Haifa researchers found that due to intervention, only a tenth of the 450 Rambam doctors and nurses developed long-term symptoms that interfered with their ability to function.

During the Second Lebanon War, Rambam staffers treated 450 wounded soldiers and civilians, and another 350 with serious anxiety and other psychological symptoms.

Some 45 **Hizbullah** missiles fell in 2006 within a 500- meter radius of Rambam. The researchers suggested that the collective nature of the trauma and the teamwork of the staff minimized the long-term emotional harm to employees.

Meanwhile, the pediatric and adolescent anxiety clinic at Sieff Hospital in Safed reported on Wednesday a 30 percent increase in anxiety sufferers reaching the hospital as a direct result of the rocket attacks on the South.

Dr. Ma'ayan Ziskind Lev-El, head of the clinic, said that not only do the scenes of the cities, towns and settlements in the South unnerve the youngsters, but they also fear a return of shelling on the north.

She recommended sports and even just walks to minimize the release of adrenalin and other hormones produced in reaction to stress; exercise also improves mood and raises energy levels, she said.

The Health Ministry said that southern residents may take their children up to the age of five to tipat halav (family health) centers anywhere in the country for vaccines and checkups, rather than just the center where they are registered.

Emotional wounds of war may persist in hospital workers, Haifa study finds

In addition, pregnant women or women after delivery may visit any tipat halav station during the current emergency.

Clalit Health Services is offering free emergency psychological help to all residents of the South. Psychiatrists, psychologists and other professionals are on duty at health fund clinics around the country.

Since the Gaza operation started, more than 20 babies whose parents live in the South but are staying with friends and relatives out of rocket range have been born at Assaf Harofeh Medical Center in Tzrifin.

The Kav Or voluntary organization that provides free computer services to children in pediatric wards and sick children in their homes has invited youngsters in the South to get into its Web site at www.kavor.org.il without a password.

The aim is to enable children in protected rooms and shelters to enjoy the educational and entertainment content of the site. Children can contact riki@kavor.org.il or eti@kavor.org.il

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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An open letter to Senator Obama

The Jerusalem Post

July 23, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 473 words

Byline: SHAUL MOFAZ

Highlight: The writer is the minister of transportation and the former chief of the General Staff.

Body

Dear Sen. Obama, First, I would like to welcome you to Israel! It is certain that either you or Sen. John McCain will be the next president of the United States. We, the citizens of Israel, look forward to the future US president's cooperation and support in confronting the challenges our two countries will continue to face, as has been the case down the years.

The only truly important issue for the State of Israel has been and will continue to be our ability to continue living and surviving here as a people. Just a little more than six decades have passed since the Jewish people were sentenced to complete destruction by the Nazis. Since then a home has been established for the Jewish people in this country, a home that has experienced great success and growth.

Unfortunately, even today we face new and different threats. We are subject to terrorism on a regular basis - not in the abstract, but as a vivid reality. Missiles and rockets rain down on our citizens daily. Innocent men, women and children lose their lives in suicide attacks, while just a few days ago we buried the last two of the many soldiers killed in the Second Lebanon War.

The events of last week prove beyond all doubt that our struggle to keep living here, on this piece of land, has not yet come to an end, and that Israel faces a cruel, bitter, and despicable enemy that will stop at nothing to get what it wants.

The consistent language of the Iranian president and the arrogant words of Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah prove that today, as before, there are those who wish for the total annihilation of the Jewish people, and work day and night to achieve that goal. To us this is very clear, and we hope the rest of the world sees it with the same clarity.

As someone who was born and spent his childhood in Iran, I know the Iranian people very well. I can tell you that they are a people who support peace. Their problem is their leadership, which misuses Islam and turns it into an extreme message of hate and violence, assisting every worthless, negative player in the region.

Having dedicated the past 40 years of my life to Israel's security and defense, and as someone who is very well acquainted with the regional system, I can tell you that the only language that can be used in this case is the language of strength.

An open letter to Senator Obama

We bless you on your visit to Israel and welcome you to our democratic, free and hopeful nation. We want you to know how much we value your friendship and how, together, we must protect those values that make our country and yours extraordinary.

We wish you well. We wish you peace, and we hope that if you are elected president of the United States, you will remember the long journey Israel and the United States have taken together. Together we must continue walking this path for many years to come.

Sincerely, Shaul Mofaz.

Graphic

Photo: DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL candidate Barack Obama with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in Baghdad on Monday. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Bomb attacks kill at least 50 people as new wave of violence hits Iraq: Bus blast leaves 40 dead and 70 hurt in Baaquba: Militia groups filling a vacuum, aid group warns

The Guardian - Final Edition

April 16, 2008 Wednesday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 22

Length: 521 words

Byline: Ian Black, Middle East editor

Body

Iraq suffered a day of widespread violence yesterday when at least 50 people were killed in three separate bomb attacks blamed on Sunni Islamist groups.

In Baaquba, capital of Diyala province north of Baghdad, 40 died and 70 were injured when a bus exploded outside a restaurant near the city's courthouse and government offices. Reports from the scene said a large number of the victims were women and children and that the death toll was expected to rise.

It was the deadliest single bombing in Iraq since a pair of female suicide bombers struck two pet markets, killing 99 people, in an attack in Baghdad on February 1.

Thirteen other people were killed in a suicide bombing that hit a kebab restaurant in Ramadi, capital of Anbar province. "Pieces of flesh flew into the air and the roof fell over us," one witness told AP. "I saw the horrible sight of bodies without heads or without legs or hands."

Like Baaquba, the area had seen a sharp decline in violence in recent months as tribal leaders in the Sahwa or "Awakening" movement joined forces with the Americans to fight al-Qaida in Iraq.

The third incident was in central Baghdad when a car bomb hit a police patrol, killing three.

The latest attacks underline how, despite recent successes attributed to the US troop "surge", the capacity for Sunni violence remains undiminished. On Monday 18 people died in two car bombings and a suicide attack in areas where al-Qaida is active. They also demonstrate how separate wars are being fought in different areas of the country.

The US military said yesterday that troops backed by an airstrike had killed six fighters in Sadr City, stronghold of Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, in the capital. Iraqi police said two boys were among those killed, but the US military said no civilian casualties were reported.

Bomb attacks kill at least 50 people as new wave of violence hits Iraq : Bus blast leaves 40 dead and 70 hurt in Baaquba: Militia groups filling a vacuum, aid g....

The fighting began when US and Iraqi troops moved in to stop rocket and mortar attacks from the district towards the Green Zone, home to the Iraqi government and the US and British embassies. In the last three weeks, the US says, nearly 600 rockets and mortar rounds have been fired towards the Green Zone, many of them and killing Iraqi civilians.

In a separate development Refugees International warned yesterday that Iraqi militia groups were filling a vacuum in humanitarian assistance resulting from the failure of both the Iraqi government and the international community to deliver aid to needy civilians. The groups are creating what it called a "**Hizbullah**-like dynamic" - a reference to the Lebanese Shia militia - by becoming major providers of food, clothing, oil and other basic resources.

"Militias of all denominations are improving their local base of support by providing social services in neighbourhoods and towns they control," said the RI report. The Mahdi Army had become Iraq's "largest 'humanitarian' organisation", and "resettles" displaced Shia free of charge in homes that belonged to Sunnis. Sunni militias "play a similar role with displaced and needy Sunnis."

The report recommends that the Iraqi and US governments stop encouraging refugee returns until more effective aid channels are established.

Load-Date: April 16, 2008

End of Document

Gaza conflict will shake the Arab world

Guardian.com

January 11, 2009

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theguardian

Length: 994 words

Highlight: Ismail Patel: Egypt's leadership could be the first hit by shockwaves sent through the neighbourhood by Israel's attacks

Body

The human cost of Israel's decision to attack Gaza is being paid by the Palestinians. However, the fallout from this wanton violence is going to have long-term political consequences throughout the Arab world. The Israeli attack on Gaza is likely to bring to the fore political trends that up to now have remained just below the parapet of influence. The situation has brought the Arab world to an historic crossroads, where leaders will either move towards Arab independence from western policies, which is likely to be driven by popular grassroots support, or continue to toe the line of Israel/US influence. Much of this will be determined by the duration of Israeli attacks and the survival or demise of Hamas.

The first and obvious fact in the current war is that since the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, this is the first war that Israel has launched that Palestinians have defended themselves without any neighbouring Arab country militarily intervening. The Palestinians have taken up arms independently, whether home-made or imported, to defend their land and people against this full-scale Israeli military attack from the air, sea and ground. This could be argued to be the first Palestinian-Israeli war.

If Hamas emerges from this brutal Israeli onslaught still politically operational against the odds of the high number of civilian injuries and deaths and severe structural damage to infrastructure, it is bound to empower the Palestinians, and Hamas itself. Despite the lethal Israeli military firepower there are logical reasons to assume that this is a possibility. Hamas is a political party with a solid structure that has popular support and deep roots within the Palestinian society stretching some 20 years. It is thus implausible to envisage its total demise even if Israel manages to reach one of its desired ambitions of eliminating the present leadership.

With the Hamas-led Palestinian resistance still holding, it appears that despite the snail-paced international efforts to halt the carnage in Gaza, Israel is unlikely to have enough time to achieve one of its ever-changing targets, the destruction of Hamas. Other targets include stopping rocket fire; the assassination of Hamas leadership; and the destruction of tunnels which are purportedly used for smuggling weapons - although in reality they are used mainly for smuggling basic necessities denied by the siege. With the war already dragging into its third week and Israel's continued use of indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force resulting in ever gruesome images of bloodstrewn bodies of children, women and the old being beamed daily into homes, many in Arab countries are taking to the streets in protest despite government efforts to prevent this.

Gaza conflict will shake the Arab world

The greatest impact of the political shockwave from the Palestinian resistance is most heavily felt in Egypt. Here, the dictatorial "life" regime of President Hosni Mubarak continues to march in a diametrically opposite position to the sentiments of the public, whose sympathies are with the Palestinians, leading the government and people to a collision course. As Jack Shenker noted here on Cif, the people on the streets are getting bolder by the day. Despite the heavy hand of the police in Egypt, which could see protesters imprisoned, thousands have taken to the streets daily and the chorus is getting louder with chants that are both anti-Israeli and anti-Mubarak.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which is the only credible opposition to Mubarak, has joined hands with the secularists, leftist and others in denouncing Mubarak's ties with Israel and his choking of the Palestinians by keeping the Rafah crossing shut. Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader in Lebanon who is viewed as a hero by many on the Egyptian streets for taking on the might of the Israeli army in 2006, and surviving, has weighed in strongly against Mubarak. Short of calling for an uprising, he has encouraged the Egyptian public to take action and force open the Rafah crossing.

In 2006, Mubarak first condemned Hezbollah's actions but later retracted this and ended up sending his minister to congratulate Nasrallah, as popular support for Hezbollah grew larger and more passionate in Egypt. Despite that, he has yet again opted to take the Israeli side in the current conflict. It appears he is fogged by the largesse of \$2.2bn donated annually by the US to Egypt, which many believe is tied to his commitment for the US-Israeli ambitions and project in the region. Although Hamas initially emerged as an offshoot of the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt, it appears that in a turnabout of fate, the Brotherhood may reap the benefit from Hamas's stance against Israeli aggression. On Tuesday the head of the Brotherhood, Mohammed Akef, called for continued demonstration with demands on Mubarak to expel the Israeli ambassador and end the prevention of humanitarian relief to Gaza.

At present the call has been for non-violent protests but with the emotions proportionately rising with the continued attack on Gaza, things may change. There is an emerging consensus on the streets of Cairo that Mubarak is as great an obstacle to Palestinian freedom as Israel. If this consensus coalesces it could result in the emergence of political actors in Egypt capable of challenging Mubarak's regime. In addition, it seems likely that for any ceasefire acceptable to Israel and, by extension, the US, to be agreed, Egypt will come under severe pressure to acquiesce to, and perhaps even help police, a ban on the movement of armaments from the Egyptian side of Gaza border via tunnels. For Egypt in effect to aid any renewed blockade of Gaza would surely be a high political risk for the Mubarak regime.

The future of Israel's allies in Egypt and the other neighbouring states depends on whether Israel can reach a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians or independence and freedom is created by the Palestinians through successful resistance.

Load-Date: January 11, 2009

World digest

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

June 17, 2008 Tuesday

FIRST EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A5

Length: 630 words

Byline: from news services

Body

BEIRUT, LEBANON

U.S. can live with deal on power sharing, Rice says

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Monday she welcomes a new power-sharing arrangement in Lebanon even though it increased the power of **Hezbollah** militants at the expense of U.S.-backed moderates.

"Obviously in any compromise there are compromises," Rice said during a surprise visit to meet Lebanon's new consensus choice for president. The election of former Army chief Michel Suleiman last month is the clearest sign that Lebanon stepped back from the brink and that the deal with Iranian-backed **Hezbollah** is taking hold.

Rice's blessing is a sign that the Bush administration has accepted that Western-backed democratic leaders who helped Lebanon throw off three decades of Syrian domination could not govern the country alone.

"This was an agreement that I think served the interests of the Lebanese people," Rice said. "And since it served the interests of the Lebanese people, it served the interests of the United States. We support the democratically elected government of Lebanon."

TEHRAN, IRAN

Shops are shuttered in dress-code crackdown

Police closed dozens of clothing stores and hairdressers and stopped cars and pedestrians in a crackdown on **women** who do not abide by Iran's strict Islamic dress code and men wearing fashions seen as too Western, Iranian media reported Monday.

The sweep, launched Saturday in some neighborhoods of Tehran, is part of an annual campaign aimed at enforcing dress codes that require **women** to wear long loose robes or coats and cover their hair in public. Many **women** - particularly in Tehran - push the boundaries of the code, wearing short, colorful coats that reveal the shape of the body and letting their headscarves slip to show much of their hair.

During the crackdown, police stop **women** in the streets, issuing them warnings or even arresting them if their garb is deemed unsuitable. Men are also targeted for having long hair and other styles deemed too Western.

World digest

But the closure of shops appeared to be a new step, aimed at stopping the sale of shorter coats and lighter headscarves.

LONDON

British will provide more troops for Afghanistan

President George W. Bush hit pay dirt Monday in what has been widely billed as his farewell tour of Europe with a commitment for a net increase of 230 British troops in Afghanistan.

The deployment takes British troops to their highest levels in the South Asian nation, with 8,030 forces now committed in Kabul, Kandahar and Helmand.

The decision was not officially linked to the arrival of Bush, who held talks Monday with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and had breakfast with his predecessor, Tony Blair, a day after visiting Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle.

But the announcement follows long-standing U.S. complaints that some European allies are not doing their share of the heavy lifting in the war against the Taliban.

Briefly

- China floods: Weeks of rain pushed rivers over their banks in southern China, displacing more than 1.27 million people and forcing some to huddle on rooftops Monday as the region braced for more downpours.

- Setting sail: Hilary Lister, 36, a quadriplegic sailor, set off on a journey around the British Isles Monday in a boat she controls with her breath. She set sail alone in her boat from Dover, steering her specially adapted yacht by blowing and sucking on straws to adjust the sails and tiller.

- New military: France announced a vision Monday for its 21st-century military - a leaner, smarter and more high-tech force capable of detecting threats like terrorism early and deploying quickly to battlefields abroad. The document places a greater focus on intelligence-gathering and more spending on satellite and airborne drones. The review calls for a reduction of 54,000 defense jobs.

Load-Date: June 17, 2008

Northern Israel on alert after second attack; As Palestinian death toll nears 1000, PM Olmert under pressure from his cabinet and American allies

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 15, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 9

Length: 576 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, JERUSALEM, with LOS ANGELES TIMES

Body

NORTHERN Israel was under renewed attack from Lebanese-based militants last night, with four Katyusha rockets striking the region surrounding the Sea of Galilee, again raising fears that Israel's Gaza Strip offensive might lead to war across the region.

Israeli forces immediately returned fire, with four artillery shells striking the south Lebanese village of al-Hibarieh. There were no reports of injuries.

An Israeli military source who spoke to The Age said it appeared as if the latest attack was again the work of Palestinian militants.

"Israeli intelligence has been predicting low-level attacks by Palestinian militants operating in the area," the source said.

"At this stage we believe those attacks will be limited and we don't believe the intention is to set the border alight."

Southern Lebanon is largely controlled by the Iranian-backed **Hezbollah** movement, which waged a six-week war with Israel in 2006.

Israeli and Lebanese political sources have indicated that they do not expect **Hezbollah** to initiate another war with Israel because it has too much at stake in the Lebanese general elections due in June.

But as the war in Gaza enters its 20th day, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert appeared determined to continue the offensive despite pressure for a ceasefire emerging from within his cabinet.

Israel continued its bombardment of the Gaza Strip yesterday, with Israeli Air Force jets striking more than 60 targets while forces on the ground tightened their encirclement of the strip's most densely populated areas, pushing the Palestinian death toll close to 1000.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, among the dead are at least 311 children and 76 **women**.

Of the 4418 people reported injured, 1549 are children and 652 are **women**.

Northern Israel on alert after second attack As Palestinian death toll nears 1000, PM Olmert under pressure from his cabinet and American allies

There have been 13 Israelis killed since the start of the offensive on December 27, including nine soldiers, and 58 Israeli civilians injured from rocket attacks.

United Nations and International Red Cross officials believe the true Palestinian death toll could be much higher because of the difficulty of recovering bodies from collapsed buildings.

With United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon due to land in Israel later today, there was intense international pressure for Israel to cease its bombardment of Gaza on humanitarian grounds.

Israeli media reports suggested that Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni were pushing for a ceasefire but had been rebuffed by Mr Olmert.

There is a widespread assumption within Israel that the conflict will not continue beyond the weekend, ahead of the inauguration of US President-elect Barack Obama on Tuesday.

Mr Olmert was severely embarrassed yesterday when the United States categorically rejected his claim, made to an audience in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon, that the US had abstained from voting on last week's UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire at his request and he had "embarrassed" US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Mr Olmert's comments were "wholly inaccurate ... just 100per cent, totally, completely not true" and the US could ask Israel to clarify the comments, a step that would indicate deep diplomatic displeasure.

Dr Rice's decision to abstain surprised some US allies, who later said they had been told the Americans were going to support the resolution, which passed the Security Council by 14 votes to none. -- With LOS ANGELES TIMES

Graphic

FOUR PHOTOS: ABOVE: The Gaza Strip city of Rafah is hit by Israeli air strikes. MAIN PICTURE: Israelis watch the bombardment of Gaza from Horseman's Hill, a popular picnic spot near Sderot in southern Israel. PICTURES: GETTY IMAGES, AP

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

Northern Israel on alert after second attack; As Palestinian death toll nears 1000, PM Olmert under pressure from his cabinet and American allies

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 15, 2009 Thursday

Third Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 9

Length: 576 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, JERUSALEM, with LOS ANGELES TIMES, AGENCIES

Body

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Israeli forces immediately returned fire, with four artillery shells striking the south Lebanese village of al-Hibarieh. There were no reports of injuries.

The Lebanese Government last night denounced the firing of the rockets into Israel, saying the incident undermined national unity and gave Israel an excuse to attack the country.

"Someone is trying to drag Lebanon into a conflict and is moving rockets from one area to another," Lebanese Information Minister Tarek Mitri said.

An Israeli military source who spoke to The Age said it appeared as if the latest attack was again the work of Palestinian militants.

"Israeli intelligence has been predicting low-level attacks by Palestinian militants operating in the area," the military source said.

"At this stage we believe those attacks will be limited and we don't believe the intention is to set the border alight."

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Northern Israel on alert after second attack As Palestinian death toll nears 1000, PM Olmert under pressure from his cabinet and American allies

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There is a widespread assumption within Israel that the conflict will not continue beyond the weekend, ahead of the inauguration of US President-elect Barack Obama on Tuesday.

Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has issued a new audio tape urging Muslims to launch a jihad, or holy war, to stop Israel's offensive in Gaza.

Bin Laden also condemns Arab governments for preventing their people from acting to "liberate Palestine".

The tape has been posted on Islamic militant websites where al-Qaeda usually issues its messages. The tape's authenticity cannot be independently confirmed, but the voice resembles that of bin Laden in previous messages. -- With LOS ANGELES TIMES, AGENCIES

Graphic

FOUR PHOTOS: ABOVE: The Gaza Strip city of Rafah is hit by Israeli air strikes. MAIN PICTURE: Israelis watch the bombardment of Gaza from Horseman's Hill, a popular picnic spot near Sderot in southern Israel. PICTURES: GETTY IMAGES, AP

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

Hamas ends six month truce in Gaza

Prince Rupert Daily News (British Columbia)

December 19, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 588 words

Byline: Canadian Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Hamas has formally announced the end of its unwritten truce with Israel.

The end of the often-breached ceasefire was punctuated by two rockets being fired into southern Israel by militants on the Gaza Strip side of the border.

The Israeli military says troops guarding Israeli farmers in fields adjoining Gaza also came under sniper fire from across the border.

No injuries are reported in any of the incidents.

In a statement posted on its website, Hamas said it could no longer stand idly by despite what it called Israeli provocations.

It cited the painful economic blockade of Gaza, along with Israeli military strikes into the densely populated coastal strip and continuing efforts by Tel Aviv to hunt down Hamas operatives in the West Bank.

"Since the enemy did not abide with the conditions ... we hold the enemy the fully responsible for ending the truce and we confirm that the Palestinian resistance factions headed by Hamas will act," the statement said.

There was no immediate Israeli comment about Hamas' announcement that it would not extend the ceasefire past its end Friday.

Israel said previously that the six-month-old truce, brokered by Egypt, didn't have an official expiration date and that the government was interested in prolonging "understandings" with Hamas.

In Washington, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was critical of Hamas' move.

"I sincerely hope that there will not be a resumption of the violence because that is not going to help the people of Gaza, it is not going to help the Palestinians, it is not going to help the Palestinian cause," she said.

Hamas ends six month truce in Gaza

Hamas, which seized control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 from a faction more to the liking of Israel and the West, is listed as a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and much of the international community. Israel does not officially have direct contacts with it.

Though violence and casualties dropped significantly under the ceasefire agreement, the truce has increasingly unravelled since early November, when Israeli soldiers entered Gaza to destroy a tunnel that the army said could have been used in a cross-border raid. In response, Palestinian militants resumed firing rockets at Israel.

On Thursday, Gaza militants fired 11 rockets and six mortar shells toward Israel and Israel staged at least two air strikes against rocket squads. The day before, at least 20 rockets were fired at Israel, wounding two people and causing property damage, the army and police said.

Even before the truce began fraying, Israel did not allow the free transfer of goods in and out of Gaza. Since cross-border fighting resumed in November, Israel has kept the borders virtually sealed, allowing in only minimal humanitarian aid.

There were protests against the Gaza blockade in several Mideast states Friday.

In Lebanon, thousands of supporters of the militant group Hezbollah swarmed Beirut's southern suburbs, some chanting "Death to America" and "Israel is the enemy of Muslims."

In the southern city of Sidon, about 1,000 Hezbollah supporters staged a sit-in at the main square, halting traffic for about three hours.

About 3,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria joined a demonstration at the Sbeineh camp outside the capital, Damascus.

In the Persian Gulf island state of Bahrain, security forces clashed with thousands of protesters who were demanding that Arab governments take action to end the Gaza blockade.

Witnesses said a number of people, including women and children, were wounded by rubber bullets and others overcome by tear gas.

Load-Date: December 22, 2008

**THE ISRAELI OFFENSIVE IN GAZA: PRO: Yes, free Gaza --- from terrorist
tyranny**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

Main Edition

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**The Atlanta
Journal-Constitution**

Section: @ISSUE; Pg. 8A

Length: 577 words

Byline: REDA MANSOUR

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Some of the Arab and Muslim demonstrators who recently came to our offices were holding signs that said "Free Gaza." Many Israelis would raise that same sign, me included, but for different reasons. People tend to forget that as of August 2005, Israel has not been in Gaza, and that the Gazans have been under Hamas control since June 2007. Indeed, Gaza needs to be freed from many different extremist forces.

Gaza should be freed from Hamas, a terrorist organization that seized the strip by force. Since the takeover, Hamas has run Gaza's economy into the ground and now nearly half of the work force is unemployed. Hamas has built a Taliban-style state in Gaza and introduced many of the Islamic Shari'a laws, institutionalizing the persecution of women and minorities.

Hamas has transformed Gaza from a free territory to a large bunker, a place where rockets are stored under families, schools and places of prayer. Unfortunately, Gazans not only live among this militarization, but are now a tool in Hamas' aggression. The terrorist organization has developed a strategy of using innocent civilians as human shields. When Israel warns that the houses of Hamas operatives and commanders will be targeted, the terrorists bring in innocent citizens, often by force, in an effort to increase the likelihood of civilian casualties. Hamas' leaders rely on the strict Israeli moral code, hoping to avoid being attacked or that a strike will allow them to score points in the media by sacrificing their own people, creating what looks like acts of Israeli military aggression.

Gaza should be freed from the intervention of Iran, a state that openly admits to financing Hamas. Iran is also helping Palestinian terror organizations with training, intelligence and equipment. Some of this "aid" is channeled through Hezbollah in Lebanon --- yet another Iranian proxy organization. Hezbollah and Iran use the Gazans to maintain regional political relevance in their empty agenda against Israel.

THE ISRAELI OFFENSIVE IN GAZA: PRO: Yes, free Gaza --- from terrorist tyranny

Gaza should be freed from some of the Arab satellite channels like Al-Jazeera. These television stations engage in the direct incitement of the Arab and Muslim world. Everything is acceptable in their eyes to raise their ratings: including long shots of bodies and injuries. Some of these channels do not dismiss any editing trick and consider propaganda as a normal part of their news reporting.

As far as Israel is concerned, Gaza is free and it is the decision of its inhabitants what the area's destiny will be. They can continue to buy into the self-defeating promises of terrorist organizations and extremist ideologies. Even worse, they can continue to let these organizations use them as human shields and demolish their hopes and futures.

Gazans can only truly be free by declaring Gaza a terror-free zone. The people of Gaza have many resources in their hands to achieve success. Gaza could use its beautiful Mediterranean coast to attract Israeli and Egyptian tourists. It can renew the flower and fruit exports to Europe that Israel left behind. The airport that was built there can be reopened. The seaport that is planned and even the natural gas fields in its waters could be built. The people of this region need to make the decision that Gaza will become a model of peace and stability and hopefully, the beginning of the two-state solution: Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace.

* Ambassador Reda Mansour is consul general of Israel to the Southeast.

Graphic

Photo: * Ambassador Reda Mansour is consul general of Israel to the Southeast./ImageData*

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

End of Document

Hamas ends truce on Gaza border; Islamic group blames military moves against group in ending truce

The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)

December 20, 2008 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. D4

Length: 612 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Hamas formally announced the end of its unwritten, often-breached truce with Israel yesterday, citing the ongoing Israeli blockade as well as military moves against the Islamic group.

The Israeli military said two rockets were fired into southern Israel yesterday morning and two more after sunset. It said troops guarding Israeli farmers in fields adjoining Gaza also came under sniper fire from across the border. No injuries were reported in any of the incidents.

In a statement posted on its website, Hamas said Israel had breached agreements by imposing a painful economic blockade on Gaza, staging military strikes into the densely populated coastal strip and continuing to hunt down Hamas operatives in the West Bank.

"Since the enemy did not abide with the conditions ... we hold the enemy fully responsible for ending the truce and we confirm that the Palestinian resistance factions headed by Hamas will act," the statement said.

There was no immediate Israeli comment about Hamas' announcement that it would not extend the ceasefire past its end yesterday.

Israel has said previously that the six-month-old truce, brokered by Egypt, didn't have an official expiration date and that the government was interested in prolonging "understandings" with Hamas.

In Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was critical of Hamas' move.

"I sincerely hope that there will not be a resumption of the violence because that is not going to help the people of Gaza, it is not going to help the Palestinians, it is not going to help the Palestinian cause," she said.

Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 from Fatah, a Palestinian faction favoured by Israel and the West. Israel does not officially have direct contacts Hamas, which it, the United States and several other list as a terrorist organization.

Though violence and casualties dropped significantly under the ceasefire agreement, the truce has increasingly unravelled since early November, when Israeli soldiers entered Gaza to destroy a tunnel it claimed could have been used in a cross-border raid.

In response, the Palestinians resumed firing rockets at Israel.

Hamas ends truce on Gaza border; Islamic group blames military moves against group in ending truce

On Thursday, Gaza militants fired 11 rockets and six mortar shells toward Israel and Israel staged at least two air strikes against rocket squads. The day before, at least 20 rockets were fired at Israel, wounding two people and causing property damage, the army and police said.

There were protests against the Gaza blockade in several Mideast states Friday.

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About 3,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria joined a demonstration at the Sbeineh camp outside the capital, Damascus.

In the Persian Gulf island state of Bahrain, security forces clashed with thousands of protesters who were demanding that Arab governments take action to end the Gaza blockade.

Witnesses said a number of people, including women and children, were wounded by rubber bullets and others overcome by tear gas. An Interior Ministry spokesman, Maj. Mohamad Bin Dina, denied rubber bullets were used and said tear gas was fired when some demonstrators began destroying public property and throwing stones at police.

Meanwhile, an international group opposed to the Gaza blockade said one of its vessels left Cyprus carrying supplies for the Palestinian territory. The Free Gaza Group has made four previous boat trips to Gaza in defiance of the Israeli blockade.

Load-Date: December 20, 2008

Between West and East

The New York Times

March 30, 2008 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 20

Length: 606 words

Byline: By MICHAEL J. TOTTEN

Michael J. Totten is an independent foreign correspondent specializing in the Middle East. He is a former resident of Beirut.

Body

MIRROR OF THE ARAB WORLD

Lebanon in Conflict.

By Sandra Mackey.

303 pp. W. W. Norton & Company. \$25.95.

First-time visitors to Lebanon are often startled at how different the country seems from the rest of the Arab world. Spectacular snow-capped mountains rise sheer from the shores of the Mediterranean. Freewheeling Beirut, where almost everything short of murder and rape is allowed, feels more like Hong Kong or Amsterdam than dreary Damascus or Cairo. Elegant women, Muslim as well as Christian, dress as stylishly as their counterparts in Milan and Manhattan. Plastic surgeons are as ubiquitous as decadent and erotically charged nightclubs. Democracy isn't pushed on the Lebanese by diplomats or foreign soldiers -- it's taught in schools, and has been for more than a half-century.

But Lebanon is also where Palestinian guerrillas, living in squalid camps, fought a hot war with the national army last year. Bullet-pocked and mortar-shattered towers stand as gruesome reminders that history continues to be made in Beirut, that the Paris of the Middle East moonlights as the Baghdad of the Levant. "Until Iraq took a share of the title in 2003," Sandra Mackey writes in "Mirror of the Arab World: Lebanon in Conflict," "the most tormented of all Arab countries was Lebanon."

Though far and away the most liberal, democratic and sophisticated of Arabic-speaking countries, Lebanon, as Mackey convincingly shows, still hasn't managed to overcome the Arab world's troubles. Identity is rooted in family, clan, sect and ideology more than in the nation. The weak central government can't administer or police its territory. Meddlesome foreigners use the country for proxy wars, at times occupying swaths of its land with their own soldiers. Borders are only vaguely defined in some places, and everywhere else were drawn up by Western imperialists in collaboration with local clients. Conflict between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, and between Muslims and Christians, has plunged Lebanon into civil war and may do so again. Hezbollah's radical Islamist militia administers

Between West and East

its own area and is better armed and trained than the national army. In 2006 Lebanon was, yet again, a front line in the intractable Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Mirror of the Arab World" is really two books in one. Mackey's narrative deftly weaves Lebanon's tragic history with that of the Arab Middle East as a whole. The author of books on Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia, Mackey follows Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization from its insurgency against King Hussein in Jordan, through its formation of a state-within-a-state in Lebanon to its exile at the hands of Israeli soldiers. She traces the arc of rising Shiite political power as it developed from Iran's Islamic Republic and Saddam Hussein's defeat in Iraq to the emergence of Hezbollah's protostate in south Lebanon. Rather than look at Iraq as an echo of Vietnam, she finds a closer parallel in the ferocious civil war that pitted sect against sect and local against foreigner in Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s.

Mackey performs the tricky balancing act of demonstrating that Lebanon is unique yet somehow still reflective of all Arab countries. "The world of the Arabs is no longer a mysterious, romanticized region lying somewhere between Europe and Asia," she writes. "It is here. It is now. And it is difficult." Lebanon is especially difficult.

Beirut has long been considered a gateway between the West and the East. It is also a doorway to understanding, because to know Lebanon is to know the Arabs. "Mirror of the Arab World" is an expert depiction of both.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Checking out the destruction in southern Beirut, August 2006. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES)

Load-Date: March 30, 2008

End of Document

Digest

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

June 30, 2008 Monday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 619 words

Byline: From news Services

Body

MEXICO CITY

Boris strengthens; still far from land

Tropical Storm Boris strengthened unexpectedly to just below hurricane strength Sunday but remained far from land over the eastern Pacific, forecasters said.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Boris' wind speed increased to 70 mph. But the storm was expected to weaken today.

Boris is 760 miles southwest of the tip of Baja California and is not expected to threaten land, forecasters said. It is moving west at 10 mph.

Another tropical storm, Cristina, is about 1,345 miles off Mexico's shore and is not expected to threaten land either.

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

Streets are sealed as beef protest turns violent

The government of President Lee Myung-bak sealed off major rallying points in central Seoul on Sunday after hundreds of citizens and police officers were injured in a protest against U.S. beef imports.

Still, protesters broke into several groups of hundreds and marched Sunday evening, engaging in sporadic shoving matches with the police.

A protest that began Saturday evening and continued until Sunday morning attracted more than 18,000 people, the largest crowd since a rally on June 10 drew at least 100,000.

Police said 112 officers had been injured and 35 police vehicles had been damaged. About 50 protesters were detained on charges of assaulting police officers, they said.

JERUSALEM

Israeli Cabinet approves Hezbollah prisoner deal

Digest

The Israeli government agreed Sunday to free a Lebanese gunman convicted in one of the grisliest attacks in the country's history in exchange for the bodies of two Israeli soldiers killed by Hezbollah guerrillas.

The German-mediated deal was a rare political victory for embattled Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and closed a chapter from Israel's inconclusive war against the Lebanese militant group two years ago.

But critics warned that the deal's heavy price for Israel could offer militant groups an even greater incentive to kill captive soldiers.

LIUYANG, CHINA

Shipping woes cut fireworks exports

China, where fireworks were invented, is running short of ports from which to ship the dangerous cargoes abroad.

China's fireworks industry provides 98 percent of America's overall needs, and 80 percent of the pyrotechnics for professional displays. But the U.S. fireworks business stands to lose \$25 million to \$30 million this year because of lost orders, says Julie Heckman, of the American Pyrotechnics Association.

In February, a blast at a fireworks warehouse led to a ban on fireworks shipments at the southern port of Sanshui, Guangdong province, which previously handled 20 percent of China's pyrotechnic exports.

Then, in late March, officials stopped fireworks shipments at Nanshan, another Guangdong port, after inspectors found explosives that had been declared as something else.

BAGHDAD

Iraqi guards kill female suicide bomber

Iraqi guards opened fire on a female suicide bomber on Sunday and triggered her explosives belt before she reached their headquarters, foiling the latest of more than 20 suicide missions by women this year, military officials said.

The bomber targeted an awakening council - Sunni volunteers who have turned against insurgents - about 60 miles northeast of Baghdad.

Briefly

- U.S.-N. Korea aid: A U.S. ship carrying thousands of tons of food aid has arrived in North Korea, after the communist nation agreed to expanded international assistance for its impoverished people, the U.N. food agency said Monday.

- Landslide deaths: Officials say heavy rains have triggered a landslide that killed at least four people and injured 26 others in the central Philippines.

- Talking Tibet: China says it will resume talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama, weeks before the start of the Olympic Games.

Graphic

PHOTO

Digest

PHOTO - U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice tours the earthquake destruction in Dujiangyan in China's Sichuan province on Sunday. Rice praised China's earthquake recovery efforts, contrasting it with Myanmar's reluctance to allow in aid after a devastating cyclone. Andy Wong-Pool | Getty Images

Load-Date: June 30, 2008

End of Document

AUSTRALIANS DESERVE A MODERATE MUFTI

The Australian (Australia)

June 12, 2007 Tuesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Leader; Pg. 11

Length: 641 words

Body

MATP

After years of vitriol, it's time for a change

MUSLIMS in Australia deserve much better than Taj Din al-Hilali, and so it is with a profound sense of relief that we note that his inglorious reign as grand mufti of Australia and New Zealand has finally come to an end. After two decades of his virulent anti-Semitism, support for suicide bombers and offensive misogyny, the mufti has declined an invitation from the Australian National Imams Council to be reappointed. Sheik Hilali has done great damage to the reputation of Muslims in Australia and it is a disgrace that he continued to receive the council's endorsement despite the embarrassment and anger he caused the Australian community, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

Sheik Hilali first visited Australia in 1982 on a tourist visa from Lebanon and remained illegally in the country after it expired. Right from the start he was in the business of giving vitriolic sermons. Eddie Obeid, a Lebanese Christian who published an article in his newspaper, El Telegraph, based on a recording of one of Sheik Hilali's first sermons in 1982, had his offices burned down days later. In 1988, then immigration minister in the Hawke Labor government Chris Hurford sought to have Sheik Hilali deported after he gave speeches in which he endorsed suicide bombings in Lebanon, accused Jews of plotting world domination and said that the two cheapest things in Australia were the flesh of a woman and the meat of a pig. Despite the best efforts of Hurford and his department, Sheik Hilali was granted permanent residency after the direct intervention of then acting prime minister Paul Keating, when he and other western-Sydney Labor members were courting the local Lebanese community.

Like an Egyptian Mel Gibson, Sheik Hilali accuses the Jews of causing all wars and of trying "to control the world through sex, then sexual perversion, then the promotion of espionage, treason, and economic hoarding". He has called the Holocaust a "Zionist lie" and referred to Israel as cancer. In a sermon in Sidon in Lebanon in 2004 he said that September 11 was "God's work against oppressors" and called on the sons of Islam to become martyrs in the war against infidels. In one of his most infamous sermons, in October last year, Sheik Hilali compared women to uncovered meat and said that women's dress and the way they "sway suggestively" before men was the cause of rape. There is no place in Australian public life for a man such as Sheik Hilali.

While we hope for a more constructive contribution to Australian public life from Sheik Hilali's successor, Fehmi Naji el-Imam, there is reason to worry about some public comments from the 79-year-old Lebanese-born cleric. Sheik Fehmi called on Hezbollah "freedom fighters" to prevail after they attacked Israel, murdering Israeli soldiers and firing thousands of missiles at Israeli civilians. He also called for Hezbollah's militant arm to be removed from Australia's proscribed list of terrorist organisations, a call rightly rejected by the federal Government. Sheik Fehmi

AUSTRALIANS DESERVE A MODERATE MUFTI

supported alleged terrorist conspirator Abdul Nacer Benbrika's Australian citizenship, a decision he regretted as Mr Benbrika's extremist views became apparent.

The role of mufti has considerable prominence in Australia, purportedly representing about 300,000 Muslims from 60 different ethnic communities. It is vital that the person holding this role truly represents the moderate, law-abiding stance of the vast majority of Australian Muslims. Australians are tired of Muslim clerics who present a moderate face when addressing the English-speaking media and incite hatred, denigrate women or support terrorist organisations when they speak in Arabic. We welcome the new mufti, but he should be aware that we will be listening very carefully to his messages in both English and Arabic.

Load-Date: June 11, 2007

End of Document

OSTRICH FARMER REBUILDS IN LEBANON

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

June 17, 2007 Sunday

FIVE STAR EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-3

Length: 591 words

Byline: Bill Spindle, The Wall Street Journal

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

Not far from piles of rubble still being cleared after last year's war with Israel, Mohamad Yassine recently took an important step in his own effort to rebuild. Middle East Ostrich, his first retail shop, got ready to open.

Passersby peered curiously through the window at his display of delicacies -- ostrich sausage, ostrich mortadella and a basket of big ostrich eggs. Heat-and-eat ostrich cordon bleu and ostrich Kiev were stacked in a freezer nearby. Souvenir plumes adorned a vase near the doorway.

Before the war, Mr. Yassine planned a much larger business expansion than this storefront. For now, though, it will have to do. "The war was a disaster for us," said Mr. Yassine, 52. "We're continuing on. But we don't know how long we'll make it."

That's a sentiment shared by many Lebanese. Their hopes for prosperity, so real last year, were pummeled by 34 days of fighting between the militant group Hezbollah and Israel's military in July and August. The aftermath of the war has brought political gridlock, rising sectarian tensions and, recently, street battles between armed groups and the military.

Mr. Yassine's ostrich farm is the only one in the country, but his tale of destruction and rebuilding isn't unusual.

For a decade, he had poured everything he had into building a flock of the African birds on a farm in southern Lebanon. His brood numbered about 2,400 when the fighting started.

Mr. Yassine, who wasn't at the farm when the Israeli jets began streaking overhead, phoned his son, Mehdi Yassine, who was on a summer break from the University of Toledo in Ohio, where he is studying biomedical engineering. The 27-year-old agreed to stay and try to keep the birds fed.

The bombing was so intense that Mehdi couldn't leave the house most days, he says. On day 15, he spread all the ostrich food onto the driveway, filled the swimming pool with drinking water and let the ostriches out of their pens. He and his father hoped the birds would forage enough to stay alive. Then Mehdi left for the relative safety of the north.

Rebuilding started immediately with the cease-fire that took effect on Aug. 14. The elder Mr. Yassine drove through an obstacle course of battered roads and collapsed bridges to get to his farm. He was aghast at what he found: Of

OSTRICH FARMER REBUILDS IN LEBANON

1,200 chicks in cages lining the farm's long driveway, just 10 were alive (and they died within days); 2,000 incubating eggs were ruined; and 6 tons of fetid meat sat rotting in freezers long deprived of electricity.

Adult ostriches wandered about the nearby hills and fields. Dozens lay dead. Mr. Yassine began piecing things back together as best he could. He has had to borrow \$400,000 from friends, which helped him pay to clean, repair and disinfect the cages. United Nations and Hezbollah teams re-moved most of the dozens of cluster bomblets on his land. Still, ostriches that had eaten sticks and rocks continued to die for weeks after the war ended, he says.

The females among the 900 adult ostriches that survived have laid 2,000 eggs. He hopes that by next year he'll have enough birds to begin culling them again for sale in significant numbers.

He's also working to expand beyond food products: He is negotiating with business people and artisans to create ostrich-skin handbags and backpacks, ostrich oils and salves and ostrich eggs with etched designs to be sold as art.

Mehdi Yassine plans to return to Lebanon after he graduates in December to help his father.

"We probably have a good chance to get back on our feet again -- if there's not another war," he said.

Load-Date: June 19, 2007

Draft dodgers should bear 'Mark of Cain': Israeli minister; One in four evades summer conscription

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

July 31, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 585 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Israel's new defence minister, Ehud Barak, suggested Monday draft dodgers should bear the "Mark of Cain on their foreheads" for evading compulsory military service in what has long been known here as "the people's army."

Military service was once considered a right of passage and essential for the Jewish state's defence. But according to Israeli Defence Forces statistics, one of four Israelis born in 1989 evaded this summer's draft by getting medical or religious exemptions or because they had a criminal record or were living overseas.

Most controversially, more than one in 10 of those eligible for military service who skipped it were Ultra-Orthodox Israelis who did so in order to study the Jewish holy book, the Torah.

Unless exempted, all Israeli males upon turning 18 are drafted to serve three years in the armed forces. All Israeli **females** are obliged to serve about half that time.

Barak, a highly decorated paratrooper who once entered Lebanon dressed as woman while leading a raid that killed three senior members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization responsible for the murders of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics, decried the new attitude at a memorial service for Ze'ev Schiff, the dean of Israeli military correspondents.

"The Israel Defence Forces are turning gradually into an army of only half the people," said Barak, who served as prime minister from 1999 to 2001, adding that those who did their service were being made to feel like "suckers."

Barak also lambasted employers for firing reservists who were called up and universities for not allowing them to take their examinations in such a way as not to conflict with their military obligations.

With politicians and many other public figures held in low esteem, the military had been Israel's last untarnished institution. But during Israel's war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon last summer senior commanders were widely condemned both for their tactics and for allowing three soldiers to be kidnapped by **Hezbollah** and Hamas and taken to Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

Draft dodgers should bear 'Mark of Cain': Israeli minister; One in four evades summer conscription

Sleeping soldier left behind

The most recent embarrassment came over the weekend when an Israeli soldier from the crack Golani Brigade fell asleep while on an operation about 700 metres inside Gaza and a friend vouched for his presence during a head count. The sleeping soldier's unit only discovered that he had been left behind when they did a second head count in Israel and rushed back to retrieve him.

In another incident that the IDF is still investigating, a unit conducted an operation without authorization last Thursday near the West Bank town of Hebron. Wearing civilian clothes, soldiers commandeered a Palestinian taxi and then shot and seriously wounded a Palestinian who had approached the vehicle. As a result, a multitude of charges are pending against six soldiers.

Typifying the growing ambivalence among young Israelis about military service, a secular teenager working in a sushi restaurant in Tel Aviv breezily revealed last week that she had evaded the draft by getting a medical exemption because "lots of my friends are in the army now and they told me I wouldn't like it."

Such attitudes about conscription have raised the hackles of many Israelis. Parents of soldiers wounded in last summer's war held a rally at an army base last week to protest the growing number of exemptions.

The mark of Cain refers to a passage in Genesis in which God places a mark upon Cain, the first-born of Adam and Eve, after he slew his brother Abel.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Barak ;

Load-Date: July 31, 2007

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Many Egyptians want to steer clear of Gaza trouble

Daily News Egypt

January 2, 2009 Friday

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Length: 595 words

Body

CAIRO: Ezzat Abdel-Rahman says Palestinians are suffering "great injustice" at the hands of Israel but they should have followed Egypt's lead and long ago made peace with the Jewish state.

He also says Egypt should not open its border with Gaza to let Palestinians flee the six-day Israeli assault, as demanded by Hamas and many Arabs.

"This could get Egypt into trouble with Israel," said the 42-year-old, who runs a shop selling shoes in central Cairo. "Israel could accuse Egypt of smuggling weapons into Gaza and dump the problems of Gaza on Egypt."

Despite the fiery rhetoric of Islamists and activists who demand strong action against Israel, many average Egyptians say they do not want the country dragged into another Middle East conflict, in rare agreement with a usually unpopular government.

Many say Hamas insurgents, who rule the Gaza Strip, could have avoided the attacks that killed more than 400 people if it had stopped firing its ineffective rockets at Israel.

"Hamas is acting against the Palestinians," said Mohamed Kamal, also a central Cairo shopkeeper, and one of a dozen Cairo residents interviewed by Reuters this week. "There is no reason for firing rockets. What are they hitting anyway?" he said.

Others, reflecting views promoted by state-run papers, said Hamas was acting with Iran and Syria, its main two supporters, to undermine Egypt and drag it into a conflict with Israel.

At a women's hairdresser, a worker was arguing with a customer that Egypt, has done enough for the Palestinians, a widely shared view among Egyptian citizens and government officials.

Egypt, the most populous Arab country and once seen as the bastion of Arab nationalism, fought four wars with Israel between 1948 and 1973. In 1979, it became the first Arab country to make peace with the Jewish state.

Hani El-Husseini, a veteran politician with the leftist Tagammu opposition party, said the Egyptian intelligentsia, many of whom favor tough measures such as breaking ties with Israel, are divorced from the reality of public priorities.

Many Egyptians want to steer clear of Gaza trouble

"The popular interest in regional issues has waned because people have surrendered to the notion that no Arab power can change the situation (with Israel)," he said.

The popular position is leaning toward peace, he said, despite the general hatred of Israel.

The Egyptian government says that if it left the border with Gaza wide open Israel would wash its hands of responsibility for ensuring Gazans receive enough supplies to keep them alive. Officials also say the probable influx of Gazans would pose a security risk because militants could sneak in among them.

But thousands of Arabs have rallied against Egypt in cities such as Beirut and Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, accusing Cairo of cooperating with Israel against Hamas and Palestinians.

Such sentiments reflect a widening gap among Arabs, with one group viewing Hamas and Hezbollah, the anti-Israeli Lebanese group, as part of a regional "defiance front" led by Iran and Syria against Israel and the United States.

The other camp says that only civilians pay the price for what they call useless military adventures.

The split was on display between two friends at a coffee shop in the center of Cairo this week.

"We have reached a stage when (Israel) is slapping us on the back of our neck," said 33-year-old Mohamed Abdallah. He praised Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah for calling on Egyptians to rise and support Gaza. "He is a man of principle."

"No, he is not," said his friend Mohamed Latif, an Egyptian working in the United Arab Emirates. "Our government is right."

Load-Date: January 4, 2009

Lebanon as a door to understanding; BOOKS & IDEAS

The International Herald Tribune

March 29, 2008 Saturday

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Section: FEATURE; Pg. 10

Length: 588 words

Byline: Michael J. Totten - The New York Times Media Group

Body

Mirror of the Arab World Lebanon in Conflict

By Sandra Mackey

303 pages. \$25.95. W. W. Norton & Company.

Reviewed by Michael J. Totten

*

First-time visitors to Lebanon are often startled at how different the country seems from the rest of the Arab world. Spectacular snow-capped mountains rise sheer from the shores of the Mediterranean. Freewheeling Beirut, where almost everything short of murder and rape is allowed, feels more like Hong Kong or Amsterdam than dreary Damascus or Cairo. Elegant women, Muslim as well as Christian, dress as stylishly as their counterparts in Milan and Manhattan. Plastic surgeons are as ubiquitous as decadent and erotically charged nightclubs. Democracy isn't pushed on the Lebanese by diplomats or foreign soldiers - it's taught in schools, and has been for more than a half-century.

But Lebanon is also where Palestinian guerrillas, living in squalid camps, fought a hot war with the national army last year. Bullet-pocked and mortar-shattered towers stand as gruesome reminders that history continues to be made in Beirut, that the Paris of the Middle East moonlights as the Baghdad of the Levant.

"Until Iraq took a share of the title in 2003," Sandra Mackey writes in "Mirror of the Arab World: Lebanon in Conflict," "the most tormented of all Arab countries was Lebanon." Though far and away the most liberal, democratic and sophisticated of Arabic-speaking countries, Lebanon still hasn't managed to overcome the Arab world's troubles. Identity is rooted in family, clan, sect and ideology more than in the nation. The government can't administer or police its territory. Foreigners use the country for proxy wars.

Borders are only vaguely defined in some places, and everywhere else were drawn up by Western imperialists in collaboration with local clients.

Conflict between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, and between Muslims and Christians, has plunged Lebanon into civil war and may do so again.

Lebanon as a door to understanding BOOKS & IDEAS

Hezbollah's radical Islamist militia administers its own area and is better armed and trained than the national army. In 2006 Lebanon was, yet again, a front line in the intractable Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Mirror of the Arab World" is really two books in one. Mackey's narrative deftly weaves Lebanon's tragic history with that of the Arab Middle East as a whole. The author of books on Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia, Mackey follows Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization from its insurgency against King Hussein in Jordan, through its formation of a state-within-a-state in Lebanon to its exile at the hands of Israeli soldiers.

She traces the arc of rising Shiite political power to the emergence of Hezbollah's protostate in south Lebanon. Rather than look at Iraq as an echo of Vietnam, she finds a closer parallel in the ferocious civil war that pitted sect against sect and local against foreigner in Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s.

Mackey performs the balancing act of demonstrating that Lebanon is unique yet somehow still reflective of all Arab countries. "The world of the Arabs is no longer a mysterious, romanticized region lying somewhere between Europe and Asia," she writes. "It is here. It is now. And it is difficult."

Beirut has long been considered a gateway between the West and the East. It is also a doorway to understanding, because to know Lebanon is to know the Arabs. "Mirror of the Arab World" is an expert depiction of both.

*

Michael J. Totten is an independent foreign correspondent specializing in the Middle East. He is a former resident of Beirut.

Load-Date: April 1, 2008

End of Document

Israel's Labour leadership race heads for runoff; Ex-prime minister Barak to face political rookie Ayalon in comeback try

The Toronto Star
May 29, 2007 Tuesday

Copyright 2007 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: WORLD & COMMENT; Pg. AA01

Length: 563 words

Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Two former Israeli prime ministers rebounded to the political forefront yesterday, but neither will learn his eventual destiny until at least the middle of next month.

Ehud Barak, who served as Israel's top politician from 1999 until 2001, won a first-place finish with 36 per cent in the vote to choose a new leader for the left-leaning Labour party, currently junior partner in the ruling coalition.

That sets the stage for a June 12 runoff, pitting Barak against relative political neophyte Ami Ayalon, a former head of Israel's security intelligence organization, Shin Bet, who was elected to parliament for the first time only last year.

Ayalon got 31 per cent, according to final results announced early today. Neither candidate was able to garner more than 40 per cent of votes for a first-round win, forcing a runoff.

The race for the Labour party leadership is important because its outcome could determine the fate of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the coalition government he has led since March 2006.

The Barak-Ayalon contest also could have a substantial impact on the search for solutions to the long-running conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

Barak has said he would remain in the governing alliance and back Olmert's leadership, while Ayalon maintains he would seek to hold the coalition together while insisting on a replacement for the prime minister.

Meanwhile, Olmert yesterday was promoting the apparently inexhaustible career ambitions of another former prime minister, Shimon Peres, who led the country from 1984 to 1986.

Olmert threw his support and that of his ruling Kadima Party behind Peres in next month's vote to elect Israel's next president, a largely ceremonial position.

Peres, 84, who now serves as vice-premier in Olmert's coalition government, has long been a towering figure in Middle East politics. He has also served as minister of defence and of foreign affairs.

"I have no doubt that Peres will restore the honour and prestige to the president's position, which is what the people deserve," Olmert said.

Israel 's Labour leadership race heads for runoff Ex- prime minister Barak to face political rookie Ayalon in comeback try

Those comments were an apparent reference to the current president, Moshe Katsav, who in January took a leave of absence amid a brewing scandal based on allegations he raped or sexually harassed **female** subordinates.

Peres is expected to announce his candidacy for the president's job tomorrow. The big loser in yesterday's leadership vote appeared to be Amir Peretz, who has held the position for the past 18 months but who seemed headed for a third-place finish.

Peretz has come under especially severe criticism for his part in last summer's war with **Hezbollah** and for what some see as his unsuitability for the defence portfolio.

A poll this past weekend in the Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahronot suggested that Ayalon would triumph over Barak in a runoff.

Each insists he is the best choice for the party and would be the leader most likely to restore Labour to its former glory as one of Israel's two most formidable political machines, a reputation it once enjoyed along with the right-wing Likud Party, which has also suffered recent reverses.

Last month, Olmert suffered stinging criticism from a commission of inquiry that blamed him for a series of mistakes during last summer's war pitting Israel against **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon, a conflict that ended inconclusively after claiming more than 1,000 lives, most of them Lebanese.

Graphic

ARIEL SCHALIT AP Former Israeli PM Ehud Barak is making a political comeback.

Load-Date: May 29, 2007

Frustration for Bush as pledge to Saudis fails to win oil concession

The Guardian - Final Edition

May 17, 2008 Saturday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 28

Length: 504 words

Byline: Ian Black, Middle East editor

Body

The US agreed yesterday to help Saudi Arabia protect its oil industry from terrorist attack, while offering to back conservative Arab countries resisting Iranian influence spreading across the Middle East.

The White House announced new agreements with the kingdom as President George Bush flew to Riyadh for private talks with King Abdullah at his ranch outside the capital. But the king was not persuaded to boost Saudi oil production to ease the effect of the \$127-a-barrel price on the US economy.

Bush arrived from Israel, where he spent two days celebrating its 60th anniversary, an event which brought the release yesterday of another threatening message from the Saudi renegade and al-Qaida leader, Osama bin Laden.

"We will continue, God willing, the fight against the Israelis and their allies . . . and will not give up a single inch of Palestine as long as there is one true Muslim on Earth," he declared in a 10-minute audio message posted on an Islamist website. The tape's authenticity could not be verified but it bore the hallmarks of al-Sahab, al-Qaida's media arm.

"The participation of western leaders with the Jews in this celebration confirms that the west backs this Jewish occupation of our land, and that they stand in the Israeli trench against us," he said, claiming that the Palestinian issue had motivated the 9/11 attacks on the US.

Bin Laden, clearly aware of Palestine's wider resonance, attaches more importance to the issue these days, having made little of it in public statements before 2001. "Peace talks that started 60 years ago are just meant to deceive the idiots," he said. "After all the destruction and the killings . . . your leaders talk about principles. This is unbearable. You describe Palestinian organisations as terrorists and you boycott them and punish them while Israelis are killing civilians, women and children."

Bush's speech in the Knesset on Thursday lavished praise on Israel and excoriated its enemies - Hamas, Hizbullah in Lebanon, as well as Iran and Syria. But he barely mentioned the Palestinians, who were that same day marking the "nakba" (catastrophe) they suffered as the Jewish state won its independence in May 1948.

Frustration for Bush as pledge to Saudis fails to win oil concession

It will have confirmed many Arabs in their conviction that the US is irredeemably biased in favour of Israel.

US expectations for good news on oil had been low. The Saudis are bound by agreement with the rest of Opec. "What they're saying is . . . Saudi Arabia does not have customers that are making requests for oil that they are not able to satisfy," said the US national security adviser, Stephen Hadley. Bush made a similar pitch in January and was rebuffed. The Saudis want \$1.4bn in arms sales, which Democrats have threatened to block unless Riyadh agrees to increase oil production by 1 million barrels per day.

Bush flies to Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, today for a meeting of the World Economic Forum. He will also meet the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak.

Oil nears \$128 a barrel, page 39 >=

Load-Date: May 17, 2008

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Between dust and deliverance; COMMENTARY

The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)

June 16, 2007 Saturday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A11

Length: 613 words

Byline: THOMAS FRIEDMAN

Body

I'm sitting in Ramallah at The Yasser Arafat Foundation listening to Nasser al-Kidwa, the thoughtful former Palestinian foreign minister, talk about Palestinian society "disintegrating" around him. What pains him most, he explains, is that any of his neighbours today with money, skills, or a foreign passport are fleeing for the West or the Gulf. As he speaks, an old saying pops into my mind - one that applies today to Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine: "Would the last one out please turn off the lights."

The Arab world needs a Fourth Way.

The Arabs tried Nasserism, i.e., authoritarian-nationalism, and that didn't work. It tried various brands of Arab socialism, and that didn't work. It even took a flier with bin Ladenism. Bin Laden was the thumb that many Arabs stuck in the eye of the West and of their own hated regimes.

But, I would argue, bin Ladenism, and its various jihadist offshoots, has died in Iraq. Its revolutionary shine, because it has turned out to be nothing more than a death cult.

In my book, the day it died was May 24, 2007, in Fallujah, Iraq. Why? Because on that day, 27 people were killed when a suicide bomber in a car attacked a funeral procession for Allawi al-Isawi, a local contractor, who was killed earlier in the day. According to Reuters, "as mourners walked down a main street holding aloft al-Isawi's coffin, the bomber drove into the crowd and blew himself up."

Think about that. No - really think about it: A Muslim suicide bomber blew up a Muslim funeral. Is there anything lower? But that is what bin Laden and the jihadists have become: utter nihilists, responsible for killing more Muslims than anyone in the world today and totally uninterested in governing, only in making life ungovernable.

But who offers a way forward? Right now, the best Arabs can hope for are the decent, modernizing monarchies, like Jordan, Qatar, Dubai, and the United Arab Emirates. I do not see any secular progressivism - a Fourth Way - emerging in the big Arab states like Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and Iraq, that is, a progressivism that would effectively promote more rule of law, global integration, multiparty elections, women's empowerment, and modern education to lay the foundations of decent governance. Far from it, Egypt had an election in 2005, and Ayman Nour, the candidate who dared to run against President Mubarak, got thrown into jail on phony charges.

I also don't see a religious Fourth Way emerging - a progressive Islam articulated by the big, popular Islamic parties like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Hezbollah took seats in the Lebanese Cabinet and then proceeded to launch its own war with Israel. What a great vision.

Between dust and deliverance; COMMENTARY

Since the Islamic parties have monopolized the mosques and the authoritarian regimes have monopolized the public square, anyone trying to articulate an Arab Fourth Way today "is competing against either God or the state - and between God and the state, what room is left for secular democrats?" asked Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki.

Only weeds can grow there - small nihilist weeds, like Fatah al Islam in Lebanon or al-Qaida in Mesopotamia in Iraq or Islamic Jihad in Gaza. And they are growing.

That's why decent people, particularly Arab college grads, are leaving the area. They have no one to cheer for. The only hope for getting them back or for getting us out of Iraq - without leaving the region to the most nihilistic or impoverished elements - is an Arab Fourth Way. But it has to come from them - and right now, it is not happening, not inside Iraq, not outside.

Thomas L. Friedman is a syndicated columnist for the New York Times. His column is distributed by the New York Times News Service.

Load-Date: June 16, 2007

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Anti-Semitism is finding new allies on both Right and Left

The Times (London)

April 1, 2008, Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Times2; Pg. 7

Length: 976 words

Byline: Michael Gove

Body

If even Ed Stourton doesn't get it, there really is a problem. Stourton is not just an exceptionally civilised voice on Radio 4, he's also one of broadcasting's most thoughtful figures. As well as Today, he occasionally fronts Sunday, the religious magazine programme, has written a well-received book on Pope John Paul II and presented a fascinating documentary on the Arab/Israeli conflict. Which is why it's so troubling that he, of all people, missed the point.

Stourton was interviewing Barbet Schroeder, who has produced biopics on Idi Amin and Claus von Bulow and has just made a film about the famous French lawyer Jacques Verges. Like many lawyers who prefer to act for the defence, Verges enjoys difficult cases. But he's a little bit more daring than Horace Rumpole in his client list: Verges has, in his time, defended the Vichy collaborator Klaus Barbie (the Butcher of Lyons), Ilich Ramirez Sanchez (Carlos the Jackal), various Palestinian terrorists and members of the Baader-Meinhof gang. Oh, and we shouldn't forget Saddam Hussein's No 2, Tariq Aziz.

Stourton was curious about this galere of clients, and confessed to feeling perplexed about what could possibly link Klaus Barbie and Palestinian terrorists. What on earth would unite these disparate people, and what would draw Verges to them?

What indeed? What is it that has marked the most sustained terror campaign in the Middle East? What was it that characterised Barbie's period in charge of security in wartime Lyons? What drove the arguments made by those survivors of the Baader-Meinhof gang who are still politically active today, such as Horst Mahler? And what tie binds Carlos the Jackal, the renegade terrorist of the 1970s, to Tariq Aziz, the Establishment face of prewar Iraq?

One thing unites them all: anti-Semitism.

While Stourton might have found it hard to see what united Palestinian terrorists and Klaus Barbie, it was instantly apparent to me - both made the elimination of Jewish lives a central ideological mission. Just as Carlos the Jackal did in the 1970s, when he launched rocket attacks on El-Al airlines and targeted Jewish businessmen. And just as Tariq Aziz did in the 1990s, when Iraqi Scud missiles were directed against Israel, and Iraqi money subsidised suicide bombing.

Of course, despite the best efforts of the impeccably professional, utterly neutral and, I'm sure, entirely charming M Verges, Klaus, Carlos and their ideological cousins have all been brought to justice. Yet the ideology that united them - a dark and furious hatred of the Jewish people - hasn't been contained.

Anti-Semitism is finding new allies on both Right and Left

In 2006, Israel came under attack from the Lebanese-based terror group Hezbollah. The leader of Hezbollah, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, is on record as saying: "If we searched the entire world for a person more cowardly, despicable, weak and feeble in psyche, mind, ideology and religion, we would not find anyone like the Jew. Notice, I do not say the Israeli." That summer the streets of London were filled with our fellow citizens chanting: "We are all Hezbollah now."

The spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood is a gentleman called Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. He is on record as telling Newsnight that suicide bombing which targeted Israeli women and children was justified, arguing: "I consider this type of martyrdom operation as an evidence of God's justice. Allah Almighty is just; through His infinite wisdom He has given the weak a weapon that the strong do not have, and that is their ability to turn their bodies into bombs as Palestinians do." The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, invited the Sheikh to City Hall in 2004 as an "honoured guest".

Ron Paul is a Texan Congressman and one of the Republican Party's defeated candidates for his party's presidential nomination this year. Although he finished well behind the rest of the pack, he won plaudits from many and raised millions en route. The Guardian columnist Geoffrey Wheatcroft last week praised Paul for his opposition to the Iraq War and singled out as especially commendable his dislike of US policy towards Israel. Wheatcroft lauded Paul as an "excellent man" whose words on Israel were "sane and humane". Yet, as the US magazine The New Republic has revealed, Paul has published some curious thoughts on the Middle East. In a 1987 issue of the Ron Paul Investment Letter Israel is described as "an aggressive, national socialist state". A 1990 newsletter discussed the "tens of thousands of well-placed friends of Israel in all countries who are willing to wok (sic) for the Mossad in their area of expertise". Of the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing, a newsletter said: "Whether it was a set-up by the Israeli Mossad, as a Jewish friend of mine suspects, or was truly a retaliation by the Islamic fundamentalists matters little."

Whether it comes from the hard Left or the wildest shores of the Right, whether it masquerades as liberation rhetoric or brave truth-telling about hidden power brokers, anti-Semitism is finding new allies, making new connections, gathering new force. Something is clearly awry in our culture. The Iranian Government holds conferences to discuss the historical truth of the Holocaust, yet some newspapers try to minimise the danger from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and defend him from "misquotation". Learned magazines devote thousands of words to the pernicious nature of Jewish influence on Western governments, and senior commentators then celebrate the delicious courage of this novel argument. Academics, without apparently being conscious of the irony, argue for a boycott of Israeli thinkers in the name of freedom. It is one of the grave distempers of our times, this prejudice towards the Jewish people, their nation and their collective identity. And one of the tasks of our times is its exposure, its combating and its defeat.

Michael Gove is Conservative MP for Surrey Heath

Load-Date: April 1, 2008

A master of political survival; Embattled Israeli PM exploits coalition partners' reluctance for another election

The Toronto Star
May 5, 2007 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 916 words

Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Ignore for a moment all the terrible things you may have heard recently about Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is being pilloried here for his apparently gross mishandling of this country's war last summer in southern Lebanon.

Incompetent, the man may be - at least when it comes to the task of deploying armies in wartime - but the former mayor of Jerusalem can now also lay claim to an accomplishment that few of his predecessors in the prime minister's office ever managed to achieve.

He has conjured up a political option that people on both sides of the Middle East's lethal and abiding fault line are willing to endorse. Palestinian or Israeli, it doesn't seem to matter which: they all want Olmert to go.

"For us, if Olmert would resign, we would not lose anything," said Nabi Kukali, a Palestinian pollster and head of the Palestinian Centre for Public Opinion, based in the West Bank town of Beit Sahour. "The way we see it, he is unable to go forward with the peace process. He can't make any agreements. It would be good for the Palestinians if he just resigns."

Although they expressed the sentiment in different terms, an Israeli crowd estimated at 150,000 proposed the identical solution on Thursday evening when they thronged into Tel Aviv's Rabin Square to demonstrate their opposition to the second-generation politician, who may have bungled a war but has so far proved himself to be a master of political survival.

"He knows all the tricks of the trade," said Gideon Doron, professor of political science at Tel Aviv University. "Unlike others, it's almost natural for him to survive."

Early this week, a government-appointed commission of inquiry headed by retired judge Eliyahu Winograd released an interim report on last summer's conflict, which pitted Israel's armed forces against Syrian-backed ***Hezbollah*** guerrillas operating just beyond Israel's northern border.

After much bombing and bloodshed, the war ended inconclusively, without achieving any of Israel's stated goals, and the commission's report held Olmert largely to blame, along with Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz and former armed forces' chief of staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz, who has resigned.

A master of political survival Embattled Israeli PM exploits coalition partners' reluctance for another election

"It's an astounding document for the ineptitude it reveals," David Horovitz, editor-in-chief of The Jerusalem Post, said of the 160-page report. "This is not an ideological critique. It is a criticism of staggering incompetence. They're saying that anybody would have been smarter and better."

According to a recent poll, conducted before the Winograd commission released its report, Olmert's political support had dwindled to 2 per cent of the electorate, and yet the man remains in office - and there are those here who predict he will continue to hang onto power.

"I do not think it's over for Olmert," said Ari Shavit, a political columnist for the newspaper Haaretz.

Reviled he may be, but Olmert also heads a coalition government that enjoys a comfortable majority with about 75 seats - there were a couple of defections this week - in the 120-seat Knesset or parliament.

"That's a very strong coalition," said Doron. "As of today, Olmert is very strong politically."

But powerful Israeli politicians have been brought down in the past by upsurges of popular opposition, expressed by massive street demonstrations and fiery editorials in the press.

The organizers of Thursday's huge anti-government rally in Tel Aviv promise that the event will be merely the first of many.

Meanwhile, there is no shortage of ambitious politicians here who are already lobbying behind the scenes.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni heads many people's lists of possible successors.

However, many observers now say she did herself no favours late this week when she urged her boss to step down but did not take the same course herself.

"It was a terrible mistake," said Shavit at Haaretz.

In pursuit of the top job, Livni might also have trouble attracting support from other parties in the ruling coalition, some of whose members might oppose her for reasons of ideology or gender.

According to Doron, she's too left-wing for the right and too female for the religiously orthodox, who would not back any woman for the prime minister's job.

Shimon Peres, former prime minister and long-time fixture of Israeli politics, is said to have ambitions of again ruling this fractious land. But Peres, now 84, would likely have to win the support of another former prime minister and fellow stalwart of the Labour Party - Ehud Barak, who is the odds-on favourite to win the party leadership in a convention scheduled for late this month, probably unseating the incumbent, none other than Peretz, who is under pressure to resign.

It is possible Barak might then withdraw Labour from Olmert's ruling coalition, possibly bringing down the government, except that the leading contender for the prime minister's job, according to the latest polls, would then be yet another former occupant of that office, the hard-line right-winger by the name of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Nobody on the left, and very few people in the centre, want the man known here as Bibi to wind up holding the winning hand - and that reluctance may well be the ace up Olmert's sleeve.

"There's no doubt that Bibi-phobia is Olmert's safety net," said Shavit.

And so the protest demonstrations and the backroom manoeuvring seem all but certain to continue, as politicians jockey for position or survival, while the remorseless search for an accommodation between Israelis and Palestinians fades.

A master of political survival Embattled Israeli PM exploits coalition partners' reluctance for another election

Graphic

KEVIN FRAYER AP Pictures of Ehud Goldwasser, left, and Eldad Regev, who were captured by Hezbollah, and Gilad Shalit, right, who was taken by Palestinian militants in Gaza, hangs on a stall in a Jerusalem market yesterday. Their capture sparked last summer's war on Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Load-Date: May 5, 2007

End of Document

Eliminating Hezbollah, Hamas will bring peace

Windsor Star (Ontario)

January 20, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL/OPINION; Pg. A7

Length: 129 words

Byline: Chris Flood, Windsor Star

Body

Re: Israel Started Dispute By Breaking Truce, Jan. 19, by Sami Mazloun.

Mr. Mazloun's statement that Israel is waging war against the civilian population is incorrect. Israel is waging war against Hamas, a terrorist group that does not recognize and wants to eliminate Israel.

Like **Hezbollah**, Hamas hides and launches rockets in homes and schools where **women** and children are used as shields.

In 2006, Israel left the Gaza Strip in a show of peace and received in return more than 4,000 rockets from Hamas.

Where was the outcry when Hamas was launching these rockets into Israel schools and homes?

Peace will arise when Hamas and **Hezbollah** are wiped off the map and then hopefully Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will think twice about wiping Israel off the map.

Chris Flood

Essex

Load-Date: January 20, 2009

Israel set to widen its assault on Gaza; Death toll surpasses 300 in third day of airstrikes; fury rises in Arab world

The International Herald Tribune

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1469 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Ethan Bronner contributed reporting from Jerusalem; Robert F. Worth and Hwaïda Saad from Beirut; Nazila Fathi from Tehran; Rina Castelnovo from the Israel-Gaza border; Khaled Abu Aker from Ramallah, West Bank; and an employee of The New York Times from Syria.

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Hamas said Israel bombed a government ministry compound and the Islamic University in Gaza, a stronghold of Hamas, late Sunday night. The Hamas-owned television station Al Aqsa was also struck, as was a mosque that the Israeli military said was being used as a terrorist base. On Monday, Israeli warplanes bombed the Hamas-run Interior Ministry, Reuters reported, based on a Hamas statement.

In a statement on Monday, the Israeli Army said some areas around Gaza had been declared a "closed military zone," a move that some analysts depicted as a potential precursor to a ground offensive. The military said the declaration meant that civilians, including journalists, could be denied access to an area up to three kilometers, or two miles, from Gaza.

The military also reported that a rocket fired Monday from Gaza had killed a man and wounded seven people in the southern Israeli town of Ashkelon. Additionally, three Israelis were stabbed by a Palestinian in a Jewish settlement in the West Bank, the military said.

The continued airstrikes, which Israel said were in retaliation for sustained rocket fire from Gaza into its territory, unleashed a furious reaction across the Arab world, raising fears of greater instability in the region.

Much of the anger was also directed at Egypt, seen by Hamas and some nearby governments as having acceded to Israel's military action by sealing its border with Gaza and forcing back at gunpoint many Palestinians who were trying to escape the destruction.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross appealed Sunday for urgent humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies, to be allowed to enter Gaza. Israeli officials said that some aid had been allowed in through one of the crossings. Egypt temporarily opened the Rafah crossing on Saturday to allow some of the wounded to be taken to Egyptian hospitals.

Israel made a strong effort to justify the attacks, saying it was forced into military action to defend its citizens. At the same time, the supreme religious leader of Iran and the leader of the Lebanese militia group Hezbollah expressed strong support for Hamas.

Across Gaza, families huddled indoors as Israeli jets streaked overhead. Residents said that there were long blackouts and that they had no cooking gas. Some ventured out to receive bread rations at bakeries or to brave the streets to claim their dead at the hospitals. There were few mass funerals; rather, families buried the victims in small ceremonies.

At dusk on Sunday, Israeli fighter jets bombed more than 40 tunnels along Gaza's border with Egypt. The Israeli military said that the tunnels, on the Gaza side of the border, were used for smuggling weapons, explosives and fugitives. Gazans also use many of them to import consumer goods and fuel in order to get around the Israeli-imposed economic blockade.

In the first two days of the operation, Israeli jets had destroyed at least 30 targets in Gaza, including the main security compound and prison in Gaza City known as the Saraya, metal workshops throughout Gaza that were suspected of manufacturing rockets, and Hamas military posts.

Israel appeared to be settling in for a longer haul. On Sunday, the government approved the emergency call-up of thousands of army reservists in preparation for a possible ground operation as Israeli troops, tanks, armored personnel carriers and armored bulldozers massed at the border.

Speaking before the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, the Israeli defense minister, Ehud Barak, said the army "will deepen and broaden its actions as needed" and "will continue to act." Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel's goal was not to reoccupy Gaza, which it left unilaterally in 2005, but to "restore normal life and quiet to residents of the south" of Israel.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni appeared on U.S. talk shows to press Israel's case. She said on "Fox News Sunday" that the operation "is needed in order to change the realities on the ground and to give peace and quiet to the citizens in southern Israel."

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In Lebanon, the leader of the Shiite militant group **Hezbollah**, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, put his fighters on alert, expressing strong support for Hamas and saying that he believed Israel might try to wage a two-front war, as it did in 2006. He called for a mass demonstration in Beirut. And he also denounced Egyptian leaders. "If you don't open the borders, you are accomplices in the killing," he said in a televised speech.

The supreme religious leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, condemned the silence of some Arab countries, which he said had prepared the grounds for the "catastrophe," an Iranian news agency, ISNA, reported.

"The horrible crime of the Zionist regime in Gaza has once again revealed the bloodthirsty face of this regime from disguise," he said in a statement. "But worse than this catastrophe is the encouraging silence of some Arab countries who claim to be Muslim," he said, apparently in a reference to Egypt and Jordan.

Egypt has mediated talks between Israel and the Palestinians and between Hamas and its rival, Fatah, leaving it open to criticism that it is too willing to work with Israel. In turn, Egypt and other Western-allied Arab Sunni nations are deeply opposed to **Hezbollah** and Hamas, which they see as extensions of Iran, their Shiite nemesis.

Across the region, the Israeli strikes were being broadcast in grisly detail almost continually on Arab satellite networks.

In the Syrian capital, Damascus, a large group of protesters marched to Yusuf al-Azmeh Square, where they chanted slogans and burned Israeli and U.S. flags.

In Beirut, protesters were bused to a rally outside the United Nations building, holding up Palestinian flags and Hamas banners. Muhammad Mazen Ibrahim, a 25-year-old Palestinian who lives in one of the refugee camps here, choked up when asked about the assault on Gaza.

"There's an agreement between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel against Hamas," he said. "They want to end them; all the countries are in league against Hamas, but, God willing, we will win."

That sentiment is widespread here. Many see Livni's visit to Cairo last week as evidence that Egypt, eager to be rid of Hamas, had consented to the airstrikes.

The anger echoes what happened in July 2006, when the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Egypt publicly blamed **Hezbollah** for starting the conflict with Israel. Popular rage against Israel soon forced the leaders to change their positions.

Hamas, sworn to the destruction of Israel, took control of Gaza when it ousted Fatah last year. An Egyptian-brokered six-month truce between Israel and Hamas, always shaky, began to unravel in early November. It expired 10 days ago.

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Isabel Kershner reported from Jerusalem.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

ISRAEL KEEPS UP ASSAULT ON GAZA; ARAB ANGER RISES

The New York Times

December 29, 2008 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1325 words

Byline: By TAGHREED EL-KHODARY and ISABEL KERSHNER; Taghreed El-Khodary reported from Gaza, and Isabel Kershner from Jerusalem. Reporting was contributed by Robert F. Worth and Hwaida Saad from Beirut, Lebanon, Nazila Fathi from Tehran, Rina Castelnuevo from the Israel-Gaza border, Khaled Abu Aker from Ramallah, West Bank, and an employee of The New York Times from Syria.

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israeli troops and tanks massed along the Gaza border and the government said it had called up reserves for a possible ground operation, as the death toll increased to nearly 300 after Israeli aircraft pounded Gaza for a second day on Sunday.

The continued strikes, which Israel said were in retaliation for sustained rocket fire from Gaza into its territory, unleashed a furious reaction across the Arab world, raising fears of greater instability in the region.

Much of the anger was also directed at Egypt, seen by Hamas and some nearby governments as having acceded to Israel's military action by sealing its border with Gaza and forcing back many Palestinians at gunpoint who were trying to escape the destruction.

Witnesses at the Rafah border crossing described a chaotic scene as young men tried to force their way across into Egypt, amid sporadic exchanges of gunfire between Hamas and Egyptian forces. Egyptian state television reported that one Egyptian border guard was killed by a Hamas gunman. A Palestinian man was killed by an Egyptian guard near Rafah, Reuters reported.

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<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: Palestinian rescue workers helped a wounded prisoner on Sunday in Gaza City after an Israeli missile attack at the main security compound and prison, the Saraya. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAJED HAMDAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (pg.A1)

A Palestinian family in the Rafah refugee camp rushed from the scene of a building hit by an Israeli missile strike Sunday, the second day of an air barrage in Gaza. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HATEM OMAR/MAANIMAGES, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Palestinian youths clashed, left, with Israeli border police on Sunday in the West Bank. In Gaza City, Palestinians tried to reach the body of a Hamas security officer. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMMAR AWAD/REUTERS

FADI ADWAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (pg.A10) MAP: Some Palestinians tried to flee from the Gaza Strip to Egypt. (pg.A10)

ISRAEL KEEPS UP ASSAULT ON GAZA; ARAB ANGER RISES

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

Israel set to widen its assault on Gaza; Death toll surpasses 300 in third day of airstrikes; fury rises in Arab world

The International Herald Tribune

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1469 words

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At Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, women wailed as they searched for relatives among bodies that lay strewn on the hospital floor. One doctor said that, given the dearth of facilities, not much could be done for the seriously wounded and that it was "better to be brought in dead."

The International Committee of the Red Cross appealed Sunday for urgent humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies, to be allowed to enter Gaza. Israeli officials said that some aid had been allowed in through one of the crossings. Egypt temporarily opened the Rafah crossing on Saturday to allow some of the wounded to be taken to Egyptian hospitals.

Israel made a strong effort to justify the attacks, saying it was forced into military action to defend its citizens. At the same time, the supreme religious leader of Iran and the leader of the Lebanese militia group Hezbollah expressed strong support for Hamas.

Across Gaza, families huddled indoors as Israeli jets streaked overhead. Residents said that there were long blackouts and that they had no cooking gas. Some ventured out to receive bread rations at bakeries or to brave the streets to claim their dead at the hospitals. There were few mass funerals; rather, families buried the victims in small ceremonies.

At dusk on Sunday, Israeli fighter jets bombed more than 40 tunnels along Gaza's border with Egypt. The Israeli military said that the tunnels, on the Gaza side of the border, were used for smuggling weapons, explosives and fugitives. Gazans also use many of them to import consumer goods and fuel in order to get around the Israeli-imposed economic blockade.

In the first two days of the operation, Israeli jets had destroyed at least 30 targets in Gaza, including the main security compound and prison in Gaza City known as the Saraya, metal workshops throughout Gaza that were suspected of manufacturing rockets, and Hamas military posts.

Israel appeared to be settling in for a longer haul. On Sunday, the government approved the emergency call-up of thousands of army reservists in preparation for a possible ground operation as Israeli troops, tanks, armored personnel carriers and armored bulldozers massed at the border.

Speaking before the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, the Israeli defense minister, Ehud Barak, said the army "will deepen and broaden its actions as needed" and "will continue to act." Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel's goal was not to reoccupy Gaza, which it left unilaterally in 2005, but to "restore normal life and quiet to residents of the south" of Israel.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni appeared on U.S. talk shows to press Israel's case. She said on "Fox News Sunday" that the operation "is needed in order to change the realities on the ground and to give peace and quiet to the citizens in southern Israel."

Militants in Gaza fired barrages of rockets and mortar shells the farthest yet into Israel on Sunday. One rocket fell in Gan Yavneh, a village near the major port city of Ashdod, about 30 kilometers north of Gaza. Two landed in the coastal city of Ashkelon. Several Israelis were wounded.

Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesman for Hamas, told reporters that Israel had started a "war" but that it would not be able to choose how it would end. He called for revenge in the form of strikes reaching "deep into the Zionist entity using all means," including suicide attacks.

Israel set to widen its assault on Gaza Death toll surpasses 300 in third day of airstrikes fury rises in Arab world

The hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens now within rocket range have been instructed by the authorities to stay close to protected spaces.

In Lebanon, the leader of the Shiite militant group Hezbollah, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, put his fighters on alert, expressing strong support for Hamas and saying that he believed Israel might try to wage a two-front war, as it did in 2006. He called for a mass demonstration in Beirut. And he also denounced Egyptian leaders. "If you don't open the borders, you are accomplices in the killing," he said in a televised speech.

The supreme religious leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, condemned the silence of some Arab countries, which he said had prepared the grounds for the "catastrophe," an Iranian news agency, ISNA, reported.

"The horrible crime of the Zionist regime in Gaza has once again revealed the bloodthirsty face of this regime from disguise," he said in a statement. "But worse than this catastrophe is the encouraging silence of some Arab countries who claim to be Muslim," he said, apparently in a reference to Egypt and Jordan.

Egypt has mediated talks between Israel and the Palestinians and between Hamas and its rival, Fatah, leaving it open to criticism that it is too willing to work with Israel. In turn, Egypt and other Western-allied Arab Sunni nations are deeply opposed to Hezbollah and Hamas, which they see as extensions of Iran, their Shiite nemesis.

Across the region, the Israeli strikes were being broadcast in grisly detail almost continually on Arab satellite networks.

In the Syrian capital, Damascus, a large group of protesters marched to Yusuf al-Azmeh Square, where they chanted slogans and burned Israeli and U.S. flags.

In Beirut, protesters were bused to a rally outside the United Nations building, holding up Palestinian flags and Hamas banners. Muhammad Mazen Ibrahim, a 25-year-old Palestinian who lives in one of the refugee camps here, choked up when asked about the assault on Gaza.

"There's an agreement between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel against Hamas," he said. "They want to end them; all the countries are in league against Hamas, but, God willing, we will win."

That sentiment is widespread here. Many see Livni's visit to Cairo last week as evidence that Egypt, eager to be rid of Hamas, had consented to the airstrikes.

The anger echoes what happened in July 2006, when the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Egypt publicly blamed Hezbollah for starting the conflict with Israel. Popular rage against Israel soon forced the leaders to change their positions.

Hamas, sworn to the destruction of Israel, took control of Gaza when it ousted Fatah last year. An Egyptian-brokered six-month truce between Israel and Hamas, always shaky, began to unravel in early November. It expired 10 days ago.

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Isabel Kershner reported from Jerusalem.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel-Hamas ceasefire

The New Zealand Herald

January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 1483 words

Body

GENEVA - The United Nations Security Council approved a resolution Thursday calling for an immediate and durable cease-fire between Hamas militants and Israeli forces now fighting in the Gaza Strip.

The vote was 14-0, with the United States abstaining.

The vote followed three days of intense negotiations between ministers from key Arab nations and the council's veto-wielding Western powers - the United States, Britain and France. It came on the 13th day of an Israeli air and ground offensive against the Islamic group Hamas, which rules Gaza and has been launching rockets and mortars into southern Israel for years.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, and Arab nations that have close ties to Hamas negotiated the text of the resolution. But it will be up to Israel and Hamas to decide to stop their military activities.

"We are all very conscious that peace is made on the ground while resolutions are written in the United Nations," British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said.

"Our job here is to support the efforts for peace on the ground and to help turn the good words on paper into changes on the ground that are desperately needed."

Earlier the UN halted deliveries to the Gaza Strip on after gunfire from an Israeli tank killed an aid truck driver, and the international Red Cross said it would restrict activities after one of its drivers was injured in a similar incident.

The threat of a wider conflict arose when militants in Lebanon fired two rockets into northern Israel. One rocket crashed into a retirement home, but there were no serious injuries. Israel responded with mortar shells.

During a three-hour pause in the fighting to allow in food and fuel and let medics collect the dead, nearly three dozen bodies were found beneath the rubble of bombed out buildings in Gaza City.

Many of the dead were in the same neighborhood where the international Red Cross said rescue workers discovered young children too weak to stand who had stayed by their dead mothers.

Relations between Israel and humanitarian organizations have grown increasingly tense as civilian casualties have mounted.

The United Nations demanded an investigation after Israel earlier this week fired shells at a target next to a UN school filled with Gazans seeking refuge from fighting that has left nearly 750 Palestinians dead, according to

UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel - Hamas ceasefire

Palestinian hospital officials and human rights workers. Israel said militants had launched an attack from the area, and then ran into a crowd of civilians for cover. Nearly 40 Palestinians died.

"We've been coordinating with them (Israeli forces) and yet our staff continue to be hit and killed," said a UN spokesman, Chris Gunness, announcing the suspension. The UN is the largest aid provider in Gaza.

Israeli police, meanwhile, said militants in the Gaza Strip fired 24 rockets into Israel on Thursday, injuring four people, one of them seriously. Militants fired larger numbers of rockets in the early days of the conflict.

The Israeli military said one soldier attached to a tank battalion was killed by gunfire in the Gaza Strip on Thursday.

Twelve Israelis, including nine soldiers, have died since the Dec. 27 beginning of the offensive against the Hamas militants in charge of Gaza, meant to halt years of Palestinian rocket attacks on southern Israel. But with roughly half the Palestinian dead believed to be civilians, international efforts to broker a cease-fire have been gaining steam.

Israeli envoys traveled to Egypt on Thursday to discuss the proposal being brokered by France and Egypt and now backed by the U.S.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said any time lost will play into the hands of those who want war.

"The weapons must go quiet, the escalation must stop, Israel must obtain security guarantees and leave Gaza," he said in Paris.

The UN provides food aid to around 750,000 Gaza residents - about half of Gaza's population - and runs dozens of schools and clinics throughout the territory. They have some 9,000 locally employed staffers inside Gaza, and a small team of international staffers who work there.

Elena Mancusi Materi, UNRWA's spokeswoman in Geneva, said the suspension concerned all truck movement in Gaza.

"If someone comes to one of our food distribution centers, we will give that person food," she said. "If people come to our clinics with injuries, we will treat them."

For a second straight day, Israel suspended its Gaza military operation for three hours to allow in humanitarian supplies. Shortly before the pause took effect, however, the UN said one of its aid trucks came under fire from a gunner on an Israeli tank, killing the driver.

UN spokesman Adnan Abu Hasna said the UN coordinated the delivery with Israel, and the vehicle was marked with a UN flag and insignia when it was shot in northern Gaza. The Israeli army said it was investigating.

In Geneva, the international Red Cross said it would restrict its aid operations to Gaza City for at least one day after one of its convoys came under Israeli fire at the Netzarim crossing during the three-hour lull in fighting Thursday. One driver was lightly injured.

Dr. Moaiya Hassanain of the Palestinian Health Ministry said 35 bodies were discovered Thursday during the three-hour pause in fighting in several areas around Gaza City that have seen fierce fighting between Israeli troops and Hamas militants.

He said it was unclear how many militants were killed because the remains were in poor condition, but that women and children were among the dead. Hassanain said 746 Palestinians have died in Israel's 13-day offensive.

Many of the dead found Thursday were in Gaza City's Zeitoun neighborhood, where the international Red Cross said it found four small children alive next to their mothers' bodies in the rubble of a home hit by Israeli shelling. The neutral aid group says a total of 15 dead were recovered from two houses in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City on Wednesday.

UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel - Hamas ceasefire

A Red Cross spokesman says rescuers had been refused permission by Israeli forces to reach the site for four days. It said the delay in allowing rescue services access was "unacceptable."

The Red Cross statement was a rare public criticism from the aid group, which normally conducts confidential negotiations with warring parties.

The Israeli military said in a statement that Hamas militants used Palestinian civilians as human shields, and that Israeli forces work closely with international aid groups to help civilians during the fighting in Gaza.

In other Gaza violence, Israel killed at least 12 people, including the UN driver and three people who were fleeing their homes, according to Palestinian medical officials.

The rockets from Lebanon raised the specter of renewed hostilities on Israel's northern frontier, just 2½ years after Israel battled the Hezbollah guerrilla group to a 34-day stalemate. War broke out between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006 as Israel battled Palestinian militants in Gaza, on Israel's southern borders.

No group claimed responsibility. Lebanon's government condemned the attack, and Hezbollah - which now plays an integral role in Lebanon's government - denied any responsibility for the rocket fire, which lightly injured two Israelis at a retirement home.

"The rocket entered through the roof, hurling the water heaters into the air. It went through bedrooms upstairs and then into the kitchen," said Henry Carmelli, the home's manager.

Israel has repeatedly said it was prepared for a possible attack on the north since it launched its bruising campaign against Hamas militants in Gaza, to the south. Israel has mobilized thousands of reserve troops for such a scenario, and leaders have warned Hezbollah of dire consequences if it enters the fighting.

"We are prepared and will respond as necessary," Defence Minister Ehud Barak told reporters.

The Israeli offensive has reduced Palestinian rocket fire, but not stopped it altogether. Several barrages were reported Thursday, including one strike that damaged a school and sports center in the southern city of Ashkelon, police said. Both buildings were empty.

For Israel to accept a proposed cease-fire deal, "there has to be a total and complete cessation of all hostile fire from Gaza into Israel, and ... we have to see an arms embargo on Hamas that will receive international support," said government spokesman Mark Regev.

For its part, Hamas said it would not accept a truce deal unless it includes an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza - something Israel says it is not willing to do. Israel and Egypt have maintained a stiff economic embargo on Gaza since the Hamas takeover.

The Palestinian Authority controls the West Bank while Hamas rules Gaza - two territories on opposite sides of Israel that are supposed to make up a future Palestinian state. Hamas took control of Gaza from forces loyal to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in June 2007.

- AP

Load-Date: January 9, 2009

Touted as traitors

The Jerusalem Post
January 2, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 1236 words

Byline: KHALED ABU TOAMEH

Highlight: Widespread protests that have erupted throughout the Arab world against 'collaborators' like the PA's Mahmoud Abbas and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak may signal the start of a third intifada - against any leaders seen as colluding with Israel to topple Hamas. PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

Body

The IDF's Cast Lead offensive in the Gaza Strip may have severely harmed Hamas's military capabilities and weakened its tight grip on the area, but it has also further undermined the credibility of the "moderate," pro- Western Arab regimes.

Many of the "moderate" Arab leaders, including the Palestinian Authority's Mahmoud Abbas, were not afraid to alienate the Arab street by blaming Hamas for the latest cycle of violence. Some of them are even reported to have gone as far as quietly urging Israel to pursue its military operation until Hamas is removed from power.

Since the beginning of the operation, the Arab media have been full of reports suggesting that Abbas, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdel Aziz had all given Israel a "green light" to attack Gaza.

Apart from seriously embarrassing these Arab leaders, the reports have also sent hundreds of thousands of Arab protesters to the streets to condemn not Israel, but what they regard as their governments' involvement in the "US-Zionist conspiracy" to remove Hamas from power.

The widespread protests are seen by some Arab political analysts as marking the beginning of a popular "intifada" against corrupt, pro-Western Arab dictators. They expect these protests to intensify as the IDF operation continues and the number of Palestinian casualties rises.

"The radicals among the Arabs have succeeded in igniting a popular intifada against the failed Arab rulers, thanks to the Israeli war," said Dr. Issam Nu'man, a respected Lebanese political commentator. "The war has exposed the partnership among Arab regimes, Israel and the US."

Most of the heat on the Arab street is directed against Mubarak and Abbas - the only two leaders who had the courage to blame Hamas for the war because of its continued rocket attacks on Israel. Walid Tabtabai, an Islamist member of the Kuwaiti parliament who took off his shoe and waved it in the air, while hurling curses at Abbas, is being hailed throughout the Arab world as a hero. Other members of the parliament called on their government to ban the "traitor" Abbas from entering the country.

Touted as traitors

Several members of the Jordanian parliament, in an unprecedented move, burned the Israeli flag inside the chamber, and called on King Abdullah to expel the Israeli ambassador. At least 20,000 Palestinians and Jordanians staged a huge demonstration in Amman, during which they chanted slogans against Israel, the US and Arab leaders, especially Mubarak and Abbas.

Mubarak is being attacked for allegedly giving Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni a "green light" to wipe out Hamas during their meeting in Cairo 48 hours before the IDF operation was launched. The Arabs are particularly angry with him for allowing Livni to stand in front of media representatives in the Egyptian capital and issue threats to crush Hamas.

"What would have happened if a Palestinian leader had issued threats to eliminate Israel from the heart of the Egyptian capital?" asked Abdel Bari Atawan, editor of the London-based Palestinian daily Al-Kuds al-Arabi. "It would have been the end of the world."

Mubarak, who is currently facing growing opposition on the streets of Cairo, is also being accused of participating in the Israeli blockade on Gaza by refusing to reopen the Rafah border crossing. His declared policy, that the border crossing won't be reopened until Abbas's loyalists are permitted to return to the terminal, has further enraged many Palestinians, Egyptians and Arabs. This anger was reflected in a fiery speech given by Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, who called on the Egyptians to overthrow Mubarak's regime.

"Mubarak has become the number one enemy of the Arab masses," commented a Palestinian newspaper editor in Ramallah. "President Mahmoud Abbas is also in big trouble, because he's being portrayed as someone who supported the Israeli attack so that he could return to the Gaza Strip."

THE INCITEMENT against Mubarak and Abbas in the Arab media is likely to intensify as Al-Jazeera continues to broadcast horrific images of dead women and children in Gaza. As in the past, it is now spearheading a campaign aimed at discrediting "moderate" Arab rulers, by depicting them as pawns in the hands of the Israelis and Americans. The message that Al-Jazeera is sending to the Arab and Islamic masses is: "You must rise against your treacherous leaders, because they are serving the interests of Israel and the US."

During the Second Lebanon War in 2006, Al-Jazeera and many Arab media outlets also waged a campaign against the Arab leaders, accusing them of "collusion" with Israel. Fortunately for those leaders, that war did not last too long. Moreover, it was regarded as a campaign against Hizbullah alone, while the current offensive is being seen as an attempt to punish the Palestinians for having voted for Hamas.

Operation Cast Lead will not wipe out Hamas completely, even if it results in the demolition of all of the Islamist movement's government buildings and security installations. On the contrary, the operation, by all accounts, is likely to boost Hamas's popularity not only among the Palestinians, but also on the streets of Khartoum, Amman, Cairo and Beirut.

Ironically, the offensive has already undermined the standing of the "moderate" regimes and leaders in the Arab world by making them appear as if they are on Israel's side. By seeking to ban the protests on the Arab street, these leaders have only drawn more fire from their constituents and the Arab media.

Mubarak, Abbas and King Abdullah II tried unsuccessfully over the past week to prevent the protests from spreading. The Jordanian monarch even went as far as asking his intelligence chief to step down for failing to stop the demonstrations. In Ramallah, Abbas and his aides are busy trying to convince the Palestinians and the Arab world that they have no plans to return to Gaza "aboard Israeli tanks," and that they never gave their blessing to the Israeli operation.

But the damage has already been done. Abbas, along with the rest of his "moderate" colleagues, is now trying to salvage what's left of his credibility. Clearly, he doesn't have much time, since his term in office expires next week, leaving the Palestinians with only one freely- elected, legitimate government - the Hamas regime.

Touted as traitors

After January 9, Abbas is likely to come under heavy pressure to step down not only from Hamas, but also from many people in his Fatah faction who accuse him of being a failed leader and who hold him responsible for the fact that Hamas is in power in Gaza.

The talk about a "third intifada" that would be directed this time against the Arab rulers appears to be gaining momentum on the Arab street, where many people are no longer afraid to openly condemn their leaders as "traitors" and "Israeli puppets."

The Arab street is ready for a third intifada, said Palestinian writer Rashad Abu Shawar. "Those Arabs who are exonerating Israel and blaming Hamas are being regarded as traitors," he said. "This week, we already saw the spark of the third intifada on the streets of Ramallah, Hebron, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, as well as inside Israel. These Arab regimes want to see Gaza surrender, so that they can eliminate the term 'resistance' from their lexicon. The third intifada won't only finish off the PA; it will also destroy the illusion of peace with the Israeli enemy."

Graphic

Photo: PA PRESIDENT Mahmoud Abbas with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Most of the heat on the Arab street is directed against the two leaders for blaming Hamas for the war. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Rockets are fired from Lebanon into north Israel; Possibility of second front in war seen

The International Herald Tribune

January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1119 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Thanassis Cambanis contributed reporting from Beirut.

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Rockets fired from Lebanon landed in northern Israel on Thursday, raising concerns that they could represent a broadening of the conflict, but both governments played down their significance. International efforts to end the 13-day war in the Gaza Strip continued with the arrival of Israeli negotiators in Cairo.

Egyptian officials said the Israelis were meeting with the head of Egyptian military intelligence, Omar Suleiman, to explore a proposal devised by Egypt and France as what officials in Paris called a road map to a cease-fire. There was no immediate word on the outcome of the talks.

As the Israeli offensive in Gaza continued with tanks on the ground in the beleaguered coastal strip and bombardment from the air, Israel again ordered a temporary lull in the fighting Thursday to give the 1.5 million population a three-hour opportunity to seek medical help and buy supplies.

A similar pause Wednesday enabled rescue teams from the International Committee of the Red Cross to enter some areas for the first time since the Israeli ground offensive began last weekend after days of airstrikes. In one area, the aid organization reported Thursday, its representatives discovered "shocking" scenes, including four children next to their mothers' corpses. The children were too weak to stand on their own, the aid organization said. (Page 3)

The discussions in Cairo got underway hours after at least three missiles from Lebanon landed near the northern Israeli town of Nahariya. The Israeli Army said that it "responded with fire against the source of the rockets." Two Israelis were slightly wounded, the police said. The rockets from Lebanon raised concern that they could presage a second front in the conflict that would complicate peace efforts and revive memories of the bloody war between Israel and the militant group **Hezbollah** in southern Lebanon in 2006.

But the Israeli Army later dismissed the rockets Thursday as "a minor event" and, in Lebanon, the government said **Hezbollah** had distanced itself from the attack. Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of Lebanon immediately condemned the rocket fire. In a statement, the Lebanese information minister, Tarek Mitri, said: "**Hezbollah** assured the

Rockets are fired from Lebanon into north Israel Possibility of second front in war seen

Lebanese government that it remains engaged in preserving the stability in Lebanon and respects Security Council resolution 1701."

United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 laid out the terms of the cease-fire that ended the war between Israel and Lebanon in August 2006.

The rockets from Lebanon fell in residential areas. Shimon Koren, head of the northern district police, instructed residents of Nahariya and Kabri to enter bomb shelters, and he instructed residents in nearby localities to open their shelters. School was canceled in Nahariya and nearby Shlomi.

So far there has been no claim of responsibility.

The pause in fighting Thursday coincided with news from Cairo that the Israeli delegation had arrived to open talks. Israeli officials said Wednesday that their country would be represented at the Cairo talks by two officials - a senior aide to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Shalom Turgeman, and a senior defense official, Amos Gilad.

International pressure for a negotiated cease-fire intensified after Israeli shells killed some 40 people at a UN school in Gaza on Tuesday. Israel said Hamas militants had fired mortar shells from the school compound prior to Israel's shelling.

The Israeli government said Wednesday that it welcomed the efforts of France and Egypt to work out a durable cease-fire. It said it would end its assault if Hamas stopped firing rockets into Israel and ended the smuggling of weapons from Egypt. It said that if a durable cease-fire took hold, it would reopen border crossings into Gaza for goods and people. But Israeli and Hamas officials both denied an assertion Wednesday by the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, that a cease-fire had been agreed upon.

"There is an agreement on general principles, that Hamas should stop rocket fire and mustn't rearm," a senior Israeli official said Wednesday evening. "But that's like agreeing that motherhood is a good thing. We have to transform those agreed principles into working procedures on the ground, and that's barely begun."

The United States has been involved behind the scenes, senior Israeli and French officials said, with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice "constantly on the phone" with Olmert, according to one Israeli official.

In Washington, the White House spokeswoman, Dana Perino, said of talks about a cease-fire: "As I understand, the Israelis are open to the concept, but they want to learn more about the details; so do we."

At the United Nations, several Arab delegates said Wednesday night that they thought that they now had enough votes to approve a Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. That move would likely put the United States and other Western powers, which oppose a binding resolution, in the awkward position of having to veto a cease-fire.

A senior French official in Paris said that Sarkozy's earlier comment about an agreement on a cease-fire was misunderstood: "The plan is not a cease-fire; the plan is a road map toward a cease-fire." One crucial aspect of any deal is how to prevent new smuggling tunnels from being built under Egypt's border with Gaza.

The senior Israeli official raised the possibility of reaching "tacit agreements" with Hamas to end rocket fire, while also persuading Egypt to allow American and perhaps European army engineers to help seal its border with Gaza above and below ground.

Hamas is insisting that any new arrangement include the reopening of border crossings for trade with Israel and the reopening of the Rafah crossing into Egypt for people.

Casualty figures in the Gaza war are hard to verify, but officials at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City and the Gazan Ministry of Health said 683 Palestinians had died since the conflict began Dec. 27, including 218 children and 90 women. They said 3,085 had been wounded. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights in Gaza said 130 children age 16 or under had died. The United Nations estimated a few days ago that a quarter of the dead were civilians.

Rockets are fired from Lebanon into north Israel Possibility of second front in war seen

But Palestinian residents and Israeli officials say that Hamas is tending its own wounded in separate medical centers, not in public hospitals, and that it is difficult to know the number of dead Hamas fighters, many of whom were not wearing uniforms.

Israel says it has killed at least 130 Hamas fighters. Ten Israelis have been killed during the offensive, including three civilians. Most of the seven dead Israeli soldiers were killed in so-called friendly fire.

Load-Date: February 3, 2009

End of Document

Egypt uses water cannons to keep Palestinians out

Cape Times (South Africa)

July 03, 2008 Thursday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 241 words

Body

Egyptian security forces have used water cannon to keep thousands of Palestinians from storming across the border between Gaza and the Sinai peninsula. Calm has been restored, a security official says.

Britain has banned the military wing of Hezbollah in a rebuke over the Lebanese Shia group's alleged support for militants in Iraq. Britain has about 4 000 servicemen and women in southern Iraq.

Iraq is expecting visits from Jordan's King Abdullah and Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan that would ease its regional diplomatic isolation, Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari has said. Abdullah is to be the first Arab head of state to visit Iraq since the US-led invasion in 2003. Gulf Arab states, encouraged by the decline in violence, have pledged to revive high-level ties to Iraq.

Millions of Indian truckers have begun a strike in protest over high taxes and rising fuel bills after failing to resolve their dispute with the transport ministry. An estimated 4.5 million trucks are off the road.

In Britain, hundreds of truckers have driven to the Houses of Parliament to protest over the rising cost of fuel. Police closed a section of the A40 highway into London to let the trucks gather, then escorted them in small convoys into the centre of the city.

Heavy rain has been predicted and, coupled with any aftershocks, could lead to lakes created by the earthquake in China in May breaking their banks and flooding hundreds of thousands of homes.

Load-Date: July 3, 2008

Protest elsewhere

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A13; Inbox: Your Space - Your Time

Length: 202 words

Byline: Platoon Werbicky, Calgary Herald

Body

Re: "Thousands gather in protest of Israeli offensive in Gaza," Jan. 4.

If there is one thing that bothers me, it's all the demonstrations against Israel for defending itself. These people come to Canada for a better life and all they do is cry about what is going on with the life they left. It's just another example of people coming here out of convenience rather than wanting to become Canadian. I do not feel sorry for anyone in Gaza. They may not belong to Hamas or Hezbollah, but by keeping silent they might as well belong.

The Arab terrorists have always hidden among civilians, knowing perfectly well some of these civilians will get killed.

They are trying to use a sympathy card with the rest of the world. If they feel this collateral damage is acceptable, so be it. Don't cry to me about the dead women and children because it's you who allowed this to happen.

There's a commercial about spousal abuse that states if you keep quiet about the problem, it's like encouraging the problem. Same with the Palestinians in Gaza. If you want to protest what's going on in Gaza, get on a plane and go protest where the terrorists are so I don't have to watch you parading down our streets.

Platoon Werbicky,

Calgary

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

Too alarmed to be alert

Canberra Times (Australia)

July 5, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 19

Length: 1099 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

LET'S not live in denial. A small number of Australians of Muslim faith and/or heritage believe they must attack Australian (and broader Western) interests. If the British experience is any indication, many are young second- and third- generation migrants, and the rest converts. By and large, the intelligence and law enforcement community knows who these people are, and have reliable informants from within various Muslim communities. Indeed, virtually every arrest under anti-terrorism legislation has been the result of tip- offs from sources within Muslim communities, often the result of long and drawn-out investigations.

This hasn't always been the case.

Concern about domestic or "home- grown" terrorism became particularly acute since the London bombings on July 7, 2005. Within weeks of the bombings, investigative journalist Brian Toohey wrote in the Weekend Financial Review that ASIO's budget for Muslim community informants had blown out, with much information deemed useless. Former Australian Security Intelligence Service chief Allan Taylor was called in to crack down on the amount of money wasted by ASIO.

An internal review revealed many part-time agents in Australia's Islamic community were being paid for information that had not been properly evaluated. The intelligence community soon learned what Muslims took for granted: Australia's Islamic community is riven by religious, political and personal rivalries, which often prompt informers to take advantage of ASIO's cash to make up damaging accusations against their opponents.

This simple fact underlies the work of seasoned law enforcement and intelligence professionals who show extreme caution to ensure they only act on the basis of accurate information, ensuring their processes are driven less by ideology and more by objective assessment of exactly where threats exist.

Sadly, our cultural warriors in the media and politics aren't always driven by such caution.

We are taught to be alert but not alarmed.

But some Muslim-baiting media outlets incite so much sectarian hysteria that we are left too alarmed to be alert. Recent reports in one newspaper in particular have bordered on the fanciful. Last week the paper declared all Australian Muslims supported the Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim party *Hezbollah* and opposed Israel. I've never been to Lebanon. Most of my Lebanese friends are either Sunni Muslims or Christians. Most of my Shi'ite Muslim friends fled Afghanistan and Iran to escape theocratic regimes.

Too alarmed to be alert

Hardly people who'd support a theocratic party. My migrant mother's first Australian friend was Jewish. When I was young, my family used to buy our Indian spices from a Bondi spice shop owned by a Jewish family. My colleagues and friends include Jews, most of them avid supporters of Israel.

Yet according to The Australian, I support Hezbollah and oppose Israel. Why? Because The Australian spoke to a senior Shi'ite Muslim cleric who declared that all his community supported Hezbollah and opposed Israel. The newspaper then spoke to an oft-quoted Lebanese Muslim spokesman who declared Sunni Muslims agree with this position.

Before reading the article, I'd never even heard of the Shi'ite Muslim gentleman. I knew of the Lebanese Muslim spokesman as a former president of an ethno-religious organisation in Lakemba which barred full membership to all women and to men ineligible for Lebanese citizenship. Yet the national broadsheet attributes the opinions of these religious figures to 300,000 Australians who tick the "Muslim" box on their census forms. This same newspaper's editorials consistently patronises Muslims for allegedly not embracing democracy and gender equality.

Within 24 hours of the latest terrorist scares in London and Glasgow, the paper had a front-page report alleging some 2000-3000 "ideological sleeper cells" existed in Sydney ready to be "radicalised" into committing terrorist acts. The report relied on the "research" of one Mustapha Kara-Ali, of Sydney, giving credence to his sensational comments by claiming he was given a \$200,000 grant by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in June last year to investigate the radicalisation of young Muslims in Sydney's south-west.

This must have been news to the department's officers overseeing the National Action Plan. The department website shows Kara-Ali hadn't received a single cent. Indeed, the grant of just over \$150,000 was given to al-Amana College, an independent school managed by one of at least three rival Lebanese Sunni Muslim sects. Kara-Ali's role is allegedly to act as "project manager".

You'd expect research about trends in Muslim youth radicalism be managed by someone with qualifications in sociology, demography and/or anthropology.

Kara-Ali holds no such qualifications.

His research methodology consisted of focus groups and discussions with 200 young Muslims and a number of imams. How were these people chosen? Which ethnic, sectarian or other backgrounds were these people from? From which parts of Australia? With such questionable methodologies being used at taxpayer expense, it's little wonder Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty rejected Kara-Ali's claims.

Finally, Brian Toohey's words cited above should be heeded by journalists as much as by law enforcement and counter-terrorism professionals. Within Sydney's Lebanese Sunni Muslim community, a sectarian turf war is being waged between the Lebanese al-Ahbash sect (to which Kara-Ali belongs) and other Sunni sects. Each sect uses every opportunity to paint their opponents within the Lebanese Sunni community as terrorists or "Wahhabists".

Which Lebanese sect is truly radical? For Muslim outsiders like myself, they're all as bad as each other. Al-Ahbash spokesmen were gleeful when a handful of young Lebanese Australian men from a competing sect were recently rounded up by Lebanese police.

Their sectarian opponents speak with glee of senior al-Ahbash leaders about to be tried for alleged involvement in the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri.

Meanwhile, self-serving polemical rants are made front-page news in the national broadsheet. Intelligence and law enforcement professionals are alert. Government wants us to be alert but not alarmed. Yet some media outlets make it their business to make us all very alarmed without themselves being too alert with facts and logic.

The author is a Sydney lawyer and co-convenes a course on Understanding Australia's Muslim Communities for the Australian Homeland Security research Centre. The views expressed here are those of the author and not of the centre.

Too alarmed to be alert

Load-Date: July 4, 2007

End of Document

TO FUEL QUEST, HEZBOLLAH HARNESSSES YOUTH PIETY

NEW YORK TIMES

November 21, 2008 Friday

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Information Bank Abstracts

Section: Section A; Column 4; Pg. 1

Length: 140 words

Byline: By Robert F Worth

Body

Eighth article in series Generation Faithful examining lives of young across Muslim world at time of religious revival; Hezbollah is marshaling energies of young men in Lebanon to continue military struggle against Israel; it has become model for other militant groups, including Hamas; success is largely due to Hezbollah's comprehensive array of religion-themed youth and recruitment programs; it runs or controls. network of schools shielded from outsiders where religious lessons are large part of curriculum; it organizes outings and arranges events to encourage young people to express devotion in public and to perform charity work, all in effort to mobilize and build support and immunize young from secular temptations; women are integral part of effort in creating what is often called 'jihad atmosphere' among children; photos; map.

Graphic

Combination

Load-Date: November 22, 2008

Israel's Livni calls for Olmert's ouster

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

May 3, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1074 words

Byline: Josef Federman Associated Press

Body

JERUSALEM -- Israel's popular foreign minister called Wednesday on Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to resign -- positioning herself to replace him and dealing the toughest blow yet to his efforts to stay in power after a scathing report on his performance in the war in Lebanon.

Olmert said he does not plan to resign, despite the growing number of allies deserting him. His Kadima party also said it would stand behind him after an emergency meeting.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni became the highest-ranking official to call for Olmert's ouster, telling him in a meeting that he had lost the public's support and setting herself up to become Israel's second ***female*** prime minister, after the legendary Golda Meir.

"I told him that resignation would be the right thing for him to do," Livni told reporters. She had been conspicuously silent since the report on last summer's war came out Monday.

A relative political newcomer and a former officer in the Mossad spy agency, Livni is Kadima's most popular politician. The daughter of an underground fighter in Israel's war for independence, she has quickly risen in politics in recent years and appears to be Kadima's best hope of retaining power.

Livni, 48, presents a stark contrast to Olmert. Perhaps reflecting her history as a young Mossad agent in the 1980s, Livni measures her words and maintains a calm exterior, while Olmert enthusiastically pumps hands and claps backs while letting fly with sometimes costly inexact phrases -- in English and in Hebrew.

This week's report capped a six-month investigation into a war that the Israeli public widely perceived as a failure. The five-member panel, named by Olmert, used exceptionally harsh language, saying Olmert bore overall responsibility and suffered from poor judgment, hasty decision-making and shortsightedness.

The report has prompted widespread calls for Olmert's resignation, both from political rivals and in the media. Opinion polls have shown some two-thirds of the public want him to step down.

A poll published Wednesday in the Maariv daily showed that 73 percent felt Olmert should resign, and only 17 percent said he should remain in office. The poll questioned 501 Israeli adults and had a margin of error of 4.6 percentage points.

At an emergency meeting of Kadima later Wednesday, most of the party caucus agreed to support Olmert, said Cabinet minister Meir Sheetrit. "There is no reason to think that the prime minister is going to resign," he added.

Israel's Livni calls for Olmert's ouster

Sheetrit said the meeting was calm, and there were no harsh words between Olmert and Livni.

At her earlier news conference, Livni said she would remain in the government and would not actively work to oust Olmert. But she said he should voluntarily leave office, and that she considered herself the rightful successor to lead the Kadima Party. Livni also said she did not want to see the government dissolved and opposed early elections.

"I haven't worked and am not working to topple the prime minister. That's a decision he'll have to make," she said. "It's not a personal matter between me and the prime minister -- this issue is more important than both of us."

Under Israel's parliamentary system, Kadima could change leaders without losing power. The prime minister is not directly elected and usually comes from parliament's largest bloc.

Opinion polls have shown that the hard-line former prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu of the opposition Likud Party, would win if new elections are held. Netanyahu served as Israel's leader from 1996-1999, rebuffing pressure to make concessions to the Palestinians and employing especially harsh rhetoric about dangers facing Israel from Palestinian and other Arab extremists.

Netanyahu, who was educated in the United States and is popular there as a speaker explaining Israeli policy, is poised to make a comeback at the head of a coalition of hawkish parties, taking advantage of the expected crash of the centrist Kadima and failure of the dovish Labor to inspire support.

Last year's war erupted July 12 when Hezbollah guerrillas crossed into Israel, killing three soldiers and capturing two.

In 34 days of fighting, Israel failed to achieve the two main goals Olmert set: to return the soldiers and crush Hezbollah. Instead, Hezbollah fired nearly 4,000 rockets into northern Israel.

Nearly 160 Israelis and more than 1,000 Lebanese died in the fighting, and Israeli soldiers returned from battle complaining of conflicting orders and shortages of food and ammunition.

Since the report was issued, Olmert has been scrambling to hold his coalition together. One minister from the Labor Party, Olmert's main coalition partner, quit Tuesday, and the chairman of his parliamentary coalition stepped down Wednesday. Three members of parliament from Kadima have also demanded he resign.

At the emergency party meeting Wednesday, Olmert pledged to stay in office.

"I intend to implement the recommendations of the (war) report down to the last detail," spokesman Jacob Galanti quoted him as saying.

Olmert opened a special Cabinet session earlier in the day by hinting that reports of his political demise were premature.

At her news conference, Livni said she would remain as foreign minister "to ensure that improvements are carried out." Party officials said Olmert did not plan to fire her.

However, it was unclear how she and Olmert would be able to continue working together.

Although Kadima could replace Olmert without elections, Livni could encounter difficulty in keeping the current coalition together. The ultra-Orthodox Shas party would have difficulty serving under a woman, while the nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu Party may be wary of cooperating with Livni, who is more dovish than Olmert.

Kadima was formed by then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon after he despaired of persuading his longtime Likud faction of making further territorial concessions following Israel's unilateral pullout from the Gaza Strip. Sharon suffered a stroke in January 2006 and remains in a coma.

Israel's Livni calls for Olmert's ouster

Reuven Hazan, a political scientist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said Livni's challenge would have been worse had she threatened to resign or bring down the government.

"We see a ball rolling, but a ball that could have taken on a lot of momentum today has slowed down," he said. He noted that Olmert's opponents plan a demonstration Thursday in Tel Aviv and said the turnout could determine whether the momentum against Olmert continues to grow or fizzles out.

Load-Date: May 3, 2007

End of Document

Suicide bomb aimed at cops

The Star (South Africa)

July 07, 2008 Monday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 683 words

Body

Islamabad - At least 15 people, including about 11 police officers, were killed yesterday in an apparent suicide bomb attack on police near a site where Islamists had been marking the anniversary of an army commando raid on the capital's Red Mosque. Thousands of people were at the mosque where 100 were killed in a week-long siege by government troops last year.

Kabul - Afghan President Hamid Karzai has ordered an investigation into a US-led coalition air strike that local officials say killed 15 civilians, but the US military says killed only Taliban militants. But just as the president gave the order, accusations surfaced that another coalition air strike killed 23 civilians travelling in a wedding convoy. The issue of civilian casualties is an emotive one in Afghanistan.

Bend, Oregon - Kent Couch (48) sits in a lawn chair rigged with helium-filled balloons as he readies to fly from central Oregon to Idaho on Saturday. About 320km later he landed in a field in Idaho. It was Couch's third bid to fly from Oregon to Idaho by lawn chair.

Rome - Italian judges, fighting back against attacks by conservative Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, are threatening to strike over proposed cuts of 40% to their budget. "We're heading towards the destruction of the justice system," said the National Association of Magistrates. Berlusconi has repeatedly accused "red" magistrates of conducting a witchhunt against him.

London - Britain's first Muslim minister has attacked the growing culture of hostility against Muslims in the UK, saying that many feel targeted like "the Jews of Europe". Shahid Malik, a minister in the Department for International Development, said it had become legitimate to target Muslims in the media and society at large in a way that would be unacceptable for any other minority.

Damascus - Syrian authorities have blamed inmates for provoking a riot in a prison for political detainees. According to the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, at least 25 died after military police fired live bullets when Islamist inmates rioted on Saturday after a raid by guards. Yesterday, it said rioting by prisoners, "victims of humiliation and bad treatment", was continuing.

Jerusalem - Israel TV yesterday showed a video of tractors working at a cemetery for dead Lebanese and Palestinian fighters, as they prepare for a prisoner swap between Israel and **Hezbollah**. Military officials said the exhumation of coffins was to begin today, and identification of the bodies would take several days. **Hezbollah** is to return the bodies of two Israeli soldiers captured in 2006.

Suicide bomb aimed at cops

Mogadishu - Gunmen yesterday killed the head of the UN Development Programme in the Somali capital, a UN official said - the latest fatality in a string of attacks on aid workers in the lawless country. Osman Ali Ahmed was shot several times in the head and chest as he left a mosque in southern Mogadishu's Bulohube district. His son and another man were wounded.

Jerusalem - Israeli police say they have made the biggest drug bust in the country's history. Customs officials at the Haifa port found 104kg of pure cocaine hidden in coffee cans shipped from Colombia. The cocaine had a street value of more than \$15-million (R115,5-million). The uncut cocaine was discovered last month. Eight suspects had to be freed for lack of evidence.

Riyadh - A Saudi appeals court is due this week to review the case of a biochemist and his ***female*** student sentenced to jail and flogging after a lower court ruled research contact was a front for a telephone affair. The man was sentenced to eight months and 600 lashes and his student to four months and 350 lashes for establishing a phone relationship that led her to divorce her husband.

Havana - Cuba's former president Fidel Castro has urged Farc rebels to free its remaining hostages, after the rescue last week by Colombian commandos of 15 captives held by the Marxists. Castro, however, cautioned that the guerrillas should not lay down their weapons, warning that, as a rule, fighters who had done so over the past 50 years "did not survive to see the peace".

Load-Date: July 7, 2008

TO FUEL QUEST, HEZBOLLAH HARNESSSES YOUTH PIETY

NEW YORK TIMES

November 21, 2008 Friday

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Information Bank Abstracts

Section: Section A; Column 4; Pg. 1

Length: 140 words

Byline: By Robert F Worth

Body

Eighth article in series Generation Faithful examining lives of young across Muslim world at time of religious revival; Hezbollah is marshaling energies of young men in Lebanon to continue military struggle against Israel; it has become model for other militant groups, including Hamas; success is largely due to Hezbollah's comprehensive array of religion-themed youth and recruitment programs; it runs or controls. network of schools shielded from outsiders where religious lessons are large part of curriculum; it organizes outings and arranges events to encourage young people to express devotion in public and to perform charity work, all in effort to mobilize and build support and immunize young from secular temptations; women are integral part of effort in creating what is often called 'jihad atmosphere' among children; photos; map.

Graphic

Combination

Load-Date: November 22, 2008

Nine die as gunman opens fire on student rabbis in Jerusalem

The Times (London)

March 7, 2008, Friday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 645 words

Byline: Sheera Frenkel Jerusalem

Body

First attack in city for more than three years

At least nine people were killed last night and nine others injured when a Palestinian gunman opened fire on students at a rabbinical seminary in Jerusalem, the first terrorist attack in the city for more than three years. The gunman was among the dead.

The attacker, wearing a grey jumper and jeans, was later identified by police as Jabel Mukaber, a resident of Arab East Jerusalem. He had walked through the Mercaz Harav seminary's main gate and entered the library, carrying an assault rifle and a pistol in a small cardboard box.

David Simchon, head of the seminary, said that the students had been preparing a celebration for the new month in the Jewish calendar, which includes the holiday of Purim. "We were planning to have a Purim party here tonight and instead we had a massacre," he said.

Witnesses described terrifying scenes during the shooting, with students jumping out the windows of the building to escape. It was at this point that one of the students, Yitzhak Dadon, took aim. "I lay on the roof of the study hall, cocked my gun and waited for him. He came out of the library spraying automatic fire," said Mr Dadon, an army reservist.

"He came to the entrance and I shot him twice in the head," he said. A soldier then killed the gunman with a rifle, Mr Dadon added.

The shooting at the seminary was the most serious attack in Jerusalem since September 2004, when two police officers were killed and at least 16 people injured after a bag packed with explosives was detonated at a bus stop. Between 2001 and 2004, at the height of the second Palestinian intifada, Israel's biggest city was a frequent target of Palestinian attacks, including suicide bombings on buses.

The seminary, which was founded 80 years ago by Israel's first Chief Rabbi, Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook, is associated with the Jewish settler movement in the West Bank. Most of the students are 12-25 years of age.

Hezbollah's Al-Manar television station claimed that the attack had been carried out by the previously unknown Phalange of Free Men of Galilee - Groups of the Martyr Imad Mughnieh and Martyrs of Gaza.

Imad Mughnieh was a top **Hezbollah** commander assassinated in a bombing on February 12, for which the Islamist organisation blamed Israel and threatened to exact revenge.

Nine die as gunman opens fire on student rabbis in Jerusalem

Israeli police have been on heightened alert throughout the country this week amid fears that Arab fury at the ongoing violence in the Gaza Strip could spill over and spark a third intifada. Israel's Operation Warm Winter in Gaza left more than 120 Palestinians and two Israeli soldiers dead. Israeli troops withdrew on Monday, though the air force continued strikes against suspected rocket launchers.

"We have been waiting for the violence to start again and we knew it was only a matter of time until this false peace ended," said a woman who lives opposite Mercuz Harav. Store owners in Jerusalem were planning to close up early for the weekend, while police prepared to put an additional 5,000 officers on the streets and increased their presence in the Arab neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem.

The attack came a day after the Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, persuaded Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, to return to peace talks with Israel. Mr Abbas condemned last night's shooting.

Jewish women taking the veil World news, page 35

Massacre at library follows Gaza campaign

ATTACKS IN ISRAEL

Feb 4, 2008 One dead in Dimona suicide bombing

Apr 29, 2007 Three dead in Eilat suicide bombing

Apr 17, 2006 Nine dead, 40 wounded in suicide bombing near old bus station in Tel Aviv

Mar 30, 2006 Four dead in Kedumim suicide bombing

Dec 29, 2005 Three dead in suicide bombing near Tulkarm Dec 5, 2005 Five dead in Netanya suicide bombing

Oct 26, 2005 Six dead in Hadera market suicide bombing

July 12, 2005 Two dead in Netanya suicide bombing Source: BBC

Load-Date: March 7, 2008

Gunman was Arab working at the school

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 8, 2008 Saturday

Fourth Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 19

Length: 649 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin in Jerusalem

Body

THE man who shot dead eight students at a right-wing Jewish institute in Jerusalem on Thursday is believed to be a former Arab employee of the organisation who was recently held for two months by Israeli police.

Residents of the killer's neighbourhood in Arab East Jerusalem named the attacker as Alaa Abu Dheim, 20, a former driver at the Mercaz Harav yeshiva (Jewish religious school). They told journalists that the man had been arrested by police four months ago and then released two months later.

Armed with a Kalashnikov rifle and a pistol, the lone gunman burst into the school's library at 8.30 pm Thursday local time and killed eight youths and young men before he himself was shot.

While no claim of responsibility has been confirmed, Hezbollah's television station in Lebanon reported that a hitherto unknown group calling itself the "Galilee Freedom Battalions - the Martyrs of Imad Mughniyeh" said it carried out the attack.

The Galilee is a mainly Arab-populated region of northern Israel, while Imad Mughniyeh was a Hezbollah leader killed in a mysterious car bomb attack in Damascus last month.

Yesterday's attack was the biggest death toll in Israel since a suicide bomber killed 11 at a Tel Aviv falafel stand almost two years ago. It was the first major terrorist attack in Jerusalem since a suicide bomber killed seven bus passengers in February 2004.

Large numbers of police were patrolling Jerusalem last night in response to the attack. Both the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships said that it would not derail flagging peace talks.

The incident brings to at least 62 the number of civilians killed in the 10 days since Israel's assassination of five Hamas leaders, in response to a fatal rocket attack in the Israeli town of Sderot.

Most of those who died were Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip last weekend where, according to the United Nations and other human rights groups, 120 people were killed, at least 52 of them civilians including 27 children.

There is speculation in the Israeli media that the Mercaz Harav yeshiva was targeted because of its role as the cradle and spiritual centre of Israel's far-right religious settler movement.

Gunman was Arab working at the school

"This was not an accidental arrival at some city's commercial centre and the setting off [of] an explosive charge," wrote the Ha'aretz defence correspondent Avi Issacharoff. He continued: "The perpetrator knew where he was heading and that many armed young men would be there."

The mass daily Ma'ariv reported that "those who planned, who sent and who carried out the terror attack can say today that they succeeded in striking a harsh blow to the very place from where the occupation sprung".

The attack resembled in its execution the 1994 incident in which Baruch Goldstein, a physician and member of the religious settler movement, shot dead 29 Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque before he was killed by survivors.

One student at the yeshiva claimed to have shot the attacker twice in the head with his weapon. Police say the attacker was killed by an off-duty army officer who rushed to the rescue when he heard shooting.

The incident has been widely condemned by foreign governments and by the UN secretary-general, Ban Ki Moon.

A US attempt to pass a statement condemning the shootings, together with an attack on Israeli troops in Gaza, failed after a UN Security Council member, Libya, said the resolution should also include condemnation of Israel's killings of civilians in Gaza.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said that the attack "expresses at its most deplorable the fundamentalist-extremist foundations, in the name of which Palestinian terrorism operates ... Israel expects the nations of the world to support it in its war against those who murder students, women and children."

The Palestinian Authority chairman, Mahmoud Abbas, also condemned the attack on the yeshiva.

Middle East carnage - Page 21

Alan Ramsey - Page 39

Graphic

PHOTO: Funeral scene ... men place a body covered in a Jewish prayer shawl next to others as Israelis gather for the funerals of the eight yeshiva students. Photo: AP/Sebastian Scheiner

Load-Date: March 7, 2008

India tests lethal chopper

The Star (South Africa)

August 17, 2007 Friday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 685 words

Body

Bangalore - India yesterday carried out the first flight of a weaponised combat helicopter it is developing to equip its own armed forces as well as potential overseas customers including Turkey. The lethal Dhruv (Pole Star) has "fire-and-forget" air-to-air missile capability and advanced avionics. India already has developed the Chetak, Cheetah and Lancer light helicopters.

Beirut - Raid Israel to capture soldiers, battle tanks in south Lebanon and launch rockets at Israeli towns - a new **Hezbollah** computer game puts players on the frontline of war with Israel. Special Force 2 is based on last year's conflict between the Lebanese guerrilla group and Israel. "This game presents the culture of resistance to children: occupation must be resisted, land and nation guarded," **Hezbollah** said.

Vienna - A crucifix from the Middle Ages has turned up in Austria. A woman looking through a dustbin in Zell am See came upon the piece in 2004. Now experts say it could be worth e400 000 (R4-million). The crucifix was part of a Polish art collection stolen by the Nazis.

Tokyo - Japan yesterday sizzled through its hottest day on record, as a day-long heatwave reportedly claimed at least 13 lives across the country and spurred fears of an electricity shortage. The mercury hit 40,9°C in Tajimi and Kumagaya, breaking a previous national record of 40,8°C set in 1933. In Tokyo, 38,7°C was recorded - breaking the previous record of 38,5° for August.

Sydney - The 50 000 residents of the iconic Australian Outback town of Alice Springs got through enough pure alcohol in the first four months of this year to fill an Olympic swimming pool. Northern Territory Chief Minister Clare Martin said yesterday most of the heavy drinking was done by the 2 000 Aborigines who live in squalid camps set up on Aboriginal-owned land.

Copenhagen - About 50 Danish neo-Nazis plan to demonstrate tomorrow to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy. They originally planned to march in the German town of Wunsiedel, where Hess is buried, but the march was banned. In Denmark, unlike Germany, it is not illegal to display the swastika, utter "Heil Hitler" or use the Nazi salute.

New Delhi - India's children are getting increasingly overweight and unhealthy and the government is asking schools to ban junk food. Guidelines by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights include suggestions that schools ensure access to healthy drinks like milk, water and fruit juices and that food sold at cafeterias is hygienically prepared and nutritious.

India tests lethal chopper

Kuala Lumpur - Lucky and Flo, two sniffer dogs that cramped Malaysia's DVD pirates by ferreting out millions of illegal discs, will get a hero's farewell when their six-month assignment ends next week. The black labradors - said to be the first in the world trained to sniff out discs - will receive a medal from the Malaysia Motion Picture Association for their service, before they return home to New York.

Lagos - Conditions in Nigerian prisons are appalling, with "forgotten inmates" locked away for years without trial simply because their files have been lost. According to Amnesty International many are left for years awaiting trial in filthy and overcrowded cells, with children and adults often held together. Some prisoners were known as "forgotten inmates" as they never got to court.

Jerusalem - The US and Israel yesterday signed a formal agreement under which Washington will provide \$30-billion (R225-billion) in defence aid over the next decade - a 25% increase over previous years. Last month the US said it would offer weapons packages worth \$20-billion to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states over 10 years. Egypt would also get \$13-billion in defence assistance.

St Louis, Senegal - An Irish teenager faces up to six months in a Senegalese jail for public indecency. Patrick Devine (19) was working for a teaching project when he was arrested for "removing his underwear before the main door of the home of the governor" in St Louis, a former capital. He allegedly bared his behind for a photograph being taken by a female Canadian friend.

Load-Date: August 16, 2007

End of Document

Cartoon fallout

Pretoria News (South Africa)

September 07, 2007 Friday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 12

Length: 687 words

Body

Stockholm - Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt has invited ambassadors from Muslim countries to talks today over a drawing of the Prophet Mohammed in a Swedish newspaper. The cartoon, which showed the prophet's head on a dog's body, has drawn protests from Swedish Muslim groups and formal complaints from Muslim countries, including Pakistan and Iran.

Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua - The death toll from Hurricane Felix rose to more than 40 yesterday as rescuers searched the seas and civil defence workers reached more isolated communities devastated by the category-five storm. Scores of others remained missing. Many people hung on to tables, buoys and canoes as they were blown into neighbouring Honduran waters.

Liverpool - Melanie Jones watches as her husband Stephen and son Owen carry the coffin of her son, 11-year-old Rhys Jones, whose shooting last month triggered soul-searching over Britain's gun culture. Thousands of people dressed in Everton and Liverpool football shirts, as well as players of the teams, attended the funeral at the local Anglican Cathedral.

Beijing - Authorities in China have banned two late-night radio shows that discussed sex and drugs, labelling them "extremely pornographic". The latest order from China's broadcast watchdog follows a ban on television shows about cosmetic surgery and sex changes. "The programmes caused great harm to the psychological development of young people and fouled the social air," it said.

Jerusalem - Human Rights Watch yesterday charged that most of the Lebanese civilian casualties in last year's war came from "indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes". It said there was no basis to the Israeli claim that the casualties resulted from Hezbollah guerrillas using civilians for cover. HRW has previously accused Hezbollah of indiscriminate firing of rockets at Israeli civilians.

Yangon - Hundreds of Buddhist monks in Myanmar set four cars alight and held a group of local and security officials hostage for several hours yesterday after troops violently broke up an anti-junta protest, residents said. The showdown in Pakokku, a major centre of Buddhist learning, marked the most serious clash with the military regime since protests erupted two weeks ago.

Rome - A small region in northern Italy is battling what may be Europe's first epidemic of the crippling, mosquito-borne Chikungunya virus, the National Institute of Health said. About 160 cases of the non-fatal but painful disease have been confirmed. Symptoms include high fever, joint and muscular pain, severe headaches, nausea and vomiting, body aches and a rash.

Cartoon fallout

Beijing - The 172 coal miners who have been trapped in a flooded shaft for nearly three weeks will not be found alive, officials said yesterday. "Life scientists" said the workers "will not return alive" after 20 days in the mine. The announcement makes it one of the worst accidents of its kind in 58 years of communist rule. A 1960 accident killed 684 miners and a 2005 explosion killed 214.

Oslo - Norwegian and British fighters scrambled twice yesterday to monitor eight Russian bombers in the latest show of air power by the Kremlin, defence officials said. The Tupolev-95 strategic bombers, also called Bears, neared but did not enter Norwegian airspace in the far north. Four Royal Air Force fighters also scrambled to monitor the flight, which did not enter British territory.

Almaty - A Russian space rocket carrying a Japanese satellite crashed yesterday after blasting off from a launch pad in Kazakhstan, the Emergencies Ministry said. The unmanned Proton-M booster with the Japanese JCSAT-11 communications satellite on board crashed into open countryside after lifting off from the Baikonur cosmodrome, it said. No one was injured.

Lusaka - A police officer in Zambia has been arrested after he severely beat up nurses at a public hospital on the allegation that they failed to save the life of his ailing son. Inspector Peter Mwale punched and kicked **female** nurses at the country's biggest hospital at the weekend after they allegedly failed to attend to the boy on time when he took him for treatment. The child later died.

Load-Date: September 6, 2007

End of Document

Peace activists 'hypocritical'

Nelson Daily News (British Columbia)

November 7, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 4

Length: 643 words

Byline: Roger Pratt, Nelson Daily News

Body

To the Editor:

Re: War and Peace

Once again we were subjected to a so-called "Peace Rally" last month. Once again, anti-Americanism was the theme, and the rights of the people of Afghanistan were treated with contempt.

Canadian soldiers are risking their lives to help protect the Afghan people from terrorists like the Taliban, are assisting in re-building the country, and in training Afghan soldiers and police. It is hoped that the Afghan police and army can take over security duties in the near future. All experts who have studied the situation say that the Afghans are not yet ready to take over. A large majority of Afghans, including the government, want the Canadian soldiers to stay.

So it begs the question: "Why do these so-called 'Peace Activists' want the Canadians out right now, when they know the Taliban will return to abuse women and destroy the country?" It is obvious to me that the "Peace Coalition" wants the Taliban to succeed, and to once again set up terrorist training camps. Why? That's the question I am asking.

We see the daily killings going on in Darfur; by some calculations up to 400,000 people have been murdered. The only action the "Peace Coalition" has taken was a minor demonstration that was organized by actor George Clooney, the only protest in about four years of mass murder.

Most of us know about the appalling actions by the government of Zimbabwe against its own people. There is starvation, theft of land, destruction of homes, shortages of fuel, the beatings of protesters, political prisoners, inflation of over 6,000 per cent, and over 80 per cent unemployment. There is no protest over this because the "Peace Coalition" cannot blame it on Israel or the United States, and because the glorious leader, Robert Mugabe is "building socialism."

In Israel there are daily rocket attacks against Israeli civilians, and attempted suicide bombings. The terrorist groups Hamas, Hezbollah, and the government of Iran have called for the extermination of Israel and the ethnic cleansing and murder of over five million Jews. In addition, the government of Iran has called for the extermination of every Jew on the planet. The "Peace Coalition" does not protest, in fact, has never protested. This begs another question: "Does the 'Peace Coalition' support the extermination of every Jew in Israel or every Jew on the planet?" This may

Peace activists 'hypocritical'

seem like a stupid question because they would answer "no." But at the "Peace Rally" they said "hands off Iran" regarding Iran's nuclear program. Let Iran do anything it wants.

Suppose someone proposed building a nuclear power plant in the Kootenays. After all, one has been proposed for northern Alberta, and nuclear plants do not generate carbon dioxide. Would the "Peace Coalition" remain silent and let the construction begin, or would they speak out and protest? My guess is that they would protest, so why do they not protest the nuclear plant in Iran, particularly as it is clear that Iran intends to construct nuclear bombs, and intends to wipe out Israel.

The Turkish Prime Minister, regarding Kurdish terrorism, stated recently: "Those who overlook terrorism are in co-operation with terrorists." This statement clearly applies to the "Peace Coalition."

On a similar theme, when Stephen Lewis visited the area, he stated that peace was not merely an absence of physical violence. He said that if you do not get gender equality, you do not get peace. The Taliban, Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the government of Iran do not believe in gender equality. They believe in forced marriages, stoning women to death, honour killings, and various other forms of oppression. The "Peace Coalition" does not protest these terrorist groups. The so-called "Peace Coalition" is clearly a hypocritical, anti-capitalist, pro-war movement that has nothing to do with peace.

Roger Pratt

Nelson, B.C.

Load-Date: November 8, 2007

End of Document

Israeli Arab shot students, say police

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 8, 2008 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 19

Length: 636 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin in Jerusalem

Body

ISRAELI police believe that an Arab citizen of Israel or resident of East Jerusalem carried out the terrorist attack which killed eight students of a right-wing Jerusalem religious institution yesterday.

A gunman armed with a pistol and a Kalashnikov rifle shot dead eight male students, four of whom were aged 15 to 17, at the famous Mercaz Harav yeshiva before he was shot and killed.

While no claim of responsibility has been confirmed, Hezbollah's television station in Lebanon reported that a hitherto unknown group calling itself the "Galilee Freedom Battalions - the Martyrs of Imad Mughniyeh" said it carried out the attack.

The Galilee is a mainly Arab-populated region of northern Israel, while Imad Mughniyeh was a Hezbollah leader killed in a mysterious car bomb attack in Damascus last month.

Yesterday's attack was the biggest death toll in Israel since a suicide bomber killed 11 at a Tel Aviv falafel stand almost two years ago. It was the first major terrorist attack in Jerusalem since a suicide bomber killed seven bus passengers in February 2004.

Large numbers of Israeli police were patrolling Jerusalem last night in response to the attack. Both the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships said that it would not derail flagging peace talks.

The incident brings to at least 62 the number of civilians killed in the 10 days since Israel's assassination of five Hamas leaders, in response to a fatal rocket attack in the Israeli town of Sderot.

Most of those who died were Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip last weekend, which according to the UN and other human rights groups killed 120 people, at least 52 of them civilians including 27 children.

There is speculation in the Israeli media that the Mercaz Harav yeshiva was targeted because of its role as the cradle and spiritual centre of Israel's far-right religious settler movement.

"This was not an accidental arrival at some city's commercial centre and the setting off [of] an explosive charge," wrote Ha'aretz defence correspondent Avi Issacharoff. He continued: "The perpetrator knew where he was heading and that many armed young men would be there."

Israeli Arab shot students, say police

The mass daily Ma'ariv reported that "those who planned, who sent and who carried out the terror attack can say today that they succeeded in striking a harsh blow to the very place from where the occupation sprung".

The attack resembled in its execution the 1994 incident in which Baruch Goldstein, a physician and member of the religious settler movement, shot dead 29 Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque before he was killed by survivors.

One student at the yeshiva claimed to have shot the attacker twice in the head with his personal weapon. Police say the attacker was killed by an off-duty army officer who rushed to the rescue when he heard shooting.

The incident has been widely condemned by foreign governments and by the United Nations secretary-general, Ban Ki Moon.

A US attempt to pass a security statement condemning the shootings, together with an attack on Israeli troops in Gaza, failed after temporary UN security council member Libya said the resolution should also include condemnation of Israel's killings of civilians in Gaza. Israel's foreign ministry said that the attack "expresses at its most deplorable the fundamentalist-extremist foundations, in the name of which Palestinian terrorism operates ... Israel expects the nations of the world to support it in its war against those who murder students, women and children."

The Palestinian Authority chairman, Mahmoud Abbas, also condemned the attack.

The attack was greeted with delight in Gaza City, where gunmen cheered and fired into the air. A spokesman for the Hamas government in Gaza said the group blessed the attack as a "natural reaction" to Israeli killings.

Middle East carnage - Page 21

Alan Ramsey - Page 39

Graphic

PHOTO: After the shooting ... a member of the Israeli emergency service Zaka next to a weapon and ammunition inside the religious school. Photo: Reuters

Load-Date: March 7, 2008

National Briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

August 7, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: A; Pg. 7

Length: 672 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Officer shot during traffic stop

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. - A motorcyclist pulled over during a routine traffic stop shot an off duty Broward County sheriff's deputy in the head on Monday, critically wounding him, authorities said.

The deputy was on his way to an undercover operation and was not in uniform when he stopped David Maldonado, 23, of Hollywood. The man fled on foot, then turned around and shot Deputy Maury Hernandez, authorities said.

Hernandez, 28, is in critical condition after he suffered "a serious catastrophic injury to the right side of his head," Sheriff Ken Jenne said.

Maldonado was arrested moments later at a nearby condominium, officials said.

Nearly a dozen officers and rescue workers helped load the deputy onto a stretcher. He was taken to Memorial Regional Hospital where he underwent surgery.

"The next couple of days we're going to have to say a lot of prayers for him," said Jenne, who was at the hospital.

5 die in crash

of medical plane

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - A medical plane crashed overnight, killing all five on board, including a young girl en route to a hospital, authorities said. A search helicopter found the wreckage early Monday.

Tracy Smith and her daughter, 15-month-old Lily Smith, were among those killed, said Peter Olson, a spokesman for the state Department of Public Safety. Lily was the patient, but it's unknown why she was being taken to a hospital.

Police have not released the identities of the 56-year-old pilot, a 44-year-old male nurse and a 40-year-old female paramedic, pending notification of next of kin, Olson said.

FBI raid sought terrorism information

DEARBORN, Mich. - Federal agents were looking for information on terrorist operations and Hezbollah activity when they raided two Muslim charities last month, court records show.

National Briefs

The agents hauled away computers, files, money and other items from the Dearborn

offices of Al-Mabarrat Charitable Organization and Goodwill Charitable Organization, two Shiite Muslim groups that raised money in metro Detroit.

On the same day, July 24, the U.S. Treasury Department said Goodwill was a front group for Hezbollah and froze its

assets, but Al-Mabarrat was not labeled, charged or placed on any terrorism list.

According to an affidavit filed with the search warrant for the raids, agents were looking for financial ties to "foreign Lebanese or Iranian affiliated charitable organizations" as well as "anti-United States or anti-

Israel propaganda."

Flight attendant accused of being drunk on duty

LEXINGTON, Ky. - A flight attendant appeared in court Monday to answer charges she was drinking alcohol on the job and told a captain "You're dead" as she was removed from the plane.

Public safety officers at Blue Grass Airport reported Sarah Mills, 26, threatened the Delta captain Sunday afternoon. Court documents said she smelled heavily of alcohol and admitted drinking whiskey onboard.

She was being held Monday at Fayette County Detention Center on a \$350 bond following her arraignment on terroristic threatening and public alcohol intoxication. She pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Court records say a breath test found her blood alcohol level was .032 - lower than Kentucky's legal limit of .08 to operate a motor vehicle. She refused blood and urine tests, the court records said.

Montana fire evacuees visit homes briefly

SEELEY LAKE, Mont. - Residents who fled a large wildfire burning in southwestern Montana were briefly allowed to return Monday to check on their homes and gather belongings as firefighters braced for worsening weather.

Some 675 homes have been evacuated and more than 28 square miles have burned since the fire near Seeley Lake began Friday about 50 miles northeast of Missoula. The cause is under investigation.

Firefighters were taking the unusual step of building containment lines in advance of the fire, rather than attacking it from the sides.

"We're trying to build lines ahead of the fire because the town is in the way and people's homes," said Ricardo Zuniga, a fire information officer.

Load-Date: August 7, 2007

Yes, we know there's a war on ?; ?and we're trying to stop it

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

May 25, 2007 Friday

National Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A16

Length: 660 words

Byline: James Clark, National Post

Body

Canada's anti-war movement has been the subject of considerable discussion in the national press lately, drawing the particular ire of National Post columnist Barbara Kay. In a recent column ("Don't You Know There's a War On," May 16), she criticized the participation of Canadian delegates at an international peace conference in Cairo, and the relationship between progressives and some groups in the Middle East.

This year marked the five-year anniversary of the Cairo Conference. Held at the headquarters of Egypt's national union of journalists, the 2007 meeting attracted more than 2,000 delegates from the Middle East and around the world. Every section of civil society was present, including trade unionists, students, women's groups and pro-democracy campaigners.

Twenty activists comprised the Canadian delegation to this year's conference, representing a variety of organizations in the anti-war movement. Among the Canadian delegates were three Jewish activists, including a Holocaust survivor. They shared their experiences of anti-Semitism, expressed their support for Palestinian liberation and explained the difference between Zionism and Judaism. They were warmly received by the conference and spoke alongside activists of other faiths and political traditions who shared their opposition to war and occupation.

Some commentators -- including Ms. Kay -- have condemned the conference and its Canadian participants because groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood sent representatives.

Whether we like it or not, these groups are considered mainstream forces in the Middle East, and have millions of supporters. Hezbollah participates in Lebanon's national government and was recently in Cabinet. Hamas, the democratically elected government of the Palestinian National Authority, enjoys a larger parliamentary plurality than Stephen Harper does in Canada. The Muslim Brotherhood forms the largest opposition bloc in Egypt with 88 elected MPs.

We don't have to agree with everything these groups stand for -- and we don't. But it's not up to us to decide who represents the people of the Middle East. That's up to them.

History shows that dialogue with all players is the only path to peace.

Yes, we know there's a war on ?; ?and we're trying to stop it

Recently, Norway's deputy foreign minister met with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a leader of Hamas. Norway has recognized the Palestinian unity government and called on the European Union to end economic sanctions. So too have Members of the European Parliament.

During Apartheid, anti-racist campaigners who engaged the African National Congress were smeared and vilified. Nelson Mandela, then labelled a "terrorist," is today revered as an icon for peace, justice and equality.

Last week, Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams joined British Prime Minister Tony Blair as Northern Ireland convened its historic power-sharing government. Decades earlier, Gerry Adams was called a "terrorist" and banned from speaking on the BBC. But the British government eventually began talks with the Irish Republican Army, the first step of a process that has led to the peace celebrated today.

This debate matters for Canadians. Stephen Harper arrived in Afghanistan this week not long after the Afghan Senate voted to engage in direct talks with the Taliban. The Senate argued that the only way to end the violence in Afghanistan is through talks. When New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton made the same suggestion a year ago he was derided by Conservatives as "Taliban Jack."

It's not always popular to voice opposition to war or seek engagement with people we disagree with. But there's no other way to achieve a real and lasting peace.

Despite criticisms from the likes of Ms. Kay, we are hopeful. In Canada, the tide has already begun to turn against the war. We must be doing something right. - James Clark is an organizer with the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War. He participated in this year's Cairo Conference.

Jamesbc75@gmail.com

Load-Date: May 25, 2007

End of Document

His final salute

The Jerusalem Post

July 25, 2008 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 15

Length: 2047 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Highlight: In an exclusive interview on the eve of his retirement from the IDF, Maj.-Gen. Elazar Stern tells the 'Post' why he has worked so hard to incorporate Judaism in the Israeli military, and to integrate religious soldiers with secular ones. SECURITY AND DEFENSE

Body

After a two-and-a-half hour drive to Tel Aviv from the North - where he gave his 80th and final lecture to a group of IDF officers ahead of a heritage trip to Poland - Maj.- Gen. Elazar Stern has one more place to stop before heading back to his office in the Kirya Military Headquarters.

Stern orders his driver to exit the highway and head into nearby Ramat Hasharon. He is paying a condolence call to an officer whose mother just died. The officer served under Stern a decade ago as a company commander at the IDF Officer Training School.

This is quintessential Stern - one of the most charismatic, vocal and controversial generals to have emerged since the founding of the state - a man who, in between making provocative statements about the need to draft haredim and the problems surrounding the release of hundreds of terrorists for a kidnapped soldier, doesn't forget to pay his respects to a former subordinate.

It is during this drive that Stern gives The Jerusalem Post an exclusive interview, just days before stepping down as head of the IDF's Human Resources Department, and ending an illustrious, 34-year military career.

Stern, 52, and the father of five, was drafted into the IDF in 1974, together with several of his classmates from Netiv Meir, the national-religious flagship high school at the time. Three of these - Yair Naveh, Yishai Be'er and Gershon Hachohen - would also become generals.

The young Stern volunteered for the Paratroopers and quickly rose through the ranks, proving to be an agile, confident and determined commander. But after serving as a battalion commander in the Paratrooper Brigade, Stern became disenchanted with the military. It was the period after the first war in Lebanon, and many young officers were jumping ship.

He spent the next two years as a high school teacher, until he was called back to service by chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Shomron.

Since then, he has had a meteoric rise in the military on an unconventional path. While most generals climb onto their seats around the General Staff table by serving in combat and field positions, Stern always opted for roles in

His final salute

which he could also serve as an educator. When he was invited to become a brigade commander, he asked to first serve as commander of the Paratroopers Training School.

After serving as commander of a reserve brigade in the Northern Command, he was appointed commander of the IDF Officer Training School, a role in which he began to receive national attention. After that, he was appointed chief education officer, and in 2005 became head of the Human Resources Department.

Our interview took place shortly before the bodies of reservists Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser were returned by Hizbullah in exchange for terrorist Samir Kuntar, four Hizbullah fighters caught during the Second Lebanon War and approximately 200 bodies of Lebanese and Palestinian combatants.

As head of the Human Resources Department, it was Stern's job to maintain contact with the bereaved families, as well as with the Goldwassers, Regevs and the parents of Gilad Schalit. At a farewell party thrown for him last week, the mother of a fallen soldier told the crowd of 1,000 packed into the Holon Arts Center that the phone call she received from Stern every Friday before Shabbat "made my week."

"I TOLD the families that while I am their sons' commander, I am also the commander of those who will be wounded or killed if we release too many," Stern says. "I think that we, as a society, have become confused with the idea that we will release 'at any price.'"

He says that the "confusion" and hysteria over kidnapped soldiers have "harmed us as a nation" and as a result we have "betrayed our soldiers."

He continues, "We are one of the countries that most surrenders to terrorism," and adds that he is envious of the US, which has set as its policy not to negotiate with terrorists.

Stressing that his opinion is one of principle, and not in reference to either the swap with Hizbullah or the ongoing negotiations with Hamas over Schalit's release, Stern's response to being asked about the possibility that hundreds of prisoners will be released is to answer plainly, "I would not recommend that type of price."

TALKING TO Stern is like being shown a mosaic of the Jewish world, with which, through his military career, he has grown very familiar. One of his close friends was the late Wall Street mogul Zalman Bernstein, who founded the Jerusalem-based Avi Chai Foundation and Shalem Center. Another is Nobel Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel.

It is also like being given a taste of a kind of heimish yiddishkeit. When addressing the IDF delegation to Poland, for example, Stern sounds more like a stand-up comedian than a senior IDF officer. He tells stories about the hang-ups of his Holocaust-survivor parents, and how his mother still calls him in the middle of the night to make sure he is ok. And he recalls how the Saudi and Kuwaiti military officers with whom he studied at the National Defense University in Washington DC couldn't understand why he wasn't shaving during the nine days before Tisha Be'av.

He then moves on to recount a meeting he had recently with the CEO of a large clothing company that decided to use a supermodel who had dodged the draft in its latest ad campaign. Stern told him not to be surprised if the IDF announces that only draft-dodgers buy clothes at his stores.

Indeed, Stern is known for being one of the most opinionated officers in the IDF. At his farewell party, Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi said he would miss him at the weekly meetings, and Defense Minister Ehud Barak quipped that while Stern may have made some controversial remarks throughout his career, "they always stimulated thinking processes and action."

STERN SAYS the Holocaust played a pivotal role in shaping his Jewish and Israeli identity. It was following a private family visit to Poland with his parents in 1992 that he began pushing the top IDF brass to create a program to bring hundreds of soldiers to Auschwitz every year. Since then, 80 delegations have made the trip.

"Nothing should be taken for granted in life, and that is why Poland is important," he says, adding that if he were a young soldier and were asked if he wanted to visit the Western Wall, he would respond: "First take me to Yad Vashem."

His final salute

Indeed, a theme that has run throughout Stern's career is the enhancement of soldiers' Jewish identity. One example: Seven years ago, when he was chief education officer, Stern was informed that the IDF was distributing 600 New Testaments annually to non-Jewish soldiers. And though he could not prevent the distribution, Stern said, "Let's try to reach the point at which soldiers do not ask for it."

Part of Stern's efforts on this score included offering conversion classes to the thousands of new-immigrant soldiers, mainly from the former Soviet Union. Since then, close to 2,900 soldiers have converted, 77 percent of them women. "This creates a feeling of partnership for the soldiers, and enhances their connection to the state and the IDF," he explains. "This is also significant, since now there will be 2,000 more Jewish mothers in Israel."

This theme was also brought to light in Stern's public argument with Israel Prize Laureate Asa Kasher, author of the IDF code of ethics. Stern demanded that the phrase "love for the homeland" be inserted into the code. Kasher opposed, asserting that it was foolish to insert emotions into a code of ethics. Ultimately, it was Stern who prevailed.

"My goal has always been to try to get soldiers to want to say that they are proud to be Jews," Stern declares.

NEVERTHELESS, in recent years, Stern has become ostracized by many in the national-religious and settler camp. The anger toward him is mainly due to the fact that he was a religious officer who participated in the disengagement from the Gaza Strip.

The attacks against Stern from these quarters were not only verbal. On one visit to the Gush Katif settlement bloc before the evacuation, right-wing activists slashed Stern's tires and then proceeded to hurl epithets at him in view and earshot of the media.

Several months later, Stern was physically attacked at the Western Wall, where he had gone to pray with his children. Activists hurled plastic bottles, rocks and chairs at him, while calling him a traitor.

Stern does not believe he made a mistake in obeying his orders to evacuate settlements, but does stand by his longtime opinion that it should have been the police and not the IDF carrying out the withdrawal.

His opposition to IDF participation in future evacuations also stems from a self-professed fear that there will be larger numbers of soldiers refusing to obey orders the next time around. "Today, there is a very ideological youth, and this is potentially risky," he says.

Another, possibly more important reason for Stern's being condemned by religious Zionists is his intention to revamp hesder yeshivot - a five-year program that incorporates Torah learning and a shortened military service. Stern says he is in favor of the hesder yeshivot, but that the number of students has grown too high over the years, and needs to be curbed. He has also taken heat for working to integrate hesder soldiers - who traditionally served in segregated units - with secular ones. He says that integration is important for creating a stronger and more inherent "Jewish dialogue" in the IDF, and that in the end, both the secular and the religious soldiers will benefit.

Despite the almost daily attacks on him in the religious media, Stern has stuck to his principles where moving his initiatives forward is concerned. He even admits that there was "a fraction of a second" when he considered taking off his kippa and throwing it away for good. "Not because I didn't feel religious, which I am. But because of the contempt I feel toward those who have done these things to me. If I ever had the thought, it was because I did not want to be associated with those bearded men who lie and incite and turn Judaism into a hate-filled and evil religion. I know that I am more religious than they are."

AS PART of his work to enhance the IDF's Jewish identity, Stern has worked tirelessly to upgrade the military's ties with the Diaspora. In the past year alone, he has revamped the Mahal and Shlav Bet volunteer programs for overseas youth, in an effort to attract more new immigrants.

Last year, he started the Gvanim program, which sent some 30 high-ranking officers to dozens of cities around the United States to lecture and interact with Jews.

His final salute

One of his greatest accomplishments in this area was getting the approval for soldiers to participate in birthright. So far, 30,000 soldiers have attended the 10- day tour program.

"The military needs to be an attractive place, not a discouraging one," he says, expressing the hope that more Jews from abroad will come to Israel to serve in the IDF.

DURING HIS last year in service, Stern faced possibly his greatest challenge - dwindling draft numbers. Ahead of last summer's draft, the IDF presented statistics showing a sharp rise in the number of teenagers dodging military service, with the total reaching 25% of youth born in 1990. Of that 25%, 11% received exemptions this year on religious grounds, an increase of 1% over last year; 7% were exempted for medical reasons, including physical and emotional; 4% had criminal records; and 3% live abroad.

Stern does not hide his concern. "This is a real threat to the state of Israel, since we are not yet at the stage where we do not need a strong military. We have become confused. We thought that we didn't need a military in the beginning of the decade, and we were proven wrong."

He says that in recent months he has noticed that the public campaign against draft-dodgers is having the desired effect. The slogan, "A true Israeli does not dodge the draft," which can be found on the bumpers of tens of thousands of cars, was created by a private public relations company, not commissioned by the IDF.

While the IDF is pushing financial incentives for soldiers who serve a full military term, Stern believes that in the end the only way to curb draft-dodging will be through the public's asking: "Who are we as a society?"

He is still waiting for an answer.

Graphic

Photo: ELAZAR STERN. 'My goal has always been to try to get soldiers to want to say that they are proud to be Jews.' (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

International briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

March 1, 2008 Saturday

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Section: C; Pg. 8

Length: 686 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Japan drops charges against U.S. Marine

TOKYO - A U.S. Marine who was accused of raping a 14-year-old girl in southern Japan has been released after prosecutors dropped the charges at the teenager's request, the Foreign Ministry said Friday.

Staff Sgt. Tyrone Luther Hadnott, 38, was arrested on Feb. 10 on suspicion of raping the girl on the southern island of Okinawa, fueling nationwide furor over crimes involving American troops in Japan.

Hadnott was released Friday night after the girl withdrew her criminal complaint against him, said Ryo Fukahori, a Foreign Ministry official in charge of Japan-U.S. security. Rape charges in Japan can be filed only with a victim's complaint.

Fukahori said the rape charges could be separately pursued by the U.S. military. Japanese police earlier said Hadnott admitted that he forced the girl down and kissed her, but that he denied raping her.

A series of criminal accusations against some of the 50,000 American troops based in Japan have inflamed anger at the U.S. military presence.

Hezbollah rejects

U.S. ship deployment

BEIRUT, Lebanon - Hez-bollah denounced the deployment of U.S. warships off Lebanon's coast and said Friday it won't be intimidated, while the U.S.-backed Lebanese government distanced itself from the military move.

"We did not request any warships from any party," U.S.-backed Prime Minister Fuad Saniora said, hours after the U.S. announced it was sending ships off Lebanon to promote regional stability.

He insisted the U.S. ships would cruise off the coast, not in Lebanese territorial waters.

Saniora, who has been accused

by the opposition of following U.S. policy, spoke in front of Arab diplomats at government headquarters in Beirut after his **Hezbollah** opponents called the U.S. deployment a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and independence.

Israel warns of possible offensive in Gaza

International briefs

JERUSALEM - Israel's deputy defense minister warned of disaster in the Gaza Strip after Palestinian rocket fire grew more ominous Friday with an assault on an Israeli city. Gaza's unbowed Hamas rulers promised to fight on.

Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai told Army Radio that because of the militants' attacks, Israel had "no other choice" but to launch a massive military operation in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military has completed preparations for a major ground offensive and notified the government it is ready to move, defense officials said. An invasion is not expected for the next week or two, in part because the military prefers to wait for clearer weather, the officials said.

Body of former model found in the river

PARIS - The body of Katoucha Niane, one of the first African women to attain international stardom as a model and a vocal opponent of female genital mutilation, was found in the Seine River, police said Friday.

Known simply as Katoucha, the former top model for Yves Saint Laurent and other top designers was found Thursday near the Garigliano bridge in Paris, judicial police in Paris said.

An autopsy showed no signs of foul play, pointing to the possibility that the 47-year-old may have fallen accidentally into the river, they said.

She had been missing since January and was last seen returning home from a party. She lived in a houseboat near Paris' Alexandre III bridge, and her handbag was later found on the boat.

2 former Philippine presidents join rally

MANILA, Philippines - Two former Philippine presidents, once bitter foes, joined tens of thousands of protesters at a rally Friday to press for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's resignation over a raging corruption scandal.

It was the largest crowd yet since Arroyo's latest crisis erupted weeks ago when the Philippine Senate heard testimony, broadcast on live television, that linked her husband to multimillion-dollar kickbacks in a government telecommunications deal.

The crowd included former opponents ex-President Corazon Aquino, who ushered in democracy when the country's first "people power" revolt ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, and former President Joseph Estrada, who was forced out over massive corruption by a second "people power" uprising in 2001.

Load-Date: March 1, 2008

Video shows beheading

The Star (South Africa)

August 28, 2007 Tuesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 675 words

Body

Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan - Pro-Taliban militants have released a video of a teenager beheading one of 16 Pakistani soldiers kidnapped in a tribal area bordering Afghanistan this month. The gruesome 35-minute video first shows the soldiers in uniform, then one of them kneeling before four teenagers with AK rifles and daggers. Finally one boy cuts off the soldier's head and holds it up for the camera.

Amsterdam - The Netherlands has come up with a four-year plan to fight radicalisation, especially among Muslim youths, amid concern over domestic Islamic extremism. Most of the 28-million (R78-million) budget would go to local governments to support projects designed to keep youths from turning against Dutch society and its values, officials said yesterday.

Bangkok - An Indian national has been convicted in Bangkok for selling dozens of shawls made from the endangered Tibetan antelope, pictured here. Reyaz Ahmad Mir violated Thailand's wildlife protection law but escaped with a small fine.

Kabul - Opium production has soared to "frightening record levels" in Afghanistan, which has more land producing drugs than Colombia, Bolivia and Peru combined, the UN said yesterday. The area of land with opium poppies rose by 17% to 193 000 hectares this year and the harvest was 8 200 tons, up from 6 100 last year. The country produced 93% of the world's opium this year.

Berlin - The first privately funded Jewish cultural centre in Germany since the Holocaust will open in Berlin this week as a symbol of the rebirth of Jewish life in the country. The complex includes a library, synagogue, kosher restaurant, tourist information centre and lecture hall. The Jewish community in Germany is one of the fastest-growing in the world, with about 120 000 members.

Peshawar - A visiting Islamic cleric from South Korea said yesterday he was asking religious leaders in Pakistan to help persuade the Taliban to free 19 Korean Christians hostages in neighbouring Afghanistan. Sulaiman Lee Haeng, imam of the main mosque in Seoul, hoped to establish contact with the Taliban during his trip on behalf of the 35 000-strong Muslim community in South Korea.

New Delhi - A man who swallowed a knife four years ago to avoid deportation to India from Germany on fraud charges has finally reached New Delhi, where the police said the blade in his belly would not prevent prosecution. Amarendra Nath Ghosh fled six years ago after being charged with defrauding Indian banks of \$6,7-million (R48-million).

Video shows beheading

Geneva - In just 278 more days, the paper air ticket will become a collector's item. The global airlines body IATA said yesterday it had placed its last order for paper tickets, clearing the way for air travel to be based entirely on electronic ticketing from June 1. The changeover from paper would cut airlines' costs by \$9 (R65) for every traveller and would save 50 000 mature trees a year.

Jerusalem - Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said yesterday the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon had about 20 000 rockets in its arsenal, significantly more than it did before a war with Israel last year. The rockets were located far from the border with Israel, north of the Litani River, but within striking range of Israel. Hezbollah fired almost 4 000 rockets at northern Israel during the 34-day war.

Tehran - The Osnabrück Symphony Orchestra from north-west Germany is in Tehran to give two concerts - the first performances in Iran by a Western ensemble since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Female players will have to conform to Islamic dress code and wear headscarves. The orchestra will perform Beethoven, Brahms and Elgar. The Tehran Symphony visited Osnabrück last year.

Sydney - Thoroughbred racing was banned indefinitely in Australia's New South Wales yesterday, as an outbreak of equine flu spread to 60 horses and another 450 horses were suspected of being infected. Police horses have been confined to stables. Last week the racing industry protested against the use of the Sydney track for a papal mass next year, saying it would lose millions of dollars.

Load-Date: August 27, 2007

Israel continues to bombard Palestinians

The Irish Times

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Attack on Gaza; Pg. 8

Length: 657 words

Byline: MARK WEISS in Jerusalem

Body

THERE WAS no let-up in the fighting yesterday as Israeli aircraft continued to hit targets across the Gaza Strip and militants fired more than 30 rockets into southern Israel.

Thousands of Israeli troops along the border were waiting for orders to begin a ground offensive.

Three factors pointed to an imminent incursion: weather forecasts indicating a dry spell; the anticipation of stepped-up diplomatic efforts next week to stop the fighting; and yesterday's decision by Israel to allow foreign nationals to leave Gaza.

Some 20 homes belonging to Hamas activists were hit yesterday, although the militants themselves were not present when the attacks took place. The Israeli military phoned neighbours a few minutes before the attacks, telling them to leave the area.

Palestinian sources reported that three children, all from the same family, were killed in Khan Younis, in the south of the Gaza Strip.

A mosque was also destroyed in Jebalya in the north of the strip - the fifth to be targeted so far.

An Israeli military official said the mosque was used to store rockets, claiming that the large number of secondary explosions which followed the initial impact proved the point.

Israeli jets also pounded the southern tip of the strip again, along the border with Egypt, targeting smuggling tunnels.

Despite the fear of more air strikes, thousands of Gaza residents turned out for the funeral of Hamas leader Nizar Rayan, who was killed with members of his family on Thursday when a one-tonne bomb hit his home.

Hamas member of parliament Mushir Masri told the crowd that the Palestinian resistance "will not forget and will not forgive".

Israel opened the Erez crossing, at the northern end of the strip, to allow 300 foreign nationals to leave the war zone.

Most were Russian or east European women, married to Palestinians, who left with their children.

Israel continues to bombard Palestinians

The Israeli authorities announced that the Erez crossing would be open tomorrow to allow some of the Palestinians wounded in the bombing campaign to receive treatment in Israeli hospitals.

Israeli group Physicians for Human Rights, which pushed for the transfer of the wounded, said the Palestinian Authority was unwilling to pay for their medical treatment, claiming Hamas was responsible.

The death toll from six days of fighting now stands at at least 420, and a United Nations official said more than one-quarter of these are civilians.

Of six Palestinians reported killed yesterday in more than 30 Israeli air strikes, five were civilians, local medics said.

One missile killed three Palestinian children aged between eight and 12 as they played on a street near the town of Khan Younis in the south of the strip. One was decapitated.

Sixty-four trucks carrying humanitarian supplies were allowed through the Israeli-controlled border crossing points yesterday.

Maxwell Gaylard, the UN humanitarian co-ordinator for the Palestinian territories, said that although Israel was allowing humanitarian convoys through, Gaza residents still faced a food and medical crisis.

An interim analysis conducted by the Israel defence forces concluded that the Hamas rocket threat to southern Israel was less serious than originally presumed, and residents were not showing signs of panic.

Militants have fired more than 350 rockets into Israel since Saturday, killing three civilians and a soldier.

At least 40 of these rockets were long-range Katyushas.

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, speaking during a tour of the south, said that Hamas's capabilities "cannot be compared" with those of Hizbullah, which fired almost 4,000 rockets into Israel from southern Lebanon during the one-month war in the summer of 2006.

Police went on high alert throughout Israel yesterday, and a weekend curfew was clamped on the West Bank.

Hundreds of Arabs clashed with police in Jerusalem after yesterday's Friday Muslim prayers and all football matches scheduled for the weekend between Jewish and Arab teams were postponed.

Load-Date: January 3, 2009

Say no more: Transsexual Israeli tops Lebanese song chart

The Jerusalem Post

June 27, 2008 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 575 words

Byline: DAVID BRINN

Body

While overtures recently made by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Shimon Peres toward the Lebanese government to enter into direct peace talks have fallen on deaf ears, that doesn't mean the Lebanese are tuning out everything Israeli.

"Say No More," a pulsating trance music track by up- and-coming Israeli ***female*** singer Aderet and DJ Dvir Halevi, has been at the top of the playlist this month on the "Beirut Nights" Internet radio station devoted to dance music (www.beirutnights.com).

"We found out they were playing my music by chance," the 32-year-old Aderet said on Wednesday. She grew up in a religious home in Jerusalem and launched her musical career after undergoing a sex change operation following her IDF service over 10 years ago.

"I put out a dance single last year - a cover of Alice DJ's 'Better Off Alone' - which was big in the clubs in Israel, and when our production team did a search on Google, we found the song on lots of playlists around Europe and on Beirut Nights."

When Aderet sent the Web site an e-mail thanking them for playing the song, she received a response requesting more of her English songs. The singer, who has previously released two albums in Hebrew - 2001's Tenth Floor and 2005's Without the Evil Eye - is readying her first English-language album, Jewish Girl, for release later this year. A month ago, her management sent the album's first single, "Say No More," and a remix of the song by DJ Dvir Halevi to the Lebanese station.

"They added the remix to the playlist and a few days later, it was at the top of the most played list," said Aderet, who regularly performs at clubs, weddings and private functions in Israel and Europe.

On the Web site's "Eurodance and Trance Songs" chat forum, the forum's administrator described the song as an "uplifting tune with super nice lyrics."

"They know I'm an Israeli singer, and that it's an Israeli song," said Aderet. "It feels great, it's a big honor for me and makes me so happy that they let a 100 percent Israeli song to be played and to top their playlist without letting politics interfere."

When contacted by The Jerusalem Post a representative of Beirut Nights named Sami responded in an e-mail that Israeli music was regularly featured on the station.

Say no more: Transsexual Israeli tops Lebanese song chart

"We grew up in Beirut listening to Ofra Haza and Ishtar Alabina," Sami said. "We play Aderet, but also Dana International, Sarit Hadad, and DJs Yahel and Ofer Nissim. It's not a policy because there is no policy, it is just music. You shouldn't make a big deal about it, because it might hurt us since we are surrounded by fanatics who ultimately have no place in Lebanon.

"If you ask 70% of the Lebanese population, they would tell you that Iran is more of an enemy than Israel. If the government needs to implement laws, they should start with laws against terrorists like Hizbullah rather than implement old outdated rules," he said.

While Beirut Nights is only an Internet radio station, Sami claimed it was the most widely listened to site among the Lebanese diaspora, while acknowledging that its reach within Lebanon itself was limited.

Aderet is hopeful that the popularity of "Say No More" will snowball into something more significant, not just for her but for Israel.

"I hope that it will enable more Israeli musicians to break through there, and that maybe through music and the people who love club music, it could help start to bring peace between the Israeli and Lebanese people," she said.

Graphic

Photo: 'THEY KNOW I'm an Israeli singer.' Aderet says she hopes the popularity of her music in Lebanon will help peace efforts. (Credit: Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 6, 2007 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 246 words

Byline: from news services

Body

JERUSALEM

Defense minister will step down

Israel's defense minister said Saturday he will step down after an inquiry commission criticized his handling of the war against Hezbollah in Lebanon last summer, but he will probably wait until his Labor Party has held its primaries at the end of the month.

The government probe found that Amir Peretz did not fulfill his duty as defense minister, in part due to his inexperience in military matters.

"I have made my decision," Peretz said. "But I think if I decided from one day to the next to get up and flee the defense ministry, I would be doing something bad, bad for the security and the state of Israel."

SOUTH DOCK, TURKS and Caicos Islands

Search is suspended for missing Haitians

The U.S. Coast Guard suspended its search Saturday for more than 40 missing Haitian migrants after local authorities said it was no longer needed as hopes faded of finding more survivors.

Several boats and helicopters belonging to the Turks and Caicos, near where the boat sank Friday, continued to search the Caribbean waters. But police Inspector Sharon Whitaker that search may also suspend early Sunday if no more survivors or bodies are found.

Roughly 160 Haitian migrants were packed aboard a 25-foot boat when it ran into stormy weather before dawn Friday off the coast of this British territory. Thirty six people - 23 women and 13 men - were confirmed dead in addition to the more than 40 missing.

Searchers found no survivors or bodies on Saturday.

Load-Date: May 6, 2007

DIGEST

End of Document

Calls for moderation mark opening of Al-Amin Mosque

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

October 20, 2008 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 602 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

The inauguration of the Mohammad al-Amin Mosque took place on Saturday morning with over 700 people in attendance, including politicians, spiritual leaders and diplomats. The speakers called for moderation, tolerance and unity between Christians and Muslims, while Bishop Roland Abu Jaoude.

BEIRUT: The inauguration of the Mohammad al-Amin Mosque took place on Saturday morning with over 700 people in attendance, including politicians, spiritual leaders and diplomats.

The speakers called for moderation, tolerance and unity between Christians and Muslims, while Bishop Roland Abu Jaoude, representing Lebanon's main Maronite Catholic Church, made mention of the adjacent Maronite St. George Cathedral whose church bells tolled as the ceremony began.

Saad Hariri, the son and political heir of slain former Premier Rafik Hariri, who started the project to build the Mohammad al-Amin Mosque in 2002, began the proceedings with a reading of Al-Fatiha prayer at his father's tomb with Speaker Nabih Berri.

Hariri's tomb is adjacent to the mosque, and has been visited by numerous international leaders since the former prime minister's killing in 2005.

The official ceremony began at 10:30 a.m. in the presence of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, Progressive Socialist Party leader MP Walid Jumblatt, Kataeb Party leader Amin Gemayel, a Hizbullah delegation, Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon Mohammad Rida Shibani. Ministers from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Djibouti and the Palestinian territories also attended.

Speakers included a number of spiritual leaders from Lebanon, as well as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Lands Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad Hussein, and Egypt's Mufti Ali Gomaa.

"Muslims are convinced that Lebanon cannot survive without coexistence among its people," said Grand Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani.

Calls for moderation mark opening of Al-Amin Mosque

The theme was reiterated by all of the speakers, including Bishop Elias Audi, who spoke on behalf of the Greek Orthodox patriarch, Druze spiritual leader Sheikh Naim Hassan, and Vice President of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council Sheikh Abdel-Amir Qabalan.

Saad Hariri closed the ceremony. "We want this day to represent the force of moderation in Lebanon and a message of moderation from Lebanon to the world," he said.

He also mentioned the situation of Christians in Mosul who are being forced out of their homes en masse. "The same people who created a war between Sunnis and Shiites are the ones kicking the Christians out of Iraq today," he said.

Several statements were also made regarding unity and the defeat of Israel.

"We live in unity in Palestine like we do in Lebanon. Christians and Muslims live hand and hand, so we can defeat Israel," said Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad Hussein.

Qabalan called on people of all religions and sects to unite to re-establish the resistance and confront Israel.

After the speeches, people in attendance made their way to the prayer room, which can accommodate 5,000 men and 1,000 women.

The Mohammad al-Amin Mosque is Lebanon's largest Muslim place of worship at 10,000 square meters. The bright blue dome and the four minarets, which are based on those of Mecca's Grand Mosque, can be seen from anywhere in Downtown Beirut. Inside, Chandeliers hang over the carpeted floor and verses from the Koran adorn the walls.

The mosque's architect, Azmi Fakhuri, said the mosque had an Ottoman style, but retained a Lebanese identity.

The streets were packed with cars leaving and coming to the mosque all day on Saturday. One local who was passing by the procession wondered. "Yes, today everyone prays, but tomorrow will it be empty?"

Load-Date: October 19, 2008

Israelis only want peace

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

June 8, 2008 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A15

Length: 262 words

Byline: Robert Moskowitz, Calgary Herald

Body

Re: "Israel's 60 years of turmoil, triumph," Editorial, May 8.

I wish to congratulate the Calgary Herald for its insightful editorial on the occasion of Israel's 60th-year celebrations. The editorial writer has shown a true understanding of the geo-political dynamics of the situation between Israel and its neighbours, and a true sense of the moral dichotomy between Israel and the people who so quickly rush to criticize its right to defend itself (such as CUPW). Theodor Herzl said "if you dream -- it will become a reality," and the vision, determination and optimism of multitudes of Holocaust survivors, and generations of

Israeli-born dreamers made

Israel a thriving democracy and symbol for Jewish people's insistence on survival and success.

The editorial was especially poignant in light of a recent concert at the Beth Tzedek synagogue on the celebrations of Israel's 60th independence day. The event featured a choir composed of dozen or so 16- and

17-year-olds from Israel. These girls, all from cities and towns along the Israeli-Lebanese border, have grown up in the shadows of *Hezbollah* Katyusha rockets threatening their own and their families' safety and right to live without fear. Nevertheless, among the inspirational singing program, the final song the girls offered was A Song for Peace. Even those Israelis who have known nothing but fear throughout their young lives still ache for a peaceful co-existence with their neighbours, and this spirit was never more evident than in these beautiful young Israeli *women*'s voices and hearts.

Robert Moskowitz, Calgary

Load-Date: June 8, 2008

Israelis only want peace

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

May 11, 2008 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A15

Length: 263 words

Byline: Robert Moskowitz, Calgary Herald

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Robert Moskowitz, Calgary

Load-Date: May 11, 2008

Lebanon's Shiites still angry about missing imam

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

August 31, 2008 Sunday

FIRST EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 637 words

Byline: By Bassem Mroue THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

For the rest of the world, the disappearance of the imam Moussa al-Sadr is probably at most a footnote in the checkered history of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. In 1978, the Lebanese Shiite Muslim religious leader flew to Tripoli for a week of talks with Libyan officials. He was never seen or heard from again.

But in Lebanon, the mystery of the missing imam remains a burning issue for Shiites, including leaders of the powerful Hezbollah movement - an indication of al-Sadr's potency as a symbol for a community that in 40 years has gone from a downtrodden, impoverished sect to a major political player.

Al-Sadr is one of the pioneers of Shiite empowerment that has become a force across the Middle East, spurred by the 1979 Islamic revolution in Shiite Iran and more recently by the rise to leadership of Iraq's majority Shiites after U.S. forces ousted Saddam Hussein and his Sunni Muslim-dominated regime.

Framed photos of al-Sadr adorn the shops and homes of Lebanese Shiites, and the day he was last seen, on Aug. 31, 1978, is marked annually in Lebanon, with this year's major ceremony planned in the southern town of Nabatiyeh.

On Wednesday, Lebanese judicial officials said prosecutors had just charged Gadhafi and six other Libyan officials with "incitement to kidnap and withhold the freedom" of al-Sadr. The charge could carry the death penalty, but the officials, insisting on anonymity since they were not authorized to speak to the media, conceded it was unlikely Gadhafi would ever be tried.

Most Lebanese presume al-Sadr is dead - he would be 80 if alive - but some cling to the belief he remains in a Libyan jail. It's an appealing idea for Shiites; a major tenet of the faith is that a revered ninth century imam has been hidden by God and will return as mankind's savior.

In 1975, al-Sadr founded Amal, the first major militia and political force for Lebanon's Shiites, who historically were under the thumb of Christians and Sunnis.

Al-Sadr was an impressive figure - well over six feet tall, he wore the black turban of a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and was a skilled orator, with an accent reflecting his Iranian past. Regarded as a moderate, he urged

Lebanon 's Shiites still angry about missing imam

cooperation with other faiths. His biggest success may have been that his preaching for Shiite dignity changed the way the sect's members thought of themselves.

Amal and other organizations he founded became the model for a grass-roots Shiite political movement. Today, the Shiites are Lebanon's largest sect, with an estimated 1.2 million of the 4 million population, led by the Iranian-backed **Hezbollah**.

A member of a clan known for its religious scholars, al-Sadr is a distant relative of Iraq's radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, whose Mahdi Army militia has fought the U.S. military and its Iraqi allies.

Founds key group

In 1974, a year before Lebanon's 15-year civil war broke out, al-Sadr founded the Movement of the Deprived, attracting thousands of followers.

The following year, he established the military wing Amal - Arabic for "hope" and an acronym for the militia's Arabic name, the Lebanese Resistance Brigades - which later fought in Lebanon's civil war.

Since al-Sadr's disappearance, Libya has always insisted the cleric and his two traveling companions left Tripoli on a flight to Rome and suggested he was a victim of a power struggle among Shiites.

At the time, Italian authorities found no evidence al-Sadr ever arrived in Italy, and luggage belonging to him and his aides reportedly was found in a Tripoli hotel. However, his passport surfaced in Rome during a forgery trial in 2004, with some suggesting it had been altered.

Most of al-Sadr's followers are convinced Gadhafi ordered al-Sadr killed in a dispute over Libyan payments to Lebanese militias, but the imam's family argues he could still be alive in a Libyan jail.

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Shiite **women** in Beirut, Lebanon, look at pictures of Lebanese Shiite cleric Imam Moussa al-Sadr at an exhibition Wednesday marking the 30th anniversary of his disappearance. A Lebanese prosecutor is seeking the death sentence for Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi and six other Libyan officials over the disappearance of al-Sadr and his two companions during a trip to Libya in 1978, judicial officials said Wednesday. Hussein Malla The Associated Press

Load-Date: September 1, 2008

Gaza massacre

The Nation (AsiaNet)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 772 words

Byline: USMAN KHAN

Body

For the past fortnight we have been horrified by the images of bloodied bodies of innocent Palestinian men, women and children, brutally killed by the military might of the state of Israel. These images show the fraction of the destruction being caused due to the ban by the Israeli government on the foreign journalists and reporters in Gaza, despite of the ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court to allow access to the foreign journalists into Gaza. Moreover, the delayed intervention by the international community has compounded the misery of the Palestinians.

After winning the elections Hamas has sought international credibility but its political position of refusing to recognise Israel and renounce violence was not acceptable to the west and left it isolated. Two years ago Israel declared Gaza as a Hostile Territory. Since then, Israel had planned to collectively punish the people of Gaza by putting the Strip under siege by isolating it economically, commercially, politically and diplomatically.

The political position of the Fatah movement controlling the West Bank didn't help much in curbing the isolation of Gaza due to the differences between Hamas and Fatah movement. There is a need to understand this crisis in the context of Israeli power politics and the prestige of the Israeli armed forces. After the humiliating defeat of Israel by a guerrilla force Hezbollah there was an immense Public pressure on the Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who belongs to Kidima party, to resign. The Israeli armed forces also got their share of humiliation.

Elections are due in February, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni (former Mossad operative) and Defence Minister Ehud Barak both belonging to Kidima party are the front runners in the race to become prime minister. As the incumbent Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is a lame duck due to corruption charges, both Barak and Livni are trying their best to prove tough enough to ensure Israeli security by bombarding innocent Palestinian civilians. We should not be surprised if they open another front in the north with Hezbollah. In this particular way they want to win over the support of the Israeli public from their main contender "the notorious Benjamin Netanyahu" and to give an opportunity to the Israeli armed forces to restore their pride and prestige by heavily bombarding and using indiscriminate force against the innocent people of Gaza. Israeli hue and cry about rockets being fired at them from Gaza is merely an excuse to carry out their heinous design.

All this will have far reaching repercussions for Israel's closest ally the United States, whose new administration's focus is on winning hearts and minds of the people in the Muslim world. President elect Obama is considering number of options to portray a positive image of his administration in the Muslim world. Two of them are: i) to close down Guantanamo Bay prison and ii) give his first foreign policy statement in a Muslim country after swearing in as president (Pakistan was one of the country being considered but it was dropped due to security concerns). Such kind of symbolic gestures won't make a big impact, as many in the Muslim world believe that the united state is

Gaza massacre

supporting Israel and they have a reason to believe it. The United States has blocked all the UN resolutions condemning Israeli aggression.

Recently the US has abstained in a voting for the resolution based on the French-Egyptian ceasefire plan which will definitely be violated by Israel till its objectives are achieved .The US administration has to understand that its all out support for all kind of Israeli action will further radicalise the streets of Arab and Muslim world, extremely marginalising the moderates and making it difficult for the US to sell its foreign policy in the region.

Trying to insure peace and security through indiscriminate force will create a vicious cycle of violence and give way to the emergence of non-state actors. When the international community which is lead by the US fails to stop these atrocities then it gives an excuse to these non-state actors to fill that void and their only mean is violence.

The Europeans have realised that violence feed violence and the only way to curb terrorism and extremism is through political dialogue. Voice of descend has started coming from Israel its leading newspaper Haaretz has advised the government to stop the military incursion and negotiate. At the end of the day Israel has to ensure its security through political dialogue with its Arab neighbours including Hamas. The writer is a research coordinator at the Institute of Public Policy, BNU

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

End of Document

Keenan tells of desire for death in Beirut captivity

Sunday Business Post

March 30, 2008

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Section: IRELAND

Length: 263 words

Body

Brian Keenan prayed for his own death while held hostage in Lebanon in the late 1980s, a new documentary on his ordeal reveals.

Keenan, from Belfast, was kidnapped by Islamic Jihad militia in the Muslim-controlled area of west Beirut as he made his way to the American University, where he worked as an English teacher in April 1986.

He was held for four and a half years at the height of the country's bloody civil war and often tortured and beaten before his release in August 1990.

In a new BBC documentary to be screened tomorrow night, which follows his emotional return to Beirut for the first time since his release, he reveals the crippling mental effect captivity had on him. "Sleeping in the smell of my own filth, many times I thought of death, looked for it, prayed for it and asked for it," he said.

While filming, he also visited a number of parts of south Lebanon ravaged by the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, including Qana, where 28 people, including women and children, were killed in one attack.

"Qana is the place where Jesus turned water into wine, but these days it is the place where high explosives turn children into ashes," he said.

Despite this, he said he felt a sense of release on this return visit. "I didn't come to Beirut to be a hostage. It has taken away the cross that has been hanging around for 20 years."

Keenan's wife Audrey and his two young sons, Cal and Jack, also travelled with him. "My sons know bad things happened to daddy here, but I didn't want them to grow up with that nightmare."

Back to Beirut airs tomorrow at 7pm on BBC2

Load-Date: March 30, 2008

International: Boost for Middle East summit as Syria joins in: Annapolis summit hopes to kickstart negotiations: Broad Arab support, but expectations are low

The Guardian - Final Edition

November 26, 2007 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 15

Length: 596 words

Byline: Ian Black, Washington

Body

Syria is to attend the US-brokered Annapolis conference tomorrow, guaranteeing broad Arab support for an ambitious but risky attempt to relaunch peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians after years of violence and deadlock.

Confirmation that President Bashar al-Assad is sending his deputy foreign minister means that the Maryland meeting will be the best-attended Middle Eastern summit since the Madrid conference in 1991 - although the stakes are higher and expectations far lower.

President Bush said last night that the broad attendance "demonstrates the international resolve to seize this important opportunity to advance freedom and peace in the Middle East".

The news came as Israeli and Palestinian officials worked against the clock to try to agree an elusive joint declaration on principles for peace amid near-universal gloom about the long-term prospects of reaching a workable solution.

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, and Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, arrived in Washington yesterday declaring their determination to make progress, but acknowledged the difficulties. "I have come in order to fulfil the desire of the Palestinian people for their own state," said Abbas.

Both leaders are meeting Bush separately at the White House today and again on Wednesday. Olmert told reporters he hoped the summit would launch negotiations on "all the core issues that will result in a solution of two states for two peoples".

But in the Gaza Strip, sealed off from Israel and controlled by Abbas's bitter enemy, Hamas, thousands of women demonstrated against Annapolis, waving banners that read: "The enemy knows only the language of force." Iran condemned the summit as "supporting the Zionist occupiers".

Diplomats said Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state, was trying last night to bridge the gaps. Negotiations have been deadlocked for weeks over whether the document should address the final borders between Israel and a Palestinian state, Jerusalem, and refugees. Israel wants to keep it vague; the Palestinians want detail and a timetable.

International: Boost for Middle East summit as Syria joins in: Annapolis summit hopes to kickstart negotiations:
Broad Arab support, but expectations are low

The idea is to jumpstart talks aimed at creating a Palestinian state before Bush leaves office in January 2009. These will be the first substantive negotiations since the collapse of talks in the dying days of the Clinton administration. That was followed by the second intifada, which claimed 4,000 Palestinian and 1,000 Israeli lives.

The question is, what can happen beyond tomorrow's ritual speeches? Both leaders face powerful opposition - Abbas from Hamas and Olmert from coalition partners and opposition parties against concessions on settlements, Jerusalem and easing restrictions in the West Bank.

Arab attendance provides one glimmer of hope. Syria had insisted it would only come if there was discussion of the Golan Heights, still occupied 40 years after the 1967 Middle East war. The country's official news agency said Syria had been told there would be a session on reviving peace talks with Israel.

Faysal Mekdad, Syria's deputy foreign minister, is a senior enough figure to avoid a snub, but not so high-level as to constitute a ringing endorsement of the event.

Dialogue with Syria was one of the recommendations of the Hamilton-Baker commission for the aftermath of the Iraq war. Damascus backs Hamas and Hizbullah in Lebanon, both enemies of the US and Israel. Under US pressure, Saudi Arabia is sending its foreign minister, the veteran Prince Saud al-Faisal, although he made clear there would be no "normalisation" or handshakes with Israeli leaders.

Karma Nabulsi, page 27

Load-Date: November 26, 2007

End of Document

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hobart Mercury (Australia)

June 24, 2008 Tuesday

1 - Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 15

Length: 296 words

Body

Lebanese violence

SECTARIAN clashes resumed in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli yesterday, forcing civilians to flee and further denting a Qatari-brokered deal to end the country's political crisis. The death toll rose to nine after fighting between Sunni supporters of the ruling majority and Alawites loyal to the Hezbollah-led opposition erupted on Sunday.

Industrialist freed

KIDNAPPERS released leading Greek industrialist Giorgos Mylonas, 49, unharmed yesterday, 13 days after he was abducted at his Thessaloniki home. Mylonas said his family had paid a ransom to the kidnappers, who had initially sought \$49 million.

Dutch pot conundrum

THE notorious Dutch ``coffee shop" faces a conundrum under a new public smoking ban. Patrons can still light up cannabis joints but not if the drug is blended with tobacco when the Netherlands bans tobacco smoke from public places on July 1.

Afghan fury at deaths

HUNDREDS of protesters took to the streets of Khogyani, eastern Afghanistan, yesterday after a father and son were killed by gunfire from US-led soldiers targeting the Taliban, Governor Haji Zalmay Khan said. The US denied any civilian casualties.

Comedian Carlin dies

GEORGE Carlin, the dean of US counterculture comedians whose biting insights on life and language were immortalised in his Seven Words You Can Never Say On TV routine, has died of heart failure in Santa Monica at 71.

Inside murder story

MACEDONIAN journalist Vlado Taneski, 56, who was suspected of having brutally killed three women and who wrote reports about the murders, was found dead in his cell yesterday after putting his head in a bucket of water.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Everest limit sought

CHINA wants to restrict the number of climbers on Everest amid concerns visitors pollute the mountain with hard-to-clear rubbish.

Load-Date: June 23, 2008

End of Document

Beirut's nights; LEBANON: The Lights Are Going Out in Beirut

IPS (Latin America)

March 10, 2008 Monday

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Length: 761 words

Byline: Mona Alami

Body

Sporadic gunfire erupts, breaking the silence of the night. A few police cars speed up, heading east. Their lights flashing in the dark and their sirens echoing across the shanty neighbourhoods, they rapidly cross the run down metallic Basta bridge in the direction of the shootout.

On either side of the street, tanks are parked, with soldiers briskly pacing the pavement, listening to the cacophony. Such have become Beirut's nights.

Only a few years ago, Lebanon was known for its hip clubbing scene, and the people for their hedonistic lifestyle and love for entertainment. Tourists and partygoers flocked to Beirut: youngsters in tight jeans or short skirts, dressed to kill, regularly queued in front of bars and clubs. Today, nightlife venues open and close at rocket speed, with only a few areas still filled with the reassuring laughter and typical Lebanese joie de vivre.

They are minuscule pockets of light in an increasingly dark and threatening world.

'We've lost around 20 percent of our customers this year, the average expenditure of customers per table has also decreased significantly of late,' says Tony Matran, manager of Joe Penas, a bar-restaurant in the popular Gemayzeh neighbourhood frequented by the Lebanese upper crust and yuppies. 'However, we are doing relatively well compared to others in the business, as our clientele remains, after all, less price conscious than others.'

In recent months, political deadlock over the presidency, a rise in confessional tensions, and the threat of a war with Israel has weighed heavily on the country's economy and its tense, overwrought population.

On this particular weekend, however, the Lebanese seem to have forgotten about their anxieties as they engage in their favourite pastime: heavy socialising while sipping on cocktails of vodka and Red Bull-cranberry juice, or frozen margaritas.

'Our turnover is linked to the situation. I've noticed that people have avoided going out since the recent Mar Michel confrontations,' says Matran, referring to the recent violent clashes between protesters from Shia **Hezbollah** and Amal parties and the army that ended in a bloodbath.

Away from the bustling Gemayzeh area is Noueiri, a neighbourhood that has been struck by the confessional divide that is redrawing the map of Beirut. Unlike the 15-year civil war (1975-1990) -- during which the country was split into the Christian East and Muslim West -- demarcation lines are today increasingly blurry. Conflicts between Shias and Sunnis emerge in areas densely populated by both communities.

Beirut's nights LEBANON : The Lights Are Going Out in Beirut

'We used to close at 11 or 12 every night. In recent weeks, though, we have been serving our last meals at around eight o'clock,' says Mohamad Chmeitally, owner of a small restaurant in Noueiri. 'People are anxious about the recent confrontations, which are taking place more frequently. I estimate the drop in overall activity at 70 percent.'

His neighbour, shop owner Ghazi Jaroudi, says jokingly, 'I increased my consumption of narguileh (water pipe for smoking) from two to seven (pipes) a day. Too much idle time on my hands is going to literally kill me! My landlord and banker are hunting me down and I am sinking under debt.'

His friend, Bassam Hijazi, interrupts him: 'This is a waiting game; Sayyed Hassan (referring to Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Hezbollah) advised us to be patient. He knows what he is doing and I am sure that all the sacrifices will be worthwhile.'

A few kilometres away, large military trucks are parked under the Mazraa bridge. Soldiers standing guard on street corners have become a common sight. Hussein Daou, a pastry shop owner who works in the vicinity, says he lives in the Ras al-Nabeh area, where only a few weeks ago, violent fights ignited between the Future Sunni movement and Amal. 'The situation has calmed down since, but I see fewer people in the streets.'

Daou says client purchases have decreased, as his products are perceived as unnecessary luxury, with people preferring to save money in case a war erupts. 'What has happened to the Lebanese? In whose name are Sunnis and Shias, united by blood, fighting a brotherly war?' he asks.

Not far from Mazraa, but seemingly light years away, is the once bustling Monot area, now far from busy. Around the Element nightclub, a few dressed up hipsters cross the street under the watchful eye of Lebanese soldiers. The sight of women in high boots and black dresses walking by men in their fatigues armed with M16s seems almost absurd. The party, no matter how subdued, goes on. © 2008 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: March 10, 2008

Legacy of Terror

Richmond Times Dispatch (Virginia)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A-10

Length: 312 words

Body

Hamas effectively controls Gaza. Fatah clings to power in the West Bank. If Palestinians must choose between terrorist groups, then it is principally because Palestinians previously chose terror. Consider the disintegrating situation part of Yasser Arafat's legacy.

Arafat bequeathed to an unhappy people a tradition of corruption and violence. Hamas has risen in part because systemic graft long ago deprived Arafat's apparatus, now run by his political heirs, of its authority. Fatah, Hamas, and too many subsets to name have embraced the sword. Is it any surprise they have turned the blade on their own?

Hamas is incorrigible. Fatah is not to be confused with the League of Women Voters, or for that matter with France's Socialist Party, but the Palestinian civil war gives its members an opportunity to transcend themselves. Are rank-and-file Palestinians ready for leaders who stress development and diplomacy? Precedent offers little reason for optimism. The baleful cycle likely will continue.

Hamas and its colleagues in hate make themselves clear. "We will not recognize Israel, we will not recognize Israel, we will not recognize Israel," says Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in cadences evocative of the infamous "three no's" that slammed the door on prospects for peace following the Six-Day War. "If the Jews all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide," snaps Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah. "Israel is a tumor which needs to be removed," proclaims Khalid Mashall, chairman of Hamas' political bureau. "Israel must be wiped off the map," Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, president of Iran, asserts.

The quotations appear in an ad sponsored by the American Jewish Committee. Meanwhile, unions representing British academics and journalists have called for a boycott of... Israel. The blood spilled by terrorists leaves many stains.

Load-Date: July 27, 2007

Controversy follows outgoing; mufti at Muslim changeover

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

June 11, 2007 Monday

Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 299 words

Body

THE controversy that dogged outspoken Muslim leader Sheik Taj Aldin Alhilali has followed him even as he stepped down from Australia's top Islamic post.

Sheik Alhilali yesterday declined another term as mufti, forcing Muslim leaders to appoint a successor.

Australia's imams yesterday elected Sheik Fehmi Naji El-Imam during a four-hour meeting behind closed doors at a Melbourne mosque.

But Sheik Alhilali was their first choice, despite recent pressure from within their own ranks for him to be sacked.

While his departure has pleased some Muslim leaders, a close confidant believes the outgoing mufti was the best cleric for the job, while others are calling for the position to be scrapped altogether.

Past president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Rehin Ghauri, said most Muslims would be pleased to leave the controversy of Sheik Alhilali's 18-year tenure behind.

"Alhilali is very experienced, but he has caused some problems to the community," said Mr Ghauri.

"I don't like his personality, I don't like his style - uncompromising style. Pulling punches gets you nowhere, you bring controversy instead of friends.

"The ordinary Muslims don't like to see him as mufti."

The mufti sparked a storm of controversy last year when he likened immodestly dressed women to uncovered meat, suggesting they invited rape, during a Ramadan sermon to 500 worshippers in Sydney.

Those comments prompted calls for his resignation and were widely denounced by Muslim community leaders and politicians across the political spectrum.

Sheik Alhilali has also praised jihadists for fighting coalition forces, been accused of mishandling charity money raised after last year's Israel-Hezbollah war and declared Australian Muslims had greater citizenship rights than those with a convict heritage.

Load-Date: June 11, 2007

Controversy follows outgoing mufti at Muslim changeover

End of Document

IRAN'S DEADLY GAME; EXCLUSIVE NUCLEAR CAT AND MOUSE COULD THREATEN US ALL

The Mirror

July 12, 2008 Saturday

3 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 17

Length: 1189 words

Byline: BY CHRIS HUGHES SECURITY CORRESPONDENT

Body

WITHIN months of becoming President of Iran, nearly three years ago, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had questioned the Holocaust and talked of "wiping Israel off the map".

Many hoped that Ahmadinejad - a slight, often smiling figure in a sports jacket - was merely talking the talk to maintain his support from Iran's hardline Shi'ite mullahs.

But fears over Iran's determination to enrich uranium have steadily grown, culminating this week in the country's high profile long-range missile test - which they insist is for research into generating electricity.

Tehran claimed its successful launch of nine rockets proved that Iran could hit targets as far away as Israel's capital, Tel Aviv, dramatically increasing tension across the Middle East.

For years, Israel has claimed it faces an "existential threat" from Iran, which refuses to recognise it diplomatically and arms its Lebanese enemy, *Hezbollah*. Last month its air force carried out a huge exercise in the Mediterranean, widely seen as a dry run for bombing Iran's nuclear sites.

Many, including Colonel Richard Kemp, the former commander of U K forces in Afghanistan, believe that only pre-emptive military action by the West or Israel can halt Ahmadinejad in his tracks - before it is too late.

But is the President's bite worse than his bark? Would he really carry out the threat of an attack on Israel, given the implied warning to British and US warships on the Gulf?

In the Middle East and South East Asia political bluff counts for a lot - it is virtual currency in every negotiation from souks to international politics.

IRAN 'S DEADLY GAME EXCLUSIVE NUCLEAR CAT AND MOUSE COULD THREATEN US ALL

There is also the inclination for terror - there is little doubt that Iran is the biggest international exporter of terrorism, as recognised by Western governments. In Iraq, dozens of British troops have been killed or maimed by Iranian-sponsored and designed roadside bombs.

When the insurgency started in Iraq in late 2003, Shia and Sunni militants were not sophisticated bomb-makers. Many roadside bombs failed to go off. There were even examples of tank shells being tied to lampposts and yanked off as troops drove by. Step forward Iranian agents, who poured over the border to teach the Shia how to do it.

Within weeks, British troops were up against the most sophisticated bomb-makers in the world.

Explosives disposal experts say infra-red technology imported from the Lebanese Hezbollah militants - the Party of God - gave Iraq's Shia, in two years, a more efficient roadside killer than the IRA learned to make in 30 years.

In February 2007, the Mirror revealed Pentagon plans to launch massive air-strikes on Iran - using unmanned planes called Drones armed with Hellfire missiles - to take out key scientists. Bunker buster bombs would blitz underground facilities, while submarines and warships would fire cruise missiles at Iranian nuclear facilities.

Experts believed an attack on Israel back then was unthinkable. It would be globally reviled and there were questions over its feasibility. So this week's missile tests in Iran are extremely worrying - especially to Israel.

Colonel Kemp says: "They show how much Israel's dry run for an airstrike has rattled the ayatollahs.

"The last thing Israel wants is to attack Iran. They know how dangerous that would be for the world.

"But they see Iran's nuclear programme as an even greater danger. The threat they face is quite literally a 21st century holocaust."

He believes Israelis fear they are a "one bomb state", meaning that their country is so small that a single nuclear missile could wipe them out.

And so far, the efforts of Israeli leaders and diplomats to persuade world leaders to pressure Iran to cease its nuclear weapons programme, have had only limited success.

Col Kemp sees last month's Israeli warplane rehearsal over the Mediterr a neanas an indication of just how worried the Israelis are. He says: "They were sending out a desperate signal to Iran. But behind that signal lies the deadly reality of a powerful air strike.

"Israel has the capability to bomb nuclear facilities 1,500 kilometres into the depths of south-east Iran. Israeli commanders are under no illusion that they could wipe out Iran's programme at a stroke. The nuclear sites are hardened and dispersed.

"Instead Israel's objective would be to set back the programme and buy themselves vital time."

What of the neighbours? Colonel Kemp believes that, secretly, many Sunni Arab states in the Middle East would be happy to see an attack against Israel, seeing the country as the greatest threat to peace in the region.

He says: "As for Iran, its capabilities to resist an Israeli air strike are limited. Of course, there would be dangers, and some Israeli warplanes could be shot down. But enough would get through. "Without nuclear weapons, Iran also lacks the capability for serious military retaliation - although the missiles fired on Thursday have the range to hit Israel's civilian population.

"Iran instead would use Hezbollah, a deadly terrorist group whose hands are already bloodied by terrorist strikes against Israel. Their targets would include Western countries that Iran saw as supportive of Israel - perhaps including the UK."

But he adds that this terrifying picture need not become a reality, if major world powers take tough diplomatic and economic action aimed at forcing Iran to abandon its nuclear race.

IRAN 'S DEADLY GAME EXCLUSIVE NUCLEAR CAT AND MOUSE COULD THREATEN US ALL

The Colonel concludes: "None of us can afford to let such apocalyptic weapons get into the hands of the fanatical ayatollahs, whose disregard for human life has been demonstrated many times over."

THE EXPERT COL RICHARD KEMP

AGE 47

BACKGROUND: Former commander of British Forces in Afghanistan

THE PRESIDENT MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD

AGE 58

ELECTED August 2005

BACKGROUND: Former lecturer in public transport, rumoured to have taken part in the 1979 Iranian embassy siege

History of conflict

550BC Persian empire founded by Cyrus II The Great.

333BC Persians defeated by Alexander the Great at Issus, Syria.

1502 Safavid dynasty make Shia Islam the official religion.

1921 Reza Khan topples ruling dynasty in coup and takes the title Shah. Abdicates 20 years later in favour of his son.

1953 Britain and US fund coup to topple Prime Minister Mohammed Mossagdeh, who has nationalised oil industry.

1971 Shah opposed by religious groups after giving women the vote.

1979 Shah flees Iran and cleric Ayatollah Khomeini (left) returns from exile.

His students storm US embassy in Tehran taking 66 hostages and demand the Shah be tried.

1980 Saddam Hussein invades Iran.

Iran-Iraq war lasts eight years.

1989 Britain cuts off diplomatic relations with Iran after Khomeini issues death threat against Salman Rushdie for writing The Satanic Verses.

2002 US President George Bush describes Iran as part of an "axis of evil". Says Iran has a nuclear weapons programme.

2005 Iranian President Ahmadinejad calls for Israel to be "wiped from the map".

2008 Iran announces it has test-fired nine missiles capable of hitting Tel Aviv. Barack Obama calls Iran "a great threat".

We can't let such apocalyptic weapons get into the hands of the fanatical ayatollahs

COLONEL RICHARD KEMP

The threat that Israel faces is, literally, a 21st century holocaust

Graphic

COL RICHARD KEMP; MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD; TEST OF NERVE Iran's new missiles are capable of reaching Israel

Load-Date: July 12, 2008

End of Document

IN SEARCH OF MODERN ARABIA; COLLEGE GRADS ARE LEAVING IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE AND NIHILISM

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

June 15, 2007 Friday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. B-7

Length: 686 words

Byline: Thomas L. Friedman

Body

I'm sitting in Ramallah at The Yasser Arafat Foundation listening to Nasser al-Kidwa, the former Palestinian foreign minister, talk about Palestinian society "disintegrating" around him. What pains him most, he explains, is that any of his neighbors today with money, skills or a foreign passport are fleeing for the West or the Gulf. An old saying pops into my mind -- one that applies today to Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine: "Would the last one out please turn off the lights."

The other day, I wrote about how Israel was looking for a "Fourth Way" -- after the collapse of the left's land-for-peace strategy, the right's permanent occupation strategy and the "third way" unilateral withdrawal strategy. Well, the Arab world also needs a Fourth Way.

The Arabs tried authoritarian-nationalism, various brands of Arab socialism and it even took a flier with bin Ladenism, none of which have worked. Bin Laden was the thumb that many Arabs stuck in the eye of the West and of their own hated regimes. But bin Ladenism and its jihadist offshoots, has died in Iraq. Yes, it will still have adherents, but it has lost its revolutionary shine, because it has turned out to be nothing more than a death cult.

It died on May 24, 2007, in Fallujah, Iraq. Why? Because on that day, 27 people were killed when a suicide car bomber attacked a funeral procession for a local contractor who was killed earlier in the day. According to Reuters, "as mourners walked down a main street holding aloft [his] coffin, the bomber drove into the crowd and blew himself up."

Think about that: A Muslim suicide bomber blew up a Muslim funeral. Is there anything lower? But that is what bin Laden and the jihadists have become: utter nihilists, responsible for killing more Muslims than anyone in the world today and totally uninterested in governing, only in making life ungovernable.

But who offers a way forward? Right now, the best Arabs can hope for are the decent, modernizing monarchies, like Jordan, Qatar, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates. Secular progressivism -- a Fourth Way -- is not emerging in the big Arab states like Egypt, Syria, Algeria and Iraq, that is, a progressivism that would effectively promote more rule of law, global integration, multiparty elections, women's empowerment and modern education to lay the foundations of decent governance.

IN SEARCH OF MODERN ARABIA COLLEGE GRADS ARE LEAVING IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE AND NIHILISM

I also don't see a religious Fourth Way emerging -- a progressive Islam articulated by popular Islamic parties like Hamas, Hezbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood. Hezbollah took seats in the Lebanese Cabinet and then launched its own war with Israel. What a great vision.

"Sadly," observed Middle East analyst Fawaz A. Gerges, on YaleGlobal Online, "mainstream Islamists have provided neither vision nor initiative to build a broad alliance of social forces and transform the political space. They arm themselves with vacuous slogans like 'Islam is the solution.' " No wonder, he adds, that the average Arab citizen is fed up today with both their rulers and the opposition, "who promised heaven and delivered dust."

But since the Islamic parties have monopolized the mosques and the authoritarian regimes have monopolized the public square, anyone trying to articulate an Arab Fourth Way today "is competing against either God or the state -- and between God and the state, what room is left for secular democrats?" asked Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki.

Only weeds can grow there -- small nihilist weeds, like Fatah al Islam in Lebanon or al-Qaida in Mesopotamia in Iraq or Islamic Jihad in Gaza. And they are growing.

"Now any five guys who want to work together and believe they can uphold God's name and have guns can start an army," said Mr. Kidwa. "Money is all over the place. There is no money for the needed things, but there is a lot of money to finance [armed] groups."

That's why decent people, particularly college grads, are leaving. The only hope for getting them back or for getting us out of Iraq -- without leaving the region to the most nihilistic or impoverished elements -- is an Arab Fourth Way. But it has to come from them -- and right now, it is not happening.

Notes

Thomas L. Friedman is a syndicated columnist for The New York Times.

Load-Date: June 15, 2007

End of Document

Defence Minister warns about massive ground operation; MIDEAST: Not Another Ground Assault

IPS (Latin America)

May 24, 2007 Thursday

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Length: 1240 words

Byline: Peter Hirschberg

Body

The latest warning came Tuesday, when Peretz told European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, on a visit to the region aimed at dousing the latest surge of violence, that the government was restraining itself from sending troops in on the ground in response to the ongoing rocket fire.

Earlier in the week, Peretz said Hamas should ‘not delude itself. We will not be deterred from any decision -- including a ground operation.’

Despite Peretz's breast-beating, for now a major Israeli sweep into Gaza appears unlikely. Olmert, deeply scarred by the debacle of the Lebanon war last summer, seems disinclined to send in massive ground forces. So do most of his ministers, who wonder whether the public has the stomach for what would be a long, complicated operation.

Military officers have also been circumspect about a ground assault, wondering what the endgame would be, especially since Israel does not want to find itself again ensconced in Gaza. That doesn't mean, however, that the latest escalation won't ultimately end in an Israeli incursion into Gaza.

Pressure on the government to adopt an even harsher response to the rocket fire from Gaza intensified Monday evening when a 35-year-old woman was killed by a rocket in the southern town of Sderot -- the first Israeli fatality in the latest round of violence, which has seen some 140 rockets launched into Israel in the last week.

For now, the government is likely to keep up its aerial strikes in Gaza -- a policy it renewed last week in the face of daily rocket salvos into Israel. Over 30 Palestinians, most of them militants, have been killed in the aerial raids so far.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants have again become targets as Israeli planes hunt them from the skies. In one lethal strike, four militants belonging to the Islamic Jihad group, which has been responsible for many of the rocket attacks on Israel, were killed Sunday when a missile slammed into their car as they drove near the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza.

In the deadliest attack so far, eight Palestinians were killed when a missile fired by an Israeli military aircraft smashed into the home of a Hamas lawmaker on Sunday night. Khalil al-Haya was not at home at the time of the blast, but seven of his family members, including his 60-year-old father, were killed in the strike.

Hamas officials said that two of the dead were militants and the rest civilians, but Israeli officials insisted that five of the dead were members of the armed wing of the Islamic group and that three were civilians.

Defence Minister warns about massive ground operation MIDEAST: Not Another Ground Assault

The strike immediately raised questions as to whether Israel was also renewing attacks on the political leaders of Hamas, as it did several years ago when it assassinated the group's most senior leaders. That assessment was strengthened by threats issued the next day by two senior cabinet ministers.

Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter warned that the Damascus-based Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal might be targeted. Dichter, a former head of the Shin Bet internal security service, said that Mashaal, whom Israel tried to assassinate in Jordan in 1997, was 'not immune, not in Damascus and not anywhere else. I'm convinced,' he said in an interview on Army Radio, 'that at the first opportunity, he will be bade farewell.'

Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer followed that up with a more sweeping threat. There was no distinction, he said, 'between those who carry out the (rocket) attacks (into Israel) and those who give the orders. I say we have to put them all in the crosshairs.'

Military officials, however, insisted that al-Haya was not the target of Sunday night's strike, but rather a group of Hamas militants gathered near his home. And despite the threats to renew attacks on Hamas political leaders, government officials let it be known that the renewal of aerial strikes was aimed at the Islamic movement's military wing and not its political leaders.

For now, Israel appears intent on keeping up the pressure on Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants via ongoing aerial strikes, in the hope this will persuade them to cease firing rockets into Israel. Senior ministers have ruled out calls by former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the hawkish opposition Likud party, to target Palestinian infrastructure in Gaza, like the electricity supply, if the rocket fire continues.

With the trauma of the war in Lebanon last summer still fresh, ministers don't believe there is broad public support for a major ground push into Gaza.

In response to an attack on a border patrol, in which three soldiers were killed and two were captured by Hezbollah guerrillas, Israel launched a major military assault in Lebanon in July last year, but despite its superior fire power it was unable to halt the daily firing of dozens of rockets into the northern part of the country.

After failing to subdue Hezbollah from the air, a hesitant Olmert launched a limited ground offensive that also failed to stem the rocket attacks and which many Israelis believe was poorly managed.

Government ministers and military officials also counsel against a ground operation for fear the army would get entangled again in the densely populated Gaza Strip. Deputy defence minister Ephraim Sneh has warned against re-entering Gaza -- Israel pulled out of the coastal strip in August 2005 -- saying the situation was complicated and that there was no 'magical solution' to the rocket fire.

Army chief Gabi Ashkenazi is known to be against a major ground incursion. The military says that Hamas has built an elaborate maze of underground tunnels in anticipation of an Israeli ground push, and is reticent to get sucked into house-to-house combat in the narrow alleyways of Gaza.

But the death Monday in Sderot and the mounting political pressure on Olmert to take even harsher measures in Gaza as a result of the ongoing rocket attacks could force the Prime Minister's hand. The pictures of hundreds of women and children fleeing the rocket-hit town of Sderot have already forced the government to renew aerial strikes in Gaza.

And Olmert could also find his already shaky ruling coalition further jolted if his more hardline partners demand a harsher response. Avigdor Lieberman, head of the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home) party, has intimated that he would quit the government if the military was not ordered to take more severe measures in Gaza.

'The current coalition has reached the moment of truth,' he said. 'They must either dismantle Hamas or dismantle the government.'

Defence Minister warns about massive ground operation MIDEAST: Not Another Ground Assault

Some hardline lawmakers want the government to order a major ground operation in Gaza, similar to the one Israel launched in April 2002 when it re-invaded the West Bank following a spate of suicide bombings in its cities.

For now, Olmert will clearly be hoping that the aerial assault on militants in Gaza and the threats to target Hamas political leaders will persuade the group to agree to another time-out in the war of attrition between the two sides.

But Olmert -- maybe chastened by his Lebanon experience, when he made bold, unfulfilled pledges about crushing **Hezbollah** -- has been careful not to offer any instant solutions. "I don't have simple answers," he told angry residents in Sderot during a visit to the shell-shocked town on Monday. "Even when we were in Gaza they continued to shoot at us. © 2007 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: May 24, 2007

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ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA BY AIR AGAIN; ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA FOR 2ND DAY STRIKES CONTINUE FOR SECOND DAY; TROOPS AND TANKS MASS ALONG BORDER

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

December 29, 2008 Monday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2008 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 1109 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Isabel Kershner, The New York Times

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Israeli aircraft pounded Gaza for a second day yesterday, increasing the death toll to nearly 300, as Israeli troops and tanks massed along the border and the government said it had called up reserves for a possible ground operation.

The continued strikes, which Israel said were in retaliation for sustained rocket fire from Gaza into its territory, unleashed a furious reaction across the Arab world, raising fears of greater instability in the region.

Much of the anger was also directed at Egypt, seen by Hamas and some nearby governments as having acceded to Israel's military action by sealing its border with Gaza and forcing back at gunpoint many Palestinians who were trying to escape the destruction.

Witnesses at the Rafah border crossing described a chaotic scene as young men tried to force their way across into Egypt, amid sporadic exchanges of gunfire between Hamas and Egyptian forces. Egyptian state television reported that one Egyptian border guard was fatally shot by a Hamas gunman. A Palestinian man was killed by an Egyptian guard near Rafah, Reuters reported.

In Gaza yesterday, officials said medical services, stretched to the breaking point after 18 months of Israeli sanctions, were on the verge of collapse as they struggled to care for the more than 600 wounded in the past two days.

At Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, **women** wailed as they searched for relatives among bodies that lay strewn on the hospital floor. One doctor said that given the dearth of facilities, not much could be done for the seriously wounded and that it was "better to be brought in dead."

The International Committee for the Red Cross appealed yesterday for urgent humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies, to be allowed to enter Gaza. Israeli officials said some aid had been allowed in through one of the crossings; on Saturday, Egypt temporarily opened the Rafah crossing to allow the wounded to be taken to Egyptian hospitals.

ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA BY AIR AGAIN ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA FOR 2ND DAY STRIKES CONTINUE FOR SECOND DAY; TROOPS AND TANKS MASS ALONG BORDER

Israel made a strong push to justify the attacks, saying it was forced into military action to defend its citizens. At the same time, heated statements from the supreme leader of Iran and the leader of Hezbollah expressed strong support for Hamas.

Across Gaza, families huddled indoors as Israeli jets streaked overhead. Residents said there were long electricity blackouts and that they had no cooking gas. Some ventured out to receive rationed bread at bakeries, or to brave the streets to claim their dead at hospitals. There were few mass funerals; rather, families buried the victims in small ceremonies.

At dusk yesterday, Israeli fighter jets bombed more than 40 tunnels along Gaza's border with Egypt. The Israeli military said the tunnels that were attacked, on the Gaza side of the border, were used for smuggling weapons, explosives and fugitives. Gazans also use many of them to import consumer goods and fuel in order to get around the Israeli-imposed economic blockade.

Over the past two days, Israeli jets destroyed at least 30 targets in Gaza, including the main security compound and prison in Gaza City known as the Saraya, metal workshops throughout Gaza that are suspected of manufacturing rockets, and Hamas military posts.

Hamas said Israel bombed a government ministry compound and Gaza's Islamic University, an important symbol and training ground, late last night. The Hamas-owned television station Al Aqsa was also struck, as was a mosque that the Israeli military said was being used as a terrorist base.

Israel appeared to be settling in for a longer haul. The government yesterday approved the emergency call-up of thousands of army reservists in preparation for a possible ground operation as Israeli troops, tanks, armored personnel carriers and armored bulldozers massed along the border.

Speaking before the weekly Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said the army "will deepen and broaden its actions as needed" and "will continue to act." Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel's goal was not to reoccupy Gaza, which it left unilaterally in 2005, but to "restore normal life and quiet to residents of the south."

Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni appeared on the Sunday U.S. talk shows to press Israel's case. She said on "Fox News Sunday" that the operation "is needed in order to change the realities on the ground, and to give peace and quiet to the citizens in southern Israel."

Militants in Gaza again fired barrages of rockets and mortar shells further into Israel yesterday. One rocket fell in Gan Yavneh, a village near the major port city of Ashdod, almost 20 miles north of Gaza. Two others landed in the coastal city of Ashkelon. Several Israelis were wounded.

Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesman for Hamas, told reporters that Israel had started a "war" but that it would not be able to choose how it would end. He called for revenge in the form of strikes reaching "deep into the Zionist entity using all means," including suicide attacks.

Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority and the leader of Fatah, blamed Hamas yesterday for the bloodshed in Gaza and said it could have been prevented. The hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens now within rocket range have been instructed by the authorities to stay close to protected spaces.

In Lebanon, the leader of the Shiite militant group Hezbollah, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, put his fighters on alert, expressing strong support for Hamas and saying he believed Israel might try to wage a two-front war, as it did in 2006. He called for a mass demonstration in Beirut today. And he, too, denounced Egypt's leaders. "If you don't open the borders, you are accomplices in the killing," he said in a televised speech.

Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, condemned the silence of some Arab countries, which he said had prepared the grounds for the catastrophe, ISNA news agency reported.

ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA BY AIR AGAIN ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA FOR 2ND DAY STRIKES CONTINUE FOR SECOND DAY; TROOPS AND TANKS MASS ALONG BORDER

"The horrible crime of the Zionist regime in Gaza has once again revealed the blood-thirsty face of this regime from disguise," he said in a statement. "But worse than this catastrophe is the encouraging silence of some Arab countries who claim to be Muslim," he said, in an apparent reference to Egypt and Jordan.

Egypt has mediated talks between Israel and the Palestinians and between Hamas and Fatah, leaving it open to criticism that it is too willing to work with Israel. In turn, Egypt and other Western-allied Sunni Arab nations are deeply opposed to **Hezbollah** and Hamas, which they see as extensions of Iran, their Shiite nemesis.

Across the region, the Israeli strikes were being broadcast almost continually on Arab satellite networks, in grisly detail.

Graphic

PHOTO: Eyad Baba/Associated Press: A Palestinian family reacts as they rush past a burning building after an Israeli missile strike in the Rafah refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC; AP: (Violence mounts)

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

Government contortions, public anger

Guardian.com

January 3, 2009

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theguardian

Length: 1496 words

Highlight: Jack Shenker: Egyptian complicity in Israel's Gaza bloodbath is giving fresh impetus to struggles against the Mubarak regime

Body

Doublespeak absurdity is plentiful at the moment; I thought I'd had more than my fair share of it in the West Bank this week, watching Israel's brazen PR zealots deliver soundbite after soundbite into television cameras, each of them notable only for their heart-stopping audacity. But that was before I returned to Cairo to hear the Mubarak government's breathtaking contortions as it tried to justify its complicity in Israel's Gazan bloodbath.

The pages of Egypt's state-owned newspapers are an inky testament to George Orwell's claim that "Political language ... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." A few brief examples: * Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni visits President Mubarak on the eve of the military offensive to secure his approval; her Egyptian counterpart claims that Mubarak had got wind of what was about to happen and had summoned "that woman" to Cairo to persuade her to stop the attack. * Egypt leaves the Rafah border largely sealed as bombs fall on Gazans, citing in its defence an expired treaty to which it is not even a signatory; government spokesmen insist that Egypt is acting in the Palestinian national interest by thwarting Israel's plan to annex Gaza to its Arab neighbour. * Protecting his own fast-melting political skin, Mubarak spends months helping to isolate Hamas and maintains a brutal crackdown on its Egyptian colleagues, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood; as Israeli missiles seek out Hamas targets, he keeps a straight face while telling the Egyptian people that Zionist leaders have blood on their hands and that the Palestinians must stand united. Orwell also said that "During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act." When deceit is so pervasive though, it's hard to know where to begin the revolution. One good place to start is the prism through which Egypt's role in the Gazan mess is viewed by the domestic and international media. It's a prism that distorts and misdirects, both masking and deepening the most important dividing line in the Middle East today – the one between neoliberal regimes and their people. Egypt's beleaguered politicians have come under sustained fire since the Gazan assault began, and are smarting from the verbal volleys. Hassan Nasrallah's call on the Egyptian masses to rise up in their millions to force open the Rafah border gate received short shrift from Mubarak minister Aboul Gheit, who told the Hizbullah leader that his country's armed forces were ready, if necessary, "to protect Egypt from people like you". And resentment at Egypt's growing pariah status in the eyes of the Arab world is not limited to regime acolytes. Demonstrations outside Egypt's international embassies, the shooting of an Egyptian border guard by Hamas gunmen, and finally a widely-circulated article by the Independent's Robert Fisk which attacked Egypt's national "disgrace" and "malaise" have provoked a backlash even among trenchant government critics. "I'm sick of the sudden 'let's blame Egypt' mentality," wrote "F attractive woman", a female Muslim blogger. The blogger known as Sandmonkey went further in a post about Jordanian, Lebanese and Syrian responses to Egypt's position, laying

into "all of you f*****s who are badmouthing my country, which - by the way - fought four f*****g wars for the Palestinian cause and lost more people than all of you." The international press has largely sought to explain and frame these clashes between Egypt and its critics in one of two ways. The first is geopolitical, lining up the pro-western governments of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia against the counter-alignment of Libya, Syria, Iran and its proxies, *Hizbullah* and Hamas. The second is domestic, ranging the forces of moderation and reason (personified by Mubarak and his party, the NDP) against the darker recesses of political Islam in Egypt (embodied by the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters). Either way, the critical distinction is drawn between the calm and sensible mindset of a US and Israeli-allied Egyptian government and its irrational and hate-filled detractors, be they terrorist mouthpieces in the Arab League or Egypt's own Islamists marching in their thousands in support of Hamas. The emphasis on this distinction is deliberate and wrong. Certainly there are two regional political blocs in the Middle East and this has helped fuel the diplomatic war of words over Egypt's stance on Gaza. And yes, the Muslim Brotherhood has been out in force in the streets here, using Palestinian deaths in Gaza to energise its support base. But the key to unlocking the complex Egyptian response to Gaza is the battle between the Egyptian people and its crony-capitalist regime. It's a battle that largely goes unreported in the western press, not least because it doesn't fit comfortably with pre-existing stereotypes about the political dynamics of the region. These focus on religious and sectarian division or high-level spats between autocratic leaders; there is no space for supposedly banal news about the impact Washington-imposed economic orthodoxy is having on citizens, or the popular fightbacks that break out daily against it. As many Egyptian activists have shown me, the Palestinian cause has always been inextricably linked in Egyptian eyes to Egypt's own home-grown struggle against corruption, repression and the naked looting of state assets by a western-propped business and political glitterati. Early demonstrations against Mubarak's dictatorship in the 1990s rallied around the slogan "The road to Jerusalem lies through Cairo"; those attending understood that the status quo in Palestine was reinforced by the financial interests of their own regime and the security apparatus that supported it. The aggressive new privatisation programme pursued by the Mubarak regime since 2004, and the corruption scandals and spiralling unemployment and inflation accompanying it (even as the country delivers IMF "poster-boy" figures on economic growth) is seen as part and parcel of the global interests that keep Gaza under siege and consign Palestinian self-determination to a pipe dream. Despite internal disunity, opposition movements often understood that forces of money and power - governments in America, Europe, Israel and their Arab-regime cheerleaders, plus the local and international corporate entities profiting from economic liberalisation in the region - acted as a coherent and effective cabal, and resistance to it in Egypt could not be isolated from resistance in Palestine. Mubarak and the ruling NDP party understood this too, which is why it has been so quick to shut down any popular expressions of support for the Palestinian people within its own borders and why it is so nervous about the latest wave of protests. The Gazan crisis has emerged just as popular actions to subvert the systems of social repression that keep Egyptians alienated from their own economic and political processes are snowballing. The previous two years have seen more strikes and sit-ins than at any time since the second world war; a second major industrial sector has managed to break free of the five-decade state monopoly on trade unions; over 2,000 police officers have just resigned en masse over the use of torture as a security tactic and woeful working conditions. As ever, developments across the border help to give fresh impetus to these anti-regime struggles and provide a wide range of opposition political interests - from socialists to liberals, secularists to Islamists - with an opportunity to unite around a potent and effective political symbol which advances their cause. And as ever, the regime reacts brutally, putting Cairo University under siege even as its figurehead publicly bemoans the fate of the besieged Palestinians of Gaza. The students struggling to make themselves heard on campus behind the batons and riot shields of Mubarak's law enforcers are not pawns in the geopolitical fissures that the media obsess over, nor are they blind footsoldiers of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. They are, for the most part, simply fired by the Gazan catastrophe into giving voice to the simmering anger felt by much of the population at the twisted and tragic policies of an Egyptian government which, as the author Alaa al-Aswani recently wrote, has created its own generation of martyrs killed by "corruption and abuse of power" - through accidents and negligence and the poisonous grip of poverty - a government also colluding in the subjugation and destruction of Palestinians on Egypt's border. Unable and unwilling to break free of its well-worn preconceptions, most of the media prefers to ignore this crucial fault-line in the Arab world's largest state when "explaining" the Gazan assault. By throwing attention elsewhere instead, they are carrying out a dangerous conjuring trick which insults and undermines Egyptians and Palestinians alike.

Government contortions, public anger

Load-Date: January 3, 2009

End of Document

One Gaza, under Hamas

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

June 15, 2007 Friday

National Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A12

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Byline: National Post

Body

There are three pieces of good news to come out of Hamas' victory in Gaza's quasi-civil war. First, now that one side has prevailed, perhaps the bloodshed will stop, and residents of the densely populated Palestinian territory can return to some kind of regular civic life. The violence in recent days has reached sickening proportions -- with men being thrown off buildings and machine-gunned in front of their loved ones. Even by Palestinian standards, this is appalling stuff. (If the Israelis were even half as brutal in their counter-terrorist operations in the West Bank and Gaza, one can only imagine how the world would react.)

Second, this week's events serve to clarify a formerly muddled strategic situation. With Hamas now definitively in charge there will be nothing to prevent Israel from striking back vigorously against unprovoked rocket and terrorist attacks launched from Gaza. In recent months, the military value of such attacks had to be weighed against the possibility of tipping the scales of public opinion toward Hamas and away from Fatah. Now, the dynamic is simple: If Hamas continues to attack Israel, its fighters will be targeted and killed by commandos and armed drones.

By seizing complete power in Gaza, Hamas has simultaneously made itself more powerful and more vulnerable: Having your own state means having a return address for incoming fire.

Third, the total domination of Gaza by an Islamist terrorist group that endorses terror, refuses to recognize Israel and embraces all of those charmingly medieval Taliban-like views on women and homosexuals will put an end to calls from Europe -- and perhaps even from the Arab world -- for Israel to immediately remove its troops from the larger and more strategically important West Bank. The examples of Gaza, Iraq and Hezbollah-controlled southern Lebanon show what the West Bank would look like without the Israeli Defense Forces keeping a lid on violence. A terrorist-run WestBankistan would be a threat to not only Israel, but also Jordan and perhaps even Syria as well.

And now the bad news: Hamas is formally dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Its leaders are mostly hotheads who lack the cynical (but useful) realism of embattled Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (a Fatah leader). Hamas has smuggled heavy weapons into Gaza through Egypt, and is hoping to draw the Jewish state into the sort of bloody, inconclusive warfare that broke out in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah. Till now, Hamas' fighters have been kept busy fighting Fatah. Now, they will have no one to fight but the Israelis.

There's another option, of course: Hamas could put down its weapons, negotiate a peace with Israel and start building a prosperous state in Gaza. This is an option that would be obvious to any Western-minded observer: Israel withdrew from Gaza long ago -- what's the point in continued warfare? Unfortunately, since 1948, Arab

One Gaza, under Hamas

extremists have time and again showed that they would rather die trying to destroy Israel than live with Jews in their midst.

If there is hope for Gaza and the region, it is the same hope that has existed for decades: that ordinary Palestinians, beaten down by war and international isolation, will pressure their leaders into embracing peace and realism instead of endless war.

As things stand, Hamas is an expanding movement that includes both (1) (relative) pragmatists who are primarily interested in ridding Palestinian society of Yasser Arafat's corrupt Fatah legacy, and (2) bloodthirsty jihadists, such as Damascus-based "political leader" Khaled Mash'al, whose methods aren't much different from those of al-Qaeda. The West can maximize the tensions between those two camps --and perhaps even put hardliners on the defensive -- by continuing to withhold aid and diplomatic engagement from a Hamas dominated government. The worst thing we could do now is give Hamas a double victory by turning the aid spigot back on: This would only send the message that Hamas can make war on Israel and take Western cash simultaneously.

No one can force the Palestinians to choose peace and prosperity over jihad and self-destruction. All we can do is present them with the choice and hope that, for once, they choose wisely.

BLOG:FULLCOMMENT.COM

Whither Gaza? Have your say on our open thread at fullcomment.com

Load-Date: June 15, 2007

End of Document

Israel's next prime minister?; Tzipi Livni has become one of her country's most important political figures

thespec.com

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Final Edition

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Byline: Tracy Wilkinson, The Los Angeles Times

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

She grew up in Zionist royalty, the pedigreed daughter of a "fighting family." She was a spy with the Mossad, her purportedly daring field exploits are still classified. Today, she is the face of the Israeli government, in a country where politics remain largely the purview of macho men and where being tough often outranks being smart.

And some people think Tzipi Livni could become the first **female** prime minister in more than a generation.

Israel routinely recycles its mostly male politicians, whatever scandal or other difficulty might befall them. How else can the country explain the long up-and-down career of Ariel Sharon, or the current comeback of Ehud Barak, or the omnipresence of Benjamin Netanyahu? In that world, Livni is a fresh phenomenon. In just a few years, she has emerged from relative obscurity to become one of Israel's most important political figures.

At 49, Livni, foreign minister and deputy prime minister, has defied many stereotypes.

Livni evolved into a proponent of coexistence with the Palestinians, relinquishing the idea of a Greater Israel and instead advocating side-by-side states. A one-time agent with Israel's storied spy agency, she now sits down with Arab leaders and speaks to Arab newspapers.

This combination of old ideals and contemporary pragmatism has earned Livni a respect among many Israelis, from the right and left, who see her as a leader who is honest and principled, if not always suave.

"Supporting a two-state solution goes with the values I was raised with -- the need to keep Israel a Jewish state and a democratic one," Livni said in an interview at the modern Foreign Ministry on the western edge of Jerusalem. "The need is to adapt the two-state solution in order to live in our homeland ... a Jewish homeland ... while giving the Palestinians a possibility to create their own homeland."

Livni is not a natural schmoozer; her English is not flawless, and her Israeli accent remains thick. She often seems aloof.

Israel's next prime minister?; Tzipi Livni has become one of her country's most important political figures

But she wins praise, here and abroad, for a willingness to seek compromise -- a skill not always valued in Israeli politics -- and to work not necessarily in the spotlight. Yet none of this should be mistaken for meekness, say those who know her.

"She shows strength without being aggressive, more of a European-style politician," said one veteran Israeli analyst. "But she can also be behind the scenes with a knife in her teeth when she needs to be. She knows how to fight."

That fighting instinct led Livni to what many consider to be her first major misstep.

A special inquiry into last year's war between Israel and the Lebanese-based Islamic militant group Hezbollah blamed Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his government for a string of strategic and political errors. Livni came off looking ineffective. She then launched, but quickly abandoned, an attempted coup against Olmert.

The half-hearted mutiny cost her, and dearly. Suddenly, Livni's leadership abilities and judgment were doubted.

And now the question is: Is she doomed by her blunders and the attacks of an unforgiving media that raked her over the coals? Or can she yet recover and attain the success and power that she clearly craves?

Tzipora Livni was born a decade after Israel was, in 1958. Her parents were famous members of the Irgun, an underground group of armed Jews fighting to establish the state of Israel. Her father, Eitan, was its near-legendary director of operations.

Decades later, Eitan Livni became a lawmaker with the right-wing Likud Party, which grouped fervent political Zionists and which his daughter also eventually joined. In her office today, where many a foreign minister has hung photographs of themselves with the U.S. president, Livni has on display a single picture. It's her father, his craggy face in profile, cigarette in hand, smoke curling upward.

Like almost every Israeli, Livni served in the military in her youth. When she was 22, she joined the Mossad. The year was 1980. The Mossad in those days was hunting down and killing Palestinian militants who had slain Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics and laying the groundwork for a 1981 strike on an Iraqi nuclear reactor.

Neither Livni nor her associates are allowed to talk about her four-year stint with the Mossad.

Former Mossad director Efraim Halevy said she belonged to an elite unit and suggested she was a field agent with hair-raising duties.

Her service in the Mossad "necessitated precision, courage, bravery and responsibility," he said.

"It required cool judgment and the ability to work in a team. ... That is not the work of an analyst" seated at a desk, he said.

After leaving the Mossad, Livni earned a law degree and practised corporate law until entering politics in the late 1990s. By then she had married Naftali Shpitzer and had two sons.

From her first days in Likud, Livni was a protege of Ariel Sharon, the former warrior who had engineered his own comeback and was elected prime minister in early 2001.

Eventually she would head seven ministries in five years and prove herself valuable to Sharon by negotiating support for his decision to pull Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and by gaining even more favourable treatment from Washington.

When Sharon abandoned Likud in late 2005 and formed a new party, Kadima, Livni followed without hesitation. And, six weeks later, when Sharon was felled by a stroke, Livni went before the stunned nation to promise stability and rally behind Olmert, Sharon's heir apparent, despite her rivalry with him.

Israel 's next prime minister?; Tzipi Livni has become one of her country's most important political figures

Livni's fumble came in the aftermath of the war with **Hezbollah**. An investigative panel issued a scathing report in May that blamed Olmert for miscalculating the threat and other failings. In a private meeting, Livni told Olmert he should resign -- and then, remarkably, she went before television cameras and said the same thing.

Olmert quickly stifled the fledgling mutiny. He secured pledges of loyalty from his Cabinet, including from Livni, who was forced to back down.

Many who had expected her to lead the charge to oust Olmert were bitterly disappointed.

In the news conference, she looked indecisive and nervous; she tripped, literally, as she approached the microphone and nearly fell into the waiting journalists. Israel's high-spirited media, until that point fairly friendly to Livni, was savage.

Livni's critics concluded that she was not ready for the bruising nerves-of-steel combat of Israeli politics. But her supporters saw something else: someone who spoke out frankly, however inelegantly, and who then chose to remain in the government to change from within.

Her chances for becoming prime minister are tangled in numerous complexities beyond the war with **Hezbollah**. For one, ultra-Orthodox and other religious parties these days exercise considerable power in Israel, and they do not approve of **women** in public politics. The last -- and only -- **female** prime minister of Israel, Golda Meir, who served from 1969 to 1974, did not have that to contend with, though discontent over the handling of a war also led to her downfall.

Her time may yet come. Olmert eventually may not be able to resist demands he resign. And then, it will be Livni's moment to move.

Graphic

Photo: Charles Platiau, Reuters , Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni arrives at the Elysee Palace for talks with French President Nicolas Sarkozy July 4, 2007.

Load-Date: July 10, 2007

As goest Israel ...; If the Jewish state can't survive the onslaught of militant Islam, neither can the rest of the civilized world

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

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National Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A14; Lorne Gunter

Length: 691 words

Byline: Lorne Gunter, National Post

Series: Israel At 60

Body

Israel is Western civilization's canary in the coal mine. If Israel cannot survive, perhaps Western civilization -- pluralistic, democratic, individualistic, secular, free-trading and devoted to the rule of law -- will be unable to last, either.

On the eve of Israel's 60th anniversary, those of us who cherish our own fundamental freedoms had better hope the Jewish state makes it through its second 60 years; or else our own right to think, say or worship as we please (unless, of course, we come under the scrutiny of a so-called human rights commission) is in jeopardy.

To many Canadians, that may seem a farfetched warning.

What has Israel's survival got to do with us? Israel is far away. It has different enemies than we do. Even among Islamic extremists, they are battling Hamas, Hezbollah, the PLO and Islamic Jihad, while the West is confronting the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Besides, if we're nice and accommodating of diversity, the terrorists will respect our attempts to honour their culture and faith and leave us alone.

Nice theory. Too bad jihadis of every label view Israel and the West as conjoined and inseparable. Even though we may not see our destiny as inextricably linked with Israel's, they do. If we give up on Israel, they will simply take that as a sign they might be able to pressure us next to give up on Quebec, Mississauga, Michigan, Birmingham and the Paris suburbs.

This week, Riyad Na'san Al-Agha, Syria's culture minister and a man long touted in the West as an intellectual moderate, told Al Hiwar TV, an Arab-language channel based in London, that he longs for the destruction of Israel (so much for his moderation) and that he is "optimistic that within 10 years, Israel will come to its end."

What then? Arabs can concentrate on driving the infidels from their neighbourhood and, who knows, perhaps even take the fight to the infidels' homelands.

Remember, this is from a government official, not from a terrorist.

As goest Israel ...; If the Jewish state can't survive the onslaught of militant Islam, neither can the rest of the civilized world

Hamas, despite occasionally insisting it can live peacefully with Israel, has never given up its dream of destroying "the Zionist entity," and never will. But what would Hamas do if it ever managed to dismantle Israel: pat itself on the back and close up?

Not at all. Hamas co-founder Mahmud az-Zahar has long said that should that happy day (for him) ever come, his organization would merely turn its efforts to the spread of Islam in the rest of the West, by force if necessary. To this end, Hamas has set up training camps in the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

And Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah, has frequently urged Palestinians to fight not only Israel but the whole of the Western world, which he has described as satanic.

Aaron Klein, an American journalist who now lives in Israel, last year released a fascinating book, *Schmoozing with Terrorists: From Hollywood to the Holy Land, Jihadists Reveal Their Global Plans -- To a Jew!*. In it, he recounts how in hundreds of hours of interviews with dozens of terrorists their declared hatred of the West was nearly as great as their hatred of Israel. They were not motivated by poverty or political oppression as much as by faith and ideology, and nearly all spoke of establishing a worldwide caliphate once they had dispatched the Jewish state. They were especially enraged by our equal treatment of women and our tolerance of gays and lesbians.

Most of the Palestinian attacks on Israelis of late have been centred around the small industrial-agricultural city of Sderot. Since 2001, there have been more than 6,000 rockets and mortars launched from the Gaza Strip into Israel, an average of nearly three per day, most of them aimed at Sderot. The pace has quickened since the beginning of the year.

Seldom has a day gone by since January when Sderot's schools and markets have not been emptied by the blare of air-raid sirens that sometimes provide only 15 seconds notice of an incoming Katyusha or Qassam rocket.

If we permit Israel to lose the battle for Sderot, if we in the West wag our finger at Israel's efforts to defend herself, it may not be long before we find Sderot's plight repeated in Markham, Newark or Leeds.

lgunter@shaw.ca

Graphic

Color Photo: Amir Cohen, Reuters; An Israeli explosives expert examines the remains of a rocket fired into Sderot. ;

Load-Date: May 5, 2008

Gaza

The Northern Echo (Newsquest Regional Press)

January 2, 2009 Friday

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Section: LETTERS (NORTHERNECHO LETTERS)

Length: 708 words

Body

JOHN Gilmore asks how anyone can side with Israel (HAS, Dec 30).

I agree the latest situation in Gaza is dreadful and civilian deaths are a tragedy, but, where was his condemnation of Hamas and Hezbollah for starting a war they know they cannot win?

These fanatics have little regard for human life. They hide behind civilians and use women and children as human shields.

Israel was advised to trade land for peace; it did, it pulled out of Southern Lebanon.

Even though it has ceded territory, kidnappings and terror attacks on Israel soil continued.

The fact is there will never be peace in the Middle East until the likes of Hezbollah and Hamas recognise Israel's right to exist, and no longer seeks its total eradication.

Anti-Semitic leftists describe Israel's bombing as "disproportionate".

Are the thousands of rockets fired at genuine civilian targets in Israel "proportionate"?

It is only because Israelis are in underground shelters built out of necessity and bitter experience or have fled out of range that there have not been more casualties on their side of the border.

Israel is fighting for its existence and lashing out in fear and frustration after enduring years of provocation.

Des More, Darlington.

CONSIDER the following scenario. You live in a semi, next door to a very large dysfunctional family who have tapped into your electricity, gas and water supplies for which you pay the bills.

Every night they siphon petrol from your car and constantly chuck their rubbish over the fence into your garden. They play loud music all the time (because they don't go to work, relying instead on hand-outs), and are hated by the neighbours on the other side who are also fed up with their behaviour.

Eventually, you can't tolerate this any more and take action by disconnecting the mains services and locking away your car at night. The response is a tirade of abuse, the murder of your cat with an airgun and your windows put through.

Gaza

Trendy left-wingers instantly label you as the perpetrators of unspeakable crimes and them as your innocent victims. The neighbours on the other side erect a giant fence to ensure that they aren't chosen as the next focus of attention.

This is what goes on in Gaza. It will continue until the Palestinians renounce violence, hold out the hand of friendship to Israel and agree to work night and day until a genuine two-state solution is found.

David Lacey, Durham.

I WRITE to express my outrage at the totally uncalled-for, over-the-top bombing and rocket attacks on Gaza by the Israeli military that, at the time of writing, had killed more than 300 civilians, many of them deliberately targeted and including children, five sisters among them.

It's sickening and inhuman. I understand that the deaths have been greeted with glee by Israeli newspapers.

Ever since the last Palestinian elections, the Israelis have maintained a blockade on such as food, desperately-needed medical supplies and access, plus severe restrictions on water and electricity, causing starvation and many deaths from treatable illnesses. Half the population lives on less than a pound a day.

If you wish to express your concern, please write to Gordon Brown and/or the Foreign Secretary and/or your MP (at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA) and/or your Euro MP and/or attend a demonstration (Durham, Millennium Square, from 10.45am, or Grey's Monument, Newcastle, from noon, both tomorrow).

John Severs, Durham City.

LIKE their American patrons, the Israelis seem incapable of learning from their mistakes.

It should be obvious most Palestinians want peace and normality above all else. The present onslaught can be guaranteed to change all that.

For every Hamas militant Israeli bombs kill, they will recruit 1,000 more for Hamas. As for destroying the Hamas infrastructure, that's a consideration of singular irrelevance, both economic and militarily.

The Israeli leadership are supposed to be intelligent people, but they seem extraordinarily obtuse about the realities of human nature as well as those of basic ethics.

Traditionally, the Israelis consider themselves a holy nation, God's chosen people, but there is precious little evidence of holiness in raining down bombs on a densely-crowded civilian population.

Tony Kelly, Crook, Co Durham.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

Richie leaves jail after 82 minutes

The Bismarck Tribune

August 24, 2007 Friday

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Section: WIRE

Length: 735 words

Body

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) - Nawaz Sharif, head of a powerful Pakistani political party that wants to oust embattled President Pervez Musharraf, vowed to return quickly after the Supreme Court ruled Thursday that the former prime minister can come back from exile.

It was yet another setback for Musharraf, and Sharif immediately turned up the heat in a growing public clamor for an end to military rule by calling on Washington to support Pakistan as a country - not just the general.

"It should not equate Pakistan with Musharraf," Sharif told the Associated Press at his London residence. "It is being perceived America is supporting one man against 160 million people in Pakistan."

Musharraf has been struggling in his effort to get another presidential term, seeing his attempt earlier this year to fire the Supreme Court's chief judge touch off widespread rallies calling for democracy and then having the court reinstate the justice.

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) - A replica of a long-range missile greets visitors, and posters mock Israel and the United States.

Welcome to "Spider's Web," a museum south of Beirut that has become Hezbollah's latest propaganda tool - showcasing what it says was a divine victory over Israel in last summer's war.

The museum exhibits war souvenirs - helmets, boots, ammunition and armored vehicles captured from the Israelis or left on Lebanon's battlefields. And it has gruesome photos of Lebanese civilians killed in Israeli airstrikes.

The exhibit has drawn condemnation from Israel. In Lebanon, there has been no overt criticism, although the war deepened divisions among Lebanese, many of whom opposed Hezbollah's capture of two Israeli soldiers that set off the conflict on July 12, 2006.

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Nicole Richie was released from jail Thursday after serving 82 minutes of a four-day sentence for driving under the influence of drugs.

The reality show star, who checked into jail in this Los Angeles suburb at 3:15 p.m., was released at 4:37 p.m. "based on her sentence and federal guidelines," Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Maribel Rizo said without elaborating.

When asked whether Richie, who is four months pregnant, spent her brief sentence in a jail cell, Rizo replied: "I have no further comment."

Richie leaves jail after 82 minutes

Under a federal court mandate to manage jail overcrowding, arrestees sentenced to 30 days or less for a nonviolent offense are usually released within 12 hours, the sheriff's department said in a statement.

Under the guidelines, Richie was "treated in the same manner as other inmates with a similar sentence," the statement said.

Richie, 25, was originally sentenced to 96 hours in jail, but that was reduced to 90 hours because of time served when she was arrested.

Richie arrived at jail with her attorney and her boyfriend, Joel Madden, sheriff's spokeswoman Kerri Webb said. A call to attorney Shawn Chapman Holley was not immediately returned.

"She was processed into the jail system, she was highly cooperative and she was released," Webb said.

Just hours before Richie did her time, Lindsay Lohan was charged with seven misdemeanor drunken-driving and cocaine charges for two arrests in the last four months. Attorney Blair Berk arranged a plea bargain and Lohan was sentenced to one day in jail, 10 days of community service and the mandatory completion of a drug treatment program. She was also fined and placed on 36 months probation.

Richie served her time at the county jail for women in Lynwood, the same place her "The Simple Life" co-star Paris Hilton was housed for nearly three weeks after she was convicted of driving on a suspended license while on probation for an alcohol-related reckless driving case.

Richie was arrested on Dec. 11, 2006, after witnesses reported seeing her black Mercedes-Benz sport utility vehicle headed the wrong way on a freeway in Burbank. The California Highway Patrol said they found her parked in the car-pool lane.

Richie pleaded guilty in July to a misdemeanor DUI charge in a deal with prosecutors that helped her avoid a potential year in jail because it was a second driving-under-the-influence conviction.

Her first conviction was in 2003 for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Richie, the daughter of Lionel Richie, told authorities after being arrested in December that she had smoked marijuana and taken the prescription painkiller Vicodin, a CHP officer said at the time. No drugs were found on her or in her car.

Load-Date: August 24, 2007

Israel's Lesson in War

New York Sun (Archive)

January 11, 2008 Friday

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Section: ARTS AND LETTERS; Pg. 11

Length: 2122 words

Byline: JUDITH MILLER

Body

The most popular Israeli film this year says much about Israel's ever-contradictory state of mind. "Beaufort," which opens January 18 as one of the centerpiece films of the 17th annual New York Jewish Film Festival, is an antiwar war movie about courage and cowardice, obedience and rebellion, heroism and survival.

The **Hezbollah** enemy is never seen. Nor are the Israeli politicians who sent the soldiers portrayed in this powerful film to war in Lebanon first in 1982 and again in the summer of 2006 in a disheartening reprise of the earlier invasion. At the start of Israel's first invasion - Operation Peace for the Galilee, as the Israeli Defense Forces called its campaign to crush Palestinian Arab guerrillas - the Shiites of southern Lebanon welcomed the Israeli soldiers who would rid them of the Palestinian Arabs who had usurped their land to attack Israel's northern settlements. But Israel's 18-year occupation ultimately left more than 1,000 Israelis dead, enflamed the civil war in Lebanon, and created **Hezbollah**, the militant Shiite "Party of God."

The full impact of the second, 34-day Israeli incursion in 2006 remains uncertain. But it was clearly time to examine such wars of choice - in Israel, at least, if not yet in America, where none of the anti-Iraq war movies released this year have attracted audiences.

A deceptively simple film, "Beaufort," which was co-written by Ron Leshem and Joseph Cedar and directed by the latter, is set in 2000 and chronicles the fate of the last combat unit to hold this "Beautiful Fort," the 12th-century Crusader castle that became a symbol of Israel's controversial war. The film is already a box-office smash in Israel, and is Israel's entry this year for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. An English translation of Mr. Leshem's 2005 novel, also titled "Beaufort," will be published this month by Delacorte. The Hebrew version of the book spent 18 months on Israel's best-seller list, nine of them at no. 1.

Why such resonance? Timing was clearly a factor. Though "Beaufort" was filmed before Israel's invasion of Lebanon two summers ago, it was edited as Israeli forces were once again pouring across the Litani River into Lebanon. It had been seven years since **Hezbollah** and a furious, frustrated Israeli public - spearheaded by four mothers who had lost sons in the conflict - had forced prime minister Ehud Barak to withdraw. So searing was the memory of the real Beaufort that Israeli forces had orders during the 2006 invasion to steer clear of the castle.

In 1982, the much contested fortress - the highest point in southern Lebanon, overlooking many of Israel's northern settlements - was the first major target to be captured by Israeli forces. But the battle by the celebrated Golani special forces brigade against 40 or so Palestinian Fedayeen who held the castle turned out to be unnecessary, since, unbeknown to the attackers, Israeli forces had already advanced beyond the castle. Orders canceling the mission never reached the Golani unit's commanders.

Israel's Lesson in War

To celebrate the victory, Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin and defense minister Ariel Sharon flew to the mountain to unfurl an Israeli flag and announce that the fortress had been taken without Israeli casualties. In fact, six soldiers had died and nine others were wounded, among them Major General Moshe Kaplinsky, then the Golani unit's commander, who recently stepped down as the IDF's deputy chief of staff. As a result, Beaufort became a metaphor for the detachment of Israel's political leaders from facts on the ground and eventually for their mismanagement of the entire campaign. In 1997, 73 Israeli soldiers were killed when two IDF helicopters collided in midair while transporting soldiers to Beaufort - the war's single most deadly incident. In 2000, the isolated outpost at Beaufort was the last to be evacuated and destroyed.

According to Mr. Cedar, the movie's true subject is not combat but retreat. The film explores fear, specifically how one soldier comes to acknowledge and ultimately accept his own. More broadly, it is an allegory on the trauma that this controversial war inflicted on Israeli society and for the questions Israelis now increasingly ask both about the need for such wars and the nature of their society.

In an arresting scene, the ostensible hero, Liraz Liberti (Oshri Cohen), the unit's 22-year-old, gung-ho commander, freezes with fear when a fellow soldier, a close friend, is caught in a mortar barrage. "Liraz, get me inside. Liraz!" the wounded soldier pleads for rescue only a few feet away, but beyond the safety of the fortress walls. Liraz, who has been brash and proud in the film's early scenes, cannot move. His buddy is rescued instead by another member of the unit who braves the mortar fire and drags the wounded compatriot to safety. Neither Liraz nor the rescuer ever speaks of it.

Mr. Cedar said the incident mirrors his own experience when, in 2002, he was summoned back to military service in a call-up that preceded Prime Minister Sharon's decision to reoccupy the Palestinian Arab West Bank in response to multiple Palestinian suicide bombings inside Israel. Then a new father, Mr. Cedar said, he literally could not move after receiving a computerized call informing him he had six hours to report to his unit's headquarters.

"I could not lift my arm off the chair," the director said. "I sat in the dark, utterly paralyzed, until the phone rang again, and another computerized voice said the call-up had been canceled."

In November 2003, the next and last time he was summoned for reserve duty, Mr. Cedar went to his designated station, but only to tell his commanders that he would not serve. When asked at his hearing why not, "I told them I was afraid," he said. "That was the bravest thing I have ever done." Mr. Cedar was jailed for two weeks and exempted from further reserve duty.

Mr. Cedar served in the army as an infantry soldier and medic between 1987 and 1989. He visited Beaufort but was stationed at other posts in southern Lebanon. "I was not a great soldier, but an obedient one," he said. "I was proud of doing what I was told. By 2003, I realized I was no longer a soldier." When he read an article in *Yediot Ahronot* by Mr. Leshem describing a soldier at Beaufort whose fear made him unwilling to risk his life in what he saw as a pointless war, Mr. Cedar was deeply shaken. He and Mr. Leshem met and talked for hours. They decided to adapt the article to film; Mr. Leshem also began working on the novel based on the soldier's account.

The saga of Beaufort, which Hezbollah steadily shelled until the night Israel left Lebanon, is the antithesis of another of Israel's founding heroic myths about a mountain: the ancient Hebrews' outpost at Massada. According to the founding Zionist story, a group of ancient Jewish rebels - men, women, and children alike - committed suicide by throwing themselves off Massada rather than surrendering to the Romans.

"It's a story that tells us that individual life has no value, that the nation is everything," Mr. Cedar said. But the Massada myth downplays the other Jews there who were willing to compromise, to give up the mountain and even leave Jerusalem, and hence, lived to tell the tale. It is they, Mr. Cedar said, who preserved Jewish life, values, and culture.

"Zionism's Massada motto," he said, "was drummed into us: 'Better to die as a lion than to live as a dog.' But the lions of Massada died while the dogs retreated and lived to have puppies. And we're still around, wagging our tails."

Israel's Lesson in War

Hence, the film portrays the retreat from Beaufort not as a defeat, but as an act of strength, of true heroism. To have stayed, the filmmakers argue, would have demanded the pointless sacrifice of Jewish life. Such a theme was bound to be controversial in Israel, and it was. But Israelis, whose films increasingly explore political and moral complexity as opposed to those of the industry's early years, when unabashed nationalism and invariably heroic patriots dominated Israeli screens, were ready to hear such a harsh verdict. The IDF, in fact, supported the film and the Israeli government helped pay for it.

Israelis, it turned out, were particularly ready to explore the theme of failed war after the second incursion into Lebanon was condemned last April by a national commission led by Eliyahu Winograd. Appointed by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert soon after the war ended, the commission blasted Israel's top leadership, especially Mr. Olmert, and the military's leaders. The defense minister, who resigned, lacked "knowledge or experience in military, political, or governmental matters," the report concluded. Mr. Olmert's failure was having no "organized plan" when he launched the war, it said, and it accused him of a "a serious failure in exercising judgment, responsibility and prudence." While the preliminary report stopped short of calling for his dismissal, the prime minister's approval ratings sank to below 5%.

The mood of the elite audience invited to attend the opening of the film last spring was somber. Israelis fell eerily silent as images of the Israeli outpost atop the craggy promontory near the castle filled the screen. (The movie was filmed not in Lebanon, but at another crusader castle called Kalat Namrud in Israel, not far from the Lebanese border.)

Many in the audience, which included relatives of soldiers who had died or were wounded in Israel, applauded the film, which is highly unusual, and appeared shaken by the film, particularly the men. Among them was General Kaplinsky, who lives with a bullet from the battle for Beaufort lodged in his lung, deemed too dangerous to remove. Among those who had fought for Beaufort, General Kaplinsky was charged 18 years later with overseeing its evacuation. His son had been a member of the Golani brigade in which he had served.

What did he think of the film? I asked him recently in New York. "It was accurate, sometimes painfully so, especially from the soldier's point of view."

Was it right to have fought for Beaufort, to have occupied a place for 18 years whose main military value, especially toward the end, was protecting the soldiers who occupied it?

"At the time, I thought it was the right decision, based on what we knew then," he said carefully, adhering to the Israeli military's tradition of silence when asked to criticize fellow officers. "We thought that the security zone would collapse if we left, but it had collapsed anyway, though that wasn't clear to us at the time." Besides, he added, it was not the army's decision to leave or to stay in Lebanon. "It was the government's."

The commanders had different concerns from their soldiers, he continued, shifting the discussion back to more comfortable ground. "My biggest challenge was trying to motivate soldiers to continue doing a mission that was defined by a timetable," he said. "If we were leaving 10 months from then, why not tomorrow? Who wanted to be the last Israeli to die in Lebanon?"

He sympathized with American commanders in Iraq, in particular with General David Petraeus, who faced what he called a similar "leadership challenge."

There were obvious differences both in the wars and in our societies, General Kaplinsky said. For Israel, events in Lebanon posed an immediate threat and challenge. Lebanon and Israel share a border, with the bulk of Israel's population a mere 200 kilometers away. For America, Iraq was a distant war.

"In Israel, the burden of war is shared by and affects everyone," he said. Almost every Israeli had a son or a daughter or relative in Lebanon during the first war. And so many others had lost someone because of war or terrorism. In the United States, the burden of war fell mainly on volunteer soldiers and their families."

Israel 's Lesson in War

But there were some similarities between our nations' wars, General Kaplinsky suggested by implication. "We had no strategy for victory in Lebanon," he said. "We could and should have destroyed Fatah's infrastructure in Lebanon and then immediately pulled out," he said. "Instead, we stayed almost 20 years, helping create Hezbollah and trying to create a new political order and settle ancient political quarrels among civilians, which armies do not do well. We stayed in what we now call the mud of Lebanon, bleeding."

General Kaplinski and others argue that the willingness of democracies such as Israel's and America's to form commissions such as Winograd to investigate our conflicts and confront mistakes shows the strength of our respective democracies.

But Mr. Cedar is not so sure. Despite the first debacle in Lebanon, the Israeli public, press, and parliament wholeheartedly supported the second war against Lebanon, until it went sour. "That surprised me."

Load-Date: January 11, 2008

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The king & Peres

The Jerusalem Post

November 16, 2008 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 731 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

Is Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's two holiest cities, and the Arab world's most conservative monarchy, experiencing a change of heart?

In a campaign against extremists at home, Saudi courts have now begun to try 991 prisoners held on terrorism charges. A new government initiative targets jihadist detainees for counseling and religious re-education. And last year, a Saudi mufti, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Abdallah, issued a fatwa prohibiting Saudi youth from traveling overseas to wage jihad.

The kingdom of about 27 million residents, including nearly 7 million foreigners, also seems to be reaching out in new ways. King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, a new Saudi research institution reported to have a \$10 billion endowment, is joining with three American universities - the University of Texas, Berkeley and Stanford - in partnerships worth \$25 million or more. The Saudi government recently donated \$500m. to the World Food Program, and in August opened its stock market for the first time to foreign investors.

The kingdom's latest step in this direction was to convene a summit in New York last week under UN auspices on interfaith cooperation, a follow-up to the Saudi-sponsored World Conference on Dialogue, held in July in Madrid. A dozen world leaders attended the meeting, including President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, President Shimon Peres, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and the heads of seven Arab states.

The meeting sparked a backlash in the Arab world. **Hizbullah**'s foreign relations chief, Nawaf Al-Moussawi, criticized the conference as providing a cover for normalizing relations with Israel.

BUT THERE are better reasons to treat the conference - and the Saudi intentions behind it - with a degree of skepticism. For it grants Saudi Arabia a platform to promote religious tolerance abroad even while suppressing religious and political freedoms at home. The kingdom, still beset by a virulent brand of anti-Western Wahhabism, allows no public worship outside Islam. Churches are banned. Shi'ites suffer widespread discrimination.

The Saudi legal system remains as draconian and archaic as ever. The UN Committee Against Torture has repeatedly complained about floggings, amputations and beheadings of criminals. Earlier this year, a Saudi judge sentenced a woman who had been gang-raped to dozens of lashes for being in a car with an unrelated man prior to the rape. **Women** are subject to the Committee for the Advancement of Virtue and Elimination of Vice.

The Saudi campaign against reformers, meanwhile, continues unabated. In May, the public prosecutor charged prominent activist Ra'if Badawi with "establishing a Web site offensive to Islam," asking the court to sentence him to five years in prison. Just this month, activists held a hunger strike to draw attention to the plight of 11 reformers

The king & Peres

jailed without trial or access to lawyers. Three years after the accession of King Abdullah, hopes for reform have almost evaporated in the harsh Arabian sun.

WHY THEN sponsor an interfaith conference? One reason was given with rare candor after the Madrid prequel by former Saudi information minister Muhammad Abduh Al-Yamani. "We had no choice but to declare a 'jihad' that includes dialogue with the other side," he said, "and to explain the facts accurately, so they would know what Islam is all about." It offered the chance, he continued, to tell Christians and Jews, "We want to bring you back to the original religion."

But the conference, like similar Saudi gestures of late, must fundamentally be understood in the context of the country's efforts to raise its regional profile. This involves actively seeking a role as peacemaker. It involves, too, a well-orchestrated bid for political influence by a country worried by waning economic influence. As the world's largest oil exporter, after all, the Saudi government is understandably anxious about falling oil prices, and the consequent diminishment of political clout.

That said, the symbolism of King Abdullah sitting through a speech by President Peres last Wednesday and later dining in the same hall together sends an encouraging message. It's good, too, that the Saudis say they're self-conscious about what Islamist violence has done to the image of the Muslim faith.

How sad that these moves come at a pace so glacially slow. But, of course, better late than never.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Pelosi: Israel 'bears the brunt' of Iranian threat, but it's the world's problem

The Jerusalem Post
July 15, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 649 words

Byline: JUDY SIEGEL, Jerusalem Post correspondent

Body

LOS ANGELES - The Iranian regime threatens not only Israel and the Middle East but the entire world, said US Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D- California), who spoke Sunday night at the opening of the three-day 94th national conference of the Hadassah Zionist Women's Organization in Los Angeles's Westin Bonaventure Hotel.

"Israel bears the brunt of that threat... and the safety not only of Israel but of the entire world depends on forcing Iran to give up its nuclear capability," she said, calling for stronger sanctions against the rogue Muslim state.

Pelosi, who visited Israel last May and toured the Hadassah University Medical Center in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem, appeared along with Knesset Speaker Dalia Itzik, who had flown in specially for the 2,000-delegate event.

Both the first women to become speakers of the legislatures in their countries and, standing at either side of the dais, they were described with a smile by Hadassah national president Nancy Falchuk as "stereo speakers" who had done much for the empowerment of women in the two countries.

Pelosi told the delegates representing the 96-year-old organization's 300,000 members that she always carried with her replicas of the "dog tags" of Hizbullah's prisoners, kidnapped soldiers Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev - given to her by Goldwasser's wife Karnit - and shows them at every opportunity in Washington to demonstrate Congress's commitment to their return, as well as to the release of Gilad Schalit from the hands of Hamas in Gaza.

Pelosi praised Hadassah for its political activism in the US, which helped bring about the passing of a law that guarantees privacy and protection from discrimination on the basis of genetic tests, its efforts for health care for all of America's children and embryonic stem cell research, which has the potential to eventually reverse various chronic diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and type 1 diabetes.

Pelosi, herself a mother of five with seven grandchildren, noted with frustration that US President George W. Bush had repeatedly vetoed bills that had been passed by Congress. Bush, she said, opposes a law to provide universal health care to children because "he says it would cost too much, but [the costs of keeping US soldiers] only 40 days in Iraq will provide care for 10 million children."

She noted that although cancer had hit virtually every American family, killing 550,000 Americans per year, Bush also defeated an initiative to increase research funding for the US National Cancer Institute. But, the Democratic congresswoman added, "January is only a few months away," referring to the month when a new president will take over.

Pelosi: Israel 'bears the brunt' of Iranian threat, but it's the world's problem

She had been impressed during her visit to the Hadassah hospital that its staff "treat everyone not because they [the patients] are Jewish, but because you [the supporters and staff] are Jewish."

Itzik, who was warmly received at the convention, noted that 60 years ago, Israel had been home to only three percent of world Jewry, but today the figure had risen to 43%. She also praised the Hadassah initiative to teach Hebrew to members around the US.

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who himself visited Israel only a few weeks ago, said that Israel's enemies wanted to "exterminate" the Jewish state, but that America would always stand behind Israel. During his visit, he had signed an agreement that would bring Israeli airport security experts to the US to help make Los Angeles's international airport safer, he said.

The ceremony began with rousing versions of both countries' national anthems. The convention organizers committed themselves to making it an "environmentally friendly" affair - giving out cloth bags rather than paper-filled plastic cases to delegates and replacing the traditional daily "newspaper" reporting the events with an Internet site to disseminate stories, videos and photos.

Graphic

Photo: NANCY PELOSI, Speaker for the US House of Representatives, says that Israel bears the brunt of the Iranian threat. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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JACKSON FIVE

Sunday Mercury

September 23, 2007, Sunday

First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 10

Length: 294 words

Byline: LORNE JACKSON

Body

1 RUSSIA'S Foreign Minister says: "We're convinced that no modern problem has a military solution."

He was attacking France's position on war with Iran.

Putin and his pals certainly have a keen sense of humour because Moscow is currently brandishing more heavy-duty weaponry than you'd find at an International Convention Of Male Strippers.

Or perhaps Russia just doesn't want to defy her old mate, Iran.

It's a foolish move, whatever the reason.

The great nations of the world must stand together and tough against Iran.

That's the only way to avoid conflict.

2 NO-NONSENSE military man General Dannat says British Army morale is being sapped because soldiers don't feel they're backed by the nation.

He's got a point.

Led by chattering-class chumps, too many people are happy to support Hezbollah, Hamas and Iraqi insurgents (or terrorists, if you want their proper, non-BBC name). Flag-waving does still exist. Unfortunately, too many ageing anarchists and left-wing 'rebels' have chosen the skull and cross-bones as their flag of choice.

3 CHRIS Langham's wife says he is not a paedophile, just arrogant and stupid.

But by downloading porno-graphic images of children, the actor helped finance a horrific system.

He wasn't just a big-headed fool, he was a voyeur of vicious acts.

A man who thoroughly deserves his prison sentence.

4 SIAN Lloyd has won the Rear Of The Year Award.

I'm not particularly impressed by that wobbly blancmange she packs into her jeans.

JACKSON FIVE

Maybe the competition organisers were talking about that thing balanced on top of her neck.

5 COMMISERATIONS to the England Rugby Team, who got beaten by America in the final of the World Cup yesterday.

What? That was the Women's football team!

Gals, you really have to start wielding those Lady Shavers with conviction.

Load-Date: September 23, 2007

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World Digest

The Toronto Star
May 19, 2008 Monday

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Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA03

Length: 308 words

Body

Iraq

U.S. sniper ejected after using Qur'an as target

An American sniper was removed from Iraq after he used a copy of the Qur'an for target practice, the military said yesterday, a day after a U.S. commander held a formal ceremony apologizing to Sunni tribal leaders.

Iraqi police found the bullet-riddled Qur'an with graffiti inside the cover on a firing range near a police station on May 9 in Radwaniyah, U.S. military spokesperson Col. Bill Buckner said.

As part of the formal apology, an American officer kissed a new copy of Islam's holy book before giving it to the tribal leaders.

Egypt

Bin Laden denounces protective Arab leaders

Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden yesterday denounced Arab leaders for sacrificing the Palestinians and saying Hassan Nasrallah, the head of the Shiite militant group Hezbollah, did not really have the strength to take on Israel.

In his second audio message in three days about the Palestinians, bin Laden said the only way to liberate the Palestinian territories is to fight Arab regimes that protect Israel. He then called on Muslim militants in Egypt to help break the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Qatar

Mediators try to broker end to Lebanese crisis

Mediators tried today, the fourth day of tense talks in Doha, to nudge rival Lebanese leaders toward agreement on proposals aimed at ending their political crisis.

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani presented proposals on the two main issues: the formation of a new government and a new election law.

Kuwait

Muslim hardliners

gain seats in parliament

Female candidates were shut out again as Muslim hardliners made gains in parliamentary elections, according to official results issued yesterday. Religious conservatives, both Sunnis and Shiites, gained two seats to hold 24 - nearly half of the 50-member parliament.

From the Star's wire services

Load-Date: May 19, 2008

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The Mideast's ground zero

The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)

January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A5

Length: 738 words

Byline: Thomas L. Friedman

Body

The fighting, death and destruction in Gaza is painful to watch. But it's all too familiar. It's the latest version of the longest-running play in the modern Middle East, which, if I were to give it a title, would be called: "Who owns this hotel? Can the Jews have a room? And shouldn't we blow up the bar and replace it with a mosque?" That is, Gaza is a mini-version of three great struggles that have been playing out since 1948: 1) Who is going to be the regional superpower - Egypt? Saudi Arabia? Iran? 2) Should there be a Jewish state in the Middle East and, if so, on what Palestinian terms? And 3) Who is going to dominate Arab society - Islamists who are intolerant of other faiths and want to choke off modernity or modernists who want to embrace the future, with an Arab-Muslim face? Let's look at each.

Who Owns This Hotel? The struggle for hegemony over the modern Arab world is as old as Nasser's Egypt. But what is new today is that non-Arab Iran is now making a bid for primacy - challenging Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Iran has deftly used military aid to both Hamas and Hezbollah to create a rocket-armed force on Israel's northern and western borders. This enables Tehran to stop and start the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at will and to paint itself as the true protector of the Palestinians, as opposed to the weak Arab regimes.

"The Gaza that Israel left in 2005 was bordering Egypt. The Gaza that Israel just came back to is now bordering Iran," said Mamoun Fandy, director of Middle East programs at the International Institute of Strategic Studies. "Iran has become the ultimate confrontation state. I am not sure we can talk just about 'Arab-Israeli peace' or the 'Arab peace initiative' anymore. We may be looking at an 'Iranian initiative.'" In short, the whole notion of Arab-Israeli peacemaking likely will have to change.

Can The Jews Have a Room Here? Hamas rejects any recognition of Israel. By contrast, the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority, which controls the West Bank, has recognized Israel - and vice versa. If you believe, as I do, that the only stable solution is a two-state one, with the Palestinians getting all of the West Bank, Gaza and Arab sectors of East Jerusalem, then you have to hope for the weakening of Hamas.

Why? Because nothing has damaged Palestinians more than the Hamas death-cult strategy of turning Palestinian youths into suicide bombers. Because nothing would set back a peace deal more than if Hamas' call to replace Israel with an Islamic state became the Palestinian negotiating position. And because Hamas' attacks on towns in southern Israel is destroying a two-state solution, even more than Israel's disastrous and reckless West Bank settlements.

Israel has proved that it can and will uproot settlements, as it did in Gaza. Hamas' rocket attacks pose an irreversible threat. They say to Israel: "From Gaza, we can hit southern Israel. If we get the West Bank, we can

The Mideast's ground zero

rocket, and thereby close, Israel's international airport - anytime, any day, from now to eternity." How many Israelis will risk relinquishing the West Bank, given this new threat?

Shouldn't We Blow Up the Bar and Replace it with a Mosque? Hamas' overthrow of the more secular Fatah organization in Gaza in 2007 is part of a regionwide civil war between Islamists and modernists. In the week that Israel has been slicing through Gaza, Islamist suicide bombers have killed almost 100 Iraqis - first, a group of tribal sheikhs in Yusufiya, who were working on reconciliation between Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, and, second, mostly women and children gathered at a Shiite shrine. These unprovoked mass murders have not stirred a single protest in Europe or the Middle East.

Gaza today is basically ground zero for all three of these struggles.

No doubt, Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran are hoping that they can use the Gaza conflict to turn Obama into Bush. They know Barack Hussein Obama must be (am)Bushed to keep America and its Arab allies on the defensive. Obama has to keep his eye on the prize. His goal - America's goal - has to be a settlement in Gaza that eliminates the threat of Hamas rockets and opens Gaza economically to the world, under credible international supervision. That's what will serve U.S. interests, moderate the three great struggles and earn him respect.

Thomas L. Friedman is a syndicated columnist for the New York Times. His column is distributed by the New York Times News Service.

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In Praise of Being Cut Off

The New York Times

June 16, 2008 Monday

The New York Times on the Web

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Section: Section ; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. ; OP-ED COLUMNIST

Length: 729 words

Byline: By ROGER COHEN

Body

About a quarter-century ago, I was in West Beirut at the Commodore Hotel, once described as a functioning telex machine surrounded by 500 broken toilets. You lined up to use the telex. There was a war on in a divided city. There was also plenty of Black Label.

It was hard to get in, harder to get out. The airport was closed. You sailed from Cyprus to Jounieh, a village north of Beirut. The ship couldn't dock there so you transferred at sea to small fishing boats that took you ashore. Jumping from one to the other across a yard of heaving water caused some women to scream or balk.

We were comfortable enough at the Commodore. You got used to the shelling. Some Beirut kids, it was said, could not sleep without the sounds of war because that was all they had known.

It was good to be cut off. As a journalist, that's what you wanted to be: cut off, except for that telex line.

I became a journalist because I wanted to tell stories. To find stories you must give yourself to the moment. Time must weigh on you, its lulls, accelerations and silences. The life within, the deeper story, does not yield itself with ease.

Beirut gave you time. Most of war is sitting around. I watched kids on the sidewalks, facades of buildings blown away behind them, constructing elaborate castles of cigarette cartons, flimsy creations that defied shelling as the spirit defies measurement.

At the Central Bank, I met a young woman. I was waiting. There was a lot of that. Her name was Sana. Later she took me to her family's shuttered apartment. All but she had fled to Europe. There were heavy drapes over the ornate furniture and the airless, opulent rooms spoke of a rich life eclipsed.

I felt like a trespasser on family secrets, gazing at formal portraits. But perhaps we story tellers are trespassers. There is something indecent about what we do, plunderers of others' lives. The faster we move on, the more indecent it is. I've been the unseemly chronicler of too many tears.

That abandoned apartment taught me something essential about Beirut's cosmopolitan soul, a truth deeper than all the labels of the war's militias, Christian, Shia, Druse and the rest. Sana taught me about the defiance of loss. The universal in the particular is all we can aspire to.

In Praise of Being Cut Off

It helps to be cut off, to have nowhere to go, nowhere but your story, and no excuse for not telling it. I would gaze at the blank sky and think of kids that smiled at me. Gulls swooped.

One day, I went to southern Beirut to get a press pass from the Shia Hezbollah militia. A bearded guy with an automatic rifle and a portrait of Ayatollah Khomeini behind him took an interest in my name. He explained how an Israeli spy called Cohen had been hanged in the public square in Damascus.

"And you," he asked, "are a journalist?"

"Yeah."

"Really?"

"Yep."

He looked me in the eye, took out a press pass, signed it, stamped it, and wished me well.

You never know. It's worth trying to get the feel of the world in your fingertips. A story has a feel, a scent, a tingle. It may lie around the next corner, beyond a silence or in a glance.

I worry about stories dying, replaced by stuff. Content for platforms does not a story make. Today, you arrive anywhere and surf the Net. Being "always on" is being always off, to something.

A dozen years later I was cut off again, in Sarajevo. The war had driven people mad. They burned books to heat stoves to cook the rabbits they raised in cages in their bedrooms. Always the smash of a shell, the flat boom of rending and fracture in that narrow valley, took my breath away. What followed was exhaustion.

You want to get out, of course, away from the prison of your story, not knowing how you will miss what's revealed at the dangerous edge of things.

When I left Beirut, I sailed out from Jounieh with Terry Anderson, then an Associated Press correspondent. We chatted, happy to be out. A U.S. chopper swooped over the stern, close enough to see the pilot's thumbs-up sign.

I didn't go back. Anderson did and, the next year, was kidnapped by Hezbollah. For more than six years, he was held hostage.

My imagination failed me. I could not see his terrible confinement coming on that bright faraway day, any more than I could envisage our accelerated world, or the scant time it has left us for emptying the mind to imagine the stories that count.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

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In praise of being cut off; Globalist

The International Herald Tribune

June 16, 2008 Monday

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Length: 732 words

Byline: Roger Cohen - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

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Readers are invited to comment at my blog: www.iht.com/passages.

Load-Date: June 16, 2008

'I'M THE BOSS' SPIRIT OF CHANGE IN A KNIFE-WIELDING BAPTISM...;
PRIME MINISTER BROWN: DAY 1

The Mirror
June 29, 2007 Friday
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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

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Byline: KEVIN MAGUIRE

Body

THREE more dead British soldiers - two from his home patch in Scotland - were a bloody baptism for Gordon Brown.

The carnage of the morning of his first full day in No 10 will require him to start his first Prime Minister's Questions next Wednesday with solemn tributes.

But yesterday's Cabinet reshuffle stressed change, a fresh start.

The Premier must wrestle with the legacy of Blair's war. Yet he wielded the political knife with a ruthlessness that often eluded his predecessor in the most sweeping game of Cabinet musical chairs outside a general election.

Ten out of 22 ministers were discarded and of the remaining dozen just one, Des Browne at Defence, kept his old job.

The Premier's message was, "I'm the boss".

And the Cabinet has a distinctly Brownite flavour with notable promotions for the Eds, Balls and Miliband.

But most significant may be the upgrade to Foreign Secretary of David Miliband (brother of Ed), at 41 one of the youngest in the post. Privately he believes Iraq a huge error and criticised Blair's refusal to condemn Israel's retaliation against Lebanon over last year's ***Hezbollah*** attacks.

Maybe tellingly, on the day three more soldiers paid the ultimate price, Iraq rebel John Denham who quit over the war was also restored as a minister.

'I'M THE BOSS' SPIRIT OF CHANGE IN A KNIFE-WIELDING BAPTISM.. PRIME MINISTER BROWN : DAY 1

The emphasis is on improving public services, with Alan Johnson switched to health. And while bundling anti-social behaviour and schools into a new department looked odd, Balls is Brown's most trusted lieutenant.

Jacqui Smith's appointment as Britain's first female Home Secretary failed to mask a cut of three to five in women members, suggesting more macho politics.

The Premier today reshuffles his middle and junior posts - when many more new names will be unveiled.

Mr Brown promised change and is living up to his word.

Load-Date: June 29, 2007

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