

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:31:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223447029

Documents (100)

1. Jaw-jaw has always been better than war-war LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

2. Deborah Coddington: Beware of the terrible tree-trashing tots

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

3. Too good to be true

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

4. Palestinian University Pulls Back on Partnerships With Israeli Counterparts

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

5. Olmert calls opponents of IDF legal expert's posting 'hypocrites'. Col. Pnina Sharvit-Baruch, who gave green light to army's actions in Gaza Strip, will be appointed to TAU faculty despite protests

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

6. Anti- Israel protests show ignorance

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

7. Drunk blamed for deadly fire

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

8. Conference Circuit

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

9. Palestinians use lull in war to get food and check relatives

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

10. Israeli election a photo finish; Rivals both claim victory; showdown between Likud, Kadima looms

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

11. Clinton aims for pragmatic diplomacy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

12. Obama offers olive branch to billion Muslims

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

13. Obama vows to bridge rift with Muslims At long-awaited speech in Cairo, he promises to 'seek a new

<u>beginning'</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

14. Obama is all for hope and change But apparently, not for Iranians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

15. Leftists cowering to a running dog of US democracy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

16. Obama stands idly by while Iranians fight for liberty

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

17. PM head-down, tail-up denying talk of an early election

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

18. Bâtisseuses de Paix comprises Jewish, Muslim and Christian women FRANCE: Sharing a Recipe for

Peace

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

19. Religious bullying is a problem around the world Vigilante enforcement of theocratic codes can crop up

when a minority group doesn't conform.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

20. Obama's new start The world's 1.5 billion Muslims were the target audience of a speech delivered by US

President Barack Obama

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

21. A conflict of commerce in the West Bank

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

22. Questions worth fighting for in fields of Afghanistan

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

23. Family of footballers eases intifada

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

24. Of limits and Ahmadinejad

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

25. Give peace yet another chance How to solve the Middle East crisis. By Chris Patten

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

26. Give peace yet another chance How to solve the Middle East crisis. By Chris Patten

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

27. Hezbollah spy thriller grips Arab world

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

28. <u>Magistrates have a thankless task I read the letter (March 2) from Tony Badcock, of Ottery St Mary, which</u> shamed Mrs Alma Harding for acting like a vigilante.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

29. Your turn

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

30. <u>Magistrates have a thankless task I read the letter (March 2) from Tony Badcock, of Ottery St Mary, which</u> shamed Mrs Alma Harding for acting like a vigilante.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

31. Obama faces acid test

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

32. Editorial: Enough conspiracy theories

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

33. <u>Magistrates have a thankless task I read the letter (March 2) from Tony Badcock, of Ottery St Mary, which</u> shamed Mrs Alma Harding for acting like a vigilante.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

34. Barak to Rabin camp: We're carrying on in his tradition

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

35. Now much reduced, Labor and Meretz look to pick up the pieces in opposition

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

36. 'Where's the logic here?'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

37. An Egyptian town's economy depends on tunnel traffic to Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

38. Territory swaps and tunnels offered to solve endless crisis

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

39. Occupation is origin of violence in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

40. Territory swaps and tunnels offered to solve endless crisis

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

41. ABORTION MUST REMAIN AVAILABLE



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

42. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

43. AGREE? NO CHANCE!

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

44. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

45. Plea to help end Zionist aggression

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

46. Father says children were carrying white flags when shot dead by Israelis

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

47. AGREE? NO CHANCE!

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

48. Occupation is origin of violence in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

49. Health services 'on verge of collapse'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

50. Iran 's uncertain path; The protesters in Tehran raise questions about the Iranian government's support

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

51. RIDING A SLOW WEST BANK BUS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

52. Imaginary One-on-One With Barack Obama

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

53. ACROSS MIDEAST, PRAISE AND CRITICISM THE PRESIDENT ASKED LISTENERS IN A REGION ROILED BY HATRED TO TAKE TWO STEPS THAT HAVE LONG BEEN ANATHEMA: FORGETTING THE PAST AND UNDERSTANDING AN OPPOSING VIEW.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

54. The Pope is a spiritual leader, not a politician George Pitcher says that critics of Pope Benedict have the wrong idea about his role in the modern world

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

55. Heeere's Sandy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

56. This addiction has me totally Wired

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

57. <u>Pope challenges Israel to give Palestinians homeland Benedict XVI throws weight behind statehood solution</u> during visit to a West Bank refugee camp

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

58. Defending freedom's defenders

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

59. Providing hope in the face of fear PRESIDENT OBAMA

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

60. Iran gives cautious welcome to Barack Obama video message

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

61. US experts: Transparency key in war crimes probes. 'Alleged misconduct in Cast Lead must be taken

seriously'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

62. International briefs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

63. Khatami is not the conciliator he claims to be

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

64. Waltz with Sisyphus: Israel 's impossible propaganda war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

65. A Norwegian Thatcher?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

66. Iran , the Jews and Germany Globalist

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

67. Unity the only way forward

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

68. Gazans struggle for repair water and sewage systems damaged MIDEAST: Gazans Struggle for Clean

Drinking Water

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

69. Iran , the Jews and Germany

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

70. Sport and politics ought not to play in the same arena MIDEAST: The Ball Could be in Israel's Court

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

71. Iran , the Jews and Germany Globalist

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009



72. The myth of ' Israeli apartheid'; Arabs in Israel have full civil and democratic rights - more than afforded by most other countries in the Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

73. News: Charity row: At the heart of BBC row, the homeless of Gaza: Peter Beaumont returns to Jabal Rayas to talk to the children whose desperate struggle to survive in bombed-out shanty towns has led a leading charity to mount an emergency appeal - which BBC executives are refusing to screen

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

74. Banks can't expect us to pay back 'free' cash - they don't

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

75. The leader who struts like a superpower Benjamin Netanyahu is favourite to win Tuesday's Israeli election, and that could put him on a collision course with the Obama White House. Donald Macintyre reports

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

76. <u>Street protests against Israel 's assault on Gaza MIDEAST: Gaza War Divides Arab Governments From People</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

77. Bibi's basking: The pretender who struts like a superpower Right-winger Bibi Netanyahu is favourite to win Tuesday's Israeli election. That could put him on a collision course with the Obama White House, says Donald Macintyre

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

78. <u>Erdogan storms off stage after bitter spat with Peres in Davos . 'You are killing people,' fumes Turkish PM.</u>
What is the matter with you?' Peres lashes back

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

79. Hope is within reach

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

80. Rest assured, we will all pay for this road's folly FRANKSTON BYPASS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

81. 'We are all Neda'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

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Jun 30, 2009

82. Obama's Muslim speech

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

83. Kasrils still on anti- Israel rant Obama is showing wisdom and sensitivity - and true statesmanship - in his approach to the conflict in the Middle East, writes David Sacks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

84. Kasrils still on anti- Israel rant Obama is showing wisdom and sensitivity - and true statesmanship - in his approach to the conflict in the Middle East, writes David Sacks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

85. Barack Obama pledges new beginning between US and Muslims

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

86. LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

87. Force Zvika

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

88. Barack Obama's Cairo speech: Live

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

89. NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rather than focusing on issues of racism and discrimination in the Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

90. Obama 's bow to Saudi king a disgrace

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

91. How Muslim countries must deal with radicals

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

92. International liaisons

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

93. Appeasement is not the way to defeat Islamist extremists LEADER

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

94. Israeli soldiers' stories inflame Gaza debate Troops describe killing civilians freely

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

95. No 'fireworks' expected at first Netanyahu-Clinton meeting. Secretary of state insists US won't budge on

two-state solution
Client/Matter: -NoneSearch Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

96. IRAN HANGED 59 PEOPLE IN JANUARY AND 71 KIDS FACE EXECUTION, THIS IS.. MULLAH JUSTICE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

97. IRAN HANGED 59 PEOPLE IN JANUARY AND 71 KIDS FACE EXECUTION, THIS IS.. MULLAH JUSTICE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

98. Air attacks on a besieged Gaza have killed over 1,000 Palestinians POLITICS: Israeli Attacks on Gaza Escape Global Media Scrutiny

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

99. Recruiter of Iraqi female bombers arrested Young women raped, then sent for advice

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

100. <u>Eating the wild; In America</u>, there are foragers among us, out searching for morels in the spring, and there are hunters too. Yet most of our food, except for fish caught from the sea, is farmed. We do not trap songbirds for savory pies. (We destroy too many of them through other means.)

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009



Jaw-jaw has always been better than war-war; LETTERS

The Sunday Times (London)

March 22, 2009

Edition 1

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 24

Length: 688 words

Body

BRITAIN'S role in Iraq and Afghanistan needs better evaluation (Only a surge in fudging will tame Afghanistan, Comment, last week). We must face up to the fact that we do not always "know best", a hangover from superpower days, and adjust to punch our weight.

Our problem was summed up by Vladimir Putin's comments during Russia's spat with Georgia: "We have the political will, the economic strength and the military power." The UK is deficient on all three, particularly the will when it comes to analysing our performance in Basra. Our biggest problem now appears to be the meltdown of our financial sector, the ramifications of which could be the most serious ever faced.

Allan Nash Billericay, Essex

Time to talk

Although we have demonised the Taliban for years, it was Mullah Omar who said that all problems can be solved at the negotiating table before the invasion. They are not fools or demons if we just take time and talk and stop delivering ultimatums. The Pashtuns are good at negotiating.

Richard Scott Drake Colorado, USA

Obama'll fix it

The US and Britain have failed to solve this problem with violence. It's time to try something else. Thank God Barack Obama is in charge.

D Behrman London

Peace for the few

Welcome to the peaceful Afghanistan of the future. No suicide bombers or air raids.

Only musicians, teachers and women have anything to fear.

N Cook London

The blame starts here

I laud your editorial (We should just laugh at these clowns, last week) for highlighting the virtues of democracy. The British army has been pivotal in removing tyrannies and spreading freedom. Kosovo and Bosnia stand as an example of risking lives to prevent suffering.

But who doesn't agree that the Iraq war has caused the unjustifiable deaths of innocents, that America and

Britain helped in the installation of puppet regimes from Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan to Nouri al-Maliki in Iraq and Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan, and shunned democratically elected *Hamas*.

The Iraq war has been unleashed under spurious pretences and the anger should be vented not on the lunatics who abused homecoming soldiers, but on those who sent them to Iraq to face death.

Dr Munjed Al Qutob London SW5

Fear on home ground

Where is serious criticism, never mind dismissive humour, about Islam and its more extreme manifestations anywhere in our stage, film or written media? Was a Dutch film-maker not refused admission because of a work, good, bad or indifferent we do not know, that might have been unpalatable to Muslims?.

There is physical fear of extremists, fear of causing agitation among the significant minority in our midst and fear of suggesting to them that they become an integrated, identifiable, part of our culture. Until there is a sea change we shall see ever more intrusive laws.

Name and address supplied

Stop funding misfits

Your editorial is misguided. As absurd as figures like Anjem Choudary appear, sadly there are plenty of poorly educated misfits that are only too willing to lionise his ilk and become dupes to his particular brand of warped rhetoric. It does not take a genius to become a suicide bomber.

The state is supporting Choudary and his family while he rails against our society and encourages the financing of military actions against British troops in Afghanistan. If he is plotting our destruction on a full-time basis, he will not be looking for employment to support his family.

Simon Bradley London SE1

Luton was criminal

The events in Luton last week have raised strong emotions.

Call them what you will but for God's sake do not call them jihadist, Islamist or Muslim terrorists. These terms have given the primitivists false credibility in the eyes of some fellow Muslims. To chop off the head of the serpent of radicalism and terrorism, it is essential that their link with Islam is severed. Once this is done, the terrorists will be treated as common criminals, for they will lose credence in the eyes of Muslims.

While there is illiteracy and poverty in some countries and dimwitted leaders in others, the primitivists will continue to use Islam as their cloak and terrorism as their dagger.

Dr Shahid Khan Address withheld

Load-Date: March 22, 2009

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Deborah Coddington: Beware of the terrible tree-trashing tots

The New Zealand Herald February 22, 2009 Sunday

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Section: ENTERTAINMENT; General

Length: 725 words

Body

There comes a time when campaigners lose potential support from fence-sitters, doubters or sceptics because they go too far. We've seen it with people like John Minto and Father Gerry Burns. Well-intentioned folk who, in their support for the Palestinians, muddled *Hamas* into the mix and veered off into other actions.

In Britain this week, Sir Jonathan Porritt labelled couples who bear more than two children "irresponsible" because they contribute to global warming and the destruction of planet earth.

Sir Jonathan has clout. He is chairman of Tony Blair's Sustainable Development Commission and chief adviser to Prince Charles and the Government on green matters.

Eton and Oxford-educated, Sir Jonathan, who inherits his baronetcy from his dad, Sir Arthur Porritt, New Zealand's 11th Governor-General, is also a patron of the powerful lobby group Optimum Population Trust.

This group's main slogan is "Stop At Two" - coincidentally or not, the number of children at which Jonno and his Lady Wife have stopped. Only a cynic would presume this distinctly privileged couple had eschewed continuing their own bloodlines and adopted their children from a freezing cold orphanage in Ukraine or an over-crowded institution in Thailand.

Last week Sir Jonathan said he was "unapologetic about asking people to connect up their own responsibility for their total environmental footprint and how they decide to procreate".

According to this British toff, we should seriously consider contraception and abortion as weapons against climate change. After all, he reckons, every Pommie child in its lifetime will destroy more than two acres of "old-growth oak woodland".

I suppose in New Zealand the equivalent would be trashing several hectares of native bush.

I look forward to the reaction from our Family First lobby on hearing New Zealand <u>women</u>, pregnant with a third child, can rush to a certified GP seeking an abortion on the grounds that a nice patch of West Coast beech forest is more important than human life.

And why stop at humans? If man is destroying the planet, then surely domesticated or agricultural animals are also irresponsible culprits? All those dairy herds supplying milk, butter, cheese, by-products - income and a better standard of living for millions - should be dog tucker.

Deborah Coddington: Beware of the terrible tree-trashing tots

Dog tucker? That presupposes dogs are allowed to survive. It won't just be Kelburn and Remuera's bichon frises being mass-euthanased, but also huntaways, heading bitches, police and guide dogs will go off to the happy hunting ground in the sky.

No more racehorses generating employment for jockeys, strappers, stablehands, grooms, trainers and TAB staff. Chooks, cats, sheep, ducks, anything not feral or native - off with their heads.

To be fair, the trust's website declares its members are absolutely opposed to any coercion regarding population control. But one can almost sense the "yet" at the end of that statement. Limit your families voluntarily, or else.

Sir Jonathan is just one patron among a who's who of aristocracy, luvvies and academics.

A fellow patron is Susan Hampshire OBE, who was so lovely in the TV series The Forsyte Saga that many men of my generation would have traded their inheritance to practise procreating with her.

Joking aside, we should be uneasy. Sir Jonathan advises the Government to consider "shifting money from curing illness" if necessary. As Toby Young wrote in the Spectator, "the plague that is modern medicine can be eradicated if you put your mind to it. Thanks to [Pol] Pot's enlightened attitude to healthcare - he outlawed all medical drugs - over a million Cambodians died during his reign."

On the other hand, a comment on the trust's blog site supporting Sir Jonathan's outrageous advice recommends "fewer but better-educated people" and "it's better to raise little emperors". If being better educated (at Oxford and Eton) results in people choosing to let children die from curable diseases so that hectares of oaks can survive, then give me ignorance any day.

Meanwhile, I can't wait until a loopy greenie here has the cojones to suggest some of our most virile high-profile sires of litters - Sir Robert Jones, Bill English, Jim Bolger, Bob Harvey, Tom Scott and, good gracious, the QC and I share nine children - might indulge in some upper class self-flagellation for our irresponsible breeding of environment trashers.

Load-Date: February 21, 2009

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Too good to be true

The Jerusalem Post March 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 721 words Highlight: Editorial

Body

The deluge of good news, on a variety of fronts - coinciding with this year's Purim festival - demands we pause from our usual dreary agenda to offer praise where it is due.

To Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz, for acknowledging that he had no good reason for dragging out the indictment of former president Moshe Katsav. "I have issues with procrastination," he noted, "but this time I think I really am ready."

To former Supreme Court president Aharon Barak, who admitted that "Judges should not dominate the process of selecting judges. We need a system with checks and balances," he told the Bar Association.

Law and order was further boosted when Israel's crime syndicate - moetzet gedolei ha'avaryanim - declared its constituents would no longer engage in human trafficking, extortion or the drug trade. A top mobster confessed: "We have become nothing more than Hebrew-speaking thugs. Enough!"

THE Finance Ministry deserves our esteem for promising it would pull out all stops to fast-track completion of the express rail line linking Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, making it operational by 2012.

El Al lifted spirits by announcing it would not follow Ryanair's lead of making passengers pay for the right to relieve themselves on flights. "It's clever of them to offer free bottled water while charging for the use of the toilets, but we intend to focus on long-term customer loyalty by giving economy class passengers 15 percent more leg room," said spokesman Matos Avir.

Editors of the British newspapers The Guardian, The Times and The Daily Telegraph made encouraging headlines by jointly pledging to take a more balanced stance in their coverage of Israel and leave the task of delegitimizing the Jewish state primarily to The Independent. In a related praiseworthy development, the ombudsman at the International Herald Tribune admitted that using a photograph of Arab <u>women</u> marching past the ruins of a bombed building in the Gaza Strip as the paper's lead photo on International <u>Women</u>'s Day was "tendentious."

Kol Hamusika, Israel's classical station, struck a positive note by promising to play music listeners might enjoy instead of the atonal post-modern din which dominates its playlist.

We're impressed, too, that Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alice Walker decided to forgo a trip to the Gaza Strip and focus attention instead on genocide in the Sudan. "Sure I could jump on the anti-Israel bandwagon," she said. "But Palestinians capture a disproportionate amount of press attention, which detracts from far more pressing issues."

Too good to be true

SPAIN is to be congratulated for repealing a law allowing its courts to apply "universal jurisdiction" to harass Israeli security personnel involved in the 2002 liquidation of <u>Hamas</u> terrorist Salah Shehadeh. A Spanish legal scholar explained: "We just felt that with our history of inquisitions and persecution and false neutrality during the Holocaust, we really had no moral standing to denounce Israelis for defending themselves."

The organizers of the UN Conference on Racism (Durban II) deserve appreciation for cancelling the event because "the enterprise had devolved into a frenzy of non- governmental Jew-hatred."

HERE AT home, we are delighted by the IDF's announcement that, for the first time in decades, the West Bank will not be sealed off from Israel proper over the Purim holiday. With the notion of Palestinian Arabs blowing up buses or threatening children's Purim parades now fantastical, the need for closures is, thankfully, obviated.

India is to be commended for its pledge of \$5 million to help rebuild Sderot, matching its \$5 million for similar reconstruction in Gaza. To the Palestinian Authority's credit, it has rejected the cash, saying it couldn't account for billions of dollars in previously donated international contributions. "What we really need," said Mahmoud Abbas, "is not more money but a trusteeship for Palestine to help us create a culture of tolerance and respect for minority rights."

But the ultimate praise goes to Iran, which now admits that it has been working on an atom bomb, but has decided to stop as a result of a vision which came to Ayatollah Khamenei. "The Prophet sent an angel to tell me that God wanted the Children of Abraham to work out our differences amicably," he told a delirious throng in Teheran's Revolution Square.

Delirious indeed.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Palestinian University Pulls Back on Partnerships With Israeli Counterparts

The Chronicle of Higher Education February 13, 2009 Friday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 38; Vol. 55; No. 23

Length: 746 words

Byline: MATTHEW KALMAN

Dateline: Jerusalem

Body

The leaders of Al-Quds University, the only Palestinian institution to maintain ties with Israeli universities and oppose international calls for a boycott of Israeli academics, voted this month to freeze new joint projects with Israeli universities in the wake of the war in Gaza.

But the Palestinian professors have taken pains to emphasize that existing joint projects would continue, and that the university was not joining calls in Europe and North America for an academic boycott of Israel.

The university council, comprising the deans of Al-Quds's 12 academic schools and other senior department heads, voted unanimously to begin a six-month review period, during which no new ventures would be established.

Faculty members who were present for the vote told The Chronicle that Sari Nusseibeh, president of Al-Quds, had steered his colleagues toward a compromise that sent a strong signal disapproving of Israel's actions but stopped short of severing ties altogether.

In a speech he gave the day after the vote, Mr. Nusseibeh called on "all civil society institutions, in Palestine or abroad, to place a six-month moratorium on all new 'routine' or normal cooperative activities with Israeli institutions or individuals -- not, I must add, as a punitive measure, but as a rallying cry for all concerned to pressure the Israeli government into committing itself to a timetable for ending the occupation in return for a full peace treaty with its Palestinian neighbor."

In a follow-up interview with The Chronicle, Mr. Nusseibeh said the move was intended only "to raise the alarm to take the matter seriously of the continued occupation and the need to reach a solution."

Existing projects with Israeli universities would continue, he said, and individual faculty members at Al-Quds were free to ignore the new policy and seek ties with Israeli institutions. He emphasized that Al-Quds was not joining the international boycott campaign.

Mr. Nusseibeh said the university, with 10,000 students on its campuses in the West Bank towns of Al Bireh, Abu Dis, and East Jerusalem, has about 40 joint projects with Israeli institutions, with a combined budget of less than \$5-million. They include joint political and educational seminars and "very important research" in medicine, dentistry, and nanotechnology.

Palestinian University Pulls Back on Partnerships With Israeli Counterparts

Faculty members said the council hoped to use its unique position to increase pressure on both sides to move more quickly toward a peaceful solution of the conflict and the establishment of a Palestinian state at peace with its Israeli neighbor.

"We felt it was time to protest the fact that the Israeli universities and faculty did not even take a stand regarding the destruction of the universities in Gaza or show any sympathy at the deaths of more than 1,000 Palestinians, many of them <u>women</u> and children," said Mohammed Dajani, a professor of American studies.

Mohammad Shaheen, dean of the School of Public Health at Al-Quds, said he supported the change in policy even though he has worked with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in Israel, for more than five years on joint psychological and social research dealing with children's trauma.

"We wanted to learn from them and also share with them how we do our own programs, especially because we don't have such resources," he said.

But, he added, "we have a political and ethical responsibility toward our own Palestinian people who are part of this and live this reality every day. This new position is not against any specific Israeli organization or colleague. This position is a cry for waking us on both sides and saying that we cannot continue."

Israeli faculty members expressed sadness at the decision and hope that it would be reversed.

Although he disagreed with Al-Quds's decision, Moshe Ma'oz, an emeritus professor of Islamic and Middle East studies and a former director of the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said he sympathized with the university's frustration over the failure of more Israeli professors to speak out against the attack on Gaza.

"I expect academics to do something, to protest. I tried myself," he said. "The week before the war, I was on the radio saying that Israel should not attack Gaza and should try to reach a political settlement with <u>Hamas</u>, but no one listened. It's one of the frustrations of academics that governments don't listen to us. They ask our advice, and then they take it as ammunition if it suits them."

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

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Olmert calls opponents of IDF legal expert's posting 'hypocrites'. Col. Pnina Sharvit-Baruch, who gave green light to army's actions in Gaza Strip, will be appointed to TAU faculty despite protests

The Jerusalem Post February 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 726 words

Byline: HAVIV RETTIG GUR

Body

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert came to the defense of Col. Pnina Sharvit-Baruch on Sunday, speaking out against those seeking to prevent her from taking up a teaching position at Tel Aviv University when she finishes her IDF career in the coming weeks.

The prime minister blasted the "self-righteous hypocrites" at the university who "presume to preach morality" without first learning the facts of a case.

He added that a university that rejected someone on the basis of their service in the IDF did not deserve to receive state funding.

The appointment of Sharvit-Baruch, the IDF's top international law expert, to the teaching post met with protest from a handful of lecturers and Haaretz over the weekend, who accused her of approving the killing of hundreds of civilians during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza.

Sharvit-Baruch's detractors, principally Prof. Chaim Ganz of the university's Minerva Center for Human Rights, apparently based their stance on a Haaretz report over the weekend that took issue with her interpretation of humanitarian law as it related to the fight against *Hamas*.

Ganz sent a letter to the law school's dean, Prof. Hanoch Dagan, claiming "Sharvit-Baruch's interpretation of the law... allowed the army to act in ways that constitute potential war crimes" and that Sharvit-Baruch herself "harms Israel's values system."

Haaretz quoted another university lecturer, Dr. Anat Matar, as saying she "was shocked to learn that half of the second-year law students will learn the foundations of law from someone who helped justify the killing of civilians, including hundreds of children."

In its Friday editorial, the paper opined that Sharvit-Baruch had sanctioned "the killing of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, many of them children, <u>women</u> and elderly people, during the three weeks of the war."

The paper even claimed her predecessor at the head of the army's International Law Division, Col. (res.) Daniel Reisner, had criticized her enabling of the military's "trigger-happiness" during the war.

Olmert calls opponents of IDF legal expert's posting 'hypocrites'. Col. Pnina Sharvit-Baruch, who gave green light to army's actions in Gaza Strip, will be appo....

The response to the assault on Sharvit-Baruch was quick in coming.

"I was cheated outright by Haaretz," Reisner told The Jerusalem Post on Sunday. "In an hourlong interview, I told them the opposite of what they wrote. [Sharvit-Baruch] was my deputy for 15 years. She's an incredible lawyer and a friend. Many of her interpretations actually continued my own legal developments. I have considered suing the newspaper for libel."

According to Reisner, the newspaper even rejected his on-line talkback on the paper's Hebrew Web site, in which he denied he had criticized Sharvit-Baruch.

Olmert, who spoke on the issue at Sunday morning's cabinet meeting, delivered an outright threat to the publicly-funded school, saying, "Any university that lends its hand to disqualifying lecturers on the basis of such claims, without inquiring into the matter and without anybody being able to establish such claims except on the basis that someone served in the IDF during wartime, is an institution that is not worthy of the support of the government of Israel. If such an institution should act this way - and I am certain that Tel Aviv University does not intend to do so it would be unworthy of the support of the State of Israel [for] its ongoing activities."

The university was quick to note that it did not acquiesce to the complaints against Sharvit-Baruch, with one university official saying they believed it was Haaretz that had lent needless significance to a "non-event."

"Only a single law professor protested [Sharvit- Baruch's] appointment, and he retracted his protest soon after, saying the law faculty is not a courtroom," read a statement from the university management.

"At no point did the faculty even consider cancelling Pnina Sharvit-Baruch's appointment," Dagan, the law school dean, wrote to Defense Minister Ehud Barak last week in response to the minister's query.

A university representative said the institution does not cancel appointments over disagreements in legal interpretation. "Pluralism is the life-breath of Tel Aviv University," the representative said.

Haaretz magazine editor Nir Becher said "Haaretz stands completely behind the published article. The statements made by attorney Reisner were quoted accurately. As to Reisner's retroactive interpretations of his published statements, those are his responsibility alone."

Graphic

Photo: Ehud Olmert (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Anti-Israel protests show ignorance

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)
February 27, 2009 Friday
Final Edition

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Section: THE EDITORIAL PAGE; Pg. A22; Naomi Lakritz

Length: 768 words

Byline: Naomi Lakritz, Calgary Herald

Body

University students today have to be among the most misguided and ill-informed generation ever to grace campus quadrangles. They act like the meekest of lickspittles when administrations crack down on free speech --as with the University of Calgary's pro-life club, and Queen's University's now mercifully defunct language monitors. But when they finally get fired up to rally around a cause, they direct their feel-good self-righteousness to the wrong one. Thus they demonstrate their abysmal ignorance of history and politics, along with their inability to differentiate between a democracy and its enemies.

Which brings us to March 1, start of the fifth annual, oxy-moronic Israel Apartheid Week, taking place on more than 40 campuses and venues worldwide, including the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. If these students had the slightest knowledge of the Middle East, they would know there is no such thing as apartheid in Israel. Arab Israelis are treated no differently than anyone else. They are also far better off socially, economically and politically than Palestinian Arabs, who live under a despotic, corrupt regime run by *Hamas* terrorists who foster a culture of death and have zero regard for the lives of their own people. These terrorists set up ordinary Palestinians to die by using them as human shields. They love it when their civilian death toll inevitably adds up--all they care about is blackening Israel's image at the expense of their own citizens' lives.

As for the security wall Israel erected in the West Bank, which is always cited when the word "apartheid" surfaces, its purpose is to prevent suicide bombers from killing innocent Israeli citizens. And no, these fanatics don't ask Muslim and Christian diners to exit the pizza parlour before detonating themselves to kill Jews. Everybody gets blown up. Without the wall, there would be thousands more dead in Israel--but maybe genocide is really what the IAW supporters want to see. After all, just two weeks ago, IAW activists surrounded a Hillel office at York University where Jewish students had taken refuge from them, and pounded on the walls yelling, "Death to the Jews," and "Die, Jew! Get the hell off campus."

IAW supporters want to boycott Israel, so the Simon Wiesenthal Centre has come up with an ad campaign that brilliantly shows up the protesters for their painful stupidity. The ad features two tin cans connected by a piece of string and says: "Committed to boycotting Israel? Be Zion-free--do not use: Cellphones (you can keep the case); voice mail and cellphone camera chip; AIM, ICQ, instant messaging; Google (runs on Israeli search algorithms); Microsoft Windows XP, Vista, Microsoft Office; Intel microchip, Pentium chip and microprocessor; fire-walls and virus protection software. All developed in Israel. To acquire the Zion-Free iCAN Phone, contact: studentboycotters@carrier-pigeon.net" Truly amazing, when you think of it. Here's Israel perpetually under siege,

Anti- Israel protests show ignorance

and yet its scientists, doctors and engineers just go right on with their work, making the world a better place for everyone.

Perhaps the most painful stupidity of all is exhibited by the <u>women</u> students who have joined the anti-Israel movement. In Canada, these include "pro-Palestinian activist Jessica Carpinone," who was quoted in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz as complaining that Carleton University officials had banned one of the IAW's more hateful posters. Carpinone and other <u>women</u> seem oblivious to the fact that the regime they support is among the worst oppressors of <u>women</u>. Have they ever heard of sharia law? Honour killings? How ironic that in North America, Muslim <u>women</u>'s associations are speaking out against oppression of Arab <u>women</u> in the Middle East, while non-Muslim <u>women</u> march in support of the patriarchal regimes which perpetrate that oppression.

Equally interesting is the fact that these protesters are the generation who were spoon-fed sugary lectures on "tolerance" all through their school years--"tolerance" which obviously meant nothing to them because it was taught in a vacuum, devoid of historical, political and social context. Given Canadian high schools' well-documented failure to teach history-- every year, we're told anew that kids have never even heardofD-Day--these students probably don't even know that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. Likely they'd be hard put to find it on a map. If you want to rally, do so against the real oppressors of the Palestinian people. That would be their own leaders --not Israel.

nlakritz@theherald.canwest.com

Load-Date: February 27, 2009

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Drunk blamed for deadly fire

Pretoria News (South Africa)
February 16, 2009 Monday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 703 words

Body

A fire in a dilapidated three-storey wooden building near the Volga City of Astrakhan in Russia has killed at least 16 people, with the blame being quickly placed on a drunken woman resident. About 50 residents were rescued and were given shelter in a school. The woman had stored several petrol canisters in her apartment, where the fire started. The building was declared unsafe some time ago.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy believes the country's generous leave for new mothers could hinder <u>women</u>'s careers. He told family organisations in Paris that he would like to see more new mothers put in reduced hours instead of stopping work altogether. The long period off work was "sometimes a waste". France's family leave system costs about e80-million (R1-billion) a year.

A man gets his eye tested at a free eye-care camp set up by a voluntary organisation, Karm, in Mumbai, India, yesterday. A World Health Organisation report says 90% of the world's blind people live in developing countries, with at least 9-million of them in India, where they are often the victims of poverty and lack of access to quality eye care.

Iraqi officials have nullified election results in more than 30 polling stations across the country's 14 provinces due to fraud in last month's provincial balloting. "But we won't cancel the election in any province," election chief Faraj al-Haidari said yesterday, adding that the final results of the January 31 voting would be certified and announced this week.

The population of the <u>Hamas</u>-ruled Gaza Strip has passed 1,4-million people, according to an official Palestinian 2008 census released in Ramallah yesterday. It found that in 2007 the population had reached 1 416 543, compared to 1 022 207 in 1997, with an estimated annual growth rate of 3,3%. Most Palestinians - 2 345 107 - live in the West Bank, an increase of 30% in 10 years.

Members of Kenya's government say culprits of post-election violence last year could still be tried at home despite a parliamentary vote last week that failed to create a special local tribunal. Under the terms of a government-accepted inquiry, mediator Kofi Annan should hand the names of 10 top suspects to the International Criminal Court in The Hague when a March 1 deadline for a Kenyan court passes.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's political fortunes have suffered a new blow as a poll showed support for his Labour Party sliding seven points to 25%. The poll for The Independent on Sunday newspaper gives the main opposition Conservative Party a 16-point lead, with its rating at an unchanged 41%. Labour is only three points ahead of the Liberal Democrats, the poll found.

Drunk blamed for deadly fire

President Muammar Gaddafi, in another jab at a government that he says is failing the people, has called for Libya's oil revenues to be distributed directly to the people. He told the People's Congress that \$32-billion (R318-billion) - roughly Libya's annual oil revenues - should be given to the country's 5-million people. He said the plan would help overcome corruption in the government.

Syria's ambassador in Washington says the US Treasury Department has authorised the transfer of \$500 000 (R5-million) to a Syrian charity. Imad Mustafa said in Damascus yesterday the money for the Children with Cancer Support Association was raised by Syrians living in the US. If confirmed, the transfer would be the latest sign that the US is easing its economic embargo on Syria.

The cabinet minister charged with finding ways to lift Japan's low birth rate is pregnant with her second child. Yuko Obuchi (35) said yesterday she was worried about juggling motherhood and her job, a problem experts say has helped keep the birth rate low - which has added to policy problems in a fast-ageing society. Japan's fertility rate was 1,34 in 2007, far from the 2,07 seen as desirable.

The boss of a building firm, crippled by the crisis in the construction sector in Spain, has turned bank robber in a desperate bid to pay his debts. The 52-year-old, whose company is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, was arrested as he was getting ready to carry out his fifth bank raid. In the past five months he raided four banks in the Catalonia region, pocketing e80 000 (more than R1-million).

Load-Date: February 15, 2009

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Conference Circuit

The Jerusalem Post February 1, 2009 Sunday

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Section: ECONOMICS; Pg. 15

Length: 743 words

Byline: GREER FAY CASHMAN

Body

Sunday, February 1

- * **WOMEN** AND Business is the title of a conference at the Tel Aviv Museum, with presentations by **women** in high-ranking positions across the industrial spectrum. The conference begins at 8.30 a.m.
- * FOR FOREIGN press only. The Israel Project, in conjunction with the Government Press Office, has organized a meeting with Likud, Kadima and Labor candidates at the David Citadel Hotel in Jerusalem at noon. There will be a debate followed by a question-and-answer session designed to shed light on the political platforms of all three parties. The event is in English.
- * THE IRAN Forum at Tel Aviv University has invited Dr. Charles Asher Small, director of the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Anti-Semitism (YIISA) at Yale University to be the guest lecturer at its special session on "The Social Construction of the Other: The Iranian Region and possibility of negotiations." The session will begin at 4 p.m. in Room 133 of the Gilman Building on the TAU campus.
- * THE CENTER for Strategic Dialogue at Netanya Academic College will host a conference on <u>Hamas</u> terrorism. Participants include former ambassador to the US Danny Ayalon, former police commissioner Assaf Hefetz, former Council for National Security head Ilan Mizrahi and former ambassador to India and China Yehoyada Haim. The conference will begin at 4 p.m. in the Tshuva Auditorium on the NAC campus.
- * "BECAUSE BLOOD is soul: The control of production of blood vessels for medical purposes" is the subject of a lecture in Hebrew by Prof. Eli Keshet of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The event starts at 5 p.m. in the Wise Auditorium, Edmond J. Safra campus at Givat Ram. It is within the framework of the "Why?" series of lectures and musical programs sponsored by the Hebrew University Authority for Community and Youth. Admission is free of charge. For more details call (02) 658-6256.
- * THE FIRST of a weekly "Turning Point" series of lectures for cancer patients and their families will be held from 2 p.m. at the Neveh Shalom Center near Latrun. For more details: www.turningpoint.co.il, info@turningpoint.co.il, or call (052) 404-1996, (077) 450- 0970.

Monday, February 2

* THERE WILL be more than 30 panels on a multitude of subjects at the 9th annual Herzliya Conference. It will be held over a three-day period at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya. Due to time constraints, two panels will be

Conference Circuit

running concurrently through most of the conference; all will be broadcast over the conference Web site: www.herzliyaconference.org/eng.

- * A SYMPOSIUM on "The Gaza Operation's Impact on Latin America, Spain and Portugal" will be held at 2 p.m. in the Bronfman Hall on HU's Mount Scopus campus. It is under the auspices of the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace and the Department of Romance and Latin American Studies. For more details call (054) 768-0378.
- * A HEBREW forum on "Economic Policy in Times of Crisis" will convene from 4.30 p.m.-7.30 p.m. in Room 405, Maiersdorf Faculty Club, HU Mount Scopus campus. Speakers include: Finance Ministry director-general Yoram Ariav, Prof. Yosef Zeira, Prof. Manuel Trachtenberg and Prof. Eugene Kandel. For more details call (02) 588-3167 or e- mail msronit@mscc.huji.ac.il

Wednesday, February 4

- * ISRAEL PRIZE laureate Rabbi Avraham Steinberg will deliver a lecture on Jewish Medical Ethics in memory of his father-in-law, Rabbi Charles Weinberg, who passed away a month ago. The lecture will be held at Jerusalem's Yeshurun Central Synagogue, 44 King George Street, at 8 p.m.
- * CAN A Secular-Religious leadership succeed? Religious figures, academics, journalists and politicians from the Right and Left will share their opinions on the subject at a conference organized by the Netanya Academic College's Center for Israeli Heritage. For more details call Amikam Shapira at (052) 245-3660.
- * BUSINESS NETWORK International will host a networking conference at Xanadu, Rehov Benzion Gellis 50, Petah Tikva, at 8 a.m. Sessions will be devoted to contacts with major capitalists, growth partnership, small- and medium-sized businesses in the shadow of the economic crunch, creative legal defense of businesses that have been victims of the meltdown, the struggles of the financial and provident divisions of capital markets, investment psychology and more. Participation fee is NIS 315. To register call 1-800-200-830 or access www.bni.co.il.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Palestinians use Iull in war to get food and check relatives

The Irish Times

January 17, 2009 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 11

Length: 698 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN in Jerusalem

Body

HUMANITARIAN IMPACT:THE GAZA Strip was relatively calm yesterday following Thursday s massive firestorm which destroyed UN and Red Crescent warehouses filled with food and medical supplies and the al-Quds hospital in Tel Hawa neighbourhood.

On the phone from al-Awdah surgical and maternity hospital in Jabaliya in the north, Dr Marwan Saliyah said: For a few hours it has been a little bit quiet. We hope it will continue. People are leaving their homes to look for food and see how relatives are faring.

Since Israel launched its assault on December 27th, the 75- bed hospital has received 370 emergency cases, 57 of whom were kept in hospital, he said. Severe cases were sent to Gaza City or to Egypt.

At present there are only nine patients in the wards, one in intensive care. The injured suffer from crush and shrapnel wounds and phosphorus burns. Two hundred babies have been delivered at the hospital since the beginning of the year, Dr Saliyah said. The average is 500 a month.

In Gaza City just south of Jabaliya, Irish volunteer Caoimhe Butterly also reported a lull in the offensive. Al-Quds hospital had to be evacuated late Thursday of doctors, nurses and patients. Patients were ferried in ambulances to the Red Cross and Shifa hospitals.

Israeli troops, who had driven deep into Tel Hawa, appeared to be pulling back towards the centre of the Strip.

Twenty-three bodies were recovered in Tel Hawa, several from the crater left by the strike on the building where Saeed Siyam, *Hamas* s interior minister, was killed along with family members.

Nearby buildings were heavily damaged. Ms Butterly is living in an ambulance.

To reassure ration recipients, Irish national John Ging, operations chief of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), said the agency is up and running again, setting up new warehouses.

Jaber Wishah, deputy director of the Palestinian Human Rights Centre, who has taken refuge with a brother at Nuseirat camp at the centre of the Strip, went to the centre s office in Khan Younis. His wife, an UNRWA doctor, made the rounds of clinics in a white UN car.

Palestinians use lull in war to get food and check relatives

He said that on Thursday night Israel struck nearby Bureij camp with a bombardment that released acrid smoke, forcing people as far as 2km (1.2 miles) away to cover their noses and mouths with wet cloths. He too said Israeli troops and tanks had pulled back.

But Bureij [where his own home is located] is very dangerous. We can only visit during the three-hour lull, he added.

He and the other 27 members of his family holed up in Nuseirat are fortunate to have a small generator which allows them to have lights and to snatch a look at television and access the internet.

I bought 40 litres of fuel . . . enough to last for four days. We are adapting our feeding habits to what we find. We are playing around with ways to cook lentils, rice and kidney beans. We try to eat as much food as we can because we are not sure if we will have another meal. It s a defence mechanism. My elderly father and mother keep requesting ice cream and unseasonable fruits and vegetables, said Wishah.

Jenny Linnel, a British volunteer based in the southernmost city of Rafah, reported the continuous bombardment had eased although there were occasional explosions and the sound of Apache helicopters overhead.

The tunnels used to smuggle essential supplies and weapons are not the main focus of Israel s heavy bombardment, she said.

Israel is systematically destroying or damaging thousands of homes between the Egyptian border and the main street of Rafah. UNRWA estimates 50,000 people have been driven from their homes here. Most stay temporarily with relatives.

She has visited farming villages near Rafah where 50 houses have been demolished and fruit orchards and fields have been bulldozed. Groups of <u>women</u> and children fleeing have been fired upon by Israeli soldiers and at least one woman in her late 40s was shot and could not be rescued before she bled to death.

According to hospital figures, 48 Palestinians were killed yesterday. The total death toll has reached 1,169, of whom 370 are children and 85 **women**. The numbers injured are now 5,015.

Thirteen Israelis have died, three of them civilians.

Load-Date: January 20, 2009



Israeli election a photo finish; Rivals both claim victory; showdown between Likud, Kadima looms

Ottawa Citizen February 11, 2009 Wednesday Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 604 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Both Tzipi Livni's ruling Kadima Party and Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud challenger declared victory as Israel's general election came to a tight finish late last night, setting the stage for a power struggle.

With 91 per cent of votes counted, television projections showed the centrist Kadima held a two-seat lead ahead of Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing Likud, but the election remained a virtual dead heat.

"Today, the people have chosen Kadima," Ms. Livni told supporters in Tel Aviv as she vowed to become Israel's second *female* prime minister.

"Israel does not belong to the right in the same way that peace does not belong to the left," the 50-year-old Ms. Livni said.

But it was Mr. Netanyahu who claimed victory and told a cheering crowd of supporters that "the people want to be led in a different way."

"The national camp led by the Likud has won an unambiguous majority," Mr. Netanyahu said in Tel Aviv.

"I am certain that I will be able to form the next government," he said. "I can unite all forces of this nation and lead Israel."

The former prime minister's confidence that he had been returned to the office he held from 1996 to 1999 stemmed from a surge in support for other right-wing parties as well as Likud. This made it more likely that he, rather than Ms. Livni, would be able to form Israel's next coalition government.

However, pundits repeatedly cautioned that the race remained too close to call and that it might be prudent to await the official count before trying to predict what kind of horse-trading for cabinet posts was going to take place.

With the race so tight, it might be several days before Israelis learn what the final tally is.

If the exit polls are correct, and Kadima and Likud were in the political equivalent of a photo finish, the issue will be officially decided by President Shimon Peres.

Israeli election a photo finish; Rivals both claim victory; showdown between Likud, Kadima looms

But the real kingmaker is likely to be Avigdor Lieberman, the blunt, extreme right-wing leader of third-place-finishing Israel Beiteinu.

The Russian-speaking immigrant from Soviet Moldova and his party were arguably the biggest winners on the night, improving their standing from 11 to 15 seats.

Mr. Lieberman's main campaign theme was that the country's substantial Arab minority must take an oath of loyalty to the Jewish state.

In a speech to campaign workers after the polls closed, he promised to crush <u>Hamas</u>, which continued to fire rockets into Israel yesterday.

Labour, which was Israel's founding party and its biggest entity for decades, was the night's big loser, slipping for the first time ever to fourth place, behind Israel Beiteinu, as it dropped to 12 seats.

The close results and the fact that 12 parties have apparently won seats in the next Knesset were the latest of many indications that it will be very difficult for either Mr. Netanyahu or Ms. Livni, who is foreign minister in the current Kadima government of outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, to stitch together a coalition.

The main differences between Kadima and Likud has been over how to deal with the Palestinian issue. Kadima favours continuing U.S.-backed talks with the Palestinian Authority that would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state. Likud has advocated what it calls a "bottom-up approach," where many trust-building measures must precede such talks.

Mr. Netanyahu has also been adamant that Jerusalem must remain Israel's undivided capital and that Jewish settlements in the West Bank must be kept to protect Israel's security.

Palestinians also claim Jerusalem as their capital and want most of the several hundred thousand settlers to leave the West Bank, which Israel captured during the Six Day War in 1967.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Amir Cohen, Reuters; A projection in Tel Aviv displays exit-poll results for Israel's top three parties yesterday. From left, seat counts for Likud, Kadima and Israel Beiteinu.;

Colour Photo: David Silverman, AFP/Getty Images; Kadima party leader Tzipi Livni, above, and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu both declared victory last night, though Israeli pollsters are saying the vote is simply too close to call. The final results could take weeks to emerge.;

Colour Photo: Uriel Sinai, AFP/Getty Images; Kadima party leader Tzipi Livni and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, above, both declared victory last night, though Israeli pollsters are saying the vote is simply too close to call. The final results could take weeks to emerge.;

Load-Date: February 11, 2009



Clinton aims for pragmatic diplomacy

Financial Times (London, England)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

USA Edition 1

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Section: OBAMA TEAM; Pg. 4

Length: 782 words

Byline: Daniel Dombey in Washington **Highlight:** Closer ties with Russia and China

Pledge on making fewer adversaries

Body

Hillary Clinton yesterday vowed to strengthen US alliances and international institutions while working closely with the Middle East, China and Russia, in the most detailed account of the incoming administration's foreign policy plans.

Mrs Clinton used her Senate hearing for confirmation as secretary of state - in which she received strong support from legislators - to strike a less ideological and confrontational line than the Bush administration.

She also promised a policy review on Afghanistan, a new approach to Iran and multilateral engagement rather than confrontation with Arab regimes.

She said: "We must build a world with more partners and fewer adversaries. Foreign policy must be based on a marriage of principles and pragmatism, not rigid ideology." She called for the use of "smart power" rather than just "hard" or "soft" power, and said: "Diplomacy will be at the vanguard of our foreign policy."

When Condoleezza Rice had her confirmation hearing four years ago for the same post she described Cuba and Iran as "outposts of tyranny". Mrs Clinton highlighted a more pragmatic prospectus.

She said her top international priorities were to keep the US and its allies secure, "promote economic growth and shared prosperity at home and abroad", and "strengthen America's position of global leadership". She said the new administration would seek to persuade Iran and Syria "to abandon their dangerous behaviour and become constructive regional actors", while strengthening relations with countries such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

In the wake of a presidential campaign in which her most memorable foreign policy comments were a threat to "obliterate" Iran and the faulty memory of coming under Bosnian sniper fire, an assured Mrs Clinton was happy to discuss topics ranging from Arctic policy to Gazprom's acquisition policies, much to the satisfaction of the Senators who number such issues among their favourite causes.

The only pressure focused not on her past or prospects, but on the activities of her husband, former president Bill Clinton, who has agreed to greater transparency about donations to his charitable activities, a subject on which some senators remain unconvinced.

Clinton aims for pragmatic diplomacy

"Foreign governments and entities may perceive the Clinton foundation as a means to gain favour with the secretary of state," said Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the panel. "The only certain way to eliminate this risk going forward is for the Clinton foundation to forswear new foreign contributions when Senator Clinton becomes secretary of state."

Mrs Clinton avoided clear commitments in a committee session presided over by John Kerry, a senator who had hoped to become secretary of state, and watched by Congressional aides, foreign ambassadors and her daughter, Chelsea.

She described the policy review on Afghanistan as the "highest priority" for Barack Obama, the president-elect, and described his stance on the war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda as "more for more" - meaning more US troops and more support from other countries. She said Mr Obama believed in "an attitude towards engagement [with Iran] that might bear fruit".

In her opening statement, Mrs Clinton avoided specifics about the fighting in Gaza but said the ArabIsraeli conflict continued "to inflame tensions from Asia to Africa". She described a final peace deal as "critical not only to the parties involved but to our profound interests in undermining the forces of alienation and violent extremism across our world". She ruled out diplomatic contacts with <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist organisation, as long as it refused to rule out violence and denied Israel's right to exist.

The secretary of statedesignate said the Obama administration would seek ratification of the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and renewed talks on a fissile material cut-off treaty for nuclear materials, as well as further arms reduction deals with Russia.

She added that the new team wanted to "deepen and strengthen" ties with China but relations would depend on Beijing's policies at home and abroad.

In comments about human rights, she focused on economic marginalisation and the role of <u>women</u>, rather than free elections. "If half of the world's population remains vulnerable to economic, political, legal and social marginalisation, our hope of advancing democracy and prosperity will remain in serious jeopardy," said Mrs Clinton.

"We should use the United Nations and other international institutions whenever appropriate and possible. We should work with like-minded friends to make sure these institutions reflect the values that motivated their creation in the first place."

Editorial Comment, Page 8 www.ft.com/obamacabinet

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Scotsman

June 5, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1735 words

Byline: Ross Colvin and Mark smith

Highlight: BARACK Obama called for a "new beginning" in relations between the United States and Islam

yesterday in a historic speech to an audience of more than one billion Muslims.

Body

Addressing the world's Muslims from Cairo, the US President also tackled grievances over two American-led wars and tensions over Iran.

He conceded that tension "has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations".

Mr Obama, who recalled hearing prayer calls of "azaan" at dawn and dusk while living in Indonesia as a boy, went on: "I consider it part of my responsibility as President of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear."

In his keynote speech, occasionally interrupted by shouts of "we love you", Mr Obama said he did not want US troops to stay in Iraq or Afghanistan "forever" and offered mutual respect in seeking to resolve differences with long-time foe Iran.

"We meet at a time of tension between the United States and Muslims around the world - tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate," he said in the address that included quotes from the Koran.

"I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect. America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition.

"This cycle of suspicion and discord must end."

But highlighting the hostility the US President faces from some quarters, al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden issued an online warning to Muslims against any alliance with Christians and Jews, saying it would annul their faith.

Also, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said before Mr Obama spoke that America was "deeply hated" and only action, not "slogans" could change that.

But the US President said the actions of violent, extremist Muslims were "irreconcilable with the rights of human beings" and quoted the Koran to make his point: "Be conscious of God and always speak the truth ..."

He added: "Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism - it is an important part of promoting peace."

The choice of Cairo for the speech underscored Mr Obama's focus on the Middle East, where he faces big foreign policy challenges, from trying to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks to curbing Iran's nuclear ambition, which Washington says is to build atomic bombs.

His trip included a tour of a 14th-century Cairo mosque with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and a visit to the Pyramids.

He was later seen off at the airport, walking up the red carpet in the T-shirt and trousers he had worn to visit the ancient sites.

Mr Obama, who wants to build a coalition of Muslim governments to back his diplomatic moves, affirmed his commitment to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"I intend to personally pursue this outcome with all the patience that the task requires."

Mr Obama said Palestinians had to abandon violence and urged them to acknowledge Israel's right to exist. He also said Israel should stop building settlements in the West Bank.

Palestinian official Nabil Abu Rdainah said: "President Obama's speech is a good start and an important step towards a new American policy."

Israel responded by saying it shared President Obama's hopes for Middle East peace but its own security interests remained paramount. An official statement made no mention of Jewish settlements nor Palestinian statehood.

Islam praises tone of respect and humility

MUSLIMS around the world praised Barack Obama's address as a positive shift in attitude and tone, though some said they wanted him to turn his words into action.

Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesman for <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza, said there had been a change in tone, but complained that Mr Obama did not specifically note the suffering after the three-week Israeli incursion earlier this year that killed 1,000 Palestinians.

"There is a change between the language of President Obama and previous speeches made by George Bush," Mr Barhoum said. "The statements of today did not include a mechanism that can translate his wishes and views into actions."

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, whose Fatah group rivals <u>Hamas</u> for leadership of the Palestinians, welcomed Mr Obama's words. "The part of (his] speech regarding the Palestinian issue is an important step under new beginnings," his spokesman said.

"It shows there is a new and different American policy toward the Palestinian issue."

The speech had a mixed message for Israel, and the Israeli government called it "not bad".

Before the address, Muslims had said they wanted to hear respect for Islam.

"It was very good of him to address Muslims by quoting from holy Quran, something I did not expect in his speech," Osama Ahmed Sameh, 45, an Iraqi civil servant, said.

Shahinda al-Bahgouri, a 20-year-old student at Cairo University said: "All we want as Muslims is for there to be a partnership. And he was seriously humble. Humility is important for us."

Zahid Husain Gardezi, 50, a landowner in the Pakistani city of Multan, was pleased by Mr Obama's warmth. "It is the first time I have ever heard such affectionate words from an American for Muslims," he said.

Marjorie Olster

The seven central strands of Cairo address - what he said and what he really meant

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

"The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements."

Israel was invited to 'blink first' in the deadlocked Middle East peace process, with Barack Obama telling it to halt settlement building in the occupied West Bank.

Obama's comments were the clearest signal so far from the White House that President Obama sees the settlements as a key obstacle to re-starting a Middle East peace process. Mr Obama was quick to tie his proposal to a call for the Palestinians and Arab states to recognise the state of Israel.

Of concern to the Obama administration are the construction of so-called Outposts, seen by critics as embryonic settlements designed to spread territory controlled by the Settlers beyond previous borders.

The big question is how far Mr Obama wants Israel to scale back its settlements: A halt to expansion is one thing; dismantling the towns and villages and pulling out, as happened in Gaza in 2005, would be a far bigger step.

TERRORISM

"The sooner the extremists are isolated and unwelcome in Muslim communities, the sooner we will all be safer."

Mr Obama laid out his belief that terrorism is best combated by a combination of tolerance and a recognition that more can be achieved through non-violent protest.

"Violence is a dead end," he said. "This same story can be told by people from South Africa to South Asia; from Eastern Europe to Indonesia."

He reached back to the experience of African Americans to outline how non-violent protest can achieve spectacular results. "For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation," he said. "But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was a peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the centre of America's founding."

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

"It is clear to all concerned that when it comes to nuclear weapons, we have reached a decisive point. This is not simply about America's interests. It is about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East."

On the issue of Iran's nuclear ambitions, Mr Obama was unequivocal in his opposition, but he sought to portray it in a regional context, saying that Tehran would not find security in building its own nuclear weapons because it would be likely to trigger a wider Middle East arms race.

But Iran's leaders may doubt how practical is his call for all nations to abandon their nuclear arsenals: "I strongly reaffirm America's commitment to seek a world in which no nations hold nuclear weapons."

DEMOCRACY

"You must maintain your power through consent, not coercion; you must respect the rights of minorities, and participate with a spirit of tolerance and compromise."

Mr Obama's appeal for the spread of democracy was always going to be the most delicate part of his Cairo speech, delivered in a state accused by human rights groups of crushing all political opposition.

He said democracy did not depend only on the ballot box, but required a government to follow the rule of law, allow free speech and tolerate opposition.

RELIGION

"I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect."

A call for mutual understanding between the United States and the world's 1.5 billion Muslims was the theme running through Mr Obama's Cairo speech. He told his audience that the lack of understanding was the soil in which terrorism was sown.

Several times he referred to the Koran, quoting passages that underlined the value of non-violence. "The Holy Koran teaches that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind."

WOMENS RIGHTS

"I respect those women who choose to live their lives in traditional roles. But it should be their choice."

An emphasis on <u>women</u>'s rights was perhaps the surprise package of the Cairo speech, with Mr Obama urging Middle Eastern states to grant rights and access to education to **women**.

Few parts of the world draw such criticism as the Middle East for their treatment of <u>women</u>, and the US president insisted that without rights for <u>women</u>, other human rights would be stalled.

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

"All of us must recognise that education and innovation will be the currency of the 21st century, and in too many Muslim communities there remains underinvestment in these areas."

Mr Obama's comments were aimed both at Islamic states who suppress the free market and oil states who rely on petro-dollars to support their economies.

He acknowledged the fears of many Muslims that the march of technology can undermine traditional values, but insisted other states had shown how to accommodate advances without losing their values:

"I know that for many, the face of globalisation is contradictory. The Internet and television can bring knowledge and information, but also offensive sexuality and mindless violence," he said.

"There need not be contradiction between development and tradition. Countries like Japan and South Korea grew their economies while maintaining distinct cultures."

Read the full speech here

Load-Date: March 14, 2011



Obama vows to bridge rift with Muslims; At long-awaited speech in Cairo, he promises to 'seek a new beginning' - Correction Appended

The International Herald Tribune June 5, 2009 Friday

Correction Appended

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1597 words

Byline: Jeff Zeleny and Helene Cooper - The New York Times

Dateline: CAIRO

Body

"We have a responsibility to join together on behalf of the world we seek," he said. "A world where extremists no longer threaten our people, and American troops have come home; a world where Israelis and Palestinians are each secure in a state of their own, and nuclear energy is used for peaceful purposes; a world where governments serve their citizens, and the rights of all God's children are respected."

He dwelled on Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan but reserved some of his sharpest words for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He offered no major initiatives on the Middle East peace process although he put Israelis and Palestinians on notice that he intends to deal directly with what he sees as intransigence on key issues, evoking the concerns of both parties but asking both to shift ground significantly.

The speech in Cairo, which he called a "timeless city," redeemed a promise he made nearly two years ago while running for president. It was, perhaps, the riskiest speech of his young presidency, and Mr. Obama readily conceded that not every goal would be easily or quickly achieved.

"I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition," he said. "Instead, they overlap, and share common principles D principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."

His message was sweeping and forceful Đ at times scolding and combative Đ

promoting democracy in Egypt, warning Israelis against building new settlements, and acknowledging that the United States had fallen short of its ideals, particularly in the Iraq war. It also evoked a new and nuanced tone, and some of Mr. Obama's language drew appreciative applause from his audience of 3,000 invited guests in the Major Reception Hall at Cairo University.

Several times, for instance, he spoke of "Palestine," rather than the more ambiguous term often used by American leaders, "future Palestinian state." And, in reference to the Palestinians, he pointedly mentioned "the daily humiliations Đ large and small Đ that come with occupation."

Obama vows to bridge rift with Muslims At long-awaited speech in Cairo, he promises to 'seek a new beginning'

He described the bond between the United States and Israel as "unbreakable" and urged <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamic militant group in control of the Gaza Strip, to stop violence. But in his next breath, Mr. Obama said Israel must curtail its expansion of West Bank settlements and recognize Palestinian aspirations for statehood. He also acknowledged that <u>Hamas</u>, which the United States labels a terrorist organization, "does have some support among some Palestinians."

"But they also have responsibilities," Mr. Obama said, listing them as "to end violence, recognize past agreements, recognize Israel's right to exist."

"Israelis must acknowledge that just as Israel's right to exist cannot be denied, neither can Palestine's," Mr. Obama said. "The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop."

And, while Israel's hawkish government has not accepted a so-called two-state solution, Mr. Obama said: "The only resolution is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security."

"This is in Israel's interest, Palestine's interest, America's interest and the world's interest," he said. In the Middle East, "too many tears have been shed; too much blood has been shed."

The address drew initial support from Palestinians. Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, called it "a good start and an important step toward a new American policy."

"It was honest, is the first word that comes to mind," said Hossam Bahgat, executive director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, an independent human rights organization.

Mr. Bahgat, who attended the speech at Cairo University, said that one of the most important elements of the speech was what was left out. "I think it was remarkable the speech left out the term terrorism completely," he said. "It may have been a paradigm shift for the United States, away from using this politically charged word."

But others in the region faulted it. Mr. Obama, some noted, did not offer any new initiatives, did not lay out a time line for progress toward a Middle East settlement and asked his audience to accept an view that gave equal weight to Israeli and Palestinian concerns.

That part did not go down well, people in the region said.

"I feel it is important historically, but it will bring nothing new," said Hasim Fouad, 24, a reporter with the independent Egyptian newspaper Al Dustour.

Mr. Obama strode onto the stage to loud applause and a standing ovation in the conference hall. He conceded that his speech came at "a time of great tension between the United States and Muslims around the world."

But he sought to explain that he represented the new face of American leadership. He did not mention the name of George W. Bush, who preceded him in office, and whose policies contributed to the mistrust.

"America is not and never will be at war with Islam. We will, however, relentlessly confront violent extremists who pose a grave threat to our security," Mr. Obama said. "Because we reject the same thing that people of all faiths reject: the killing of innocent men, **women** and children."

Mr. Obama said: "I consider it part of my responsibility as president of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear. But that same principle must apply to Muslim perceptions of America. Just as Muslims do not fit a crude stereotype, America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire."

Mr. Obama offered few details for how to solve myriad problems and conflicts around the globe, but he offered up his own biography as a credible connection to his audience. While the message touched upon a litany of

Obama vows to bridge rift with Muslims At long-awaited speech in Cairo, he promises to 'seek a new beginning'

challenges, it boiled down to simply this: Barack Hussein Obama was standing at the podium as the American president.

"I am also proud to carry with me the good will of the American people, and a greeting of peace from Muslim communities in my country: Salaam alaykum," Mr. Obama said, delivering a common greeting signifying peaceful intent.

Mr. Obama said the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, caused "enormous trauma to our country." He offered no direct criticism of the previous administration but reminded his audience that he had "unequivocally prohibited the use of torture" and had ordered the prison to be closed at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

"The fear and anger that it provoked was understandable, but in some cases it led us to act contrary to our traditions and our ideals," Mr. Obama said. "We are taking concrete actions to change course."

The president divided his speech into seven sections, often sounding like the university professor he was before he sought political office. He touched on "sources of tension" from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, democracy, religious freedom, <u>women</u>'s rights and economic development and opportunity.

He said the Iraq war had been a "war of choice that provoked strong differences in my country and around the world." Although I believe that the Iraqi people are ultimately better off without the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, I also believe that events in Iraq have reminded America of the need to use diplomacy and build international consensus to resolve our problems whenever possible."

By contrast, he described America's military presence in Afghanistan as a necessity after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

"Make no mistake: we do not want to keep our troops in Afghanistan," he said. "We would gladly bring every single one of our troops home if we could be confident that there were not violent extremists in Afghanistan, and now Pakistan, determined to kill as many Americans as possible. But that is not yet the case."

Turning to Iran's contentious nuclear program, he said any nation "should have the right to access to peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities" under international regulations to counter the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Iran maintains its nuclear enrichment program is for peaceful civilian purposes but many in the West suspect it is designed to build a nuclear bomb. "This is not simply about America's interests," Mr. Obama said, "It is also about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead this region and the world down a hugely dangerous path."

As his visit to the region began Wednesday in Saudi Arabia, Mr. Obama was greeted with reminders of the vast gulfs his address must bridge, as voices as disparate as Al Qaeda's and the Israeli government's competed to shape how Mr. Obama's message would be heard.

In a new audiotape, Osama bin Laden condemned Mr. Obama for planting what he called new seeds of "hatred and vengeance" among Muslims, while in Jerusalem, senior Israeli officials complained that Mr. Obama was rewriting old understandings by taking a harder line against new Israeli settlements.

Alan Cowell reported from London. Helene Cooper contributed reporting from Washington, and Michael Slackman from Cairo.

**

CAPTION:

[President Barack Obama]

Obama vows to bridge rift with Muslims At long-awaited speech in Cairo, he promises to 'seek a new beginning'

Photo Credit: MANDEL NGAN/AFP

**

CAPTION:

Palestinians watching a broadcast of President Barak Obama's speech in Cairo at their home in Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip.

Photo Credit: Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/Reuters

Correction

Because of an editing error, an article June 5 about the expectations being set before President Barack Obama's speech in Cairo, which was meant to address U.S. relations with the Muslim world, misstated the source of new tensions between the Obama administration and Israel concerning Israeli settlements. Senior Israeli officials have said that in their view Mr. Obama is rewriting old understandings by taking a harder line against growth within existing settlements, not against new settlements.

President Barack Obama pledged Thursday to "seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world," imploring America and the Islamic world to drop their suspicions of one another and forge new alliances to confront violent extremism and heal religious divides.

Correction-Date: June 12, 2009

Load-Date: June 12, 2009



Obama is all for hope and change; But apparently, not for Iranians

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

June 20, 2009, Saturday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers **Section:** EDITORIAL; Pg. P5A

Length: 795 words

Byline: Charles Krauthammer

Body

WASHINGTON - Millions of Iranians take to the streets to defy a theocratic dictatorship that, among its other finer qualities, is a self-declared enemy of America and the tolerance and liberties it represents.

The demonstrators are fighting on their own, but they await just a word that America is on their side.

And what do they hear from the president of the United States?

Silence. Then, worse. Three days in, the president makes clear his policy: continued "dialogue" with their clerical masters.

Dialogue with a regime that is breaking heads, shooting demonstrators, expelling journalists, arresting activists.

Engagement with - which inevitably confers legitimacy upon - leaders elected in a process that begins as a sham (only four handpicked candidates permitted out of 476) and ends in overt rigging.

Then, after treating this popular revolution as an inconvenience to the real business of Obama-Khamanei negotiations, the president speaks favorably of "some initial reaction from the Supreme Leader that indicates he understands the Iranian people have deep concerns about the election."

Where to begin?

"Supreme Leader"? Note the abject solicitousness with which the American president confers this honorific on a clerical dictator who, even as his minions attack demonstrators, offers to examine some returns in some electoral districts - a farcical fix that will do nothing to alter the fraudulence of the election.

Moreover, this incipient revolution is no longer about the election.

Obama totally misses the point. The election allowed the political space and provided the spark for the eruption of anti-regime fervor that has been simmering for years and awaiting its moment.

But people aren't dying in the street because they want a recount of hanging chads in suburban Isfahan. They want to bring down the tyrannical, misogynist, corrupt theocracy that has imposed itself with the very baton-wielding goons that today attack the demonstrators.

This started out about election fraud. But like all revolutions, it has far outgrown its origins.

Obama is all for hope and change But apparently, not for Iranians

What's at stake now is the very legitimacy of this regime - and the future of the entire Middle East.

This revolution will end either as a Tiananmen (a hot Tiananmen with massive and bloody repression or a cold Tiananmen with a finer mix of brutality and co-optation) or as a true revolution that brings down the Islamic Republic.

The latter is improbable but, for the first time in 30 years, not impossible.

Imagine the repercussions. It would mark a decisive blow to Islamist radicalism, of which Iran today is not just standard-bearer and model, but financier and arms supplier.

It would do to Islamism what the collapse of the Soviet Union did to communism - leave it forever spent and discredited.

In the region, it would launch a second Arab spring. The first in 2005 - the expulsion of Syria from Lebanon, first elections in Iraq and early liberalization in the Gulf states and Egypt - was aborted by a fierce counterattack from the forces of repression and reaction, led and funded by Iran.

Now, with Hezbollah having lost elections in Lebanon and with Iraq establishing the institutions of a young democracy, the fall of the Islamist dictatorship in Iran would have an electric and contagious effect.

The exception - Iraq and Lebanon - becomes the rule. Democracy becomes the wave. Syria becomes isolated; Hezbollah and *Hamas*, patronless.

The entire trajectory of the region is reversed.

All hangs in the balance. The Khamenei regime is deciding whether to do a Tiananmen.

And what side is the Obama administration taking?

None - except for the desire that this "vigorous debate" (press secretary Robert Gibbs' disgraceful euphemism) over election "irregularities" not stand in the way of U.S.-Iranian engagement on nuclear weapons.

Even from the narrow perspective of the nuclear issue, the administration's geopolitical calculus is absurd. There is zero chance that any such talks will denuclearize Iran.

On Monday, Ahmadinejad declared yet again that the nuclear "file is shut, forever." The only hope for a resolution of the nuclear question is regime change, which (if the successor regime were as moderate as pre-Khomeini Iran) might either stop the program, or make it manageable and nonthreatening.

That's our fundamental interest. And our fundamental values demand that America stand with demonstrators opposing a regime that is the antithesis of all we believe.

And where is our president?

Afraid of "meddling." Afraid to take sides between the head-breaking, <u>women</u>-shackling exporters of terror - and the people in the street yearning to breathe free.

This from a president who fancies himself the restorer of America's moral standing in the world.

Krauthammer may be reached by e-mail at letters@charles krauthammer.com.

Load-Date: June 22, 2009



Leftists cowering to a running dog of US democracy

The Australian

June 11, 2009 Thursday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 728 words

Byline: Sandmonkey, Evan Thomas, David Penberthy, Mark Arbib

Body

Egyptian blogger Sandmonkey on the mood in Cairo in the lead-up to the speech by US President Barack Obama

LOTS of democracy activists are not happy, especially leftist ones. They are considering the visit as cowering to a dictator and giving him undeserved prominence. This is incredibly funny to me personally because I always thought their position on America's push for democracy and rights in Egypt was ``unwanted imperialistic interference in Egyptian affairs, and anyone who wants it is a traitorous stupid ignorant zionist jew spy dog".

At least this was the case in the Bush years. How time changes things. Do you think that the leftist activists who are very pissy about Obama's visit will actually do something about it? Like, will they start a demonstration maybe? Man, I think I will roll on the floor laughing the moment I see an ``Obama is Bush" poster.

Sandmonkey after hearing Obama's speech in Cairo:

MY favourite parts of the speech had to be the following in order: The way he delivered el salamu alaikom (the audience looked like it just had a collective orgasm), the pandering to hijabis, the dig at Hillary (<u>women</u> became leaders in Islamic countries, while the US is still ``struggling with it"? Nice!).

But I digress. The man did a good job appeasing the Islamic world and that's really what the people who voted for him wanted, right? That's why the section on human rights in his speech was the weakest because, let's face it, he ain't going to push on human rights and democracy. That era is gone.

We are all about diplomacy and friendship now, and that's what the American people want, even if the price is that the democracy activists in Egypt get f..ked. But, then again, the democracy activists in Egypt didn't really like it when Bush was calling for democracy and human rights, so maybe they deserve it.

Anyway, like all good things, the speech had to end. While leaving the university I saw a small demonstration by CODE PINK. YES, f..king Code Pink. Cindy Sheehan's Code Pink. And they were protesting [against] the speech and Obama over Gaza, and how they had a letter from the *Hamas* leaders that they want delivered to him. Oh Code Pink, you bunch of unemployed leftist wankers, you made my day.

Newsweek's Evan Thomas on Washington radio station WETA on February 2, 2007:

GORDON Peterson: Are the mainstream media bashing the president unfairly?

Leftists cowering to a running dog of US democracy

Thomas: Well, our job is to bash the president.

Thomas last Friday on MSNBC:

I MEAN, in a way, Obama's standing above the country, above the world, he's sort of God.

David Penberthy in The Punch yesterday:

FORGET the Red Shield Appeal, Daffodil Day, the work of the Black Dog Institute and, dare I mention them, the Make a Wish Foundation. I'm donating my cash to victims of NPD: Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

While they haven't exactly suffered in silence -- mainly because their key symptom is high-volume, profanity-laden abuse -- victims of NPD have nevertheless suffered foryears without any formal recognition of their condition.

It was made clear on the letters pages of The Australian this morning by Rob McCasker of Coomera, Qld, who writes: Tracy Grimshaw has every right to be upset over the vile and unprovoked attack by Gordon Ramsay. However, she failed in her response by dismissing Ramsay as an arrogant narcissist. Narcissistic Personality Disorder is very real and has sufferers living a sociopathic existence destroying the lives of many people they claim to love; in short, NPD is emotional rape. McCasker continued: If Grimshaw knew Ramsay suffered from this mental turmoil, then a far more responsible use of her national prime-time TV spot would have been to recommend he (and others) seek help to manage his condition. There you have it. Gordon's the real victim here.

New Employment Participation Minister Mark Arbib tells ABC1's Tony Jones who to run on Lateline:

ARBIB: Tony, what I'm willing to do, I'm willing to come back on Lateline on Friday night and debate Andrew Southcott, the Liberal Party spokesperson on employment, right here, and let's talk about jobs, let's talk about a plan.

Jones: We'll decide who comes on this program and the manner in which they come, if you don't mind.

Arbib: I'll debate Joe Hockey then if you'd like Joe Hockey.

Melbourne ABC presenter Jon Faine talks about the weather yesterday:

I WONDER if this snow is the result of globalwarming?

Load-Date: June 10, 2009



Obama stands idly by while Iranians fight for liberty

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

June 21, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 816 words

Byline: Charles Krauthammer

Body

WASHINGTON? Millions of Iranians take to the streets to defy a theocratic dictatorship that, among its other finer qualities, is a self-declared enemy of America and the tolerance and liberties it represents. The demonstrators are fighting on their own, but they await just a word that America is on their side. And what do they hear from the president of the United States?

Silence. Then, worse. Three days in, the president makes clear his policy: continued "dialogue" with their clerical masters. Dialogue with a regime that is breaking heads, shooting demonstrators, expelling journalists, arresting activists. Engagement with ? which inevitably confers legitimacy upon ? leaders elected in a process that begins as a sham (only four handpicked candidates permitted out of 476) and ends in overt rigging. Then, after treating this popular revolution as an inconvenience to the real business of negotiations between President Barack Obama and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the president speaks favorably of "some initial reaction from the supreme leader that indicates he understands the Iranian people have deep concerns about the election." Where to begin? "Supreme leader"? Note the abject solicitousness with which the American president confers this honorific on a clerical dictator who, even as his minions attack demonstrators, offers to examine some returns in some electoral districts? a farcical fix that will do nothing to alter the fraudulence of the election. Moreover, this incipient revolution is no longer about the election. Obama totally misses the point. The election allowed the political space and provided the spark for the eruption of anti-regime fervor that has been simmering for years and awaiting its moment. But people aren't dying in the street because they want a recount of hanging chads in suburban Isfahan. They want to bring down the tyrannical, misogynist, corrupt theocracy that has imposed itself with the very baton-wielding goons that today attack the demonstrators. This started out about election fraud. But like all revolutions, it has far outgrown its origins. What's at stake now is the very legitimacy of this regime? and the future of the entire Middle East. This revolution will end either as a Tiananmen (a hot Tiananmen with massive and bloody repression or a cold Tiananmen with a finer mix of brutality and co-optation) or as a true revolution that brings down the Islamic Republic. The latter is improbable but, for the first time in 30 years, not impossible. Imagine the repercussions. It would mark a decisive blow to Islamist radicalism, of which Iran today is not just standard-bearer and model, but financier and arms supplier. It would do to Islamism what the collapse of the Soviet Union did to communism? leave it forever spent and discredited. In the region, it would launch a second Arab spring. The first in 2005? the expulsion of Syria from Lebanon, first elections in Iraq and early liberalization in the Gulf states and Egypt? was aborted by a fierce counterattack from the forces of repression and reaction, led and funded by Iran. Now, with Hezbollah having lost elections in Lebanon and with Iraq establishing the institutions of a young democracy, the fall of the Islamist dictatorship in Iran would have an electric and contagious effect. The exception? Iraq and Lebanon? becomes the rule. Democracy becomes the wave. Syria becomes isolated; Hezbollah and *Hamas*, patronless. The entire trajectory of the region is reversed. All hangs in the balance. The Khamenei regime is deciding whether to do a Tiananmen. And what side is the Obama administration taking? None. Except for the desire that this "vigorous

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debate" (press secretary Robert Gibbs' disgraceful euphemism) over election "irregularities" not stand in the way of U.S.-Iranian engagement on nuclear weapons. Even from the narrow perspective of the nuclear issue, the administration's geopolitical calculus is absurd. There is zero chance that any such talks will denuclearize Iran. On Monday, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared yet again that the nuclear "file is shut, forever." The only hope for a resolution of the nuclear question is regime change, which (if the successor regime were as moderate as pre-Khomeini Iran) might either stop the program or make it manageable and nonthreatening. That's our fundamental interest. And our fundamental values demand that America stand with demonstrators opposing a regime that is the antithesis of all we believe. And where is our president? Afraid of "meddling." Afraid to take sides between the head-breaking, women-shackling exporters of terror? and the people in the street yearning to breathe free. This from a president who fancies himself the restorer of America's moral standing in the world. Charles Krauthammer's e-mail address is letters@charleskrauthammer.com Washington Post Writers Group

Load-Date: June 21, 2009



PM head-down, tail-up denying talk of an early election

The Australian

June 11, 2009 Thursday

2 - All-round First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 756 words

Byline: Kevin Rudd, Mark Kenny, Mark Arbib, David Penberthy, Sandmonkey

Body

The PM shows off his proficiency in odd Australian idioms with Neil Mitchell on Radio 3AW yesterday

MITCHELL: Have you told the Party to be on stand-by for a November election?

PM: Absolutely not. We are head-down, tail-up wrestling with the challenge of getting through this global recession.

Mitchell: So it's not a matter of being ready at any time?

PM: No, we're head-down, tail-up in terms of getting the rollout of this infrastructure program.

At a press conference in Victoria:

Journalist: Prime Minister, there was a report in The Sydney Morning Herald--

PM: There often are.

Journalist: It suggested you're preparing for an election in November of this year. What's your reaction to that?

PM: I think pigs might fly.

Mark Kenny in The Advertiser yesterday:

PRIME Minister Kevin Rudd has added a third language to his well known mastery of Mandarin and bureaucratic English: common Australian. Sensitive to criticism that his new front bench had overlooked <u>women</u>, Mr Rudd yesterday dismissed the claims with the Aussie maxim, ``fair shake of the sauce bottle, mate". More curiously, he said it three times during a short television interview with Sky News. The deliberate use of bush slang had political watchers suggesting the poll-conscious PM may have been responding to focus group research calling for a more a common touch in his communication style.

New minister Mark Arbib tells Tony Jones how to run ABC1's Lateline:

ARBIB: Tony, I'm willing to come back on Lateline on Friday night and debate Andrew Southcott, the Liberal Party spokesperson on employment, right here, and let's talk about jobs, let's talk about a plan.

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Load-Date: June 10, 2009



<u>Bâtisseuses de Paix comprises Jewish, Muslim and Christian women;</u> FRANCE: Sharing a Recipe for Peace

IPS (Latin America)

June 3, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 795 words

Byline: Alecia D. McKenzie

Body

The <u>women</u> are members of the Bâtisseuses de Paix, or the Peace Builders, an organisation that comprises Jewish, Muslim, Christian and 'even agnostic' <u>women</u>, working to improve relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities in France amidst a growing number of anti-Semitic incidents.

They meet once a month at this bakery, Les Jardins de la Mediterrannee, located in a shopping centre flanked by beige and grey housing blocks. There they concoct pastries from Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Israel and other countries, in an activity that brings together individuals who might normally not meet, or even speak to one another.

'I love this rapprochement of people,' says Julie Sultan, a Tunisian-born Jew who has lived in France 53 years. 'No white, black, brown or any colour. Just a meeting of hearts. We are all sisters, and to tell the truth, I feel closer to Arab **women** than to French **women**.'

Ouafa Kabsi, a Tunisian Muslim, says that for her, being a member of the group is a way to 'open up' and to change preconceptions. 'We're all human beings, we're all the same,' she says.

Formed in 2002 by French Jewish journalist Annie-Paule Derczansky in response to acts of anti-Semitism in the suburbs around Paris, the Bâtisseuses say they have a core membership of some 60 <u>women</u> and see a further 300 to 400 each year at their various activities.

'<u>Women</u> are the backbone of Mediterranean families and the builders of the future,' says Derczansky. 'What we do is an example to children that happy co-existence is possible because we've seen many friendships develop between Muslim and Jewish *women*.'

These sentiments contrast with the rise in ethnic tensions in France, home to the largest Jewish and Muslim populations in Western Europe (numbered at around 600,000 and five million respectively). Indeed, several high-profile cases involving both communities have hit the courts over the past month, leading to much discussion and soul-searching.

In the most disturbing case, a Frenchman of African origin, Youssouf Fofana, is on trial for the 2006 murder of a Jewish young man, Ilan Halimi. Also accused are 26 alleged accomplices of Fofana, including <u>women</u> and teenagers.

Halimi was kidnapped in January 2006, held for ransom, and tortured for three weeks in a cellar in the Paris suburb Bagneux before he was left handcuffed to a tree near a railway station. When police found him, he was in a state of

Bâtisseuses de Paix comprises Jewish, Muslim and Christian women FRANCE: Sharing a Recipe for Peace

shock, his body covered with burns and cuts. He died on way to hospital. Prosecutors say the perpetrators targeted Jews for ransom money.

The Bâtisseuses de Paix are now planning meetings to 'allow people to comprehend what in the education of young people could have led them to commit such a crime,' says Derczansky, who also acts as president of the group. 'We don't want to explain or to excuse, but to try to understand.'

Along with the bakery workshops, the group organises dinner meetings where diplomats, psychoanalysts and other experts are invited to give speeches. The Bâtisseuses also work with schoolchildren, taking them alternately to the Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute) and to the Musee d'art et d'histoire de Judaisme (Judaism Art and History Museum), both in Paris. 'The idea is to show how much Jews and Muslims have in common,' says Derczansky. Her hope is that if religious harmony can be fostered at a young age, there might be fewer cases of ethnic violence.

But the group has its work cut out for it in other ways. Although members make it a point to avoid discussing the political situation in the Middle East, events there can reignite simmering hatred. During the Israeli military campaign against <u>Hamas</u> in January of this year, some synagogues were attacked, and Jewish students were abused on the streets.

The Bâtisseuses suspended all meetings because 'everybody was feeling too much pain,' says Derczansky. She proposed a talking session, 'like in psychoanalysis', but no one responded.

'Nobody got back to me,' she recalls wryly. 'But the important thing is that no one withdrew from the group.'

The organisation is now busy with another of its projects: trying to get the Grande Mosquée of Paris to erect a plaque showing that Jewish adults and children were sheltered there during World War II before they made their escape to other countries.

The group has launched an appeal to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria (under whose authority the mosque falls) to open the historical archives on the role of the mosque during the German occupation of France.

'This would send such a strong symbolic message if people knew that Muslims were working to save Jewish people during World War II, while the French government was in collaboration with the Nazis,' Derczansky says. © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: June 3, 2009



Religious bullying is a problem around the world; Vigilante enforcement of theocratic codes can crop up when a minority group doesn't conform.

The Christian Science Monitor
May 7, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 812 words

Byline: Walter Rodgers

Body

A friend, a Pakistani journalist, recently came out of the troubled Swat valley in northwest Pakistan and told a chilling tale. He said, "It is now halal [religiously sanctioned] to kill journalists." The tribal Muslim clerics in Swat, he said, have declared open season on reporters whose writings they disapprove of. My friend, a brave and devout Sunni Muslim, seemed quite shaken, having spent two weeks reporting under threat in Swat, an area once called the Switzerland of Pakistan.

Several journalists have already been murdered for a perceived breach of theocratic codes. Such violence is religious "correctness" in the extreme, but vigilante enforcement of theocratic codes can crop up whenever and wherever an individual or minority does not conform to the religious tenets of the majority. In the United States, when Muslim Congressman Keith Ellison (D) of Minnesota asked to be sworn in using the Koran, the personal attacks on him from the Christian right were just short of poisonous. In areas such as the Balkans and Iraq, religious intimidation has taken the form of ethnic cleansing, forcibly coercing religious minorities to emigrate. In the West Bank a decade ago, I witnessed *Hamas* activists taunting Christian *women* for wearing crosses around their necks. Though Palestinian officials deny religious coercion, the exodus of Christian Arabs from the West Bank suggests otherwise. Another form of religious intimidation worms its way through US high schools. Teenagers complain of being verbally assaulted by "God squads," whose members roam corridors demanding to know if their fellow students share their messianic religious visions - and if not, why not? Religious bullying is "a great concern," says Deborah Lauter of the Anti-Defamation League. "It does happen a lot ... we believe it's a pervasive problem." Daniel Mach of the American Civil Liberties Union agrees: "It's clear this problem is not going to go away soon." The ACLU is representing a group of anonymous students in Santa Rosa County, Fla., who allege that school officials created a coercive environment in promoting their personal religious beliefs in school and at school events. "The students are proceeding anonymously to avoid intimidation and threats of violence...," Mr. Mach said. Indeed, the list of complaints from those who are unwilling to go forward for fear of intimidation and possible violence "is far longer [than] the list of cases filed," according to Art Spitzer, another ACLU attorney. He said it is easier to win these cases in the courts, but religionist partisans win in the schools because "there are no judges in the principals' offices." A friend in a northern Virginia high school said religious hectoring by students is "very aggressive and sometimes involves physical threats." He told of a young Jewish friend who is frequently told by other students that her religion is "wrong because you don't believe in God." Judaism can be no less bullying, however, when it finds itself in the majority. Walk through Mea Shearim, an Orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem. If you are a nonobservant Jew, or worse, a gentile, you risk being cursed or stoned. I was spat upon eight years ago for merely walking through the area once (no, it wasn't a Jewish holiday or Sabbath). These incidents are rarely discussed because we fear giving offense. It's disingenuous, however, to pretend they do not occur. Intimidation is intimidation, whether it's found in Pakistan, Jerusalem, Florida, or northern Virginia. Western civilization has become far too tolerant of religious

Religious bullying is a problem around the world Vigilante enforcement of theocratic codes can crop up when a minority group doesn't conform.

intolerance that masquerades as freedom of religion. Young people today are taught not to be "judgmental," but without making critical judgments, how can we curtail threats to individual liberty? And amid such intellectual tapioca learning itself becomes irrelevant. Zoe Oldenburg, a scholar of a most horrific outbreak of religious violence, the Roman Catholic Church's Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars of the 13th century, wrote, "the essential value of any faith must be judged by the effect it produces in the lives of its devotees...." Religion should have a humanizing effect on its adherents. Civilizing barbarians was an original aim of Islam. Christianity is supposed to cultivate charity for all mankind. The original idea of loving thy neighbor as thyself was first articulated in Jewish Scripture. Yet when religion loses sight of its potential civilizing leaven, it risks merely becoming tyranny in subtler guise. Thomas Jefferson swore "eternal hostility toward every tyranny over the mind of man." Today, however, political and religious leaders tend to snooze their way through the various manifestations of religious coercion and intimidation reminiscent of a darker medieval world. Walter Rodgers, a former senior international correspondent for CNN, writes a biweekly column.

Load-Date: February 19, 2010



Obama's new start The world's 1.5 billion Muslims were the target audience of a speech delivered by US President Barack Obama

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

June 6, 2009 Saturday

1 - Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 71

Length: 774 words

Byline: Stephen Collinson

Body

US PRESIDENT Barack Obama vowed to forge a `new beginning' for Islam and America in a landmark speech to the world's Muslims, pledging to purge years of `suspicion and discord'.

In what may be one of the defining moments of his presidency, Mr Obama on Thursday laid out a new blueprint for US Middle East policy, promising to end mistrust, forge a state for Palestinians and defuse a nuclear showdown with Iran.

"So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace," said Mr Obama, who was greeted with a standing ovation as he stepped up to the podium at Cairo University.

Mr Obama, fresh from talks in Saudi Arabia with King Abdullah and with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on his first major visit to the Middle East, drew applause as he sprinkled his text with allusions to the Koran and the Bible.

In the university's imposing domed Great Hall, Mr Obama said the US bond with Israel, the source of much Arab distrust of the US, was unbreakable.

He rejected `ignorant' rants by those who deny the Nazi Holocaust -- an implied shot at Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

But breaking with his predecessor George W Bush, Mr Obama also rebuked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to halt West Bank settlement expansion.

- "I have come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world," Mr Obama said in a speech targeting the globe's 1.5 billion Muslims via television, the internet and on social networking sites.
- "This cycle of suspicion and discord must end," he said, vowing to fight 'negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear'.
- "But that same principle must apply to Muslim perceptions of America," he said, and touched on contentious regional issues such as democracy and **women**'s rights.

Obama's new start The world's 1.5 billion Muslims were the target audience of a speech delivered by US

President Barack Obama

Part of Mr Obama's motivation appeared to be to cleanse the US image in the Muslim world, which has been tarnished by events such as the Iraq war, the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal and the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

Targeting young Muslims, Mr Obama said: ``I know there are many -- Muslim and non-Muslim -- who question whether we can forge this new beginning.

"Some are eager to stoke the flames of division, and to stand in the way of progress. Some suggest that it isn't worth the effort -- that we are fated to disagree, and civilisations are doomed to clash.

``There is so much fear, so much mistrust. But if we choose to be bound by the past, we will never move forward."

As expected, the speech received mixed reactions.

The Islamist <u>Hamas</u> group which rules Gaza said the address showed `tangible change' but also contradictions and appeared to be a bid to polish the US image.

Arab League chief Amr Mussa said the speech was `balanced' and paved the way for good relations.

Israel said it was ready to work for reconciliation with the Muslim world `while taking into consideration its national interest, first and foremost its security'.

Mr Obama called on Israel and the Palestinians to revive stalled peace talks, demanding that Palestinians halt violence and Israelis ease the plight of those in the occupied territories.

"Too many tears have been shed. Too much blood has been shed," he said.

"America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own. The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements.

"This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop."

The US president renewed his offer of dialogue with arch-foe Iran `without preconditions'.

"It will be hard to overcome decades of mistrust, but we will proceed with courage, rectitude and resolve," Mr Obama said.

Earlier, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had fired a shot across Mr Obama's bows, saying: ``Nations in the region hate the United States from the bottom of their hearts because they have seen violence, military intervention and discrimination."

Mr Obama weaved his own biography, with Islamic lineage among family members in Kenya, and several years growing up as a boy in Indonesia, into his search to pick out a new path for the US and Islam.

He portrayed Islam as an essential part of the American cultural mosaic and said one of his duties as president was to make sure the Muslim faith was not misrepresented.

But he surprised his audience by saying Islam must also not misrepresent the US, and warned he would `never tolerate' violence, citing the trauma of the September 11 attacks in 2001.

Mr Obama has ended his Middle East visit and flown to Germany.

Load-Date: June 6, 2009

Obama's new start The world's 1.5 billion Muslims were the target audience of a speech delivered by US President Barack Obama



A conflict of commerce in the West Bank

Financial Times (London, England)

May 5, 2009 Tuesday

London Edition 1

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 793 words

Byline: Tobias Buck in Hebron

Highlight: Global village

Cheap imports from China are imperilling Palestinian manufacturers, writes Tobias Buck

Body

The antiquated looms that dominate the factory floor of the Herbawi textile company make an ear-splitting noise, rattling and hissing as they slowly weave together 3,500 yarns into rolls of black-and-white cotton cloth.

It takes the machines half an hour to produce 1.25 metres of fabric. That is the traditional measure for one keffiyah, the headscarf recognised around the world as the symbol of Palestinian nationalism.

Yasser Herbawi, who founded the factory in the West Bank city of Hebron in 1961, is nearly 80. But he still spends much of the day keeping a beady eye on his looms.

His company, Mr Herbawi says proudly, is the only manufacturer of keffiyahs in the Palestinian territories. It survived the 1967 war, the Israeli occupation, two Palestinian intifadas and countless days of violence. But, over the past decade, the factory has come up against an economic threat far more potent and menacing: the industrial might of China.

"The Chinese are our biggest enemy," says Azzad Herbawi, who runs the factory with his father. "We sell a dozen scarves to shops for Shk120 (\$29, EUR22, £19), but shop owners and traders can buy a dozen Chinese-made keffiyahs for Shk60, and then sell them for 70 or 80."

The Herbawis insist that the quality and finish of their headscarves is far superior to the Chinese-made keffiyahs. But with prices so low, the Chinese merchandise is eating away at their market share. Azzad Herbawi estimates that at least one in two keffiyahs sold in the Palestinian territories today comes from China - a reality that has left its mark on the factory floor. Only seven of the 15 looms are operating, and of the 15 workers employed by them during their monopoly years, only one remains.

China's rise as an economic superpower has, of course, troubled manufacturers the world over for many years. The Palestinian private sector, however, hobbled by perpetual instability and the restrictions of the Israeli occupation, is more vulnerable than most. Manufacturers, in Hebron in particular, used to specialise in comparatively simple products such as textiles and shoes - markets where China enjoys an overwhelming advantage.

A conflict of commerce in the West Bank

Jibreel Mousa Natsheh, the secretary-general of Hebron's chamber of commerce and a shoe manufacturer, says local industry has suffered a steep decline since Chinese imports started arriving more than a decade ago: "In the shoe industry, before the competition from China, we had 15,000 workers making 70,000 pairs of shoes a day. Today, we have only 5,000 workers and they make only 20,000 pairs."

The industrial decline has implications beyond Hebron. With Israeli-Palestinian peace talks stalled, many are pinning their hopes on boosting the Palestinian economy as a way to stabilise the region. If that policy is to succeed, diplomats and mediators will not only have to tackle the stifling impact of the Israeli occupation, but also the damage inflicted on the local economy by the competition from China.

In the local souk, evidence of that damage abounds. Many boxes piled outside traders' stalls bear Chinese lettering, and the labels dangling from the shirts, shoes and toys on sale reveal that almost all were made in China. Most traders selling keffiyahs admit they stock only Chinese-made headscarves.

Competition from the Far East has also left its mark on the lingerie factory owned by the Shawer brothers. The company specialises in the risqué underwear that Palestinian <u>women</u> traditionally wear on their wedding night. One set typically sells for as much as Shk2,000; a Chinese-made combination can be bought for a quarter of that.

<u>Hamas</u> Shawer, one of the brothers, says Chinese imports are "like a volcano - burning everything in its way". The company, like so many others, has had to cut back workers and production, and now sells mainly underwear made in China, but labelled with its own brand.

This subtle transformation shows that - to some Hebron entrepreneurs at least - there is a profitable flip-side to the Chinese competition. Over the past years, the Hebron business community has built up close ties with Chinese manufacturers, and the city's merchants now function as the main importers of Chinese goods into the West Bank.

The chamber of commerce says Hebron traders have opened more than 20 offices in manufacturing centres on China's east coast, and that at least 5,000 local merchants are active in the China trade.

For Mr Herbawi, his son and their keffiyah factory, however, there is no easy way to beat the Chinese competition. They hope that - once a Palestinian state is established - they will be able to persuade the government to impose higher tariffs on imports.

The keffiyah, after all, says Azzad Herbawi, is "a symbol of national pride - we should be supported by everyone".

Load-Date: May 4, 2009



Questions worth fighting for in fields of Afghanistan

Canberra Times (Australia)

May 12, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 10 Length: 750 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

David H. Lewis (Letters, May 9), responding to the recent Afghan civilian casualties from a misdirected US airstrike, says the war in Afghanistan is illegal and "utterly illogical".

On the question of the war's legality Lewis is ill-informed. The United Nations Security Council sanctioned the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001.

As to it being illogical, if he finds it illogical to try to defeat a fanatical movement that would again provide safe haven for al-Qaeda, instability to its neighbours and terror and misery to its people, then he has a strangely inverted notion of logic and ethics compared with mine.

I hope he reads the article in the same edition by Virginia Haussegger ("Facing Taliban terror", Panorama, May 9, p16), who among feminists writing in this paper is one of the few who seems willing to keep faith with the <u>women</u> of Afghanistan. As she makes plain, defeat of these fanatical misogynists is the only moral strategy.

Lewis might be surprised to learn that he is not the only person who is appalled and saddened by the loss of life from misguided US airstrikes but instead of using this as a convenient stick to beat Americans can I suggest he asks why airstrikes are necessary at all?

The primary reason is the limp contribution by the supposed leaders of the war, the European Union, which if should ensure there are enough troops on the ground to make air warfare unnecessary. The trouble is, it seems, the governments of Europe are all too willing to cower to people writing in high dudgeon to newspapers who believe that there is no cause in life worth fighting for.

Greg Ellis, Griffith What an interesting range of positions on Afghanistan in Forum on Saturday.

On the one hand we have another of Virginia Haussegger's terrifyingly frank opinion pieces on how the Taliban treat <u>women</u> (and dissenters) in their society, treatment that defies logic and belief, yet as any reader of The Kite Runner and similar novels would know, presumably accurate. On the other hand we have two more letter writers advocating, not unreasonably, either peace talks or complete withdrawal.

I can't see how any civilised society could possibly leave the <u>women</u> of Afghanistan (or Pakistan) to a fate as described by Haussegger through some sort of peace deal with the Taliban or by abandoning them, so perhaps she is right, the only solution is complete annihilation. But that doesn't sound very civilised either.

Questions worth fighting for in fields of Afghanistan

Malcolm Robertson, Chapman The US admits culpability in killing civilians in Afghanistan and we are told that an Afghan whose bicycle has been stolen will go to the Taliban and not (he laughs) to Hamid Karzai's policemen.

Likewise, in Palestine, <u>Hamas</u>, committed to the destruction of Israel, wins popular support. In Lebanon, too, Hezbollah help people, so they too enjoy greater popular support than the rest of the elected government.

We'll never bomb out the Taliban.

Clearly they are (up to a point) the people's choice. So, one might well ask, what are we doing there? The answer is that we, along with the other invaders, must talk to them, not bomb them.

A better moral position for Australia than threatening lives and wasting taxpayers' money would be to urge, and broker, US-Taliban talks.

Neither we nor the US have yet learned the lesson of Vietnam.

There has to be a better way out than killing people.

Barrie Smillie, Duffy Jack Waterford wonders if there is much point in Australia's involvement in America's wars, as its contribution is unlikely to affect the outcome ("In combat, and often in vain", Forum, May 9, p8).

I suspect that both sides know this to be so, but the arrangement serves their respective purposes well: America looks upon Australia's support as justification for its adventure, while Australia takes the view that its token gesture would deter the US from referring to us as a fair-weather friend.

What strikes me as unacceptable, however, is how willing our government is to faithfully toe the US line, adopt one meaningless slogan after another and seems reticent to advance a fresh idea, especially when the situation desperately calls for one.

Granted, it is the US that has been making the greatest contribution to the wars, and its leadership is, therefore, likely to have the final say. However, recent events have more than adequately demonstrated that might does not make America right. If the US is willing to take risks and sacrifice its soldiers to a poorly planned war, it is unforgivable if this country were to do the same.

Sam Nona, Burradoo

Load-Date: May 11, 2009



Family of footballers eases intifada

The Sunday Independent (South Africa)

April 19, 2009

e1 Edition

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Section: DISPATCHES; Pg. 16

Length: 745 words

Byline: Howard Schneider

Body

Like any soccer match among six-year-olds, the gang behind the village school brought as much structure to the game as a swarm of bees.

But Omar Abu Hamad, coach of champions Wadi al-Nees Blue Eagles of the Palestinian Football Association, was already scouting his next generation of players - including the speedy sons of two of his current stars. If all goes well, he said, this village of 800 in the occupied West Bank will contribute to a Palestinian national team worthy of the world stage.

"Their talent puts them on the right track," he said of the children. "The reputation is very important to us. We want to build our team."

More than 15 years after the Oslo peace accords put Palestinian society on what was envisioned as a path to self-government, prospects for the creation of a Palestinian state are in limbo. The current Israeli government has said that progress on security must precede steps to establish final borders, or resolve other key issues. Palestinian society, meanwhile, is largely split between the Fatah movement, which favours a negotiated settlement with Israel, and *Hamas*, which rejects Israel's existence.

While the Oslo accords in 1993 gave the Palestinians more leeway to build civil institutions, the intervening decadeand-a-half in many ways has been time lost - a fact the two sides blame on each other.

But late last year, the soccer league completed a full 21-game season. That may not seem like a profound step forward, but it is one that gave fans of teams in 22 towns and villages a taste of normalcy, and a chance to wave a flag in a context that didn't involve rock-throwing or tear gas.

Play had been suspended for several years because of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, that broke out in 2000.

But the sport appears to be on the upswing under the guidance of Jibril Rajoub, better known as the general who ran one of the two main security services of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Though still active in politics, Rajoub is head of the Palestinian Football Association.

Roughly \$3 million in overseas donations and some local funding paid for renovations that brought Ramallah's al-Husseini stadium up to international standards. Last year, the Palestinian national team played its first ever Fifasanctioned home match: a 1-1 draw against Jordan.

Family of footballers eases intifada

Perhaps as significant, Wadi al-Nees - for its winning effort in last season's league play - earned a \$25 000 prize that will buy the Blue Eagles new shoes and equipment and perhaps start developing a home pitch. The team practices on the same blacktop playground where the coach scouts the six-year-olds.

This year the association won the first ever development award from Fifa, soccer's governing body.

"For the first time in years we had a league from A to Z. For the first time in the history of Palestine we had a league for *women*. We had a home pitch," Rajoub said.

"One of our problems is to convince the international community that we deserve independence. Presenting the Palestinian people through sport is important to convince the world that we are normal."

It has certainly become central to Wadi al-Nees, the playfully named "Valley of the Porcupines".

The village sits on a hillside south of Bethlehem, near the Israeli settlement of Efrat. Many men in the town work as stonecutters in a nearby Palestinian-owned quarry. It's a quiet life in a village where almost everyone is related, by blood or marriage, to the Abu Hamad clan.

Which makes the soccer, like everything else here, a family affair. The team is largely a gaggle of brothers and cousins, although they have imported a player or two.

That might seem a recipe for trouble - particularly when it comes to benching your brother or telling your nephew he didn't make the cut - but Salim Abu Hamad said people trusted his judgment.

A clubhouse full of trophies and banners shows why. Goalkeeper Mohammed Abu Hamad notes that in 21 games last year the Blue Eagles allowed only 10 goals.

"The secret is loving one another," the coach said. "Other teams fight among themselves."

The Abu Hamads, coach and director, say they have the talent to stay on top of the Palestinian league and, over time, help boost the national squad out of its ranking of 174, between Bangladesh and St Lucia.

Ultimately, they said, a match against the Israeli national squad is not out of the question, but only after they have a few years to build.

"Now," said Salim Abu Hamad, "we just need a field." - The Washington Post

Load-Date: April 18, 2009



Of limits and Ahmadinejad

The Jerusalem Post May 4, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 708 words **Byline:** LAURA KAM

Highlight: Not only does the Iranian leader deny the Holocaust, he sponsors terrorist organizations and calls for the

killing of innocents. The writer is a senior adviser at The Israel Project.

Body

Yesh gvul is Hebrew for there is a limit - and I reached mine sitting in the UN Plenary in Geneva listening to Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

I am a daughter of two Holocaust survivors. My grandparents (the ones who survived) and all of my aunts and uncles were Holocaust survivors. Their friends were almost all Holocaust survivors as well. I too, in my way, have lived the Holocaust and on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, listening to Ahmadinejad question the veracity of the Holocaust offended me to the very depths of my soul in a way that was shocking, even to myself.

That the Iranian president had the audacity to use the platform afforded him at the UN to refer to the Holocaust as "the pretext of Jewish suffering... in order to establish a totally racist government in occupied Palestine" was a moral travesty in and of itself. Given the background of my own family and the history European Jewry, such a statement can hardly be exceeded in the depth of its insidiousness. It is one thing to read Ahmadinejad's blatant and outrageous layout of historical facts in the news, but it definitely is a different experience seeing this man walking up a stage in close proximity and talking literally to the world.

Suddenly my heart pounded widely and I almost felt suffocated knowing that the president of Iran, whose nation is working furiously to develop nuclear weapons that will target the very place where half of the world's Jewish people now reside, was dismissing the veracity of Israel's existence.

It is needless to mention the irony behind the fact that Iran is in the forefront of countries where human rights abuses routinely take place, where there is no freedom of speech or religious belief, where people are routinely abused and have no individual rights, where <u>women</u> and gays are routinely denied their humanity and even their lives.

AFTER THE MOVING walkout by European delegates as a sign of their disgust over Ahmadinejad's remarks, as the representatives of dozens of nations listened quietly or applauded, I could not take it anymore. I decided to take "action" as a sign of symbolic solidarity with the many men, <u>women</u> and children who never had the chance to speak up against the world's biggest human atrocity as they were silenced to death by gas chambers and crematories and with those murdered in terrorist attacks in Israel and abroad.

For not only does Ahmadinejad deny the Holocaust, he also actively sponsors terrorist organizations carrying out suicide attacks against Israel and other Western democratic nations. He advocates martyrdom and global jihad - in

Of limits and Ahmadinejad

fact he pursues a death-loving approach to life that calls for the killing of innocents. That is why I picked up a sign I was carrying for a demonstration later on and held up the truth: "Iran funds *Hamas* and Hizbullah."

When he said: "World Zionism personifies racism that falsely resorts to religions and abuses religious sentiments to hide its hatred and ugly face," no one said a word. When he questioned the right of my adopted country to exist, he was threatening not only my home, but also the lives of my children. He said of Israel that it is a "Zionist regime" of "ugliness and crimes" and that "we should try to put an end to the misuse of international means by the Zionists and their supporters." Ahmadinejad showed his pure anti-Semitic polemic on full display.

Shortly after my little "act of bravery," I was asked to leave the plenary hall and had my credentials revoked. It was however absolutely worth it: a small sign before the international community but definitely a giant triumph for me and for those who were deprived of ever being heard again.

I had always believed that the ethics of the United Nations was to bring nations together to strengthen international peace and security. This was supposed to be the very DNA on which the UN was built, was it not? But sitting in the middle of the UN celebrating this virulent anti-Semite, giving him legitimacy to publicly speak in front of an international audience, only showed hypocrisy and the failure to do what should have been done - deny Ahmadinejad, who has repeatedly called for Israel to be wiped off the map, the opportunity to be welcome at an anti-racism conference.

Graphic

Photo: IN SOLIDARITY with the many who never had the chance to speak up against the world's biggest human atrocity, and with those murdered in terrorist attacks. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Give peace yet another chance; How to solve the Middle East crisis. By Chris Patten

Financial Times (London, England)

April 18, 2009 Saturday

London Edition 1

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Section: FT WEEKEND SUPPLEMENT - LIFE & ARTS; Pg. 13

Length: 804 words

Body

Last Chance:

The Middle East in the

Balance

by David Gardner

IB Tauris £18.99, 288 pages

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this angry book. It is almost equally difficult while reading *Last Chance* to avoid a growing feeling of gloom that, in spite of the unlamented departure of Bush and the arrival of Obama, the wise if uncomfortable advice here is unlikely to be heeded. So we will "abet the onward march of the jihadis" and "condemn the broader Middle East to violence, stagnation and possible state failures". We will pay a heavy price in the west for this.

David Gardner, chief leader writer for the FT, has a clear and convincing thesis. In the Middle East and beyond we should not continue to base our policy on propping up autocrats and on unconditional support for Israel, he says. We have sustained tyranny, practised shameful double standards, turned much of a civilisation against the west, and incubated Islamic terrorism. We should not regard the Arab world as the exception to our general espousal of the virtues of democracy. There really is a freedom agenda, though the consequences of trying to implement it may be uncomfortable in the short-term.

Last Chance does not shy away from the turbulence that democracy could bring in a region where the security state has been tolerated, so long as oil continues to flow at a reasonable price and Israel is not put under too much pressure. If Arabs are given the chance to vote, they will at times - particularly at first - vote for people who the west does not care for. <u>Hamas</u> won the elections in Palestine. Authoritarians, in or out of uniform, will inevitably be followed in some countries by men with beards. We have pretty well guaranteed such outcomes. But the longer democracy is denied, the more extreme the consequences and the greater the instability when democracy eventually comes.

Early this decade, the United Nations Development Programme produced two brave reports, written by Arabs, that demonstrated the relationship between bad governance, lack of democracy, discrimination against **women**,

confessional education and lousy economic performance. Where civil society is oppressed, corruption flourishes and religious extremism becomes the only alternative to brutal power.

On the fringes of the region, Pakistan and Turkey provide contrasting examples of the value of democracy. In Pakistan, the west's largely unqualified support for generals, most recently Musharraf, weakened a democracy whose practitioners admittedly did much to weaken it themselves. But the democratic parties in Pakistan are the only alternative to rampant jihadism, which has enjoyed the patronage of the military. In Turkey, a moderate Islamic party has come to power through the ballot box and is fashioning a modern political and economic system. If the European Union in due course turns its back on Turkey's aspirations to become a member, it will be tantamount to resigning any serious ambition to play a significant role in the 21st century's affairs.

Gardner's critique of US and European policy on Israel and Palestine is no less devastating for being familiar - but there is a much livelier debate about Israel's policies within that country than in the US, where criticising Tel Aviv is routinely seen as being anti-Semitic.

Too often, Israel's inalienable right to live at peace has been confused with Israel's right to do whatever it wants. The disproportionate use of force to deal with acts of terrorism against civilians is one example. "The Palestinians must be made to understand in the deepest recesses of their consciousness," said the Israeli army chief of staff in 2002, as Palestinian territories were pounded by his artillery, "that they are a defeated people." As the imprisoned Fatah leader of the intifada, Marwan Barghouti, said: "We recognise Israel; the problem is that Israel does not recognise us."

We know what a settlement would need to contain, including ending the colonisation of occupied land, tolerated if not quite endorsed by Bush and Tony Blair as "facts on the ground". For Blair to be appointed as a Middle East peace envoy, with special responsibilities for rebuilding the West Bank and Gaza (a territory he did not visit until it was flattened with more than 1,300 deaths over the New Year) is tragic evidence that real life rarely requires satire.

In endorsing Gardner's passionate book, Jon Snow rightly wishes for it to find a place in the hand-luggage of President Obama's negotiators in the Middle East and Iran. Indeed. But I fear that in the Middle East, "No, we can't," is more likely to guide policy than "Yes, we can". Yet, having read this beautifully written, page-turner of a book, I find myself clinging desperately to a few shards of hope. We can; really we can.

Chris Patten is chancellor of Oxford University

Load-Date: April 17, 2009



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Chris Patten is chancellor of Oxford University

Load-Date: July 24, 2009



Hezbollah spy thriller grips Arab world

Guardian.com

April 29, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 814 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Bugged cars, mini-bars and the 'party of God' ... no wonder the arrest of four alleged moles has the Middle East abuzz

FULL TEXT

It's the first rule of espionage not to get caught - and of counter-intelligence work to ensure enemy operations are monitored and foiled. Occasional exposure can provide fascinating insights into a world that is supposed to remain secret.

So it has been in recent days on the Middle East's hottest frontline, where the Lebanese authorities have been rolling up an Israeli spy network or networks that are said to have penetrated the Shia organisation Hezbollah.

Lebanese and Arab media are agog with details of the affair. The most prominent of those arrested is Adib Alam, a retired general with the country's general security department. Alam, his wife and his nephew - a low-ranking serving security official - stand accused of gathering information about Lebanese and Syrian military and civilian targets "with the aim of facilitating Israeli attacks" and guiding Israeli planes to them.

Lebanese security sources have claimed that for 10 years Alam travelled regularly to Europe to meet his Israeli controllers while running a business that brought Asian <u>women</u> to Lebanon to work as maids as a front for his espionage activities. In his home investigators apparently found a<u>mini-bar that doubled as a communications</u> system for transmitting and receiving information via satellite.

This week the authorities arrested three other people, two Lebanese and one Palestinian, who are alleged to have confessed to crossing the border into Israel and receiving military training there.

Hezbollah, Lebanon's "Party of God," is backed by Iran and Syria and admired for its toughness and discipline even by its critics. Its military wing is clearly alert to the dangers of penetration by hostile intelligence services. But signs are that the "resistance", as Hezbollah is universally called in Lebanon, may have learned this the hard way. Earlier this year its security apparatus arrested a businessman named Marwan Faqih, who is <u>reported to have sold dozens</u> of cars to <u>Hezbollah officials</u> with GPS tracking and listening devices planted inside them on behalf of Israeli intelligence.

Hezbollah spy thriller grips Arab world

In such a murky area, it is reasonable to assume there may be disinformation in any media coverage, but it does seem likely that this operation allowed the Israelis to locate bunkers, safe houses and weapons caches put in place since the 2006 war.

Hezbollah interrogated Faqih and then - in a sign of its improving relationship with the government in advance of the June parliamentary elections - handed him over to the Lebanese authorities, who charged him with collaborating with the enemy. Before that they did the same with Ali al-Jarrah, another Lebanese who was later charged with spying for Israel for 25 years and faces the death penalty. His brother and several others were also arrested.

In the Jarrah case, Lebanese reports have suggested a direct link with the killing of <u>Imad Mughniyeh</u>, the Hezbollah military chief (involved in hostage-taking and attacks on US targets in the 1980s) who was assassinated in Damascus in February 2008 in a highly professional car bombing that was widely attributed to Israel's Mossad secret service.

Israel, like many governments, does not comment publicly on its clandestine operations. But unlike most others it does a good deal of nodding and winking designed to signal responsibility without acknowledging it: thus it was with the September 2007 bombing of an alleged nuclear reactor in Syria; the Mughniyeh killing; and most recently, the mysterious drone attack on an arms convoy on its way from Sudan, via Egypt, to supply *Hamas* fighters in the Gaza Strip.

The pattern is that after an initial "no comment" by the government, a politician makes an "unguarded" remark that corroborates the story. While official silence is maintained, effective confirmation comes later in unattributable or background media briefings - so the message filters through without a formal statement ever being made.

Yossi Melman, an Israeli expert on intelligence, seemed to be struggling to keep the country's military censors at bay when <u>he commented in Haaretz</u>that not all Israeli spying operations are carried out by the Mossad, a relatively small organisation that focuses activity on high-level targets, especially Iran's nuclear programme. Lebanese agents were likely being recruited and "run" by military intelligence units operating across the border and gathering operationally useful information about Hezbollah, he suggested.

It takes two to fight in the shadows of course, and in the last few months the Israeli security authorities have arrested and charged several Iranians, Lebanese and Palestinians - as well as Israelis - with spying for Iran and Hezbollah - though none of them appear to have achieved very much. The secret wars go on.

Load-Date: April 29, 2009



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Western Morning News (Plymouth, UK)

March 7, 2009 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 13

Length: 757 words

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David Morgans

South Molton

Easy money

Roger Prescott

Plympton

Load-Date: March 8, 2009



Your turn

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

March 7, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: GOOD WEEKEND; Pg. 4

Length: 749 words

Body

Letter of the week

Imagine the other side of the story of Geordie Brookman's trauma at school (Your Time Starts Now..., February 14) when he was placed in a garbage bin by his art teacher. What if it were the art teacher's first year of teaching in a smallish country high school with an art department of one? What if he had to teach a group of bored and out of control 12- and 13-year-olds? Think of the frustration that led to the teacher placing both hands on the upper arms and lifting Geordie vertically and placing him upright in a bin, not attempting to place a lid on top or to squash him down. IÂ believe that the art teacher in question did not teach again for about six years after that fateful year because of the trauma inflicted upon him. IÂ believe that the art teacher was ... me.

Jim Croke, Stanmore, NSW

A Game of Two Halves

A story on footballers' wives (February 14)? I realise that we need some light, fluffy stuff amid all the bad news, but no one cares about these people.

Mekita Vanderheyde

Brighton, Qld

The Hussein Ultimatum

I wonder how many Israeli men, <u>women</u> and children would not have had their lives cut short by becoming victims of suicide bomb attacks if the Israeli attempt to assassinate <u>Hamas</u> leader Khalid Mishal had been allowed to succeed (February 14)?

Michael Burd

Toorak, Vic

The Things We Do for Love

The article "The Things We Do for Love" (February 14) was an amusing account

of how we view romance.

Your turn

I've still got a box brimming with love letters from my husband (it's fair to say

that there was something in me that allowed him to tap into his literary talents with gusto!). Fifteen years on, he is no longer professing his love with such fury and I've had to pathetically resort to rereading my past romantic glories. I'm happy, though, without these daily outpourings of love because he still brings me my cup of tea and fruit each morning.

Joanne Wilson

Rowville, Vic

According to "The Things We Do for Love", a half hour of cuddling is among the things <u>women</u> want from their partners. If the <u>women</u> aren't getting enough cuddles, then it follows that the men in their lives also have a somewhat cuddle-free existence. As a single male who spends a lot of his time wondering when and where he'll get his next cuddle, I take some comfort in the knowledge that the correlation between cohabitation and cuddles is not an exact science.

Shane Joseph

Marsfield, NSW

The surprise wedding mentioned in your February 14 article sounds like a lovely, romantic idea, but it would not meet the requirements of the Marriage Act in Australia. "Voluntarily entered into" means that both parties have to know what is planned, sign the required Notice of Intended Marriage and statutory declaration, and not be under pressure (such as being in front of a party of family and friends) to agree to the marriage. All celebrants in Australia have clear instructions from the Attorney-General's Department about this and know that they would be committing an offence if they did not follow them. A wedding may be a surprise for the guests, but not for the bride or the groom.

Anne Phillips

New Town, Tas

Two of Us

I opened Good Weekend to the February 14 Two of Us and declared to my husband of 25 years: "I want to emulate this photo in 35 years' time." Together, John and Helen Walker have found the essence of what makes a truly happy marriage. They are thankful for life, grateful for opportunity and devoted to each other. They should write a book.

Kath Floyd

Glendon, NSW

Maggie Alderson

We are kindred spirits, Maggie and me ("Luck of the Drawer", February 7)! I, too, tidy frantically when faced with crisis. And I am especially tidy when I am angry. That's a good thing because I think far more calmly and clearly in uncluttered surrounds.

Jenny Frappell

Bulli, NSW

Maggie Alderson's article on the humble peg several months ago ("Pegging Order", July 5, 2008) seems to have created a revolution. Since then, everywhere I turn <u>women</u> are still discussing the concept of where to correctly place the peg when attaching washing to the clothes line. Previously IÂ would hang tops at the waist but now I, and

Your turn

many others, have subscribed to Alderson's concept of draping shirts at chest level with pegs placed in the armpits to hide those nasty peg marks. On a related point: is there any connection between Alderson's obsession with peg placement and her daughter Peggy's name?

Suzanne Vanselow

Heidelberg, Vic

Editor's note: Peggy is actually named after both Maggie's mother and grandmother.

Load-Date: March 6, 2009



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Load-Date: June 11, 2009



Obama faces acid test

Post (South Africa)

March 11, 2009 Wednesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 773 words

Body

THE increase in belligerence towards Pakistan by the American Government and especially the new Obama Administration is of deep concern. It is true that General Musharaff who changed Pakistan's policy of giving material and financial assistance to the Taliban Government of Afghanistan bought over some of the more war-like warlords. It is also true that the production of poppies increased and enhanced the international drug traffic trade.

This was very much a minus and so was the degeneration of the Taliban from being a defender of the Islamic credos, to one which mercilessly deprived Afghan Muslims, especially their <u>women</u>, of their fundamental human rights. It was Pakistan acting as proxy for the United States of America which popped up with massive amounts of arms and money.

As soon as the Americans defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan, the Afghans resorted not to fundamentalist Islam as is alleged, but to one of perversion of the Muslim faith.

Anyone who knows anything about Islam will know that the greeting "As-asalaam-aleikom" is one of peace, and that the hallmark of Islamic culture is one of friendship and hospitality. So if anyone really wants to be a Muslim extremist, he will practise Islam to the extreme, and will not use it for murder and suicide which are the antitheses of Islam.

The danger currently is that President Barack Obama may be about to turn the area of Afghanistan and Pakistan, which joins it, into a place of destruction.

His moves in Iraq have been welcomed, but his pre-election promise that in the separate states that he envisages for Palestine and Israel, he supports the continuation of the theft of a portion to Jerusalem and to deny that portion to the Muslims, does not indicate an even-handed approach. And that is coupled with a lack of insistence that Israel must vacate the whole of the stolen lands of the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

The enormous exhilaration worldwide at the election of a coloured man as President of America is called somewhat into question, when within 30 days of his election he displayed a lack of balance between Israel and non-Israelis.

Obama is, of course, perfectly right in insisting that all declarations of the intended destruction of Israel made by leaders of <u>Hamas</u> and of Syria and Iran has to be condemned by all. But so too should there be a simultaneous demand for the Palestinian lands to be restored to its rightful owners.

Until then the thrill of a black in the White House is rather subdued.

Obama faces acid test

As has been mentioned in this column and elsewhere several times, the Israeli/Palestinian dispute, which has ferociously taken many lives and destroyed billions worth of property, was the doing of the western powers. It should never be forgotten that Palestine was part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire which made the mistake of joining the war of the German empire begun in 1914.

When the Germans were defeated four years later in the same way that South West Africa was mandated to our own country, Palestine and several other territories were mandated to the British. This meant that the British had to hold those territories as trustee on behalf of the people living there.

In the same way as the Hereros and other tribes of South West Africa demanded freedom within an independent state, so too did the Palestinian Arabs. But they had great and well-supported opposition.

Part of this was internal from the residual Jewish population which with its descendants had survived from Roman times.

The ideal of the Kibbutzim in terms of which all Jews were equal and each contributed to the community in return only for subsistence, attracted Jewish intellectuals from all over the world.

When in 1923 Lord Balfour promised on behalf of the British Government that a Jewish state would be established in the major part of Palestine, he was doing what the British were famous for. Divide up land and share it among different competing interests.

New Jewish immigration brought in hundreds of thousands whose only affiliation to Israel was that of religion. But the British, the Americans and the French ignored entirely the interests and the needs of the Muslim-majority Arabs.

That was the explosive mix which the United Nations planted in the Middle East. The UN, however, like a castigated bull, has whimpered numerous resolutions demanding peace, but so far it has continued to give support to the virtual Nazi-like conduct of Israel.

One must hope that despite his stumble over East Jerusalem, the administration of President Barack Obama will ensure peace and justice for which he has so eloquently called, does reach what was the mandated territory of Palestine.

Load-Date: March 11, 2009



Editorial: Enough conspiracy theories

Daily News Egypt February 27, 2009 Friday

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Length: 772 words

Body

CAIRO: Earlier this week, like all Egyptians, I was discussing the bomb that went off at AI-Hussein on Sunday in the presence on my young nephew.

€œSo what happened?€ he asked.

€œA bomb went off at a popular tourist bazaar in Cairo, killed a 17-year-old French girl and wounded 24 others,€ I said. "œIt was terrible.€

€œObviously the person who made that bomb doesn't know what he's doing,€ he said, as we all stared at him in disbelief.

Even my nine-year-old nephew was able to figure it out. So when tall tales began wasting column inches in newspapers we consider credible, I wanted to do something drastic.

Nothing beat an Al-Masry Al-Youm story that appeared on the front page of their Wednesday issue, citing an anonymous security source.

According to their story a *female* eyewitness who was in the vicinity to take pictures of her children near Al-Hussein Mosques, said that she had seen the three men who she believed to be the perpetrators of the attack.

The unnamed security source reportedly said that the eyewitness said she saw a man throwing a bag from the window of the Al-Hussein Hotel into the street. It was picked up by another man who left it under one of the stone benches in the square, before it eventually exploded. The two of them apparently jumped into a taxi where a bearded man sat next to the driver.

She followed the taxi all the way to their residence in Helmiyat Al Zeitoun.

To top it off, when she arrived at the alleged bombers' home (note that her children are with her in the car through all this), she asked a man at a shop beneath their building about their names. He identified them as Marawan and Nasser.

Editorial: Enough conspiracy theories

As journalists, we always complain about how the interior ministry is tight-lipped about information when it comes to major incidents, but there's a limit to what the media can do to get a grabbing headline.

The ministry, which I must admit, has been uncharacteristically efficient in publicizing the facts it had collected in the media and on its website, while maintaining that an investigation is still underway, made no mention whatsoever of the mystery "ceNancy Drew-Mama" in any of its statements, despite providing media updates such as the fact that 11 people who were taken in for questioning, and that the initial suspects (two <u>women</u> wearing the niqab and one male companion) were released.

The ministry also eliminated the theory that the bomb was thrown from the Al-Hussein Hotel overlooking the square, describing the bomb in detail. According to a MENA report quoting a security source, the bomb, which weighed in at between half a kilo and 750 grams was made up of two canisters placed inside a plastic water cooler and detonated with a washing machine timer. It was filled with gunpowder and rocks similar to that used in fireworks children play with during festivities.

First of all, it simply doesn't make sense for them to take such a big risk by throwing the bomb from the window if it already had a timer. Investigations have revealed that the bomb was placed under the stone bench, so why would the bombers play catch with it when they intended it to go off at a specific time from a specific spot?

Besides, what kind of mother would risk taking her children on a wild goose chase of possible murderers?

Apart from this action-packed work of fiction, many people were facetiously convinced that arch-enemy Israel is behind the attack to distract attention from its plans to evict some 1,500 Palestinians and destroy more than 80 houses in east Jerusalem.

And my personal favorite is the theory implicating <u>Hamas</u> sympathizers who wish to get back at the Egyptian regime by hurting the tourism; as if the economy isn't suffering as it is.

Enough conspiracy theories.

Of course the loss of a single human life is a terrible tragedy and on behalf of all Egyptians, I'd like to extend my deepest condolences to the family of the victim of this horrid act, but if anything, the haphazard, primitive way the whole operation was conducted should set our hearts to rest.

This was no complex, meticulously masterminded terrorist act targeting a maximum number of victims, but the desperate act of a handful of brain-washed, disenfranchised criminals whose likes exist anywhere in the world.

As most analysts have said, this blast was random and will not have the feared ramifications on tourism that resulted from the Luxor terror attack over 10 years ago, so it's vital that the media let the investigation take its course and not volunteer inaccurate information, or become a soap box for conspiracy theorists.

Rania Al Malky is the Chief Editor of Daily News Egypt.

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Load-Date: August 21, 2009



Barak to Rabin camp: We're carrying on in his tradition

The Jerusalem Post February 5, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 682 words

Byline: SHELLY PAZ

Body

Dozens of activists who worked in former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's elections campaign in the early 1990s met on Wednesday evening in Tel Aviv to pay tribute to him and to show Defense Minister and Labor Party Chairman Ehud Barak their support.

The Rabin camp, comprised of former ministers and MKs, activists who worked on his election campaign, and their children attended the event, which has been held before every general election since Rabin was murdered in 1995.

"We don't know if it's over in the South or not, but for eight years Kassam rockets were fired on the Gaza-belt communities and three governments hadn't dealt with the situation until we came and brought the six-month long cease-fire," Barak said.

"I don't regret the quiet we brought and the international legitimacy we had gained for the day we needed to act. We hit *Hamas* badly and it is busy picking up the pieces," he said.

"We saw Iran launching a satellite into space - a small one, but a country that is capable of launching a satellite must have advanced rockets that can reach Europe," he continued.

"We have the Syrians who are a challenge, but also an opportunity, Hizbullah that has gotten stronger even if it lost its appetite to launch another offensive, Mughniyeh, the smuggling of weapons into the Gaza Strip. In short, it's never boring in the Middle East and this is why we need a brave leadership that knows when to act and when to stop," he added.

Barak admitted that the Labor Party wasn't perfect.

"We make mistakes but we always try hard to do the right thing. We carry on Rabin's tradition, we are proud of it and want to continue doing what is right for Israel," Barak said.

Barak asked for the support and the assistance of the members of the Rabin camp in convincing the undecided voters.

"The greater mass of undecided voters belong to our camp and they are deliberating [either] between us and Hatnua Hahadasha-Meretz, or between us and Kadima on the other hand," he said.

Barak to Rabin camp: We're carrying on in his tradition

"Voting for Meretz interferes with our ambitions to get bigger and more effective, and voting for Kadima is voting for a party without an identity; many of its members who might defect back to the Likud a day after the elections. We know that they are capable of defecting from their party because they have already done it in the past," he added.

Barak said that in a country like Israel, inexperience is a privilege one cannot afford.

"Here, every incident on the border turns into a national problem within 10 minutes, a regional problem within a couple of hours and sometimes into a global problem. It is not an easy task to lead our country and it is too important for us to make mistakes," he said.

National Infrastructures Minister Binyamin Ben- Eliezer, who spoke before Barak, expressed his deepening concern that the next Israeli leaders would be a group of extreme right-wing politicians.

"Each one of us needs to look at his children, his house, his country and to understand what we are putting at risk," Ben-Eliezer said.

"The Labor Party has great people, experienced in all fields, and today it is almost to be or not to be. We better wake up and understand that this country is en route to an internal intifada and that we need to regain our sanity," he said.

Erez Orion, an attorney who worked on Labor's election campaign in 1992, brought his two daughters, Arielle (17) and Ophir (15), whom he described as "second generation in Rabin's tradition."

Though he was still committed to Rabin's legacy, despite the criticism he had of the Labor Party, "something is missing," Orion said.

"I think we have lost the compassion we had and we could see it in Operation Cast Lead. If we continue like this, three more military operations like this one and the world would consider us an apartheid country," he said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Esther Bitan, a veteran Labor supporter, announced her decision to leave the party and support Kadima and its chairwoman, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni.

"I have reached the conclusion that the Labor Party does not encourage <u>women</u> and I don't believe in its present path today," Bitan said.

Graphic

Photo: LABOR PARTY Chairman Ehud Barak gets a 'Blue Box' from Efi Stenzler, chairman of the Jewish National Fund, at the Herzliya Conference yesterday evening. After 30 years of absence, the boxes will be distributed once again to the nation's schools, to be used as an educational tool to promote community activism. (Credit: Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Now much reduced, Labor and Meretz look to pick up the pieces in opposition

The Jerusalem Post February 13, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 731 words

Byline: SHELLY PAZ

Body

Labor and Meretz are preparing for hard work in the opposition, where they believe they can pave the road to regaining the public's trust.

Two days after the general elections that cut down both Meretz (from five to three Knesset seats) and Labor (from 19 to 13), they say that they are not considering joining the next government. They are not even sure whom, if anyone, they will recommend that President Shimon Peres designate to form that government.

"Our decisions have no influence on how the coalition will look. We are getting ready to sit in the opposition," a source in Labor said on Thursday.

Labor officials rejected predictions that party chairman and Defense Minister Ehud Barak would leave the party - and politics - or perhaps agree to stay in the Defense portfolio and resign his position in the party, as some rumors have it.

"Barak isn't considering leaving the party. He continues to lead the party and he is prepared to do it from the opposition. Barak is the only figure in the Labor Party who is perceived as capable of and is capable of leading the party," a source close to Barak said.

"[Losing seats] is a big blow for us and we understand the situation. Many of the classic left-wingers voted for [Kadima leader Tzipi] Livni, and that killed us. We are starting to hear regrets from people who voted for Livni and only now realize what they have done, and that what we said ahead of the elections was true. It was not smart to vote for Livni just to block [Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu] Bibi at the cost of ruining the left-wing camp," the source said.

Though there have been calls to create a strong Left bloc in the opposition by merging Labor and Meretz since the failures of the two parties became clear, their members said it was too soon to consider such a move.

"First we need to see if a government can be formed, and then we will examine what options we have," the Labor source said.

Early next week, the Labor faction is scheduled to meet to decide which MK they will recommend that the president appoint to form a government, and to agree on the party's agenda.

Now much reduced, Labor and Meretz look to pick up the pieces in opposition

The mood was similarly bleak within Meretz on Thursday, except for stronger recriminations against party chairman Haim Oron. He said his party would not recommend anyone to Peres to be the next prime minister.

Oron, who is being blamed for Meretz's poor showing in the election, announced that he would not resign from the Knesset to make room for Zehava Gal-On, who chaired the party's faction in the 17th Knesset.

Oron said that one of the reasons Meretz lost votes was that **women**'s organizations had call on voters to support Livni for the premiership.

"I didn't hear these organizations calling on <u>women</u> to vote for Meretz so that Gal-On would be in the next Knesset," he said.

Kadima's last-moment campaign, presenting the election as a choice between Livni and Netanyahu, took votes from both Meretz and Labor, Oron said.

"Their campaign was obviously successful, but false," he said. "The war between Bibi and Tzipi attracted many of Meretz's potential voters. That cost us about two mandates, and some say even more than that."

Oron said further that he did not think the merger with Hatnua Hadasha was behind the party's failure.

"This move received a lot of support at first and the polls even predicted us getting three-four more mandates. Last Friday we still had five to six mandates in the polls. Truthfully, I don't see the merger as the reason for the failure," he said.

Oron also rejected the argument that Meretz's support for the IDF offensive against <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza during its first four days cost the party votes.

"I think we lost votes because we were not supportive of the operation to the end. We say what we think; at first we thought it was right to support the military operation, and when we thought that there was no reason to continue the operation, we said that," he said.

Discounting another theory, Oron said, "Hadash didn't take many votes from us. We lost more votes in the Gazabelt communities than the votes Hadash received all across Israel."

Now, Oron said, was the time to rehabilitate the party, to learn from the outcome of the election, and to work hard in the next Knesset to revive the Left.

"If Meretz and Labor are in the opposition, I am sure cooperation will increase and will bring more ideas and options," he said, regarding a possible merger with Labor.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



'Where's the logic here?'

The Jerusalem Post June 26, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 18

Length: 1559 words

Byline: Lydia Aisenberg

Highlight: Allam Abu Abead's bed lies directly over the Green Line. He has been arrested twice and has been imprisoned for working illegally in Israel. Metro recently caught up with the Jenin native for a candid talk about

Fatah-Hamas relations, Israeli policy and his current cat-and-mouse game with the authorities

Body

Sitting in a somewhat squashed corner between a serving counter and shelves full of stock, Allam Abu Abead is making coffee. A shoebox-sized coffee maker sits below rows of deodorant, aftershave and perfume. The coffee maker seems to be the only item not covered in a layer of fine gray dust.

Abead is from Jenin, only 30 kilometers - but worlds apart - from his business in West Barta'a. But to get there he would have to pass through the Reichan-Barta'a checkpoint in the West Bank security barrier, about two kilometers behind East Barta'a, which lies beyond the Green Line. The gate generally opens early in the morning and closes again at around 10 p.m. On a good day one can get through the checkpoint in half an hour. However, it can often take an hour or two, depending on the overall security situation. If there is some sort of alert, or holiday in Israel, the checkpoint is often closed entirely.

Abead doesn't go home to Jenin, but rents accommodation in Barta'a, where he can usually be found at his business from morning until late in the evening. He is trying to make a living; there isn't anything else to do in Barta'a, anyway.

He shouldn't be doing business where he is, shouldn't be sleeping where he is. In fact, Abead shouldn't be this side of the security barrier at all, as his permit is no longer valid. He hasn't asked the Israeli authorities to renew it, because he objects to a new regulation that would require him to leave the area by 7 p.m.

"In the summer months we're open until late. That's when a large number of customers come. You seriously think I'm going to shut up shop and move out when there is business to be done?" he asks, pouring thick, piping hot, aromatic coffee into small disposable plastic cups.

He rents a small room in a makeshift "building" that's basically several shipping containers knocked together into shops. A second floor has been added onto the containers' roof, creating a few poky places for accommodation. Abead's bed literally hangs over a ditch - the Green Line, although in truth it is anything but that color, filled with debris, a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects.

Abead's story is typical of many of the Palestinians who work in East and West Barta'a. They're not supposed to be there, but everybody knows they are, including the security forces. As long as things are quiet and nobody rocks the

'Where's the logic here?'

boat, the successful center of commerce - the main source of income for many West Bank families - will continue to thrive.

Abead's own shop is divided into two sections. The main entrance area is full of Arabic music CDs and video cassettes. A few steps down, the second section sells toiletries and houses the coffee machine and computer. Wires stretch up and over the wall, under the doorway and out. During our conversation a young man is in and out, trying to do something with all the wiring to reconnect Abead to his computer.

When asked if he imports from Asia as many other shopkeepers do, he laughs heartily. "Are you kidding? I'm not big enough for that. I buy stock from wherever I can. Buying is no problem - it's the selling that's the difficult bit," he says with a smile.

A few <u>women</u> come in to purchase some items. They are slightly put off whatever has interested them, as the cellophane bags are covered in dust. Using two fingers, one lady picks up the item by its corner and, careful not to spread the dust, lays it gently on the glass countertop. She seems to be saying that she wants it, and Abead begins to wipe it off with a rag.

The troublesome dust is kicked into the shop by the heavy traffic outside. The village's infrastructure can't cope with the volume of vehicles that pass through the narrow main road, both sides of which are lined with shops. After the second intifada, anybody who could turned one of their home's front rooms into a store for rent. There are dozens of hole-in-the-wall enterprises in Barta'a, and where there is some space, buildings are hastily erected to open yet another "bizziness," as one gentleman calls his shipping container kiosk from which he sells felafel. That particular container literally straddles the Green Line ditch.

Abead pays rent on his shop to an Israeli Arab, and pays more rent to another Israeli Arab for the box in which he sleeps. He pays taxes to the West Barta'a municipality, which is now working to spruce up the main square on its side of the Green Line - laying pavements, surfacing the road and building a small park. He doesn't, however, pay VAT on the goods he sells, nor tax of any other kind. Not to the Israelis and not to the Palestinians. East Barta'a comes under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority. But thus far, the tax man from Jenin (the PA headquarters for the northern West Bank) has yet to call on him. Although it is rather difficult to understand how the PA tax authorities could demand that a Palestinian illegally doing business in Israel - West Barta'a - pay up.

He speaks very good English, somewhat hesitatingly, as he doesn't get to use it often. He spent time studying in Iraq and lived in a house in Baghdad. He is unmarried but has a lady friend in a nearby Israeli Arab city - where he is also forbidden to go, as he is not allowed over the Green Line, or security barrier for that matter. In this area, the barrier doesn't run along the Green Line, but veers a few kilometers into the West Bank.

Before the last intifada, he had a business in Jenin. He moved it to Baka a-Sharkiya in Wadi Ara. For a number of years a very successful market operated there, part of it in Baka a-Sharkiya (East Baka) in the West Bank, and part in Baka al-Gharbiya (West Baka) in Israel. In those days, one could buy fruit in Israel, walk a few paces, and buy vegetables in the West Bank - somewhat like in Barta'a today. After a number of Israelis were murdered at the Baka al-Gharbiya and Sharkiya market place, and more in the general vicinity, the IDF destroyed hundreds of shops and stalls. Abead's East Baka business was also flattened. He moved whatever stock he could save to Baka al-Gharbiya, and started all over again while maintaining a similar shop in Jenin, run by a relative.

Abead's Baka al-Gharbiya shop was in the center of the sprawling town. He was arrested twice for being in Israel without a permit. "When a construction or agriculture worker comes across illegally, it's not so easy to catch them. They move from place to place and are in areas off the main roads. I, on the other hand, stayed in the shop, [which was] on a busy main road and very easy to find," he explains, offering more coffee.

At one point he sat in the Kishon Prison. His cellmates were an Israeli Druse and a Russian immigrant. "We all got on very well under the circumstances," he says with a chuckle.

Since it was too easy to be picked up in the center of Baka al-Gharbiya, Abead moved his business once more, this time to Barta'a.

'Where's the logic here?'

He answers questions candidly. His knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is deep, often quoting what was said, done, agreed upon and reneged upon in the Madrid, Wye and Camp David agreements. His comments on Fatah-<u>Hamas</u> relations cause the listener to understand that he sees nothing positive for the Palestinian people in the near future. He believes the infighting between the two camps is detrimental to the Palestinian cause and that corruption in Fatah is a leading factor in the current situation.

Abead said that unlike many Palestinians, he does believe that the Holocaust happened and sees Hitler as an evil man. "I don't hate Jews, most of us don't. We hate the situation. The Holocaust was not the fault of the Palestinian people and should not be used to deprive the Palestinians, as has been done," he says with great feeling.

As far as he knows, Jews left Iraq and other countries to go to Israel voluntarily, not as a result of being persecuted and too frightened to stay. He listens with interest to stories about some Iraqi Jews, but seems to hold on to the belief that they left not because they were threatened, but because they wanted to live in Israel.

Asked how he perceives Israel's Arab citizens and what sort of relationship he had with the Israeli Arabs in Barta'a, Baka al-Gharbiya and elsewhere, he answers: "They are part of us, but at the same time they are different. They are actually in a worse situation than us, the Palestinians. When something happens to us they feel it very strongly and same with us when there are problems for them. They have an identity crisis, we don't."

Turning to Jenin, Abead says he knows many people who cannot provide sufficient food for their children. "It is better to be a refugee in Jenin than one of the established families. The registered refugees continue to get aid from UNWRA - basic supplies - whilst the local Palestinian population not considered refugees get nothing, go hungry."

As far as limiting the number of Palestinians allowed to work in Israel, Abead says he doesn't understand why only a limited number of married men with children are granted permits.

"Because I'm single, I can't get a permit to work in Israel. I don't understand the Israeli logicÉ really. If I had children and my children were suffering, I would be pushed toward doing something drastic. If your children were hungry, don't you think that would be the situation?" he asks. "Where's the logic here?"

Graphic

3 photos: VISITORS FROM California listen to Allam Abu Abead outside his shop in West Barta'a. TWO FOR ONE. Hadera and the Mediterranean Sea can be seen further in the distance. PALESTINIAN CHILDREN of East Barta'a show off their mural on the dividing wall. (Credit: Lydia Aisenberg)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



An Egyptian town's economy depends on tunnel traffic to Gaza

The International Herald Tribune
January 31, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 729 words

Byline: Michael Slackman - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: RAFAH, Egypt

Body

From the rooftops you can see tall buildings, and trucks pulling through streets teeming with people. You can hear generators humming, and the rumble of construction gear. From the rooftops, you can see Gaza.

But down below on the streets here, it is quiet, the kind of quiet that says people have been driven out. Stores were long ago abandoned. The street is buckled in places, and litter is piled along the curb. Residents have fled the war over the border, the heavy pressure from Egyptian security, the emptiness of life in Rafah.

"All we have," said Muhammad Sha'er, as he looked from a rooftop into Gaza, "are the tunnels."

Early Wednesday morning, Israel again bombed the tunnels that stretch under the border from Gaza into Egypt. The bombings followed a 22-day Israeli offensive to stop *Hamas*'s rocket fire, which was followed by international negotiations aimed at ending smuggling into Gaza.

But here in Rafah, people were still trying to smuggle goods through tunnels, hours before and hours after the bombing Wednesday morning. Rafah is a bleak, rutted, dusty town that bears more than passing resemblance to Baghdad after years of international sanctions.

"On the other side, they want to eat," said Ayed el-Sayah, a furniture maker in town, referring to Gaza. "Here we want to eat, too. That's why we have the tunnels."

These are tense days in this shattered town of about 50,000 in the northeastern corner of Sinai. It has become the focus of an intense effort to stop smuggling activities, but the focus has been exclusively on security. Checkpoints have been set up, and the police often stop young men in cars and demand to see identification. The center of the town feels as if it is occupied.

But with every Israeli bomb just over the border, and with every increase in Egyptian security, there is less and less room for any kind of normal life. The streets are filled with idle young men, and children, and old men, all with nowhere to go and little to do. *Women* stay at home.

"We only wish we didn't have to do this, that we had another job or a project, something else we can do," said a 22-year-old, who asked not to be identified for fear of being imprisoned for his work as a smuggler.

An Egyptian town's economy depends on tunnel traffic to Gaza

The young man graduated with a degree in commerce from the equivalent here of a junior college. He said he began working a tunnel only recently because there was nothing else for him to do to make a living, or to occupy his time.

He and a cousin, 19, who is also a smuggler, were huddled together in a new imported car, one of the fruits of the trade, parked outside a friend's house. It was a chilly desert night, the sky shocked with stars, and the young men were wired and nervous, smoking one cigarette after another.

The broad outlines of the tunnels are well known from the Gaza side. They are about nearly two meters, or six feet, high and a meter wide. They are typically 20 meters or so below the surface, have pulley systems and lighting and ventilation.

Little discussed is how the tunnels work on the Egyptian side, and why state security has been so unsuccessful in finding them. They are begun in Gaza in full view of Egypt's border guards, after all, and nearly everyone here admits to either working in the tunnels or being related to someone who is.

The young men say that most people no longer have the tunnels come up inside their homes, because if they are caught they have no room for denial, and the whole family could be imprisoned. The openings are lined with tarps and filled with sand. When the tunnel owner in Gaza wants to make a run, he phones and the young men assemble a small group of trusted partners. They then dig out the sand, pull out the plastic tarps and pass through food, clothing or whatever has been ordered.

"It is a family affair, but not everyone knows where the hole is," said the 19-year-old. "There are only a very few people you can trust and rely on. You make a deal with four or five other guys and that's it, it stays between you."

On Thursday, the Obama administration's new Middle East envoy, George Mitchell, said that opening Gaza to commercial goods would help stamp out smuggling, of arms as well as goods. But Ahmed and his friends said that the authorities were reluctant to take measures to end the smuggling, of commodities at least. How else, they asked, is anyone here going to make a decent living?

Load-Date: February 3, 2009



Territory swaps and tunnels offered to solve endless crisis

The Times (London)
February 6, 2009 Friday
Edition 2

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 43

Length: 798 words **Byline:** James Hider

Body

Israel's hard-fought election campaign is throwing out a number of grand plans reminiscent of some of the treaties that carved up the Middle East in the 20th century, including a scheme to transfer Jewish-held areas of the West Bank to Israel in exchange for Arab-populated territories.

As well as extreme right-wing plans to redraw boundaries Ehud Barak, the Labour Party leader and current Defence Minister, has proposed digging a 30-mile tunnel between the blockaded Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, to allow Palestinians the territorial continuity they are demanding in any peace deal.

"The preferred way to do it would be to dig a tunnel that would be under Israeli sovereignty, but under totally free and unobstructed use by Palestinians," said Mr Barak.

The election front-runner Binyamin Netanyahu, of the hawkish Likud party, has said that when he takes office he will make a point of enacting forcible regime change in Gaza to topple the Islamist leadership of *Hamas*, although he has stopped short of promising a state for their secular rivals, Fatah.

He has clashed with Tzipi Livni, the centre-right Kadima party leader and incumbent Foreign Minister, who wishes to explore the possibility of dividing Jerusalem to allow the Palestinians a capital in the city, sacred to both sides.

Perhaps surprisingly, Yisrael Beitenu, the hard-right nationalist party led by Moldavian-born Avigdor Lieberman, is in favour of allowing some of the Arab-dominated outlying areas of northern Jerusalem to become a Palestinian city, although it is unlikely to be enough to please the other side.

Mr Lieberman has also developed one of the most sweeping plans of all the schemes being put forward to tackle the endless crisis, and one that his supporters hope will also shore up Israel's demographics in favour of the Jewish population, which has a slower birth rate than the 20 per cent Arab minority.

That plan involves exchanging an area close to the West Bank, where tens of thousands of Arab-Israelis - descendents of Palestinian Arabs who stayed in their homes when the Jewish state was formed around them in

Territory swaps and tunnels offered to solve endless crisis

1948 - for two large Jewish settlement blocks in the West Bank, Ariel in the north and Gush Etzion to the south of Bethlehem.

The party also wants to consolidate a large settlement community east of Jerusalem called Maale Aduumim, effectively surrounding Arab East Jerusalem with Jewish settlements.

Mr Lieberman has referred to Israeli Arabs as the enemy within, with sympathies closer to their Palestinian brethren than Israel, and has even proposed forcing them to swear an oath of allegiance to the Jewish state.

Such ambitious plans - recalling the British redrawing of post-Second World War maps with green pencils - do not go down well with the Arab residents of Umm al-Fahm, at the heart of the so-called Triangle of Arab towns close to the green line dividing Israel from the West Bank.

"Lieberman wants to use transfer against Arabs but he has no right," said Jamal Ighbariya, 42, an unemployed labourer in Umm al-Fahm, the second-largest Arab-Israeli town.

"How can someone who came here a few years ago from Russia use this argument against people here, whose grandparents lived here? Lieberman should go back to Russia." "This is racism," said one of his friends chatting on the town's main street. "This is their education system, encouraging racism." Israeli Arabs already complain that the Jewish state treats them like second-class citizens.

Despite having a population of about 50,000, Umm al-Fahm has no hospital or courthouse of its own, and residents complain of having to travel to nearby Jewish towns to take advantage of basic government facilities. Despite those complaints, Arab Israelis are also not keen to be grafted on to the West Bank, where they believe their living standards would drop even farther.

"It's a better life here," said Diaa Mohammed, 28, a housewife. "Women have no rights there," said an older woman. "Everything over there depends on wealth and status."

Mr Lieberman's faction may not be invited into the national unity government Mr Netanyahu is planning to form - senior Labour officials have already balked at sharing power with his party.

But Mr Netanyahu has extreme nationalists within his own ranks to contend with, and the more seats he wins, the more hardliners he will have to deal with from his own faction in the Knesset.

One of them, Moshe Feiglin, has suggested taking Israel's defence budget and using it to pay Palestinians up to \$250,000 per family to leave for countries in the Gulf, Europe and the Americas. He cites surveys he said were carried out by Palestinian universities suggesting that up to 60 per cent of Palestinians are so dispirited by Israeli occupation and harsh living conditions that they want to get out..

Load-Date: February 6, 2009



Occupation is origin of violence in Gaza;

Lincoln Journal Star (Nebraska) January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. B5

Length: 783 words

Byline: GREG KELLER For the Lincoln Journal Star

Body

It's impossible to have an intelligent discussion about the situation between Israel and the Palestinians (specifically Gaza) if you don't have the facts. Americans, thanks to incomplete, inaccurate and lazy coverage by the mainstream media, overwhelmingly don't have the facts. What we do have is misinformation, mischaracterization and flat-out lies. And most of us don't even realize it.

In the words of Stephen Hawking, "The enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge."

The misinformation has come mostly in the form of omission. The reason most Americans don't feel empathy for Palestinians and aren't outraged by the actions of the Israeli government and its military is largely because we have no idea of the reality of what's really going on. We've never seen the images or heard the stories of the people who live in the "Occupied Territories." The mainstream media refuse to show us the faces of the civilian <u>women</u> and children who are living and dying in the path of the latest invasion.

Palestinians (in Gaza and in the West Bank) have been living under brutal and oppressive military occupation since 1967 - a fact that is missing from almost every "news" report in the United States. Yes, Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005, but it has continued the occupation by maintaining control of Gaza's borders and coasts, not allowing basic supplies in from Israel or from the sea. Gaza has been virtually under siege for the past three years, and Israel has continued to send its forces in whenever it wishes.

When people say that <u>Hamas</u> broke the cease-fire, they neglect to mention that for the period of time that the rocket attacks did cease, Israel didn't fulfill its part of the agreement, which was to loosen restrictions at the borders for food, fuel and medicine. It has, in fact, tightened those restrictions during the attacks, which has resulted in the residents of Gaza being unable to leave, creating a growing humanitarian disaster.

As CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour pointed out, to her credit, this is one of the first conflicts that has seen no refugees. The reason? They can't get out. Israel has closed the borders by land and sea (Egypt has also closed its borders, and that's another story), and the residents of Gaza flee from one location to the other inside their prison, seeking shelter from the attacks. They find none, not even in the U.N. schools, which have been hit by Israeli mortars. They are trapped inside a death zone. And we do nothing.

The occupation itself is an act of violence. The opposition to it is resistance. I'm not condoning the rocket attacks into Israel, but we need to understand that this is not two equally mighty nations who just can't get along duking it out. It's not a matter of "both sides have committed acts of violence against each other." It's not a balanced conflict. One is a highly sophisticated and extremely well-armed military machine - financed and equipped by U.S. taxpayers

Occupation is origin of violence in Gaza

to the tune of \$3 billion to \$5 billion a year - and the other is a devastated, largely unarmed civilian population who are virtual prisoners.

No American could (or would) tolerate for an hour the horrendous and oppressive conditions Palestinians endure on a daily basis (and have been enduring for the past 40-plus years) at the hands of the Israeli military. Every day a Palestinian wakes up alive it's an act of resistance. Unfortunately, even this simple act is becoming more and more difficult. The current number of civilian dead in Gaza is estimated at more than 1,000, at least 300 of whom are children.

The other obstacle for Americans in understanding this conflict is the presentation by the media of a united Israel unanimously in favor of the occupation at any cost. We never hear the voices of the Israelis who vehemently oppose it. We never see the footage of the demonstrations in Tel Aviv of thousands of Israelis calling for withdrawal. We don't see any of the members of the many Jewish organizations in Israel and in the United States who are highly critical of the actions of the Israeli government on their behalf. There is actually more diversity of opinion and debate within Israel than there is in all of the mainstream U.S. media. And don't forget about the West Bank. What's happening there while our attention is turned to Gaza? And who will tell us?

What can you do? Contact your local and national news outlets and let them know that you want them to do their jobs. Tell them to provide the rest of the story. Educate yourself. Do the research they're not doing for you, and then educate someone else. But do something.

Gregory L. Keller of Lincoln is a journalism adviser at Lincoln High School.

Load-Date: May 13, 2009



Territory swaps and tunnels offered to solve endless crisis

The Times (London)
February 6, 2009 Friday
Edition 1

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 43

Length: 797 words **Byline:** James Hider

Body

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The election front-runner Binyamin Netanyahu, of the hawkish Likud party, has said that when he takes office he will make a point of enacting forcible regime change in Gaza to topple the Islamist leadership of *Hamas*, although he has stopped short of promising a state for their secular rivals, Fatah.

He has clashed with Tzipi Livni, the centre-right Kadima party leader and incumbent Foreign Minister, who wishes to explore the possibility of dividing Jerusalem to allow the Palestinians a capital in the city, sacred to both sides.

Perhaps surprisingly, Yisrael Beitenu, the hard-right nationalist party led by Moldavian-born Avigdor Lieberman, is in favour of allowing some of the Arab-dominated outlying areas of northern Jerusalem to become a Palestinian city, although it is unlikely to be enough to please the other side.

Mr Lieberman has also developed one of the most sweeping plans of all the schemes being put forward to tackle the endless crisis, and one that his supporters hope will also shore up Israel's demographics in favour of the Jewish population, which has a slower birth rate than the 20 per cent Arab minority.

That plan involves exchanging an area close to the West Bank, where tens of thousands of Arab-Israelis - descendents of Palestinian Arabs who stayed in their homes when the Jewish state was formed around them in

Territory swaps and tunnels offered to solve endless crisis

1948 - for two large Jewish settlement blocks in the West Bank, Ariel in the north and Gush Etzion to the south of Bethlehem.

The party also wants to consolidate a large settlement community east of Jerusalem called Maale Aduumim, effectively surrounding Arab East Jerusalem with Jewish settlements.

Mr Lieberman has referred to Israeli Arabs as the enemy within, with sympathies closer to their Palestinian brethren than Israel, and has even proposed forcing them to swear an oath of allegiance to the Jewish state.

Such ambitious plans - recalling the British redrawing of post-Second World War maps with green pencils - do not go down well with the Arab residents of Umm al-Fahm, at the heart of the so-called Triangle of Arab towns close to the green line dividing Israel from the West Bank.

"Lieberman wants to use transfer against Arabs but he has no right," said Jamal Ighbariya, 42, an unemployed labourer in Umm al-Fahm, the second-largest Arab-Israeli town.

"How can someone who came here a few years ago from Russia use this argument against people here, whose grandparents lived here? Lieberman should go back to Russia."

"This is racism," said one of his friends chatting on the town's main street. "This is their education system, encouraging racism."

Israeli Arabs already complain that the Jewish state treats them like second-class citizens.

Despite having a population of about 50,000, Umm al-Fahm has no hospital or courthouse of its own, and residents complain of having to travel to nearby Jewish towns to take advantage of basic government facilities. Despite those complaints, Arab Israelis are also not keen to be grafted on to the West Bank, where they believe their living standards would drop even farther.

"It's a better life here," said Diaa Mohammed, 28, a housewife. "*Women* have no rights there," said an older woman. "Everything over there depends on wealth and status."

Mr Lieberman's faction may not be invited into the national unity government Mr Netanyahu is planning to form - senior Labour officials have already balked at sharing power with his party.

But Mr Netanyahu has extreme nationalists within his own ranks to contend with, and the more seats he wins, the more hardliners he will have to deal with from his own faction in the Knesset.

One of them, Moshe Feiglin, has suggested taking Israel's defence budget and using it to pay Palestinians up to \$250,000 per family to leave for countries in the Gulf, Europe and the Americas. He cites surveys he said were carried out by Palestinian universities suggesting that up to 60 per cent of Palestinians are so dispirited by Israeli occupation and harsh living conditions that they want to get out.

Load-Date: February 6, 2009



ABORTION MUST REMAIN AVAILABLE

The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin)

January 27, 2009 Tuesday

ALL EDITION

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Section: OPINION; Pg. WEB

Length: 773 words

Body

Dear Editor: The decision by the Madison Surgery Center, UW Hospital and Clinics and the UW Medical Foundation regarding provision of second-trimester abortions should be applauded and supported. We cannot allow the minority opinion of a few religious and political groups to determine the parameters of reproductive health care for the rest of us.

Access to this legal procedure for women in our community must remain available in our community.

Julie Worzala Madison

Anti-Israel Jews part of propaganda machine

Dear Editor: Letter-writer Janice Oltman and the rest of the American anti-Israelis just don't seem to get it when they claim what the Israelis have done in Gaza is similar to what the "persecutors" did to the Jews of Europe before and during WWII.

The Jews of Europe were a prosperous, intelligent, high-achieving society which, like the Israelis, only wanted live in peace with their neighbors. The European Jews didn't go around bombing themselves to kill their neighbors. They didn't kidnap and torture their neighbors. They didn't hurl bombs relentlessly at the schools and homes of people who never provoked them other than having a religion different than their own. One of their original 10 commandments was and continues to be "love thy neighbor as thy self." They have no commandment that says to turn their cheeks when constantly struck. The European Jews of old and their offspring living in Israel have never sought the annihilation of their neighbors.

Why do the Jews of America who oppose Israel refuse to acknowledge these facts in their condemnation of Israel's attempt to control <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah so that a peaceful solution can be found? They have become part of the propaganda machine whose purpose is to destroy what their forebears took decades to develop.

Ernie Pellegrino Middleton

'Punk' album on cops an outrage

Dear Editor: Police Officer Erik David Hite died June 2, 2008, in Tucson, Ariz., sacrificing his life valiantly answering the "call to duty." He was honored and remembered for his selfless, supreme sacrifice.

ABORTION MUST REMAIN AVAILABLE

The recently released album "Kill a Cop for God," sung by a "punk" group called Awful Truth, disparagingly carries the image of Officer Hite on the album cover. Mentioned within the lyrics of one song are the names of two convicted cop-killers. One name mentioned is David Delich, the man responsible for the death of Officer Hite.

Suzie Sawyer, executive director of Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.), which represents over 15,000 families who have lost their officers in the line of duty, said it well when she said, "We feel certain the members of Awful Truth aren't aware of the awful truth about the devastation experienced by families that have lost a loved one to murder. Every victim's group nationwide should be up in arms over this, not just Concerns of Police Survivors and law enforcement groups. Unfortunately, there is nothing to stop anyone from inappropriately using any murder victim's photo. While we believe in freedom of speech, the awful truth is that this album impinges upon the rights of not only the Hite family, but each and every law enforcement family, and every family that has ever experienced victimization. In spite of this despicable action by Awful Truth, we certainly hope members of this 'punk' recording group never experience the loss of one of their loved ones to murder."

The lead singer of Awful Truth, David Stine, has stated he has no regrets regarding the use of Officer Hite's photo, the song, or using the names of convicted cop-killers in the album's music.

Carol Weinke Wis. chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors Reedsburg

Whites, blacks both show racism

Dear Editor: A recent letter said that racism abounds in Madison. The gist was that whites can expect second-rate service from black service people. That is a truism that I, as a working class person who frequents establishments which are not primarily concerned with catering to money, can attest to. And it hurts, but as with anything else in the public sphere, we have to reconcile our feelings with it; let's at least try to get some perspective.

I am disinclined to pose questions about reciprocity because they never seem to get us anywhere. I would, however, suggest that expecting more than that is expecting more from people of one color than people of another. Does this writer really expect anything more than they got was gotten by the next black person in a white checker's line?

I wish we could have an immediate answer to that but I dare say the answer would be no. Well, maybe not and maybe so, but all in all I don't believe so.

John Costello Madison - 1/27/2009 5:31 am

Load-Date: January 28, 2009



The Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois)

January 26, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A7

Length: 833 words

Body

Support Coliseum teams with your attendance

I have attended numerous games this season. Sometimes I don't agree with the attendance numbers, especially when there are numerous blue seats empty.

I have yet to walk around the arena and see any council members or former Mayor Judy Markowitz around.

When the "Zack & Cody" guys were here, there was a large crowd; however, most left after greeting them and throwing bears on the Ice.

I also don't agree with some of the roster moves they have made. Leo Thomas and Don Parsons were good for the team. They did look around and nod at fans.

They also knocked players around, too. I wouldn't want to play "hard" either to a half full or empty arena either.

Football will be starting soon, too. Possibly we'll have a championship this year. Will you attend? I will. If we don't start showing support, they will leave.

I agree with the other writers on racism. It is alive and well in our twin towns.

Walk around the mall and listen. Visit our schools. While walking the halls, listen to the kids. Listen to your relatives at restaurants or at home.

Rudeness does exist. Manners are very lacking all over. Sometimes when I've gone to stores and check out, the employee - especially younger ones - act like you're wasting their time or they don't want to be there.

Support your U.S. Cellular Coliseum teams. Show up for games. Bring the entire family - I do. It's a great experience.

Law enforcement, especially traffic laws, is really lacking. Drivers are speeding, running red lights and stop signs, not signaling for lane changes or not allowing drivers to complete their turns before pushing them out of the way.

A new "era" is coming. Let's be nice.

Oh, and let's get it done this year, Cubbies. Avoid the sweeps.

Tim Dawson

Normal

When will U.S. president not need to declare faith?

The United States has elected an African American president. This is wonderful.

He was accused of being a Muslim. What if he was? I don't believe that is a disqualification. What if he were agnostic or atheist?

I look forward to the day when one doesn't have to declare faith in any organized religion to be elected to political office

Mike Shirley

Bloomington

Armed citizenry deters government run amuck

On Jan. 8, Reuters.com published an article titled, "U.S. Senate supports Israel's Gaza incursion."

Within the piece, U.S. Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, noting that Israel was bent on halting <u>Hamas</u> rocket fire, said: "I ask any of my colleagues to imagine that happening here in the United States; rockets and mortars coming from Toronto, Canada, into Buffalo, New York. How would we as a country react?"

My reply is sorry, Sen. Reid, but your simple statement does not represent reality. Let me remind you that thanks to the wisdom of our Founding Fathers and the Second Amendment, as long as we the people are armed, it is highly unlikely that a foreign country would attack us.

Unfortunately for the citizens of Palestine, they are not armed and must rely on throwing rocks for their meager defense, leaving innocent civilian men, <u>women</u> and children completely defenseless.

Imagine that happening here! Imagine the eradication of principle that "the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." Imagine the loss of the Second Amendment.

Imagine the reality of deceitful back-door legislation further restricting or inhibiting good citizens from gun ownership through stricter registration, skyrocketing associated costs, etc. Imagine the right to defend yourself becoming a privilege.

I am almost ashamed of myself for using the calamity of the gross atrocities of the war in Gaza as an example, but, yes, it can happen here!

As the economy slides into deeper recession, many of us have seen things happen here that we never thought would happen.

A country whose citizens are armed is, undoubtedly, the best deterrent to a government run amuck, the war on terror, protecting our borders against invasion or any other violence against we the people.

Tell Congress to defeat deceitful backdoor anti-gun legislation.

Phil Boulds

Bloomington

If Chief is not allowed, ban 'Fighting Irish,' too

I find it offensive to my Irish heritage that Notre Dame uses the "Fighting Irish" as their mascot. Every Irishman isn't fighting and to use that with the Irish name is outrageous - not to mention that Notre Dame's mascot is shown with his fists up and dressed in a green leprechaun suit.

I do not walk around looking for a fight nor do I dress up in a green outfit.

If the University of Illinois can't use the Chief Illiniwek because it upsets the Native Americans, then other colleges shouldn't be allowed to use mascots such as the Notre Dame "Fighting Irish." What is good for one college should be good for all of the colleges.

Tony Simonton

Waynesville

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



AGREE? NO CHANCE!

Metro (UK)
January 21, 2009 Wednesday
Dublin Edition

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Section: Pg. 17

Length: 705 words

Body

If a cyclist makes an error they often pay with their lives, a motorists mistake often kills others.

Likewise, to criticise cyclists for going through red lights is a bit rich in a country where an amber light means put your foot down and speed through it. Tony I agree with Scared Pedestrian, cyclists are a worse danger than cars. We all know that Dublin city is not well suited for cycling, but that doesnt give them the right to do as they like it is no wonder they get knocked over so often. Cyclists: red lights mean stop! Angry Pedestrian Can anybody explain to me why it is acceptable for pedestrians to cross the street with red lights but not for cars and bicycles? Martin Anon, you say the number of cyclists that come up on the inside of a vehicle when they are turning left is mind blowing, well Im a cyclist, and the amount of vehicles that turn left without indicating is ridiculous.

Ive been forced to slam on brakes, been knocked up on to pavements and also knocked off my bike.

Why cant we cyclists go around the outside? Because its dangerous and the cycle lanes are on the inside! Willy Invisible Cyclist, from this Thursday, Lidl will be selling reversible reflector jackets.

They look very good with high visibility colour on one side and black on the other. Get one quick!Helen Invisible Cyclist, there is hi-vis everywhere!

Try the Snickers shop on Grand Canal Street Upper.

Theres also a bright yellow bag to wear on the bike in North Face in Temple Bar.Becky Coverage of the Gaza conflict threw up two much repeated mantras: disproportionate response and innocent civilians.

I wonder if a directly proportionate response (i.e. up to 80 rockets per day being indiscriminately launched into Gaza) would be acceptable to the anti-Israel brigade.

Innocence is a relative term.

The ordinary people of Germany voted Hitler into power and rightly got precious little sympathy for their suffering during the destruction of the Nazi regime.

AGREE? NO CHANCE!

Likewise, its a bit rich for the people of Gaza to complain about Israels actions when they voted for <u>Hamas</u> with the full knowledge of that partys stated intention to exterminate every single Israeli man, woman and child and which also facilitated the daily attacks on Israel.

The only true innocents here are the children but they, tragically, are quickly corrupted by their parents into hatefilled fanatics. Dick Keane Sorry: I would like to apologise to the girl whose shoe I stepped on while boarding the train in Coolmine Station. I was shocked that your shoe ended up on the track! Hope you got to work okay. I was so embarrassed that I boarded the train and left you. Anon Mickey: I drive a Nissan Micra (a nice blue one) and Im a 29-year-old man. All the lads take the mickey out of me because I drive it, they also say III never get a girl if they see me in my little car. Are they right? Do girls not like quys who drive cars similar to themselves? I just want to get from A to B!Tony Hmmm: Can anyone explain how the cost of transport can be down by 2.9 per cent when all train and bus fares have gone up by ten per cent? Anne True: How can CIE justify a ten per cent increase in prices on some routes when they are downsizing? Its baffling. Anon Ooh la la: Who is the new Metro girl beside Parnell Monument? Not only is she beautiful, but she also makes me wake up earlier just to be sure I dont miss her smile!MSG Stylz, how many women have you really picked up with that line? Why dont you just tap her on the shoulder and ask her for a drink? Simple!Kev To all those using the word skanger, just letting you know its out of date. Theyre called scrotes now. Conor Sophie, if people are sitting beside you on empty Darts, maybe youre really hot?Legend of the South Sophie, Im that guy that sits beside you on the Dart when theres no one else there. Be very afraid&Rob Obama the first black president. Lewis Hamilton the first black F1 world champ. Will Smith the worlds highest paid actor its a good time to be black! Michael Jackson must be kicking himself&D To the guy with the Thomas the Tank Engine ringtone on the Drogheda train yesterday. Hearing it brought a big grin to my face! Loved it!AnonTo the reformed NKOTB. We did a collection for ya you owe us €20. Ha ha ha!ABBH

Graphic

Red lights: A mystery to some

Load-Date: February 10, 2009



The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)

January 22, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. D8

Length: 785 words

Body

Taxpayers aren't paying the bill

To The Editor:

We regret that we had to disqualify contestant Camille Labchuk (and several others) late in the competition for Canada's Next Great Prime Minister; we have done so to ensure the competition remains as intended -- an opportunity for young people with no previous political experience. We recognized our error, have apologized for it and moved to fix it as soon as possible.

Your columnist Rod Allen is wrong, however, when he suggests the program and its prizes are "funded by taxpayers" and that we shouldn't be doing "reality TV." In fact, as a publicly-subsidized commercial network, CBC Television uses revenues generated by its programs to reduce the need for its public subsidy (the second-lowest per capita in the industrialized world), with profits redirected into still more Canadian programming.

This is no less true with reality programs, which have a long and successful history on CBC, including uniquely Canadian shows of the past like Front Page Challenge, more recently Canada's Next Great Prime Minister and, beginning last night, The Week the *Women* Went, which this season comes from beautiful Tatamagouche, N.S.

Jeff Keay,

CBC Media Relations,

Toronto, Ont.

How about growing up?

To The Editor:

We really don't deserve to have such a wonderful newspaper as the Times & Transcript. We really don't.

With all the events of yesterday in Washington and around the globe notwithstanding, the sage editors have decided to enlighten us again with the annual "let's dump on the teachers."

Hey guys! We all had teachers we didn't like but we got over it when we grew up! To suggest that the collective agreement be torn up because of your wrong- headed idea the teachers are overpaid is not a surprise, really. It was just a year ago when the same tirade began after some bad weather. We can't all live in Florida guys. Get over it.

P.S. I am not a teacher.

John Coughlan,

Riverview

Ambulances are for emergencies

To The Editor:

I'm responding to the letter "Deplorable state of health care" published in your newspaper by Ms. Nancy Crossman, on Jan. 8.

I respect Ms. Crossman's concerns but would like to address one comment where she stated that: "For anyone who requires immediate medical attention, if you should fall, cut yourself badly, or whatever . . . call an ambulance! It's the only way, from my observation, to get emergency medical treatment at the hospital!"

These comments may be taken out of context by some readers.

Calling an ambulance is done when a person is injured or ill and requires emergency medical care or emergency transportation. Ambulances are also used for inter-hospital transfers and for people who are not "ambulatory". New Brunswick has a limited amount of paramedics and ambulances. When you call for an ambulance, it will first be prioritized by your type of emergency. This affects the level of response sent to the call. Then the ambulance arrives and paramedics assess, treat, and then transport the patient to the ER. Once the ambulance arrives to the hospital, the paramedics will take the patient in and they will leave for their next call. The hospital medical personnel are required to "triage" the patient. This process assesses the patient and assigns a priority level that affects the time until the physician sees the patient.

We acknowledge the need to call an ambulance whenever there is a medical need, not in an attempt to shorten your ER wait.

Preston Holmes,

Director,

Clinical Operations, Ambulance NB

Moncton

Demand Israel behave better

To The Editor:

On behalf of the Greater Moncton Human Rights Committee of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), I am writing to protest the Canadian government's support of the military assault on the people of Gaza that the State of Israel commenced on Dec. 26.

The Canadian government's unconditional support of the so-called "right" of Israel to protect itself from attack is wholly unacceptable. Indeed, by using such techniques as collective punishment, Israel -- as an occupying power -- is violating the Geneva Convention.

Let us drop the pretence that it was the Palestinians who broke the truce by firing missiles into Israel. As CNN has confirmed, the ceasefire was broken when Israel invaded Gaza on Nov. 5 and killed six supporters of <u>Hamas</u>. At the same time, Israel has maintained a blockade of Gaza that denies essentials to civilians.

We lend our voice to other progressive organizations in demanding that Canada can and must push for an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza, and for the implementation of measures that will enhance the ability of humanitarian relief systems to function properly.

Philip Lillies,

Co-chair

Greater Moncton PSAC Human Rights Committee,

Moncton

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



Plea to help end Zionist aggression

Gulf Daily News January 22, 2009

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Length: 815 words **Byline:** The letter in full

Body

God bless a just America. Dear Mr President, With great respect and hope, we, the people of Bahrain, are addressing you on your first day in office and congratulate you on your inauguration as President of the US. You reached there by promising change to the citizens of the US and the citizens of an attentive world. We believe that change is indeed required and it is you who has the opportunity to make it happen.

Yes, you can!

Mr President, many things have changed already. The younger generations in our world no longer think the way their parents did. Young people receive information from different sources.

They skilfully surf, Google and YouTube. And every key word in a search bar brings thousands of information.

Keying a word like "Gaza" in Google exposes a youngster to images and words uploaded by Palestinians, Israelis, Americans or European writers at the same time.

Stories of suffering and agony will be mixed with military aggression and cries for peace and human dignity.

In this digital world, a child crying for her dead mother says more than a spokesperson in uniform.

The era of information censorship is counting its last days and with this change, governments will rediscover the essential values of communication - honesty and transparency.

Mr President, your America will have a new face and will speak with a new tongue.

Perhaps some terms used by your predecessors may require reconsideration.

When suggesting this, we are thinking of "war on terror" or "pre-emptive strike".

"War on terror" has familiarised the world with the fact that the US has given up confronting terror through a judicial system.

Plea to help end Zionist aggression

Terrorism is only to be stopped with war and use of rockets and jets in "pre-emptive strikes", taking the lives of civilians, has become acceptable.

Here we are in need for real change and Mr President, if you have entered office to be a president for all, then we have no doubt that you will prevail.

We have heard many reasons throughout the last weeks justifying Israeli's disproportionate use if violence, causing the loss of lives among Palestinian civilians.

If you want to stop such ideology to spread further, please find the courage for new words and new looks.

Mr President, you can introduce honesty and transparency to assist the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

We expect, that the US under your lead will never again silently observe aggressions which have been described as extensive violence and cruelty against civilians by the U N Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, upon visiting Palestine.

Your commitment to seek peace based on mutual interest, respect and dignity offers you the potential for peace.

But change, requires change on both sides of the fence.

Do you think you can divert Israel from the "war on terror" rhetoric and initiate change towards peace?

Are you ready to give honest and open advice rather than continue the Euro-American flatteries which have not changed anything for decades?

Or has the long-term acceptance of Israeli military aggressions by the US led to a circle of hatred that can no longer be broken?

Mr President, are you worried that *Hamas* may not stop launching rockets?

We are writing to you from the an Arab culture background and we know that your new language of honesty, loyalty and peace will be understood.

Change the Middle East by giving the Palestinian people dignity and the aggressors on both sides a system of fair jurisdiction, which brings criminals to justice.

Human dignity requires freedom to select residence and to strive for individual wealth and happiness - three aspects currently impossible in the Israeli blockade.

Mr President, liberate the Palestinian people by giving them trust and reason to believe in the institutions of democracy and by providing them proof that these can achieve freedom and peace without violence and arms.

Show the world that Palestine can be an equal partner in democratic governance.

After eight years since the introduction of the project for a "New Middle East" we witness not only the same aggressions and conflicts.

We believe it cannot be achieved without a "New Israel", with both believing in dialogue and peace.

This change will not take place as long as Rabbis and religious schools mobilise to back killing of non-Jewish children, **women** and senior citizens, or as long as criminals throw bombs into public buses in the name of faith.

Give your fair attention equally to both sides of the fence.

Mr President, change all expressions of radicalism and extremism by giving the example of a world leader who is a lover of peace and dialogue. Bring your change to the world; give your hand to the peace-thirsty moderate Jews in Israel and the population of Gaza. Win the hearts and minds of all.

Plea to help end Zionist aggression

Yes, you can!

Guide us and them into changed world, towards the blessing of peace. God bless America, the land of justice and equality for all.

A group of Bahraini believers in change.

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



Father says children were carrying white flags when shot dead by Israelis

The Irish Times

January 26, 2009 Monday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 10

Length: 776 words

Byline: LARA MARLOWE in Gaza

Body

KHALED ABED Rabbo (30) sits in the wreckage of his house in the Abed Rabbo district in the northeast of the Gaza Strip. Each day, journalists and human rights investigators come to interview the grieving father.

I am very tired. But I want the world to know this was a peaceful home, he says.

Abed Rabbo then recounts how on the afternoon of January 7th, an Israeli soldier shot his three little girls, killing Amal (2), Souad (7) and critically wounding Samer (4) in the spine.

The Abed Rabbos live less than 2km from the Israeli border. Like many of the 1,300 Palestinians killed in the Israeli offensive, the girls appear to have died not because of who they were obviously not <u>Hamas</u> fighters but because of where they were in the path of invading Israeli ground troops.

The Israelis practised a particularly brutal form of what the American military calls recon by fire .

The Abed Rabbos thought they were safe, because they had not been harmed in an earlier Israeli incursion. The Israelis know what we eat in our houses, said Souad, Khaled s mother.

If any of us had belonged to any faction, we could not have stayed in our homes so close to the border. Though unemployed, Khaled still receives a salary for his former job as a bodyguard to the western-backed president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas.

As the Israelis advanced, a tank stopped in front of the Abed Rabbos building and ordered them out with a loudspeaker. My three daughters, wife and mother went out carrying white flags, Mr Abed Rabbo said. By sending the <u>women</u> out, the family sought to prove they were civilians.

Two soldiers were eating outside the tank. Mr Abed Rabbo said a third soldier emerged from the hatch and opened fire on the family with an assault rifle, hitting the girls and Khaled s mother, after whom his eldest daughter was named.

Amal s insides poured out. Little Souad was cut across the middle by bullets.

Samih al Sheikh, an ambulance driver, heard the Abed Rabbos screaming from his home, 60 metres away.

He started up the hill in his ambulance, in uniform, with the intention of helping them, but came upon two Israeli tanks.

Father says children were carrying white flags when shot dead by Israelis

The Israelis told me to get out of my ambulance with my hands up. They made me strip down to my underwear. They wouldn't let me go to the Abed Rabbos, he said.

The Abed Rabbos retreated into their building. Two hours later, the Israelis allowed them to walk to a highway junction, carrying their dead and wounded.

In separate interviews, Khaled and Souad said the soldiers shot around their feet and over their heads as they were fleeing. Both recounted how a man with a horse-drawn cart who tried to help them was also shot dead.

Once the neighbourhood was evacuated, the Israelis blew up all the houses with detonation charges. The Israelis apparently wanted to empty the district, to deepen the buffer zone along their border.

But the Abed Rabbos are determined to hold on to their land, and are living in hastily constructed shacks on the ruins of their homes.

Amal and Souad Abed Rabbo were buried in one grave in Jabalya cemetery. An uncle accompanied Samer to Belgium, where she has undergone seven operations.

The deaths of the little girls have become known as the white flag incident, and could become grounds for a war crimes trial.

The human rights group Amnesty International has also received reports of at least three people killed in cold blood near Zeitoun, south of Gaza city.

In Khuza a village, east of the central Gazan town of Khan Yunis, a woman carrying a white flag at the head of a group of civilians was also shot dead.

The problem is that with these summary executions, there is no material proof, says Donatella Rovera, who is leading an Amnesty investigation into what she calls massive violations of international law and possibly war crimes during the three-week war.

That is why, she says, there must be a UN-mandated investigation. It might not bear fruit for 10 years, but evidence must be gathered now.

The Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert has asked the justice minister Daniel Freidman to prepare to defend Israeli officers and officials in the event of international lawsuits for war crimes.

A statement by the Israeli defence ministry said it would request a law to offer moral and legal support to military who participated in the offensive.

Military censors have forbidden the publication of the names of heads of the Israeli units involved.

Souad Abed Rabbo, Khaled s mother, lies on a sofa in the unlit living room of the home of relatives, under a pile of blankets, recuperating from bullet wounds.

I wouldn't wish what happened to us on anyone, she said. Not even Jews.

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



AGREE? NO CHANCE!

Metro (UK)
January 21, 2009 Wednesday
Dublin Edition

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Section: Pg. 17

Length: 705 words

Body

If a cyclist makes an error they often pay with their lives, a motorists mistake often kills others.

Likewise, to criticise cyclists for going through red lights is a bit rich in a country where an amber light means put your foot down and speed through it. Tony I agree with Scared Pedestrian, cyclists are a worse danger than cars. We all know that Dublin city is not well suited for cycling, but that doesnt give them the right to do as they like it is no wonder they get knocked over so often. Cyclists: red lights mean stop! Angry Pedestrian Can anybody explain to me why it is acceptable for pedestrians to cross the street with red lights but not for cars and bicycles? Martin Anon, you say the number of cyclists that come up on the inside of a vehicle when they are turning left is mind blowing, well Im a cyclist, and the amount of vehicles that turn left without indicating is ridiculous.

Ive been forced to slam on brakes, been knocked up on to pavements and also knocked off my bike.

Why cant we cyclists go around the outside? Because its dangerous and the cycle lanes are on the inside! Willy Invisible Cyclist, from this Thursday, Lidl will be selling reversible reflector jackets.

They look very good with high visibility colour on one side and black on the other. Get one quick!Helen Invisible Cyclist, there is hi-vis everywhere!

Try the Snickers shop on Grand Canal Street Upper.

Theres also a bright yellow bag to wear on the bike in North Face in Temple Bar.Becky Coverage of the Gaza conflict threw up two much repeated mantras: disproportionate response and innocent civilians.

I wonder if a directly proportionate response (i.e. up to 80 rockets per day being indiscriminately launched into Gaza) would be acceptable to the anti-Israel brigade.

Innocence is a relative term.

The ordinary people of Germany voted Hitler into power and rightly got precious little sympathy for their suffering during the destruction of the Nazi regime.

AGREE? NO CHANCE!

Likewise, its a bit rich for the people of Gaza to complain about Israels actions when they voted for <u>Hamas</u> with the full knowledge of that partys stated intention to exterminate every single Israeli man, woman and child and which also facilitated the daily attacks on Israel.

The only true innocents here are the children but they, tragically, are quickly corrupted by their parents into hatefilled fanatics. Dick Keane Sorry: I would like to apologise to the girl whose shoe I stepped on while boarding the train in Coolmine Station. I was shocked that your shoe ended up on the track! Hope you got to work okay. I was so embarrassed that I boarded the train and left you. Anon Mickey: I drive a Nissan Micra (a nice blue one) and Im a 29-year-old man. All the lads take the mickey out of me because I drive it, they also say III never get a girl if they see me in my little car. Are they right? Do girls not like quys who drive cars similar to themselves? I just want to get from A to B!Tony Hmmm: Can anyone explain how the cost of transport can be down by 2.9 per cent when all train and bus fares have gone up by ten per cent? Anne True: How can CIE justify a ten per cent increase in prices on some routes when they are downsizing? Its baffling. Anon Ooh la la: Who is the new Metro girl beside Parnell Monument? Not only is she beautiful, but she also makes me wake up earlier just to be sure I dont miss her smile!MSG Stylz, how many women have you really picked up with that line? Why dont you just tap her on the shoulder and ask her for a drink? Simple!Kev To all those using the word skanger, just letting you know its out of date. Theyre called scrotes now. Conor Sophie, if people are sitting beside you on empty Darts, maybe youre really hot?Legend of the South Sophie, Im that guy that sits beside you on the Dart when theres no one else there. Be very afraid&Rob Obama the first black president. Lewis Hamilton the first black F1 world champ. Will Smith the worlds highest paid actor its a good time to be black! Michael Jackson must be kicking himself&D To the guy with the Thomas the Tank Engine ringtone on the Drogheda train yesterday. Hearing it brought a big grin to my face! Loved it!AnonTo the reformed NKOTB. We did a collection for ya you owe us €20. Ha ha ha!ABBH

Graphic

Red lights: A mystery to some

Load-Date: February 10, 2009



Occupation is origin of violence in Gaza;

Lincoln Journal Star (Nebraska) January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. B5

Length: 783 words

Byline: GREG KELLER For the Lincoln Journal Star

Body

It's impossible to have an intelligent discussion about the situation between Israel and the Palestinians (specifically Gaza) if you don't have the facts. Americans, thanks to incomplete, inaccurate and lazy coverage by the mainstream media, overwhelmingly don't have the facts. What we do have is misinformation, mischaracterization and flat-out lies. And most of us don't even realize it.

In the words of Stephen Hawking, "The enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge."

The misinformation has come mostly in the form of omission. The reason most Americans don't feel empathy for Palestinians and aren't outraged by the actions of the Israeli government and its military is largely because we have no idea of the reality of what's really going on. We've never seen the images or heard the stories of the people who live in the "Occupied Territories." The mainstream media refuse to show us the faces of the civilian <u>women</u> and children who are living and dying in the path of the latest invasion.

Palestinians (in Gaza and in the West Bank) have been living under brutal and oppressive military occupation since 1967 - a fact that is missing from almost every "news" report in the United States. Yes, Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005, but it has continued the occupation by maintaining control of Gaza's borders and coasts, not allowing basic supplies in from Israel or from the sea. Gaza has been virtually under siege for the past three years, and Israel has continued to send its forces in whenever it wishes.

When people say that <u>Hamas</u> broke the cease-fire, they neglect to mention that for the period of time that the rocket attacks did cease, Israel didn't fulfill its part of the agreement, which was to loosen restrictions at the borders for food, fuel and medicine. It has, in fact, tightened those restrictions during the attacks, which has resulted in the residents of Gaza being unable to leave, creating a growing humanitarian disaster.

As CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour pointed out, to her credit, this is one of the first conflicts that has seen no refugees. The reason? They can't get out. Israel has closed the borders by land and sea (Egypt has also closed its borders, and that's another story), and the residents of Gaza flee from one location to the other inside their prison, seeking shelter from the attacks. They find none, not even in the U.N. schools, which have been hit by Israeli mortars. They are trapped inside a death zone. And we do nothing.

The occupation itself is an act of violence. The opposition to it is resistance. I'm not condoning the rocket attacks into Israel, but we need to understand that this is not two equally mighty nations who just can't get along duking it out. It's not a matter of "both sides have committed acts of violence against each other." It's not a balanced conflict. One is a highly sophisticated and extremely well-armed military machine - financed and equipped by U.S. taxpayers

Occupation is origin of violence in Gaza

to the tune of \$3 billion to \$5 billion a year - and the other is a devastated, largely unarmed civilian population who are virtual prisoners.

No American could (or would) tolerate for an hour the horrendous and oppressive conditions Palestinians endure on a daily basis (and have been enduring for the past 40-plus years) at the hands of the Israeli military. Every day a Palestinian wakes up alive it's an act of resistance. Unfortunately, even this simple act is becoming more and more difficult. The current number of civilian dead in Gaza is estimated at more than 1,000, at least 300 of whom are children.

The other obstacle for Americans in understanding this conflict is the presentation by the media of a united Israel unanimously in favor of the occupation at any cost. We never hear the voices of the Israelis who vehemently oppose it. We never see the footage of the demonstrations in Tel Aviv of thousands of Israelis calling for withdrawal. We don't see any of the members of the many Jewish organizations in Israel and in the United States who are highly critical of the actions of the Israeli government on their behalf. There is actually more diversity of opinion and debate within Israel than there is in all of the mainstream U.S. media. And don't forget about the West Bank. What's happening there while our attention is turned to Gaza? And who will tell us?

What can you do? Contact your local and national news outlets and let them know that you want them to do their jobs. Tell them to provide the rest of the story. Educate yourself. Do the research they're not doing for you, and then educate someone else. But do something.

Gregory L. Keller of Lincoln is a journalism adviser at Lincoln High School.

Load-Date: May 13, 2009



Health services 'on verge of collapse'

therecord.com

January 15, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A6

Length: 744 words

Byline: Maria Cheng, The Associated Press

Dateline: LONDON

Body

International doctors called for an end to the violence in Gaza, saying hospitals were scenes of "nightmarish havoc" in articles published yesterday in The Lancet medical journal.

In a special report detailing the human toll of the Gaza offensive, The Lancet said Gaza City's Al Shifa hospital asked for extra refrigeration equipment before the bodies of patients with severe wounds began decomposing.

The hospital, Gaza's largest, reported its 585 beds were filled in the first week of the Israeli offensive.

The Lancet cited the Ministry of Health in Gaza as saying that as of Monday, 292 children and 75 **women** had been killed in the offensive, with 1,497 children and 626 **women** wounded.

According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, the death toll is somewhat lower: As of yesterday, it said, 225 children and 70 <u>women</u> had been killed. However, the ministry defines children as 18 and under, the Palestinian Center 17 and under.

Israeli defence officials acknowledge the military has loosened its rules of engagement during the current round of fighting to prevent the killing or capture of soldiers.

But military officials note that <u>Hamas</u> fighters have worn civilian clothing while fighting Israeli troops, using schools, mosques and crowded residential areas for cover, making it hard to keep ordinary residents out of harm's way.

Reacting to The Lancet articles, Israeli Cabinet Minister Isaac Herzog said his country has worked hard to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza throughout the fighting, and Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson Yigal Palmor sharply criticized one of the doctors quoted in The Lancet for "spreading vicious lies."

Paul Garwood, a Geneva-based spokesperson for the World Health Organization, said the Gaza Health Ministry's figures had not been independently verified, but they seemed reasonable based on their staff's observations in Gaza. In a statement last week, WHO declared that health services in Gaza were "on the point of collapse." UNICEF called the situation "tragic" and "unacceptable."

The International Committee of the Red Cross said the Israeli army has failed to evacuate the wounded.

Health services 'on verge of collapse'

"The violence launched on Gaza is taking an unjustifiable toll on civilian populations," The Lancet said in an editorial. "These actions contravene the Fourth Geneva Convention," it said, referring to the international agreement that civilians are to be protected in times of war.

The Lancet also published a letter signed by more than 700 medical students calling for an end to the Gaza attacks.

Norwegian doctors Mads Gilbert and Erik Fosse, who are working inside the Al Shifa hospital, described Gaza's health situation as "nightmarish havoc" in The Lancet special report.

The pair have more than two decades of experience working in Gaza and other war zones. Gilbert and Fosse wrote that since arriving in Gaza on Dec. 31, 2008, they have "witnessed the most horrific war injuries in men, <u>women</u> and children of all ages in numbers almost too large to comprehend."

More than 350 surgeries were performed in the first two weeks of the attacks. All of those were on patients injured in the fighting; all other surgeries have been suspended.

Each operating room is equipped with one table and several lights, though many are not working, Gilbert and Fosse said.

With widespread power shortages throughout Gaza, Shifa heavily relies on generators for electricity.

Gilbert and Fosse had no statistics on the types of surgeries being performed, but had participated in many amputations, including some triple amputations. They said that the killed and injured they have seen in the hospital have overwhelmingly been civilians.

Since most health services not immediately related to the violence have been disrupted or suspended, experts are also worried about people with chronic problems like cancer or heart disease, many of whom have fled Gaza for Egypt or Israel.

Palmor questioned the accuracy of Gilbert's comments.

"Dr. Gilbert is notorious for his radical far left opinions and his systematic demonization of Israel. He has already accused Israel of almost every nightmarish crime in the book only to ignore the refutation of every one of his allegations," Palmor said in an interview.

"His stories are worthy of Dante's imagination but have been proved time and again to be far removed from reality. It is a pity that serious members of the medical profession should allow themselves to be dragged into an excessive of mad Mads."

Graphic

Photo: Majed Hamdan, The Associated Press, A Palestinian child, wounded earlier in an Israeli military attack, is seen through the window of Kamal Edwan hospital of the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Lahiya, yesterday. Israel showed no signs of slowing its offensive as it struck some 60 targets yesterday.

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



Iran's uncertain path; The protesters in Tehran raise questions about the Iranian government's support

therecord.com

June 23, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Pg. A7

Length: 824 words **Byline:** Barry Kay

Body

The turmoil in Tehran needn't have come to this. If Ayatollah Khamenei was certain of a huge victory by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over Mir Hossein Mousavi, something few Iranians seem to accept, it would have been a simple matter to resolve the impasse with a runoff vote. However once the supreme leader intervened on behalf of the incumbent, Ahmadinejad's apparent unpopularity became transferred to the ayatollah, who had previously been held to be above partisan conflict.

Now, of course, any climb down or acknowledgment that there had been election fraud would itself reflect upon the supreme leader. As has been evident in many other authoritarian regimes, once weakness is perceived, it is a slippery slope for those in power.

This was understood by tyrants ranging from Josef Stalin to Saddam Hussein, and is the operative rationale in North Korea and Myanmar. Khamenei's gambit of having a limited recount simply did not resonate.

If one engages in electoral fraud in the first place, why would anyone expect the same authority to treat a recount any more fairly, especially when it would lead to their own embarrassment?

All of this is a result of the rigid arrogance of a regime that assumed it could rule indefinitely out of intimidation, and that nothing ever changes in the society. Thirty years after the fall of the shah, many Iranians have no memory of the events used to scapegoat the United States and foreign interests for all the failings in their nation. In hindsight, this confrontation resulted gratuitously from unforced errors by the ruling elite.

Khamenei and his minions ignored public concern with the excesses of Ahmadinejad, who apart from becoming an international buffoon, has mishandled the domestic economy which has inflation and unemployment rates above 25 per cent, despite the country's oil wealth.

Another dimension of the problem that is less reported are personal antagonisms and jealousies among those in power. Former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani exchanged personal insults with Ahmadinejad during the campaign, and as a member of the Council of Guardians is in a position to challenge Khamenei himself, if it should ever come to that.

Iran 's uncertain path; The protesters in Tehran raise questions about the Iranian government's support

While in the west, there is widespread antipathy to the entire regime, and hence a concomitant desire to see it completely replaced, that is unlikely to have been the initial goal for many of the demonstrators, including Mousavi himself.

It is far too premature to think that a revolution of comparable proportion to 1979 will inevitably follow. Nonetheless the nation is in ferment and these demonstrations should have a transformative impact upon Iranian governance, even if Ahmadinejad does remain in power.

Both he and the supreme leader have been diminished substantially, both internally and in the eyes of the world. The technological advances of the internet and social media in recent years suggest that authoritarian governments in educated societies cannot impose complete media blackouts, or resist public protests through fear of repression alone.

So long as the numbers in the street persist, the Iranian government runs serious risks in using brute force. To assert short-term authority through violence will lessen long-term regime legitimacy, and jeopardize the entire political system. At the moment, the establishment's hope seems to be that the protesters will tire themselves out, and give up in frustration.

However future events unfold, the fact that the demonstrations have continued to this point means that the government must act with greater caution. As a gesture, some possible reforms include a relaxation of the role of the morality police enforcing modest dress for <u>women</u> and more efficient economic management.

This entire confrontation has ramifications outside of Iran as well. American President Barack Obama had appropriately been leaning over backward to avoid commenting, despite the Iranian regime's desire to blame the United States for everything, but it isn't clear that serious U.S.-Iranian negotiations can now take place in this climate.

What had been seen as expanding Iranian foreign policy influence will now probably be much more limited. The funding and use of proxies Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> to export the revolution will have less credibility if that revolution is being questioned at home. The damage associated with Ahmadinejad has also extended to the United Nations, which in an act of supreme misjudgment selected this "holocaust denier" to be the keynote speaker at their conference on racism last April at Geneva.

As has frequently been observed, nobody really knows where this confrontation is going, but it has to cast uncertainty about the hollowness of popular support for the Iranian administration.

It will, of course, depend upon the will of the Iranian people in the street, but nobody is going to put the toothpaste back into the tube.

Barry Kay is a professor of political science at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Graphic

Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been dragged into the election conflict after intervening on behalf of the incumbent president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Prior to the election, Khamenei had been held to be above partisan conflict.

Load-Date: June 23, 2009



St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

March 8, 2009 Sunday

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 1P

Length: 1591 words

Byline: SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN, Times Senior Correspondent

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank

Body

There are three main ways to get around the West Bank.

If you're a Jewish settler, you zip along a network of good, limited-access roads built especially for you and the other 250,000 settlers. If you're a VIP - a term broadly applied to most foreigners, including journalists - you travel along those same routes in chauffeured style with car and driver. And if you're a Palestinian you get in a vehicle and hope for the best.

Palestinians have long complained that Israel's checkpoints and road closures make it hard for them to go from place to place. Construction of the 254-mile Israeli security barrier has further balkanized the West Bank, Palestinians charge, reducing chances they will ever have a contiguous state of their own in this rocky, star-crossed land.

In more than a dozen trips to the West Bank since 1997, I had always gone with a driver and interpreter. Last month, I decided to travel alone, to see for myself if conditions are as onerous as Israel's critics say.

It turned out that the 2.5 million Palestinians of the West Bank have cobbled together a surprisingly efficient transportation system. But while often interesting, getting from here to there is not always fast or easy.

- - -

My journey started one Thursday morning in East Jerusalem, where I joined several people waiting for the No. 18 bus at the juncture of Nablus and Salah ad-Din roads. During the 1967 Mideast War, this area near the Old City was on the front line of fighting between Israeli and Jordanian soldiers. Today it is mix of Jewish and Arab - an Israeli district court is just down the street from dozens of Arab shops.

Within minutes, the No. 18 bus to Ramallah arrived. I deposited four shekels - about \$1 - and took a seat.

"Who runs these buses?" I asked the man next to me, a computer engineer who spoke English.

"A private company started this about four years ago," he said. "It's a lot better than it used to be; then there were only taxis."

He and most of the other passengers were going to work in Ramallah, the largest city in the West Bank. Before the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, began in 2000, the morning commuter flow was in the opposite direction -

thousands of Palestinians came from the West Bank each day to work construction or service jobs in Israel. But now it is nearly impossible for those with Palestinian identification to enter Jerusalem unless they have special permission, rarely granted except for medical emergencies.

My seatmate, though, was a Jerusalem native who had an Israeli ID. That enabled him to go to Ramallah to work and - more important - allowed him to return home each night.

We chatted as the bus left East Jerusalem and ran alongside Israel's security fence - in this area a solid, 25-foothigh high wall topped with barbed wire. For Israelis, the barrier has been a great success. Within a year after the first segment was erected in 2003, the number of attacks plunged from 73 to three. For Palestinians, it has been a nightmare, dividing families and neighborhoods and turning short trips into hourlong excursions.

At the huge Calandiya checkpoint, the Israeli-controlled entrance to Ramallah, we came to a sign that said Vehicle Inspection Point. But the bus rolled on; I asked my seatmate why we didn't have to stop.

"They don't care who's going in," he shrugged, referring to the Israeli soldiers nearby.

Ramallah is a crowded, noisy Arab city that lacks the sophistication of Beirut or the rich history of Cairo. It is controlled by the late Yasser Arafat's Fatah Party, which lost to the militant group <u>Hamas</u> in 2006 parliamentary elections but continues to be propped up by billions of dollars in aid from the United States and Europe. Even with all that money, times are hard: The owner of a jewelry store said more customers were coming in to sell gold than to buy it.

I didn't intend to stay long in Ramallah, but my eye caught an unexpected sign: Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association. Since Palestinians have one of the world's highest birth rates, I was intrigued, and went in.

Over tea, the director of the office, Dr. Suad Husseini, told me she was born in the Gaza Strip but had been back only once in the last 10 years. With Gaza now under <u>Hamas</u> control and the Israeli blockade, she couldn't even go to her mother's funeral in January.

Here in the West Bank, she said, Israeli security measures made life "very difficult, especially on <u>women</u> and children."

According to a report she gave me from the International Planned Parenthood Federation, 34.5 percent of Palestinians living near Jerusalem have been separated from family members by the "wall," 65 percent have seen a drop in income since its construction and 38 percent said Israeli road closures prevented them from getting necessary health care. Another 22 percent said they had ended their education early because of the difficulties moving around.

"Within the steadily shrinking, fragmented space," the report said, "the local Palestinian population is experiencing an unraveling of economic and social networks."

- - -

Getting to Ramallah had been smooth enough that I aimed for a bigger challenge: Nablus, the West Bank's second-largest city and a flashpoint between Israelis and Palestinians during the second intifada. A photographer and I had tried to go there in 2002 after Israel invaded the West Bank in retaliation for a suicide bombing that killed 30 civilians at a Passover dinner. But our driver considered the road to Nablus too risky. It ran near a Jewish settlement, and from their hillside perch, settlers hurled rocks at any vehicle with a Palestinian tag.

Now, seven years later, I made my way to a big parking garage near the center of Ramallah. It echoed with shouted destinations: Jenin! Tulkarum! Qalqilya!

One man directed me to a minibus headed for Nablus. Smaller and older than the No. 18 bus, this one had ripped vinyl seats held together with duct tape. The fare: 15 shekels.

It was a beautiful day, and the drive through the northern West Bank was a pleasant one. We drove along a ridge with spectacular views in all directions, then dipped into an emerald valley past olive groves and almond trees in pale pink bloom.

About 30 minutes into the trip, the driver said something in Arabic and the other six passengers immediately reached for their seat belts. We were approaching an Israeli checkpoint. The bus slowed but was waved on through, and we soon reached Nablus.

More precisely, we reached the outskirts of Nablus. Israel controls all entrances to the city, home to three refugee camps said to have been a center for rocket production during the second intifada. Things are quiet now, but with rare exceptions no vehicles from other parts of the West Bank are allowed into the city. You have to get out of the vehicle you came in, carry your belongings through a checkpoint, and catch another ride on the other side.

I asked one of my fellow passengers where I could get a taxi into town.

"Come with me," he said. He introduced himself as Rami Abdoo, a bodyguard for the Palestinian minister of social services. Home for the weekend, he offered to show me around the Old City of Nablus.

Founded by the Romans nearly 2,000 years ago, Nablus remains a thriving commercial center known for its fine soaps, olive oil and furniture. For two hours we wandered through crowded Arab souks and streets so narrow I could touch the walls on both sides without fully extending my arms. Many buildings still showed scars of the 2002 Israeli incursion.

At 2:30 p.m., I took a taxi back to the checkpoint. Scores of men stood in one long line. "Here, many hours!" one shouted in English.

The other, much shorter, line was primarily for <u>women</u> and children. "What are you doing in Nablus?" a young Israeli soldier asked. He clearly hadn't seen many Americans in this part of the West Bank.

"Just wanted to visit," I said. He looked skeptical, but motioned me on. I got into a minibus, and began the trip back to Jerusalem.

The drive went smoothly until we came to an Israeli checkpoint near the Jewish settlement of Shiloh. We started up a small hill, then came to a dead stop.

Three roads converged at the checkpoint and within minutes, each had a line of vehicles as far as the eye could see. Twenty minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes. The man sitting next to me pulled out his cell phone and angrily shouted at someone on the other end; wherever he was going, he was going to be late.

Every now and then we inched forward a few yards. An hour and 20 minutes later we finally reached the top of the hill. There was no obvious reason for the delay - no accident, no breakdown, no road work. No one moved until an Israeli soldier, with a barely discernible shake of the head, signaled to one car at a time that it was okay to proceed.

It was nearly 5 p.m. by the time we got to Ramallah. What should have been a 40-minute drive had taken almost 2-1/2 hours.

- - -

At Ramallah, I transferred to the No. 18 bus to Jerusalem. This time, we stopped at the Calandiya checkpoint, where Israel soldiers closely examined every passport, ID and permission slip. Then they started going through the bus itself.

"You may want to get off and get that one," a fellow passenger advised, nodding toward a bus already cleared to continue.

It was dark by the time the No.18 turned onto Nablus Road. The driver let me off a block from my hotel.

Cost of buses and taxis in the West Bank: 38 shekels, or about \$9.50.

Experience of traveling like a local: priceless.

Susan Taylor Martin can be contacted at susan@sptimes.com

Graphic

PHOTO, SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN, Times: An Israeli military jeep approaches the No. 18 bus that runs from Ramallah, the largest city in the West Bank, to predominately Arab East Jerusalem. Vehicles skirt Israel's 254-milelong security barrier, which has dramatically reduced suicide bombings. Palestinians, though, say the barrier has separated families and makes it harder for them to get to school, jobs and medical care. PHOTO, SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN, Times: The driver of a Palestinian minibus - a common means of transport for Palestinians in the West Bank - shows his frustration as traffic comes to a standstill for almost two hours at an Israeli checkpoint near the Jewish settlement of Shiloh. MAP, Times

Load-Date: March 9, 2009



Imaginary One-on-One With Barack Obama

Richmond Times Dispatch (Virginia)

June 14, 2009 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: COMMENTARY; Pg. E-03

Length: 877 words

Byline: ROSS MACKENZIE

Body

You are there - sipping green tea with President Obama in this imaginary one-on-one...

Sir, in your Cairo address to Islam you were the first Western potentate since Napoleon to embrace the Islamist narrative dividing humanity into warring religious camps: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc. That implicitly supports reestablishment of the caliphate -

On the contrary, one of my applause lines said: "The fourth issue I will address is democracy." It's difficult even for me to express how deeply I believe in democracy.

So are you now belatedly supporting President Bush's freedom agenda for the Middle East - as made tangible by the wars against terror in Iraq and Afghanistan?

I have made it clear that although Bush-Cheney policies are responsible for so much that I am trying to correct, I am for freedom and diplomacy - and against war. I said in Cairo, "The Iraqi people are ultimately better off without the tyranny of Saddam Hussein." I also said I "believe that events in Iraq have reminded America of the need to use diplomacy and build international consensus to resolve our problems."

You may have missed that in Cairo I did not once deploy the word terror or any of its variations. I did use the phrase violent extremism. I have instructed my administration to avoid such Bush-Cheney terms as The Long War and The Global War on Terror. Because I so deplore war and the notion of offending Muslim peoples, I have directed that our actions abroad to confront extremism be rebranded Overseas Contingency Operations. No joke.

Right. No more war... New question: If you so reject Bush administration policies and pronouncements, was it mere coincidence that you echoed Laura Bush when saying in Cairo, "I respect those [Muslim] <u>women</u> who choose to live their lives in traditional roles, but it should be their choice"?

Exactly. It is no surprise that I am pro-choice - long have been. I'm glad you understand that.

Mr. President, could we talk about Israel for a minute? It seems that in Cairo you repudiated - at least - the Bush administration's Road Map for peace. And you redefined Israel's abandonment of settlements in the West Bank, even for natural growth (as emphasized by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton), as not a topic of negotiations but a requirement for them.

Imaginary One-on-One With Barack Obama

I have said these things: (1) America supports Israel and (2) America supports the Palestinians. There is equivalence here, you might call it moral equivalence. Israel must abandon settlements it is building - and has built - on land it took by war. I am against war.

But sir, in almost all cases Israel was defending itself - and winning - in wars waged by Arabs and Muslims. Israel aspires only to be recognized by the world community (including its 57 Muslim-majority nations), to be secure, and to be left alone.

The Palestinians have their aspirations too, and those Israeli settlements are greatly offensive to Palestinian aspirations - so offensive that they have fueled the rise of <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah, and could lead to more war. For the Arab street they're a festering sore that can cause, for us, more overseas contingency operations.

Israeli settlements are the genesis of Iranian nuclear ambition for bombs and missiles to obliterate an Israel whose location on the world map Iran refuses even to acknowledge?

I am seeking opportunities for Secretary Clinton and her people - all part of the Obama team - to sit down with the Iranians. The more we talk to them, the more the chances to educate them - and the greater the likelihood they will see the goodness of our ways. As you know, I am a dreamer -

No kidding -

And although they are not yet returning our phone calls, I am hopeful for positive outcomes in talks we want to have with - well, with everyone.

Talks with our avowed enemies tend to be one-way streets - buying time only for those on the other side of the table. Talks haven't worked to our advantage with North Korea. And despite your Cairo apologia for American sins against Islam - wherein you failed to mention all the American blood spilled selflessly for Muslims from Bosnia, Kosovo, and Kuwait to Iraq (twice) and Afghanistan - talks are not likely to soften the Iranian ayatollahs either, if you ever can find the right numbers to call.

My staff has diligently supplied the media with catalogs chronicling the broadly positive response in the Muslim world to my remarks in Cairo.

As in so much, this conversation ought to be a two-way street as well. So let me conclude our discussion with a question for you. How would you characterize my Cairo address to Islam?

You truly want to know?

I'm a dreamer with his feet planted in the concrete of reality.

You are a serious speechifier, sir. Your addresses at the Naval Academy and Normandy were soaring affairs. Yet Cairo was all na*ve academic theory, patronizing feel-goodism, and high-tone loquacity - consisting fundamentally in the elaborate rhetorical window-dressing at which you are so deft.

The operative question is this: Will Cairo do anything -anything at all - to deter and defuse a terror-driven Islamist jihad, and thereby generate solid outcomes for the West and this beloved land?

Ross Mackenzie is the retired editor of the Editorial Pages. Contact him at rmackenzie@tribune.com

Load-Date: June 25, 2009



ACROSS MIDEAST, PRAISE AND CRITICISM; THE PRESIDENT ASKED LISTENERS IN A REGION ROILED BY HATRED TO TAKE TWO STEPS THAT HAVE LONG BEEN ANATHEMA: FORGETTING THE PAST AND UNDERSTANDING AN OPPOSING VIEW.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

June 5, 2009 Friday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A-4

Length: 847 words

Byline: Michael Slackman, The New York Times

Body

CAIRO, Egypt -- On one level, President Barack Obama's speech succeeded in reaching out to Muslims across the Middle East, winning widespread praise for his respectful approach, his quotations from the Quran and his forthright references to highly fraught political conflicts.

But the president's calibrated remarks also asked listeners in a region roiled by hatred to take two steps that have long been anathema: Forgetting the past and understanding an opposing view. For a president who proclaimed a goal of asking people to listen to uncomfortable truths, it was clear that parts of his speech resonated deeply with his intended audience, and others fell on deaf ears, in Israel as well as the Muslim world.

Again and again, Muslim listeners said they were struck by how skillfully Mr. Obama appropriated religious, cultural and historical references in ways other American presidents had not. He sprinkled the speech with four quotations from the Quran and used Arabic greetings. He took note of longstanding historical grievances like the stain of colonialism, U.S. support for the Iranian coup of 1953 and the displacement of the Palestinian people.

His speech was also embraced for what it did not do: Use the word terrorism, broadly seen here as shorthand for an attack on Islam.

"He spoke really like an enlightened leader from the region, more than like a foreigner," said Mustafa Hamarneh, former director of the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies. "It was very unlike the neocolonial and condescending approach of the previous administration."

In effect, Mr. Obama structured his speech almost like a Friday prayer, blending a political, social and religious message. In style and substance, some regional analysts said, the speech sought to undermine the message of radical terrorists like Osama bin Laden.

"Al-Qaida benefited from the previous rhetoric about the clash of civilizations in mobilizing and recruiting individuals as part of fighting a crusade," said Mohammad Abu Rumman, research editor at Al Ghad daily newspaper in Amman, Jordan. "The speech is positive and allows us to move from the religious-civilization title of the struggle to a political-realistic title."

ACROSS MIDEAST, PRAISE AND CRITICISM THE PRESIDENT ASKED LISTENERS IN A REGION ROILED BY HATRED TO TAKE TWO STEPS THAT HAVE LONG BEEN ANATHEMA: FORGETTING THE P....

Perhaps inevitably, by seeking to present balance to the many conflicts that divide the region, Mr. Obama angered some on both sides. Many Arabs and Israelis alike furiously rejected what they saw as his attempt to present their suffering as morally equivalent. They picked at the content of the speech almost like a biblical text.

"How dare Obama compare Arab refugee suffering to the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust?" asked Aryeh Eldad, a parliamentarian from the rightist National Union Party in Israel.

Ahmed Youssef, deputy foreign minister in the <u>Hamas</u> government in Gaza, said, "He points to the right of Israel to exist, but what about the refugees and their right of return?"

And in Jordan, Rohile Gharaibeh, deputy secretary-general for the Islamic Action Front, the political party of the Muslim Brotherhood, rejected any reference to the Holocaust. "The Holocaust was not the doing of the Muslims; it was the Europeans, and it should not come at the cost of the Palestinian people or the Arabs and Muslims," he said.

The president's speech included a list of topics that have soured relations with Muslims. As each topic was addressed, from religious tolerance and <u>women</u>'s rights to nuclear weapons and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, he was greeted with warm applause or icy stares, depending on who was listening.

In Iraq, after six years of occupation, missed opportunities and failed promises, there was a heavy dose of skepticism. In Iran, some praised the explicit reference to the 1953 coup that toppled a popular Iranian prime minister.

"The coup has become a symbol of nationalism for Iranians, and the fact that Obama acknowledged the United States had intervened sends a positive message to all groups," said Tehran political analyst Alireza Rajaee. "Now, those who favor better ties with the United States have no fear to publicly call for it, because they can say that the United States has admitted to its historic mistake."

While many listeners generally agreed with Mr. Obama's comments about violence and extremism, some said they disliked his characterization of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which they described as bloody catastrophes.

"What is astonishing is that he condemned violence, but he didn't say a word about what the United States did in Iraq," said Khalid Saghieh, executive editor of the Lebanese daily newspaper al Akhbar, which leans toward Hezbollah. "If you want to call for a new beginning, you should at least apologize for tens of thousands of victims in Iraq."

But Israelis and Palestinians also managed to step back from their own concerns and said they understood the broader significance of the speech. Even Mr. Youssef hailed the speech as historic.

The Israeli government said in a statement that it hoped that the speech "will indeed lead to a new period of reconciliation between the Arab and Muslim world and Israel."

Load-Date: June 5, 2009



The Pope is a spiritual leader, not a politician; George Pitcher says that critics of Pope Benedict have the wrong idea about his role in the modern world

The Daily Telegraph (London)

May 11, 2009 Monday

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The Daily Telegraph

Section: FEATURES; Comment; Pg. 24

Length: 797 words

Byline: George Pitcher

Body

Pope Benedict XVI arrives in Israel today, amid some of the tightest security ever to accompany a visiting dignitary. Unsurprising at any time, given the febrile and fractious nature of Middle East diplomacy, but a particularly vulnerable aura surrounds the Pope on this tour, as a consequence of recent events that have again poisoned the well of Jewish-Christian relations.

The fear is that the lone fanatic with a gun will have gained renewed motivation from the Pope's apparent enthusiasm for the beatification of Pius XII, known in some Jewish quarters as "Hitler's Pope". His rehabilitation of the excommunicated Bishop Richard Williamson, just as he gave a Holocaust-denying interview in Scandinavia, and his revision of the Good Friday Prayer, with its echoes of Roman Catholic anti-semitism, have exacerbated old wounds.

Fears that Pope Benedict may have put back the clock to the days when Jews would have routinely been called "Christ-murderers" in Vatican circles have led to representatives of both faiths to call on what they know to be a good and holy man to make conciliatory and diplomatic noises. They want him to condemn Williamson, to affirm the Jewish state and to censure *Hamas* and Hizbollah.

To some extent, the Pope can be a worldly diplomat. He showed as much this weekend in Jordan, where he spoke of his "deep respect" for Islam. But he cannot aspire to be a remedial politician in the Middle East. His job is to speak Catholic Truth, born of tradition and interpreted through the prism of his own scriptural faith.

Those who want a flexible pope, one who addresses the Abramic faiths in an ecumenical way, make a category mistake. If he compromised the Truth, then he wouldn't be the Pope.

So his Church's teaching can't be compromised, any more than the Christ that he serves could be said to change to suit the political circumstances of our day. The category error of those who would like to see a little more pliability from the Holy Father was most apparent on his visit to Africa, when he indicated that condoms weren't an answer to the blight of Aids.

The Pope is a spiritual leader, not a politician George Pitcher says that critics of Pope Benedict have the wrong idea about his role in the modern world

Doubtless, contraception would save lives. But the uncomfortable truth to which the Pope attests is that it would save far fewer lives than if everyone lived in monogamous marriages and the unmarried remained celibate. We say life isn't like that, but the Pope's task is to remind the faithful of the will of God to which humankind should aspire; there is a Protestant tradition for those who interpret the gospel in the context of the world in which we live.

Similarly, in the Middle East, we can't expect Pope Benedict to take sides. The most we can expect is that he will indicate that Christ can work mysteriously in the lives of non-believers and that violence is an abomination.

That will be seen by many Jews and Muslims as the same old Christian hegemony. But that is a mistake. The assumption that Roman Catholicism abhors Judaism and Islam is wrong. Documents from the Second Vatican Council are unequivocal: Nostra Aetate states that when the Church delves into her own mystery, she discovers her link with the Jewish people, and the Roman Missal adds that "the Jews were the first to hear the word of God". Meanwhile, Lumen Gentium says that "the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place among whom are the Muslims".

These aren't fuzzy multi-faith imprecations. It's still the Christ who saves. But to characterise the Pope as, by definition, an anti-Semite and a crusader against infidels is an infantile calumny. He deserves better than that, if only because he comes in peace. Whether he gets it in the Holy Lands this week depends largely on his hosts. But that he is there, treading in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, is enormously potent in its symbolism.

He isn't the first Pope to visit Israel; his predecessor was there at the millennium. But at a time of extreme polarisation of the Abramic faiths, the Pope can't be a healer of nations from the Vatican. As Benedict's saviour put it, no man can be a prophet in his own land.

And there lies the significance of the tour. Unlike politicians, it's not what he has to say that will change the world. It is his prophetic presence that is an act of Christian witness among the violence.

Tony Blair has made a negligible mark as a Middle East envoy. A recent convert to Roman Catholicism, he took it upon himself to tell the Pope which way was up in sexual relations, while his wife Cherie chimed in to tell His Holiness that he needs to get his act together on <u>women</u>.

Politicians may come and go and snap at his heels, but the Pope walks the Holy Lands as part of a far greater and timeless apostolic mission. And we should not only wish him and his hosts well, but rejoice that he is there.

Load-Date: May 12, 2009



Heeere's Sandy

The Jerusalem Post February 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 30

Length: 1766 words **Byline:** DAVID BRINN

Highlight: Provocative comedian Sandra Bernhard, who will be headlining at next week's Women's Festival in

Holon, talks to the 'Post' about Sarah Palin, Sarah Silverman, and Shabbat services

Body

Some people mellow with age, but not Sandra Bernhard.

Example: The 53-year-old Jewish New Yorker made headlines last September while appearing at Theater J of the Washington, DC, Jewish Community Center, when she warned vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin that she would be gang-raped by Bernhard's "big black brothers" if she visited Manhattan.

At the time, Bernhard told the New York Daily News that she was just being provocative, which is what she's famous for doing.

"[The gang rape comment] is part of a much larger, nuanced and yes, provocative (that's what I do) piece from my show about racism, freedom, <u>women</u>'s rights and the extreme views of Governor Sarah Palin, a woman who doesn't believe that other <u>women</u> should have the right to choose," Bernhard told the Daily News.

And now five months later, instead of retreating and taking it back, the comedian isn't backing down at all.

"I think most people agreed with what I said, and it didn't take more than a couple weeks to discover what a total hypocrite she was. She stood for everything that <u>women</u> have been fighting against for the last 150 years - she was ready to roll back everybody's rights. <u>Women</u> deserve better," Bernhard told The Jerusalem Post during a midmorning conversation from her Manhattan apartment.

Despite a time-difference snafu which resulted in other Israeli media waking her and her 10-year-old daughter up in the middle of the night, Bernhard sounded content and upbeat, especially when talking about the administration switch over in Washington which took place the day before.

"It's been the most incredible week of our history. I tell you, the day that George Bush got on that helicopter and took off, it felt like 1,000 tons had been lifted from my shoulders. Obama is an incredible inspiration," said Bernhard in typically no-holds-barred fashion.

That take no prisoners sensibility permeates all of Bernhard's work, an ethos local audiences will get to experience for the first time since she performed here in 1999, when the biting gay satirist headlines the Holon <u>Women</u>'s Festival, taking place from February 25-28.

Heeere's Sandy

In addition to theater, dance and music, the theme of the 13th Holon festival is <u>women</u>'s humor, something Bernhard knows something about. With a rubbery face and Mick Jagger-like lips that exude emotion and sensuality, her brash persona was ripe for her breakout role as the unforgettable stalker and kidnapper Masha in 1983's Martin Scorsese film The King of Comedy. Branching out into TV and theater, books and music, Bernhard hit her stride with her 1998, one-woman Broadway hit, I'm Still Here... Damn It! described by The New York Times as "an angst driven, foul- mouthed, poison-laced joy ride that banks and careens frenetically through the worlds of fashion, celebrity, rock and religion."

But beside the critical acclaim, Bernhard became a bona fide celebrity icon - mostly for her recurring role from 1991 to 1996, as Nancy on the Roseanne Barr TV show Roseanne, her high-profile 1980s friendship with Madonna and her penchant for making outrageous statements a la Palin. One look at Sarah Silverman's strong-armed act, and you can tell who she grew up admiring.

"I know that [Silverman's] a fan of mine. There are people I've kind of emulated over the years, so it feels kind of pretentious to be in this other position. But if it's the case that I'm a role model in a positive way, I'm totally thrilled," said Bernhard, whose star has fallen somewhat in the last few years, but can still capture headlines at will.

According to Holon festival artistic director Rivi Feldmesser-Yaron, both Bernhard and Silverman, who was also approached about performing but was unavailable, have helped reinvent the traditional model of <u>women</u> in comedy.

"I investigated this a little before I decided to make the theme of the festival '<u>women</u> and humor' and that humor has often been used against <u>women</u>. Traditionally, if you say a woman is funny, it can be a euphemism for not being pretty - she's got a great sense of humor," said Feldmesser-Yaron.

"<u>Women</u> like funny men - most male comedians have beautiful <u>women</u> around them. But men are afraid of funny <u>women</u>, as if they're threatened by their intellect."

That discrimination has permeated the type of humor which <u>women</u> have traditionally been pigeonholed with, and which Bernhard was instrumental in breaking out of. However, Feldmesser-Yaron sees the comic revolution in Israel happening much more slowly.

"I think Israelis have problems accepting <u>women</u> comedians who are sharper and more in-your-face. Someone like Adi Ashkenazi is kind of polite and more subtle. She doesn't cross the line. What society is willing to accept from a man is different than from a woman. What might be perceived as cool coming out of a man is vulgar coming from a woman. Sandra isn't subtle, which is a difficult way to be for a woman," she said.

But Bernhard has never shied away from doing things against the grain, whether it was spending a year here after high school working on a kibbutz cleaning chickens on an assembly line, exploring and expressing her Judaism through Kabbala study or her decision 10 years ago to become a single mother. Recalling that the last time she traveled to Israel it was with her infant daughter, Bernhard laughed.

"It's shocking how quickly it's flown by. She's absolutely amazing, a wonderful kid," she said. And perhaps in a sign that there is some mellowing going on, Bernhard has even performed a children's song on an album by hip kids' musician Dan Zane called Dan Zane's Family Dance Album.

"When my daughter was little, Dan used to perform down the street from our house at a restaurant. Then I had him perform at her second birthday party. We had become friendly and he asked me to come down and work on a song for his album. It was a natural evolution," she said.

The thought of the often abrasive, frequently X-rated Bernhard performing children's material may confound the stereotypes about her, but so does her dedication to the study of Kabbala. Bernhard sends her daughter to a Chabad school for the basics in Hebrew and Torah study, and mother and daughter frequently attend Kabbala Shabbat services in New York. In an interview last year with the JDate Web site, Bernhard explained her attraction to Kabbala and criticized the "pop culturization" of its study.

Heeere's Sandy

"Ultimately, it's the spiritual dissemination of Judaism. If you are just practicing the rituals without a deeper understanding, they become sort of a robotic, unfulfilling practice. Once you add the spiritual nature to it, the ephemeral emotions of life, it brings a much deeper meaning. It's a very complex, deeply intellectual and soulful pursuit that takes all of your life to even begin to understand. I think it's really been done a disservice by the pop culturalization of it, you know, through the Kabbala Center, even though I still go there, and I still go to Shabbat and do stuff with them. I think that on some level, they thought this was a good way to go. I think it backfired. I'm not saying it should be closed off to anybody. It's open to everyone as a spiritual study. But when it starts becoming this weird, star-driven vehicle, I have a problem with it," she said.

Bernhard has no problem, however, sharing her life with her non-Jewish partner though, even displaying a Christmas tree during the holiday season.

"Even though I had been fully prepared to be a single mom, it was fortuitous that soon after I returned from performing in Israel, I met my girlfriend. She's a fabulous partner and we've been together ever since," she said.

With such clear-cut opinions on most subjects, it's no surprise that Bernhard has emphatic views about Israel, Operation Cast Lead and settlers. During her last performance here a decade ago, Bernhard started riffing on the Israel-Arab conflict, quickly coming to the conclusion that "you two peoples deserve each other." While not approaching the vitriol spewed by former TV mate Barr, who on her blog called IDF actions in Gaza Nazi-like, Bernhard felt that Operation Cast Lead was one more failed campaign following the worldview of George W. Bush.

"I understand how <u>Hamas</u> works and what they've done as much as anyone. But ultimately, I think the war was carried out under the auspices of George Bush and his careless philosophy about peace," she said. "I think what happened in Gaza is unacceptable, just as it's unacceptable for <u>Hamas</u> to be firing rockets into Israel."

Until Israel deals with the issue of settlement in the West Bank, it's not going to be able to effectively pursue peace with the Palestinians, surmised Bernhard, who added that she will have no problems raising that point during her performance in Holon.

"Of course, I'll talk about those issues. I have to gauge the vibes to a certain extent. I don't want to get into something that I can't get out of, and have it not be entertaining," she said.

According to artistic director Feldmesser-Yaron, Bernhard is given total freedom regarding the content of her show.

"One of my responsibilities as an artistic director is to not limit the artist - it's a philosophy of mine. My feeling is that if I bring Sandra Bernhard, she can be responsible for herself. I think rudeness for its own sake is unnecessary, but it's not part of my job to tell her that," she said.

"I think the role of the comedian is to criticize, it's part of artistic culture. If she wants to talk about the occupation being bad, that's her right. A lot of people here think the same way. If you start limiting artists, then you develop a situation in which [Avigdor] Lieberman can become prime minister."

"An Evening With Sandra Bernhard" promises to be - like Bernhard herself - all over the place, careening from comedy and music to improv and rants, all filtered through Bernhard's manic delivery.

"I'm working with Israeli musicians - they couldn't afford to bring over my musicians. So hopefully they'll be prepared and know what the hell I do," said Bernhard with a laugh.

"There's lots of improvisation, I'll be talking about my past visit to Israel, things that have happened to me since, it's kind of fluid and stream-of-consciousness, which anybody who's seen me knows. Since it's almost all personal, there's kind of a timelessness to it. You can always go back and talk about the highlights you experience. I was really surprised last time how the audience reacted positively to the material and got it. My first law is to always give the people their money's worth."

Whatever else Bernhard's been accused of during her career, it hasn't been not doing that.

Graphic

Photo: 'My first law is to always give the people their money's worth,' Bernhard says. (Credit: Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



This addiction has me totally Wired

The Times (London)

May 27, 2009 Wednesday

Edition 1

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 24

Length: 779 words

Byline: Robert Crampton

Body

I've got a bloke at work who sorts me out. Brian, up in advertising. We meet up on his corner, outside by the fag shelter, he slips me the latest delivery, no questions asked.

"Go on Bob," says Brian, "knock yourself out." I get the package home, heart racing, kids doing their homework, ignore them and rip open the goods in my study, maybe do a little bit to test the quality. Not very responsible parenting, but I can't help myself.

Pack the children off to bed, do a big yawn, tell my wife I need an early night, sprint upstairs with all the kit and get stuck in properly. Two, three, yeah, just do one more, four, before you know it, it's 2am. Wake up knackered and hating myself, thinking just get through the day then get back on it tonight.

That's The Wire for you. Televisual crack. One episode is too much, ten not enough. Open up the laptop, slide the disc in, hear the bluesy howl of the theme music, feel your veins start jumping. I'm exactly halfway through: series three, episode six. Right in the grip of the addiction. I find myself having to watch three episodes to replicate the thrill of the first time.

A supreme irony, surely, that The Wire is about the perils and pitfalls of drug dealing, and yet Wire-watching has made junkies of half the people I know, scratching and fidgeting and mumbling about "re-ups" (Wire-speak for a resupply of drugs from the main stash to the street dealers) until we can get back in front of a screen.

Those who have already bought the boxed sets are the dealers, reeling you in. Brian's been threatening that now I'm hooked he's going to start being really horrible to me and only lending out his DVDs one disc at a time. "Please, Brian, no, don't do that," I beg. Still, better the humiliation of waiting for the man than being in my colleague Robbie's shoes. He polished off all five series at a blistering pace - "One night I did five back-to-back," he boasts - and ever since hasn't known what to do with his life. "I'm going to have to start talking to people again," he wails.

Driven to it

This addiction has me totally Wired

I came up behind a fellow cyclist at a traffic light, broad daylight, lovely sunny day. His rear light was on. Being a conscientious member of the two-wheeled fraternity, I told him. "I know it is," he grunted in that misanthropic tone shared by a suspiciously high number of my fellow pedallistas. "It's deliberate. Gives them less excuse." He was being deadly serious.

Like many cyclists, this chap appears truly to believe that motorists are actively targeting him because he's on a bike. Trying to hurt him, intimidate him, force him off the road. But he's wrong, isn't he? Because, surely, you're not, are you? It wouldn't be rational.

Who's that man?

To the charming village of Ingatestone, Essex, to give a talk on the joys of journalism to a group called Mothers Off Duty (formerly Mothers Against Domesticity). They've tried out life-drawing, they've tried out salsa, tonight they're trying me out.

We meet in the church hall, 11 of them, stacking chairs arranged in a circle in time-honoured fashion, glasses of cabernet sauvignon all round, very congenial. And another glass of cabernet sauvignon. Even more congenial.

I am asked if I have ever made friends with any of the celebrities I've interviewed for the Times Magazine. Only once, I reply, and that was with Andy McNab, the former SAS soldier turned thriller-writer. And my theory about McNab is that because hardly anybody knows what he looks like, he has avoided the corrupting effect of fame.

"But how can you be sure it's him?" asks one of the women. Excellent question.

Power vacuum

The fight against the London plane tree's peculiarly explosive seedball goes on. They land, they explode, they scatter, they form drifts several feet high in my front yard, I have to tunnel my way out of the door, I exaggerate but slightly. The seed-drifts invade your hallway, your nose, your mouth, your eyes, I tackle them with a broom, a binbag, sunglasses and an old student-era PLO scarf wrapped around the rest of my head, the *Hamas* horticulturalist, the Hezbollah of handymen, the, er, Sheikh of the Sweep. And so on.

I brush, I clear, I survey. As I turn to go inside, another explodes, and it all starts again. You can win one battle, the war itself is ceaseless.

Except now I've gone nuclear and bought a leaf-vacuum, B& Q. I don't much like leaf-vacuums, or their equally noisy cousin the leaf-blower, there's a municipal one that blights our neighbourhood for months every autumn.

Still, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, and the leaf-vacuum makes extremely short work of the seed-drifts, as well as being highly amusing to stand astride while pretending your penis is 3ft long.

Load-Date: May 27, 2009



Pope challenges Israel to give Palestinians homeland; Benedict XVI throws weight behind statehood solution during visit to a West Bank refugee camp

The Independent (London)

May 14, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 20

Length: 821 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre IN BETHLEHEM

Body

Pope Benedict used a visit to a West Bank refugee camp yesterday to issue his most resonant plea yet for an independent Palestinian state, while describing the Israeli military's separation barrier as a "tragic" manifestation of years of conflict.

The 82-year-old Pope went out of his way at an open air mass in Bethlehem, and in a later politically charged visit to the crowded Aida refugee camp, to identify with the plight of Palestinian civilians declaring: "I know how much you have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of the turmoil that has afflicted this land for decades."

In a UN schoolyard in Aida festooned with banners lamenting the barrier and recalling the expulsion of refugees from their homes in what is now Israel in the 1948 War, the Pope stood beside the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas against the backdrop of the wall and a military watchtower.

"Their legitimate aspirations for permanent homes, for an independent Palestinian state, remain unfulfilled," he said. "Mr President, the Holy See supports the right of your people to a sovereign Palestinian homeland in the land of your forefathers, secure and at peace with its neighbours, within internationally recognised borders."

Pope Benedict's support for a state - which the new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has yet to endorse in public - came after an open air and sometimes festive mass in warm sunshine in the nativity city's Manger Square where he expressed solidarity with the stricken public of Gaza.

Referring to the hundred-plus Christians - less than the 250 who had applied - allowed out from Gaza by Israel for yesterday's mass, Pope Benedict told the crowds: "In a special way, my heart goes out to the pilgrims from war-torn Gaza: I ask you to bring back to your families and your communities my warm embrace, and my sorrow for the loss, the hardship and the suffering you have had to endure."

And in a clear reference both to the damage left by Israel's three-week military onslaught on Gaza this year and the siege it imposed on the territory after *Hamas* seized full control there in June 2007, the Pope added: "Please be

Pope challenges Israel to give Palestinians homeland Benedict XVI throws weight behind statehood solution during visit to a West Bank refugee camp

assured of my solidarity with you in the immense work of rebuilding which now lies ahead, and my prayers that the embargo will soon be lifted."

At Aida, the Pope was careful to directly address young Palestinians tempted to armed militancy by calling on them to "have the courage to resist any temptation to resort to acts of violence or terrorism". And he said that for the wall to be brought down - as he earnestly hoped it would - both sides would have to erase the wall "in their hearts".

But he declared forthrightly: "In a world where more and more borders are being opened up ... it is tragic to see walls still being erected. How earnestly we pray for an end to the hostilities that have caused this wall to be built."

The wall did not exist when his predecessor John Paul came in 2000. Israel began raising its barrier of fences and concrete through and around the West Bank in 2002, in what it said was a temporary measure to stop deadly Palestinian bombings.

Although Pope Benedict made no reference to "the right of return" of refugees to their homes in Israel, his visit to the Aida camp - where calls for that right are a part of the staple discourse - is unlikely to endear him to Israeli critics, already restive over what they see as his less-than-wholly-satisfactory condemnation of the Holocaust earlier in the trip. Palestinian moderates believe a compromise on "the right of return" is achievable, but some prominent Israeli politicians see the concept as threatening the future of the Jewish state.

The pontiff was warmly received at the mass outside the Church of Nativity - with even occasional football crowd chants of "Benedetto". The musical highlight was probably the lusty singing in Latin of "O Come all Ye Faithful" by a mainly *female* choir assembled from Bethlehem and other Christian towns and villages in the West Bank.

George Maria, 45, a Catholic audio-visual technician from Bethlehem University, who brought his wife Natalie, 40, and two children to the mass, said: "We are so happy. I couldn't express my happiness that the Pope has come here." Acknowledging that there had been emigration by Christians from the West Bank in recent years, he insisted: "As Palestinians we are facing problems, no matter whether we are Muslims or Christians. We have the same goal which is the freedom of Palestine."

Mr Maria admitted that there were sometimes tensions between Muslims and Christians but added: "These are more social and not political. After all I quarrel with my wife sometimes." Issam Aziseh, 43, a Syriac Catholic who has returned to Bethlehem after 20 years working as the Avis car rental manager at San Francisco airport said: "This visit is very important. We look to the Pope as the head of our church."

The Pope has a mountain to climb

Zaki Cooper, page 31

Load-Date: May 13, 2009



The Jerusalem Post January 27, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 1842 words

Byline: CAROLINE B. GLICK

Highlight: Muslims attack Jews abroad with the full backing of multiculturalists as well as neo-Nazis. OUR WORLD

Body

Last week, the IDF issued an unprecedented directive. All Israeli media outlets must obscure the faces of soldiers and commanders who fought in Operation Cast Lead. Henceforth, the identities of all IDF soldiers and officers who participated in the operation against the *Hamas* terror regime in Gaza are classified information.

The IDF acted as it did in an effort to protect Israeli soldiers and officers from possible prosecutions for alleged war crimes in Europe. The army's chief concern is England. In England, private citizens are allowed to file complaints against foreigners whom they claim committed war crimes. Based on these complaints, British courts can issue arrest warrants against such foreigners if they are found on British territory and force them to stand trial. Over the past few years, a number of active duty and retired IDF senior officers were forced to cancel visits to Britain after such complaints were filed against them in sympathetic local courts.

Following the IDF's move, on Sunday the government announced that Israel will provide legal assistance to any IDF veteran prosecuted abroad for actions he performed during his service in Gaza. The legal assistance will include representation, investigation of the allegations made against veterans, attempts to have the charges against them dismissed and defense at trials.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak, who brought the decision before the full cabinet, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and their colleagues all asserted that by committing the state to defending its warriors, they were fulfilling their sacred duty to protect Israel's protectors.

Unfortunately, both the cabinet decision itself and our leaders' statements missed the point.

LAST WEDNESDAY, an appellate court in Amsterdam ruled that the Dutch lawmaker and leader of the anti-jihadist Dutch Freedom Party Geert Wilders must stand trial for the alleged "crime" of inciting hatred against Muslims with his short film "Fitna," released last year.

In "Fitna," Wilders juxtaposes verses of the Koran with Islamic terror attacks, mosque sermons inciting believers to murder non-Muslims, and proclamations by Islamic clerics that Islam must kill all the Jews, conquer the world and subjugate non-believers.

The second half of the 15-minute film is devoted to Holland. It highlights the massive immigration of Muslims to the country over the past 15 years, and calls by Islamic leaders in Holland to kill homosexuals, subjugate <u>women</u>, stone adulteresses, and take over the country. "Fitna" ends with a call for Muslims to expunge Koranic verses

commanding them to conduct jihad from their belief system, and with a call for Dutchmen to defend their country, their culture and their civilization from the rising current of Islam in Europe.

All the material presented in "Fitna" is accurate. And it is also explosive. But it is hard to see how it could be illegal. And by presenting the material in the way that he does, Wilders is not demonizing Muslims, he is challenging - indeed he is practically begging - his countrymen to engage in a debate about whether or not his dim assessment of Islam is correct.

Wilders has been living under 24-hour police protection since a Dutch jihadist murdered filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004. Van Gogh was murdered after he released his short film "Submission," which described the misogyny of the Islamic world and the systematic terrorization of <u>women</u> in Islamic societies. Since then numerous Muslim clerics have issued religious judgments, or fatwas, calling for Wilders to be murdered.

Last month Wilders visited Israel and was the keynote speaker at a counter-jihad conference at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem sponsored by MK Dr. Aryeh Eldad. Speaking to a standing-room only crowd, and under heavy guard, Wilders argued that Israel is a frontline state in the global jihad. The war against Israel, he claimed has nothing to do with territory, and everything to do with ideology. Israel, as the forward outpost of Western civilization in the Islamic world, stands in the way of Islamic expansion. Consequently, he claimed, when Israel defends itself by fighting its enemies, it is also protecting Europe and the rest of the free world.

As he put it, "Thanks to Israeli parents who see their children go off to join the army and lie awake at night, parents in Europe and America can sleep well and have pleasant dreams, unaware of the dangers looming." Unfortunately, the Dutch court's decision to prosecute Wilders for calling attention to the threat of jihad in Europe demonstrates that the Europeans aren't particularly grateful to their defenders. Indeed, they despise them. Films like "Fitna," and Israel's use of its military to defend its citizens from Islamic supremacists, serve to remind them of the growing threat they desperately seek to ignore. Consequently, Europeans embrace every opportunity to blame any messenger.

THE RIPPLE effects of Wilders' indictment were immediately evident. In England, the British Muslim community mobilized to prevent his film from being screened in public. "Fitna" was scheduled to be shown at the House of Lords on January 29. But last Friday, with the threat of mass Muslim riots hanging thickly in the air, the House of Lords announced that it was cancelling the event.

British Lord Nazir Ahmed called the decision to prevent the thought-provoking, factually accurate film from being shown, "a victory for the Muslim community." Wilders' indictment is a textbook example of blaming the victim. Wilders has been forced to live a miserable life for the past four years. He has no home. Security forces move him from place to place every single day. Since Van Gogh's murder, Wilders' entire life has become one long attempt to dodge the bullet permanently pointed at his head by radicalized Muslims in Holland and throughout the world. These would-be killers wish to see him dead not to avenge any violence Wilders committed, but rather, they believe he must die for doing nothing more than talking about Islam and how he interprets its message and meaning.

Needless to say, the Dutch Muslims Wilders caught on tape in Fitna calling for an overthrow of the Dutch constitutional order and threatening homosexuals have not been arrested for inciting hatred. Likewise, Lord Ahmed, who blocked Fitna's screening in the British Parliament was made a British peer after supporting the late Ayatollah Khomeini's 1989 death sentence against British novelist Salman Rushdie.

AND THAT'S the thing of it. Increasingly, throughout Europe, those who point out the dangers of radical Islam are hounded - first by Muslims - and then by legal authorities. In contrast, those who seek to intimidate and physically silence them are embraced by the states of Europe as legitimate leaders of their Muslim communities.

This dismal state of affairs, where jihadists are supported and their victims are oppressed, is true not only of people like Wilders who actively fight radical Islam's encroachment on European freedom. It is also the case of people who are victimized solely on the basis of their ethnic identity.

At the same time Wilders and people like him are forced into hiding, Jews throughout Europe find themselves assaulted under siege not because of anything they have done, but because they are Jews.

Incidents of anti-Semitic violence in Europe reached post-Holocaust record highs over the past month. Jewish children have been violently attacked in France, barred from schools in Denmark, and harassed in England, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland and Germany just for being Jews.

In Britain, Muslims have now taken to entering into Jewish-owned businesses and kosher restaurants to threaten the owners and patrons - just because they are Jewish. Synagogues have been firebombed and defaced. Calls have been issued in the US Muslim community on the Internet for Muslims in America to similarly intimidate Jews by entering into synagogues during prayer services and condemn worshippers for supporting Israel.

Jewish men have been brutalized by Muslim gangs in Britain and viciously stabbed in France, just because they are Jewish. In Sweden, pro-Israel demonstrators were attacked with stones by Muslims this week. Even in the US, anti-Semitic violence and intimidation has reached levels never seen before. And in almost all cases, of anti-Semitic violence throughout what is commonly referred to as the free world, the perpetrators of the violence and intimidation are Muslims. They attack with the full backing of non-Muslim multiculturalists as well as neo-Nazis. The two groups, which usually assumed to be at loggerheads, apparently have no problem converging on the issue of hating Jews.

And in almost all the cases anti-Semitic violence, the Islamic identity of the attackers has been de-emphasized or obscured by the media and by politicians, or used as justification for their crimes. In France, for instance, from the way government officials talk it would be reasonable to assume that a dozen Muslim teenagers wouldn't have felt it necessary to viciously beat a ten-year-old Jewish girl if the IDF hadn't attacked <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza.

HERE THEN, we arrive at the point that the cabinet missed on Sunday when it passed its decision to commit the government to provide legal assistance to any IDF veteran who runs aground of European legal authorities during vacations in London and Brussels and Oslo and Stockholm. The point that was missed is that in the event that IDF veterans are charged with war crimes, even the best attorneys will be of little use. These veterans will not be defendants at legitimate trials. They will be the victims of politically motivated show-trials.

In an interview with Ha'aretz on Friday, Wilders claimed rightly that the Dutch court's decision to prosecute him was not a legal decision but a political one. And if he is convicted, his conviction won't be based on evidence. It will be based on the desire of the Dutch multiculturalists to make an example of him to appease the radical Muslims who seek his death, and intimidate any would-be disciples into keeping their mouths.

So too, if IDF veterans are indicted for war crimes, they won't be prosecuted based on facts. They will be persecuted to advance the prosecutors' and judges' goal of appeasing their homegrown radical Muslims who seek the destruction of Israel and who violently attack anyone perceived as supporting Israel.

Given this bleak reality, the steps that Israel must take to defend its citizens are not legal but diplomatic. Israel should announce travel advisories against all states that enable the conduct of show trials against its citizens. And it should threaten to cut off diplomatic ties with any country that seeks to persecute Israeli soldiers. Only by recognizing and pointing out what is really going on will Israel have any chance of protecting those who defend our freedom from Europeans who have decided to surrender to Islamic intimidation rather than protect their own liberty.

caroline@carolineglick.com

Graphic

Photo: INFANTRY SOLDIERS wait on the Israel-Gaza border before entering Gaza on Saturday, January 3.

(Credit: Ahikam Seri)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Providing hope in the face of fear; PRESIDENT OBAMA

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 22, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 14

Length: 1844 words

Body

BARACK Obama put so much into 19 minutes. There was bracing truth without retribution, right down to the softened treatment of his predecessor. He was plain and linear about big questions, domestic and abroad. He was sobering to those whom he has asked to restore America to what it was. There were no heavenly wonderments or rainbows, just hope and fear together - not one without the other.

Many inspirational speeches don't last beyond the time it takes to deliver them, but if ever there is a circuit-breaker, it's this man. The 44th president of the United States challenged Americans to embark on their own individual quest for their better selves. This from a man "whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant".

Ian McKail, Ashwood

Leading from the front

MANY right-wing pundits and conservative supporters are saying, "Why does Obama look so promising?" Well, after eight years of Bush and Cheney, he was always going to look like a shining star. But he has also managed to do something conservatives have not been able to achieve: he inspires hope.

Being a cautious bean-counter and running a fiscally sound conservative policy is all well and good, but leadership is about leading a country, not just fiddling with the economic knobs and dials. Leadership and hope are two things that seem to have disappeared from political life. Hopefully, Obama will lead to their return.

Doug Steley, Maroochydore, Qld

A man of the people

MALCOLM Just (Letters, 21/1) writes as if Barack Obama is the first US president to have accepted donations from special-interest groups or businesses. Clearly he has been living under a rock or he would know that raising campaign finances is a normal part of any US presidential campaign. George Bush did it and he had plenty of big business and "special interest" buddies help him out.

This is not to pass judgement on the fairness or acceptability of the practice, just to say it is normal. What isn't normal, however, is the extraordinary amount of money Mr Obama raised from average working-class citizens right across the US. An unprecedented number of \$10, \$20 and \$50 donations helped make up the millions of dollars he and his team raised, indicating Mr Obama's campaign had found resonance among the "average Joes".

Providing hope in the face of fear PRESIDENT OBAMA

Mr Just may ask who Obama might be beholden to. The smart reply might be that he is, arguably more than any other president in US history, beholden to the working-class small donor who found hope and promise in the vision he spelled out during his campaign.

Chris Riches, Werribee

The perils of popularity

UNLESS President Obama is truly a transcendent being, his glorification through the media is likely to have a negative effect, since however much he is susceptible to popular opinion will by the same degree ensure a disinclination to act on policies that go against it.

Benjamin Martin, Prahran

One man's terrorist is another man's...

MARK Leibler (Comment & Debate, 21/1) writes that "it is impossible to negotiate with terrorists". This is a nonsense that has been trotted out over the past 20 years or so, since it became a fashionable formula for politicians wishing to appear hard. In fact, negotiation with terrorists goes on all the time, always has done and always will.

Furthermore, it is especially absurd given the activities of the Stern Gang and Irgun in the '40s. Here are what were called terrorist organisations at the time, which won their battle, and became integral to the state of Israel - a simplification, to be sure, but not much of one.

Recent history has many similar examples - the Contra, the Mujahadeen, even Fatah, of terrorist organisations acquiring respectability, which is to say utility, to some faction in world politics, and more or less ceasing to become "terrorists", even if temporarily.

This is entirely a matter of power politics, and anyone purporting to see a moral dimension in all this is delusional or self-serving. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. All you need to do is win.

Charles Meo, Northcote

Child's eye view

ACTUALLY, Luke Smith (Letters, 21/1), I find it easy to imagine an Israeli child being traumatised by falling bombs. This may be due to the fact that <u>Hamas</u> has fired literally thousands of rockets at Israeli civilian communities, including kindergartens and schools.

That there have been so few casualties is not due to a lack of effort from <u>Hamas</u>, but rather that Israel manages to thwart many attacks, and the rockets themselves are so inaccurate.

Ian Fraser, Cherrybrook, NSW

Funding the future

YOUR editorial (The Age, 21/1) is correct when stating that fewer Australians would take issue with private schools if public schools were adequately funded. Sadly though, students in government schools are being underresourced. Disadvantaged students in particular are missing out.

Along with better facilities, public schools urgently need more teachers, smaller class sizes and higher numbers of literacy and numeracy staff. They also require increased numbers of integration aides, youth workers, counsellors, psychologists, chaplains and other support staff.

Government schools would also benefit greatly from access to a larger number of alternative education programs to assist students who are not reaching their full potential in more traditional school settings.

Providing hope in the face of fear PRESIDENT OBAMA

Increased government spending on both infrastructure and human resources in the public education system would be a huge step forward in helping our public schools with the incredibly important task they have of educating the majority of Australia's children and young people.

Robert Van Zetten, Highton

QuikGro politics

THE problem is not with Evan Thornley (The Age, 21/1), the problem is with our culture and bad political leadership. Rock star, Olympic athlete, newsreader, footballer, dotcom entrepreneur, whatever. If they've got a profile, bump 'em into Parliament.

Why would the not-famous ever bother undertaking a political apprenticeship? The party system that goes down this path is in deep trouble. If you want a thriving garden you need more than the odd handful of QuikGro fertiliser.

Margaret Jacobs, Northcote

Child protection:

there is a better way

WE SHOULD be careful congratulating ourselves for increase in separations of mothers and babies (The Age, 20/1). In my work, I meet <u>women</u> who suffer lifelong grief after their children are removed. Often traumatised in their young lives, they then have the best thing that has happened to them - a beautiful baby - taken away. I wonder if we will ever learn to think more expansively and creatively about family support and protection?

In Sweden, while the definition of child abuse is very strict, the level of support for children and families is equally intensive, including: contact families to mentor and support vulnerable parents; self-help groups for kids and parents in similar situations (eg: alcoholism); parenting training, family therapy, and respite care for struggling parents, and placing families in crisis together in supported residential care to rebuild.

These "interventions" understand the breadth and depth of support needed to parent children effectively. A truly preventative approach would acknowledge the healing role children can play, while supporting those without family connections to parent well.

Foster care has an important place, but surely the best thing for our children is to give their mothers the best chance possible to care for them, learn from them, and love them to bits.

Chelsea Candy, women's outreach lawyer, Fitzroy Legal Service

No time to waste

NOTHING is more important than the protection of the life of each child to ensure they grow to become contributing citizens in our community. Every day workers in our community-based organisations, amazing foster carers and extended families in Victoria provide a second chance to the 5299 children who cannot live safely at home. These children and young people are often sad, upset, confused and may have already found their way into addiction and challenging behaviours.

Working with them is very complex and resource-intensive. Endeavouring to support and skill parents who are failing to cope requires expert, compassionate and committed workers and capable foster carers.

The Victorian out-of-home care system is struggling to meet the demands placed on it. We don't have nearly enough foster carers to provide placements for all babies and children in need.

The Government's investment, policy and programs should respond to the advice of the experts who work with these families day by day. Vulnerable children simply cannot wait.

Coleen Clare, CEO, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Making tracks

ABOUT 70 years ago, when I was a student at Richmond Tech, the science teacher explained that when laying railway lines, it was essential to leave a small gap at the ends between each length of steel rail to allow for expansion in hot weather, otherwise the railway track would buckle.

Vincent Browne, Koroit

A glimmer of hope

amid the gloom

PETER Martin (Comment & Debate, 21/1) censures his critics for their accusations of negative reporting over the financial crisis. He even goes so far as to say that one caller could not name a single positive development missing from his reports.

The truth is there are a couple of glaring positives staring us all in the face. The first is that we are not experiencing a rerun of the 1930s Great Depression, when starvation, disease and other effects of extreme poverty affected millions. The second is that governments have attempted action to avert the more serious side effects of the downturn and stimulated their economies from day one, unlike their '30s counterparts who reined in their spending and only grudgingly took action when the depression had taken a firm hold.

Like some of Martin's critics, I am sick of hearing all this talk of gloom and doom, which possibly perpetuates the crisis. Emotion plays a large role in sharemarkets, with their panics and bubbles often the result of that most human of weaknesses. That is why we need leaders and commentators who, while acknowledging the gravity of the situation, give the punters some glimmer of hope for the future.

Simon Mercer, Albert Park

Who pays? We do

MR RUDD has asked employers to put pay rises on hold. What a pity he and and his predecessor neglected to ask this of the banks and the rest of the corporate sector before they got us into the biggest economic mess in a generation. The big kids had their play time, and now the rest of us will do the detention.

Glenn Fowler, Holder, ACT

Beating a bully

SISTER Ivy Khoury (Letters, 21/1) says we cannot ignore Zimbabwe's plight. The fact is we can and have. While the country has been brought to its knees by a maniacal megalomaniac, all we have done is hold talks and tell him he is a naughty boy and should stop what he is doing.

Unfortunately, bullies don't give in until they are made to. Until Mugabe is arrested and taken away in ball and chain, Zimbabwe's plight will continue to be ignored.

Roger Marks, Drouin

Graphic

Load-Date: January 21, 2009



Iran gives cautious welcome to Barack Obama video message

Guardian.com

March 20, 2009

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theguardian

Length: 868 words

Highlight: Aide to Iranian president urges US to end sanctions and drop its support for Israel

Body

Iran today hailed an unprecedented direct appeal by the US president, Barack Obama, for better relations between the two countries, but urged the US to "realise its previous mistakes" as well as end sanctions and drop its support for Israel.

Ali-Akbar Javanfekr, an aide to the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, welcomed the approach from Washington on the occasion of Nowruz, the Iranian new year.

However, there was no official response from Tehran to a far blunter message from Shimon Peres, the president of Israel, who called on Iran to "return to the enlightened world" and halt the uranium enrichment that could allow it manufacture nuclear weapons.

"The Iranian nation has shown that it can forget hasty behaviour," said Javanfekr in reference to Obama's message, "but we are awaiting practical steps by the United States."

The new US administration needed a "fundamental change in attitude", he said. But Iran would "not show its back" to Obama if the US put its words into practice.

"By fundamentally changing its behaviour, America can offer us a friendly hand. So far what we have received have been unfriendly fists. Unlimited sanctions which have been renewed by the United States are wrong and need to be reviewed," he said.

Javanfekr also singled out US backing for Israel, currently the only nuclear power in the Middle East. "Supporting Israel is not a friendly gesture and the New Year is an opportunity for the United States to change this policy," he said.

The swift but conditional response from Tehran underlined how wide the wide gap is between the two countries even as Obama's carefully-crafted message offered a "new beginning" after 30 years of animosity.

It was the latest chapter in a presidential charm offensive that has so far been conducted at arms length and which has barely touched on several key disputes.

Iran gives cautious welcome to Barack Obama video message

In the three and a half minute video, shown on a number of TV networks in the Middle East, Obama said he wanted to "speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran" to make clear his desire to establish "constructive ties".

"My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us," the president said. Strikingly, though, he mentioned none of them directly: not Iran's nuclear programme, its support for Hezbollah and *Hamas*, or its profound hostility to Israel.

The timing and format of the broadcast, shown with Persian subtitles, emphasised its broad appeal - to an entire country at a time of traditional celebration rather than solely to a government whose internal complexities compound the difficulty for US policymakers.

"For nearly three decades relations between our nations have been strained," Obama reminded his audience. "But at this holiday we are reminded of the common humanity that binds us together."

The message was a reprise of the commitment to engagement approach he signalled in his inaugural address and was made in an emollient tone that contrasted sharply with that used by George Bush, who included the Islamic Republic in his "axis of evil".

"This process will not be advanced by threats," the president said. "We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect."

Despite avoiding mention of the nuclear dossier - specifically Iran's refusal to halt uranium enrichment - Obama did warn that "terror and arms" did not sit well with the "real responsibilities" that went with Iran's "rightful place in the community of nations".

Israel's Nowruz message, broadcast on its Persian radio channel, was far less subtle. "Children can't be fed enriched uranium for breakfast," said Peres. "The leaders should let people live, let <u>women</u> breath, let the economy grow, and stop spending their days dealing with bombs and uranium - is this in the name of God? Is this what Allah asked of them?"

Israel's president also attacked Ahmadinejad for his denial of the Holocaust, saying: "Since when is he an expert on the Jewish Holocaust? Was he in Auschwitz? What does he know? All he does is speak and speak all day long."

The White House and state department have been looking at a range of ways to reach out to Iran. It has been invited to an international conference on Afghanistan later this month and the US wants to see it co-operate as US forces prepare to leave Iraq.

Another idea is for Obama to write an open letter to the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. US officials want to avoid doing anything that might boost the chances of Ahmadinejad, the populist hardliner who is standing for re-election in June.

Reopening a US interests section in Tehran - scene of the notorious hostage-taking drama at the old US embassy during the 1979 revolution - is reportedly another possibility.

But Iranian memories go back much further, to the 1953 CIA-backed coup that overthrew the nationalist prime minister Mossadegh, and decades of American support for the shah. As Obama pointed out, with presidential understatement, it would not be easy to overcome "the old divisions".

Neither Khamenei nor Ahmadinejad mentioned Obama's appeal in their own Nowruz messages. Khameni said in his speech that attempts to block Iran's nuclear progress had reached a "dead end."

Load-Date: March 20, 2009



<u>US experts: Transparency key in war crimes probes. 'Alleged misconduct in</u> Cast Lead must be taken seriously'

The Jerusalem Post March 29, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 782 words

Byline: ALLISON HOFFMAN, Jerusalem Post correspondent, Yaakov Lappin contributed to this report.

Body

NEW YORK - The allegations alone paint horrifying pictures of war: The neighbor of a suspected terrorist, taken from his family home in the dead of night and shot in a ditch by troops who said they wanted to "send a message."

Four detained military-age males, executed amid the fog of battle after a squad leader insisted there wasn't time to transfer them to base. Two dozen people, including <u>women</u> and children, shot and killed in their homes after a roadside bomb blast tore through a military convoy.

The claims - stemming from events in the Iraqi towns of Hamdania, Fallujah and Haditha - grew into some of the most high-profile war crimes cases prosecuted by the American military during the seven-year Iraq war, in trials aimed as much at establishing America's commitment to the rule of law as at punishing the guilty.

Now, with the IDF investigating its own allegations about possible misconduct by soldiers during Operation Cast Lead, American military-law experts tell The Jerusalem Post that investigations must be transparent to achieve legitimacy in the court of public opinion.

"There are at least three different constituencies that are interested and important to consider - one is world opinion, two is members of the IDF, and three is the local community, both Israelis and Gazans," said Tom Umberg, a former military prosecutor based in California.

IDF sources have told the Post that allegations that IDF troops deliberately shot and killed Palestinians during the three-week offensive against <u>Hamas</u> have been found to be categorically untrue and based on rumors rather than firsthand experience, but official investigative reports have not yet been released.

A pamphlet put out by the Rabin Premilitary Academy printed claims by one soldier that a marksman opened fire on a mother and two children after a commander told them to walk into a no-entry zone.

Other claims involved the wanton destruction of property - claims far less gory than those that emerged against US marines in Iraq, but which nonetheless would violate the rules of engagement established by the IDF.

The US Marines responded to allegations of a massacre in Haditha - first reported by Time magazine in 2006 - by court-martialing four officers and four enlisted men; all but one, who is still awaiting trial, were subsequently exonerated by military tribunals.

US experts: Transparency key in war crimes probes. 'Alleged misconduct in Cast Lead must be taken seriously'

Gary Solis, a former Marine Corps prosecutor and judge who teaches law of war at Georgetown University Law suggested that the US military, stung by the public outcry over events at Abu Ghraib, which were initially minimized by the Bush administration, may have "gone overboard" in its subsequent charging decisions.

But Solis said that appearing to take the allegations seriously was still preferable to issuing a flat denial.

"It presents a real problem when you have these kinds of allegations - either you ignore them and you're accused of covering up war crimes, or you prosecute them on thin evidence," Solis told the Post.

Even if false, the allegations have now been widely reported in the Israeli and international press - much like claims, eventually proven untrue, about IAF strikes on a United Nations refugee facility in Gaza during the military operation.

As a result, Umberg said, the key consideration for the military must be "the national security interest and the overall mission."

"What mission do you want to convey?" Umberg asked. "Do they take it seriously? ...Does justice get done?"

Israel's top brass have reiterated their commitment to the rules of engagement and have moved swiftly to condemn other perceived ethical breaches, including the private printing of squad T-shirts depicting a pregnant Arab woman in the crosshairs of a sniper sight - a design deemed "tasteless" by a military statement after a report in Ha'aretz.

Yet the IDF's challenges are different from that of the American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, said Andrew Exum, a US Army veteran who served in both wars and is now a fellow at the Center for a New American Security.

"No matter what the IDF does or doesn't do, it's never going to be popular in the Gaza Strip," Exum told the Post.

"Israel is not in competition for the hearts and minds of people in the Palestinian territories, but they may find that it might be in their best interests to be seen as virtuous from the perspective of the international community," Exum added, noting that Israel's ability to corral support from allies around the world for any future military actions depends heavily on international support.

"There's an interest in Israel being seen as more moral," Exum told the Post. "So the process of investigating, of being seen to investigate, is in the IDF's best interests."

Graphic

Photo: US AND IRAQI soldiers secure the area of a car bomb attack in Baghdad last week. Trials of alleged war crimes in Iraq were aimed as much at establishing America's commitment to the rule of law as at punishing the guilty, and Israel must also show it takes allegations of troop misconduct seriously, US military-law experts say. (Credit: Khalid Mohammed/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



International briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

March 22, 2009 Sunday

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Section: A; Pg. 7

Length: 936 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Prime minister resigns in Hungary BUDAPEST - Hungary's prime minister stunned the country Saturday by announcing his resignation because he had become an "obstacle" to the reforms needed to pull the country out of its worst financial crisis since the end of communism nearly 20 years ago. Ferenc Gyurcsany, of the ruling Socialists, made the unexpected announcement at his party's congress, saying he was keeping a pledge made in January 2008 to change the leadership if the embattled party's popularity failed to recover. "Support for us has not grown. On the contrary, it has diminished," Gyurcsany said.

"I propose forming a new government with a new prime minister." The Socialists have governed with a minority in parliament since May, when a coalition partner walked out unsatisfied with Gyurcsany's commitment to reforms. Madagascar's president sworn in ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar - The new president of Madagascar was sworn in at a ceremony Saturday that was shunned by the international community after the ousting of the elected leader. Thousands of supporters watched Andry Rajoelina take the oath of office at the municipal stadium in the island nation's capital. But African countries have refused to accept Rajoelina as president, and radio stations broadcasting the ceremony live said no foreign diplomats attended the ceremony. Former President Marc Ravalomanana resigned Tuesday and placed power in the hands of the military, which then announced Rajoelina as the country's new president. Jet makes emergency landing in Australia MELBOURNE, Australia - An Emirates jetliner carrying more than 225 people slammed its tail into the runway as it took off from Australia, sending smoke into the cabin and forcing the pilot to make an emergency landing, officials said Saturday. No one was hurt, but passengers described being terrified after learning something was wrong soon after the Airbus A340 took off from the southern city of Melbourne about 10:30 p.m. Friday, bound for Dubai. After the strike, which reportedly left debris strewn on the runway and knocked out some runway lights, the pilot flew over the sea, dumping fuel, before returning to the airport and landing without incident. "We did land successfully, thankfully, and the plane was surrounded by paramedics and fire engines," passenger Catherine Edmunds told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "It was terrifying." U.S. awaiting reply from North Korea SEOUL, South Korea - The United States has contacted representatives of North Korea about two detained American journalists and is waiting for a reply, a U.S. official said Saturday. North Korea confirmed earlier Saturday that it detained the two Americans for "illegally intruding" in its territory after crossing the border from China. Authorities are investigating the two women, who were seized Tuesday, the official Korean Central News Agency said in a brief report that gave no other details. The journalists' cameraman and guide reportedly escaped but were later detained by Chinese border guards. Mexico nabs man suspected in attack MEXICO CITY - The Mexican army arrested an alleged drug trafficker suspected of organizing an attack on a U.S. consulate as well as the killing of several soldiers in retaliation for a government crackdown, President Felipe Calderon said Friday. Calderon said alleged Gulf cartel hit man Sigifrido Najera Talamantes was captured in the northern city of Saltillo, Coahuila, earlier in the day. Najera Talamantes is suspected in an Oct. 12

International briefs

attack in which one man opened fire on the U.S. consulate in the northern city of Monterrey and another man threw a grenade that failed to explode. Nobody was hurt. He also is suspected of involvement in a similar gunfire and grenade attack Jan. 7 on the offices of the Televisa television network's station in Monterrey. Thailand's government survives vote BANGKOK - Thailand's three-month-old government survived a no-confidence vote Saturday, but analysts said it is likely to face continuing street demonstrations by loyalists of exiled Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and five of his Cabinet ministers won by comfortable margins, with Abhisit prevailing, 246-176, with 12 abstentions in the House of Representatives. The opposition Phuea Thai Party, which supports Thaksin, initiated the no-confidence motion but failed to deliver any knockout punches as it criticized the government for poor handling of the economy and accused it of supporting the protesters who occupied Bangkok's airports last year. Police in Jerusalem ban Arab cultural events JERUSALEM - Israeli authorities broke up a series of Palestinian cultural events in Jerusalem on Saturday, disrupting a children's march and bursting balloons at a schoolyard celebration in a crackdown that underscored the emotional battle over control of the disputed holy city. Elsewhere in Jerusalem, hundreds of Israelis gathered outside the residence of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to mark the 1,000th day in captivity of an Israeli soldier held by *Hamas* militants in the Gaza Strip. The demonstration took place at a protest tent set up by the soldier's family, and many in the crowd quietly waved yellow glow sticks in a show of solidarity. Palestinian activists called for Saturday's celebrations to mark the Arab League's designation of Jerusalem as the capital of Arab culture for 2009. The 23-nation group chooses a different city for the honor each year. But Israel said the events violated a ban on Palestinian political activity in Jerusalem. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas criticized the crackdown.

Load-Date: March 23, 2009



Khatami is not the conciliator he claims to be

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

March 20, 2009 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Opinion; Pg. 13

Length: 883 words

Byline: JOHN SEARLE - John Searle is president of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, peak body of the

Victorian Jewish community.

Body

Behind the Iranian's benign facade lie inhuman beliefs.

THE front page of Wednesday's Age featured the dramatic headline "Jewish fury at visit by Iran leader". Fury? Hardly. But the Jewish Community Council of Victoria is disappointed in the support for former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami's Australian visit given by the Anglican diocese and LaTrobeUniversity's Centre for Dialogue and we are concerned they have been duped.

Our belief, shared by Iranian dissidents, most Western and, indeed, Middle East governments, members of the Baha'i and other minority faiths in Iran and others, is that Iran is currently the greatest danger to world peace, and representatives such as Khatami are part of its strategy of ill intent.

Nevertheless, we continue our honest and friendly relationship with the Anglican diocese and the Centre for Dialogue as part of our long-standing commitment to interfaith relations.

The JCCV places great store on the benefits of dialogue. However, we do not believe it always works. As the Dalai Lama recently said (Times of India, 19/01), terrorists "are very brilliant and educated ... but a strong ill feeling is bred in them. Their minds are closed." Tragically dialogue is not always possible and can actually thwart peace by bestowing legitimacy on a dishonest partner, as exemplified in the negotiations between Hitler and Chamberlain.

Khatami was president of Iran from 1997 to 2005 and may be considering running again. It cannot be coincidental that Iranians lost even more freedoms during his presidency. More than 50 newspapers were closed, internet services banned and satellite dishes confiscated in this period. The Government continued to harass and kill intellectuals, students and dissidents. Public executions increased and Iran's minorities were intimidated.

Khatami's anti-democratic ways have not been confined to his own people. He has often expressed support for Hezbollah and for terrorist Palestinian factions - including <u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad - which do not merely oppose Israel's policies but are committed to its destruction, and are also blatantly and proudly Jew-hating.

Khatami resembles his successor President Ahmadinejad in his public hatred of Israel, describing it, among other things, as a "plague" and "the greatest enemy of Islam and humanity". In a televised address on October 24, 2000, he declared, "In the Koran, God commanded to kill the wicked and those who do not see the rights of the oppressed ... If we abide by human laws, we should mobilise the whole Islamic World for a sharp confrontation with

Khatami is not the conciliator he claims to be

the Zionist regime ... If we abide by the Koran, all of us should mobilise to kill." And only last year, this supposed champion of dialogue called Israel "an old, incurable wound on the body of Islam, a wound that really possesses demonic, stinking, contagious blood".

At an international conference in 2007, Khatami refused to speak with Israeli journalists and reportedly told them to "go to hell". He then refused to participate in a panel presentation because an Israeli was also scheduled to speak. These are not the actions of a man committed to honest dialogue and peace.

Further, Iran is a totalitarian theocratic state. In 2008 Amnesty International reported the following: "The authorities continued to suppress dissidents. Journalists, writers, scholars, and <u>women</u>'s rights and community activists were subject to arbitrary arrest, travel bans, closure of their NGOs and harassment ... [S]tate repression of Iran's minority communities [continued]. Discrimination against <u>women</u> remained entrenched ... Torture and other ill-treatment were widespread in prisons and detention centres ... [At] least 335 people were executed, among them seven child offenders. Sentences of stoning to death, amputation and flogging continued to be passed and carried out."

It is also common knowledge that Iran is developing a nuclear capacity and has threatened on numerous occasions to wipe Israel off the map. In 2007 its Government sponsored a conference debunking the Holocaust and a cartoon competition that mocked it. Last year, all the members of the Baha'i National Committee in Iran were imprisoned and are still detained.

This is the country of whose political establishment Khatami is a respected member and which he may possibly lead again. Khatami has not sought to dissociate himself from these threats, statements or actions in any way. Indeed, the opinion has been expressed that his more moderate pronouncements when president were deliberately framed to reduce world scrutiny of Iran.

Iran's mullahs forbid dissent. If Khatami did not support their heinous policies and ideologies, he would not have been president before and certainly would not be permitted to run again. While he may spout pious words of coexistence, behind his benign facade lie truly inhuman beliefs and actions.

We do not doubt that Archbishop Freier and Professor Camilleri are well intentioned in hosting Khatami. But sometimes you need to remove the packaging to see what really lies within. Just to meet this man legitimates his actions and words, and Iran and its terrible plans. The JCCV respectfully asks that they reconsider.

John Searle is president of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, peak body of the Victorian Jewish community.

Load-Date: March 19, 2009



Waltz with Sisyphus: Israel's impossible propaganda war

The Jerusalem Post March 22, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 788 words

Byline: Jonathan Yudelman

Highlight: We think our tears will win sympathy. In fact, they encourage our enemies and confuse our supporters.

The writer is a public relations professional and freelance writer based in Jerusalem.

Body

Israel's supporters mostly agree that the country has an image problem. To solve it, they look to ways of improving hasbara. The telling Hebrew expression literally means "explanation," and its ideal is the revelation of the nation's dreams and pain to the world. Its creed might be rendered "the better we are known, the more we will be understood and supported."

As domestic news coverage of Operation Cast Lead made clear, hasbara philosophy has deep roots. During the operation, the public was subjected to endless footage of frightened <u>women</u> and children in the South. It reminded the public why it was at war. The Israeli people doesn't like to make sacrifices based on long-term necessity or cold calculation. When it reluctantly gives battle, it prefers to be in dire straits. And for many, the suffering face of the South explained the much greater suffering of the Palestinians.

In large part, the foreign hasbara effort relied on the same formula, focusing on making the South's face known. Especially in Europe, the explanation was dismissed as "disproportional."

Israel might have chosen instead to spend more words on <u>Hamas</u>'s intractability and its genocidal philosophy. The goals of the war might have been more clearly stated, or Iranian ambitions in Gaza exposed. But Israel explained the war to the world the same way it explained it to itself, in terms of its own immediate suffering. It demanded direct empathy from people, asking, "How would you react?"

ISRAEL'S IMPULSIVENESS, its sensitivities and its unique moral symbolism run deep. For many, the face of captive Gilad Schalit explains the need to release hundreds of terrorists from jail. To understand the phenomenon, one must certainly understand the country's specific character. But it is another thing entirely to expect the rest of the world to share it.

The film Waltz with Bashir, like Beaufort before it, is an Oscar-nominated antiwar film with a documentary feel. Its animated sequences recount the stories of several aging veterans of the First Lebanon War. They suffer flashbacks from their experiences and try to come to terms with their moral wounds. As the film progresses, a universal message of the senselessness of war is interwoven with direct and specific attacks on politicians and generals, and the IDF's culpability for the Sabra and Shatila massacres is strongly implied.

The film's director, Ari Folman, revealingly commented that his work was not geared specifically toward Israelis. He also admitted that two government funds had paid for the film to represent Israel at international film festivals,

adding, "I think that they think that the film does good propaganda in the sense that it shows Israel is a very tolerant country that can deal with issues of the past that are hidden in many ways."

Nor were the government and Folman the only ones to think so. Haaretz columnist Gideon Levy, whose conviction of the country's essential wickedness is unassailable, criticized it on the same grounds. "It is an act of fraud and deceit, intended to allow us to pat ourselves on the back, to tell us and the world how lovely we are," he wrote.

The expression "we shoot and weep," ridiculed by Levy, describes the moral pride of middle Israel forced into war. Waltz with Bashir is a beautifully choreographed pageant of shooting and weeping, with perhaps more weeping than shooting. Political messages aside, the film shows the very human face of IDF soldiers sent to war. It explains. The one thing it is not does not explain, however, is the justice and necessity of Israel's ways. This hardly makes for successful propaganda.

ISRAEL'S CASE for existing is strong. It is not evident that its moral tears, however genuine, make that case stronger in the eyes of the world. Its self-doubts, encouraged by world condemnation, only remind the West of its own self-doubts and historical episodes it has chosen to reject. Direct empathy and identification, as terrorists and insurgents around the world have learned, is the longest path to the heart of the West.

Outside of America, few Western nations identify with Israel. For them, to be Western is above all to be charged with not inflicting suffering. Israel shares the West's repulsion with suffering. Perhaps it thinks for this reason that its tears will win sympathy. In fact, they encourage its enemies and confuse its supporters. The bitter truth is that hasbara is not propaganda at all, so much as a moral need particular to the Israeli psyche. And Israel's need to be known, warts and all, does not convince Westerners of justice of its cause.

In many laudable ways Israel tries to be a light unto the nations. They can all be accomplished in the absence of unlimited self-revelation.

Graphic

Photo: THE FAMILY of Ya'akov Yakubov, killed by a Kassam rocket in Sderot, November 2006. Israel explained the war to the world the same way it explained it to itself, in terms of its own immediate suffering. (Credit: TIP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



The Jerusalem Post January 22, 2009 Thursday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 2690 words

Byline: BRUCE BAWER and DANIEL JOHNSON, Standpoint magazine, special to The Jerusalem Post

Highlight: The leader of Norway's Progress Party, Siv Jensen, has a good chance of winning this year's election.

This interview first appeared in the December issue of Standpoint magazine.

Body

These days nearly every Western European country has at least one of them - a large political party that's held at arm's length by the media, political establishment, academia and the chattering classes. Some of these black sheep - such as the British National Party, Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front and the late Jorg Haider's crew in Austria really are beyond the pale; others are demonized simply because they challenge statist dogma and/or speak forbidden truths about Islamic immigration.

In Scandinavia, the home of statism at its statiest, the most high-profile such entity is probably Pia Kjaersgaard's Danish People's Party. Two months after 9/11, voter anxiety about Islamization swept out the Social Democrats (in power since 1924) and installed a conservative coalition - which, with strong DPP support, has since instituted effective, and popular, reforms (and stood foursquare for free speech during the cartoon crisis).

The picture in Sweden is different: Although the 2006 election exchanged Goran Persson's long-dominant Social Democrats for a "moderate" coalition, systemic changes have been modest, and the only major critics of the Swedes' essentially unmodified "see-no-evil" immigration policy have been the Sweden Democrats - a group, alas, that has a history of neo-Nazi ties and anti-Semitic rhetoric (and, in any case, has yet to win a single Riksdag seat).

Somewhere in between lies Norway, whose major antiestablishment faction is the Progress Party, or Fremskrittspartiet (FrP for short). Founded in 1973, it was run for 28 years by the charismatic Carl I. Hagen, whose tough-talking pugnacity made him a standout, in the '80s and '90s, in a largely bland political firmament. Though nothing in the party's program would raise eyebrows in, say, moderate Republican circles in the US, its rejection of long-standing Nordic assumptions about the role of the state has long led the media to caricature its ideology as dangerous, its supporters as unevolved lowbrows and Hagen as a demagogue.

Yet FrP survived - and thrived. Though other parties (of Left and Right) have collaborated to deny its MPs top government positions, FrP now not only dwarfs the once- powerful Conservatives but also rivals Labor, that mighty architect of postwar Norway's huge state bureaucracy and welfare system. FrP, it's widely assumed, will garner enough votes in parliamentary elections this fall to form a government.

Such an outcome would be a triumph for both market liberalism and common sense about immigration - and a massive blow for that once seemingly indomitable colossus, Scandinavian social democracy. Yet the victory's public face won't be Hagen, who retired in 2006, but his longtime second-in-command, Siv Jensen.

In one sense, Jensen, 39, fits neatly into the current crop of Norwegian party heads: Like her, the Conservatives' Erna Solberg and the Socialist Left's Kristin Halvorsen are formidable blonde pit bulls born in the 1960s. But the Thatcher-like brio with which Jensen defies PC pieties sets her apart. A shrewd, compelling debater, she's unyielding on core principles, but nonetheless cuts a more congenial figure than her sometimes blustering predecessor.

Indeed, her wry humor seems actually to have tempered media hostility toward FrP. Tempered, but not quelled. Last year, sophisticates cheered a book, FrP-Koden (The Progress Party Code), in which Magnus Marsdal, a veteran of such communist institutions as Attac, Red Youth and the newspaper Klassekampen, puzzled over the rise of "Norway's most unsympathetic party." Yet ordinary Norwegians can see clearly why FrP has risen like a phoenix: Its warnings about unchecked social democracy and naive immigration policies have proven all too prescient, and for many Norwegians Jensen and her party represent the only hope for meaningful change. If she wins power, she may yet provide a model of gutsy liberalism and immigration common sense for all of Europe.

In an interview with Standpoint editor Daniel Johnson, she explains her views.

Your party, the Progress Party, has sometimes been accused, on the left and in parts of the media, of being far right, comparable to Jean-Marie Le Pen - what is your answer to that?

First of all, it's important for me to clarify what we stand for. We are a classical liberal party, and are very much in favor of market mechanisms. We seek to improve the competitiveness of Norway, which is actually getting worse and worse. And when it comes to what is, I guess, the most critical issue, immigration, I believe that we stand for the exact same views as those held by the Liberal Party of Denmark, which is in government.

We also share the views of [French President] Nicolas Sarkozy and, I believe, some of those prevalent among the Tories today. So we are very mainstream, I would say, for Europe these days. We need to do something about immigration, because if we don't, as a very small country on the outskirts of Europe, we will end up with all kinds of problems.

What is your party's policy on immigration?

We have had very, very poor integration in Norway over the past 30 years, and that has resulted in some very critical things. First of all, you see <u>women</u> now, even with Norwegian citizenship, who don't know anything about their rights in a free modern country. They are kept locked away, they don't know any Norwegian, they are totally incapable of taking part in their children's upbringing. I think it's very strange, because one of the good things about living in the Western world is that as a woman you have total freedom. And their rights are in practice non-existent, because we let them bring the bad sides of their culture. I believe that that is what they originally fled from, so I really don't understand that.

You see young girls being put through forced circumcision, which is not acceptable.

There are also a substantial number of forced marriages, and the authorities just let it happen.

So I think this is the critical test, not only for Norway but for all of us, when we fight for human rights in other parts of the world and fight for <u>women</u>'s rights. But it's not really something that we take seriously enough. I mean, when <u>women</u> parade in Oslo on March 8 (International <u>Women</u>'s Day), they have old feminist slogans. This is silly really because Norway is a country of equality. What they should be more focused on are the <u>women</u> in Third World countries, in Afghanistan for instance, where they are so oppressed. It's ridiculous that we can let this happen.

What do you think should be the role of a Muslim community in a Western European society like Norway, and how can we move toward a position where Muslims are properly integrated into our society?

I think the mistake has been that we have not been very clear as to what our demands are. We open up our country, they are welcome to come, especially if they are in need, fleeing from another country, but coming to Norway, or coming to Britain, has to mean full integration.

You need to learn the language, you need to go to school, you need to get a job, you need to be able to support yourself and your family, you cannot be allowed to live on welfare for too long. That's what's happening in Norway.

There is a very large number of immigrants living on welfare and they have been for a very, very long time. That is not helping people.

And I believe also that letting that happen is dangerous because it means they end up outside society. They end up without education, without friends and without money.

They often tend to commit crimes and end up in prison, where they can get the wrong ideas. So the best thing for us to do is to be extremely strong on integration, and be very clear about that before people come to Norway.

That is our demand. If you're happy to come, you are welcome, but you have to follow certain ground rules. And we shall not give into demands from certain Muslim societies to accept Shari'a. It is not compatible with the standards of the Western world. We have one set of rules, we have laws, and you cannot have a different set of laws for a certain group of people.

Do you think that the left-wing establishment in Norway understands the danger to the freedoms they enjoy as well, because the hostility toward your party is very extreme, isn't it? They've tried to exclude you from mainstream politics completely.

Not very successfully though. We have been growing for the past 15 years and we're doing extremely well these days. And it has nothing to do with racism or extremism at all.

It has everything to do with protecting some of the most crucial parts of Western society, it has to do with defending freedom of speech, the freedom of each individual, defending human rights. These freedoms are so crucial to what our society is based on - if they are threatened, then our future is threatened. We saw them being threatened with the Danish cartoons, and I was quite disappointed even with the Norwegian government at that time, because they were not able to stand up to defend one of the most crucial rights of a modern society.

I respect totally the fact that people have different views on different things. I even respect the communists; even though I hate communism, I respect people's right to defend it. What I don't respect is when that leads to abolishing important parts of a free society.

Are anti-Americanism, anti-Zionism or even anti- Semitism a big problem in Norway? Do you find that there is a lot of hostility towards America and Israel?

I don't see it as a big problem, but there are quite a few people with those views. But some of us are able to stand up to that. And I'm not afraid to defend Israel's right to defend itself.

It is unfortunately surrounded by very chaotic countries. Israel is the only Western country in that region. It is a country that respects human rights, respects all the things that we place very highly here. And they have problems.

I don't blame them for wanting to defend themselves, but they're always accused of violating and interfering and trespassing, and I just don't understand why left-wing journalists keep on reporting this from a very subjective point of view.

I believe you visited Israel recently.

Yes, I did. I visited a small town called Sderot and it was actually under attack while I was there, so we had to run for the air-raid shelter, and we heard the bombs. People were killed. They have been under these attacks constantly, daily. And it does something to young girls and boys in school when they have to be evacuated several times a day. How can they learn in such an environment? It's impossible for them, but that's everyday life in that region, and it's just impossible to understand.

Some of the very hostile Palestinians have these rockets and the launchers in their living rooms, and they just put it up, launch a rocket, pack it up and continue with their everyday lives. That's what's happening, and it's a threat not just to Israelis, but to ordinary Palestinians. The only thing they want is a peaceful life, and to be able to support their families and to go to work every day. That's what they want, and they are totally unable to, because of *Hamas* controlling Gaza and creating fear by terrorist acts, even against their own people, and we need to stop that. I don't think it will be very easy to see successful negotiations with the Palestinian side as long as you have *Hamas* as a very strong faction.

That's why it's so dangerous to recognize them in government.

So you're against negotiating with them.

You have to remember that the Norwegian government was the first government to recognize <u>Hamas</u>. We protested vigorously against that, because you don't negotiate with terrorists, you just don't. A terrorist is a terrorist, no matter what. You don't negotiate with them; that will make the whole process so much more difficult. I believe some of us need to stand up for that, and there are not too many politicians who dare to do it, but I do.

Who are the other politicians you admire in Europe - or indeed, in the US?

I see Sarah Palin as a very strong and vital woman who can do good things for the US in future years. I think that Sarkozy is a strong and good leader for France, with the ability and strength to reform his country. It's absolutely necessary to do that. I'm curious about the renewal of the Tories. It's interesting what is happening there these days, and I have had the pleasure of meeting with a few of their politicians. They have good ideas, good plans, good reforms, and what I see is that they have gotten back some of the guts that you saw under Margaret Thatcher, who is one of my political heroes. She stood up as so strong in everything that she did, and she fought fights - all necessary ones. This made the UK into a better country, and it made it better for the average British woman after the reforms that she made.

You dissent, don't you, from the current consensus about climate change. How does this affect Norway, a very important energy producer?

We can see that climate changes are happening, but they have been happening for as long as the world has existed. The question is whether they are man-made or not, or whether they are dangerous or not. Just some 30 years ago, all these scientists said that the world was getting colder, and now they have changed their mind and say that the world is getting warmer. So is that what's happening, or isn't it?

Nevertheless, we are in a situation worldwide where approximately two billion people lack access to electricity, and those demands will just grow as we reach new levels of welfare throughout the world, which means that the demand for energy will increase. Norway has every opportunity to be a market leader in that because we have the know-how, the technology, especially in renewable energy production, which we have been doing for a long time. We could have been self-sufficient if we had done something about it, but just in the middle of the debate on climate change we have put ourselves in a situation where we still import coal from Europe, and it doesn't add up when our government says that we still need to do something about climate change issues. Well, if that is true then you need to fight coal-energy production, which is probably the most dangerous energy resource that we have today. But instead we end up importing coal when we could be self- sufficient, and what we should do is export our technology, our competence, to the rest of the world, help them produce renewable energy and help them set up production facilities that they don't have today.

Turning to the financial crisis, and economics generally, you're a very strong supporter of classical economics and the free market.

What would you change about what is sometimes called the Scandinavian model, the big welfare state and so on? What specifically do you think needs to be done to make Norway prosperous again?

We had a banking crisis in Norway in the '80s and we had to make severe changes and after that we liberalized the whole market.

But we set up a good regulatory framework, and you have to be an anarchist to be against regulatory frameworks, and any good market liberal will agree that regulatory frameworks are very important, to make markets work better.

But what I see now is that socialists and social democrats throughout Europe, and even in the United States, are getting some renewed energy defending their ideology, claiming that the reason for this financial scandal has to do with liberalism or market failure or capitalism, which is not true at all.

It has to do with mistakes made actually by [former US president] Bill Clinton, and it has to do not with the lack of regulation but with the wrong regulation, with forcing financial institutions to lend money to people without the capacity to pay it back. I think people need to be reminded of that.

So it's too much state intervention rather than too little.

Well, that's actually the reason behind the scandal in the United States: too much state intervention and the wrong state intervention.

If they had regulated the markets as many of the European countries have done, it wouldn't have happened.

Graphic

Photo: SIV JENSEN. A formidable blonde pit bull. (Credit: Kjetil Ree/Creative Commons Attribution Sharealike 3.0)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Iran, the Jews and Germany; Globalist

The International Herald Tribune

March 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 879 words

Byline: Roger Cohen - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

So the Jerusalem Post thinks I'm "hardly the first American to be misled by the existence of synagogues in totalitarian countries."

The Atlantic Monthly's Jeffrey Goldberg finds me "particularly credulous," taken in by the Iranian hospitality and friendliness that "are the hallmarks of most Muslim societies." (Thanks for that info, Jeffrey.)

A conservative Web site called "American Thinker," which tries to prove its name is an oxymoron, believes I would have been fooled by the Nazis' sham at the Theresienstadt camp.

The indignation stems from my recent column on Iranian Jews which said that the 25,000-strong community worships in relative tranquility; that Persian Jews have fared better than Arab Jews; that hostility toward Jews in Iran has on occasion led to trumped-up charges against them; and that those enamored of the "mad mullah" caricature of Iran regard any compromise with it as a re-run of Munich 1938.

This last point found confirmation in outraged correspondence from several American Jews unable to resist some analogy between Iran and Nazi Germany. I was based in Berlin for three years; Germany's confrontation with the Holocaust inhabited me. Let's be clear: Iran's Islamic Republic is no Third Reich redux. Nor is it a totalitarian state.

Munich allowed Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland. Iran has not waged an expansionary war in more than two centuries.

Totalitarian regimes require the complete subservience of the individual to the state and tolerate only one party to which all institutions are subordinated. Iran is an un-free society with a keen, intermittently brutal apparatus of repression, but it's far from meeting these criteria. Significant margins of liberty, even democracy, exist. Anything but mad, the mullahs have proved malleable.

Most of Iran's population is under 30; it's an Internet-connected generation. Access to satellite television is widespread. The BBC's new Farsi service is all the rage.

Abdullah Momeni, a student opponent of the regime, told me, "The Internet is very important to us, in fact it is of infinite importance." Iranians are not cut off, like Cubans or North Koreans.

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The June presidential election pitting the incumbent, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, against Mohammad Khatami (a former president who once spoke in a synagogue) will be a genuine contest as compared to the charades that pass for elections in many Arab states. No fire has burned down the Majlis, or parliament.

If you're thinking trains-on-time Fascist efficiency, think again. Tehran's new telecommunications tower took 20 years to build. I was told its restaurant would open "soon." So, it is said, will the Bushehr nuclear power plant, a project in the works for a mere 30 years. A Persian Chernobyl is far more likely than some Middle Eastern nuclear Armageddon, if that's any comfort.

For all the morality police inspecting whether <u>women</u> are wearing boots outside their pants (the latest no-no on the dress front) and the regime zealots of the Basiji militia, the air you breathe in Iran is not suffocating. Its streets at dusk hum with life - not a monochrome male-only form of it, or one inhabited by fear - but the vibrancy of a changing, highly-educated society.

This is the Iran of subtle shades that the country's Jews inhabit. Life is more difficult for them than for Muslims, but to suggest they inhabit a totalitarian hell is self-serving nonsense.

One Iranian exile, no lover of the Islamic Republic, wrote to me saying that my account of Iran's Jews had brought "tears to my eyes" because "you are saying what many of us would like to hear."

Far from the cradle of Middle Eastern Islamist zealotry, he suggested, "Iran - the supposed enemy - is the one society that has gone through its extremist fervor and is coming out the other end. It is relatively stable and socially dynamic. As my father, who continues to live there, says, 'It is the least undemocratic country in the region outside Israel."

This notion of a "post-fervor" Iran is significant. The compromises being painfully fought out between Islam and democracy in Tehran are of seminal importance. They belie the notion of a fanatical power; they explain Jewish life.

That does not mean fanaticism does not exist or that terrible crimes have not been committed. The Iran-backed bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires 15 years ago comes to mind.

But the equating of Iran with terror today is simplistic. <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah have evolved into broad political movements widely seen as resisting an Israel over-ready to use crushing force. It is essential to think again about them, just as it is essential to toss out Iran caricatures.

I return to this subject because behind the Jewish issue in Iran lies a critical one - the U.S. propensity to fixate on and demonize a country through a one-dimensional lens, with a sometimes disastrous chain of results.

It's worth recalling that hateful, ultra-nationalist rhetoric is no Iranian preserve. Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's race-baiting anti-Arab firebrand, may find a place in a government led by Benjamin Netanyahu. He should not.

Nor should racist demagoguery - wherever - prompt facile allusions to the murderous Nazi master of it.

Readers are invited to comment at my blog: www.iht.com/passages

Load-Date: March 11, 2009



Unity the only way forward

Gulf Daily News March 10, 2009

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Length: 808 words

Body

On the reconstruction of Gaza after Israel's brutal assault in January...

SM - We need Palestinian unity first. I tell you why, once we have unity there, then it will be easy passage for the borders. And once Israel accepts to open the five or six borders that are between Egypt and Israel, they will have no problem.

- JD It doesn't seem very promising to get unity in Israel and unity between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah at this juncture. So, is there more frustration going forward?
- SM It is a critical juncture, I think a difficult one. But I don't think we have any other option. There has to be unity. I mean I don't see it, any progress taking place on any, whether it's the construction phase, or economic re-building of Gaza, without the unity on both sides.
- JD I was looking back at some of the economic numbers and the Palestinian Territories and the economy there has fallen 13 per cent since 2000. Can you actually have an economy grow with a blockade in place? That's another vital feature of what we're talking about.
- SM Well the blockade has to be lifted, for sure. I think this goes along with the construction phase. You can't rebuild Gaza if you have a blockade. How are you going to get all the material for rebuilding? So the blockade is definitely, I think, going to be lifted very soon.
- JD As you know, your husband President Mubarak has come under intense pressure for not being seen to be doing enough for the Palestinian people. That must be incredibly frustrating from your vantage point.
- SM It's not fair, but when you literally see every day on your television screens, you know Gaza being bombed, children being killed, <u>women</u> being widowed, young men being... All you see is just bodies and corpses scattered all over the place. You can't have, I don't think you can have, any sympathy for any government, even the government of Egypt, from Egyptians themselves. Because you always feel, I mean, even sitting at home. We feel we have to do more. What more can we do? How can we stop this massacre? Something has to be done and this is why, I think, we had so much criticism at home regardless of what Egypt was doing. But now I think people have come to realise that the role of Egypt from day one was a positive role and Egypt was on the right path and

Unity the only way forward

continues to be a stronghold in the area. I think we are seeing more and more of this and more people acknowledging Egypt's role.

- JD What should be the follow up with Israel? At one point you were saying that the International Tribunal might be the path to charge them with war crimes. Do you still believe that?
- SM I don't know if the international community will have the courage to come up and say: "Yes, Israel, you were wrong. Yes, these were war crimes. Yes, you used weapons you shouldn't have used. Yes, this was unproportional use of force." We'll have to wait and see.

On the challenge of combatting human trafficking, the third most profitable crime in the world behind drug running and arms smuggling...

- SM Trafficking is an extremely complex problem, extremely complex, multi-layered and no country is really immune from it. Whether it is regarded as a country of origin, transit or destination. It exists in all societies... I came to realise what an insidious crime this was and how it was just really built on profit on not only low morals, no morals at all, and just built on making (money). You know when you look at the figures, \$38 billion (BD14.3bn) profit yearly on trafficking of <u>women</u> and children in particular. And I believe that as a movement we would never be able to solve the problem. But we wanted to be partners, wanted to be part of this process. Whatever we did, however little we did, we just wanted to try and make a difference in people's lives.
- JD Your approach has been to engage the business community internationally, but at the very top level. For them to take responsibility, then open their eyes to the problem itself. And is to what? Sign on the dotted line to say: 'I will not employ trafficked labour ever?"
- SM Rather than repeating what has been done, that we should start working from the top, working with the business community, who have the resources, who have the expertise, who have the technical capabilities of helping us to do something about this scourge of human trafficking.
- JD I was looking at the numbers. Of 800 people that are trafficked, on average there's only one prosecution. The penalty doesn't seem to be strong enough for the crime. Would you agree with that?
- SM Oh definitely. We have a long, long way to go yet, because the traffickers are not caught. This is an organised crime that is working, you know, underground.
- JD But even if they are caught the penalty doesn't even seem that great?
- SM Because we need, we need still to amend our laws. We need to draft new anti-trafficking laws.

Load-Date: March 10, 2009



Gazans struggle for repair water and sewage systems damaged; MIDEAST: Gazans Struggle for Clean Drinking Water

IPS (Latin America)

March 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 930 words

Body

'ICRC teams are repairing water and sewage systems in Gaza that were badly damaged during the three-week Israeli military operation in January,' the ICRC says in a media release.

'According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, one-fifth of the population had no direct access to drinking water, and relied on water purchased from private suppliers. Today, thousands of people still have no access to running water.'

Much of Gaza's infrastructure was destroyed during Israel's military assault on the coastal territory during Operation Cast Lead, which created a critical humanitarian situation on the ground.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says 150,000 Gazans still remain affected by inadequate and unsafe water supply. Of these, about 50,000 remain without any water while the remainder receive water only every five to six days.

The OCHA adds that approximately 28,000 children in the Gaza Strip have no access to piped water. An additional 56,000 children have access to water only every week or so.

Gaza's Coast Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU), which handles water and sewage treatment, says the water crisis will continue until Israel allows sufficient spare parts and repair materials into Gaza.

Israel's continuing blockade of the strip means that construction material, most spare parts and repair materials have been prevented from entering. This has made it impossible to rebuild the thousands of destroyed and damaged buildings. It has also severely restricted repair of vital infrastructure such as waste and water treatment plants.

Continual electricity blackouts have further limited the treatment plants' operating capacity, while severe restrictions on the import of fuel have limited the ability of emergency generators.

While the war exacerbated the situation, Gaza's infrastructure was already dilapidated and in urgent need of repair due to the previous 18 months of closure which followed *Hamas* taking power in June 2007.

The CMWU has been forced to pump tonnes of untreated sewage directly into the sea, which then seeps back into Gaza's underground water supply, further threatening safe drinking water supplies.

Recent water tests indicate that piped water in Gaza is not safe for human consumption. Forty-five of 248 water samples tested were found to be contaminated, primarily in the North Gaza and Gaza city districts.

Gazans struggle for repair water and sewage systems damaged MIDEAST: Gazans Struggle for Clean Drinking Water

Israel shelled Gaza's biggest wastewater treatment plant in Sheikh Ajleen, south-east of Gaza city, which usually treats raw sewage from approximately 400,000 people. The torrent of raw, untreated sewage flowing into residential areas, agricultural land and the sea was visible from outer space, according to satellite images released by the UN.

The UN's Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) showed the impact of the crater from the Israeli bomb and a sewage flow that travelled a distance of 1.2 km.

The ICRC and CMWU have been coordinating efforts to repair the plant but have been hampered by delays in obtaining the necessary approval from the Israeli authorities to bring in pipes and spare parts.

'The first thing people ask us for is water and electricity,' says Marek Komarzynski, an ICRC water engineer. 'That is what they need to lead anything like normal lives.'

But the humanitarian crisis in the wake of the war and the blockade affects nearly every other aspect of the daily lives of ordinary Gazans.

At the end of February the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) assessed that over 2,000 families needed their homes to be rebuilt, while nearly 11,000 families required urgent repairs to their homes. The agency said it expected the figures to rise.

Six Palestinian Authority (PA) schools in northern Gaza were also severely damaged, forcing nearly 5,000 school children to relocate to other schools. The overcrowding meant that additional double-shifts were introduced, further burdening the 351 schools, approximately half of which already run double-shifts.

Meanwhile, Gaza's hospitals are struggling because equipment such as neonatal machines lack spare parts, while some medicines are not available. Furthermore, only half of more than 300 Gazans who wanted to travel abroad for emergency medical treatment succeeded in getting permits from Israel.

Malnutrition is another growing problem, and children and pregnant <u>women</u> bear the brunt. UNICEF recently provided vitamin supplements to 50,000 babies and children under five.

The OCHA says that the 127 truckloads of daily aid permitted in by the Israeli authorities is insufficient to meet market needs. Prior to the blockade 475 trucks entered daily.

Poverty and unemployment plague Gaza following Israel's destruction of various sectors which provided employment.

The Private Sector Coordination Council (PSCC) assesses that 700 private sector establishments were either completely destroyed or damaged. The damage is valued at 140 million dollars.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture estimate that 180 million dollars worth of damage was done to agricultural infrastructure.

The fishing sector was estimated to have suffered direct and indirect losses of 2.2 million dollars, due to destruction of fishing boats and related materials. And even those who are employed and earning are struggling. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Israeli restrictions on the entry of cash into Gaza has affected the livelihoods of up to half a million Gazans, in a population of 1.5 million. © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: March 17, 2009



Iran, the Jews and Germany

The New York Times

March 2, 2009 Monday

The New York Times on the Web

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Section: Section; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg.; OP-ED COLUMNIST

Length: 878 words

Byline: By ROGER COHEN

Body

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The indignation stems from my recent column on Iranian Jews, which said that the 25,000-strong community worships in relative tranquillity; that Persian Jews have fared better than Arab Jews; that hostility toward Jews in Iran has on occasion led to trumped-up charges against them; and that those enamored of the "Mad Mullah" caricature of Iran regard any compromise with it as a rerun of Munich 1938.

This last point found confirmation in outraged correspondence from several American Jews unable to resist some analogy between Iran and Nazi Germany. I was based in Berlin for three years; Germany's confrontation with the Holocaust inhabited me. Let's be clear: Iran's Islamic Republic is no Third Reich redux. Nor is it a totalitarian state.

Munich allowed Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland. Iran has not waged an expansionary war in more than two centuries.

Totalitarian regimes require the complete subservience of the individual to the state and tolerate only one party to which all institutions are subordinated. Iran is an un-free society with a keen, intermittently brutal apparatus of repression, but it's far from meeting these criteria. Significant margins of liberty, even democracy, exist. Anything but mad, the mullahs have proved malleable.

Most of Iran's population is under 30; it's an Internet-connected generation. Access to satellite television is widespread. The BBC's new Farsi service is all the rage.

Abdullah Momeni, a student opponent of the regime, told me, "The Internet is very important to us; in fact, it is of infinite importance." Iranians are not cut off, like Cubans or North Koreans.

Iran, the Jews and Germany

The June presidential election pitting the incumbent, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, against Mohammad Khatami (a former president who once spoke in a synagogue) will be a genuine contest as compared with the charades that pass for elections in many Arab states. No fire has burned the Majlis, or parliament, down.

If you're thinking trains-on-time Fascist efficiency, think again. Tehran's new telecommunications tower took 20 years to build. I was told its restaurant would open "soon." So, it is said, will the Bushehr nuclear power plant, a project in the works for a mere 30 years. A Persian Chernobyl is more likely than some Middle Eastern nuclear Armageddon, if that's any comfort.

For all the morality police inspecting whether <u>women</u> are wearing boots outside their pants (the latest no-no on the dress front) and the regime zealots of the Basiji militia, the air you breathe in Iran is not suffocating. Its streets at dusk hum with life -- not a monochrome male-only form of it, or one inhabited by fear -- but the vibrancy of a changing, highly educated society.

This is the Iran of subtle shades that the country's Jews inhabit. Life is more difficult for them than for Muslims, but to suggest they inhabit a totalitarian hell is self-serving nonsense.

One Iranian exile, no lover of the Islamic Republic, wrote to me saying that my account of Iran's Jews had brought "tears to my eyes" because "you are saying what many of us would like to hear."

Far from the cradle of Middle Eastern Islamist zealotry, she suggested, "Iran -- the supposed enemy -- is the one society that has gone through its extremist fervor and is coming out the other end. It is relatively stable and socially dynamic. As my father, who continues to live there, says, 'It is the least undemocratic country in the region outside Israel.' "

This notion of a "post-fervor" Iran is significant. The compromises being painfully fought out between Islam and democracy in Tehran are of seminal importance. They belie the notion of a fanatical power; they explain Jewish life.

That does not mean fanaticism does not exist or that terrible crimes have not been committed, like the Iran-backed bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires 15 years ago.

But the equating of Iran with terror today is simplistic. <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah have evolved into broad political movements widely seen as resisting an Israel over-ready to use crushing force. It is essential to think again about them, just as it is essential to toss out Iran caricatures.

I return to this subject because behind the Jewish issue in Iran lies a critical one -- the U.S. propensity to fixate on and demonize a country through a one-dimensional lens, with a sometimes disastrous chain of results.

It's worth recalling that hateful, ultranationalist rhetoric is no Iranian preserve. Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's race-baiting anti-Arab firebrand, may find a place in a government led by Benjamin Netanyahu. He should not.

Nor should racist demagoguery -- wherever -- prompt facile allusions to the murderous Nazi master of it.

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: March 2, 2009



Sport and politics ought not to play in the same arena; MIDEAST: The Ball Could be in Israel's Court

IPS (Latin America)
February 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 853 words

Byline: Analysis by Jerrold Kessel and Pierre Klochendler

Body

At the start of the weekly Israeli cabinet meeting, Olmert pulled no punches: 'I was astonished to hear that Andy Ram intended to play in Dubai. He really should be advised to demonstrate patriotism and solidarity; he should have boycotted the tournament.'

Olmert was lashing out at the decision of the Dubai authorities to ban Israeli woman tennis player Shahar Peer from last week's championships in the Gulf state. Doubles specialist Ram is playing in this week's men's tournament after Dubai bowed to a torrent of outrage, and to pressure from international tennis authorities, and granted him the visa they had earlier denied the Israeli woman star.

Israel drew solace from the fact that tennis officialdom, Peer's fellow competitors, and international sports writers lined up to vent indignation against the ban. The <u>Women</u>'s Tennis Association (WTA) fined the Dubai tournament a whopping 300,000 dollars, and warned that any repeat of such a ban would put next year's tournament in jeopardy.

Dubai is promoting itself as the coming powerhouse of world sport, and the tennis tournament is one of the sport's top world events. Gulf officials muddied the waters a little when they insisted that there was no blatant discrimination against Peer as an Israeli, and evoked 'security considerations - that our fans might not like her presence' as the reason for the ban.

During the war in Gaza, and since, Israeli athletes have been harassed when appearing in international competition - most notably in Ankara when Turkish fans violently disrupted a basketball game with an Israeli club team. In parallel to the Dubai ban, the city authorities in Malmo announced that when Sweden hosts Israel in an upcoming Davis Cup tennis match, 'no spectators will be allowed for security reasons.'

Olmert's outburst ignored the stringent measures taken against Dubai, but suggests an underlying Israeli concern: given the international mood following the military onslaught on *Hamas* in Gaza, and with the newly elected far right government waiting in the wings avowedly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state on occupied territories, the citing of 'security concerns' in sports may be only the thin edge of the wedge. Neither the predicament of Israeli athletes, nor the dilemmas of sports authorities around the world about how to handle mounting questions about Israel's place in the world are likely suddenly to dissolve in a welter of 'love for the game'.

Olmert may have had his eye on a ball further afield. In New Zealand, Prime Minister John Key declared that his government may prevent his country's cricket team from touring Zimbabwe later this year. 'Aside from political reasons, there could also be safety and health risks to the players during the planned visit in July.' The New Zealand leader didn't stop there. 'Frankly we don't support the regime of President Robert Mugabe.'

Sport and politics ought not to play in the same arena MIDEAST: The Ball Could be in Israel's Court

What will happen when even countries traditionally friendly to Israel come to regard the new 'regime' in Jerusalem as unsavoury, its policies untenable?

In Britain and in other European countries, a 'boycott-Israel' campaign is gaining some ground, adherents encouraging a ban on everything from Israeli flowers to the shunning of academics. The design is to posit Israelis as international pariahs in order to press for a change of Israeli policies towards the Palestinians.

The most emphatic sports boycott was the one that helped bring down apartheid in South Africa. That worldwide boycott was broadly justified on the grounds that in apartheid South Africa teams were chosen along racial lines, and gave legitimacy to the racist regime. In contrast, commentators who are now aghast at the boycott of the Israeli tennis player insist that Peer is a professional sportswoman who represents only herself and argue that 'she just happens to be Israeli.'

Sport isn't as central to Israeli life as it was to white South Africa, and there is no overt discrimination against Arab citizens in Israeli sports. And, until now, Israel has managed to head off any nascent boycotts, resting on both the ambiguity of its policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians (continued occupation alongside acceptance of the principle of a Palestinian state), and also on the ambiguity of purpose of the would-be boycotters (de-legitimising Israel's policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians or de-legitimising Israel per se).

Enter Israeli politics into the politics of sports. The just completed Israeli national election campaign revolved in no small measure around a popular catchphrase devised by the anti-Arab party Israel Beiteinu (meaning Israel is our home) - 'No Loyalty, No Citizenship', which targets Israel's Arab minority. If that mood is put into practice, real discrimination against Arab sportspeople may well occur.

The new right-wing government is soon to be installed. There is a growing sense among its domestic opponents that, more and more, the onus will be on Israel itself. The policies of the new government could have a direct bearing on the momentum of any boycott - not only on the sports field. © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: February 25, 2009



Iran, the Jews and Germany; Globalist

The International Herald Tribune

March 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 879 words

Byline: Roger Cohen - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

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Iran, the Jews and Germany Globalist

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Readers are invited to comment at my blog: www.iht.com/passages

Load-Date: March 11, 2009



The myth of 'Israeli apartheid'; Arabs in Israel have full civil and democratic rights - more than afforded by most other countries in the Middle East

The Gazette (Montreal)

March 6, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A13; YORAM ELRON

Length: 835 words

Byline: YORAM ELRON, Freelance

Body

This week, at Concordia and McGill, and on university campuses throughout the world, scores of events will take place under the banner of Israeli Apartheid Week. An annual tradition running in its fifth year, Israeli Apartheid Week is a hate-fest devoted to demonizing Israel.

As the nomenclature suggests, the goal of this forum is to portray Israel as the modern-day incarnation of South Africa's morally repugnant apartheid regime. Such comparisons are pure fallacy and demonstrate ignorance to the true meaning of the word apartheid.

Derived from the Afrikaans words "apart" (apart) and "heid" (hood), apartheid is the state policy of racial segregation involving political, legal and economic discrimination based on notions of racial superiority. How one can even begin to compare Israel, the Middle East's only liberal democracy, to such a regime is beyond comprehension.

One need only turn to Israel's founding document, the Declaration of Independence, to discredit the myth of "Israeli apartheid." In it, full civil rights and "freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture" are extended to all citizens - Jews and Arabs - "irrespective of religion, race or sex." This document drafted in 1948 still serves as the basis for relations between the state and minority communities.

Today, Israel's Arab citizens, who make up 20 per cent of the population, enjoy the same rights and freedoms as the Jewish majority. These rights include the right to vote and run for public office, the right to form political parties and criticize government policies in the free press, the right to purchase and lease private land, and the right to travel without restriction. Arabic is even recognized as an official language together with Hebrew, and appears on all legislation, roads signs and in all public buildings.

In Israel freedom of religion is sacrosanct and access to all holy places is safeguarded by the state. Adherents of the Baha'i faith maintain their central religious shrines in Acre and Haifa, where they are free from the persecution faced in their native Iran, while the Islamic waqf (endowment) enjoys custodianship over the Temple Mount, where Muslims worship freely. Israel's legal system recognizes the religious courts of all faiths and even accords equal status to Jewish talmudic law, Muslim sharia law, Druze law, and Christian law for all personal status issues including birth, marriage and divorce.

The myth of 'Israeli apartheid'; Arabs in Israel have full civil and democratic rights - more than afforded by most other countries in the Middle East

Politically, Israel's 1.4 million Arab citizens enjoy many more freedoms in Israel than citizens of any other country in the Middle East. In the Knesset, Israeli Arabs account for 10 per cent of the current seat distribution and are represented by three Arab parties with ideological views ranging from anti-Zionist Marxism to Islamism. Like all citizens, Israeli Arabs are free to petition Israel's Supreme Court for any violation of their basic rights. In the free press, which includes dozens of Arabic-language media outlets, Arabs can express their views more freely than in neighbouring countries.

During the past several years alone, Israeli Arabs have made tremendous strides in all facets of Israeli life. Raleb Majadele, a member of Knesset for Labour, became the first Israeli Arab to sit in the cabinet, while Salim Joubran, is Israel's first Arab Supreme Court justice. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israeli Arabs serve as ambassadors, while in the army many Arab senior officers have risen to the rank of general. Enrolment in institutions of higher learning has risen steadily among Arabs, especially at Haifa University, where today they account for more than 20 per cent of the student population. At Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, about one third of the medical staff is Arab. Israel's national soccer team, which includes Jewish and Arab players, is yet another example of peaceful coexistence between communities.

It is sad that the very rights and freedoms enjoyed by Israel's Arab minority remain unknown to many Arabs in surrounding countries, let alone to minorities including Jews and Christians, who are barred from acquiring citizenship in countries such as Saudi Arabia. Today, in the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza Strip, Palestinian <u>women</u>, who were once among the most educated and avant-garde in the Arab world, are coerced into wearing the hijab, while in Israel <u>women</u> of all faiths are free from all forms of religious repression. In Israel, homosexuals live free from harassment, while in Iran they are lynched in the public square. In Israel, alleged criminals - including terrorists captured by police - are given due process, while in other Middle Eastern countries they are decapitated or, in the case of terrorists, glorified as martyrs.

If it is "apartheid" that Israel's critics are looking for, they are looking in the wrong place.

Perhaps next year universities will think twice before giving a tribune to those who propagate such fallacious myths.

Yoram Elron is consul-general of Israel for Quebec and the Atlantic provinces.

Graphic

Photo: AMMAR AWAD, REUTERS; An Israeli Arab prepares to vote in last month's parliamentary elections. Arabs have the right to vote in Israel.;

Load-Date: March 28, 2009



News: Charity row: At the heart of BBC row, the homeless of Gaza: Peter Beaumont returns to Jabal Rayas to talk to the children whose desperate struggle to survive in bombed-out shanty towns has led a leading charity to mount an emergency appeal - which BBC executives are refusing to screen

The Observer (London) (England)

January 25, 2009

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The Observer

Section: OBSERVER HOME PAGES; Pg. 8

Length: 744 words

Byline: Peter Beaumont

Body

Safaa Salam is scared and cold. Last night the 10-year-old girl slept in the ruins of her family house in the Jabal Rayas area of eastern Gaza. So did her four-year-old niece Ghavad. It is not so much a ruin as a cave, the top a tented slab of crumbling concrete, cracked and buckling in the middle.

Safaa's brother, Salman, aged 30 - Ghavad's father - jumps down from the roof that he is clearing, throwing the tail fin from an Israeli bomb. "I found four of these," he says.

"It was cold last night," says Safaa. "And I'm scared of the packs of dogs."

Salman agrees. "All of the <u>women</u> are frightened. They are worried the Israelis might come back. And they are scared of the dogs."

The dogs come to feed on the bodies of the family's sheep, lying stinking in the rubble, 20 feet from where the family sleeps. There is a toddler on a filthy mattress in the gloom. It is Salman's daughter. "She's sick. And she still can't sleep. But I don't know who to talk to about this."

I visit Jabal Rayas twice, walking among the craters, scrambling among the broken concrete into homes that - while ruined - are again in occupation. It is into such places that aid agencies wish to pour resources, raised in part by charitable appeals around the world like the one launched in Britain by the Disasters Emergency Committee that has been rejected for broadcast by the BBC.

On Friday evening, I come across the Khader family, who have set up a makeshift structure on the roof of their ruins. Mohammed Khader, father of eight girls, and his brother Zaid and his family, have found somewhere for the youngest to sleep. But they stay in the wreckage of their home. They pray and wash and cook in what is just a shanty with cloth walls. When the rain falls it hammers on the corrugated-iron roof.

News: Charity row: At the heart of BBC row, the homeless of Gaza: Peter Beaumont returns to Jabal Rayas to talk to the children whose desperate struggle to surv....

Yesterday evening there were more families among the ruins, dotted among the flattened buildings, crushed by bombs and smashed by the Israeli bulldozers that carved up the sheep pastures as they built high berms. It is from here that rockets were fired into Israel. But it was a place where peoplealso used to live and work and is now utterly destroyed.

Two <u>women</u> in one "cave", whose widest opening was three feet high, crawl out to hang up their washing. Other mem bers of the Salam family bustle around the shelters they built in the churned-up earth, baking bread and tending their chickens, sitting by feeble fires.

They are here for two reasons. Yesterday the schools in which many had been sheltering re-opened. The UN says that people were offered money to find alternative accommodation or directed to new shelters. These families insist they had nowhere else to go and no one had spoken to them.

They are living in the open for another reason, too. These people are all farm ers, afraid that, if they do not sit on their ruined lands, they will lose them.

When a small convoy from the UN does arrive in Al-Karim, the heart of the devastation, they cannot reach the Salam families' ruined houses. It is too close to the border with Israel - one kilometre distant. Their rules say they are not allowed to approach this far without permission, although they want to help.

Jabal Rayas is one of the worst places. But because the people could escape when the tanks came in, they did, and did not perish like those who were trapped in areas such as Zaitoun. But it is a sight familiar across the Gaza Strip. A disaster has occurred. And one that many - not least the children - have not chosen.

The Salams and those like them need aid. They do not care where it comes from: whether from *Hamas*, which has begun its own distributions from warehouses across the Gaza Strip, or from the international community and aid agencies. What those living in Jabal Rayas require desperately is shelter and medicine and food. They need help to rebuild their lives and restore their lands.

Last week in Jerusalem, as the news of the decision not to broadcast the DEC appeal first broke, a British aid worker confided her private and angry opinion. "It is just politics. That's all. We spoke to the BBC. They said they were getting rather bored with these appeals. Then, we were told the real reason. That the decision was political. They should be ashamed."

Last night, as she prepared to go to sleep, Safaa Salam was clutching her bedding in a plastic cover.

"Will you ask someone to help us?" said her brother as we left.

If you want to donate online to the DEC's Gaza Crisis, visit

http://www.dec.org.uk/item/200

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



Banks can't expect us to pay back 'free' cash - they don't

The Sunday Times (London)

January 18, 2009

Edition 1

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 17

Length: 819 words **Byline:** ROD LIDDLE

Body

Here's a way to ease the credit crunch, although not one recommended by any of those useless financial experts you see every evening on your television news: steal from the banks. Fill your boots.

After all, quite apart from those penalties charged on your overdraft and their profitable chicanery when dealing with cheques, they're also taking your money in tax as a direct consequence of their greed and incompetence. So fair's fair.

Apparently some hole-in-the-wall cash machines have recently been paying out double the amount of money requested of them and people are queuing up to rip the banks off. There was one rogue ATM in Manchester on Friday - and the looks of utter jubilation and vengeance on the faces of the customers in the queue was a real pleasure to behold. The queue had a sort of carnival, holiday, atmosphere, people dancing around and texting their friends.

It may well be that these are sentient ATMs, cash machines with a conscience, which have decided unilaterally that the banks have gone too far and it is time for redress. Technically, of course, it is theft, taking advantage of an ATM which has gone doolally and is spraying out tenners right left and centre.

However, this is an increasingly difficult argument to advance on moral terms, if you are a banker. Especially if you are a banker who has presided over a catastrophic lurch towards bankruptcy, been bailed out with billions of pounds of taxpayers money but are still perfectly happy to trouser a million quid salary plus bonuses for having been stupid, or greedy, or most likely both.

Insisting that customers pay back the extra Eur30 they got from the ATM because to do otherwise would be immoral, and keeping a straight face all the while, must be a difficult trick to pull off. Not least if you are a senior employee of the Royal Bank of Scotland, whose chief executive receives a salary of Eur1.2m a year and owns most of the home counties, and whose bank has received Eur20 billion from you and me in the past year.

That's about Eur330 for every man, woman and child in Britain, if my free online calculator is working properly.

Banks can't expect us to pay back 'free' cash - they don't

Are you happy that this is money well spent, or would you rather put it towards a holiday? When you hear that the bankers are still receiving enormous salaries, despite being about as much use as Anne Frank's drum kit, and while still refusing to advance credit to small businesses in the blitz spirit of togetherness which the government, naively, expected - does your moral compass suddenly start behaving in an unexpected manner? Does it start pointing due south, instead? Just imagine - in the week that your income tax returns are due, an ATM - possessed by the spirit of Robin Hood or Rosa Luxemburg - gives you 60 quid instead of the 30 you asked for. What are you going to do? We behave with honesty largely for reasons of reciprocity. The most unjust societies are generally the most corrupt, where individuals cheat and extort because it is the norm.

It may well be that in the affluent, democratic and meritocratic West the sense of justice and fairness is at least partly illusory, a clever sleight of hand.

But right now, with the extravagant rescue of the banks, and with those enormous salaries still being paid out, and with the banks utterly devoid of contrition, even that clever illusion has been shattered.

In the past few months incidences of burglary and robbery seem to have increased sharply - by some 98%, for example, in the county of Lincolnshire, and by more than double elsewhere.

Undoubtedly this is largely the consequence of people being skint, but it may also be a consequence of people not buying into this notion of fairness any more. The banks get away with it - why shouldn't we?

I+ Great news for London - the Evening Standard, like most other things in the capital, will soon be owned by a former member of the Russian KGB. The loss-making newspaper is to be sold to Alexander Lebedev for Eur1 - you don't haggle with the KGB, you see.

Try to push up the price and sooner or later you'll find yourself glowing like a Belisha beacon and your hair falling out in large clumps.

It may seem unusual for former operatives of a somewhat sinister and hostile security organisation to buy up our newspapers, but many people have assumed that for years the Daily Mail has been owned by Haiti's vigorous secret police, the Ton Ton Macoute. And it is well known that The Guardian is managed by an edgy Sinn Fein-Hamas coalition.

There will be changes at the Standard, of course - the fashion pages will soon feature <u>women</u> with grim expressions in white stilettos, tons of gold jewellery, dyed auburn hair and ominous tattoos. The front page each day will be devoted to an exaggerated report of pig iron production - and restaurant critic Fay Maschler had better develop a liking for borscht pretty quickly. They lost the cold war and won, it would seem, the world.

Load-Date: January 18, 2009



The leader who struts like a superpower; Benjamin Netanyahu is favourite to win Tuesday's Israeli election, and that could put him on a collision course with the Obama White House. Donald Macintyre reports

The Independent (London)
February 7, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 30

Length: 849 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre

Body

IT WAS Bill Clinton who drily observed after meeting the newly elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that "he thinks he is the superpower and we are here to do whatever he requires."

If Mr Netanyahu emerges as victor in next Tuesday's election and in the process of government formation that will follow, he is unlikely to treat President Barack Obama to a repeat of what Mr Clinton's key Middle East aide, Dennis Ross, would later recall as that "nearly insufferable" performance in the White House in 1996.

Mr Netanyahu, who has gone out of his way to be publicly flattering about Mr Obama in recent weeks, knows a little more about diplomacy than he did then; one of several reasons why he lost the election three years later was that the Israeli public was unhappy about how unwelcome their prime minister had become in Washington.

The question of whether this is more than a superficial change, and whether he can manage to avoid alienating a new US president professedly intent on progress in the Middle East, remains a vexed one, however.

With his lead over Tzipi Livni's Kadima party narrowing this weekend, Mr Netanyahu's Likud cannot be regarded as a shoo-in. But if he does win, it will have been on a platform of expanding rather than uprooting existing West Bank settlements, of the indivisibility of Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state, and of the need to remedy what he sees as the unfinished military job last month of toppling *Hamas*. None of these positions, on present showing, are likely to commend themselves to the White House.

The paradox of Mr Netanyahu's uneasy relationship with the US last time around is that he is the most Americanised of Israeli politicians, albeit one more linked to the neo-conservative Republican right. He was given a US education by his emigre Israeli parents, interrupted by military service first in the elite Sayeret Matkal unit - during which he took part in the nocturnal rescue of hostages from a hijacked Sabena jet in 1972 - and later in the 1973 Yom Kippur war.

The leader who struts like a superpower Benjamin Netanyahu is favourite to win Tuesday's Israeli election, and that could put him on a collision course with the....

He might even have pursued an American business career, had his brother, Yoni, not been killed during the much more famous Entebbe raid in 1976; for Bibi - as he is universally if not especially warmly known - that was a seminal event. But in 1982 he took a job in Israel's Washington embassy as a protege of the leading Likud figure and then-ambassador Moshe Arens, returning to Israel in 1988 to a Knesset seat and deputy ministerial post.

His rise was meteoric, if hardly untroubled. In 1993, when he was fighting for the Likud leadership, his present - and third - wife, Sara, took an anonymous call reporting the existence of a video of her husband in "compromising romantic situations" with a *female* image consultant. The candidate's response was to go on television, confess to infidelity and then accuse his Likud rivals of using "mafia methods" to undermine him.

What mainly exasperated the Clinton administration once Mr Netanyahu became Prime Minister was his foot-dragging over the Oslo accords - which he had vigorously rejected, personalizing much of his opposition around the then-prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, assassinated in 1995. Today, he remains deeply opposed to territorial concessions to the Palestinians in any foreseeable future, arguing that they would be to pave the way for a further "Hamastan" - the term he is proud of having coined about Gaza - in the West Bank.

He has several times during the campaign dropped the name of Tony Blair when advancing his own favoured alternative: an "economic peace" under which some of the formidable obstacles to West Bank trade might be removed - but not (as many others, including Mr Blair, envisage) as a prelude to an independent Palestinian state.

The Israeli analyst Yossi Alpher thinks that if Netanyahu wins and is able to form a unity government with Ms Livni and Labour leader Ehud Barak, he might just be able to avert an early collision with the US President. He might, Mr Alpher says, be able to persuade the President's envoy, George Mitchell, that instead of a deal with the Palestinians he could "live with" serious negotiations with Syria as an alternative - despite his campaign pledges not to surrender the Golan. This would at least have the merits of detaching Damascus from Iran - the nuclear threat from which Mr Netanyahu has made a centrepiece of his campaign. But if, instead, he forms a right-wing coalition including the fast-rising Avigdor Lieberman, Mr Alpher believes "he's in trouble."

Either way, a seminal New Yorker profile by David Remnick in 1998 emphasised the influence of the Likud leader's flintily hard-line father, Benzion Netanyahu, an academic and one-time aide to the revisionist Zionist Ze'ev Jabotinsky. "To a considerable degree Bibi Netanyahu's struggle is between an inherited ideology and the tug of political contingencies," Remnick wrote. If Mr Obama seriously wants progress in the Middle East, he is likely to have his work cut out if Mr Netanyahu wins next Tuesday.

Jo Brand: the woman who helped get Carol Thatcher the sack Profile, pages 44 & 45

Load-Date: February 6, 2009



Street protests against Israel's assault on Gaza; MIDEAST: Gaza War Divides Arab Governments From People

IPS (Latin America)
January 29, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 961 words

Byline: Adam Morrow and Khaled Moussa al-Omrani

Body

In Cairo, and in many Arab capitals, much of the anger is directed at the Egyptian regime, seen by critics as complicit in the Israeli campaign.

'The escalation of popular protests across the country indicates unprecedented levels of popular outrage over both Israel's aggression and Egypt's official position,' Ibrahim Mansour, political analyst and managing editor-in-chief of independent daily Al-Dustour told IPS.

On Saturday (Jan. 17) night, Israel declared a unilateral ceasefire. Israeli troops and armour, however, remain deep inside the Gaza Strip, and it remains unclear whether the move represents a definitive cessation of Israeli military operations inside the territory.

After three weeks of punishing assaults from air, land and sea, the Palestinian death toll has soared past 1,200, mostly **women** and children.

The Egyptian government, meanwhile, has come under increasing criticism both at home and abroad for keeping its 14-kilometre border with the Gaza Strip closed - with a few minor exceptions - to humanitarian aid convoys.

'By keeping the border closed to humanitarian aid, Egypt is complicit in Israel's aggression against the people of Gaza,' Mansour said, echoing a common sentiment. 'Egypt's shameful position does not represent the Egyptian people or Egypt's political opposition.'

Ever since <u>Hamas</u> took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007 (after winning elections a year earlier), Egypt - like Israel - has kept its border with the territory tightly sealed, geographically isolating the coastal enclave and depriving its 1.5 million inhabitants of desperately needed food and medicine.

Since the Israeli campaign began Dec. 27, local sources say that only about 10 percent of the humanitarian aid that has accumulated on the Egyptian side of the border, donated by sympathisers from around the world, has been allowed entry into Gaza.

Egypt maintains that it cannot reopen the border in the absence of Palestinian Authority (PA) officials and EU observers, as is stipulated in a 2005 security agreement. Egyptian officials also cite the security situation at the border - the Palestinian side of which came under frequent Israeli attack in past weeks - as a reason for the closure.

In the last three weeks, popular protests against both Israeli aggression in Gaza and Egypt's border policy have increased in size and intensity throughout the country.

Street protests against Israel 's assault on Gaza MIDEAST: Gaza War Divides Arab Governments From People

According to independent daily Al-Badeel, Friday (Jan. 16) witnessed demonstrations in rural provinces countrywide involving 'tens of thousands' of participants. 'Twenty thousand people protest in Daqheliya; 15,000 in Al-Qalioubiya,' the paper reported the following day.

Along with severing diplomatic relations and the immediate halt of natural gas exports to Israel, protestors demand the permanent reopening of Egypt's border with Gaza. 'Mubarak, you're responsible... Why is the Rafah crossing closed?' demonstrators asked (referring to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak).

Other 'moderate' Arab regimes, namely U.S. allies Jordan and Saudi Arabia also came in for criticism from angry protestors. 'Cowardly Arab regimes...there's either resistance or betrayal', they chanted, according to local reports.

'The eruption of demonstrations countrywide signifies the extent of popular outrage over the criminal attack on Gaza,' Hamdi Hassan, MP for the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's largest opposition group, told IPS. 'It also reflects the people's total rejection of the position of most Arab governments, which refused to use the means at their disposal to pressure Israel to halt its aggression.'

Protests in the capital, meanwhile, have been far more restricted, due primarily to an extremely heavy police presence. According to Al-Badeel, a demonstration held on Friday (Jan. 16) on the outskirts of Cairo involving hundreds of participants was cordoned off by several thousand security personnel.

'Demonstrations are given relatively free rein outside the capital,' Diaa Rashwan, analyst at the semi-official Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies told IPS. 'But in Cairo, security forces are very careful to keep protests under very tight control with a view to securing state institutions.'

'For this reason, the biggest demonstrations in Cairo have not surpassed 5,000, while some rural provinces have seen protests involving more than 100,000 people,' Rashwan added.

Demonstrations have been accompanied by a fresh wave of arrests directed mainly against the Muslim Brotherhood, which has taken the lead in organising protests in solidarity with the people of Gaza and the Palestinian resistance.

On Tuesday (Jan. 13), 12 Brotherhood members were arrested in the Delta province of Sharqiya, according to independent daily Al-Masri Al-Youm. The next day, the newspaper reported that a total of 860 MB members were detained for organising protests since the outset of Israel's campaign.

'The arrest of people for holding peaceful protests is a way of effectively terrorising citizens from expressing their opinion,' said Hassan. 'It also clearly reveals the degree of the regime's complicity with the criminal policies of the Zionists.'

The war on next-door Gaza has also dominated parliamentary affairs. Recent sessions in the national assembly have witnessed fierce exchanges between opposition MPs - who have repeated the basic demands of street protestors - and those of Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party (NDP).

According to Mansour, opposition in parliament - no matter how vocal - stands little chance of changing unpopular government policy.

'The NDP majority thoroughly monopolises all parliamentary decision-making,' he said. 'Opposition and independent MPs would be better off tendering their resignations in protest.' © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: January 29, 2009



Bibi's basking: The pretender who struts like a superpower; Right-winger Bibi Netanyahu is favourite to win Tuesday's Israeli election. That could put him on a collision course with the Obama White House, says Donald Macintyre

Sunday Tribune (Ireland) February 8, 2009

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Section: NEWS; Pg. N16

Length: 813 words

Body

It was Bill Clinton who drily observed after meeting the newly elected Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu that "he thinks he is the superpower and we are here to do whatever he requires".

If Netanyahu emerges victorious in Tuesday's election and in the process of government formation that will follow, he is unlikely to treat Barack Obama to a repeat of what Clinton's key Middle East aide, Dennis Ross, would later recall as that "nearly insufferable" performance in the White House in 1996.

Netanyahu, who has gone out of his way to be publicly flattering about Obama in recent weeks, knows a little more about diplomacy than he did then; one of several reasons why he lost the election three years later was that the Israeli public was unhappy about how unwelcome their prime minister had become in Washington.

The question of whether this is more than a superficial change, and whether he can manage to avoid alienating a new US president professedly intent on progress in the Middle East, remains a vexed one, however.

With his lead over Tzipi Livni's Kadima party narrowing this weekend, Netanyahu's Likud cannot be regarded as a shoo-in. But if he does win, it will have been on a platform of expanding rather than uprooting existing West Bank settlements, of the indivisibility of Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state, and of the need to remedy what he sees as the unfinished military job last month of toppling <u>Hamas</u>. None of these positions is likely to commend Netanyahu to the White House.

The paradox of Netanyahu's uneasy relationship with the US last time around is that he is the most Americanised of Israeli politicians, albeit one more linked to the neo-conservative Republican right. He was given a US education by his emigre Israeli parents, interrupted by military service first in the elite Sayeret Matkal unit - during which he took part in the nocturnal rescue of hostages from a hijacked Sabena jet in 1972 - and later in the 1973 Yom Kippur war.

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Either way, a seminal New Yorker profile by David Remnick in 1998 emphasised the influence of the Likud leader's flintily hardline father, Benzion Netanyahu, an academic and one-time aide to the revisionist Ze'ev Jabotinsky. "To a considerable degree Bibi Netanyahu's struggle is between an inherited ideology and the tug of political contingencies," Remnick wrote. If Obama seriously wants progress in the Middle East, he is likely to have his work cut out if Netanyahu wins next Tuesday.

Load-Date: February 12, 2009



Erdogan storms off stage after bitter spat with Peres in Davos. 'You are killing people,' fumes Turkish PM. What is the matter with you?' Peres lashes back

The Jerusalem Post January 30, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 795 words

Byline: HERB KEINON and AP

Body

Israeli-Turkish relations took a dramatic turn for the worse in Davos Thursday night when Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stormed red-faced off the stage at the World Economic Forum after sparring with President Shimon Peres over the fighting in Gaza.

Erdogan was angry over being cut off by a panel moderator after listening to an impassioned monologue by Peres defending Operation Cast Lead.

Peres's defense was prompted by harsh criticism leveled at Israel not only by Erdogan, but also by the two other panelists, Arab League head Amr Moussa and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

"You are killing people," Erdogan declared to Peres.

However, a finger-pointing Peres told Erdogan that he would have done the same if rockets had been hitting Istanbul.

"Do you understand the meaning of a situation where hundreds of rockets are falling a day on <u>women</u> and children who cannot sleep quietly, who need to sleep in shelters? What is the matter with you? You don't understand, and I am not prepared for lies."

Peres's comments were met by hearty applause, which apparently irritated the Turkish prime minister.

Erdogan asked the moderator, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius, to let him speak once more.

"Only a minute," Ignatius replied.

Speaking in Turkish, Erdogan said, "I remember two former prime ministers in your country who said they felt very happy when they were able to enter Palestine on tanks. I find it very sad that people applaud what you said. There have been many people killed. And I think that it is very wrong and it's not humanitarian."

"We can't start the debate again. We just don't have time," Ignatius said.

"Please let me finish," Erdogan said.

Erdogan storms off stage after bitter spat with Peres in Davos . 'You are killing people,' fumes Turkish PM.

What is the matter with you?' Peres lashes back

However, Ignatius responded, "We really do need to get people to dinner."

The Turkish premier then said, "Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I don't think I will come back to Davos after this."

The confrontation saw Peres and Erdogan raise their voices - highly unusual at the elite gathering of corporate and world leaders, which is usually marked by learned consensus-seeking and polite dialogue.

The packed audience at the Erdogan and Peres session, which included US President Barack Obama's close adviser Valerie Jarrett, appeared stunned.

Afterward, forum founder Klaus Schwab huddled with Erdogan in a corner of the Congress Center.

"I have known Shimon Peres for many years and I also know Erdogan. I have never seen Shimon Peres so passionate as he was today. I think he felt Israel was being attacked by so many in the international community. He felt isolated," said former Norwegian prime minister Kjell Magne Bondevik.

"I was very sad that Erdogan left. This was an expression of how difficult this situation is," he added.

Moussa, the former Egyptian foreign minister, said Erdogan's actions were understandable.

"Mr. Erdogan said what he wanted to say, and then he left. That's all. He was right," Moussa said.

Of Israel, he said, "They don't listen."

Erdogan brushed past reporters outside the hall. His wife appeared upset.

"All Peres said was a lie. It was unacceptable," she said, eyes glistening.

The unpleasant incident came at a meeting that both Israeli and Turkish diplomatic officials thought could help improve relations between the two countries - relations that have soured considerably due to Erdogan's extremely harsh criticism since the start of Operation Cast Lead.

"Erdogan's actions in Davos show that he doesn't want to miss an opportunity to further harm Turkish-Israeli relations," sources in Jerusalem said in response to the incident. The sources said that Erdogan's behavior on the Davos stage obviously would not help Turkey's attempts to be seen in Europe as a rational and constructive actor on the international stage.

"Israel's strategic relationship with Turkey is important to us, but it is no less important to Turkey," the official said. "Erdogan is harming his own interests."

The official said that Israel was growing increasingly "tired" of Erdogan's tirades, and was unlikely to make any more efforts to "chase after the Turks."

The official dismissed as no longer valid the argument that Erdogan's diatribes - he has called for Israel to be barred from the UN and said its actions were inhuman and would bring it to self-destruction - were the result of domestic considerations, and that he was playing to his strong Islamic base before the Turkish municipal elections in March.

The incident came even as Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan appeared over the last couple of days to be tempering Turkish rhetoric and taking a more conciliatory approach. On Wednesday he called on <u>Hamas</u> to abandon violence.

The Foreign Ministry had no response to the incident, an apparent indication that it did not want to exacerbate the situation.

Erdogan storms off stage after bitter spat with Peres in Davos . 'You are killing people,' fumes Turkish PM. What is the matter with you?' Peres lashes back

Graphic

Photo: TURKISH PRIME Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan points angrily at President Shimon Peres before walking out of their plenary session at the World Economic Forum in Davos yesterday. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Hope is within reach

Financial Times (London, England)

January 17, 2009 Saturday

London Edition 1

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Section: FT WEEKEND SUPPLEMENT - LIFE & ARTS; Pg. 20

Length: 834 words **Byline:** Harry Eyres

Body

Late as usual with my new year resolutions, I decided 2009 should be a year for stretching. This might seem paradoxical as all the pundits and indicators are warning us of severe contractions in gross domestic product, house prices, the job market, and so on. But I am convinced that to try to imitate the wider economy by a sort of personal contracting would be a grave mistake. Here I am not talking about going on a wild, counter-cyclical orgy of consumption. *Décontracté* is the French word for relaxed, casual and laid-back and if we could all face 2009 in a *décontracté* frame of mind, I'm sure the sum of cheer would increase.

Yoga is a good place to start. Not that my experiences of yoga are in the least encouraging. I have tried class after class and found myself in the disagreeable and unfamiliar position of being the least able member of it. Yoga classes do tend to be populated by exceptionally supple <u>women</u> but that is a feeble excuse. I experimented with the fashionable Bikram school of yoga (we happen to have one just down the road, in our generally unfashionable part of town), where you go through your paces in a room heated to 42°C, led by a Californian instructor from the cast of *Baywatch*. The atmosphere in the men's changing room at the end, full of sweaty red-faced blokes too dazed to speak, resembles the aftermath of a rugby match.

My nadir came at the Iyengar Centre in Maida Vale, where I had to contemplate vast blown-up photos of guruji, as they like to call him, in impossibly contorted positions, while I struggled with such basic poses as the downward dog, meant to be relaxing but agonising for me with my tight hamstrings.

Now I have found a much more relaxed yoga place, where the emphasis is on slow stretching and breathing rather than a hyped-up aerobic work-out. I can't say that I find it easy, or that I don't still find excuses not to go, but I do know that I always feel better for it - and not just physically but also emotionally or even spiritually. What I mean by that overused word is that after a good class not just your body but the world seems to have undergone a magical expansion, "Like gold to airy thinness beat", as John Donne put it in one of his most beautiful "Songs and Sonnets". Though there is nothing really magical about it - breathing is what connects us with the world, receiving with the inbreath, giving with the out-breath.

Physical stretching, as I understand it, is only the beginning, and not the end or the aim of yoga. Yoga originally means union in Sanskrit (from a root word meaning to connect or join), and in Hindu philosophy and religion is a spiritual discipline aimed at awareness and, ultimately union with the divine, not mere physical toning.

Hope is within reach

Certainly the kind of stretching I have in mind for 2009 is not merely physical. Mental stretching will be not just a matter of continuing my efforts to learn Mandarin or trying to come to grips with the austere, cerebral music of Elliott Carter, who looks like accomplishing the unique feat for a composer of celebrating his own centenary while still alive. Even more, it will involve what a wise old friend called the mental yoga of philosophy, loosening over-rigid mind-sets.

When I say 2009 should be a year for stretching, I also mean a year for reaching out. If stretching is something you tend to do by yourself, for yourself (like a cat, an animal much imitated, though in my case at a far remove, in yoga practice), reaching out is something you do by definition towards an other or others, as God and Adam reach out towards each other in Michelangelo's fresco of "The Creation of Adam" on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Reaching out means the opposite of retreating fearfully into our own sealed-off enclaves.

This year will offer many possibilities of reaching out, both personal and political. However dire the immediate economic, political or psychological prospects, we are all inescapably more connected than we were even just a few years ago. This is thanks to a revolution in communications of which the internet is the worldwide version, potentially huge in scope and generosity, and the mobile phone, the often annoying personal or adolescent incarnation, offering the hell of endless chatter and a kind of connectedness too often comparable to the leash that binds dog to master.

As the bombs and shells rained down on Gaza, and the rockets whooshed out of it, last week I contacted a quietly impressive man I met at the Salzburg Trilogue in the summer, who has tried to mediate between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah as an independent Gazan member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and Palestinian foreign minister. Amazingly, Ziad Abu Amr responded almost immediately to my message, which expressed concern for his and his family's safety. The news was not good - the situation, he said, was desperate - but the fact that the messages could be exchanged at all represented, to me at least, a very small sign of hope.

More columns at www.ft.com/eyres

Load-Date: January 16, 2009



Rest assured, we will all pay for this road's folly; FRANKSTON BYPASS

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

April 2, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 20

Length: 1966 words

Body

THE southern section of the proposed Frankston bypass will cut a swathe through the Moorooduc Valley and through 12kilometres of designated green wedge reserve - for what?

The South Eastern Integrated Transport Authority's own modelling shows that by 2030 the southern section (which runs parallel to the existing Moorooduc Highway about two kilometres to the east) will be operating at less than 50per cent of capacity. This is massive over-servicing and a waste of money.

That it is planned to be a public-private partnership should fool nobody as it will ultimately be the taxpayers of Victoria who fund this road. Surely there are better ways to commit taxpayers' funds. Public transport infrastructure on the peninsula is a farce. At peak periods during the summer, existing road infrastructure further down the peninsula is already at or near capacity. The Moorooduc Highway has the capacity, with some improvements, to cater for future traffic requirements. This could potentially save hundreds of millions of dollars and improve traffic safety at the same time.

The Government should be supported in its efforts to develop infrastructure, particularly at a time of economic hardship, but not at the expense of sensible planning.

Garry Craig, Moorooduc

Cart is before the horse

I MUST be getting cynical. I was not surprised with the announcement that the Frankston bypass will be built, bulldozing rare and endangered species and habitat, without consideration for the environmental effects statement, which is yet to be completed. Most of their other major projects have proceeded on the same basis. The EES is supposed to come first, not after decisions are made.

The aim of an EES is to inform the community and the Government, so all possible alternatives are considered before decisions are made, thus ensuring that the alternative with the least environmental impact is chosen; that irreplaceable areas of significance are protected; and that the least environmental damage occurs when major projects are built and operated.

It is becoming more obvious every day that this Government is out of touch with the community, treating it and the environment with contempt.

Time for an election. Perhaps the Liberals will offer to build a tunnel under the significant Frankston heathlands.

Ken McInnes, Ringwood North

The people are ignored

I HAVE come to the conclusion that Victorians' inputs on planning or development proposals are a waste of energy and time. The Government's various panels and environmental effect hearings are a farce. Citizens believing in democratic processes are treated as second-class individuals, while the proponents of any issue have the majority of the attention. At my presentation to the Peninsula Link panel hearings, I was to speak last, after a proponent for the freeway. I had to remind the panel, after 10 minutes past my allotted time, that I would like to be heard too.

Then John Brumby tells all of Victoria that the Frankston bypass will commence this year, come what may. This, of course, is way before the panel's report has been tabled and the same behaviour we saw with the bay dredging, the desalination plant and the north-south pipeline.

Citizens of Victoria, don't waste your time and energy with inquiries and panel hearings or environmental effects statements. The powers that be will only ignore you.

Rupert Steiner, Balnarring Beach

Why, oh why?

I SEE the \$750 million Frankston bypass will be built, with work starting this year and the road to be completed by 2013. Why is it impossible for this Government to find \$750 million to build new railway lines to Mernda, Rowville, Doncaster, Aurora or Mornington instead?

Phil Bourke, Macleod

Menzies and the Coalition's culture

I'M NOT surprised that the Opposition "has resorted to playing the race card" (Editorial, ¼) by spreading its ingrained xenophobia. As postwar South-East Asian students of Chinese descent who came to Australia to study in the '50s and '60s, we were under surveillance by government security organisations and rigorously monitored by the Immigration Department. Those were the days of "reds under the bed", started by Menzies and long festering in the hearts and souls of the Coalition.

The Coalition is still suffering from an election hangover: it's impossible for it to view its role in any other way but to wrest back what it perceives to be its God-given heritage - the running of this country. Perhaps John Howard is right after all, perhaps multiculturalism does only exist in the minds of people like me, the so-called chardonnay-guzzling chattering classes who cheer at the successes of the Obamas and Rudds of the world. At any rate, has the Australian public forgotten the antics of Rudd's predecessor, brown-nosing George Bush?

Alex Njoo, St Kilda

Slowly does it

THE row over Joel Fitzgibbon's relationship with Chinese-born businesswoman Helen Liu demonstrates that our confidence in our relationship with China needs more investment. The real issue has been side-stepped - the failure of the minister's office to disclose and declare his interests and trips to China. What amazes me is that, after 37 years of bilateral relations, we are still speaking in the Cold War tongue.

Since 1972, Australia has been the first to recognise the importance of internationally oriented growth in China and the opportunities that it would open. China has now overtaken the United States and Japan as our No.1 trading partner.

Rest assured, we will all pay for this road's folly FRANKSTON BYPASS

A greater part of social inclusion is to be more actively involved in our community. This attitude makes it hard for the community to have confidence and trust in our democratically elected governments. It seems 37 years is just not enough to build trust.

Jieh-Yung Lo, on behalf of Dr Stanley Chiang, president, Chinese Community Council of Australia (Victoria chapter), Notting Hill

I said it first

IT IS easy for lazy cynics to be critical. Take Peter Costello's remarks on the 2020 summit (Comment & Debate, $\hat{A}\frac{1}{4}$).

Although not a delegate, he had access to the submissions from non-delegates through the 2020 summit website. With a little sincere effort, he would have found submission No.8018, The General Theory of Value. It is a virtual script for much of what the PM is saying.

Peter Gilchrist, author, The General Theory of Value, Grange, SA

Acceptance is key

WHILE writing graffiti on a wall during a war does not seem to warrant a photo in The Age (\hat{A}'_{4}), it is ironic that the graffiti that is being highlighted as anti-Arab is the phrase "Am Yisrael chai" - "the Jewish people live". This is the biggest issue, I think - the inability of many to accept that Israel has a right to existence that lies at the core of the conflict. When that is accepted, all else can be dealt with.

Lawrence Cher, Caulfield North

Grounds for action

JOHN Renehan (Letters, 3â...") is quite right; <u>Hamas</u> is the legally and democratically elected government of Gaza. That is the point; the people of Gaza legally and democratically elected a government that has as its stated aim the destruction of the state of Israel, and which does its best to achieve its aim by firing rockets at civilian targets every day.

In those circumstances, the people of Gaza and John Renehan cannot legitimately complain when Israel reacts with military action against *Hamas*.

Peter Weiss, East St Kilda

Fudging the data a health-care necessity

THERE is a pattern to the recent hospital waiting list and emergency department drama. Everyone is doing it.

Our overstretched emergency departments have had staffing numbers reduced, while ward bed numbers remain static and demand skyrockets with our ageing and growing population. Might it be considered madness that, when these already stretched departments are unable to meet the unrealistic demands placed on them, they are fined?

Surely it is time for the Health Minister and his department to ask why reputable hospitals are "falsifying data"? The culture in the system is that the statistics need to be right or hospitals will be punished. This has got to stop. The minister should start listening to the people who actually work in these hospitals instead of his political yes-men.

Dr Simon Hendel, North Fitzroy

Results are worth it

Rest assured, we will all pay for this road's folly FRANKSTON BYPASS

IN THE controversy regarding management of hospital waiting lists, it does not seem to have occurred to any commentators that the processes adopted by the Royal <u>Women</u>'s and, presumably, other hospitals actually may have increased the number of patients treated.

Throughout my career, hospitals were never allocated sufficient funds to meet the legitimate needs of their communities. The acquisition of funds from a "bonus pool" may have enabled hospitals to treat more patients than would have been possible if such funds had not been received.

When one considers the games politicians play - budget cuts labelled as "efficiency dividends" and the spin that accompanies almost every political statement, I think that, in this case, a strong argument can be mounted that the means - "managing" the waiting list - justifies the end - treating more patients.

Irwin Faris, retired professor of surgery, Torquay

Relief at the track

TO THOSE who have a boringly incessant grudge against the grand prix (I sometimes think it is a bit of a hangover gripe about Jeff) - get over it. Formula one is politically incorrect; it is loud, it affirms the car industry, tobacco industry, speed and there are overt tones of sexism and exclusivity, combined with a human blood lust to see spectacular crashes. But isn't it a nice bit of relief from trying to be oh so politically correct all the time?

Luke Hooper, Hawthorn

Swamps help to keep us all cool

DENISE Gadd's article on Phillip Johnson's wetland ecosystem for the Melbourne garden show (Metropolis, ¼) is a timely reminder of the effect of wetlands on lowering temperatures and guaranteeing moisture to surrounding areas.

It's a wake-up call for governments, which have allowed the infilling of these systems in the past 30 years for housing and commercial purposes, in particular the western wetlands and those at Edithvale. Those under the West Gate Bridge, in which enormous numbers of waterfowl nested in 1992-93, are largely gone, with only two unappealing greenish ponds remaining. Ditto for much of the Laverton marsh areas and, if the Planning Minister has his way, those at Point Lonsdale soon.

I contend that this disregard for our natural waterways has added to the drying out of Melbourne in general and increased the impact of high temperatures on surrounding suburbs. Certainly it has contributed to the demise of waterbirds, few of which now have a wide choice of habitat to resort to in times of climatic stress.

Loucille McGinley, East Brighton

Postcode bias

I AM saddened, but not surprised, by VCAT's decision to refuse an application to demolish Brighton's Khyat's Hotel ("Locals' shouts save pub", The Age, $\hat{A}\frac{1}{4}$), because it again exposes VCAT's contradictory and amateurish ways.

This is the same tribunal that glowingly approved a 10-storey apartment block on the boundary of a heritage-listed, art deco child health centre in Brunswick, casting it and its 100-plus users in permanent shade.

Apparently an organised opposition in Brighton has higher value than the same level of opposition in Brunswick.

Combined with Premier John Brumby's blustering, heavy-handed pronouncements and Planning Minister Justin Madden's fumbling attempts at leadership, the planning system in Victoria is a mess.

Ron Holmes, Brunswick

Give us a fair go

Rest assured, we will all pay for this road's folly FRANKSTON BYPASS

I'M NOT surprised that people are not playing trugo ("Trugo, trugo-ing, trugone", The Age, ½).

If you have a full-time job, you can't play, since practice is on Tuesdays, and matches on Thursdays. I'm told it was intentionally designed for retired or out-of-work people.

Maybe there's an idea hidden in there somewhere.

Geoff Schmidt, North Fitzroy

Graphic

CARTOON BY TANDBERG

Load-Date: April 1, 2009



<u>'We are all Neda'</u>

The Jerusalem Post June 26, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 789 words

Byline: RUTHIE BLUM LEIBOWITZ

Highlight: MEDIA MATTERS. The gruesome gunning down of an Iranian protester in her prime is being watched

all over the world on YouTube. And the young woman's face has become the key symbol of the revolution

Body

In an op-ed in Ma'ariv on Monday, Ben Caspit and Ben- Dror Yemini lashed out at the Left for its lack of response to the events in Iran.

"Tell us," they write. "Where is everyone? Where are all the people who demonstrated against Israel's brutality in Operation Cast Lead, in the Second Lebanon War, in Operation Defensive Shield?... All the... friends filling the newspapers, magazines and various academic journals with various demands for boycotting Israel, defaming Zionism and blaming us and it for all the ills and woes of the world - could it be that they have taken a long summer vacation? Now of all times, when the Basij hooligans have begun to slaughter innocent civilians in the city squares of Teheran? Aren't they connected to the Internet?... How can it be that when a Jew kills a Muslim, the entire world boils, and when extremist Islam slaughters its citizens, whose sole sin is the aspiration to freedom, the world is silent?... There are millions of Muslims who support freedom, human rights, equality for women. These millions loathe Khamenei, Chavez and Nasrallah, too. But part of the global left-wing prefers the ayatollah regime over them. The main thing is for them to raise flags against Israel and America."

I couldn't agree with Caspit and Yemini more. But to their diatribe - which has been making the rounds on the Web - I would add a severe reprimand to the Hebrew media.

Where the hell are you guys?

True, the three TV channels have generally led their news broadcasts with the Iranian revolution that is taking place in the streets of Teheran. But even that is petering out as the week progresses. The same goes for the dailies, with their news pages at least paying lip service to the fact that this is a major story.

But all those pundits whose righteous indignation about every injustice - this week's being Bank Hapoalim magnate Shari Arison's revelation that she communicates and consults with celestial beings; the nomination of Judge Moshe Drori to the Supreme Court (though he acquitted a yeshiva boher who purposely rammed his car into an Ethiopian waitress at a restaurant which he exited without paying his bill); the sentencing of former ministers Avraham Hirchson and Shlomo Benizri to prison terms; and, of course, the third anniversary of Gilad Schalit's incarceration at the hands of <u>Hamas</u> - seem to have lost their voices when it comes to what is probably the most significant world event that we've seen in years.

'We are all Neda'

Don't get me wrong. It distresses me to hear that my bank is headed by someone who relies on mystics (though, in the final analysis, economists and other experts don't necessarily have a greater grasp than stargazers).

Nor can I believe, let alone tolerate, that a judge in this country, in 2009, would dare use Maimonides as the basis for a 300-something-page explanation of why the haredi guy doesn't need to be punished because he completed all his stages of repentance.

And I, too - like the rest of the country and members of the press - am fed up with the monetary monkey business of our politicians, as well as horrified that the IDF can't swoop down, kill Schalit's captors and get the kidnapped soldier home already.

Still, let's get real here. Iran is the story. The story - ours as journalists and as citizens. Both its unfolding plot and its ending will have far-reaching global consequences we can only pray will go in the right direction - that of freedom.

ANOTHER, EVEN more widely circulated item than that of Caspit and Yemini is the graphic clip of Neda Salehi Agha Soltan, a 27-year-old Iranian woman, who was shot through the heart on Saturday by the "Basij hooligans" referred to above.

In the clip, that was posted via cellphone on YouTube, the beautiful young Neda is seen dying, while her father and others try in vain to resuscitate her.

The negative of her bloodstained face has been made into a logo for posters and other paraphernalia to promote the cause. But have we been seeing it plastered over our news pages and TV screens? The answer is no.

Compare this to the picture of Muhammad al-Dura, the 12-year-old Palestinian boy, reported by France 2 TV to have been killed (in September 2000) by IDF fire. Later it was proved that he was actually killed by "friendly" fire, if at all. But, the facts were of interest to no one, in Israel or the Muslim world. The latter, in fact, still uses Dura's image to recruit suicide bombers.

Now is the time for the Israeli and American media to step up to the plate and further, for once and for all, the cause of genuine freedom fighters, as opposed to those who are misrepresented as such by themselves and by their Western apologists, among them a large portion of the press. Neda really is us.

ruthie@jpost.com

Graphic

Photo: THE ICON of the revolution. The scene of Neda Salehi Agha Soltan's murder at the hands of the Basij has been watched by millions of YouTube viewers, and has now become the symbol of the struggle in Iran.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Obama's Muslim speech

The International Herald Tribune
June 3, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 933 words

Byline: Madeleine K. Albright - International Herald Tribune

Body

On Thursday, President Obama will deliver a speech on American foreign policy to a predominantly Muslim audience in Egypt. Aside from fulfilling a campaign pledge, why has the president decided to give such a speech? When he approaches the microphone, what are the key issues he should address?

I have attended a number of conferences designed to promote understanding between the United States and people who live in Muslim-majority states. According to Muslim speakers at such events, one fact stands out: When the cold war ended, America needed an enemy to replace Communism and chose Islam.

How else, they ask, to explain the two Gulf wars, Afghanistan, Guantánamo and the plight of the Palestinians? To support their thesis, they cite the bellicose post-9/11 rhetoric of U.S. officials, the Western media's preoccupation with Muslim extremists and the plethora of pundits who have identified Islam, especially "political Islam," as the leading threat to civilization in the 21st century.

To most Americans, the idea that our country is attacking Islam or that we view the Islamic faith as an enemy is absurd. The first Gulf War was a response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of a neighboring Arab country. On 9/11, America was the victim, not the aggressor. In Iraq, President Bush's rationale for regime change, though misguided, was hardly anti-Islamic. U.S. leaders can't be held accountable for what some writers say in order to scare people and sell books. What is more, in the 1990s, America twice led NATO into conflicts on behalf of Muslim populations

first in Bosnia, then Kosovo.

Nevertheless, the perception that America is hostile to Islam remains widespread, much to the satisfaction of Al Qaeda, the Taliban and the government of Iran. To his credit, President Bush attempted on several occasions to communicate his respect and peaceful intentions to Muslim audiences. Sadly, those efforts fell on deaf ears.

On Thursday, President Obama can be assured of a wide audience, and he will speak with a far cleaner slate than his predecessor.

Mr. Obama has a family connection to Islam; he also has a well deserved reputation for weaving moral and political themes together in a coherent and thoughtful way. His challenge

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not unusual for this president

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will be to fulfill the expectations he has raised.

Mr. Obama's dilemma is that no speech, however eloquent, can disentangle U.S.-Muslim relations from the treacherous terrain of current events in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the Middle East.

Since the president is unlikely to announce major policy changes, he must persuade Muslims abroad to view our existing policies in a new light.

That is no small job. It requires separating the rationale for contemporary actions from the long history of clashes between Islam and the West, and it requires overcoming the resentment caused when Muslim noncombatants are killed as a byproduct of conflict.

The more direct the president is in acknowledging these problems, the more likely it is that Muslims will think objectively about his words.

Muslims desire respect and respect demands frankness. We cannot pretend that American soldiers and aircraft are not attacking Muslims. We can, however, remind the world that the people we oppose are murdering Muslims and other innocents every day. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, our allies are Muslims. We have partners in Lebanon and among Palestinians, as well.

We understand the desire of every country to be free from foreign domination. We will be neither intimidated nor dissuaded from our purpose, but our goal isn't to wage war; it is to help establish security for local populations and our fondest hope is to return home as soon as possible.

Although the president will be speaking to a Muslim audience about American policy, it is equally important that he address the audience in the United States.

Muslims abroad need to embrace a more accurate picture of America; but Americans need to learn more about Muslims. It cannot be said too often that Islam is a religion of peace, that terrorism is as indefensible in Islam as it is in the other two Abrahamic faiths, and that the vast majority of Muslims

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including the millions who are citizens of the United States

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want to live in dignity and without violence.

Finally, President Obama can remind his Egyptian hosts that repression in the name of moderation is still repression. Despite the mistakes of recent years, support for democracy should remain a central theme of U.S. foreign policy. Armed groups, such as <u>Hamas</u>, have no place in an election. But democracy is why <u>women</u> have led governments in four of the five most populous Muslim-majority states and why <u>women</u> were recently elected to the parliament of Kuwait.

January's provincial balloting in Iraq has helped to unify the country, while legislative debate has provided a peaceful outlet for anger. Upcoming votes in Iran and Afghanistan will no doubt influence the course of those nations. Democracy's advantage is that it contains the means for its own correction through public accountability and discussion. It also offers a non-violent alternative for the forces of change, whether those forces are progressive or conservative.

Obama's Muslim speech

It would be unreasonable to expect too much of any speech, especially on a topic as prone to subjective interpretation as U.S. foreign policy and Islam. Given President Obama's record, however, we can be confident that a brave and possibly historic effort is in store.

- Madeleine K. Albright

was the U.S. secretary of state from 1997 to 2001.

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CAPTION

Illustration by STEPH [Stephane Peray]

Load-Date: June 17, 2009



Kasrils still on anti-Israel rant; Obama is showing wisdom and sensitivity - and true statesmanship - in his approach to the conflict in the Middle East, writes David Sacks

The Star (South Africa)
June 22, 2009 Monday
e1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 977 words

Body

A few weeks ago, US President Barack Obama addressed a largely Arab audience in Cairo, eloquently laying out his vision for a positive new era in international relations concerning the Middle East and his country's interaction with the Arab and Muslim world.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict formed an important part of his address. With sensitivity and insight, he summed up the hopes, fears and grievances of all parties and what both sides need to do to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Not everyone will agree with his analysis, but who can deny his sincerity in trying to mediate between the conflicting claims in a fair, balanced manner?

How different from Obama's wise and humane approach to this most vexing of international disputes was Ronnie Kasrils' article "Netanyahu on a road to nowhere" (The Star, June 18). A window of opportunity has opened for the different parties to begin reaching out once more across the gulf that divides them, but all Kasrils can come up with is the same, tired anti-Israel rant, trotting out the usual string of tendentious propaganda canards.

Kasrils' inconsistency is evident in his calling Israel's defining of itself as a "Jewish" state "reminiscent of the worst days of apartheid". Apparently, he has no problem with the fact that many other countries also define themselves in religious or ethnic terms. Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania and Saudi Arabia declare themselves "Islamic". Bahrain defines itself as "an Arab Islamic state... its people are part of the Arab nation". Turkey defines itself as a Turkish state, even though a significant proportion of the population is not ethnic Turks but Kurds. In the Palestinian territories, *Hamas* envisions a state defined along religious - in other words, Islamic - lines, while for Fatah, ethnic Arab nationalism is the defining feature.

So, Kasrils denies Israel's right to define itself as a "Jewish state", but allows other countries to define themselves how they wish. So much for "justness and fairness".

Kasrils then describes the position of non-Jews in Israel as being similar to that of non-whites in apartheid South Africa.

In South Africa, "colour bar" legislation restricted non-whites from most professions, and wage legislation fixed their wages at lower levels than whites. In Israel, access to all levels of the economic and professional sectors is open to

Kasrils still on anti- Israel rant Obama is showing wisdom and sensitivity - and true statesmanship - in his approach to the conflict in the Middle East, writes....

all; under apartheid, public amenities such as parks, buses, hospitals, libraries and beaches were segregated, with whites enjoying the best facilities.

In Israel, such discrimination would be illegal.

Only whites had political rights under apartheid, but all Israeli citizens have them. Public education was segregated under apartheid, with race determining what school or university one could attend; Israelis can attend whatever school or university they wish (a right enforced by the courts). In South Africa, 87 percent of the land was reserved for white ownership; in Israel (apart from the 13 percent owned by the Jewish National Fund, and even that is changing), the land is available for lease or purchase to all citizens and it is illegal to discriminate in this regard. Apartheid prohibited racially mixed marriages and even sexual relations across the colour line, something entirely absent in Israel. And unlike apartheid South Africa, Israel does not have pass laws and influx control based on race.

Kasrils moves on to the situation in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war, where he believes comparisons with apartheid South Africa have particular resonance. Here it cannot be denied that an atrocious situation has emerged in recent years. Checkpoints, roadblocks, security fences and separate road systems have imposed a stranglehold on basic Palestinian freedoms, rendering the emergence of a viable, sovereign state impossible. Nor have successive Israeli administrations been guiltless in this regard. The fact that thousands of Israeli Jews now live in the West Bank against the wishes of the majority Palestinian population has complicated an already fraught situation. Many of the extraordinary security measures imposed by Israel are motivated by the need to protect this Jewish minority.

But that is not the whole story. The often draconian restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement were not imposed in a vacuum; they came about after the most sustained period of terrorism against the citizens of Israel in more than 50 years. From September 2000, the Palestinian leadership pursued a campaign of violence that reached levels of barbarity never seen even during the worst years of apartheid repression. (In March 2002, twice as many Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinian terrorism than the number of white South Africans killed in terrorist attacks in more than 30 years). This reality renders meaningless accusations that Israeli policies are worse than under apartheid.

Kasrils, blinkered as ever, can't bring himself to acknowledge that such violence is taking place.

By contrast, Obama was unequivocal in telling the Palestinians that to achieve their independence, violence has to be abandoned: "Violence is a dead end. It is a sign neither of courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old **women** on a bus. That's not how moral authority is claimed; that's how it is surrendered."

Obama said another wise thing: "If we see this conflict only from one side or the other, then we will be blind to the truth."

True statesmanship means being able to empathise with the legitimate concerns, grievances and aspirations of all sides of a dispute. Serving up emotive and misleading caricatures of Virtue and Villainy is harmful. It is something Kasrils, for all his years in high office, has evidently never learnt.

I Sacks is the associate director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies

Load-Date: June 21, 2009



Kasrils still on anti-Israel rant; Obama is showing wisdom and sensitivity - and true statesmanship - in his approach to the conflict in the Middle East, writes David Sacks

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e1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 11

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I Sacks is the associate director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies

Load-Date: June 19, 2009



Barack Obama pledges new beginning between US and Muslims

Guardian.com

June 4, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 901 words

Body

ABSTRACT

US president tells Israel 'it is time for settlements to stop'

FULL TEXT

Barack Obama today appealed for a new beginning in relations between America and the world's Muslims in a *much-anticipated speech* in Cairo, while delivering a blunt message to Israel over settlements.

The US president paid tribute to Islam's influence on religion, culture and civilisation, and started with the traditional Arabic greeting assalaamu alaykum? peace be upon you? to thunderous applause. Then in an appeal to form a common front against extremists, Obama said the "cycle of suspicion and discord" between the west and Islam must end.

"I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world: one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based on the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive," he said.

As expected, Obama made proud reference to his own Muslim roots, mentioning his childhood in Indonesia and waking to the sound of the "azaan" call to prayer. He stressed the common ground between the west and Islam, saying that "Islam has always been a part of America's story".

Obama said Islamic teachings, far from being the source of conflict, could help to bring about peace: "The Holy Qur'an teaches that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind? Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism? it is an important part of promoting peace," he said.

In one of the most eagerly awaited elements of the speech, he issued a tough message to Israel that went down well with his audience: stop building settlements on land claimed by Palestinians.

Marking a change from the Bush administration, Obama said: "Israelis must acknowledge that just as Israel's right to exist cannot be denied, neither can Palestine's. The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued

Barack Obama pledges new beginning between US and Muslims

Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop."

While Obama had made similar statements to the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, the tone of his remarks before an Arab audience took on a special resonance.

At the same time he sent a clear message to Palestinian militants to abandon violence, saying: "It is a sign of neither courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old **women** on a bus."

The Arab-Israeli conflict, Obama added, "should no longer be used to distract the people of Arab nations from other problems. Instead it must be a cause for action to help the Palestinian people develop the institutions that will sustain their state; to recognise Israel's legitimacy; and to choose progress over a self-defeating focus on the past."

Obama's comments in support of democracy? a burning issue in Egypt and in almost all Arab countries? were non-specific, which may disappoint activists in Egypt and elsewhere, but they were greeted with cheers of support from some members of the audience.

In a clear rejection of the Bush doctrine of regime change and attempts to impose democracy, Obama said: "America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election. But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed."

Obama defended his strategies in both Afghanistan and Iraq but made clear he did not wish to maintain a permanent presence in either country.

On the burning issue of Iran and nuclear weapons he issued a stark warning: "We have reached a decisive point. This is not simply about America's interests. It is about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead this region and the world down a hugely dangerous path."

<u>Unprecedented security measures</u> were in place for Obama's big day, which included a tour of the pyramids on Cairo's outskirts and a medieval mosque. Earlier he spoke to the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, before giving his 45-minute address.

A social media networking blitz by the White House helped publicise the speech in an effort to generate discussion.

The Muslim world largely welcomed the speech, although some said it lacked concrete proposals.

"There is a change between the speech of President Obama and previous speeches made by George Bush," said Fawzi Barhoum, a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman in Gaza, "... but the statements of today did not include a mechanism that can translate his wishes and views into actions."

In Iran, Mohammad Ali Abtahi, a cleric who was vice-president under the reformist president, Mohammad Khatami, called the speech "compensation to the hostile environment which was created during President Bush".

The director of Israel's government press office, Danny Seaman, said Obama's speech was "not bad".

"All in all, his attitude is one we certainly share as a democratic country," he said. "The state of Israel isn't against reconciliation ... We think we should be more cautious and it should be done in such a way that the extremists shouldn't take control," he said.

Following his recording yesterday, Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaida leader, to told Muslims that alliances with Christians and Jews would annul their faith. He called on them to fight allies of the "infidels" in Muslim countries.

Load-Date: June 4, 2009



LETTERS

Geelong Advertiser (Australia)

May 1, 2009 Friday

1 - Main Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 18

Length: 879 words

Body

We can't compromise our values

IN reference to the Pageant Queen and the gay-rights spat (GA 22/4), this young lady was asked for her opinion on same-sex marriage and said she was raised to think marriage should be between a man and woman.

Fair enough, she was asked for her opinion, and she gave it. The gentleman who asked her the question had his own opinion. Fair enough, that's his opinion.

I think the young lady should be applauded for not compromising her values, her morals, her standards, her principles. Well done!

The testimony of today's society is that too many people over too many years have compromised their and societies values, morals and principles.

The fruit of compromising values can easily be seen in legalised killing (abortion) and legalised adultery (prostitution).

We, our society, has allowed evil to be legalised, ``all it takes for evil to succeed is for a few good men to do nothing".

It is time that people once again became committed to Christian values, morals and principals, because, clearly, very clearly, compromised values lead to decay and death.

David and Kaye McKinlay, Bell Post Hill

Why depression is an illness

I DON'T understand with all the facts now published to make people more aware that depression is an illness, there are still some organisations not accepting this.

I have been receiving treatment for some time, and up till an incident in January 2009 had been able to cope well enough to work part-time with medical aid and some counselling.

I was lucky, my employer worked my hours out so I had very little stress, but I gave notice because I could no longer handle even this.

LETTERS

If I was stressed before, it was even worse dealing with Centrelink.

I don't blame the people behind the counter, they have set rules to follow.

If I couldn't work because I hurt my knee or back that's fine, they will pay you an allowance, but severe depression?

No. Because I resigned I was told I would have to wait 13 weeks and then go on to Newstart and I would have to look for work or do 15 hours a week voluntary.

If I could handle work I would have stayed where I was.

Except for five years when I had my children, I have worked since I was 15 and am now 62.

I supplied a doctor's certificate, but they sent me to their own psychologist and, though she agreed with my doctor, I still have to wait and go on Newstart.

The Government is spending all this money to make people aware of mental illness but refuses to recognise it in its own department.

Name and address provided

Support or not, what's the answer?

JASON Bishop stated (GA 14/4) ``I would like to say that I personally do not support abortion", but obviously you do support it writing ``women have the right to choice in having an abortion".

On what basis do you not support abortion?

In supporting a woman's choice, you argue against the fact that abortion is painful to the unborn baby writing, "Much scientific research has been done, with the general consensus being that the foetus does not develop the ability to perceive pain until near full term".

Can you give us the source of this research so it can be read?

Aborting babies causes <u>women</u> as well as their babies physical and emotional harm (Abortion Facts.com), perhaps that's why you do not support abortion.

Kevin Guinane, Gheringhap

Report the animals

SEXUAL predators are the people of this planet who cannot control thier emotions or urges and become animals towards their counterpart, be it man or woman.

Reporting these attack is hard on the <u>women</u> as the mindset that has evolved with men and the role <u>women</u> should have in society has backfired for the male because the <u>female</u> species is intelligent in ways man is not.

I say come forward ladies, girls, teens and little ones, come forward and report the animal who has attacked your very soul and destroyed your dream.

Gavin Couzens, Belmont

Which side of the fluoride fence?

MR McLarty, I would welcome an anti-anti-fluoride group, any publicity is good.

But would you please consider the fact that I know that in the short term you will not be receiving fluoridated water, as you have tanks and a filter system fitted.

LETTERS

So on which side of the fence are you sitting?

Sandra Camm, Highton

Let's talk and end the bloodshed

HAVING no compassion for refugees , or whatever you call them does not solve the problem . One has to widen one's horizon a little to realise that refugees are mainly a product of war.

I grew up in a northwest German port directly in the war-zone during WWII and was 10 years old when it finished.

I grew up hating war and still do.

Towards the end, the refugees fleeing before the ruthless Russian army marching towards Berlin were mainly Jews.

America refused to take any more refugees and the Russian Navy obliged, sinking several refugees ships in the Baltic Sea.

Twelve ships in all with casualties of 18,056.

Right now we are involved in three unjust, unwinable wars, compliments of the US.

The Palestine/Israel conflict produces millions of Arab refugees; luckily for us they are put in concentration camps in neighbouring Jordan.

That conflict, plus the Iraqi war, is the catalyst of terrorism and the anti-American sentiment and I firmly believe without that conflict there would be no Hezbollah, *Hamas*, Fatah, al-Qaeda, Taliban or even 9/11.

E. Ruseler, South Geelong

Load-Date: May 1, 2009



Force Zvika

The Jerusalem Post January 23, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 18

Length: 1912 words

Byline: ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

Highlight: The most prominent hero of the Yom Kippur War, Zvika Greengold, guided Ofakim through the war with

Hamas. The writer is author of The Yom Kippur War.

Body

There were moments after the first Grad rocket hit Ofakim at the start of Operation Cast Lead when Mayor Zvika Greengold felt almost as stressed as he had that first night of the Yom Kippur War. The tank he commanded then stood alone blocking a Syrian armored brigade on the narrow road to Golan divisional headquarters.

"It was very difficult," he said this week of the rocketing. "The sirens had not gone off, so there was no warning. The rocket struck a house. There was panic. The city's emergency services were not functioning."

Greengold, the most prominent hero to emerge from the Yom Kippur War, was in command once more in a war situation, this time as the newly appointed head of Ofakim. The city of 27,000 is perhaps the weakest of the peripheral towns in the Negev with a long history of a dysfunctional municipality and nearly a third of the population supported by welfare. The city was so off the beaten path that even <u>Hamas</u> neglected it, raining rockets down on neighboring communities over the years but never on Ofakim, until close to midnight on the third night of the war. The city's suddenly exposed vulnerability added to the residents' sense of terror.

"He was cool," said Maj. Amir Ben-David of the Home Front Command, who witnessed Greengold's performance after the rocket hit. "He said, 'You take the family to a hotel; you clean up; you do this and you do that.' Despite the fears, he ordered the sirens retested. He was in command."

Greengold, 57, did not have heroics in mind when he took up the Ofakim appointment in September. He had had a successful career after army service as an industrial executive, including a stint as director-general of Israel Oil Refineries and a similar posting in Puerto Rico. Interviewed in his Ofakim office this week on the first day of the cease-fire, Greengold traced his path to the drab Negev town from his entry into Israeli lore as a 21-year- old lieutenant on the Golan. "I was operating then on instinct. I am acting now out of self-awareness. But the connecting line is concern about the fate of the Jewish people."

BORN IN Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot to parents who had survived the war in Europe, he found himself on the first night of the Yom Kippur War blocking a Syrian tank column on the Tapline road leading to Golan headquarters at Nafah. He skirmished for more than an hour in the darkness with the Syrians, who had difficulty outflanking him because of the boulder-strewn landscape. On the radio net, commanders unaware that his was a solitary tank referred to him as "Force Zvika." Among the things that passed through his mind that night, he would later say, was an awareness that the Holocaust his parents had survived was suddenly relevant again, a sense that he stood between an enemy and the prospect of his people's annihilation.

Force Zvika

When reinforcements arrived, the Israeli tanks charged and almost all were immediately hit, including Greengold's. He was wounded but took command of the only tank remaining operational. His battle ended hours later on the perimeter fence of Nafah when he and another tank knocked out the last of a large Syrian tank force which had reached the military base. When Greengold finally pulled himself out of the turret, he collapsed and was taken to the hospital. He would be awarded the country's highest military decoration.

The sense of despair that suffused the country after that war, Greengold would feel again after the Second Lebanese War two years ago. "I felt bad. The sense of national security had deteriorated. There was governmental instability, corruption."

Living in the Misgav area, where Arabs outnumber Jews, he felt the growing pressures of Arab nationalism as the Arab population in the Galilee increased and the Jewish population declined because of negative migration.

"The Zionist vision was to build a home for the Jewish people while giving the minorities equal rights," he said. "But this simple vision had been forgotten. There is in fact a battle against the Jewish state by some among the Israeli Arab community and we stand helpless."

He decided to become involved in politics and ran for office in his Galilee regional council but failed to make it. In the campaign, he opposed permitting Arabs to move into Jewish settlements in the area for fear that this would start a process which would end with the settlements becoming Arab villages.

Greengold derides his being labeled a "racist" by a writer in Haaretz for expressing such views. "I come from a family which had almost been totally destroyed by racism. But I've been to Poland and saw what happened when we didn't preserve our interests."

As Greengold came to see it, Israel had lost the sense of purpose that had driven its founders. After the Six Day War, he said, the country had polarized - "between those who believe in Messiah Now and those who believe in Peace Now." The majority of the population occupied the space in between, bereft of ideology or vision. "The earlier values like settlement on the land and a socialist society had been emptied of content. The big cooperatives had collapsed. So had many kibbutzim. Youth groups didn't succeed in creating alternative values. In an offhand way, society drifted towards Western culture, capitalism, as if we were living in Liechtenstein, not next to Gaza. This has fed the illusions of our enemies that we are about to collapse. This is what [Hizbullah leader Hassan] Nasrallah meant when he referred to Israeli society as being like a cobweb that can be blown away."

Although he had once believed peace with the Arabs to be possible, he no longer does. "There will not be peace. There will be arrangements, which will rest mainly on our strength. But strength is not just military. It has to be based as well on a healthy society and a correct dispersal of the population. Israel cannot afford to have a thinly occupied periphery."

THUS IT was that Greengold was motivated to respond to an Interior Ministry tender last summer for acting mayor of Ofakim even though he had no municipal experience. His model was another Yom Kippur War hero, Amram Mitzna, who for three years had been serving as the acclaimed acting mayor of Yeroham, elsewhere in the Negev. After being vetted by the appropriate committees, Greengold was appointed by Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit.

Greengold had never been to Ofakim, although he had trained often enough at the army base at Tze'elim, not far away. Its very innocuousness made the task more exciting for him. "I didn't see myself being satisfied with technical changes, like balancing the budget. My object was to begin an upward spiral in the quality of life. If I could make the city normative, not to say prosperous, that would be my contribution."

Ofakim had been established in the northern Negev in 1953 as a small urban center serving a hinterland of rural settlements established at the same time. The city's original settlers were from Romania and Morocco, but in later decades they would be joined by Russian immigrants and groups of haredim. In more recent years, about 100 Palestinian informers from the West Bank and Gaza were permitted to settle in the town.

Force Zvika

Ongoing political instability would be an important factor in the town's stagnation. No mayor would be elected to a second term and some would be unable to complete a single term. The intrigue-ridden municipal council was dispersed by the interior minister in August 2006 after the mayor was found to have made unauthorized appointments. A former Ashdod mayor, Arye Azoulay, was appointed in his place by the ministry but he resigned after only one year. In addition to Greengold, a new council was appointed, made up, like him, of people residing outside Ofakim but with municipal experience.

Greengold was still coming to grips with the job when he found himself caught up once again in a shooting war. The existing municipal infrastructure was totally inadequate to cope with the emergency, unlike other towns in the area like Sderot and Netivot which were well prepared. Fortunately, however, Greengold received powerful reinforcements in the form of Home Front Command, whose unsung performance in Negev communities during the war is no less noteworthy than the battlefield strategy of Southern Command in Gaza.

Under the command of Maj. Danny Alyagon, a reserve officer who in civilian life is head of the southern region of the Israel Bar Association, up to 100 soldiers took charge of emergency services in Ofakim for the duration of the war alongside Greengold. Within 48 hours, they converted a large, empty shelter into a command center with furniture, computers, telephones and with charts on the walls providing newly prepared databases on Ofakim's infrastructure and population.

Soldiers hastily refurbished some 50 public shelters. In parts of the city where no shelters existed, Home Front Command trucked in 80 enormous concrete water pipes, two meters in diameter, from the Mekorot water company and set them up on the streets to provide ready shelter for nearby residents. Volunteers painted them in cheerful hues. Only one rocket hit inside the built-up city, but several hit in open areas around it. However, the rockets fired at Beersheba, 20 kilometers to the east, passed over Ofakim so its sirens sounded 30 times during the war. Psychologists from Home Front Command counseled residents in stress, and <u>women</u> soldiers spent time with children in the shelters. Dozens of volunteers also came to Ofakim to offer assistance.

Other local government entities like Rishon Lezion and Gush Etzion also sent assistance, including garbage trucks, to keep municipal services going.

Greengold himself made daily rounds of the neighborhoods and delivered a recorded telephone message to residents every day. He ordered flags raised around the town and saw to it that the streets were kept clean.

The postwar depression he felt in 1973 and 2006 is not what Greengold feels now that this war is done. The coming years will be turnaround time, he believes, for this piece of Zion he has staked out as his personal project. Within three years, he says, Ofakim's isolation will be ended with the arrival of the railroad, connecting it to Tel Aviv, an hour away in one direction, and Beersheba in the other. "The budget has been allocated and there's a clear timetable."

Beyond that, he says, Ofakim will tie in to the biggest infrastructure project the country has seen - the transfer to the Negev of major military bases and other facilities. "This is going to bring billions to the Negev and new kinds of employment, not just textiles and food as in the past. It's also going to bring quality people and some will come here."

Despite Ofakim's problems, says Greengold, its educational system is sound, but the youths leave after completing army service. "My hope is that when the beautiful new people begin moving here and there is a railroad and employment opportunities, the youths from Ofakim and the surrounding villages will decide to live here too. That is my vision. This is what I'm working on. I don't rest a minute."

His appointment officially expires next September but the interior minister, whoever it will be after the coming elections, could decide to extend it for several more years. "Yes, I'm enthusiastic," says Greengold. "I found here the challenge I was looking for. My commitment is total. I will stay as long as they let me."

Force Zvika has taken the high ground and is not prepared to pull back.

Graphic

7 photos: Mayor Zvika Greengold. 'I will stay as long as they let me.'Scenes of Ofakim. Up to 100 soldiers took charge of emergency services for the duration of the war. A donkey grazes in the municipality's backyard and construction of a private residence. (Credit: Jonathan Bloom)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Guardian.com June 4, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 3188 words

Body

ABSTRACT

The US president will attempt to turn around America's battered reputation in the Middle East in an eagerly awaited speech today at Cairo University, Egypt. Follow the speech live and track the build-up and reaction to it from our correspondents across the Muslim world

FULL TEXT

7.17am:Air Force One has touched down in Cairo. Obama is is due to hold talks with the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, ahead of his *big speech*. The speech is expected to start some time between 10.35am and 11.10am BST.

The White House has gone into social networking overdrive to spread word of the speech. It will be <u>texted, tweeted, highlighted on Facebook and Myspace, live streamed</u> by both the White House and the state department, and translated into 13 different languages, according to the New York Times.

7.41am:There is no shortage of advice for Obama on what he should say. <u>Two former state department speech</u> <u>writers preview the buttons that Obama needs to press and the pitfalls he needs to avoid</u>, in a 35-minute discussion on bloggingheadstv.

Condoleezza Rice's speech writer Christian Brose, who helped write <u>Rice's 2005 Cairo speech</u>, says Obama should not shy away from democracy and human rights in Islamic countries. "He has talked a lot about how he wants to be honest with Israel but he needs to be equally honest with other countries in the region."

Madeleine Albright's speechwriter, Heather Hurlburt, predicts that Obama will lay out principles by which the US can be judged in the Middle East.

7.52am:In Cairo there is resentment at the security lockdown in the city according to Zeinobi, blogging on Egyptian Chronicles. "The people living in Khalifa Al-Mamoun were ordered to close their shops and businesses on Thursday, to find another place to park their cars and <u>not to look through the balconies or window</u>," in a post headlined "We Won't Kill Him For God Sake!!". She adds: "I do not understand why the people will not be allowed to see him passing by. For God sake most of them are the Muslims he is trying to reach to."

The <u>bumpy streets leading to the university are now as smooth as silk</u>, writes Waleed Nassar who works near the university.

8.07am:The Guardian's Middle East editor, Ian Black, who is in Cairo, says the security operation in the city is "vast", with rumours of thousands of CIA operatives crawling the streets.

He tells Guardian Daily (18 minutes in) that there are huge expectations about the speech and that people will be "hanging on every word".

8.44am:

Right wing US pundits are alarmed by what Obama might say.

Bush's deputy national security advisor, Elliott Abrams, wants Obama to stop saying sorry for the USA.

<u>"The president needs to stop apologising for our country.</u> He shouldn't be giving this speech in Egypt it's a very repressive regime."

Robert Spencer, director of Jihad Watch, wants Obama to deliver a <u>blunt message to the Muslim world.</u> He writes a speech the president "should give" in post on Real Clear Politics. It says: "Pakistan and other Muslim countries will not receive another penny of American aid unless and until they demonstrate - in a transparent and inspectable fashion - that they are working against, not abetting, the forces of the global jihad."

Pakistan and other Muslim countries will not receive another penny of American aid unless and until they demonstrate - in a transparent and inspectable fashion - that they are working against, not abetting, the forces of the global jihad.

8.52am:Guardian America editor-in-chief, Michael Tomasky, tests his own knowledge of the Middle East.

9.02am: Mubarak and Obama have given a post-talk press conference, broadcast on Al Jazeera. Mubarak said they discussed all the issues "without reservation" including Iran's nuclear programme.

Obama said: "We discussed how we can move forward in a constructive way to bring peace and prosperity in the region. I emphasised to him that America is committed to working in partnership in the region."

9.07am:

The Guardian's Rory McCarthy has been gauging expectations for the speech Gaza City. He writes:

In Gaza, Asad Abu Shark, a professor of linguistics, said he expected to hear little more than "sugar-coated language" and a "sweet-tongue strategy" from Obama's speech.

"Any American gesture in the right direction is welcome," he said. "If the Americans want an even-handed policy we welcome that, but actions speak louder than words. We don't want to live in hope until we die in despair."

He wants Washington to press Israel to end its blockade of Gaza, end the occupation of the Palestinian territories and allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in what is now Israel.

Abu Shark, whose family are refugees from what is now the Israel city of Ashqelon, believes in a one-state solution to the Middle East conflict, that is Israelis and Palestinians living together as citizens of a single, bi-national state. It is an idea that is gaining ground among Palestinians, but is strongly opposed by Israelis.

He was concerned about America's close relationships to the leaders of the Arab world. "If America says they want democracy and then he meets with dictators it means there is a double standard," he said. "They should stop listening to Arab rulers and start listening to the Arab public."

9.13am:

There is scepticism in Egypt about what the speech can achieve.

Islamist blogger, Mostafa Al Nagar, writes: "Mr. Obama, everyone is awaiting your speech, but <u>more importantly your action</u>."

Similarly, Mohamed Elmenshawy, writing in Egypt's English language newspaper, the Daily News, says: "The Muslim world's reception of Obama's presidency? as enthusiastic as it is? remains <u>sceptical of a US</u> that has a long history of failure to follow through on its promises."

James Zogby, president of the <u>Arab American Institute</u>, says <u>Egypt is where "attitudes toward America are harshest"</u> and where Obama "faces his greatest challenge".

Writing on the Huffington Post he said:

This speech must be more than banal clich?s ("we are not at war with Muslims") or a repetition of hollow visions. It must be bigger, more consequential and more substantial. It is a tall order, but given Obama's modus operandi, I'm counting on him to prove me right.

It was last month at speech in Turkey, when Obama said: "The United States is not, and will never be, at war with Islam."

9.29am: AP describes Obama's arrival:

Obama arrived at Egypt's imposing, ornate Qubba Palace on a lush property in the middle of Cairo with nearly two dozen horses leading his motorcade down the wide, palm-lined palace drive. The US president jogged up the steps to greet his Egyptian counterpart with a handshake and the region's traditional double-cheek kiss. As the two leaders stood on a balcony, a military band in blue dress uniforms played both countries' national anthems.

9.34am: Steven A Cook, senior fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at Council on Foreign Relations <u>marks our card on what to expect in the speech.</u>

He reckons there will have to be a strong statement about the Palestinian-Israel conflict if the speech is to go down well in the Arab world.

The Independent's veteran middle east writer Robert Fisk is characteristically cynical about the speech.

"Everyone will nod sagely and the newspapers of the Arab dictatorships will solemnly tip their hats to the guy and the <u>New York Times will clap vigorously</u>," he says, but adds "beautiful rhetoric and paradise-promises never, ever, win against reality.

9.52am: Jack Shenker, the Guardian's Cairo stringer, has been talking to a man who has been sprucing up the October bridge across the Nile, for ?6.50 a day.

"We have to repaint, he's our guest," Samir Hussein said wearily as he made his way across the bridge with his paintbrush. "It's an honour."

10.00am: *Hamas* has uttered some conciliatory words ahead of the speech.

In a letter to Obama, <u>Hamas</u> foreign ministry official Ahmed Youssef welcomed Obama's outreach to Muslims and wrote that his group is committed to a "just solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

10.04am:

Obama and secretary of state Hillary Clinton, in a head scarf, are visiting the Sultan Hassan mosque in Cairo.

The president's speech is due to start in about an hour. The White House will livestream the speech here.

Nomadlife is doing a *live photo blog of the visit*.

10.27am: The Israeli Committee Against Home Demolition has emailed to say that 300 Bedouin people are about to be evicted in the West Bank, in another "Israeli landgrab".

10.31am:

Ian Black in Cairo writes: "Obama is now on his way to give his long-awaited speech at Cairo university after visting the Sultan Hassan mosque in the city's old Islamic quarter. His motorcade is passing through empty streets lined by police."

An embargoed copy of the speech has just been emailed over. It is 5,832 words long.

10.42am: The Guardian's religious affairs correspondent, Riazat Butt, is outside the US embassy in London.

She texts to say: "The embassy is throwing a party. There is tea, coffee and two types of water. There are even pix of Muslims looling happy and American. The Muslims are in their huddles and the non-Muslims are in theirs. Not much mixing in going on."

10.51am:The hand-picked audience is gathering at Cairo university hall. <u>Politicians, clerics and pop stars are among the guests</u>, tweets Zeinobia. Live pictures from Jazeera show a packed hall with guests looking around checking out who else is there.

11.01am:

Obama has arrived at the university and is expected to start speaking in around five minutes.

Shenker writes:

The university has something of a reputation for hosting controversial speeches; during an address last year by Egyptian prime minister Ahmed Nazif a young heckler interrupted proceedings with shouts of "Egypt's youth are behind bars!" before being bundled off by security.

A repeat performance today is unlikely; the guest list for the speech is tightly controlled and only one student from each university faculty has been invited to attend. In recent weeks a campaign of arrests has targeted potential dissidents, including a number of foreign students at Al-Azhar University, one of the oldest educational institutions in the world.

11.11am:Obama starts his speech by praising the university and the people of Egypt.

When he utters the Muslim greeting "assalaamu alaykum" he is warmly cheered.

- "I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles? principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."
- **11.15am:**Obama gets more applause when he quotes from the Koran. "Be conscious of God and speak always the truth," he says. *A full text of Obama's speech is here*.
- **11.19am:**The third applause greets this line: "When the first Muslim-American was recently elected to Congress, he took the oath to defend our Constitution using the same Holy Koran that one of our Founding Fathers? Thomas Jefferson? kept in his personal library."

The fourth comes for a pledge to fight negative stereotypes of Islam. But when Obama says the same principle must apply to Muslim perceptions of America, there is silence then a smattering of claps.

- 11.26am: Obama repeats his line about America not being at war with Islam, to more claps.
- **11.28am:**Silence greets this: "I am aware that some question or justify the events of 9/11. Al-Qaida killed nearly 3,000 people on that day. The victims were innocent men, <u>women</u> and children from America and many other nations who had done nothing to harm anybody. And yet al-Qaida chose to ruthlessly murder these people, claimed credit for the attack, and even now states their determination to kill on a massive scale."

But there are cheers and an inaudible heckle when he says: "The Holy Koran teaches that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind."

11.32am:

Obama's pledge to remove US troops from Iraq by 2012, goes down well. As does his planned closure of Guantanamo Bay prison. There are wolf whistles of approval.

11.36am:"Let there be no doubt: the situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own." This gets one of biggest cheers yet.

But there is not a murmur when Obama says: "Palestinians must abandon violence."

11.40am:Whistles and cheers for this: "The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements."

Nisar Ahmed Faizee, tells Declan Walsh in Islamabad, "the points he makes are very good. But the question is whether he will implement them".

- **11.45am:**"When the Holy Land of three great faiths is the place of peace that God intended it to be; when Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims, and a place for all of the children of Abraham to mingle peacefully together as in the story of Isra, when Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed (peace be upon them) joined in prayer," Obama says to more approval. Riazat Butt says: "Now he's just showing off".
- **11.48am:**Obama's pointed commitment to human rights, <u>in a country with a questionable record on the issue</u>, is greeted with subversive cheers.
- **11.55am:**When the president said "I want to address is <u>women</u>'s rights" he is again applauded to Obama's approval. He says that reaction shows that the issue is hotly debated in Egypt.

He forgot to say that Saudi Arabia has no rights for *women*, Riazat points out.

- **12.03pm:**Obama hasn't been applauded for about five minutes. But the audience wakes up when he says: "There is also one rule that lies at the heart of every religion? that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us."
- **12.04pm:**The 55-minute speech ends with this: "The people of the world can live together in peace. We know that is God's vision. Now, that must be our work here on Earth. Thank you. And may God's peace be upon you."

He gets a standing ovation, and some seem to be shouting for an encore. There are a few chants of "O-ba-ma'.

12.07pm:

Rory McCarthy, in Gaza City, writes:

Eyad Galaja, 28, in the Delice cafe was impressed with the speech, which he said was balanced. He felt that when Obama described the Palestinian situation as intolerable this was "a direct message to Israel to lift the siege on the Palestinians."

But he added: "It is easy to say the words, many presidents have given good speeches, but the most important thing is the actions. The first step should be to put pressure on Israel to lift the siege on Gaza, open the commercial crossings and let goods come in."

12.21pm:More of Osama bin Laden's audio message has been played as Obama was speaking.

"We either live under the light of Islam or we die with dignity ... brace yourselves for a long war against the world's infidels and their agents," Reuters quoted him saying.

12.44pm:There was <u>"warm but not wild applause" at the American Embassy</u>in London, according to our religious affairs correspondent, Riazat Butt.

She explains the reaction and gives her verdict on the speech here:

Meanwhile in Cairo, Shenker says helicopters are preparing the airspace for Marine One's visit to the Giza pyramids.

12.52pm: The Arabist, an Egyptian blogger, provides an *instant deconstruction of the speech*.

Obama's words on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict get the highest praise:

"Saying that the Palestinians' situation is intolerable is a fantastic move, as well as making it clear that there is a special US-Israel relationship." But the post adds: "The emphasis of the US, and the Quartet, in getting all Palestinians to adhere to the Quartet conditions is wrong-headed, though, since there is no similar demand on the Israelis to give up violence."

1.00pm: The Leftist Egyptian blogger, Hossam el-Hamalawy, provides the antidote to the reaction in the hall.

He writes: "It's some of the biggest pile of horseshit I've had to listen to in years... and I still don't understand what's "historica" I about it?!!"

- **1.15pm:**Here's a *Wordle*version of the speech:
- **1.22pm:** The Palestinian reaction has been largely positive.

Nabil Abu Rdeneh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said: "The part of Obama's speech regarding the Palestinian issue is an important step under new beginnings. It shows there is a new and different American policy toward the Palestinian issue."

Mahmoud Ramahi, from the rival Hamas, said:

"There are many positive points," he said. "There is a difference between his policy and Bush's policy. I see a change in the US foreign policy discourse. But the problem is still on the ground. Would they achieve a Palestinian independent state? If he does that, that would be a relief and good for all parties."

Israel's Jerusalem Post reports a *mixed reaction*.

1.38pm:Jewish settlers reacted with frustration, the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, reports.

"Today, the state of Israel is paying is paying the price of its leaders' defeatism," Yesha Council, which represents settlers, said in a statement. "Hussein Obama gave priority to Arab lies, which have always been told with determination and daring, at the expense of the Jewish truth, which has been said in a weak and unconfident voice."

1.52pm:It was a "terrific performance" according to our Middle East editor, Ian Black in Ciaro. But he reckoned it was more about tone than substance, and it contained few specifics.

2.07pm:There's mostly adulation on the Facebook group for the speech. But it was set up by the White House.

"This speech is seriously B R I L L I A N T, period" writes Nomali Perera from Boulder, Colorado. "I am just pleased as peaches at everything our new President does," says Timothy Blackman from Portland, Oregon.

2.20pm:The counter-extremist Muslim thinktank Quilliam, welcomed a nuanced change in Obama's language. In an email it pointed out that he "notably avoided any use of the term 'the Muslim world' and instead adopted 'Muslim majority countries' and 'Muslim communities'.

"There is no monolithic 'Muslim community' nor is there a singular homogenous entity known as 'the Muslim world', rather there are diverse and distinctive Muslim communities that need to be reflected in our discourse. Using the term 'the Muslim world' only serves to bolster the Islamist and al-Qaida narrative of 'the West' against 'Islam'?of a battle of 'us' versus 'them' or 'good' versus 'evil'. By omitting this, Obama has taken a positive step in the battle of ideas."

2.44pm: Those on the right and left wings were less than impressed.

Republican Congressman Dan Burton said Obama came down too hard on Israel, and not enough on Iran.

Egyptian blogger revsocialist said it was recycled bullshit.

The posts says: "Despite what some people say, Bushama is not a good speaker. And he managed to <u>pronounce</u> <u>every arabic word he included wrong.</u>"

3.00pm: Some Arab critics are likely to be dismayed, if not surprised, by his failure to condemn Israeli violence, especially during the offensive against Gaza this year," lan Black writes.

3.07pm: A new Guardian video picks out some highlights of the speech.

That's all for now, thanks for your comments.

Load-Date: June 4, 2009



NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rather than focusing on issues of racism and discrimination in the Middle East

The Jerusalem Post April 20, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 958 words

Byline: Jerusalem Post staff

Body

Creating a European "resistance model" based on Hizbullah and blaming Israeli swimming pools for guzzling water from Palestinian olive groves. These are just two ideas brought up at the pre-Durban II Israel Review Conference hosted by anti-Israeli NGOs Sunday in Geneva.

A parallel meeting to Durban II, held in a Geneva hotel, which was organized by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, the International Coordinating Network on Palestine and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Committee, kicked off Sunday, one day ahead of the UN's conference on racism.

Entitled the Israel Review Conference: "United Against Apartheid, Colonialism and Occupation, Dignity & Justice for the Palestinian People," it was attended by some 160 participants.

The Palestinian NGO Badil, accredited to Durban I and II, presented a 300-page report on "Israel's Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the International Legal Prohibition on Apartheid."

According to a report by Jewish activists on the scene, several lawyers spoke about bringing Israel to the ICC (International Criminal Court) and the European Court of Justice for war crimes. Workshops were held on an "International campaign against the Jewish National Fund;" "State responsibility and arms trade with Israel"; "Legal BDS - Popular Tribunals and Public Petitions."

A debate entitled "Israeli apartheid" paid credit to former US president Jimmy Carter's book Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid and political experience in the trade union movement in the combat against South Africa. The concept was vaunted as a valuable tool for political mobilization and solidarity.

Campaigns were proposed to launch international legal measures to reclaim Palestinian property. An initiative was proposed regarding water; to highlight the supposed distinction between Israeli swimming pools and the "meager amount available for Palestinian olive trees."

Countermeasures were discussed against those attempting to criminalize the boycott. Concrete examples reportedly mentioned an attack in Ireland on commercial/military suppliers to Israel: demonstrators apparently damaged Israel-bound computers at the Raytheon factory.

NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rath....

There was debate on construction of a European resistance movement, based on the idea that "we are all Hizbullah, we are all **Hamas**... The world stopped Nazism, the world stopped apartheid, we will stop Zionism."

According to a report by the Wiesenthal Center, PR experts analyzed language for campaigns, recommending focus on "population transfer," and cautioning against using the Nazi analogy as this opened the campaign to charges of anti-Semitism.

Badil suggested that South Africa and Israel not be presented as analogies, but that the apartheid experience was applicable as this identified "a program of racial engineering."

"Race, color, family, descent, are related concepts. The Jew, by virtue of descent, has taken rights over the land that non-Jews do not share... Jewish supremacy or Zionism through nationality or peoplehood has been the basis for ethnic cleansing."

It was noted that the participants were eager to find ways to impact upon the proceedings of the UN Durban Review Conference (Durban II), and to structure shared campaigns and resources after the conference concluded.

Wiesenthal Center officials presently in Geneva, Dr. Shimon Samuels (Director for International Relations) and Sergio Widder (Latin American Representative), commented on "the tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish State rather than focusing on issues of racism and discrimination in the Middle East... Where were the <u>women</u>, trade unionists, writers, homosexuals and indeed Christians and other religious minorities to lament the violation of their counterparts' fundamental rights in Palestine and Iran?

"How come this gathering did not condemn the scheduled visit of Iranian President [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad in view of his genocidal statements, his patronage of terrorism, his denial of the Holocaust and his country's nuclear designs?"

"This event was yet another example of Durban II's bankruptcy and it's kowtowing to tyrants," concluded the Center.

A related initiative was the NGO Civil Society Forum March against Racism. Groups of Tamils, Kurdish victims of the Iraqi Halabja gassing and sexual diversity activists clustered at the demonstration's edges. Dalits (Indian 'untouchables') were segregated across a busy intersection. At the Wiesenthal Center's suggestion they moved their banners under the main podium.

Nevertheless, the event was clearly monopolized by the Palestine issue and by spokesmen of other groups that addressed that cause.

A main speaker was MK Jamal Zahalka, an Israeli MK, who presented himself as a Palestinian victim of "Israeli racist apartheid." He ended his speech proclaiming: "No peace without justice."

Samuels noted "the absurdity of Zahalka's contention, in that as an Israeli-Arab, he enjoys a total freedom of expression denied to all other Middle East legislatures, the Libyan-chaired Durban II preparatory process and, above all, apartheid South Africa."

Zahalka was followed by former UN Human Rights Council Rapporteur on Racism, Doudou Diene. He endorsed the legitimacy of the gathering and Durban II as a political process - that Zionism was not racism, but a political ideology, which must be confronted politically.

At another alternative event, the Civil Society Forum for the Durban Review Conference, Diene laid out measures for a reparations campaign on behalf of trans-Atlantic slave trade victims.

Widder commented on "the narrow attention to only the Western slave trade, thus excluding African victims of Arab slavers and those targeted by the contemporary traffic in **women** and children."

NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rath....

Graphic

Photo: SOME OF the material distributed yesterday at the Israel Review Conference in Geneva. (Credit: Simon Wiesenthal Center)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Obama's bow to Saudi king a disgrace

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

April 15, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: A; Pg. 4 Length: 913 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Chances are good you haven't heard this one: that, while in Buckingham Palace last week, milling about with G-20 leaders, the current president of the United States bowed deeply at the waist, one knee bent, on meeting the current King, so-called, of Saudi Arabia, who did not bow back. Chances are even better you haven't seen the video. That's because Big Media, from viewer-deprived networks to newspapers considering bailouts, have neither aired the video of the incident nor reported on it. ("The O'Reilly Factor" doesn't count.)

Washington Post reporter Michael A. Fletcher's breezy dismissal of a reader's online query exemplifies media disinterest: "I'm not sure what the etiquette is for such greetings, but I'm sure the president was only trying to convey respect ... Remember some years ago when President Bush touched cheeks with and held the hand of a Saudi monarch during a visit to his Texas ranch? Another sign of respect. I would not make too much of it." Well, I would. The assorted supplications George W. Bush engaged in, from holding hands with and kissing Abdullah, to joining in a Saudi "sword dance" while trying to beg down the price of oil, made me sick then, and Barack Obama's obeisance to the protector of Mecca and Medina (widely available online if not in the "news") makes me sick now. But just as disturbing is the American reaction. This includes, first, the unconscionable failure of media organizations to spare a few inches of column or seconds of airtime from Michelle Obama's campy cardigans for this deferential display by the United States toward Saudi Arabia. But much of the mainly conservative blog commentary on the incident, while welcome as bona fide signs of life, has come off as strangely beside the point. Or, rather, as largely limited to one point: etiquette. It's true that Americans don't bow to royalty, period - a point made repeatedly in blogs expressing frosty outrage over the incident as though the Obama-Abdullah bow were no more than a generic breach of protocol. A Washington Times editorial hammered home this same abstraction. But an American bow to Saudi Arabia is more than "unbecoming," as Clarice Feldman wrote at The American Thinker, more than "a simple but costly breakdown in basic command of protocol," as Camille Paglia wrote at Slate, more than "baseness," as Richard Brookhiser wrote at The Corner, and more than "the kind of rookie mistake you get from a president who was a state senator five years ago," as Michael Goldfarb wrote at the Weekly Standard blog. It was calumny on a historic level. King Abdullah, after all, is the head of a state that is the very caricature of modern-day evil, a Sharia dictatorship that fosters religious repression, de facto slavery, subjugation of women, and, not least, the international export of jihad and Sharia through "charities," mosques, madrassas, textbooks, university endowments, Sharia finance and, of course, terrorists, some 15 of whom attacked the United States in 2001. Just last month, Abdullah elevated the delusionally hard-line interior minister Prince Nayef, who long promoted the crackpot theory that Saudis were not involved in 9/11 (it was the Jews, he said), to a direct line of succession to the Saudi throne. Abdullah himself has donated at least \$1.35 million to Saudi telethons that raised \$174 million for the families of Palestinian suicide bombers from *Hamas* and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. In 2007, Abdullah explicitly denounced the U.S. presence in Iraq as "illegitimate," thus encouraging attacks on Americans in

Obama 's bow to Saudi king a disgrace

Iraq, where, not incidentally, Saudis are thought to have carried out more suicide bombings than any other nationality. That's just for starters. In other words, this is not a personage an American president can ever, ever show deference to without besmirching the memories and lives of the American dead and maimed. But that's just what President Obama did (despite lame claims from the White House that Obama was just shaking hands), making this incident more than a simple gaffe. But it's not much different from anything George W. Bush did. It's time to acknowledge the similarities between Presidents Obama and Bush regarding Islam. Barack Obama hits the word "respect" repeatedly in regard to Islam, whose Sharia law, putting it mildly, disrespects non-Muslims and women; well, so did George W. Bush. Obama insists the United States is not at war with Islam; so did Bush. Who can forget the Bush mantra of "Islam is love" that began on 9/12? Maybe these Bush echoes account for the conservative block on really zapping the Obama bow here. Or maybe this is the consensus they want to live with. Meanwhile, Obama's Bush-like approach is depicted as something new under the Arabian sun. Akbar Ahmed, visiting chairman of Islamic Studies at the U.S. Naval Academy, calls Obama "the first president to talk about respect for the Muslim world." Ridiculous. What's not ridiculous is Ahmed's statement calling Obama "uniquely qualified ... to really reach out and change the mood of the relationship between America and the Islamic world." Uniquely qualified indeed. Obama is the first Muslim-born U.S. president. Could that have something to do with the deepness of the bow? West is a columnist for The Washington Times. Her blog is dianawest.net and her e-mail address is dianawest@verizon.net She is the author of "The Death of the Grown-up: How America's Arrested Development Is Bringing Down Western Civilization."

Load-Date: April 16, 2009



How Muslim countries must deal with radicals

Christian Science Monitor April 8, 2009, Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 984 words **Byline:** Abu Khawla

Dateline: Dubai

Body

The Islamist Muslim Brotherhood is gaining undeniable popularity. It's doing so by exploiting democratic methods. That poses an existential problem for the future of democracy in the Arab world.

To legitimize the movement - the main representative of political Islam - runs the risk of succumbing to fanatics opposed to democracy. To outlaw it may lead to its further radicalization. But there's a way Muslim governments can avoid this Catch-22: They can contain the Islamist threat without harming budding democracies by undermining the Brotherhood with educational, social, and economic reforms.

The Brotherhood now holds 88 of 444 seats in the Egyptian parliament. In 2006, the Islamic Action Front, the political wing of the Brotherhood, won 23 out of 80 seats in the Jordanian parliament. Islamists are making similar gains in Morocco, Bahrain, and Kuwait. With additional gains, the Brotherhood could seize majority power - and that could mean the end of free elections in these countries.

Believing that Islamists are actually committed to democracy based on their participation in elections is like judging Adolf Hitler in 1933 based on his acceptance of the ballot box, not on what he wrote in "Mein Kampf."

The writings of the Muslim Brotherhood's founder, Hasan al Banna, were clear on the movement's main objective of implementing God's rule on earth. His view leaves no room for democratic decisions based on majority vote.

The use of violence was justified in unequivocal terms by Banna when he addressed the movement's fifth congress in 1939. And Islamist use of violence throughout the past three decades proves that Banna's teachings did not fall on deaf ears.

Yet, despite this violent pedigree, some observers insist that the movement is the exception and not the rule. Leading Arab democracy advocate Saad Eddin Ibrahim, for example, claims only in three cases (Taliban, Sudan, radicals in Iran) did Islamists come to power through violent coups, not peaceful democratic means.

The exceptions Dr. Ibrahim cites don't suggest that the Brotherhood is generally committed to democracy. Instead they show that the movement will adopt whatever means are necessary to advance its fundamentalist idelogy. Why stage a violent coup if a ballot box achieves the same result? Indeed, the violent seizure of the Gaza Strip in 2006 by *Hamas* - the Gaza branch of the Brotherhood that had just been democratically elected - shows that the movement's commitment to democracy is shallow.

How Muslim countries must deal with radicals

The Arab Islamist movements' main obsession nowadays seems to be to oppose democratic values. The Muslim Brotherhood's agenda, recently posted on the Internet, was clear in this respect when it stated that both the president and the elected legislative council should be advised by a "supreme council of clerics" whose decisions "will be final." And to add insult to injury, non-Muslims and **women** are barred from the presidency.

It is worth noting that Islamist success in places like Egypt and the Palestinian territories was enhanced mainly by the failure of governments to provide schooling and health services to the needy. But the ability of an opposition movement to provide services to the poor doesn't say much about its ability to deliver once in power. The Shiite network in Iran was effective in managing charitable networks under the Shah. Once in power, however, the clerics failed miserably in managing the economy.

With these fascistic features of "Islamic democracy," no wonder the Islamists resort to bloody means to grab power. And no wonder they fail to deliver when faced with real-world challenges.

As the Islamists gain popularity and threaten democracy throughout the Arab world, lessons from a handful of Muslim countries show that repression isn't the solution.

In Tunisia, a large middle class and secular nongovernmental organizations made sure that there was no reversal of social modernization during the past five decades. They also constituted a buffer against the kind of Islamist violence that rocked its neighbor, Algeria. In Turkey, the electoral vote provided the ruling party with the needed credibility to amend laws regarding the rights of <u>women</u> and minorities, consistent with the membership requirements of the European Union.

And in Malaysia, better economic opportunities as well as a coalition between the predominant political party of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the Malaysian Chinese Association, and the Malaysian Indian Congress enhanced racial harmony. Hence, the government didn't have to ban Islamists from participating in elections, once it thwarted their appeal.

A new lesson came from the Muslim world's largest country, Indonesia, which shifted recently from being terrorridden to a role model. About two fifths of local elections in Indonesia have been won by coalitions between moderate religious and secular parties. And in last week's legislative election, the top three parties belong to the secular middle, while Islamists were the main loser and the violent Jemaah Islamiah, which was responsible for the Bali bombings in 2002, has been completely marginalized. Current governments should not oppress Islamists. Rather, they should undermine their appeal and out-compete them in socioeconomic spheres as well as in free elections.

For Washington, and the international community, the lesson is clear: Instead of supporting failed autocracies in the Middle East, resources should be provided to support groups struggling for modernization, secularism, and human rights. These groups are well-placed to carry out much needed educational, social, and economic reforms. That's what Turkey, Tunisia, and Malaysia did on their own, throughout the past five decades, with noticeable success. That's what Arab and Islamic countries should do now with Western help.

Abu Khawla is a human rights activist and writer.

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Load-Date: April 14, 2009



International liaisons

The Jerusalem Post April 14, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 10

Length: 887 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Highlight: Meet the three female officers who escort foreign diplomats visiting Israel

Body

When former US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice traveled from Jerusalem to Ramallah last year, Lt. Liat Bershtling was at the checkpoint to meet her.

When the United Nations wanted to transfer supplies from a warehouse in Bethlehem to the Gaza Strip during Operation Cast Lead earlier this year, Lt. Limor Ben-Moshe coordinated the move.

And when Christian pilgrims wanted to hold a ceremony in the Jordan River near Jericho, Lt. Shiran Avramov was there to open the border gate.

Bershtling, Ben-Moshe and Avramov work in different cities throughout the West Bank but have at least two things in common - they are all Civil Administration International Liaison Officers and they are the only <u>female</u> officers in their positions.

The remaining six posts in parallel District Coordination Offices (DCOs) are held by men.

The three officers, ranging in age from 20 to 22, are in some of the most sensitive positions in the territories and are responsible for maintaining IDF relations with international organizations, of which the West Bank and Gaza Strip do not lack.

Dozens of NGOs as well as governments operate today in the West Bank, including UNRWA, the World Health Organization (WGO), the World Food Program (WFP) and World Bank.

In Ramallah, for example, 29 countries have missions, including two which are slated to open their doors in the coming weeks - Montenegro and Morocco.

At the moment, mainly in the West Bank, there are several dozen ongoing projects that require the daily assistance of the IDF.

An example is the construction of landfills in the West Bank.

One landfill - called Zahret Al Finjan - near Jenin was opened in 2008 and was funded by the World Bank. Germany has allocated \$10 million to build another landfill near Ramallah and a third is also under planning near Bethlehem and Hebron.

International liaisons

Japan has also recently expressed interest to build a small landfill near Jericho.

"Our job is to coordinate between the IDF and the international organizations," explains Bershtling, the veteran of the group. "There are many different considerations involved including Israeli security, the quality of life in the West Bank as well as the interest of the NGO or the foreign government."

The concept, "International Liaison Officers" is relatively new in the Civil Administration and was only fully formed at the height of the Second Intifada.

The trigger that got the IDF to understand the importance of the job was the accidental shooting of a UN project manager in Jenin in November 2002.

The worker, Iain Hook, had left a message on the voicemail of the Civil Administration's only international liaison officer at the time to let him know where he was in Jenin.

The officer, though, was unavailable at the time since he was accompanying an operation in another part of the West Bank.

"This incident got us to understand that this is an important job and that there is a need for an international liaison officer in every single District Coordination Office (DCO), nine of which are located in the West Bank," said an officer in the Civil Administration.

All three agree that as female officers they have an upper hand over their male liaison counterparts in the IDF.

"It is easier for people to talk to us since we are less aggressive," said Bershtling. "Girls are nicer, more sensitive and easier to work with."

One of the officers' jobs is to coordinate the entry and exit of diplomats into and out of the West Bank.

One problem they encounter is that because the diplomats have immunity, they are not required to open their doors or windows when crossing into Israel.

As a result, soldiers at checkpoints sometimes refuse to let them pass unless they show their faces and identify themselves.

"The diplomats can wait an hour at the checkpoint and refuse to even lower their window and when I get there they get out of the car and greet me," said Avramov.

Stationed near Bethlehem, Ben-Moshe works primarily on issues pertaining to tourism.

In 2008, she says, 1.3 million tourists entered Bethlehem, a 100 percent increase from the previous year. Due to the influx, the IDF is working to improve the road infrastructure into the West Bank city to better facilitate transportation.

Alongside their day jobs, the officers also accompany arrest raids into West Bank cities they are responsible for in the middle of the night.

Bershtling, for example, accompanied a series of raids recently on a UN teachers seminar in Ramallah, where <u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad operatives were believed to be hiding.

"After we pull up in front of the seminar I call the UN and let them know that we are coming and that someone should meet us," she said. "This way they open the door for us and we cannot later be accused of causing damage."

The officers maintain regular contact with security officers who work of the NGOs and various government agencies that operate in the West Bank as well.

International liaisons

"We let them know which roads they need to be careful on and where they was an attack recently," said Bar-Moshe, adding that if the need arises - in the event of a large- scale IDF operation in the West Bank - the Civil Administration has created plans to help evacuate foreigners from the Palestinian cities.

"What is most important is the day-to-day contacts," Bershtling said. "If there is an escalation, these relationships will be the key to our success."

Graphic

Photo: Liat Bershtling. Shiran Avramov and Limor Ben-Moshe standing on top of the DCO outside Ramallah.

(Credit: Yaakov Katz)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Appeasement is not the way to defeat Islamist extremists; LEADER

The Express

March 16, 2009 Monday

U.K. 1st Edition

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Section: LEADER; 14 Length: 933 words

Byline: Leo McKinstry

Body

THE RAF servicewomen move forward selfconsciously, their heads wreathed in the Islamic hijab, looks of embarrassment on their faces.

When I first saw the photograph of the three RAF <u>women</u> attired in this way I thought they must be part of some PR stunt in Afghanistan. But it turned out they were actually in that fine old East Anglian city of Peterborough on their way to visit a mosque as part of an "effort to build relations with the Muslim community".

The very fact RAF personnel should be required to behave in this submissive fashion shows how Britain is rapidly losing all sense of self-respect, pride and identity. The sad truth is that the Peterborough episode is just another example of how the modern British state continually genuflects towards Islam. Traditions of equality, democracy and freedom of speech are abandoned as politicians bend over backwards to address every kind of invented Muslim grievance. The entirely new thought-crime of Islamophobia has been invented to crack down on anyone showing insufficient enthusiasm for the Muslim takeover of large swathes of urban Britain.

Islam is treated with exquisite sensitivity by the State but nothing like the same respect is shown towards Britain's own heritage. Our national history is mocked and Christianity marginalised. While RAF service - <u>women</u> are told to don the hijab a Christian NHS nurse is suspended from her job for offering to say a prayer for an elderly patient.

L AST week these double standards were highlighted in Luton during the shameful protests by a gang of Muslim zealots led by Anjem Choudary against the parade by the Royal Anglian Regiment returning from Iraq. Predictably the police protected the Islamists as they chanted their vile slogans yet pounced with zeal on anyone who dared to voice their outrage at the Muslims' conduct.

As the Luton fiasco demonstrated, the entire aim of the British Government has been to appease militant Islam. No effort has been spared to listen to demands, provide funding and establish dialogue. At times the police and civil service talk of trying to win over Muslim "hearts and minds", exactly the phrase used by the military in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet this vast effort is not working. Muslim extremism remains more powerful than ever.

According to the CIA, Britishbased Muslims now represent the greatest terror threat in the West. Other international security agencies have rightly dubbed our capital "Londonistan" because of the malign influence of the hardliners.

Much of the Government's GBP 90million programme over the past three years, aimed at tackling extremism, has ended up giving financial support to the militants. A GBP 30,000 grant, for instance, has been given to an outfit

Appeasement is not the way to defeat Islamist extremists LEADER

called the Muslim Safety Forum, headed by Azad Ali, a civil servant suspended from his job for claiming that the killing of British soldiers in Iraq was "an obligation".

Winston Churchill once said "an appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile - hoping it will eat him last". Feeding the monster of Islamism is exactly what the Government has done and now the beast is more aggressive than ever.

The policy of appearement is based on fundamental flaws.

One is the belief extremists are without influence because they are small in number. Since the Luton protests we have heard the constant parrot cry that "the vast majority" of peaceloving Muslims have no time for the militants. But the truth is that when it comes to Islam the majority is an irrelevance.

It is the noisy, fundamentalist minority that sets the agenda on everything from book-burning to separatist education.

That is the lesson throughout modern history. The "vast majority" of Russians during the anti-Tsarist revolution were not Bolsheviks but that did not prevent Lenin from assuming power. Nor were the vast majority of Germans affiliated to Nazism in the early Thirties but Hitler was still able to assume power.

Muslim extremists are neither clownish nor insignificant.

Their burning hatred is a serious menace to our society. Nor are their numbers as tiny as complacent commentators like to pretend. The Metropolitan Police has argued that there are at least 2,000 active jihadists in our midst, while 4,000 British-based Muslims are estimated to have been trained in terror camps in recent years.

More over, the idea that the "vast majority" of the two million Muslims in Britain are imbued with our democratic values is equally mistaken.

ACCORDING to polls, at least 40 per cent support the introduction of sharia law with all its attendant misogyny, oppression and homophobia. Nor has this much-vaunted army of "moderate" Muslims ever taken to the streets to protest about honour killings, forced marriages, the slaughter of gays or raped <u>women</u>, genocide in Darfur or mass terrorism. Tellingly, by far the biggest Muslim demonstrations here in recent years have been in support of the vicious <u>Hamas</u> regime in the Gaza strip and in opposition to the publication of satirical cartoons in a Danish newspaper.

Craven surrender is no way to tackle Muslim extremism but that is the default mode of the Government. This is partly because Labour is terrified of losing Asian votes in its innercity seats. At least 20 Labour constituencies, including that of Justice Secretary Jack Straw, depend on such backing. Just as important, Labour's ideologues have eagerly used multiculturalism as a knife to tear apart the fabric of traditional British society.

The only way to defeat Islamism is by standing up for the values of democracy, freedom and patriotism but we cannot expect such robustness from Gordon Brown's Cabinet.

Graphic

EMBARRASSING: Muslim RAF officers wearing hijabs are paraded in Luton

Load-Date: March 17, 2009



<u>Israeli soldiers' stories inflame Gaza debate; Troops describe killing civilians</u> freely

The International Herald Tribune

March 21, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 897 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

In the two months since Israel ended its military assault on Gaza, Palestinians and international rights groups have accused it of excessive force and wanton killing in that operation, but the Israeli military has said it followed high ethical standards and took great care to avoid civilian casualties.

Now testimony is emerging from within the ranks of soldiers and officers alleging a permissive attitude toward the killing of civilians and reckless destruction of property that is sure to inflame the domestic and international debate about the army's conduct in Gaza. Thursday, the military's chief advocate general ordered an investigation into a soldier's account of a sniper killing a woman and her two children who had walked too close to a designated no-go area by mistake, and another account of a sharpshooter who killed an elderly woman who had come within

90 meters, or 300 feet, of a commandeered house.

When asked why that woman had been killed, a squad commander was quoted as saying: "What's great about Gaza - you see a person on a path, he doesn't have to be armed, you can simply shoot him. In our case it was an old woman on whom I did not see any weapon when I looked. The order was to take down the person, this woman, the minute you see her. There are always warnings, there is always the saying, 'Maybe he's a terrorist.' What I felt was, there was a lot of thirst for blood."

The testimonies by soldiers, leaked to the newspapers Maariv and Haaretz, appeared in a journal published by a military preparatory course at the Oranim Academic College in the northern town of Tivon. The newspapers promised to release more such anecdotal accounts on Friday, without saying how many.

The academy's director, Dany Zamir, told Israel Radio, "Those were very harsh testimonies about unjustified shooting of civilians and destruction of property that conveyed an atmosphere in which one feels entitled to use unrestricted force against Palestinians."

The revelations caused an immediate uproar here, with some soldiers and reservists saying they did not recognize the stories being told as accurate.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak told Israel Radio that he believed such incidents to be exceptions, adding, "The Israeli Army is the most moral in the world, and I know what I'm talking about because I know what took place in the former Yugoslavia, in Iraq."

It was clear that Mr. Zamir felt that his concerns, which he had raised earlier in a letter to the military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, had not been taken seriously and that was why he had published the testimonies.

Since the war ended, others have raised similar questions, generating a heated debate within military circles.

"According to the code, a soldier has to do his utmost to avoid civilian casualties and that involves taking some risk," said Moshe Halbertal, a professor of Jewish philosophy at Hebrew University who, along with three others, rewrote the military ethics code eight years ago. "That is the question we have to struggle with. From the testimonies of these soldiers, it sounds like they didn't practice this norm."

Amir Marmor, a 33-year-old history graduate student in Jerusalem and a military reservist, said in an interview with The New York Times that he had been stunned to discover the way civilian casualties were discussed in training discussions before his tank unit entered Gaza in January. "Shoot, and don't worry about the consequences," was the message from the top commanders, he said. Speaking of a lieutenant colonel who briefed the troops, Mr. Marmor said: "His whole demeanor was extremely gung-ho. This is very, very different from my usual experience. I have been doing reserve duty for 12 years, and it was always an issue how to avoid causing civilian injuries. He said in this operation, we are not taking any chances. Morality aside, we have to do our job. We will cry about it later."

About 1,300 people were killed in the war, but how many of them were combatants remains a matter of controversy. Israel lost about 10 soldiers in Gaza, some because of fire by its own forces.

The Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights, which has documented the Gaza deaths, says that about two-thirds of the 1,300 were civilians, among them 121 **women** and 288 children, which it defines as anyone 18 and younger.

But the Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Israel said Thursday that it had analyzed the Palestinian center's names and found that some it had listed as civilians had been identified as combatants on <u>Hamas</u>-related Web sites. Some listed as children were 17-year-olds with guns, it said, adding that more than 500 of those described by the center as civilians it had considered "unknowns" because most were men of combat age whose activities could not easily be traced.

It argued that the proportion of <u>women</u> and children among the dead was relatively low, showing that Israel had not killed in an indiscriminate fashion.

Gur Rosenblat, a company commander during the Gaza operation, said in an interview: "To say that people were killed without justification - the opposite was true. We put soldiers at risk to prevent harming their civilians."

Israeli experts noted that Palestinian <u>women</u> had served as suicide bombers in the past so that soldiers in Gaza did not always know when a woman was approaching whether she might have been a threat.

Load-Date: March 25, 2009



No 'fireworks' expected at first Netanyahu-Clinton meeting. Secretary of state insists US won't budge on two-state solution

The Jerusalem Post March 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 900 words

Byline: HERB KEINON, Gil Hoffman contributed to this report.

Highlight: Lead Story

Body

Some 24 hours after reaffirming in Egypt Washington's commitment to a two-state solution, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is scheduled to meet on Tuesday with Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu, who has talked about the Palestinians governing themselves but has consistently stopped short of mentioning a full-blown Palestinian state.

Israeli government officials said that both Clinton and Netanyahu would likely be in "listening mode," wanting to hear the positions of the other side.

"Remember, this is their first meeting," one official said, adding that he did not expect any "fireworks" around either the two-state issue or construction in the settlements.

Zalman Shoval, one of Netanyahu's top foreign policy advisers, said he expected that Clinton - like US special envoy George Mitchell, who met with Netanyahu on Thursday - would wait to discuss specifics until a new government was set up. He said Clinton would probably speak along lines similar to Mitchell's, and not to bring up "unexpected subjects."

Mitchell, who will be accompanying Clinton, did not discuss the settlements with Netanyahu during their meeting.

The Clinton-Netanyahu meeting is scheduled to last an hour and is the most important of the new US secretary of state's meetings with Israeli leaders on Wednesday. She will meet with President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

While those meetings would likely focus on past events, one Israeli diplomatic official said, the meeting with Netanyahu would deal with what will happen in the future.

Netanyahu is expected to tell Clinton that he favors an approach whereby, rather than declaring up front that there has to be a Palestinian state and then seeing how it would come about, he would build up the elements that have to be in any self-governing entity and then see what would come out of that.

Clinton, however, made it abundantly clear in the speech she gave at the Gaza reconstruction conference in Sharm e-Sheikh that Washington still believed in the two- state formula, and that Middle East leaders could count on President Barack Obama to take a more active approach than did his predecessor, George W. Bush.

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"It is time to look ahead," she said, with an eye to the human aspects of what years of regional conflict have meant for the Palestinians and others.

"The United States is committed to a comprehensive peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and we will pursue it on many fronts," she said.

"We cannot afford more setbacks or delays - or regrets about what might have been, had different decisions been made," she added, in an apparent reference to the failure of previous peace initiatives, including those pushed vigorously by her husband Bill Clinton's administration.

Associates of Netanyahu and Israel Beiteinu chairman Avigdor Lieberman said they had no problem with Clinton mentioning several times in her speech that she was in favor of the creation of a Palestinian state.

One Likud MK who opposes such a state responded bluntly, "So what? She also said she would be president about a thousand times, and did that happen?"

Israeli officials said that despite media speculation on inevitable friction between an Obama and a Netanyahu administration, "everybody here is a grownup; we know their positions, and they know ours. We are friends and allies, and it is not realistic to think we are going to get into a boxing match over these issues."

If Netanyahu's previous meeting with Mitchell is any indication of what to expect in the Clinton parley, the tone of the meeting is likely to be one of "let's be pragmatic and figure out how we can move things forward," according to the official.

The impression Mitchell left on his Israeli interlocutors was that the US was still very much in the policy-review stage, talking and listening to everyone in the region and looking in a "very sober" and realistic manner at the situation.

Since Clinton will be coming from the Gaza reconstruction conference in Sharm e-Sheikh, where the US pledged some \$900 million to the Palestinians, her talks in Jerusalem are expected to focus on how to provide the aid without building up *Hamas* in the process.

Likewise, Iran is also likely to be a focus of the talks, with the Israeli officials expected to express Israel's position that the US should set a time frame for its talks with Iran so Teheran does not drag the negotiations on indefinitely while continuing to develop its nuclear program.

Clinton, who arrived in the capital on Monday evening, will also visit Yad Vashem and meet with a <u>women</u>'s NGO called Sviva Tomechet, which provides support and funds for <u>female</u> entrepreneurs. Among those she will meet are an Ethiopian and a Russian immigrant who received help from the organization and set up businesses on their own.

Diplomatic officials said this type of meeting represented a vastly different style than that of her predecessor, Condoleezza Rice, who generally used to come to Israel, hold diplomatic meetings and leave, without these types of "media events."

Clinton will hold a similar kind of meeting with Palestinian students learning English in a US-funded program in Ramallah, when she goes there on Wednesday. She will meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salaam Fayad. She is scheduled to leave the region on Wednesday afternoon.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



The Mirror
February 28, 2009 Saturday

1 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 29

Length: 853 words

Byline: BY LORD CORBETT CHAIRMAN, ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY

Body

DEFIANT to the end, a convicted killer - and hero to some - faces his executioners.

A hooded gunman stands guard as Majid Kavousifar has the noose placed around his neck.

He gives a final wave to his family and even manages a smile before the bar stool he is standing on is suddenly kicked away. The body of rebel leader Kavousifar, 28 - found guilty of assassinating a judge - swings from a crane watched by a small, silent crowd outside Tehran's Judiciary headquarters.

This is "justice", Mullah-style.

More than 1,000 men, women and children have been hanged in Iran in the three years to last December.

In the first month of this year, 59 died, including a 35-year-old woman after 12 years in Rafsanjan prison. In December two men were stoned to death, a third being spared after he managed to clamber out of a pit where he was buried up to his shoulders.

The official 170 forms of punishment include limb amputation without anaesthetic and gouging out eyes with a spoon-like instrument.

Iran has executed the highest number of children in the world since 1990. Currently 71 sentenced to death await the gallows.

Since the Islamic Republic of Iran was set up 30 years ago, about 120,000 political prisoners have been hanged. About 600,000 have been tortured in the mullahs' notorious prisons. This is medieval murder on an industrial scale.

Spearheading opposition to it all is Maryam Rajavi, 56, presidentelect of the coalition National Council of Resistance of Iran.

One of her sisters was executed by the Shah who was exiled in 1979.

A second was murdered by the mullahs while pregnant.

The Council has 540 members, more than half of them <u>women</u>. It offers Iranians a democratic, secular coalition government through UN-supervised elections.

President Obama has signalled a willingness to talk to Iran about its clandestine nuclear weapons development and its arming of terror groups killing British troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But there needs to be another item on the agenda - how will the mullahs respond to 54 UN condemnations of its human rights violations?

The terror the mullahs use to stay in power is also exported. An estimated seven out of every 10 allied troops are killed in Iraq by roadside bombs supplied by Iran.

They also train and pay militants in their use. That government, our own and the US, were given these details by the Resistance.

The mullahs also train, pay and arm Hizbollah who try to strangle the infant democracy in Lebanon as well as <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza. The heart of terrorism beats in Tehran. It is also where its bankers are. The mullahs are brazen in their menace.

Sir John Sawyers, Britain's ambassador to the UN, said last week: "The Iranians wanted to strike a deal whereby they stopped killing our forces in Iraq in return for them being allowed to carry on with their nuclear programme."

For seven years, led by then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Britain, France and Germany tried to bribe Iran into ceasing nuclear development.

The policy failed - simply giving the mullahs more time to get nearer to building the weapons.

The UN's nuclear watchdog the International Atomic Energy Agency, last week reported that Iran had enough enriched uranium to build a bomb. Despite sanctions it was expanding its nuclear plant. The world needs to tremble.

The Resistance tries to alert the world to the dangers.

After a long campaign, backed by a majority of MPs, the Resistance was taken off the list of terror organisations by the Court of Appeal.

How did Jack Straw react?

In an interview with state-run news agency IRNA last week he is reported as saying: "There is an independent kind of court... and it decided that the evidence did not support what the Government was saying." As the mullahs hang and torture those who want democratic change the best Mr Straw can say is that it is "regrettable" the Resistance was unshackled.

Those millions of Iranians who oppose tyranny deserve better.

Britain should stand with those seeking freedom, not siding with those who have stolen it from them.

Iranian history

1921: Military chief Reza Khan stages coup and names himself Shah of Persia.

1935: Khan changes name from Persia to Iran.

1941: Allies make pro-German Reza abdicate. His son Reza Pahlavi named Shah.

1963: Shah tries to modernise the country, gives **women** right to vote.

1966: Women can now divorce, marriage age up to 18.

1979: Shah alienates clergy, leading to riots. He goes into exile. Islamic Ayatollah Khomeini returns after 14 years in exile. Islamic Republic of Iran is declared.

1980: Women's hijabs made compulsory. Start of Iran-Iraq war.

1989: Khomeini issues fatwa on Salman Rushdie, for his Satanic Verses book.

1995: US imposes oil and trade sanctions.

2002: Construction of Iran's first nuclear reactor.

2004: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is made president.

2007: Stand-off with Britain after Iran detains 15 British sailors.

2008: Deadline passes for Iran to agree incentives in return for halt in nuclear activities.

Death toll

120,000 political prisoners have been hanged since the 1979 revolution

An estimated seven out of 10 allied troops are killed in Iraq by roadside bombs exported by Iran

LORD CORBETT

Graphic

CHILLING Masked gun guard stands by at execution; FINAL MOMENTS Condemned and defiant Kavousifar is placed in noose; GRIM END His feet swing after stool is kicked away; LEADER Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

Load-Date: February 28, 2009



The Mirror
February 28, 2009 Saturday
3 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 28

Length: 848 words

Byline: BY LORD CORBETT CHAIRMAN, ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY

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Load-Date: February 28, 2009



Air attacks on a besieged Gaza have killed over 1,000 Palestinians; POLITICS: Israeli Attacks on Gaza Escape Global Media Scrutiny

IPS (Latin America)
January 26, 2009 Monday

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Length: 926 words **Byline:** Thalif Deen

Body

A country that claims to be the only multi-party democracy in the Middle East, Israel has barred all foreign journalists from entering Gaza, triggering strong protests not only from the United Nations but also from human rights groups and media organisations.

Speaking from Beirut, Mohamad Bazzi, a journalism professor at New York University, told IPS there are hundreds of journalists from around the world who have gathered in Israel trying to get access into Gaza.

Without access to the battlefield, they are having a difficult time verifying the claims by either side, he said.

'As the fighting continues and the civilian death toll rises in Gaza, the United Nations has warned of a humanitarian catastrophe and the world still does not have a full picture of the extent of that crisis,' said Bazzi, who is also a board member of the Arab and Middle Eastern Journalists Association (AMEJA).

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) fired off a strong letter of protest last week to Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak criticising the restrictions on the international media.

'By preventing journalists from covering its military offensive in Gaza, Israel is betraying its own democratic principles. It is also denying the world access to fact-based reporting,' says CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon.

He said Israel has a long history of allowing international journalists to cover conflicts.

'Why is it now restricting all access to a conflict zone? What is the legal basis for this restriction on the free movement of journalists?' he asked.

According to the CPJ, the Foreign Press Association in Israel appealed the ban to the Supreme Court, which suggested a compromise that would allow a small group of international journalists to file pool reports from Gaza.

The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) apparently agreed to allow eight journalists in through the Erez crossing in northern Gaza, but later scrapped the plan, 'supposedly for security reasons, even as relief workers and others were admitted into Gaza'.

'Although crossings have been opened more than once since the Israeli offensive on Gaza started, no journalists have been allowed to enter,' Simon complained in his letter to Barak.

Air attacks on a besieged Gaza have killed over 1,000 Palestinians POLITICS: Israeli Attacks on Gaza Escape Global Media Scrutiny

The letter also said there were more than 900 media personnel, mostly working for international news outlets, already in Israel who have been barred from crossing into Gaza for safety reasons.

'Israel has barred its own citizens from entering Gaza for the past two years, citing security fears. But the ban on international journalists is less than two months old and had been enforced sporadically until the latest military offensive,' said Simon.

Meanwhile, the only 24-hour reporting has come from the Al-Jazeera satellite channel, whose reporters were present in Gaza long before the fighting began.

Bazzi told IPS that Israel has a history of a free and vibrant press, with news outlets that often challenge their government.

'Israel also has a history of allowing journalists to cover conflicts,' he added.

During the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon from 1982 to 2000, the IDF took international journalists into the occupied zone.

And during the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, journalists had access to the battlefield.

'This is the first time that Israel has banned all access to a conflict zone. Israel has not provided a legal basis or an adequate explanation for this ban on journalists,' Bazzi added.

U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Kiyo Akasaka has urged the Israeli government to provide 'immediate access for international media into Gaza' and reminded the Israelis of the right to information enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

An equally strong protest has come from the director-general of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Koichiro Matsuura, who also condemned the killing of a journalist on the first day of the Israeli offensive against Gaza.

Basel Faraj, a cameraman for the Algerian TV network ENTV and the Palestine Broadcasting Production Company, died from wounds following an Israeli air strike.

Matsuura called on Israel 'to allow local and international media professionals to report on events' in Gaza.

But these protests have had no positive response from Israel, which has continued with its devastation of Gaza minus international media scrutiny.

On Thursday, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was 'outraged' that another artillery shell had landed in a U.N. compound in Gaza even as he was on a visit to Israel.

Following his protest, Barak admitted it was 'a grave mistake' and assured the secretary-general that 'extra attention' would be paid to U.N. facilities, a frequent target of Israeli attacks, in the future.

Besides the rising death toll, mostly <u>women</u> and children, the casualties also include some 4,000 injured in the 19-day fighting between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>.

'I am sorry to report that the tragic horror continues, and will continue until the guns fall silent,' John Ging, director of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Gaza, told reporters early this week.

Ging said his U.N. agency would continue to call for a media presence in Gaza 'not only because the truth must be told, but also because those making important decisions must be able to base their information on the facts.'

Both the United Nations and the humanitarian community in Gaza regretted the absence of a 'vibrant and impartial press corps on the ground', Ging added.

Air attacks on a besieged Gaza have killed over 1,000 Palestinians POLITICS: Israeli Attacks on Gaza Escape Global Media Scrutiny

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



Recruiter of Iraqi female bombers arrested; Young women raped, then sent for advice

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia) February 4, 2009, Wednesday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P3C

Length: 917 words

Byline: Qassim AbdulZahra and Brian Murphy, The Associated Press

Body

BAGHDAD - A woman accused of helping recruit dozens of <u>female</u> suicide bombers looked into the camera and described the process: trolling society for likely candidates and then patiently converting the <u>women</u> from troubled souls into deadly attackers.

The accounts, in a video released Tuesday by Iraq police, offer a rare glimpse into the networks used to find and train the *female* bombers who have become one of the insurgents' most effective weapons as they struggle under increasing crackdowns.

In a separate prison interview with The Associated Press, with interrogators nearby, the woman said she was part of a plot in which young <u>women</u> were raped and then sent to her for matronly advice. She said she would try to persuade the victims to become suicide bombers as their only escape from the shame and to reclaim their honor.

The AP was allowed access on condition the information would not be released until the formal announcement of the arrest.

The U.S. and Iraqi militaries have made past claims without providing much evidence about efforts by insurgents to recruit vulnerable <u>women</u> as well as children as attackers. Those included statements by the Iraqis that two <u>women</u> who blew themselves up last year in Baghdad had Down's Syndrome, accounts that were not supported by subsequent investigations.

It also was not possible independently to verify the claim that insurgents sent out people to rape <u>women</u> who could then be recruited as bombers in the volatile Diyala province northeast of Baghdad.

But the suspect, 50-year-old Samira Ahmed Jassim - who said her code name was "The Mother of Believers" - has given unusual firsthand descriptions of the possible workings behind last year's spike in attacks by <u>female</u> bombers.

The Iraqi military spokesman, Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi, said the suspect had recruited more than 80 <u>women</u> willing to carry out attacks and admitted masterminding 28 bombings in different areas.

<u>Female</u> suicide bombers attempted or successfully carried out 32 attacks last year, compared with eight in 2007, according to U.S. military figures. Most recently, a woman detonated an explosive under her robes that killed at least 36 people during a Shiite religious gathering last month.

Recruiter of Iraqi female bombers arrested Young women raped, then sent for advice

The attacks reflected a shift in insurgent tactics: trying to exploit cultural standards that restrict male security forces from searching <u>women</u> and use the traditional flowing robes of <u>women</u> to hide bomb-rigged belts or vests. In response, Iraqi security forces have tried to recruit more <u>women</u>. In last week's provincial elections, <u>female</u> teachers and civic workers helped search voters.

Al-Moussawi, the military spokesman, alleged Jassim was in contact with top leaders of Ansar al-Sunnah in Diyala, the last foothold of major Sunni insurgent strength near Baghdad. The group is one of the factions with suspected ties to al-Qaida in Iraq.

Al-Moussawi said Jassim "confessed to recruiting 28 <u>female</u> suicide bombers who carried out terrorist operations in different areas." He gave no other details on the locations or dates of the attacks.

In the video played for reporters, Jassim described how she was approached by insurgents to urge <u>women</u> to carry out suicide attacks. She said her first assignment was Um Hoda, a nickname meaning mother of Hoda.

"I talked to her a number of times," said Jassim, who has four daughters and two sons. "I went back to them and gave them the details on her. And they told me, bring her to us. ... And I took her to the police station, and that's where she blew herself up."

Another woman, whom she called Amal, was involved in long conversations, Jassim said.

"I talked to her many times, sat with her, and she was very depressed," she said on the video. "I took her to them, and then went back for her and she blew herself up."

Jassim gave no further information on the attacks or her role in the video.

In speaking with the AP - a week after her Jan. 21 arrest - Jassim repeated statements she had allegedly made to interrogators that insurgents organized rapes of <u>women</u> and that she would then try to coax the victims to become suicide bombers.

She said she was "able to persuade <u>women</u> to become suicide bombers ... broken <u>women</u>, especially those who were raped."

In many parts of Iraq, including conservative Diyala, a rape victim may be shunned by her family and become an outcast in society.

Police interrogators were not in the room during Jassim's interview with the AP, but they were in an adjoining chamber.

Jassim did not offer additional details on her alleged role in the attacks, but suggested she was pressured into working with the insurgency.

She claimed that Ansar al-Sunnah provided her a house in Diyala, where she operated a shop selling the traditional robes for **women** called abaya. She added, however, that Ansar al-Sunnah once threatened to bomb her house if she did not cooperate.

"I worked with [Ansar al-Sunnah] for a year and a half," she told the AP.

Female suicide bombers are uncommon, but not unknown, outside Iraq.

Among Palestinians, several woman have carried out suicide bombings for militant groups including <u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad.

There also have been cases of <u>women</u> in the West Bank attacking Israeli soldiers so they can be imprisoned after being accused of breaking traditional rules on sexual conduct. In the Palestinian territories, relatives can seek harsh punishments, including death, on **women** seen as dishonoring the family.

Recruiter of Iraqi female bombers arrested Young women raped, then sent for advice

Associated Press writer Mohammed Daraghmeh in Ramallah, West Bank, contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 4, 2009



Eating the wild; In America, there are foragers among us, out searching for morels in the spring, and there are hunters too. Yet most of our food, except for fish caught from the sea, is farmed. We do not trap songbirds for savory pies. (We destroy too many of them through other means.)

Yukon News (Yukon)
January 26, 2009 Monday
Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 4

Length: 898 words

Byline: New York Times Service

Body

Once you look beyond the parochial culinary habits of most Americans you discover that wildness, and the tastes associated with it, have a talismanic power that is very hard to eradicate. It is what keeps the Japanese whaling and keeps some Africans eating bush meat. And it is one of the things that helps explain the voracious and utterly destructive Chinese appetite for turtles.

As global wealth rises, so does global consumption of meat, which includes wild meat. Turtle meat used to be a rare delicacy in the Asian diet, but no longer. China, with Hong Kong and Taiwan, has vacuumed the wild turtles out of most of Southeast Asia. Now, according to a recent report in the Los Angeles Times, they are consuming common soft-shell turtles from the American Southeast, especially Florida, at an alarming rate.

Some scientists estimate that two-thirds of the tortoise and freshwater turtle species on the planet are seriously threatened. Some of that is secondhand damage -- loss of habitat, water pollution, climate change. But far too many turtles are being lost to the fork and the spoon.

In the United States, the solution is relatively straightforward. States should impose much tighter restrictions on the harvesting and export of wild turtles. Internationally, the problem is more complicated. There have been efforts to monitor the species of wild turtles found in Chinese markets, but as long as the appetite for turtles -- and traditional medicines derived from them -- persists, we fear it will be hard to curtail such a profitable and disastrous trade.

(New York Times Service)

WOMEN'S HEALTH, UNGAGGED

President Barack Obama on Friday began dismantling his predecessor's broad and damaging assault on <u>women</u>'s reproductive health and freedom. He lifted the odious gag rule that fomer president George W. Bush imposed on international family planning groups and began trying to restore financing to the United Nations Population Fund.

It was a reassuring message that Obama takes seriously his duty to safeguard <u>women</u>'s lives and basic rights, including free speech and the choice of whether to bear a child.

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The gag rule was first imposed by former president Ronald Reagan. It barred any health care provider receiving American family planning assistance from counselling **women** on abortion, engaging in political speech on abortion or providing abortions, even with its own money.

former president Bill Clinton lifted the gag rule, but Bush reinstated it in toughened form on his first full day in office in 2001. That seriously disrupted the best quality and most accessible family planning services in poor countries. It denied <u>women</u> access to desperately needed contraceptives, help in preventing HIV-AIDS, and maternal care. Obama's executive order lifting the financing ban will mean fewer deaths from unsafe illegal abortions.

Obama's stated intention to work with Congress to restore financing to the population fund also is a life-saving step. It ends the sorry exercise by which Bush repeatedly blocked money approved by Congress to advance poor **women**'s reproductive health, reduce infant mortality, end sexual trafficking and prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

To justify this cruelty, the Bush administration perpetuated a bogus charge that the population fund has either stood by or helped with coerced abortions in China.

We trust these policy changes mark a good start toward a larger shift that will see the Obama administration undo the full range of Republican attacks on reproductive freedom. We also hope it will press hard for passage of the Prevention First legislation designed to reduce abortions by, for example, facilitating honest sex education and improved access to contraceptives.

(New York Times Service)

AN UNENVIABLE JOB

We welcome President Barack Obama's choice of George Mitchell to be his new Middle East envoy. It is an unenviable and essential job.

A former Senate majority leader, Mitchell has the stature to represent the new administration. He negotiated the 1998 Good Friday accord in Northern Ireland, good training for taking on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As a Lebanese-American, his appointment also sends an important signal that the United States will continue to be an unwavering ally of Israel but also sensitive to the Palestinians' many legitimate grievances.

His report on a failed Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire pact, produced in 2001 at former president Bill Clinton's request, suggests Mitchell's even-handed approach. It urged the Israeli government to freeze construction of new settlements and stop shooting at unarmed demonstrators, and Palestinians to prevent terrorist attacks and punish the perpetrators. That advice remains sound.

We fear Mitchell will find the situation even more difficult today. Eight years later, <u>Hamas</u> is in control of Gaza and shows no interest in making peace with Israel. The Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, who controls the West Bank, is committed to a two-state solution but has been dangerously weakened by Israel's invasion of Gaza.

One of Mitchell's first tasks will be to find ways both to lessen the suffering of Gazans and bolster Abbas. To succeed, Mitchell will need strong support from President Obama and, we hope, a good relationship with a new Israeli prime minister who is fully committed to a two-state solution.

It is a tough job. We wish him luck.

(New York Times Service)

Load-Date: January 28, 2009

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