

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:30:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223446961

Documents (100)

1. [Street poll finds Israelis backing Gaza campaign](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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2. [Your say](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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3. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

4. [In mourning, Montrealer not optimistic for peace in Gaza; Father, brother killed by Israeli missiles, woman says](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

5. [UN report says Israel used boy as human shield, Israel denies](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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6. [A WAR CRIME UN BLASTS ISRAEL AS TWO BROTHERS KILLED IN SCHOOL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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7. [Democratic accountability in Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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8. [Shedding Light On Mideast Problems](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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9. [UN official: Assault on Gaza not 'legally justified'. Falk says Cast Lead appears to have been 'war crime of greatest magnitude'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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10. [TD calls for ambassador's expulsion as Evrony defends offensive](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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11. [Ball is in Israel's court](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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12. [IDF probe of Cast Lead reveals 'intelligence, operational mistakes'. 'But forces acted in accordance with int'l law and made great efforts to minimize civilian casualties'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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13. [Israel goes to polls](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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14. ['Trauma drives West's denial of Iran's genocidal anti-Semitism'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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15. [Dr. Fadl & the moralists](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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16. [Israel on Trial](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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17. [Why Congress supports Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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18. [The Gaza docket Israel III](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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19. [UN agency hit as Israeli leaders consider ceasefire GAZA CRISIS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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20. [Israel pushes deep into Gaza City Palestinians say residents waving white flags shot dead as they flee their homes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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21. [*Demonising Israel is not fair reporting*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

22. [*To the re-education centre . . .*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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23. [*The genocide mechanism*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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24. [*Mideast dream needs more than eloquence*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

25. [*'LOYALTY LAW' ABANDONED*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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26. [*UK Conservative leader: Commitment to Israel comes from deep inside me*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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27. [*Israel accused of carrying out air strike on Sudanese soil Olmert says his nation can hit every place 'near and far' in order to stop terror*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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28. [*News in brief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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29. [*UN report latest to charge Israel with war crimes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

30. [*Obamas right way of doing things Where I Stand*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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31. [*Palestinians Press International Court for Inquiry on Possible Gaza War Crimes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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32. [*Letters to the Editor*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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33. [*Israel to shield soldiers from prosecution; UN probes allegations of war crimes in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

34. [*Fear remains as students return to site of bombed university*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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35. [*Rallying around Palestine*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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36. [*Israel says Gaza pullout complete*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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37. [IDF: Civilian deaths less than 25% of total](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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38. [Seeping sewage, gunboats and the rubble of war: the surfers for peace take it all on board Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

39. [Gaza fight boosts Al-Jazeera in U.S.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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40. [Israel disputes civilian toll near UN school](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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41. [Diminishing the Holocaust: If every moral outrage is deemed to be the Holocaust, then nothing is - and the Holocaust becomes nothing as well](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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42. [Israeli and Palestinian supporters in the region show their solidarity](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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43. ['Color Purple' author takes trip to Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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44. [POOR ISRAEL . POOR PALESTINE BOTH HAVE BEEN BLINDED BY THE CYCLE OF REVENGE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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45. [Rebuild Gush Katif](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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46. [Soldiers shielded from war crime prosecution](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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47. [God's foreign policy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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48. [Pressure mounts for Israeli war crimes probe](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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49. [Protest was not an example of love and peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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50. [Pope's lack of specifics on Gaza, Holocaust disappoint Muslims and Jews He was politely received at Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem Tuesday, but clerics, judges, and Hamas representatives want stronger statements on Israeli policies and Palestinian suffering.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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51. [Refugee numbers drop, but many who do flee find only trouble](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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52. [Pro- Israel , pro-Arab and pro-peace Canada's friendship with Israel doesn't mean we can't support a viable state for Palestinians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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53. [Israel strikes at Lebanon rocket site](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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54. [SRINAGAR RALLY AGAINST ISRAELI ATTACKS ON GAZA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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55. [World - Olmert protects troops from war crimes charges](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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56. [Blind in Gaza and Jerusalem](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

57. [In short](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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58. [* JOURNALS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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59. ['We pray for his release every day' Israelis cling to hope young soldier captured in 2006 by Palestinian militants will be freed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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60. [The view from Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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61. [Palestinians demand freedom to rebuild](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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62. [*Mel Frykberg interviews judge Thuraya Judi Alwazir Q&A: 'More Women Need to Judge'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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63. [*Occupation the issue*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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64. [*Israel defends troops against charges of brutality in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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65. [*Israel Fights Accusations Of Abuses In Gaza War*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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66. [*Time for a new ally?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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67. [*The first casualty*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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68. [Ceasefire all talk as missiles keep flying](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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69. [UN reports offensive's toll on civilians rising](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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70. [Iran 's president fires new tirade against Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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71. [Ambassador makes case for Israel as 'charm' tour comes north - The arrival of Queen Elizabeth this week overshadowed a visit of another lesser known dignitary. Allison Morris speaks to the Israeli ambassador Ron Prosor on his first official trip to Northern Ireland](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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72. [AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN " Russian -speaking" minister of foreign affairs counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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73. [UN moves to determine own Gaza war civilian casualty figures. After 'Post' publishes IDF info, UN official says it needs to 'gain clarity'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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74. [Obama's link to the Muslim world: Turkey](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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75. [OBAMA WANTS DIVISION TO END SPEAKS FORCEFULLY ABOUT MUSLIM, PALESTINIAN ISSUES](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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76. [Al-Jazeera drew viewers on Web during Gaza war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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77. [*Arab leaders: caught between emotionalism and realism*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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78. [*Israeli Military Says Its Actions in Gaza War Did Not Violate International Law*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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79. [*Israeli strikes continue to set Gaza ablaze*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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80. [*Troops shielded from prosecution; Israel protects soldiers as UN holds preliminary investigation*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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81. [*UPSHOT US - Israeli partnership*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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82. [When it comes to Hamas and Israel , both have failed to listen tothe UN 's call for a ceasefire so I don't see Swansea council will make a difference 'Councils should concentrate on local services' the UN 's call for a ceasefire so I don't see Swansea council will make a difference](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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83. [Worldview: Mideast needs a more engaged U.S. to help broker peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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84. [As Israeli Premier's Time in Office Nears End, Captive Soldier's Saga Gains Urgency](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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85. [Column: Boycotts hinder civilians, not their governments](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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86. ['These children are being shot in the head, I think this tells us something' Israel denied that it has targeted civilians, but doctors in Egypt are treating large numbers of Gaza youngsters with bullets in the brain](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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87. [*A Bias Against Israel Enough Is Enough Objectivity Sought Qualifications Missing 'Double' Ceremony Left Bad Impression A Vote Against Pitts*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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88. [*Are you proud to be a leftist?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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89. [*The new blood libel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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90. [*chatroom*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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91. [*Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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92. [*Shocked and Grieving Gazans Find Bodies Under the Rubble of Homes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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93. [*The Bullets in My In-Box*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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94. [*FOR MIDEAST PEACE, END THE TEACHING OF HATE*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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95. [*Ban and UN must recognize the Palestinians' right to resist*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

96. [*Palestinians return home to scenes of devastation in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

97. [*In this case, there can be no comparison*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

98. [*Widows' grim plight*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

99. [*It's Short Step From Authoritarian to Totalitarian*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

100. [*G2: Women: This Muslim life*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to Jun 30, 2009

Street poll finds Israelis backing Gaza campaign

The Toronto Star

January 15, 2009 Thursday

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Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA01

Length: 620 words

Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Rafi Smith won't have the latest poll results in hand until some time today, but he was betraying no doubt at all yesterday about what they are likely to show.

Smith predicted that at least nine out of 10 Jewish Israelis will declare themselves to be firmly in favour of the pulverizing military campaign their country is continuing in Gaza.

"People think it's a very justified war," said Smith, head of Smith Research Institute, a leading Israeli polling agency. "People say we waited eight years too long."

The Israeli attacks have caused what many would consider a shocking death toll among Palestinians - more than 1,000 people killed, including large numbers of women and children.

The televised scenes of physical destruction and human suffering in Gaza have been painful to watch. But Smith does not believe such factors, wrenching as they are, have a major impact on Israeli public opinion.

"I'm not saying people are not upset," he said, "but they believe this is the price that has to be paid."

"My gut feeling, up to now, is it's perceived like a successful operation."

That was certainly the impression offered by an informal poll conducted yesterday among shop clerks and strollers on Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda St., a sloping cobblestone pedestrian mall that runs through the central city, from King George St. down to Zion Square.

Everybody who spoke to a reporter supported the war.

"I think it was necessary to do something," said Assaf Rotem, 18, a clerk in the Saphir musical instrument store.

"I have no doubt about my country or my army."

For more than eight years, Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip have been firing rockets into populated areas of southern Israel.

It was to put a stop to those barrages that Israel unleashed its massive offensive in Gaza late last month.

Street poll finds Israelis backing Gaza campaign

Hamas, the Islamist militant movement that holds political power in Gaza, regards the rockets as legitimate resistance against Israeli occupation.

But Israel points out that it withdrew from Gaza in 2005 and calls the rocket attacks terrorism plain and simple.

Like other Israelis who spoke to a reporter yesterday, Rotem expressed serious discomfort at the fatalities and hardships that have been inflicted on Gaza's 1.5 million people during the current campaign.

But that unease does not alter his support for the operation - a sentiment echoed by others.

"It's not Israel's fault," said Tair Zaken, who works at the Adi jewellery store.

"It is **Hamas** that has used its people in a cynical way."

She was referring to the radical Islamist group's alleged use of civilian facilities, as well as the people themselves, as cover to protect its fighters from Israeli attack.

"As we both know, **Hamas** uses their schools, mosques and hospitals as 'human shields,'" said David Russ, 23, a Canadian who is touring Israel, along with fellow Montrealer Simcha Wenger, 25.

"The loss of human life is extremely sad, but it is inevitable."

Many Israelis believe their armed forces should do more than merely punish **Hamas** for its actions. They believe Israel should destroy the organization outright.

"Yes, of course," said Tomer Ben David, whose family owns King David's Treasure, a gift shop on the Ben Yehuda mall. "It's hard to see all the blood but, if it's **Hamas** that dies, I'm happy."

A 24-year-old bookshop clerk who would identify herself only as Elya said international criticism of the Israeli military offensive is unfair and her country should not be blamed simply for being more powerful than its neighbours.

Like other Israelis, she said she dreams of peace in the region but does not really expect to see it in her lifetime.

"I hope someday everyone will say: 'What's done is done. Let's move ahead.'"

She grimaced. "But I don't think it will happen."

Load-Date: January 15, 2009

Your say

Herald Sun (Australia)

January 19, 2009 Monday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 24

Length: 490 words

Body

Attacks help Palestinians too

JUDY Bamberger ("Gaza deaths, injuries shameful", January 16) doubts that Israel's attack on **Hamas** is serving the interests of the Palestinian people.

Hamas is determined never to recognise Israel, and to do all it can to sabotage any progress towards peace.

It is also seeks to impose a repressive Taliban-like state on all Palestinians.

Clearly, peace is in the best interests of the Palestinians, so it serves their interests for **Hamas** to be subdued.

Bamberger also states that she finds it shameful that Israel's actions are being done in her name, as a Jew, but she need not worry.

Israel is not acting for Jews safe in Australia.

It is acting for all Israelis, Jewish and otherwise, who are subject to constant **Hamas** attacks, and for all who want peace in the Middle East.

Danny Samuels, Armadale

Resistance is fair enough

IMAGINE if a few hundred thousand Aboriginal people decided to return to the Melbourne region . . . they build their settlements in places such as Dandenong, Frankston, Caulfield and Toorak, about 50 settlements in all, and each is connected with roads that only the "new settlers" are allowed to use.

Everyone living in those suburbs is expelled from their homes and resettled on a narrow strip of land somewhere past Mornington, complete with checkpoints and blockades all around it.

A recipe for peaceful coexistence? Would there be any resistance?

Harry Schumann, Emerald

Wheel pollutes the night sky

Your say

THE Southern Star Observation Wheel is wrongly named.

I looked for the real Southern Cross when it was low in the sky near the wheel, but two of the five stars were blotted out by the flood-lighting.

The wheel is yet another light-polluting monstrosity showing indifference to environmental excesses.

Melbourne's night sky is already more than 350 per cent brighter than it was in 1990.

The last thing we need is to waste more energy to light it up even more.

Barry Clark, Viewbank

Nasty accident with curtain loop

YOUR article, ``Curtain loops can kill" (January 15) contained timely safety advice.

On Christmas night my great-granddaughter, when leaning from her top bunk to wave goodbye to visitors, over-balanced and fell, her neck catching in one such loop.

Fortunately, the loop broke, but it was a very nasty experience for her.

Elizabeth Egan, Bright

Farmers need men-only club

I HAVE a cunning plan for all those lonely male farmers who are in need of some female company -- start your exclusive men's only club.

Before you know it, there will be a herd of women knocking on your door wanting to join . . . but somehow I don't think they would be the type for hard-working farm blokes.

Hoppy, Moe

Hulls too kind to racing

MR Hulls adds insult to injury while white-washing the waste of water on Flemington racecourse by quoting the number of jobs in the racing industry.

How about the farming people along the Murray River with practically no water allocations to survive on?

Don Fraser, Mildura

Load-Date: January 18, 2009

Letters

The Jerusalem Post
February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1156 words

Byline: Barbara Oberman, Sara Shaw, Gershon Jacobson, Varda Epstein, Arlene Kushner, Colin L. Leci, Warren Zauer, David Lee, Dov Abrams, Seth Eisenberg

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Liberate us...

Sir, - I am for women's liberation ("Activists urge women to vote to advance rights," February 9). Today, please, liberate us from that woman Tzipi Livni.

BARBARA OBERMAN

Herzliya Pituah

Sir, - As actor Patrick Murray said "Politicians are like nappies [diapers] - they should be changed regularly, and for the same reason."

SARA SHAW

Kfar Saba

Sir, - It's sad, but the fact that politicians of the caliber of Netanyahu, Barak and Livni are apparently afraid of him is the best reason I can think of to cast my vote for Avigdor Lieberman ("Hardline hero offers simple answers in a polarized Israel," February 5).

GERSHON JACOBSON

Jerusalem

...yes, but from whom?

Sir, - Re "400,000 undecided voters now have on-line 'compass' to steer by" (January 30): As a third-generation Pittsburgher and niece of Myron Cope, the late, great color commentator for the Steelers, I had no trouble knowing whom to root for in the Superbowl. On the other hand, as an Israeli for the past 29 years, I have no idea whom to vote for in this election.

If I don't vote Likud, I'm giving Tzipi Livni and Ehud Barak an edge - but how can I vote for Likud? In the Likud posters, "Bogie" Ya'alon appears on Netanyahu's right hand and Benny Begin on his left. If only I believed that

Letters

these two men, the only two in Israeli politics who stand for integrity, would really be on Bibi's left and right hand were the Likud to win....

However, Bibi is frank about his desire for a broad-based unity government. That means it's more likely we will have Barak for defense, and Livni holding an important portfolio. Bogie and Benny may be edged out to make room for them.

A vote for Likud means a vote for more of the same. It means voting in the man who pledged there would be reciprocity, then gave away the holy city of Hebron for nothing.

As an American schoolchild, I learned to be serious about my civic duty and to maximize my vote. However, the last time I did that, I voted for a man who forced his and my own people out of their homes. These dispossessed now live in milk-carton-like spaces and the area they vacated is being used to attack my fellow civilians.

So this time, I will be throwing my vote away - on a small party to the right of the political spectrum that, at least, mirrors the sentiments of my heart.

VARDA EPSTEIN

Efrat

Terribly transparent

Sir, - The actions of the ruling "triumvirate" of Olmert, Livni and Barak regarding negotiations with Hamas for a cease-fire and the release of Gilad Schalit are transparent ("Rafi Eitan: Schalit deal is possible before PM steps down," February 9). For the sake of appearing to achieve certain goals on their waning watch, they are making concessions that undo whatever victory we achieved militarily.

On Saturday, Hamas leader in Gaza Mahmoud Zahar came out of hiding, reportedly with Barak's sanction.

With the announcement of a "window of opportunity" for securing Schalit's release, the triumvirate are now prepared to release more Hamas prisoners of greater culpability, trading national security and dignity for personal goals.

One must hope that everyone even considering voting Kadima will think again in the face of this latest affront.

ARLENE KUSHNER

Jerusalem

Go with the flow. (Not)

Sir, - On the eve of Israel's 60th Independence Day you ran an excellent editorial entitled "Water independence" (May 6, 2008). On election day, the question must be: Why have none of the political parties given any attention to this vital security issue when - to quote the editorial - "a dearth of deeds today will cause certain thirst tomorrow"?

COLIN L LECI

Jerusalem

State...

Sir, - Why does The Jerusalem Post find Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas's rejection of the Olmert fire sale so mind-boggling? ("Kadima slips," Editorial, January 30.) Hasn't it figured out yet that the only entity in the Middle East that wants a Palestinian state is Israel? Egypt and Jordan are clearly happier without it, and the Palestinians certainly don't want one.

Letters

Yasser Arafat made their position very clear when he rejected the Barak giveaway in 2000, preferring to launch a terrorist war. Had he been at all interested in a Palestinian state he would at least have made a counter- offer, but the Barak and Clinton offers were clearly getting too close for him to take such a chance.

Abbas's refusal to accept anything short of a return to the 1949 borders and the "right of return" is all that has prevented Ehud Olmert from giving away the farm. As we saw in a recent Torah reading, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart."

How many times do Israeli leaders need to come knocking on the Palestinians' door with the gift of a state, only to find no one at home?

WARREN ZAUER

Jerusalem

...and static

Sir, - Based upon various news items, I understand that: 1. Mahmoud Abbas carries no authority with the Palestinians, the vast majority of whom look to Hamas as their true representative; 2. Hamas does not, or will not, recognize the right of Israel to exist; 3. the Hamas charter points to the destruction of Israel as its main aim.

Why, then, does the West continue to see a peace pact between Israel and the Palestinians as a logical possibility? ("Abbas: IDF attacks on Gaza were war crimes," February 5.)

DAVID LEE

London

Lush funds

Sir, - I am as surprised as Hamas must be at the UN's angry reaction to its theft of supplies intended for the people of Gaza ("UNRWA suspends aid to Gaza after Hamas again seizes supplies," February 8). After all, it let Yasser Arafat steal around \$1 billion worth of aid meant for ordinary Palestinians.

The UN did not complain, and the West was silent. Stranger still, no one has asked for a return of the money. Meanwhile Arafat's widow lives in bizarre luxury in Paris.

They say crime doesn't pay. Sometimes it does, handsomely.

DOV AARONS

London

Comfort zone for kids

Sir, - "One in three Israeli kids remains below poverty line" (February 9) noted that 400,000 children are considered at immediate risk by social services. Without effective intervention, this tragic cycle is likely to perpetuate itself.

In the US, relationship skills-building classes - education, not therapy or counseling - have become increasingly popular as significant research has validated their impact on couples and parents seeking to create and sustain healthy, loving relationships.

The most effective interventions employ usable, easy- to-learn, research-validated skills that promote open communication, deepen empathy, expand emotional understanding and healthy expression and teach conflict resolution tools that focus on practical behavioral changes. Positive results are often immediate.

Letters

As a new government considers national priorities, these recent reports highlight the urgency of implementing a national campaign to promote healthy relationships, strengthen marriages and families, and improve the home environment for all of Israel's children and their parents.

SETH EISENBERG

PAIRS Foundation, Inc., Weston, Florida

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

In mourning, Montrealer not optimistic for peace in Gaza; Father, brother killed by Israeli missiles, woman says

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 24, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 464 words

Byline: IRWIN BLOCK, Max Harrold, The Gazette

Body

Ghada Abbas is in mourning, again.

The first blow came this month, when she learned that her brother, Hussein, had been killed by an Israeli bomb in Beit Lahia, on the Gaza Strip.

The mother of five, who is eight months pregnant, explained in Arabic through a translator that her brother, a father of six, was on his way to get food for the family when he was struck by a missile.

Three days later, her father, Naïm, was outside the house with neighbours when he was killed after an Israeli missile struck the area.

"When I heard my brother was cut to pieces by a bomb, I was in shock.

"I was more in shock when I heard my father died. I cannot even put these feelings into words," she said from her home in downtown Montreal.

The translator was arranged by Tadamon! - which means struggle in Arabic - and Palestinian and Jewish Unity. Both groups are pro-Palestinian in outlook.

Abbas, who came here two years ago from Khan Yunis to join her husband, said she is apolitical and blamed Israel for "targeting civilians, women and children who are innocent and have nothing to do with politics." "The Israelis should be tried for targeting civilians," she said.

With three sisters and five brothers left in Gaza - one sister lives in Jordan and another in the United Arab Emirates - Abbas complained that even when there was a truce, Israel carried out bombardments and targeted assassinations.

"I am not optimistic," she said of the chances for peace.

Reached by telephone, David Ouellette, a spokesperson for the Quebec- Israel Committee, said he had "a lot of empathy" for Abbas and her losses.

In mourning, Montrealer not optimistic for peace in Gaza; Father, brother killed by Israeli missiles, woman says

But "civilians get killed in wars," he added. It is **Hamas**, not Israeli defence forces, that has deliberately targeted civilians in the conflict, he said.

Ouellette was not much more optimistic for peace than Abbas.

"The problem is that there is political disunity among Palestinians," Ouellette said. **Hamas** must become "pragmatic" for there to be progress.

Agence France-Presse quoted an Israeli government source as saying that Justice Minister Daniel Friedman has been put in charge of defending Israel against charges of war crimes during the Gaza campaign.

Israel's military censor has banned the publication of the identity of the unit leaders who fought against **Hamas** forces in Gaza for fear they might face war crimes charges. Israel says its troops did their best to limit civilian casualties in a heavily populated area. It blamed **Hamas** for using civilians as human shields while it fired thousands of rockets at southern Israel.

Medical officials put the death toll in Gaza at 1,330 with at least 5,450 wounded. About 65 per cent of the dead were civilians, including 400 children and 100 **women**.

Ten Israeli soldiers and three civilians died during Operation Cast Lead.

iblock@thegazette.canwest.com

Load-Date: March 22, 2009

UN report says Israel used boy as human shield, Israel denies

Daily News Egypt

March 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 883 words

Body

JERUSALEM/GENEVA: Israel on Tuesday slammed as "one-sided" a report by a UN human rights investigator which said its three-week war on the Gaza Strip was possibly a war crime.

"Unfortunately this is a further example of the very one-sided, unbalanced and unfair attitude of the (UN) Human Rights Council," government spokesman Mark Regev told AFP.

"This sort of report does the service of human rights no good whatsoever," he said. "It's a politicization of human rights."

The UN special rapporteur on the Palestinian territories, Richard Falk, said in a report on Monday that there was "reason" to conclude that Israel's massive military offensive on Gaza in December and January was a war crime.

Falk said that in order to determine if the war was legal, it was necessary to assess if the Israeli forces could differentiate between civilian and military targets in Gaza.

"If it is not possible to do so, then launching the attacks is inherently unlawful, and would seem to constitute a war crime of the greatest magnitude under international law," Falk wrote in the report.

"On the basis of the preliminary evidence available, there is reason to reach this conclusion," he added, pointing out that attacks were targeted at densely populated areas.

On Monday UN human rights expert said Israeli soldiers used an 11-year-old Palestinian boy as a human shield during the offensive on Gaza.

The Israeli Defense force ordered the boy to walk in front of soldiers being fired on in the Gaza neighborhood of Tel Al-Hawa and enter buildings before them, said the UN secretary-general's envoy for protecting children in armed conflict.

The boy also was told to open the bags of Palestinians €" presumably to protect the soldiers from possible explosives €" before being released at the entrance to a hospital, Radhika Coomaraswamy said.

UN report says Israel used boy as human shield, Israel denies

She said the Jan. 15 incident, after Israeli tanks had rolled into the neighborhood and during "intense operations," was a violation of Israeli and international law.

It was included in a 43-page report published Monday, and was just one of many verified human rights atrocities during the three-week war between Israel and **Hamas** that ended Jan. 18, she said.

Coomaraswamy accused Israeli soldiers of shooting Palestinian children, bulldozing a home with a woman and child still inside, and shelling a building they had ordered civilians into a day earlier.

"Violations were reported on a daily basis, too numerous to list," said Coomaraswamy, who visited Gaza and Israel for five days in February.

Coomaraswamy said there also have been allegations that **Hamas** used human shields or fired from heavily populated areas, and that UN officials are investigating.

Israel criticized the report as "unable or perhaps unwilling" to address **Hamas** rocket attacks from Gaza or the threat of terrorism, citing Saturday's failed attempt to explode a car bomb in a Haifa mall parking lot as the most recent manifestation.

"The report claims to examine Israel's actions while it willfully ignores and downplays the terrorist and other threats we face," Ambassador Aharon Leshno Yaar told the 47-nation Human Rights Council.

Leshno Yaar said terrorists use **women** and children as human shields when they launch attacks from schools, homes, hospitals and mosques. He did not address the report's specific allegation about the boy, but an army spokesman rejected the claim.

"We are an army to which morals and high ethical standards are paramount," said Capt. Elie Isaacson.

Coomaraswamy said her list of Israeli violations constituted "just a few examples of the hundreds of incidents that have been documented and verified" by UN officials who were in the territory.

She was the only one of the nine UN experts who compiled the report that was allowed into Gaza following the war. The experts covered issues ranging from health and hunger to **women's** rights and arbitrary executions.

The experts also noted reports that **Hamas** had committed other abuses. They said **Hamas** had been unwilling to investigate the allegations.

The report called for Israel to investigate human rights abuses that occurred during the conflict.

Last week Israel's military ordered a criminal inquiry into published reports from soldiers that some troops had knowingly killed Palestinian civilians, including children.

Meanwhile, Falk had focused his report on the legal issues arising from the war, as he had been unable to enter Gaza to assess the human rights situation on the ground.

He attempted a mission in December €" before Israel launched its 22-day offensive €" but was detained by the Israelis and then expelled, with the foreign ministry accusing him of "legitimizing **Hamas** terrorism".

"Such a refusal to cooperate with a United Nations representative, not to mention the somewhat humiliating treatment accorded has set an unfortunate precedent with respect to the treatment of a representative of the United Nations Human Rights Council, and more generally of the United Nations itself," Falk wrote.

Falk has been highly critical of Israel's policies against the Palestinians, saying in December that they amounted to a crime against humanity.

Falk in January also charged that Israel's military operations in Gaza raised the "specter of systematic war crimes" and needed to be investigated. €" Agencies

UN report says Israel used boy as human shield, Israel denies

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Load-Date: March 24, 2009

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A WAR CRIME; UN BLASTS ISRAEL AS TWO BROTHERS KILLED IN SCHOOL

Sunday Mirror

January 18, 2009 Sunday

3 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 468 words

Byline: BY RUPERT HAMER DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

Body

ISRAEL pledged to end its offensive on Gaza last night after being accused of war crimes when two children were killed in a tank attack on a United Nations school.

The boys, brothers aged five and seven, had been sheltering from repeated Israeli air strikes over the northern Gaza Strip.

Their mother lost both her legs as tanks and war planes bombarded the school in Beit Lahiya.

Yesterday pictures clearly showed a marked UN vehicle outside the building while terrified locals sprinted for cover as a hail of fire rained down, seriously injuring 13 others.

Last night UN Relief and Works Agency head John Ging said: "These two little boys are as innocent, indisputably, as they are dead."

"The question now being asked is: Is this and the killing of all other innocent civilians in Gaza a war crime?"

Elsewhere, a very young Palestinian girl was treated in hospital for appalling injuries from another Gaza Strip strike.

A few miles away Israeli soldiers were pictured playing football next to their tanks while they waited for orders.

But yesterday hopes of an end to the conflict grew after a senior Israeli government official said the offensive would cease.

He said: "The goal is to announce, subject to approval of the cabinet, a - suspension of military activities because we believe our goals have been attained." He added that no agreement had been reached with **Hamas** and said Israel reserved the right to re-ignite hostilities if rockets were fired into their territory.

A WAR CRIME UN BLASTS ISRAEL AS TWO BROTHERS KILLED IN SCHOOL

Last night Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was expected to address the nation to announce the halt in attacks, but **Hamas** vowed to fight on unless their conditions for a ceasefire were met. Osama Hamdan, **Hamas** representative in Lebanon, said: "Either we get what we have demanded or the result will be the continuation of confrontation on the ground."

Hamas wants all Israeli troops out of the Gaza Strip and an end to the blockade that is making life in Gaza unbearable. Since the beginning of the invasion on December 27, 1,201 Palestinians have been killed - including 410 children.

Meanwhile, as Gordon Brown prepared to fly to Egypt for a peace summit and offered the use of Britain's Royal Navy to help stop the smuggling of weapons into Gaza, thousands of people gathered in London and Birmingham to protest against the attacks.

In London, 200 protesters - including children carrying dolls to symbolise the children who have died in the conflict - walked from Trafalgar Square down Whitehall to Downing Street.

Seven **women**, including Labour MP Diane Abbott, handed in a letter to No 10 demanding the British Government do more to bring about a ceasefire.

And in Brighton nine people were arrested after extensive damage was caused to a company the protesters claimed was involved in manufacturing equipment for the Israeli air force.

Graphic

Innocent victims... the bodies of the boys who died; Residents flee as Israeli bombs hit UN school; Little girl helps with clean-up; Kid's shoe lies in a pool of blood

Load-Date: January 18, 2009

Democratic accountability in Gaza

The Jerusalem Post

January 29, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 831 words

Byline: NIR BOMS and SHAYAN ARYA

Highlight: Nir Boms is vice president of the Center for Freedom in the Middle East. Shayan Arya is an Iranian activist, member of the Constitutionalist Party of Iran and associate researcher at the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education.

Body

Nearly two years after **Hamas** won a large majority in the new Palestinian parliament, and in return started a new round of terror that triggered an IDF military operation in Gaza, a fragile cease-fire has set the last word of another chapter in this tragic conflict. The airwaves are still filled with footage of war and carnage, with crying **women** and children and with debates about body counts. Yes, there is a tragic story to be told. War, even when justified, brings much injustice with it. But there is also an important lesson to be learned, and a hope that this time it will not be completely missed by the rioting Arab street.

Two years ago, the then Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qurei, one of the old guard Fatah leaders, acknowledged in submitting his resignation that **Hamas** had earned the right to form the next cabinet. "This is the choice of the people," Qurei told reporters. "It should be respected." Qurei was correct. Choices should be respected - but not without acceptance of their consequences.

Democracy, of course, is more than just accepting the choice of a given majority on a single occasion. It has to be ongoing. One test of democracy lies in the freedom for a minority view to become that of the majority and the tolerance of the elected party toward democratic attempts to replace it. Otherwise the most brutal regimes can claim that it was "the will of the people" that gave them the unlimited right to power. Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin, the Khmer Rouge and Khomeini, to name a few, did just that.

HAMAS TOO was voted into office by the majority of Palestinians who were frustrated and tired of corruption and old-guard Fatah leaders. In that sense, **Hamas**'s legitimacy should be respected.

Tariq Ali, a frequent writer for the Guardian of London, argued recently and went as far as demanding, that this legitimacy should be accorded to **Hamas** and produce solidarity with it. He criticized "the moth-eaten Mubarak dictatorship in Egypt and NATO's favorite Islamists in Ankara" who "failed to register even a symbolic protest by recalling their ambassadors from Israel," and he complained against "China and Russia" for their failure to "convene a meeting of the UN security council to discuss the crisis." "Western enthusiasm for democracy," he bitterly stated, "stops when those opposed to its policies are elected to office."

Ali has the right to demand solidarity, but his stand for democratic principles should be further refined. The recent rounds of escalation started following the withdrawal from Gaza that left the Palestinian government with unprecedented autonomy. That opportunity was used for the hostile takeover of Gaza in June of 2007 which took

Democratic accountability in Gaza

the authority of another elected leader - Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. **Hamas**, which killed hundreds of Fatah supporters and innocent bystanders on its way to power, refused to recognize the previously signed agreements by the elected PA government that addresses, among other issues, the right of Israel to exist. It also chose to intensify the missile campaign aimed at civilians, a campaign that eventually brought the IDF back to Gaza following a count of more than 9,000 rockets.

TOWARD THE end of World War II it was mostly **women** and children that became the primary victims of the allied bombings of Berlin and other German cities. In the aftermath of the war, nearly a million German civilians died of famine alone.

In 1999, during NATO operations in the Balkans, civilian casualties were at least three times the number of Serbian forces' casualties (500 to 170). Interestingly, NATO forces suffered no combat casualties due to the fact that NATO decided to conduct high-altitude aerial attacks and not risk ground troops.

Yet most reasonable people around the world, Germans and Serbs included, realized that what they went through was the natural consequence of their support for such leaders as Hitler and Slobodan Milosevic.

Unfortunately, such responsibility is tragically lacking when it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Palestinian discourse often fails to address the question of responsibility and accountability for Palestinian choices, decisions and leadership. Israel, although not free from mistakes and wrongdoing, is always there as the sole accused.

Josiah Charles Stamp once said, "It is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities." For too long, the Palestinians have been dodging their responsibilities, while blaming others for the consequences of their own leadership's actions.

For the sake of the Palestinians and the future of peace and stability in the region, let us hope that after the latest round of death and destruction this lesson won't be lost. Choices need to be respected, and so do their consequences. But to create a different future, let us hope that the Palestinians will take at least some responsibility for their past. A different choice may yield a different future.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Shedding Light On Mideast Problems

Intelligencer Journal (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)

January 16, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Section: A; Pg. 11

Length: 332 words

Byline: Letters

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

Body

TO THE EDITOR:

As a person who has lived in Jerusalem - connecting on a daily basis with Palestinians and Israelis - perhaps I can shed a little light on the current Gaza tragedy. Most Americans do not understand and are fed a very one-sided view of the conflict in Gaza. We know that Hamas had a truce with Israel that was ended by Hamas in December. We also know that Hamas increased the barrage of rockets into Israel after that truce ended. You may not know that Israel's commitment, as part of that truce, was to ease the flow of food, medicine and other living essentials into Gaza, which they did not do.

What Americans do not understand is that the root cause of this continued conflict is a brutal military occupation on the West Bank and Gaza which has now been going on for 41 years. What we are seeing in the media, in the last weeks, is a highly concentrated and exaggerated image of what all Palestinians have been experiencing as part of the occupation for over 40 years: shooting and beating of innocent Palestinians by Israeli settlers and soldiers, demolition of Palestinian homes (at night) with no legal justification, denial of building permits, pregnant women in need of medical attention denied crossing at any of hundreds of Israeli check points, and the list could go on.

Everybody wrings their hands and says "What is the solution?" Since 2002 there has been a peace proposal on the table that addresses all of Israel's concerns for security, peace and full relations with its Arab neighbors and addresses the issue of Iran. Israel would not need to give up one inch of pre-1967 territory and it would satisfy all of its stated concerns. You can read this entire document by googling "Arab Peace Initiative."

Israeli actions have historically served to radicalize and increase the resolve and anger of those under its military occupation. There is no military solution to either the current crisis in Gaza nor the overall Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Leon Miller, Lancaster

Load-Date: January 16, 2009

UN official: Assault on Gaza not 'legally justified'. Falk says Cast Lead appears to have been 'war crime of greatest magnitude'

The Jerusalem Post

March 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1020 words

Byline: TOVAH LAZAROFF, Hilary Leila Krieger and AP contributed to this report.

Body

UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk charged Tuesday that Israel's military incursion into Gaza "was not legally justified given the circumstances and diplomatic alternatives available, and was potentially a crime against peace."

He made the comment as he presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, claiming that the IDF's 22-day operation in January appeared to be "a war crime of the greatest magnitude."

Falk argued further that Palestinian rocket fire into Israel had been mostly a retaliatory act.

In response, Israel Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Roni Leshno-Yaar, said that Falk's defense of what he called in the report the "Palestinian right of resistance" constituted "poorly veiled" support for terrorism against Israeli citizens.

Leshno-Yaar told the council that Israel had suffered eight years of intentional attacks against its civilians, including women and children, in which Palestinians had launched more than 8,000 rockets into Israel from Gaza.

Underlying his remarks, another rocket was fired at Israel from Gaza on Tuesday, landing south of Ashkelon.

Leshno-Yaar said that when Israel acted in self-defense, "wild accusations are made," but "when Palestinians use the terrorists' tactic - the coward tactic - of using civilians as shields while leaders make pathetic demonstrations of bravado from bunkers in Gaza and luxury hotels in Damascus, this council condemns Israel."

The Falk report, he said, focused on Israeli misdeeds when it was Hamas that had stolen humanitarian aid destined for its own people, stored weapons in mosques, schools and hospitals, and launched attacks from inside homes and adjacent to UN facilities.

In spite of all this, the council, he said "finds fault only in Israel's most basic right - the right to defend its citizens. It is a double standard that offers a searing view of the dangers of abusing this forum for narrow, politicized objectives."

Falk took issue with Israel's argument that Operation Cast Lead had been an act of self-defense.

He faulted Israel for attacking densely populated areas and for sealing Gaza's borders so that civilians were not able to flee the fighting.

UN official: Assault on Gaza not 'legally justified'. Falk says Cast Lead appears to have been 'war crime of greatest magnitude'

"It was certainly foreseeable that hospitals, religious and educational sites and United Nations facilities would be hit... and that extensive civilian casualties would result," he said.

While Israel has said that the majority of those it killed were Hamas terrorists, Falk claimed that only 235 of the 1,434 of the Palestinians fatalities were combatants and another 239 were policemen.

Of the 960 civilians who lost their lives, 288 were children and 121 women, he said.

Falk said that 5,303 Palestinians were wounded, including 1,606 children and 838 women.

An estimated 21,000 homes were destroyed or damaged and 51,000 people were displaced, he said.

The level of destruction, he said, went well beyond anything that could be characterized as a mistake.

"It is not a matter of mistakes and fallibility but rather a massive assault on a densely populated urbanized setting where the defining reality could not but subject the entire civilian population to an inhuman form of warfare that kills, maims and inflicts mental harm," said Falk.

Israel could have protected its civilian population by extending a cease-fire with Hamas that expired in December rather than attacking innocent people in Gaza, Falk said.

While Israel has repeatedly argued that Palestinian rocket attacks were unprovoked, Falk claimed that in the six months that proceeded Operation Cast Lead, it was largely Israel that had failed to observe the cease-fire and it was Hamas which had retaliated.

From 2000 to 2008, he said, in 79 percent of violent flare-ups between the IDF and Palestinians in Gaza, it was Israel that had broken the calm with an act of violence.

The cease-fire, in the second half of 2008, he said, broke down when Israel killed a Palestinian in Gaza on November 4. This was followed by mortar fire in retaliation. An IDF air strike was then launched that killed an additional six Palestinians.

"The breakdown of the cease-fire seems to have been mainly a result of Israeli violations, although this offers no legal, moral or political excuse for firing of rockets aimed at civilian targets," said Falk.

Hamas, he said, would have been ready to extend the cease-fire if Israel had reopened its borders.

Falk said Israel had violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, which regulated the actions of an occupying power and rejected Israel contention that since it withdrew from Gaza it was no longer bound by those laws.

Israel is obligated to that convention given that it controls the Gaza borders, including the sea and airspace, said Falk.

"By imposing a blockade since the summer of 2007, it has profoundly affected the life and well being of every single person in Gaza," said Falk.

"It is disquieting that other Israeli officials have made formal statements to the effect of taking all necessary steps to protect any member of the Israel Defense Force from being accused, and if excused, to prevent indictment and prosecution."

Falk added that such statements show that Israel has no intention to cooperate with any serious investigation and noted that he himself had been barred by Israel for entering Gaza.

As a result, he said, the UN might have to rely more heavily on data provided by non-governmental bodies.

UN official: Assault on Gaza not 'legally justified'. Falk says Cast Lead appears to have been 'war crime of greatest magnitude'

He noted that since the UN secretary-general and its human rights commissioner had already called for an investigation of war crimes against Israel, he did not have to do so.

Falk did, however, recommend that a similar investigation of war crimes be conducted against **Hamas**, particularly for its firing of rockets at civilians, the use of its own citizen population as human shields and its abuse of the protected status of certain structures to hide weapons.

Already on Monday, the US State Department spokesman Robert Wood preempted Falk's report by saying that it found his views on Israel "to be anything but fair. We find them to be biased. We've made that very clear."

But Wood added that the US would do nothing to prevent a UN investigation into Israeli actions in Gaza.

Graphic

Photo: A SCHOOL in Beit Lahiya destroyed by the IDF in January remains in ruins yesterday. Israeli Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Roni Leshno-Yaar noted in response to a harsh report from UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk that **Hamas** had stored weapons in schools. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

TD calls for ambassador's expulsion as Evrony defends offensive

Irish Examiner

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: IRELAND

Length: 332 words

Body

Chris Andrews declared that international sanctions be instigated against Israel.

The Israeli ambassador, Zion Evrony, defended Israel's offensive in Gaza, declaring that **Hamas** militants were unlike the IRA and not open to change.

Tensions flared during the appearance of Israeli and Palestinian representatives at an Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ambassadors from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malaysia, the Czech Republic, India and Chile and diplomats from Britain, Finland, Spain and Morocco were present.

Mr Andrews said he had witnessed Israel's blockade of Gaza during a visit six weeks ago: "Israel has descended to a level of such brutality that it can only be classified as a terrorist state."

Israel had ignored the UN and was "acting as a rogue state", the TD said.

Evrony claimed for eight years a quarter of a million Israelis had suffered the trauma of regular **Hamas** rocket and mortar attacks.

"Try to imagine Dublin with 8,000 missile attacks day after day, night after night. What would you do? What would you expect the Taoiseach to do?" he said.

Evrony argues that **Hamas** were unlike the IRA and wanted to solely live by religious terms and were not open to change.

The ambassador admitted Israeli forces were using phosphorous munitions but said these were legal.

The head of the General Delegation of Palestine in Ireland, Hikmat Ajjuri, said Israel had failed to implement 30 Security Council resolutions.

He said half of the hundreds of people killed and thousands injured in Gaza were **women** and children and this had transformed the region from "a big prison into an abattoir".

TD calls for ambassador's expulsion as Evrony defends offensive

Attacks against Gaza, the most densely populated area on earth and half the size of Louth, had also seen support grow for Israeli ministers ahead of an election next month, Ajjuri said.

Labour's Michael D Higgins called for an immediate cease-fire in the region.

The committee agreed to summon the Iranian ambassador to appear over allegations Iranian rockets were being smuggled into Gaza and fired into Israel.

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

End of Document

Ball is in Israel's court

The Star (South Africa)
January 14, 2009 Wednesday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 18

Length: 342 words

Body

The innocent Palestinians, particularly women and children, being blown away in Gaza by indiscriminate Israeli bombing cry out for mercy. So do the Israelis hit by rockets fired by Hamas.

It was inevitable that Israel would respond to the constant rain of rockets which has been creating persistent terror in its population for eight years. No state can take that lying down.

But it is the disproportionate scale of Israel's assault that is appalling; compared to about 60 Israelis killed by rockets over those years, and 13 Israelis killed since the offensive began on December 27, more than 900 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, many of them women and children.

We understand that warfare is not conducted according to sporting rules; protagonists try to overpower their enemies to minimise their own casualties, especially when responding to an attack. And we understand that, as the tiny state of a people who have nearly suffered extermination, Israel feels a peculiar existential anxiety; it has to retaliate hard to any provocation to deter its many surrounding enemies from further and possibly terminal attack.

It is also true that Palestinians in Gaza have been confined to the most highly populated ghetto in the world, living under the most inhumane conditions imaginable. A revolt was inevitable.

Israel must also realise that in the end, life is about individuals, and that it is exterminating many of them and causing untold grief to many more, not to mention fuelling hatred and future aggression against itself.

This war must end now, but when it does, the world must apply itself to resolving the causes. It cannot continue, as it has done for the past eight years, to ignore the Hamas rocket assault on Israel; nor can it ignore the plight of the Palestinians, not only in Gaza but in the West Bank and in refugee camps elsewhere.

Ultimately, Israel can't destroy Hamas, militarily or politically. It's only chance of peaceful coexistence is an all-inclusive settlement with Palestinians based on the principle of a two-state solution.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

IDF probe of Cast Lead reveals 'intelligence, operational mistakes'. 'But forces acted in accordance with int'l law and made great efforts to minimize civilian casualties'

The Jerusalem Post
April 23, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1040 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

The IDF made several "intelligence and operational mistakes" during Operation Cast Lead that cost civilian lives, but overall operated in accordance with international law and in an ethical and professional way, Deputy Chief of General Staff Maj.-Gen. Dan Harel said on Wednesday.

He was presenting findings from five separate probes into the operation.

Following the 22-day offensive in January, Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi appointed five colonels to lead investigations into a number of allegations made against the IDF.

One probe focused on claims that the army targeted United Nations facilities and vehicles, while another looked into alleged attacks against Palestinian medical facilities, teams and vehicles.

A third probe focused on several alleged attacks against innocent Gazans; another investigated the IDF's use of white phosphorus weaponry and the fifth examined the damage caused to infrastructure and Palestinian homes by ground forces.

The overall conclusion was that the army operated in accordance with international laws and made great efforts to minimize civilian casualties, Harel said.

The probes also uncovered a number of cases in which the IDF made mistakes in the midst of the fighting that led to the deaths of several dozen innocent Palestinians.

"These are unfortunate but inevitable events that happen during a conflict," Harel said. "Especially in the type of fighting that **Hamas** forced upon the IDF when it chose to take shelter and fight in the midst of a civilian population."

Among the "intelligence and operational mistakes" was the bombing on January 6 of the Dawiya family home in the Zeitoun neighborhood in southern Gaza City, in which 21 people were reported killed.

The probe, conducted by former Golani Brigade commander Col. Tamir Yidai, discovered that an intelligence mistake led the air force to target the wrong building.

IDF probe of Cast Lead reveals 'intelligence, operational mistakes'. 'But forces acted in accordance with int'l law and made great efforts to minimize civilian

The army had received intelligence on a home two buildings down the block from the Dawiya house that was storing weaponry for Hamas. The IDF even called the correct home to warn the residents to evacuate it before the bombing.

The next step included dropping a warning munition on the roof of the building, but the IAF was given the wrong coordinates and dropped the munition on the Dawiya house and then bombed it. The IDF explained that the incident was regretful but was something that could happen in the middle of a conflict.

The IDF identified 1,166 Palestinians who were killed during the Gaza operation, of whom 709 were Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists, Harel said.

In addition, 295 of the dead were women, children and elderly people, while the remaining 162 were men between the ages of 16 and 45 who were not identified as affiliated with a terrorist organization.

While there are still some 70 teams probing various IDF units, Harel said that to date the military had not found a single incident in which an Israeli soldier purposely aimed and fired at innocent civilians.

"We have not found even one case of a soldier targeting innocent civilians during the operation," Harel said. "The investigations continue and if we will find a case it will be dealt with harshly."

As reported in The Jerusalem Post, far fewer Palestinians were killed by an IDF mortar attack against a Hamas terrorist cell near a UN compound in Jabalya on January 6 than was originally reported.

Palestinians claimed that more than 40 people were killed. The army investigation revealed that 12-17 people were killed and that at least five of them were Hamas terrorists who had fired mortars at IDF troops.

Regarding the IDF's use of white phosphorus during the operation, which drew international condemnation and accusations that Israel was committing war crimes, a probe discovered that in all cases it was used in accordance with international law.

White phosphorus was used in a type of shell fired by mortar squads, as well as by the navy, which fired a 76 mm cannon that every few rounds also fires a white-phosphorus shell to help track targets.

In addition, the IDF fired some 3,000 155 mm artillery shells - which looked like exploding octopuses in the air - that are not white-phosphorus weapons and are used exclusively to create smoke to screens troop movements.

The probe, conducted by artillery officer Col. Shai Alkalai, revealed that white phosphorus weapons were used strictly in open fields and not in urban centers.

The weapon was also not used against terrorists, but for marking and ranging when the forces targeted Kassam rocket cells operating in open areas.

The IDF said it knew of only one case when white phosphorus was used for its burning capacity. That incident also took place in an open field, to burn away shrubbery and uncover tunnel openings.

The army said that the use of the weapon in that incident was also in line with international regulations.

While the IDF was not required to, on January 7, the General Staff decided to stop using white phosphorus.

Alkali discovered three instances where forces continued to use the weapon despite the order - but this was because these units had not yet received the new directive. Once they did, use of the weapon was halted.

The IDF said it would reconsider the use of white phosphorus in a future conflict with Hamas in Gaza.

Following the released of the findings, Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that the "investigations proved again that the IDF is among the most moral militaries in the world.

IDF probe of Cast Lead reveals 'intelligence, operational mistakes'. 'But forces acted in accordance with int'l law and made great efforts to minimize civilian

"We express regret for every civilian casualty, but we must stress that the exclusive responsibility for this lies with Hamas," he said.

Human rights groups were highly critical of the investigations.

Ten Israeli organizations said the results were "very problematic. Military investigation results published today refer to dozens of innocent Palestinian civilians killed by 'rare mishaps' in Gaza during 'Operation Cast Lead,'" the statement read. "However, data collected by Israeli human rights organizations shows that many civilians were killed in Gaza not due to 'mishaps' but as a direct result of the military's chosen policy implemented throughout the fighting. The only way to investigate violations of human rights committed in Gaza is by establishing an external, extra-military investigation mechanism."

Graphic

Photo: AN IDF mobile artillery piece fires at Gaza on January 17. (Credit: Bernat Armangue/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Israel goes to polls

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 4

Length: 1043 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel's election has suddenly become too close to call, though hardliners will have a clear edge in the horse trading that is sure to follow Tuesday's vote. Whoever emerges victorious will likely have little to celebrate, with polls pointing toward a fractious coalition government and a period of political paralysis. That could complicate international efforts to create a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and pose big challenges to the new U.S. president, who has made Middle East peace a top priority. The race pits former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who opposes giving up land in the name of peace, against Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, a centrist who hopes to become the country's first female leader in nearly 40 years.

For months, opinion polls have predicted a decisive victory by Netanyahu's Likud party. But new polls released over the weekend showed Livni's Kadima party closing.

the gap. Neither, however, is expected to get more than 30 seats in the 120-seat parliament, meaning the winner will have to form a coalition with smaller parties.

Netanyahu seems to be in a far better position to lead the country, since his natural allies in the nationalist right wing of Israeli politics are all polling well. In particular, Netanyahu's former protege, Avigdor Lieberman, appears poised to make huge gains on a platform that calls for Israeli Arabs to swear loyalty to the state or lose citizenship.

While Livni could still eke out a victory, it appears mathematically impossible for her to form a coalition without bringing in Lieberman or some other hardline party. That would hinder her ability to pursue a peace agreement with the Palestinians, as she has promised to do.

"It seems it is going to be decisive, the right wing is probably going to have the majority," said Avraham Diskin, a Hebrew University political scientist who is the chief statistician for Israel's Central Election Commission.

The strength of the Israeli right is a reflection of the times. Israel recently wrapped up a three-week offensive against the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. The campaign came just over two years after an offensive against Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

Israel goes to polls

These conflicts have reinforced a sense that the Jewish state is surrounded by enemies and left a public highly skeptical about the prospects for peace. Throughout the campaign, Livni and Netanyahu have tried to outdo each other with their threats against Hamas.

"In the end, there won't be a choice but to topple the Hamas government in Gaza," Netanyahu told the French-language Guysen TV on Monday. "That's clear. The job wasn't completed in the latest operation and we will have to compete it later."

Netanyahu has tried to capitalize on the country's mood by criticizing the current peace efforts with Hamas' rival, the moderate Palestinian government in the West Bank.

Livni, who has been the government's chief negotiator, wants to continue the talks, which would require a large West Bank withdrawal as part of an agreement. She has repeatedly urged voters to choose "hope" over "fear."

Although Netanyahu has talked of forming a broadbased government, he has taken great pains to stress his hardline credentials in the closing days of the campaign - a direct result of Lieberman's growing popularity.

Over the weekend, he visited a West Bank settlement overlooking Israel's international airport and vowed never to withdraw from the area. On Sunday, he travelled to the Golan Heights and declared he would never return the strategic plateau to Syria.

POSITIONS

JERUSALEM (AP) -- Key campaign issues and positions of the main parties for Israel's Feb.10 election.

BORDERS

The centrist Kadima party of Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni wants to determine Israel's final borders based on the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan. The centre-left Labour party, led by Defence Minister Ehud Barak, also supports peace talks and retaining major settlement blocs. The hawkish Likud party of former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said it is willing to make limited territorial concessions, but only after the Palestinians halt violence and disarms militant groups.

THE PALESTINIANS

There is broad consensus across the mainstream Israeli parties that there can be no talks with Hamas, the Islamic militant group that controls the Gaza Strip.

Both Kadima and Labour are willing to seek a peace deal with Hamas' rival, moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, though they say there can be no final agreement until he regains control of Gaza.

Likud does not believe Abbas is capable of implementing a peace deal.

THE SAUDI PEACE PROPOSAL

Kadima and Labour are willing to negotiate over the plan, which calls for an Israeli withdrawal to pre-1967 borders in exchange for a sweeping Middle East peace.

Likud and Lieberman oppose it.

QUICK GLANCE

JERUSALEM (AP) -- Key facts about Israel's general election:

WHAT'S AT STAKE: Voters will elect a 120-member parliament, or Knesset, Israel's 18th.

Israel goes to polls

Citizens vote for party lists, not individual candidates. Seats are allocated in the Knesset according to the percentage of the vote the parties win.

WHO'S RUNNING: Thirty-three parties are fielding candidates. Key parties are the governing Kadima party, led by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Israel's chief negotiator with the Palestinians and a supporter of conciliation with the Arab world; Likud, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, a former prime minister who takes a hard line against the Palestinians, and Labour, headed by Defence Minister Ehud Barak, another former prime minister and a retired army chief who won widespread public approval for his role as pointman in Israel's three-week offensive against **Hamas** in Gaza last month.

FORMING A GOVERNMENT: In Israel's 60-year history, no party has ever won an outright majority of 61 seats, and the country has always been governed by a coalition.

THE VOTE: There are 5,278,985 eligible voters. Voter turnout in the last election in 2006 was 63.2 per cent, the lowest in Israel's history.

Election day is a national holiday, and workers have the day off.

ISRAEL BY THE NUMBERS:

Population: 7.2 million of whom 75 per cent (5.5 million) are Jews, 20 per cent (1.4 million) are Arabs and the rest are classified as "others," most of them non-Jewish immigrants.

Per capita GDP: \$28,900

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

'Trauma drives West's denial of Iran's genocidal anti- Semitism'

The Jerusalem Post

May 3, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 749 words

Byline: BENJAMIN WEINTHAL, Jerusalem Post correspondent

Body

BERLIN - The West is ignoring Iranian genocidal anti- Semitism due to a psychological "trauma model," according to an Israeli professor.

Dr. Hadar Lubin, co-director of the post-traumatic stress center in New Haven, Connecticut, and an assistant clinical professor in the department of psychiatry at Yale University, delivered a talk on "Trauma in Disguise: Antisemitism" at a conference last week.

There is an "identification with the aggressor out of fear" that the perpetrator will cause further harm, Lubin told The Jerusalem Post. This helps to explain why the Iranian "threat to annihilate Israel, which is very straightforward, very alarming, is ignored by the West," she said.

The Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA), the first US-based institute devoted exclusively to academic research covering rising global Jew-hatred, hosted the conference titled, "The Psychological Impact of the Threat of Contemporary Genocidal Antisemitism: From Denial and Paralysis to Understanding the Challenge," sought answers on such topics as the West's failure to fathom Islamic anti-Semitism in the Muslim world and Iran's aim to obliterate Israel.

Lubin cited the "collusion of silence" that often accompanies child abuse as a model for understanding the international community's failure to fathom the seriousness of Iran's threats. The strengthening of the perpetrator - Iran - is leading not only to increased persecution of Jews but also of other groups in Iran, according to Lubin. "Bahais and moderate Iranians are being killed, and women and scholars are subjected to repression," she said.

Dr. Neil Kressel, a visiting associate professor at YIISA and a professor of psychology at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, told the Post the denial of Iranian genocidal anti-Semitism revolved around "disagreements about what anti-Semitism is." A telling example, according to Kressel, was the argument that "they do not hate Jews but hate Zionists." That explanation did not "hold water," but rather involved "denying actual anti-Semitism," he said.

The YIISA's director, Dr. Charles Small, said in a statement that "anti-Semitism begins with Jews, but never ends with Jews. Reactionary forces seem to be gaining strength, and anti-Semitism and hatred seem to be spreading. It is imperative that as scholars we examine the social reality of these phenomena. In doing so, it is our intention to contribute to a greater understanding and to find solutions to these pressing problems.

We know from history that these issues will not disappear on their own," he said.

'Trauma drives West's denial of Iran 's genocidal anti- Semitism'

YIISA was the brainchild of Small, an Oxford University-trained academic who has taught at both Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

"Coaching for Killing: What Motivational Mechanisms Underlie Islamist Terrorists' Ideology" was the title of Dr. Idit Shalev's research project and lecture at the conference. Shalev, an Israeli Post-Doctorate at YIISA and psychologist, told the Post that she examined the Hamas Charter and how it functions as a "manual of behavior" for its followers. The Hamas Charter "contains symbols" such as the "Protocols of Zion" and the "contextual cue" of money, which appears frequently in the charter, and serve to stoke anti-Semitism as a motivational force, she said.

Many Western European politicians are advocating talks with Hamas but ignore or downplay the violent anti-Semitism of Hamas, according to critics. A leading German Green Party politician, JYrgen Trittin, urged Europe in February to negotiate with Hamas. A study commissioned by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), who co-sponsored the YIISA conference, found in a December/January poll that 31 percent of Europeans blamed Jews in the financial industry for the economic meltdown, while 58% of those asked said their opinion of Jews had worsened because of events in Israel.

The ADL polled 3,500 adults in Austria, France, Hungary, Poland, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom.

David Warren, the Regional ADL Director in Connecticut, told the Post, "We are proud to have cooperated with YIISA in developing this interdisciplinary forum to understand the psychology of contemporary anti-Semitism and its societal impact. ADL is the leading provider of programs counteracting anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry. Our collaboration with YIISA enriches ADL's work as we develop cutting edge strategies and initiatives to address the kinds of issues explored during the conference."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Dr. Fadl & the moralists

The Jerusalem Post

April 24, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 780 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

Sayyid Imam al-Sharif - known as Dr. Fadl - was an early "spiritual" leader of al-Qaida and inspiration of Egypt's Islamic Jihad, which assassinated Anwar Sadat. In the wake of 9/11, he was arrested in Yemen. Today, sitting in an Egyptian prison and having experienced an epiphany, he spends his days writing on Islamic jurisprudence.

As Israel Television's Arab affairs analyst Oded Granot reported, Dr. Fadl recently launched a religious attack on the way **Hamas** conducted the recent Gaza war. The prophet Muhammad, he declared, would not have authorized the battle; and Allah will hold **Hamas** leaders accountable for every drop of Muslim blood spilled.

Granot's report came just as the preliminary results of the IDF's probe of civilian casualties in Operation Cast Lead were released. Five military investigative teams reviewed how our armed forces conducted themselves in the recent fighting. They examined incidents involving UN or international facilities fired upon; medical buildings, ambulances and crews shot at; numbers of civilians harmed; use of weaponry containing phosphorous; and, finally, damage caused to infrastructure and buildings.

WHEN Israel withdrew from Gaza in summer 2005, the Palestinian leadership wasted no time in turning the Strip into the prototype of the "Palestine" they hope to create, firing thousands of rockets and mortars at our civilian population. The people of Sderot and the surrounding Negev communities were traumatized; homes, schools, synagogues and parks were damaged. Life became close to intolerable. In December 2008, after **Hamas** refused to renew a de-facto cease-fire arranged under Egyptian auspices, Israel finally struck back.

To warn civilians away from areas about to come under bombardment, the IDF dropped 2,250,000 warning leaflets. It commandeered enemy radio frequencies, and made 165,000 automated telephone calls alerting individual Gazans. It used costly but highly accurate munitions. And it authorized humanitarian convoys to enter Gaza - indeed, it halted offensive activities for several hours a day to allow Palestinian civilians to obtain basic necessities.

While our army was attempting to minimize civilian casualties, the enemy's forces operated largely under cover of those civilians. Violating the elementary rules of war, Palestinian gunmen utilized residential dwellings, hospitals, mosques, schools and UN and other international agency buildings. Ismail Haniyeh chose Shifa Hospital as his headquarters, his gunmen camouflaging themselves as doctors and nurses. Red Crescent Society ambulances were used to smuggle fighters and weapons.

And still, according to these preliminary results, the IDF managed to operate in accordance with international law. Grossly irresponsible accusations recently aired by several Hebrew media outlets claiming that soldiers intentionally or recklessly targeted Palestinian civilians were, according to the probe, baseless.

Dr. Fadl & the moralists

SADLY, wars claim the lives of innocents: 150,000- 200,000 in current intra-Muslim fighting in Algeria; 25,000-50,000 in Muslim-Russian fighting in Chechnya; and, since the US ousted Saddam Hussein, 600,000-1.2 million in Iraq, to cite just a few examples.

In the course of the Gaza fighting, the IDF killed 709 enemy combatants and 295 civilians (the identities of 162 other male dead have not been established). There is not an iota of proof that Israeli forces willfully killed a single civilian. And yet - because Hamas embedded itself among its own population - innocents died. To cite one ghastly blunder, 21 members of the Daya family were killed on January 6 because Israeli forces hit their home instead of the weapons depot just next door.

Some 600 structures were destroyed, either when gunmen shot from inside them, or because they served as armories; or to provide our troops with safe passage around booby- trapped buildings.

Will the IDF's probe lead media outlets to retract their assertion that "1,300 Palestinians, mostly women and children, were killed"? Probably not. Will it make Israel's human rights community, or the foreign governments and foundations who bankroll them, stop claiming that the army is lying, or even inject greater caution into their critiques? Unlikely. At root, the army's critics are frustrated by the link between the IDF's determination to minimize its own casualties (disparaged as "zero-risk" doctrine) and the number of enemy non-combatants killed. They see Israel's refusal to play into Hamas's human shields strategy as unethical. For them, too few of our sons came home in body bags.

Which tells us that Dr. Fadl now has a better grip on right and wrong than certain morally obtuse human rights advocates.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Israel on Trial

The New York Times

April 4, 2009 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Length: 813 words

Byline: By GEORGE BISHARAT

George Bisharat is a professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law.

Dateline: San Francisco

Body

CHILLING testimony by Israeli soldiers substantiates charges that Israel's Gaza Strip assault entailed grave violations of international law. The emergence of a predominantly right-wing, nationalist government in Israel suggests that there may be more violations to come. **Hamas**'s indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli civilians also constituted war crimes, but do not excuse Israel's transgressions. While Israel disputes some of the soldiers' accounts, the evidence suggests that Israel committed the following six offenses:

Violating its duty to protect the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. Despite Israel's 2005 "disengagement" from Gaza, the territory remains occupied. Israel unleashed military firepower against a people it is legally bound to protect.

Imposing collective punishment in the form of a blockade, in violation of Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In June 2007, after **Hamas** took power in the Gaza Strip, Israel imposed suffocating restrictions on trade and movement. The blockade -- an act of war in customary international law -- has helped plunge families into poverty, children into malnutrition, and patients denied access to medical treatment into their graves. People in Gaza thus faced Israel's winter onslaught in particularly weakened conditions.

Deliberately attacking civilian targets. The laws of war permit attacking a civilian object only when it is making an effective contribution to military action and a definite military advantage is gained by its destruction. Yet an Israeli general, Dan Harel, said, "We are hitting not only terrorists and launchers, but also the whole **Hamas** government and all its wings." An Israeli military spokeswoman, Maj. Avital Leibovich, avowed that "anything affiliated with **Hamas** is a legitimate target."

Israeli fire destroyed or damaged mosques, hospitals, factories, schools, a key sewage plant, institutions like the parliament, the main ministries, the central prison and police stations, and thousands of houses.

Willfully killing civilians without military justification. When civilian institutions are struck, civilians -- persons who are not members of the armed forces of a warring party, and are not taking direct part in hostilities -- are killed.

Israel on Trial

International law authorizes killings of civilians if the objective of the attack is military, and the means are proportional to the advantage gained. Yet proportionality is irrelevant if the targets of attack were not military to begin with. Gaza government employees -- traffic policemen, court clerks, secretaries and others -- are not combatants merely because Israel considers Hamas, the governing party, a terrorist organization. Many countries do not regard violence against foreign military occupation as terrorism.

Of 1,434 Palestinians killed in the Gaza invasion, 960 were civilians, including 121 women and 288 children, according to a United Nations special rapporteur, Richard Falk. Israeli military lawyers instructed army commanders that Palestinians who remained in a targeted building after having been warned to leave were "voluntary human shields," and thus combatants. Israeli gunners "knocked on roofs" -- that is, fired first at corners of buildings, before hitting more vulnerable points -- to "warn" Palestinian residents to flee.

With nearly all exits from the densely populated Gaza Strip blocked by Israel, and chaos reigning within it, this was a particularly cruel flaunting of international law. Willful killings of civilians that are not required by military necessity are grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, and are considered war crimes under the Nuremberg principles.

Deliberately employing disproportionate force. Last year, Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, head of Israel's northern command, speaking on possible future conflicts with neighbors, stated, "We will wield disproportionate power against every village from which shots are fired on Israel, and cause immense damage and destruction." Such a frank admission of illegal intent can constitute evidence in a criminal prosecution.

Illegal use of weapons, including white phosphorus. Israel was finally forced to admit, after initial denials, that it employed white phosphorous in the Gaza Strip, though Israel defended its use as legal. White phosphorous may be legally used as an obscurant, not as a weapon, as it burns deeply and is extremely difficult to extinguish.

Israeli political and military personnel who planned, ordered or executed these possible offenses should face criminal prosecution. The appointment of Richard Goldstone, the former war crimes prosecutor from South Africa, to head a fact-finding team into possible war crimes by both parties to the Gaza conflict is an important step in the right direction. The stature of international law is diminished when a nation violates it with impunity.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: April 4, 2009

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Why Congress supports Israel

The Salt Lake Tribune
January 18, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Columnists

Length: 597 words

Byline: By Stephen Zunes And Kevin Martin The Progressive Media Project

Body

Congress is woefully out of step on the issue of Israel's invasion of Gaza.

Israel's bombings and incursions have killed more than 1,100 Palestinians, hundreds of them women and children. Meanwhile, nine Israeli soldiers have died and Hamas rockets have killed four Israeli civilians.

But this disproportionate response by Israel has received overwhelming support in Congress.

On Jan. 8, the Senate passed its resolution by unanimous consent, vigorously endorsing Israel's actions and blaming only Hamas.

The following day, the House of Representatives passed its own version of the resolution by a margin of 390 in favor to 5 against, with 22 voting "present" (presumably to register discomfort with the measure without voting "no"). This resolution, astonishingly, even blamed Hamas for all the Palestinian deaths.

This lopsided vote in Congress does not reflect U.S. public opinion, however. While polls continue to indicate a strong commitment among the American people to Israel's right to live in peace and security, there appears to be far less support for providing Israel with a blank check, such as defending Israeli violations of international humanitarian law. In contrast to the near-unanimous support by Democrats on Capitol Hill, a recent Rasmussen poll shows that Democratic voters, by a more than two to one margin, oppose Israel's disproportionate attack.

Why, then, is Congress so far behind American public opinion? And why are congressional Democrats ignoring their own voter base? It is not just the influence of the hard-line American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and others in the self-appointed "pro-Israel lobby." It is also because most elected officials have failed to recognize the dramatic shift in attitudes among ordinary Americans, particularly younger voters, who believe that, just as Israel should not be unfairly singled out for criticism, Israel should not be singled out as somehow exempt from international norms of behavior.

This growing opposition to unconditional U.S. support for Israel's massive assault comes not from any sympathy for the extremists of Hamas or from opposition to Israel's right to self-defense. It comes from the liberal mainstream of peace groups, human rights organizations, churches and the young activists who helped elect Barack Obama in November.

It also includes a growing number of American Jews who recognize that the large-scale killing of Palestinian civilians does not make Israel safer.

Why Congress supports Israel

Few Democrats on Capitol Hill seem to be aware of this shift among the broad progressive populace and how non-representative of their core constituency they are on this issue.

Similarly, many of these younger progressive voters who support a more balanced policy toward Israel and Palestine probably don't realize just how far to the right many of their otherwise-liberal senators and representatives are.

This combination is probably why Congress continues to get away with supporting Israeli aggression. The problem may be less the power of AIPAC than the failure of the larger number of more moderate voices to mobilize comparable pressure on Congress.

The time to mobilize that pressure is now.

Stephen Zunes is professor of politics at the University of San Francisco. Kevin Martin is executive director of Peace Action (www.peace-action.org). The writers wrote this for Progressive Media Project, a source of liberal commentary on domestic and international issues; it is affiliated with The Progressive magazine.

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Load-Date: January 18, 2009

The Gaza docket; Israel III

The International Herald Tribune

April 7, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 823 words

Byline: George Bisharat - The New York Times

Dateline: SAN FRANCISCO

Body

Chilling testimony by Israeli soldiers substantiates charges that Israel's Gaza Strip assault entailed grave violations of international law. The emergence of a predominantly right-wing, nationalist government in Israel suggests that there may be more violations to come. **Hamas**' indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli civilians also constituted war crimes, but do not excuse Israel's transgressions. While Israel disputes some of the soldiers' accounts, the evidence suggests that Israel committed the following six offenses:

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The Gaza docket Israel III

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George Bisharat

is a professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law.

Load-Date: April 28, 2009

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UN agency hit as Israeli leaders consider ceasefire; GAZA CRISIS

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 16, 2009 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 7

Length: 549 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS IN JERUSALEM

Body

THE UN Relief and Works Agency in Gaza City came under attack from Israeli shelling last night. A UN spokesman, Christopher Gunness told the Herald the compound had been struck by three rounds of white phosphorous and several buildings were on fire.

The attack came as Israel considers a ceasefire deal proposed by Egypt and accepted by **Hamas**. As Israel's war on **Hamas** entered its 21st day, the death toll stood at 1033 Palestinians killed, including 322 children and 76 **women**, with 4850 wounded.

Despite signs that agreement on a ceasefire was near, Israeli tanks and troops maintained a tight circle around Gaza City and other densely populated areas of the 360-square-kilometre territory and the Israeli Air Force continued nightly bombing raids. Israel Army Radio reported 70 targets were hit on Thursday, killing 35 **Hamas** fighters.

A senior Israeli Defence official, General Amos Gilad, arrived in Cairo last night to discuss Egypt's plan for stopping arms smuggling into Gaza.

Hamas wants a full withdrawal of Israeli troops as part of a ceasefire and a detailed plan for the opening of the border-crossing points into and out of the territory.

Egypt and Israel want forces loyal to the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and his Fatah party, to take control of the border between Egypt and Gaza.

General Gilad was scheduled to return to Jerusalem early this morning to present the Egyptian plan to the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, the Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, and the Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni. If they approve the plan, it will go to the Israeli security cabinet for government approval.

General Gilad had twice cancelled plans to travel to Cairo last week, so his visit last night was interpreted as a sign of significant progress.

Israel is also pushing a plan that would involve building a perimeter fence that enclosed the border city of Rafah, half of which is in Gaza and the other half in Egypt.

Densely populated on both sides, Rafah is used as a hub for smuggling arms and consumer goods into Gaza.

UN agency hit as Israeli leaders consider ceasefire GAZA CRISIS

Israeli security officials said that smuggling could only be stopped by enclosing the whole of Rafah inside a security fence policed by Egypt.

"Between Rafah and Cairo is the Sinai desert, so if you build the fence outside Rafah, it's very easy to see what's going in and out, and it's impossible to tunnel under the fence and into the desert without being seen," General Giora Eiland, a former director of Israel's National Security Council, told the Herald.

Before Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, General Eiland had responsibility for preventing smuggling. "Because Rafah is so densely populated on both sides, it is impossible to prevent tunnels from one side to the other. A fence around Rafah is the only way," he said.

The director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Aharon Abramovitch, left for Washington last night to present demands that the US work for the prevention of arms smuggling from Iran to Gaza before the arms reach Egypt.

Israel has asked the US to provide guarantees for smuggling prevention by means of increased sea and land patrols, and by imposing tighter sanctions on Iran. According to the understandings that are being formulated, American activity will also take intelligence provided by Israel into account.

Load-Date: January 15, 2009

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Israel pushes deep into Gaza City; Palestinians say residents waving white flags shot dead as they flee their homes

The Independent (London)
January 14, 2009 Wednesday
First Edition

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The  **INDEPENDENT**

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 555 words

Byline: Kim Sengupta and Donald Macintyre IN JERUSALEM

Body

ISRAELI FORCES said they had pushed deeper into Gaza City amid heavy fighting, with some units within a mile of the densely populated urban centre. Terrified residents were said to be fleeing from many homes which had been set alight.

At least three Palestinians in Gaza were shot dead yesterday after Israeli soldiers fired on a group of residents leaving their homes on orders from the military and waving white flags, according to testimony taken by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem.

The testimony was rejected by the military after what it said was a preliminary investigation.

The thrust by Israeli ground forces into Tel Hawwa was the furthest the Israelis had gone into Gaza City since military operations were launched on 27 December. Meanwhile, Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, declared that he would press forward with an "iron fist". While his government in Jerusalem is claiming that Hamas's military capabilities have been severely damaged, its senior intelligence sources have revealed that only a "few hundred" of the movement's 20,000 men have been killed, including several of its key leaders.

The officials also stated that Hamas still had significant supplies of rockets left in their arsenal despite firing several hundred of them into Israel since military operations began.

However, Lieutenant-General Gabi Ashkenazi, the Israeli chief of staff, told Israeli MPs: "We have achieved a lot in hitting Hamas and its infrastructure ???but there is still work ahead." Israeli aircraft carried out 60 raids yesterday.

As Palestinian hospital officials revealed that the death toll has risen to at least 952, half of them women and children, John Ging, the UN Relief and Works Agency's director of operations in Gaza, called on the international community to protect civilians in Gaza; he also wants a full investigation into allegations that Israeli military forces have used illegal weapons.

Israel pushes deep into Gaza City Palestinians say residents waving white flags shot dead as they flee their homes

On the relatively peaceful West Bank, a Palestinian man was killed after he tried to grab a gun from an Israeli soldier in Hebron and a 15-year-old boy was shot near the city of Qalqiliya while throwing stones at a road used by soldiers and settlers. Palestinian officials said a settler had fired the fatal shot.

The UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, is heading to the region for talks with leaders in Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Syria. He said: "My message is simple: the fighting must stop. To both sides, I say: Just stop now."

In Gaza, Munir Shafik al-Najar told B'Tselem that members of his extended family started trying to leave their homes after the Israeli army began demolishing buildings in the area of Kuza- 'a, close to the Israeli border with southeastern Gaza. Mr Najar said the Israeli soldiers were using gunfire to signify that residents should leave, but then started shooting "indiscriminately".

He testified that his relative Rawhiya had stepped out of the family-owned building, one of whose walls had been destroyed by a bulldozer, expecting her family to follow, but she was shot. The military subsequently attacked another group escaping leaving two more of his relatives dead. The military said late last night that it had found the claim to be "without foundation".

Netanyahu calls for Hamas to be crippled and removed

World, pages 20 & 21

A Rabbi's plea for peace in Gaza

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, page 31

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

Demonising Israel is not fair reporting

Pretoria News (South Africa)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 530 words

Body

If I had not read Yusuf Abramjee's name appended to this column ("No one has the right to murder" - Pretoria News, January 8) I would not have believed that so experienced a journalist could pen such untruths.

The claim that the "majority of those killed by Israel are civilians" would have us believe that Abramjee has access to information denied to the BBC, CNN, Sky and Reuters etc.

According to the UN the civilian casualties are approximately 25% of the total, the rest being Hamas fighters.

While I make no attempt to minimise the terrible tragedy of these unnecessary deaths (for which Hamas must take full blame), I wish only to place Abramjee's exaggeration in proper context.

Incidentally, in a burst of journalistic wisdom he is at pains to point out that these civilians are "men, women and children".

What else could they be?

Abramjee insinuates that Israel's killing of 600 Palestinians weighed against its seven-year ordeal of almost daily rocket attacks (over 8000) can hardly be regarded as "tit for tat".

What he fails to acknowledge is that every rocket is fired with the clear intent of killing, not missing. The fact that these missiles (the inaccuracy of which do not discount their potential lethality) fail to hit their target, is largely because 250 000 Israelis have spent a good part of their lives in bomb shelters following a mere 10 to 20 second warning of a pending attack.

Would Abramjee happily have his own children live under similar conditions? This is not a numbers game, Yusuf - it is a reality of the most evil intent.

"Israel can not be above international law", he claims, introducing a tried and trusted mantra sure to create an emotive response without considering its veracity. I challenge Abramjee to quote the international law under which Israel, in her current circumstances of a sovereign democratic state protecting its citizens from indiscriminate attacks, has fallen foul.

Article 8 (2)(b)(v) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (see the internet) lists as war crimes the firing of missiles at civilian enclaves (towns) that constitute no military threat, and utilising civilians as human shields (see clause xxiii).

Demonising Israel is not fair reporting

But as **Hamas** spokesperson Fathi Hamad proudly announced on Al Aqsa TV on February 29, 2008 (see Youtube): "Palestinians have created a human shield of **women**, children, the elderly and the jihad fighters as if to say to the Zionist enemy: 'We desire death as you desire life'."

Don't weep then when death arises as a direct result of your actions.

Yes Yusuf, you are correct; **Hamas** was elected democratically.

However, it is not the democratic process of the election that counts but what the elected party does thereafter.

Adolf Hitler was also democratically elected.

Finally, Abramjee condescendingly says that "Not all members of the Jewish faith support Israel's attack and it is wrong to place the blame on them all."

On which of them, then, would Abramjee wish to place the blame, and once they have been "identified" is he suggesting that those individuals should now be attacked?

This is an irresponsible comment from someone who should know better.

Get your facts straight, Yusuf,

Victor Gordon, Brooklyn

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

To the re-education centre . . .

Irish Independent

April 1, 2009 Wednesday

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Independent.ie 

Section: FEATURES

Length: 350 words

Body

One of the most worrying phrases we hear every day is the chilling mantra: "You have to be careful what you say these days" as if somehow the Smile Stasi are lurking around every corner, awaiting the next unwitting citizen to break the language laws.

And, whenever someone points this out, they're accused of being some sort of fascist fear monger who just wants to gratuitously offend everyone. Which, in relation to this column, can be assumed to be reasonably accurate. But that's not the point.

Just look at the case of Tory councillor Jonathan Yardley, who spent two hours as a guest of the Her Majesty's Thought Police the other day -- for making a joke that someone thought was homophobic.

At a constituency presentation, guests were given a handset and asked to press button A if they were men and button B if they were women.

And, when someone asked what they should do if they were transsexual, Yardley joked that they should press both buttons.

In fairness, it's hard to know what to say to these people. This column once did a piece on a cross-dressing club and when we pointed out to the person in drag doing our hair and make-up that the only way we'd know he was a man was from his hands.

They stopped, pulled the wig painfully tight and snarled: "I'm af***ing woman, you ignorant bastard."

Honestly, there's no pleasing some people.

POOR LONESOME GEORGE

You probably know the heart-rending story of Lonesome George, the ageing relic that is the last of his kind and faces extinction due to his inability to adapt to the modern world.

(And then there's George, the Galapagos tortoise that faces a similar fate.)

To the re-education centre . . .

So it is with a degree of sympathy this column must bring you the news that our old friend George Galloway has had his appeal against a barring order from entering Canada turned down.

Those nasty Canadians have banned him from the country because of his open support for the charming Islamofascists of **Hamas**.

Defending himself, lonesome George said: "I support democracy. I don't support **Hamas**. I was making the donation to the government."

And the government is' Yup, **Hamas**.

Load-Date: April 22, 2009

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The genocide mechanism

The Jerusalem Post
April 26, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 1309 words

Byline: ITAMAR MARCUS

Highlight: Framing genocide as self-defense can turn decent people into killers. The writer is director of Palestinian Media Watch.

Body

Survivors of the genocides in Rwanda and Darfur spoke in Geneva this week at the parallel conference on human rights to counter the UN Durban II event. Listening to them describe how they were systematically demonized by the killers made it clear that genocide does not happen in a vacuum. The hate condition of a population willing and anxious to commit genocide needs nurturing. Genocide must be framed positively to get the necessary broad public support.

Common to the framing of all genocide is a very specific kind of demonization. In Rwanda, the Hutus taught that the Tutsis were cockroaches and snakes. Tutsi *women* were portrayed as cunning seductresses who used beauty and sexual power to conquer the Hutus. In Bosnia, a fictitious news report said Muslims were feeding Serb children to animals at the Sarajevo zoo. Radio Rwanda repeatedly broadcast a warning that Hutus were about to be attacked by Tutsis, to convince the Hutus that they needed to attack first to protect themselves.

This demonization included two specific components. First, the victims had to be perceived as a clear and present threat, so that the killers were convinced they were acting in self-defense. Second, the victims were dehumanized, so that the killers convinced themselves that they were not destroying real human beings.

A decent person will not join in a murder of innocents, but a decent person might join in the killing of a subhuman who is threatening his very existence. Framing genocide as self-defense can turn decent people into killers. Protection of children and family can turn a calm neighbor into a passionate murderer, because self-defense is always justified.

In Darfur and Rwanda, all that was necessary to turn a society of ordinary people into killers was to convince them that they were in danger, and that the people endangering them were less than human.

LOOKING BACK on Jewish history, it is clear that the method used to foment violence against Jews has always involved the same framing of "self-defense," with only the details changed.

So when Jews were falsely accused of poisoning wells in the Middle Ages, causing thousands of deaths, even decent people joined in the killings. They did not perceive themselves as murderers because they were defending themselves and their families.

The genocide mechanism

When Jews were believed to be using blood of children for Passover matzot, even decent people felt comfortable massacring Jews, as they were defending their children from a horrific torture.

Even Hitler used this argument of self-defense in Mein Kampf: "In this case [given the Jews' threat to the German people] the only salvation remaining was war, war with all the weapons the human spirit, reason, and will could muster... If the Jew... is victorious over the peoples of this world, then his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity... Thus I believe today that I am acting according to the will of the almighty creator: When I defend myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."

Hitler, too, packaged his genocide as legitimate self- defense. The details may change in each society, but the framing is always the same.

EXAMINING PALESTINIAN hate promotion today, it is especially striking and disconcerting that these components of the past genocides against Jews are prominent elements of the hate promotion of the Palestinian Authority and **Hamas** against Jews and Israelis.

Two items on **Hamas** TV earlier this month clearly document this.

Hamas TV broadcast a skit featuring actors playing a Jewish father and son, in traditional hassidic garb, discussing the hatred of Muslims their Jewish religion mandated. The father even revives the age-old libel that Jews drink the blood of Muslims: "Shimon, look, my son, I want to teach you a few things. You have to hate the Muslims... we want to kill the Muslims, we Jews want to drink the blood of Muslims." He later criticizes his son for washing his hands in water before prayer: "We have to wash our hands with the blood of Muslims" (Al-Aksa TV, April 3). Ironically, the **Hamas** accusation that Jews drink Muslim blood came the week before Passover, the anniversary of many horrific blood libels.

That same day, a **Hamas** religious leader ended his sermon with the promise of eventual genocide of the Jews. But to frame it properly, he opened with a depiction of Jews as the enemies of humanity: The Jews are inherently evil, seek to rule the world and are a threat to Muslims and all of humanity.

This is how Ziad Abu Alhaj framed it: "Hatred for Muhammad and Islam is in their [Jews'] souls, they are naturally disposed to it... Israel is a cancer that wants to rule the world." He concluded that the Jews are destined to be annihilated: "The time will come, by Allah's will, when their property will be destroyed and their children will be exterminated, and no Jew or Zionist will be left on the face of this earth" (Al-Aksa TV, April 3).

THIS DEMONIZATION and dehumanization of Jews is not limited to **Hamas**. Although hesitant to call for explicit murdering of Jews while seeking Western money, the PA continues its unrelenting framing of genocide as self-defense and for the common good.

In the PA-Fatah media today, Jews and Israelis are demonized through malicious libels, including such lies as the assertion that Israel intentionally spreads AIDS and drugs among Palestinians, conducts Nazi-like medical experiments on Palestinian prisoners and is planning to destroy the Aksa Mosque.

Says the Palestinian chief religious justice, Tayseer al-Tamimi: "The AIDS issue needs to receive due attention... since we neighbor a society [Israel] where the disease is widespread and which acts to transmit [AIDS] to Palestinian society. The occupying authorities, especially in Jerusalem, are working to spread drugs and drug addiction, without a doubt" (PA radio, February 17, 2008).

And this from Dr. Mutawakil Tahalk, head of the Palestinian Writers' Union and former PA deputy minister: "We saw how they [Zionists] stab bellies of pregnant women, slaughter infants and eat life in cold blood. They targeted children and the wombs of women so this people won't reproduce" (PATV, March 4, 2008).

A July 2008 article in Al-Ayyam accused Israeli settlers of releasing rats in Jerusalem's Old City "to turn the [Arab] residents' life into a living hell, forcing them to leave..." (July 17, 2008). A PA TV video clip juxtaposes scenes of a real Israeli tank with fictitious scenes of a child actor being shot, creating the fiction that Israelis deliberately target and shoot Palestinian children (PATV, May 15, 2008).

The genocide mechanism

Just as the Tutsis were described as cockroaches and snakes, both **Hamas** and the PA have described Jews as loathsome and dangerous animals, including cockroaches, spiders, scorpions and alligators.

While each libel is somewhat different, their essence is the same: The Israelis and the Jews are dangerous, they are not human, we need to defend ourselves from them and we are clearly justified in doing so.

It is tragic that this framing of genocide as necessary self-defense has been so chillingly successful.

A poll after last year's murders of eight teenage yeshiva students found that "84 percent of Palestinians support the terror attack killing eight young students in a Jerusalem yeshiva on March 6, 2008" (Poll by Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, The New York Times, March 19, 2008). How can an entire Palestinian society support the murder of children? Clearly, the framing of Jews and Israelis as mortally dangerous to Palestinians has been totally successful.

Israel now faces a society that is very possibly past the stage of genocide framing and at the point of seeing the killing of Israelis, even teens, as justified. All that would be necessary for the population to go along with the final script, detailed so many times by its leaders, would be the means.

Graphic

3 cartoons and 1 photo: TWO CARTOONS that appeared in the Palestinian official daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida. A JEW EATING a Palestinian child in a cartoon drawn by Palestinian cartoonist Omayya Joha in the Qatari newspaper Al-Raya. A RECENT **HAMAS** TV SKIT invoking the blood libel, performed at Gaza's Islamic University at the beginning of April.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Mideast dream needs more than eloquence

The Jerusalem Post

June 5, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 630 words

Byline: GERALD M. STEINBERG

Highlight: ANALYSIS. Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg is the executive director of NGO Monitor, and chairman of political science at Bar-Ilan University.

Body

President Barack Obama's Cairo speech was first and foremost an affirmation of the American dream, both in terms of his own story, and also of the broader national ethos.

History, he told his Arab and Muslim audience, was an obstacle to be overcome, and no differences were too great to prevent understanding and cooperation to achieve common objectives. Obama preached the virtues of freedom, religious tolerance, including for persecuted Copts in Egypt, and equal educational opportunities for women - all major problems in Arab societies.

This optimism was also an integral part of his framework for ending the long and violent Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the "land for peace" formula. Here, Obama is on shaky ground. After the lofty words that accompanied the Oslo process ended in mass terror, Israelis are less willing to assume that the gap between rhetoric and reality can be overcome in a few years.

The American president may believe that he has articulated the principles of mutual acceptance that "everyone knows to be true," but this is a stretch. His "everyone" ignores the army of propagandists who promote the anti-Israel narrative, label every act of self-defense a "war crime" and a "human rights violation," and reject the right of Jewish self-determination.

The call for Hamas - the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood - to act responsibly to "put an end to violence" and "recognize Israel's right to exist" is extremely far fetched, even for Obama. Hamas belongs in the first part of the speech, which focused on confronting "violent extremism in all of its forms," including al-Qaida and the Taliban.

In promoting his peace plan, including the demand for a freeze in Israeli settlements, Obama has imagined a false and highly dangerous symmetry. Israelis are far more vulnerable to American pressure than the Palestinian leaders (Hamas and Fatah) or the dictatorships that control Egypt or Syria. No Israeli leader can afford to ignore or reject American coercion, particularly as Iran continues efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. But if Netanyahu accepts Obama's demands, and there is little or no change in the hatred, violence and rejectionism on the Arab side, the "land for peace" exchange will fail, and Israel will have neither.

The call to further develop the Arab Peace Initiative, "to recognize Israel's legitimacy; and to choose progress over a self-defeating focus on the past" also needs to be quickly translated into concrete action.

Mideast dream needs more than eloquence

Every speech that trashes Israel delivered by an Egyptian, Saudi, Syrian or Palestinian official, whether at the United Nations, a university campus, a mosque or a church fuels the conflict. The same is true for editorials in official newspapers, and for television series based on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion that have become so popular. Maps that omit the word "Israel" have the same result. All of these insults were ignored by the Clinton peace team during the Oslo process - will the Obama administration do any better?

To succeed in this extremely complex political design, Obama will need much more than eloquent speeches and "courage to make a new beginning." The fundamental reform of Arab and Muslim countries is necessary to end the social, political and economic gridlock, and remove the support for violent extremists and rejectionists - including **Hamas**, a weakened but still functioning PLO, and Hizbullah.

And Iran must be stopped short of the atomic finish line. The skepticism resulting from a history of unfulfilled promises is not simply an obstacle to be overcome - it is also an important reflection of the lessons that have been learned at great cost, particularly for the Jewish people.

Obama's American optimism is refreshing, but it is a long way from Middle Eastern realities.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

'LOYALTY LAW' ABANDONED

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

June 1, 2009 Monday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-3

Length: 593 words

Body

JERUSALEM -- The Israeli government yesterday threw out a proposal aimed at minority Arabs to require an oath of loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state or risk losing their citizenship, dealing a blow to the country's ultranationalist foreign minister, who led the effort.

Avigdor Lieberman, a rising force in Israeli politics, made the proposal a central plank of his election campaign in February. The message, which sought to play on the perceived disloyalty of Israel's Arab citizens, helped propel his Yisrael Beiteinu Party to a third-place finish in the parliamentary vote.

Mr. Lieberman's electoral success was seen as evidence of growing polarization between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens. Many Israeli Arabs, once considering themselves bridges between Israel and the Arab world, have become alienated in the Jewish state and side openly with the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel.

Arabs make up one-fifth of Israel's 7 million citizens.

6 dead in West Bank strife

QALQILIYA, West Bank -- Forces loyal to the moderate Palestinian president stormed a **Hamas** hideout in the West Bank and set off a fierce gunbattle that left six dead yesterday, the worst violence since the factions fought a pitched battle over Gaza two years ago.

Militants lobbed grenades and fired automatic weapons to push back the raid in a two-story building in Qalqiliya, a West Bank town known for its strong **Hamas** presence. That drew dozens of President Mahmoud Abbas' forces to the hideout.

When it was over, pools of blood, tear gas canisters and hundreds of spent shell casings littered the floor. Walls were partly burned down during the battle.

Qalqiliya, which elected a **Hamas** mayor in 2005, was tense yesterday. **Women** gathered near the scene heaped insults on policemen. Sporadic gunfire erupted in other areas of town, and police said the shots came from **Hamas** loyalists targeting officers, though there were no reports of injuries.

Italy's Berlusconi upset

ROME -- Premier Silvio Berlusconi slammed the paparazzi yesterday for taking photos of a New Year's party at his Sardinian home that was attended by an 18-year-old at the heart of a political and personal storm.

'LOYALTY LAW' ABANDONED

At a campaign stop in Bari, the premier also lamented that the scandal was playing out on the front pages of newspapers, saying such personal matters belonged exclusively in the private, family sphere.

"We've really hit bottom with this intrusion into the private lives of everyone," Mr. Berlusconi said.

Prosecutors on Saturday seized hundreds of photos taken by a Sardinian photographer of a New Year's party at Mr. Berlusconi's villa that was attended by 18-year-old Noemi Letizia and dozens of other young women.

Mr. Berlusconi's relationship with Ms. Letizia has been the subject of speculation ever since the premier's wife, Veronica Lario, cited his presence at Ms. Letizia's 18th birthday party in announcing a few weeks ago that she was divorcing the 72-year-old premier.

Bomb found on jetliner

TEHRAN, Iran -- An Iranian airliner was forced to return to a southern airport minutes after takeoff when a homemade bomb was found aboard, said state television, in an incident a security official called a "sabotage operation."

The report said the bomb was found in a toilet, but gave no other details on the device. The incident took place late Saturday night.

The plane, carrying 140 passengers, returned to an airport in the southwestern city of Ahvaz 15 minutes after takeoff Saturday after a passenger reported a suspicious package. The plane belongs to one of Iran's commercial airlines, Kish Air.

Load-Date: June 2, 2009

UK Conservative leader: Commitment to Israel comes from deep inside me

The Jerusalem Post
June 21, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 580 words

Byline: JONNY PAUL, Jerusalem Post correspondent

Body

Conservative Party leader David Cameron has confirmed his commitment to Israel and its right to exist and defend itself, stating that he would never turn his back on Israel.

Speaking to more than 400 Conservative MPs, lords, parliamentary candidates and business leaders at the Conservative Friends of Israel annual fundraiser at the Dorchester Hotel in central London on Thursday, the party leader said he felt an affinity towards Israel.

"First, I passionately believe in the right of Israel to exist, to defend itself and to live in peace and security. Not just because of the tragedies of history. Not only because of the realities of today. Not simply because of my party's unstinting support for Israel through the decades, but also because it's something I feel very deep inside of me," he said.

Speaking about the peace process, Cameron reaffirmed his commitment to a two-state solution, "two democracies, living side by side, in peace" saying he believed there is no sustainable alternative.

"A state of Israel, with her existence recognized by all her Arab neighbors and a state for Palestine, with her existence recognized by the world," he said.

"I'm not starry-eyed about this, I know peace will not come overnight. It's going to take perseverance, dedication and compromise from all sides. Israeli leaders of all political traditions have in the past shown that they are willing to take risks for peace.

"Menachem Begin made peace with Egypt. Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres forged a historic agreement with the PLO. Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert have both recognized the demographic reality that unless a Palestinian state were created Israel's nature as both Jewish and democratic would be at risk," Cameron said.

He welcomed Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's speech last week but said that the expansion of settlements fueled extremism.

"Israel needs to be as brave again today, and that's why Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech talking of a two- state solution was such an important and welcome statement. I agree that Israel must be assured that any withdrawal from territory will not lead to rockets showering down on innocent men, women and children, as has happened all too often in the past and in the present.

UK Conservative leader: Commitment to Israel comes from deep inside me

"But I need to add something else as a true friend. The expansion of settlements fuels extremism and undercuts Palestinian leaders who genuinely yearn for peace. It is in all our interests to help improve life for ordinary Palestinians."

Cameron also called on the Palestinians to prove that they were a reliable negotiating partner and that corruption needed to cease.

Cameron also offered an insight into how his party intends to deal with Hamas. "Israel is a democracy - Hamas want to create a theocracy. Israel strives to protect innocent life - Hamas target innocent life. And so there can be no doubt, and let me make clear we won't judge Hamas just on words. Our test is whether their actions show that they are going to end the terror, recognize Israel and accept all previous peace agreements."

Addressing anti-Semitism, he said he would "stand firm" against it in all its forms and wherever it occurs, and said he found US President [Barack] Obama's speech in Cairo moving.

"There he was, in the historic center of the Arab world - where too often vile stereotypes of Israel and Jews go unchecked and unchallenged - and yet he made the fullest expression of the historic suffering of the Jewish people and the abhorrence and ignorance of anti-Semitism."

Graphic

Photo: 'I PASSIONATELY believe in the right of Israel to exist,' Conservative Party leader David Cameron said Thursday.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Israel accused of carrying out air strike on Sudanese soil; Olmert says his nation can hit every place 'near and far' in order to stop terror

The Independent (London)

March 27, 2009 Friday

First Edition

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The  **INDEPENDENT**

Section: WORLD; Pg. 28

Length: 602 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre IN JERUSALEM

Body

ISRAEL CARRIED out air strikes in January on a convoy moving through Sudan which it believed to be carrying weapons destined for **Hamas** in Gaza, according to a report by the US television network CBS.

Two Sudanese politicians yesterday confirmed that unidentified aircraft targeted the convoy in a remote desert region north-west of Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast.

The outgoing Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, appeared to fuel speculation that his country's air force was behind the attack, which reportedly killed 39 people, when he said that "Israel hits every place it can in order to stop terror, near and far". CBS reported that Israeli intelligence had learnt of plans to move weapons north through Sudan into Egypt and then smuggle them into the Gaza Strip to **Hamas**. The report said that those killed were manning the 17-vehicle convoy, although a number of civilians had also been injured in the attack, which occurred in the same month as Israel's offensive in Gaza.

While Israeli defence officials had earlier appeared to pour cold water on the report that their aircraft had carried out the attack, Mark Regev, the spokesman for Mr Olmert, would only say that it was not Israel's practice "to respond to these sort of allegations when they arise in the press".

Interdiction of the convoy would certainly chime with Israeli intelligence warnings in the past that weapons destined for **Hamas** in Gaza were being shipped from Iran through the Persian Gulf and on to Sudan. Whether or not the attacks were carried out by Israeli warplanes, they appear to have been in the spirit of an agreement signed in the closing days of the Gaza offensive by Tzipi Livni, the Israeli Foreign Minister, and the outgoing US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, aimed at curbing arms traffic into Gaza.

The aims of the accord are thought not to have been confined to tightening controls on the Egypt/Gaza border itself but to have also referred to measures needed to stop Iranian-derived arms along earlier sections of the route.

As part of the post-war efforts to halt the arms smuggling, an international conference has been called in Ottawa for May - to be attended by Canada, the US, Israel, Britain, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Norway and Denmark.

Israel accused of carrying out air strike on Sudanese soil Olmert says his nation can hit every place 'near and far' in order to stop terror

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, the conference, the third to have taken place since the Gaza offensive, will be followed by a "war game" in Washington in which an international group of security officials will practise scenarios of foiling arms traffic from Iran to Gaza.

One of the Sudanese politicians claimed that there were "four or five vehicles" in the convoy that had been hit, as opposed to the 17 cited in the CBS report, and that his colleagues had spoken to a witness. "There was an Ethiopian fellow, a mechanic," he said. "He was the only one who survived. He said they came in two planes. They passed over them then came back and they shot the cars. He couldn't tell the nationality of the aircraft. The aircraft destroyed the vehicles".

n The Israel Defence Forces produced figures of its own last night for Palestinian casualties during the Gaza offensive. It said that among the 1,166 Palestinians killed, 709 had been identified as "**Hamas** terror operatives, among them several from various other terror organisations". Another 162 men have not been yet attributed to any organisation, while 295 "uninvolved Palestinians" had died, including 89 minors and 49 **women**.

The numbers are at marked variance with those collected by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. It says 1,417 Palestinians died, including 926 civilians - 313 of whom were minors.

Load-Date: March 27, 2009

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News in brief

The Jerusalem Post

March 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 627 words

Byline: Jerusalem Post staff, Ehud Zion Waldoks, Greer Fay Cashman

Body

Schalit activists hold prison protest

Dozens of activists from the campaign to free kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Schalit on Monday held a protest outside Hasharon Prison and demanded that the living conditions of Hamas prisoners be downgraded to match those of Schalit.

Protesters attempted to deny entrance to dozens of Palestinian women who had come to visit their relatives and demanded that the government curtail all visitation rights for Hamas prisoners.

On Monday morning, MK Yariv Levin (Likud) proposed a bill that would force the government to downgrade the living conditions of all security prisoners held in Israeli jails as long as Schalit, or any other Israeli, is held in "inhumane conditions."

A Hamas prisoner leader, Yihye Sanwar, called on the organization not to capitulate to Israeli demands and to insist on freeing all of the prisoners on the list it submitted to be exchanged for Schalit.

In an interview with the London-based daily Asharq al-Awsat Monday, Sanwar called on the families of Palestinian prisoners to be patient and allow Hamas to reach its goals in the negotiations with Israel.

* Jerusalem Post staff

'30 localities run illegal dumping sites'

The Environmental Protection Ministry published a list of local authorities on Monday that had either created illegal dumping sites or looked the other way while private companies created them.

Thirty local authorities had such illegal sites for dumping dry waste from households and construction sites within their municipal boundaries.

Illegally dumping garbage represents a serious environmental hazard on a number of levels. It can cause water contamination, air pollution, ground contamination, devaluation of land and destruction of open spaces, and there is a significant cost involved in cleaning them up and rehabilitating the area, according to the ministry.

News in brief

The ministry has embarked on a series of enforcement measures after their inspectors discovered the violations. The ministry was also looking into what legal steps could be taken against the heads of these local authorities, it said.

Sixteen of the 30 local authorities were Arab cities or villages in the North, among them Mash'had, Yarka, Majd el-Kurum, Julis and Umm el-Fahm.

Many of the municipalities, such as Katzrin and Kafr Kanna, were operating the illegal sites themselves. The ministry said some local authorities were even charging for dumping in their illegal sites.

In the South, Dimona, Ashkelon, Rahat, Meitar, Omer and five other local authorities were operating illegal sites.

In the center, there was an illegal dumping site next to Route 6, as well as one near Kfar Bara.

* Ehud Zion Waldoks

5 envoys present credentials to Peres

Two of five new ambassadors who presented their credentials to President Shimon Peres on Monday are returning diplomats who expressed their excitement at being back in Israel.

Alexander de la Rosa, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, served from 1999-2003 as first secretary and consul in his country's embassy here, and from 2003-2005 was minister counsellor and charge d'affaires.

"For me it's wonderful to come home to Israel," he told Peres, in Hebrew. "I just love this country."

Also thrilled to be back was Georgian Ambassador Vahtang Jaoshvili, who first came to Israel in 1999, initially as third secretary after which he was promoted through the ranks, eventually being named chief of consular services.

Also presenting credentials was South African Ambassador Ismail Coovadia. Although several years have passed since apartheid rule, Peres marveled at how South Africa had overcome that period.

The two other ambassadors, Moussa B. Nebie of Burkina Faso and Pio Bosco Tikoisuva, are non-resident envoys, with Nebie based in Cairo and Tikoisuva in London. * Greer Fay Cashman

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

[UN report latest to charge Israel with war crimes](#)

AlArabiya.net

March 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 647 words

Body

Israel used Palestinian children as human shields and illegally used white phosphorus bombs on civilians during its Gaza offensive, according to a United Nations report, the latest in a string of reports about potential war crimes committed during the war that the Jewish state denies.

The most recent report, the combined effort of eight U.N. investigators, accused the Israeli Defence Forces of using an 11-year-old boy as a human shield, forcing him to enter suspect buildings first and inspect dangerous-looking bags.

Sri Lankan lawyer Radhika Coomaraswamy, who headed the U.N. team in charge of the protection of children of war zones, called the incident a violation of international law and said it was only one of "hundreds of incidents" verified by officials. "On the basis of the extensive information available, the great majority of observers have concluded that systematic and impartial war crimes investigations must be undertaken," stated the U.N. report.

Israel denied the charges and criticized the report for being politically motivated and not balanced.

"We are an army to which morals and high ethical standards are paramount," Captain Elie Isaacson, an IDF spokesman said in response to the report.

Last week, however, soldiers admitted killing unarmed Palestinian civilians during the operation. Israel's military has launched an investigation but the U.N. report raised doubts it can be carried out impartially.

White phosphorus officially verified

Human rights groups and victims have accused the IDF of using white phosphorus against civilians and for the first time the United Nation echoed the charges, citing several verified examples of illegal use of the chemical weapon in its report.

On Jan. 10 three children suffered serious burns when white phosphorus shells hit their family's house in Jabalia near a government building.

Another incident was verified on the last day of the assault Jan. 18 in which a white phosphorus shell bombed the UNRWA school killing two children and injuring their mother.

"UNRWA has stated that they have evidence of white phosphorous having being fired into their installations, including the UNRWA school in Beit Lahia. This is also supported by video footage of phosphorous shells being." Stated the report.

UN report latest to charge Israel with war crimes

At least 1,453 Palestinians, including 431 children, 114 women and 300 Hamas fighters, died during the 22-day war. Thirteen Israelis were killed, including four by friendly fire.

Denial in context

Israel denied the U.N.'s charges, as it has those of human rights groups.

"The report claims to examine Israel's actions while it wilfully ignores and downplays the terrorist and other threats we face," Ambassador Aharon Leshno Yaar told the U.N.'s 47-nation Human Rights Council, referring to Palestinian rocket attacks against Israeli civilians.

However the U.N. did mention allegations that Hamas used civilians as human shields and fired at IDF from densely populated areas and is investigating the reports. An HRW investigation found no evidence Hamas used human shields.

U.N. special rapporteur Richard Falk responded to Israel's criticism saying that any attempt to view both sides as "equally responsible" is inaccurate as Hamas is a lightly-armed militia operating in occupied territory while the IDF is the most powerful army in the region.

Amnesty international said it plans to release a comprehensive report on war crimes by the IDF next month. "A report bringing all evidence together is important since evidence is coming out now that more and more groups are entering Gaza for investigations," Nicole Choueiry told AlArabiya.net.

See three part video documenting Israel's IDF war crimes at

<http://evideo.alarabiya.net/ShowClip.aspx?clipid=2009.03.25.11.32.58.664>

<http://evideo.alarabiya.net/ShowClip.aspx?ClipID=2009.03.25.11.32.58.666>

<http://evideo.alarabiya.net/ShowClip.aspx?ClipID=2009.03.25.11.32.58.665>

Load-Date: May 5, 2009

Obamas right way of doing things; Where I Stand

Lassen County Times

February 3, 2009

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Length: 636 words

Byline: MYCHAL MASSIE

Body

During his campaign, presidential candidate Barack Obama cast President Bush as having done everything wrong. So, what will the now President Obama do right? If his first week is any indication of what is to come -- not much. Being president isn't an experiment where one takes classroom theory on failed political systems of the past and says, "I can make it work."

On only his second day in office, Obama called for Israel to open its borders with Gaza. Obama plans to seek a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. A noble idea even if it is Pollyanna. He believes his administration will be able to convince Hamas to end rocket fire into Israel by having Israel withdraw its forces from Gaza.

His naivete may warm the hearts of liberal classroom theorists who, like Obama, want to believe that everyone can get along if they talk and make nice-nice. But Israel knows better. Israel has experienced the treachery and deceit of Hamas. The Gaza Strip is vital to Israel's security concerns -- and she knows with empirical factuality that no amount of talk, negotiation, promised ceasefire, and/or outside monitoring will stop Hamas and anti-Israel insurgents from using the Strip to threaten the security of her people.

I don't condemn him for wanting to end said conflict, but to attempt same by legitimizing Hamas and undermining Israel's security is not the formula for success.

Interestingly, while Obama expresses deep concern for Israeli and Palestinian loss of life, he expresses no such concern when it comes to the murder of unborn children, both here and abroad.

Abortion is the number one killer of blacks in America today. Irresponsible and unreasonable white people prevented blacks from sitting at lunch-counters roughly 45 years ago. And as he rightly pointed out during his

Obamas right way of doing things Where I Stand

inaugural address, same was wrong. But today more often than not, black women are encouraged to murder approximately 1,500 unborn children daily.

From 1882 to 1968 there were 3,446 blacks lynched in the US. Today, that number is surpassed approximately every 32 hours. Obama says he does not believe in abortion, but believes in a woman's right to choose -- at the same time he speaks of personal responsibility I say, it is irrefutably irresponsible for him to advocate laws and sign executive orders removing reasonable restraints on abortion and allowing for the free flow of American tax dollars to support entities in foreign countries for the express purpose of murdering the unborn. It is inconsistent to support the lives of committed terrorists and codify the genocide of unborn American children, and black unborn children specifically.

Pursuant to that point, in signing executive orders for the closure of Guantanamo Bay, he shows more compassion for terrorists than he does for unborn children. But armed with raw criticism of President Bush for his handling of all policies and with his mantra of change -- Obama has already made exceptions to his own hailed ethics policy, presumes to accomplish that which has never worked in the history of Israel and the Palestinians, shows complete disregard for the families of those lost on 9/11 --and tangentially for American security -- and values the quality of life for those who purpose to destroy us more than he does the unborn future of America.

Yes sir, it certainly looks like he is going to do things the right way juxtaposed to Bush's wrong way.

Mychal Massie is chairman of Project 21-The National Leadership Network of Black Conservatives - a conservative black think tank located in Washington, D.C. He is a nationally recognized political activist, pundit, columnist and the former host of radio talk show "Straight Talk with Mychal Massie."

He has appeared on Fox News Channel, CNN, MSNBC, C-SPAN, NBC, Comcast Cable and talk radio programming nationwide.

Load-Date: November 15, 2009

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Palestinians Press International Court for Inquiry on Possible Gaza War Crimes

The New York Times
February 11, 2009 Wednesday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 13

Length: 979 words

Byline: By MARLISE SIMONS

Dateline: THE HAGUE

Body

The Palestinian Authority is pressing the International Criminal Court in The Hague to investigate accusations of war crimes committed by Israeli commanders during the recent war in Gaza.

The Palestinian minister of justice, Ali Kashan, first raised the issue during a visit to the court's chief prosecutor late last month, and he and other officials are due back again in The Hague this week, court officials said.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the prosecutor, had initially said he lacked the legal basis to examine the case. But since the Palestinian Authority signed a commitment on Jan. 22 recognizing the court's authority, the prosecutor has appeared more open to studying the Palestinian claim.

"The prosecutor has agreed to explore if he could have jurisdiction in the case," said Beatrice Le Fraper, the director of jurisdiction for the prosecution. She cautioned that accepting jurisdiction would not automatically set off a criminal investigation. "We are still very far from any decision; this is just the beginning of a long process," she said.

The prosecutor has received more than 200 requests to look into allegations of war crimes during the recent fighting between Israel and **Hamas** militants. They include accusations from individuals and organizations that Israel violated the rules of war by singling out civilians and nonmilitary buildings, and by using weapons like white phosphorus illegally.

"Quite a few groups have sent experts to the region, people doing forensic work, studying explosives and other weapons," she said. "The prosecutor can look at all open sources at this stage."

Should a criminal investigation begin, the prosecution would send its own investigators, who would look into possible violations by both sides. **Hamas**'s practice of sending rockets into southern Israel, which often landed in civilian areas, might be viewed as a violation. Israeli officials justified their offensive by saying they were trying to stop the rocket attacks.

But even as envisioned by the Palestinian Authority, the case faces numerous hurdles, specialists say.

Palestinians Press International Court for Inquiry on Possible Gaza War Crimes

The court here is the world's first permanent international criminal court, created to examine war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. It can prosecute any citizen from the 108 countries that are currently members of the court. Individuals, governments, the United Nations Security Council or the prosecutor can initiate cases.

Israel is not a member of the court, and the Palestinian territories, not being recognized as a sovereign nation, appear not to fulfill the requirements. But as a remedy, the Palestinian Authority has taken a first step by presenting a declaration to the court, formally accepting jurisdiction for "an indeterminate duration" over acts "committed on the territory of Palestine" since July 1, 2002, when the court's authority began.

Lawyers say such a declaration allows for joining the court on an ad hoc basis, and has been allowed before, in the case of Sierra Leone, which is not a member. But while the Palestinian declaration has been recorded at the court, its validity is far from settled. The big question, lawyers at the court say, is whether the Palestinian Authority can grant jurisdiction in any form, and if so, how that will be defined.

The issue has raised the question of whether Palestinian officials hope to obtain an implicit recognition of statehood through the court.

The court "will not use the term statehood," said a legal expert close to the case who spoke on condition of anonymity because the issue was still being decided. "The court will avoid defining whether Palestine is a state. The decision will be only if Palestine can be admitted for the purposes of the court statute."

The Palestinian officials visiting The Hague in the coming days are expected to try to demonstrate that they have been allowed to sign other international treaties and conventions, and can therefore be accepted as a party to the 1998 Rome treaty that founded the court.

Ms. Le Fraper, the director of jurisdiction, said her office would call on international experts to help settle such questions.

Another unknown is whether the Palestinian Authority can bring a case involving jurisdiction in Gaza. The authority is run by Fatah, but its rival faction, **Hamas**, has declared itself the only authority in Gaza and ousted Fatah from the territory.

More than 1,300 Palestinians died in the recent war in Gaza, many of them **women** and children. Israeli officials have insisted that Israel respected international law during the fighting. Israel has also said that it will investigate its attacks on United Nations schools and headquarters and the use of unlawful weapons in urban areas, including the use of white phosphorus.

Human rights groups and a number of United Nations officials have called for an independent international inquiry into actions by both sides. Human Rights Watch said such an independent effort was essential because of "Israel's poor record of investigating and prosecuting serious violations by its forces, and the absence of any such effort by **Hamas** or other Palestinian groups."

Western politicians and other critics of Israel's recent conduct in Gaza have also said that **Hamas** has violated the rules of war and committed war crimes with indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and the use of its own civilians as human shields.

Depending on what happens at the court, **Hamas**'s rocket attacks and other acts viewed by some as crimes could also become part of any criminal investigation. By accepting the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court on its territory, the Palestinian Authority has also accepted jurisdiction over any war crimes by its own residents.

"That's the way jurisdiction works," said a court lawyer. "The Palestinians know that and have taken that risk."

Graphic

PHOTO: A mosque in El Atatra, Gaza, that was destroyed by the Israeli military. Israel said the mosque had been used by militants. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: February 11, 2009

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Letters to the Editor

Sunday Business Post

January 18, 2009

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Section: LETTERS

Length: 1293 words

Body

Ongoing conflict in Gaza

Top marks to Tom McGurk once more for calling a spade a spade in relation to Israel's 'terrorising' of the civilian population of Gaza (11/ 01/09).

One hopes that the holocaust being unleashed from the sky above Gaza will force many politicians and other commentators to reassess their often selective use of the term 'terrorism' which, to date, has been reserved for those carrying "the smaller bomb", to quote the Jewish intellectual, Professor Noam Chomsky.

We have witnessed the slaughter of the innocents through incineration, using white phosphorous bombs, and we wonder if no lessons were learned from the experiences of the Warsaw Ghetto.

We have heard reports of children dying from heart attacks and not knowing where to run on hearing the approach of the Israeli warplanes. If this terrorising of an entire population does not constitute 'terrorism', one wonders what does?

Fionntán O'Súilleabhúin An Phort Thoir, Baile Atha Cliath 3

&That Tom McGurk believes Israel's attack on **Hamas** in Gaza to be morally unjustifiable comes as little surprise. This is, after all, the man who characterised the battle of Jenin - the culmination of an operation to destroy suicide terrorist

cells that had murdered 66 Israelis in the previous month - as "Nazistyle barbarism" and akin to an "Israeli Holocaust in Palestine". Thirteen Israeli soldiers died in that battle, as opposed to 52 Palestinians, four-fifths of them armed combatants.

The civilian death toll in Gaza looks set to be proportionately higher. But this is a consequence of the fact that **Hamas**, a 15,000strong Iranian-trained and equipped terrorist army (and not, as McGurk maintains, a "small number of militants" firing "homemade rockets"), has deliberately established its military infrastructure in the midst of Gaza's civilian population.

Letters to the Editor

It is openly waging its self-declared war of annihilation against Israel from within the very houses, public buildings and particularly the mosques McGurk castigates Israel for targeting, while its leadership directs operations from within Gaza's main hospital.

The callous use of Gaza's civilians as human shields is openly acknowledged by Hamas. Indeed, it has spoken with pride of its "creation [of] a human shield of women, children, the elderly. . . against the Zionist bombing machine".

Given the enormous suffering to which this has subjected the people of Gaza, "one wonders", as McGurk asked rhetorically of Israel, "does [Hamas] actually regard [them] as a part of humanity at all".

Seán Gannon chairman, Irish Friends of Israel

&Your editorial (11/1/09) seeking a ceasefire in Gaza and an immediate end to Israel's "offensive" is very welcome. You state that the ostensible reason for the Israeli onslaught is to stop Hamas rocket attacks on its territory, and that "such attacks by Hamas are wrong".

The fact of the matter is that the Palestinian territories of the 1967 settlement have been under illegal Israeli occupation since 1967. On March 11, 2008, our then minister for foreign affairs, Dermot Ahern, described the Israeli blockade and economic siege of Gaza as "collective punishment . . . illegal under international humanitarian law".

Under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Hamas has a right to resist Israel's illegal occupation and its brutal treatment of the Palestinian people.

Philip O'Connor Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Dame Street, Dublin 2 &Every week, I read The Sunday Business Post. The first item I read is Tom McGurk's column, which I always find to be immensely interesting and straight to the point.

I found his column on January 4 to be everything that I expected, except for one item. About two thirds of the way through it, he referred to "Palestinian terrorists". I am sure that he must have done that after some deliberation. I would be very interested to know why.

Larry McAuley San Francisco, CA

&In the eyes of the world, the Nazis shamed the people of Germany. By her actions, Israel is now shaming World Jewry: Gaza is rapidly becoming another Warsaw Ghetto. Is an Auschwitz to be next?

Jim Dixon Eyeries, Co Cork

Debate over abortion

We are all horrified at the slaughter in the Gaza Strip, but should we be surprised at this lack of respect for human life when efforts continue to try and make abortion more acceptable (Jennifer O'Connell, Agenda 11/1/09)? More than one million babies are aborted each year in the US, and almost 200,000 in Britain - and still the push continues to force Ireland to follow suit. O'Connell stated that the Crisis Pregnancy Agency, set up to reduce the numbers going to Britain for abortions, "seemed slightly puzzled" by the falling numbers of those seeking abortions. I find that attitude frightening, as if they regretted the trend. For how much longer can we pretend that, with all the help now available for those in crisis pregnancies, it should be legal to kill the child?

Mary Stewart Donegal town

&Jennifer O'Connell's pro-abortion polemic is fanciful and misconceived. Her stated hope is that the European courts will impose abortion on Ireland, on the grounds that travelling to England to end the life of one's unborn child is logistically inconvenient and costly, and that taking abortion drugs procured from the internet is frightening. Hardly the most compelling of arguments.

Letters to the Editor

Abortion is not a solution to social, medical or mental health problems, but rather a compounding factor in such problems. The answer to crisis pregnancies is support, not abortion on demand.

Michael Monaghan Sallins, Co Kildare

Councillors' role in planning

I will leave it to others to defend 'greedy builders', but I do believe that the role of councillors in the planning process has been seriously misrepresented in the media

(High time for high-rise, Agenda 11/1/09). Sadly, the emphasis has been on the few who have facilitated shoddy development, rather than the majority of us who have tried to ensure good planning and sustainable development.

Before The Sunday Business Post covers the issue of planning in Dublin again, it might bear in mind some facts. In my own area of Pembroke-Rathmines, it was councillors who successfully blocked the building of 110 apartments on a floodplain at Milltown, when the much-lauded planners justified it.

Similarly, to protect the few remaining green spaces in our city, it was councillors who persisted in introducing the new Z15 category zoning, which protects institutional lands from over-development. It was councillors who amended the city development plan to remove the flexibility previously allowing limited residential development on green spaces.

In recent months, it has been councillors who have persisted in defending the integrity of the city development plan, when the officials have used every trick in the book to facilitate over-development in the Ballsbridge area. I look forward to being "held to account" at the next local elections.

Councillor Dermot Lacey Donnybrook, Dublin 4

What's right for the GAA

Dermot Corrigan's article (11/1/ 09) was essentially a manifesto on behalf of the Gaelic Players' Association (GPA) and its view of what the GAA needs to do for the GPA.

This was an exact counterview to the one your paper carried, and many of us believe that counterview is the one that a clear majority of GAA people hold.

But keep up (the rest of) your goodwork!

Mark Conway Cookstown, Co Tyrone

Poor property predictions

I predict that none of Sherry Fitzgerald's Michael Grehan's seven property predictions (11/1/09) will be accurate. They are just wishful thinking from a sector that continually gets it wrong.

My second prediction is that, this time next year, these property people will be making even more ludicrous and wishful predictions.

K Nolan Carrick-on-Shannon Co Leitrim

Load-Date: January 18, 2009

Israel to shield soldiers from prosecution; UN probes allegations of war crimes in Gaza

Ottawa Citizen

January 26, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 610 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Dateline: AZBET ABADRAPOH, Gaza Strip

Body

As the United Nations investigates whether Israeli soldiers committed war crimes in Gaza earlier this month, Israel decided yesterday all military personnel who fought in the Hamas-run Palestinian enclave will receive protection from foreign prosecution.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza should know they are safe from various tribunals and Israel will assist them on this front and defend them, just as they defended us with their bodies during the Gaza operation," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Allegations that there may have been improper behaviour by Israel Defence Forces have been made by the UN and such agencies as Amnesty International.

Much of the territory, including most of Gaza City except for government buildings, was not touched by the war. The charges of misconduct centre on at least four communities in central and northern Gaza that bore almost the full brunt of attacks by Israeli forces.

One is Azbet Abadrapoh, just east of the Jabaliya refugee camp and about 1.5 kilometres from the Israeli border. This weekend, as residents combed through scores of flattened homes, Sannaa Awadalluh of the UN's Gaza office and an associate went around with clipboards already thick with notes.

"I am collecting tragic stories to send to our directors for analysis," Ms. Awadallah said as a crowd swarmed her and an associate. "It is important for the UN to know exactly what happened here and also to find out what help is required now. We are particularly interested in knowing what happened to women and children."

Piecing together who did what when and where will be an immense challenge as so many people wanted their narratives chronicled. For Ms. Awadallah, the most harrowing of the 70 accounts she had recorded so far is a mother who died while breastfeeding her baby, who lay beside her corpse for three days before Israel allowed Palestinian medics into the area.

Ambulance driver Khalid Abu Aouk spent many days trying to co-ordinate with Israeli troops to rescue the injured and collect bodies. "They were very unhelpful," was one of his few relatively neutral comments.

Israel to shield soldiers from prosecution; UN probes allegations of war crimes in Gaza

Israel Defence Forces entered neighbourhoods from which rockets had been launched and did what they had to do there to defend themselves, the Forces has said. This explanation was sometimes difficult to reconcile with the high level of destruction. Adding to the confusion have been accounts that soldiers gave to Israeli newspapers of how little resistance they encountered from Hamas forces.

On the other hand, it was extremely unlikely in the worst-hit residential area that residents were telling the truth when they denied any Hamas members lived among them and that their backyards and alleys had never been used to launch rockets.

In El Atatra, where officials from Hamas were compiling lists of the dead this weekend, most damage appears to have been caused by fires.

"The smell was terrible. We could not breathe," said Shahir Khdeir, whose son died in a blaze caused by an explosion that gained strength when he and his neighbours tried to put it out with water. Although he acknowledged he had never had heard of its existence until a few days ago, he said he was sure it was white phosphorous, which is not supposed to be used against civilians.

Israel has vigorously defended the conduct of its troops and has said that the weapons they used conformed with international law. While launching an investigation into the uses of white phosphorous shells during the 22-day war, the military censor's office has also ordered local and foreign media to blur the faces of army commanders so that they could not be identified and arrested while travelling abroad.

Load-Date: January 26, 2009

End of Document

Fear remains as students return to site of bombed university

The Irish Times

January 27, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 11

Length: 783 words

Byline: LARA MARLOWE in Gaza city

Body

WHAT DO young women dream of? Iman wants to run her own business. Safa wants the liberation of Palestine, while Maysoon pines for peace, to live in security, like people in other countries. Simple as these dreams might sound, they are out of reach in the Gaza Strip. None of these young women's fathers have work, and it feels like the next convulsion of violence between Israel and Hamas is just around the corner.

When the band of Palestinian friends, aged 17 to 21, reunited on the campus of the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) yesterday for the first time since the Israeli assault ended on January 17th, they laughed and cried. Thanks be to God! said Noor. I can't believe we're all alive.

We're back in our homes, but we're still afraid, says Maysoon.

On Sunday, false rumours that Hamas had fired al-Kassam rockets, or that Israel had bombed a building in Gaza, spread like wildfire the length of the enclave, bringing normal activity to a halt.

Several of the girls fled their homes during the conflict but none lost close relatives. Although classes have not yet resumed, they came to view the devastation of the university, where bomb damage is estimated at \$15million.

Sitting on plastic chairs under Eucalyptus trees, they worry about the future. I'll graduate with a degree in business studies next semester, explains Iman. But I feel hopeless about finding a job. The young women estimate unemployment at 85 to 90 per cent.

The Gaza Strip was poor and shabby before the three-week war. Now it is devastated. Yet 21-year-old Maysoon believes the Palestinians won. People everywhere, even non-Muslims, are supporting Hamas, she explains. I know it from al-Jazeera and Hawar [Qatari and Egyptian television stations].

But wasn't it a mistake for Hamas to provoke Israel by firing al-Kassam rockets, because Gaza lost 1,300 lives and thousands of buildings? No, Noor insists, giving an oft-heard answer. This is resistance. We are under siege. This is the only thing we can do.

A few minutes later, the girls admit their isolation. Some people felt for us, but nobody lifted a finger, says Maysoon. We're alone in the world. No one supported us, not even Ramallah. Ramallah is another country, adds Iman.

Fear remains as students return to site of bombed university

Ramallah is shorthand for the Fatah government in the West Bank. Hamas won democratic elections three years ago, but Fatah refused to cede power, and a low-grade civil war between the leading Palestinian factions has smouldered away ever since.

When Noor says that President Mahmoud Abbas is the same as the occupier, Safa scolds her: Don't talk about politics, because we don't agree. We want unity.

More than anything, the young women want to be together. There is nothing as good as a girlfriend, says Maysoon. Their names and faces are like flowers, and though they wear Islamic dress, they've put a lot of thought into brightly coloured headscarves, sneakers and boots with stiletto heels and bell-bottom jeans that peek out from under long robes. No matter how bad the situation is, you want to look pretty, says Safa. Choosing clothes helps you relax; it's good for morale.

Do they realise how different their lives are from those of young women in other countries? Sure, Sure, Sure, they answer together. But when I ask if they're sad or angry to be deprived of their youth, Safa and Iman reply, again in unison: We are proud. Noor elaborates: We are proud that in spite of everything that has happened . . . we will stay on our land.

Was her childhood happy? I ask Noor. Since the day I was born, we've been under occupation and airstrikes. Safa looks pensive. There were a few happy moments, but they passed quickly. With our families. On feast days.

Sometimes, even the feasts are spoiled, because of the siege, says Iman. Boys are a taboo subject in Islamic Gaza. The young women's classes are segregated. It's better that way, says Safa. We're more relaxed and comfortable, separated from men. Mixing is not allowed in Islam. Internet chat rooms, mostly with other students from IUG, are a favourite pastime. But they're scandalised when I ask whether they communicate with young men. We have no relations with males. It is forbidden. It's a sin, says Safa. If she strikes a young man's fancy, Safa explains, he'll send his mother to talk to her mother, and a meeting will be arranged. I have the freedom to accept or reject him, she adds.

Do they want children? Yes. Of course, says Maysoon. But life is so hard in the Gaza Strip. Even the most basic comforts, like water and electricity, are erratic, and hundreds of children have just died violent deaths. Exactly, says Maysoon. That's why we want to bring more.

Load-Date: January 27, 2009

Rallying around Palestine

The Nation (AsiaNet)

January 22, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1096 words

Byline: MASHAAL GAUHAR

Body

The relentless attacks on the besieged population of Gaza have left over 1,000 dead and over 4,000 injured. As hospitals burst with fresh Palestinian casualties every hour, running desperately short of blood and essential medical supplies - the bleak reality of their displacement becomes all too clear.

Despite Israel's continued assertions that the strikes are confined to targeting *Hamas* militants, the death toll largely comprises civilians, among them *women* and children. Rather than just attacking *Hamas*, the ferocity of the onslaught indicates Israel's' determination to obliterate the Palestinian presence from the region altogether.

The lack of a unified Muslim voice is starkly felt as Israel forces continue to batter the hapless Palestinians without compunction and the intractable problem of the Middle East remains unresolved. The Muslim world must ensure that the liberation of the Palestinians is recognised as a legitimate struggle - such atrocities can no longer be accepted with passive political disengagement. Bolivia's exemplary move in cutting off diplomatic ties with Israel is a testament to Bolivian President Evo Morales's bravery as he called for Israeli leaders to face charges at the international criminal court.

The first indigenous Bolivian to rule his country, Evo Morales's miraculous rise to power was led by his promise to liberate the indigenous masses from the injustice of economic imperialism. Similarly Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez strongly denounced the military action in Gaza and has severed diplomatic ties with Israel. The silent leaders of Islamic countries have much to learn from this brave act of moral imperative demonstrated by their Latin American counterparts in support of those being deprived of basic human rights irrespective of nationality or religion.

In accordance with the principles upon which Pakistan was founded, the Pakistan government must effectively condemn the carnage in Gaza and offer unequivocal support to the Palestinians who remain dispossessed under a brutal military occupation.

Describing the anarchy reigning in Gaza, the head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency, John Ging, said: "What you have in this hospital is the consequences of political failure and the complete absence of any accountability for actions that are being taken. It's the rule of the gun now, and it has to stop."

The Palestinians continue to suffer bombardment in their marginalised ghettos. On January 4, a woman and her four children were among the dead. Thousands have no access to water and electricity. Israeli bombardment of UN schools left over 50 civilians dead including a family of seven. The UN had provided Israeli forces with the exact coordinates of these schools to protect them as these were packed with families seeking refuge from the Israeli

Rallying around Palestine

onslaught. Yet, in spite of mounting international clamour, on January 11, Israel announced its intention to escalate the attacks on Gaza.

Israeli forces are said to be using the controversial white phosphorous, used as a smokescreen in warfare and capable of inflicting horrific burns on victims, bolstering the widely held belief that Israel harbours chemical and biological weapons among its deadly stockpile of arsenal.

But sadly this pattern of aggression is nothing new: Ariel Sharon's name will forever be sullied with masterminding the dreadful massacres of Palestinian refugee camps Sabra and Shatila in 1982 which resulted in the brutal deaths of between 700 and several thousand Palestinian civilians.

Israel had earlier rejected European calls for an immediate ceasefire as urged by French President Sarkozy and insists that it is essential to dismantle Hamas's military capacity if a durable ceasefire is to be negotiated. "We cannot accept a compromise that will allow Hamas to fire against Israeli towns in two months' time," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told Mr Sarkozy.

Mr Olmert's rigid opposition to compromise in the face of international pressure is indicative of his government's military strength and prowess due largely to the unlimited largesse enjoyed from Washington. As a result, Mr Olmert is able to confidently dictate his terms to the rest of the world. In his compelling and insightful book, *The Politics of Dispossession*, the late Edward Said highlights the invincibility of the US-Israeli alliance: "Israel and its major backer the United States represent a formidable military and political power, seemingly unchallengeable regionally and, in the main, internationally."

Causing massive death and destruction on the justification of eliminating unruly terrorist elements like Hamas makes no sense. However unpalatable the result, the international community must accept that Hamas is the result of the democratic elections that the West has been pushing so stridently for. Surely Israeli aggression will only breed more violence, extremism and bloodshed. As Mahmoud az-Zahar said in a televised broadcast, "They have legitimised the killing of their people all over the world by killing our people."

The threat from Islam has been greatly inflated allowing horrific acts of violence to be justified on the basis of eradicating terrorism. In his bracing and proactive speech at the Interfaith Conference held in Madrid last year, King Abdullah emphasised that extremism is reprehensible to Islam which urges a moderate path: "It is therefore incumbent upon us to declare to the world that difference must not lead to conflict and confrontation, and to state that the tragedies that have occurred in human history were not due to religion, but were the result of extremism with which some adherents of every divinely revealed religion, and of every political ideology, have been afflicted."

Similarly, Imam Muslim narrates from Ibn Masud that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Extremists shall perish." So the misperception of Islam as an inherently violent and intolerant faith is largely rooted in the politics of our time and the inability to stanch the flow of invective against the religion exposes the weakness of a fractious and divided Muslim world.

Israel's chilling 38 year military occupation of Palestine and its ruinous effect on the lives of the occupied must come to an end if a durable peace is ever to be achieved. Amid the charred buildings and mountains of rubble that now inhabit the Gaza Strip, Pakistan and the rest of the Muslim world must help rebuild the shattered lives of the Palestinians and reinvigorate the struggle for liberation and peace.

The writer is a freelance columnist

Load-Date: January 29, 2009

Israel says Gaza pullout complete

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

January 22, 2009 Thursday

1 - Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 19

Length: 244 words

Body

ISRAELI troops completed yesterday their withdrawal from the Gaza Strip after a 22-day offensive against the Islamist **Hamas** movement, an army spokesman said.

"The last soldier left the Gaza Strip this morning," the spokesman said. "However, the army remains deployed all around the Gaza Strip to meet any eventuality."

The pullout began on Sunday after Israel declared a ceasefire and Palestinians militants matched it. **Hamas** gave Israel a week to remove all troops and open crossing points into Gaza or face renewed hostilities.

The Israel Defence Forces later issued a statement saying the troops had returned to Israeli territory.

"The forces are now redeployed outside the Gaza Strip," it said.

Israel launched its massive assault on December 27, bombarding the narrow coastal strip where 1.5 million Palestinians live from land, air and sea.

The army conditioned a full withdrawal on a halt to rocket attacks on southern Israel by Palestinian militants, which sparked the

invasion.

The ceasefire held firm, but the army did not complete the withdrawal before the inauguration of US President Barack Obama in Washington on Tuesday as many commentators expected.

Palestinian health ministry figures list more than 1300 people dead, including 410 children and about 100 **women**. Another 5300 people were wounded -- 1855 of them children and 795 **women**. The Palestinian bureau of statistics reported 4100 homes totally destroyed and 17,000 others damaged in the offensive.

Load-Date: January 21, 2009

IDF: Civilian deaths less than 25% of total

The Jerusalem Post

January 15, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 226 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

A maximum of 25 percent of the Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead are innocent civilians, the head of the IDF's Gaza Coordination and Liaison Administration (CLA), Col. Moshe Levi, said Wednesday.

According to Palestinian medical officials, Israel has killed some 1,000 Palestinians since the fighting began in late December and more than half of them are civilians. The toll included 11 Palestinians killed Wednesday, medical officials said.

Levi told reporters on Wednesday that the CLA had compiled a list with the names of 900 of the Palestinians killed during the fighting. He said that 150 names were of women, children and elderly and that the maximum number of civilians killed so far was 250.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) released a report on Wednesday citing Palestinian Ministry of Health figures according to which 311 of the dead are children and 76 are women.

The number of wounded, the report claims is 4,418, of whom 1,549 are children and 652 are women.

Levi also dismissed OCHA's claim that 43 Palestinians were killed in an IDF attack on a Hamas terror cell that was firing mortars at Israeli forces from within an UNRWA school in Jabalya.

Levi said that the CLA knew of 21 Palestinians killed in the attack, including a number of Hamas operatives.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Seeping sewage, gunboats and the rubble of war: the surfers for peace take it all on board; Gaza

The Times (London)

June 16, 2009 Tuesday

Edition 1, National Edition

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 31

Length: 791 words

Byline: James Hider

Body

It is not exactly the surfer's dream scenario: the sea is flat and discoloured greenish-grey by the vast amounts of sewage seeping into it; the nearby fisherman's wharf has been reinforced by the rubble of warsmashed buildings. Just beyond the horizon, Israeli gunboats prowl to make sure no one is trying to smuggle in weapons by sea.

But none of this is deterring Gaza's small but dedicated community of surfers. In their rickety wooden lifeguard shack, Mohammed Abu Jayyab, 35, and Ahmed Abu Hasiera, 29, not only watch over the women swimming in their black robes and headscarves and the boys splashing in groups or the men washing their horses - they also keep a constant eye open for rising waves.

They started surfing a decade ago, inspired by television programmes they had seen about the sport. Ahmed brought back a cheap surfboard from Israel and by trial and error they learnt to ride the waves that rise in winter and high summer. After the Islamist group Hamas won the Palestinian elections in early 2006, Gaza was sealed off from the world and people increasingly turned to the sea for relaxation.

"There's no other form of entertainment," said Mohammed, a lean, blueeyed man with a scrubby beard and baggy surfer shorts. "I feel when I'm surfing I'm free, but only for the moment when I'm riding the wave - then you forget all the other problems around you."

The two men shared their single beaten-up board for years as the siege tightened and Israel launched deadly raids into Gaza, fighting Hamas and other militant groups firing rockets into southern Israel. Then, two years ago, their story was picked up by an American newspaper and was spotted by an elderly American who had introduced surfing to Israel half a century ago.

Don Paskowitz, a surfer from California, moved to Tel Aviv in 1956 and introduced what was then the eight-year-old Jewish state to the art of riding the waves.

Seeping sewage, gunboats and the rubble of war: the surfers for peace take it all on board Gaza

In 2007, aged 86, he was inspired to repeat his mission in the besieged, war-torn slums of Gaza. He took a dozen surfboards down to the huge checkpoint in the fence surrounding the tiny enclave. After a certain amount of haggling, he was allowed to hand over the boards to Mohammed and Ahmed, who had gone to the other side to meet him.

From that moment, a loose organisation called Surfing 4 Peace grew, although because of the strict travel restrictions in and out of Gaza, neither Ahmed or Mohammed has ever been able to meet any of the Israeli surfers involved.

A few years ago, there were only two surfers in Gaza. Now there are at least 20, bobbing out at sea as bemused Gazans look on, some of them sitting in deckchairs by the water's edge, smoking waterpipes.

Ahmed surfs whenever he can, although the ferocity of the fighting in Israel's attack last January meant that he had to stay out of the water as Israeli gunboats fired from offshore into Gaza's densely populated cities.

"Even in the war I'd come and sit and look at the sea. Immediately after the fighting I came back and surfed," he smiled, recalling the moment in the classic war film *Apocalypse Now* when an American commander in Vietnam forces his men to surf in the midst of a battle, shouting: "Charlie don't surf!"

The obvious question, then, was: does Hamas surf? "Hamas guys do surf," said Ahmed, adding that so did members of Fatah, the rival faction, who fought and lost a bitter battle for control of Gaza in the summer of 2007.

"Americans have a war in Iraq and they play football with Iraqis. We are all Palestinian citizens, there's no difference in surfing between Hamas and Fatah. In sports, there is no war."

Where you been, dude?

Angola's 1,600 km coastline was thick with troops and peppered with landmines during a 40-year civil war. But after peace came in 2002 Angolans turned their coast, which they say offers world-class waves, into a new frontier for surfing and created a budding tourism industry

Vietnam held its inaugural surfing contest in 1993 on China Beach, where American forces first landed in 1965. The competition brought together former foes from the Vietnam War

Cuban surfers made their own surfboards from refrigerator insulation foam until a website, HavanaSurf, was set up to enable surfers from abroad to donate second-hand boards. Authorities remain suspicious; in 1994 a Cuban escaped to Florida on a windsurfing board

Nachum Shifren wrote *Surfing Rabbi: A Kabbalistic Quest for Soul* after he became an expert surfer, lifeguard and triathlete, and "found God not in the synagogue, but in the majesty of Jewish mysticism and the vast power of the ocean"

Australia has four Christian surf churches, where worshippers combine prayer with surfing

Sources: Reuters, Times database

Online

For breaking Middle East news and analysis timesonline.co.uk/mideast

Graphic

Mohammed and Ahmed find peace on the waves even in Gaza City

Seeping sewage, gunboats and the rubble of war: the surfers for peace take it all on board Gaza

JAMES HIDER

Load-Date: June 18, 2009

End of Document

Gaza fight boosts Al-Jazeera in U.S.

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

January 25, 2009, Sunday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P5A

Length: 234 words

Body

DOHA, Qatar - American viewership of Al-Jazeera English rose dramatically during the Israel-**Hamas** war, partly because the channel had what CNN and other international networks didn't have: reporters inside Gaza.

But the viewers weren't watching it on television, where the Arab network's English-language station has almost no U.S. presence.

Instead, the station streamed video of Israel's offensive against **Hamas** on the Internet and took advantage of emerging online media such as the microblogging Web site Twitter to provide real-time updates.

During the 22-day conflict that ended last weekend, the station and its Arabic language sister, as they often do, aired far more graphic pictures than U.S. network television of dead and injured Palestinian children and **women**.

"Gaza ... was a breakthrough opportunity to make an impact with people who are less aware of Al-Jazeera than we'd like," said Tony Burman, managing director of the English-language channel in Qatar.

"There is an alternative perspective our channel provides, and Gaza was a good example," Burman said.

Al-Jazeera had another draw: Its reporters were inside Gaza while international networks such as CNN were barred by Israel from sending reporters in.

Outside figures also point to big gains in U.S. online interest, suggesting the war gave the Arab station its first significant chance to break into the American market.

- Associated Press

Load-Date: January 26, 2009

Israel disputes civilian toll near UN school

The Australian

February 25, 2009 Wednesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 443 words

Byline: ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

Body

JERUSALEM

ALLEGATIONS that 42 Palestinian civilians were killed by Israeli shells near a UN school in the Gaza Strip during last month's fighting have been challenged by Israeli investigators who say that fatalities in the incident totalled 12, only three of them non-combatants.

The allegations had served as the centrepiece of charges by Palestinians and international agencies that Israel used indiscriminate and excessive force against civilians during the three-week operation.

In the initial version of the incident, based on Palestinian sources, the casualties were said to have been inside a UN school in the Jabalya refugee camp north of Gaza City. This proved to be wrong when UN officials acknowledged that no shell had hit the school. However, Israel was still accused of having caused the deaths of civilians.

"I know that no one was killed in the school," a senior UN official was quoted as saying.

"But 41 innocent people were killed in the street outside the school. The state of Israel has to answer for that.

"What did they know and what care did they take?"

An answer to that question has been furnished by Colonel Moshe Levi, head of the Israel Defence Forces' Gaza Co-ordination and Liaison Administration (CLA), which normally deals with the transfer of aid to the Gaza Strip through Israeli crossing points.

With the onset of the war, Colonel Levi and his staff began compiling a list of casualties in Gaza, as reported by Palestinian health officials, and comparing the names with those on its own list of Gaza residents and its registry of militants.

In a 200-page report recently issued, the CLA identifies more than 1200 Palestinian fatalities by name and gives their Palestinian identity numbers, the circumstances in which they were killed and the militant group, if any, with which they were affiliated.

The report concludes that about one-third of the total fatalities were civilian, and not two-thirds, as Palestinian sources claimed. The CLA declines to reveal all its sources.

Israel disputes civilian toll near UN school

Focusing on the fatalities killed near the UN school in Jabalya, the CLA concluded that 12 people were killed, not 42 or 43 as variously reported, when Israeli mortars fired three shells at **Hamas** mortarmen who had fired at Israeli forces.

Israel has released the names of nine of those killed -- two **females** and seven males. In all, nine of those killed in the incident were identified by the Israeli army as **Hamas** operatives and three as non-combatants.

Israel maintains that the international community was duped by **Hamas** claims that most of the fatalities were innocent civilians.

The UN is compiling its own report on casualties suffered during the war.

Load-Date: February 24, 2009

End of Document

Diminishing the Holocaust; If every moral outrage is deemed to be the Holocaust, then nothing is - and the Holocaust becomes nothing as well

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 31, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. B7; IRWIN COTLER

Length: 1062 words

Byline: IRWIN COTLER, FREELANCE

Body

Today marks the end of United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Week - a time to reflect on the significance of the tragedies and terrors of the Holocaust.

The enduring lesson of the Holocaust and the genocides that followed is that they occurred not simply because of the machinery of death, but because of state-sanctioned incitement to hate. The genocide of European Jewry succeeded not only because of the culture of hate and industry of death, but because of crimes of indifference and conspiracies of silence - another lesson of the Holocaust.

There's a third lesson - one that emerges not so much from the Holocaust itself as from its aftermath. This lesson is that remembrance requires active effort and reflection. For the relativizing pressures of contemporary events are great, and the lessons of the Holocaust risk losing their value if the tragedy of the Holocaust is invoked to fit every case of moral outrage.

In short: if everything is another Holocaust, then nothing is - and the Holocaust itself becomes nothing as well.

No recent event makes this more clear than the inflammatory misuse of Holocaust comparisons to describe the conflict in Gaza, in a dual demonizing indictment. On the one hand, Jews are blamed for perpetrating a Holocaust on the Palestinians, as in the appalling statement of Norwegian diplomat Trine Lilleng that "The grandchildren of Holocaust survivors from World War II are doing to the Palestinians exactly what was done to them by Nazi Germany;" and on the other hand, crowds are incited to another Holocaust against the Jews, as in the chants of protesters who scream "**Hamas!** **Hamas!** Jews to the gas!"

One may critique Israel's response to **Hamas** missile and rocket attacks - or argue about the proportionality of that response - but it is outrageous to argue that the most militarily sophisticated state in the Middle East harbours genocidal ambitions against the Palestinians, as **Hamas** avowedly has regarding Israel and the Jews. It is almost embarrassing to have to point out that this accusation is utterly irreconcilable with the fact that Israel vacated Gaza in 2005, forcibly moving out Jewish settlers while leaving behind greenhouses for the Palestinian population. Or that the Palestinians in the West Bank fully escaped Israeli "attack" during the conflict, while Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas blamed **Hamas** for provoking the Israeli response.

Diminishing the Holocaust; If every moral outrage is deemed to be the Holocaust, then nothing is - and the Holocaust becomes nothing as well

Indeed, the thought of the Nazis in the Second World War contacting Jews home by home to warn them before launching attacks nearby or stopping hostilities regularly to allow humanitarian aid to pass through, as Israel did, is inconceivable.

I strongly agree that Israel - like every other state in the world - should be held responsible for any violations of human rights and humanitarian law, and deserves no immunity when it comes to defending its human- rights record. But it does deserve fairness and equality before the law, and before the international community.

Consider the simultaneous humanitarian crises in the world that were largely ignored during the war in Gaza. Darfur continued to be beset by genocide. Mass rape was being used as a weapon of war in the Congo, in an unending civil conflict that has already claimed the lives of millions. In Zimbabwe, a disastrous cholera epidemic was afflicting tens of thousands. Anarchy reigned in Somalia; systemic repression endured in North Korea, and political prisoners were being executed in Iran.

Meanwhile, Israel unilaterally halted its fighting in the middle of the day to allow humanitarian supplies to flow to Palestinians, and it warned civilians -by dropping leaflets and by phone - when attacks in their vicinity were coming.

Israel is defending itself against a multi-faceted adversary, composed of a consortium of terrorist groups funded, trained, supported and instigated by a state sponsor - Iran - preaching genocide. I would not unconditionally defend its actions, just as I respond critically when the United States or Canada - in its treatment of Maher Arar and abandonment of Omar Khadr - makes sorrowing errors in the fight against terror. So I offer no argument that Israel has an exemplary record in its struggle against terrorism. But this is hardly the point.

The point is that whatever one's perspective on the Gaza conflict, the comparison between Israel's action against **Hamas** - a terrorist group sworn to destroy Israel - and the Nazi Holocaust is as false as it is obscene. I say this not as a proponent of Israel, but as a voice for Holocaust remembrance.

Drawing false parallels between the Gaza conflict and Nazi Germany is an affront not only to the living Holocaust survivors and their children and grandchildren, but also to the 6 million deceased. These men, **women** and children, innocents all - died not in any "war" or "conflict;" they perished in a deliberate eliminationist horror in which, as Elie Wiesel put it, "not all victims were Jews but all Jews were victims."

They were victims of a carefully orchestrated infrastructure of death created with the sole purpose of annihilating a people. As the world stood by and refused even refuge to fleeing Jews, Nazi officials met 70 years ago to plan how the Nazi military machine, combined with scientific acumen, could be mobilized to "exterminate" the Jewish population most efficiently and effectively. The root cause of Nazi aggression was racist hate; its chief facilitator was international acquiescence.

When the Holocaust is misconstrued and trivialized, and its name invoked in the face of all kinds of suffering, its lessons become obscured, its teachings become ambiguous, and its invocation becomes political. Indeed, the political consequence, if not the intent, of this scurrilous indictment is clear: If Israel is a Nazi state it has no right to exist - in fact, there is an obligation to dismantle this Nazi state and delegitimize its supporters.

This is why Lilleng's Nazi analogy chastising the Jews and the calls from protesters to murder the Jews are equally offensive to the paradigm of Holocaust remembrance. The latter overtly displays the genocidal hatred of the Nazis, while the former implicitly rationalizes this response.

If we cannot unite and deplore such distortion, then we have forgotten the Holocaust indeed.

Irwin Cotler is the member of Parliament for Mount Royal and a former justice minister.

Graphic

Diminishing the Holocaust; If every moral outrage is deemed to be the Holocaust, then nothing is - and the Holocaust becomes nothing as well

Photo: MATTHEW FISHER CANWEST NEWS SERVICE; UN employee prepares to distribute aid in Gaza during an Israeli-sponsored lull in fighting. ;

Load-Date: March 23, 2009

End of Document

Israeli and Palestinian supporters in the region show their solidarity

The Citizens' Voice (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania)

January 16, 2009 Friday

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Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Business News

Section: STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

Length: 433 words

Byline: Heidi Ruckno, The Citizens' Voice, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Body

Jan. 16--WILKES-BARRE -- Tensions over the conflict between Israel and Gaza have hit the Wyoming Valley, as supporters of the Israeli and Palestinian causes staged rallies in support.

Approximately 50 people of Middle Eastern descent gathered with their friends on Public Square on Tuesday to protest the ongoing war between Israel and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and on Thursday an Israel Solidarity rally was held at the Jewish Community Center on South River Street.

On Tuesday, demonstrators of all ages arrived on Public Square around 4 p.m., waving Palestinian flags and prominently displaying a banner that said, "Palestinians deserve Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

They chanted, "Free, Free, Palestine," and "End the War Now," as they displayed poster-sized photos of war-torn Gaza and mourning families.

On Thursday, the Jewish Federation of Greater Wilkes-Barre hosted Yossi Olmert, brother of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Yossi Olmert, who was director of communication under former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, is a policy expert on the modern Middle East.

Yossi Olmert said Israel did not go into the current conflict blindly, and that terrorists in Gaza left the government with no choice.

"Hamas brought it upon themselves. They're not going to be able to claim victory at this time," he said.

Ongoing tensions escalated Dec. 27, 2008, with Israeli air strikes against Hamas targets in Gaza City. More than 1,000 Palestinians and 13 Israelis have been killed, according to the Associated Press.

Hamas has fired more than 6,000 rockets at Israeli targets since 2005, when Israel left the Gaza Strip, according to Yossi Olmert. The goal of the latest military action is to stop the ongoing assault.

Many Palestinian casualties have been civilian, angering supporters of Palestinians.

"Killing, indiscriminately, children, women and all people is a collective punishment against the Palestinian and Gazan people," said Abdel Elbattah of Kingston, a supporter of Palestine and an organizer of Tuesday's demonstration.

Israeli and Palestinian supporters in the region show their solidarity

The gathering, Elbattah said, was simply a call for peace and equity for all people.

hruckno@citizensvoice.com, 570-821-2109

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Load-Date: January 16, 2009

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'Color Purple' author takes trip to Gaza

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

March 8, 2009, Sunday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P3B

Length: 231 words

Byline: Rebecca Santana, The Associated Press

Body

CAIRO, Egypt - Pulitzer-prize winning author Alice Walker, who wrote "The Color Purple," is traveling to Gaza along with other female activists to highlight the plight of Gaza's residents.

"I feel that what is happening in the Middle East is very important because the situation is so volatile," said Walker, speaking by telephone Saturday from the Rafah border crossing as her group waited to travel into Gaza. "I love people, and I love children, and I feel that the Palestinian child is just as precious as the African-American child, as the Jewish child."

Walker is part of a group of about 60 women going to Gaza to deliver aid and meet with nongovernmental organizations and residents. The trip, organized by the U.S. anti-war group Code Pink, is intended to push Israel and Egypt to open the borders into Gaza, said Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink who helped organize the trip.

The trip comes as efforts to reach a long-term cease-fire between Israel and the militant group Hamas have hit a roadblock. An Israeli offensive on Gaza, intended to stop rocket fire into southern Israel, ended Jan. 18 with separate cease-fires declared by Israel and Hamas.

Members of the group intend to stay in Gaza until Wednesday, Benjamin said. During their trip, timed to coincide with today's International Women's Day, they also will deliver baskets filled with personal items such as shampoo.

Load-Date: March 9, 2009

POOR ISRAEL. POOR PALESTINE; BOTH HAVE BEEN BLINDED BY THE CYCLE OF REVENGE

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 23, 2009 Friday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2009 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. B-7

Length: 843 words

Byline: CHRIS PATTEN

Body

LONDON -- I spent the New Year in Sydney, Australia, watching the fireworks above the iconic bridge welcome in 2009. The explosions over Gaza that night were not intended to entertain, but rather to break Hamas and discredit it in the eyes of Palestinians.

It was the latest resort to terrible violence aimed at resolving how to share in peace what Christians still like to call the Holy Land. Mahatma Gandhi criticized the biblical justification of retribution, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Followed through to its end, he argued, it would mean that all were blind. And so it has proved in Palestine and Israel. Blind in Gaza, blind in Jerusalem.

Much of what has happened was predictable, as well over 1,400 men, women and children were killed and more than 4,000 injured.

First, the United States justified the Israeli assault and blamed everything on Hamas, just as it used to pin all responsibility for whatever went wrong on Yasir Arafat and Fatah.

Second, despite French President Nicolas Sarkozy's welcome high-profile diplomacy, Europe has been irrelevant, if not quite invisible. As Israeli officials point out, Europeans are always there for the photo opportunity. The Quartet's peacemaker, Tony Blair, is as unctuously nugatory as ever. He appears on CNN, but has he actually visited Gaza since his appointment in the summer of 2007? No.

Third, as usual, Israel has accused of anti-Semitism those who have dared to criticize its disproportionate response to Hamas's indefensible rocket attacks and its collective punishment of Palestinians. An Italian cardinal, who admittedly spoke intemperately, was accused of using the language of Holocaust denial. By that standard, does my unqualified criticism of Hamas's rocket attacks make me an Islamophobe?

Coincidentally, the deadly attack on Gaza came at the same time that a clutch of America's most distinguished would-be Middle East peacemakers published books about how the task should properly be tackled. It all sounded a bit like a series of job applications -- the war for President Barack Obama's ear.

One thing all these experts could agree on is that President George W. Bush was a disaster. American policy might as well have been made in the headquarters of Israel's hardline Likud Party.

POOR ISRAEL . POOR PALESTINE BOTH HAVE BEEN BLINDED BY THE CYCLE OF REVENGE

These "wise men," advisers to President Bill Clinton and other presidents, all seem to concede that the failure of the proposed Camp David accord in 2000 could not, after all, be laid solely at the door of former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Former Israeli premier Ehud Barak should carry his share of the blame, too. Moreover, they all criticize the Clinton-era practice of routinely clearing America's policy positions first with Israel, which is hardly likely to win Arab confidence or support.

The American diplomats' arguments about process did not on the whole carry over into disagreement about the content of a peace deal. All more or less agree on this.

Two states. Security guarantees for Israel. A Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, adjusted by agreement through mutual land swaps. An end to most West Bank settlements. No "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, but financial compensation for them. Some system of joint or international sovereignty over Jerusalem's holy places and the division of the city so that it can become the capital of two states.

Of course, this is what should happen. And I suppose that it is conceivable that it could still happen with the help of welcome new mediators like Qatar and Turkey, whose prime minister called Israel's attack "a serious crime against humanity."

But I have begun to wonder whether it will really be possible to achieve peace on this basis. The Palestinian Fatah Party and moderates like Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have been totally discredited. Palestinians on the whole have been further radicalized.

Hamas, whose engagement and support is essential for any settlement, has sworn revenge. Every day, new Palestinian sorrows strike heaven in the face. The widows and the mothers of the dead weep and cry out for bloody justice.

Should we be surprised? Had the British government pursued peace and the destruction of the IRA in Northern Ireland by bombing Catholic Derry, would that have alienated or won over Catholic opinion?

On the Israeli side, are there political leaders who really want a Palestinian state and are prepared to take the political risks to establish one? Which of them are strong enough to deal with the West Bank settlers? There will be no peace settlement otherwise. Which of them will teach the facts of life to the more extreme members of the Jewish diaspora in America? Which of them understands that reconciliation is more important than retribution and revenge?

However tough things looked in the past, I have never felt such a sense of despair about Palestine and Israel. Reason has been drowned in blood. It seems as though the politics of hope has given way to the politics of the cemetery.

Poor Palestine. Poor Israel. Who is there now who can still light a candle in the dark?

Notes

Chris Patten, the chancellor of Oxford University, is a former European Union commissioner for external relations, chairman of the British Conservative Party and the last British governor of Hong Kong. © Project Syndicate 2009 (www.project-syndicate.org/)

Load-Date: January 23, 2009

Rebuild Gush Katif

The Jerusalem Post

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 778 words

Byline: MICHAEL FREUND

Highlight: The truth of Zionist history is that Jewish settlements are not an obstacle to peace but an impediment to war. Fundamentally Freund

Body

Last week, shortly after Israeli ground forces entered Gaza, there was a brief news item on the radio which caught my attention.

Amid the flurry of reports emanating from the front, the announcer noted in passing that troops had arrived at the ruins of the Jewish communities of Dugit in northern Gaza and Netzarim in the center of the Strip. He then quickly moved on to discuss various other pressing events in the current campaign against terror.

Left unsaid, of course, was the colossal and bitter irony of this development. After all, it was just three and a half years ago, in August 2005, that soldiers descended on the Jewish communities of Gaza to expel their Jewish residents from their homes. And now the men in uniform find themselves forced to do battle against Hamas in those very same locations.

What a stinging rebuke to all those who preached the gospel of retreat in the face of terror and prophesied peace and harmony by removing Jews.

If nothing else, it is a telling reminder of a basic and fundamental truth of Zionist history and Middle Eastern reality: Jewish settlements are not an obstacle to peace, but an impediment to war.

Only by firmly planting the flag deep into every part of the Land of Israel can we ensure our continued existence in the face of ongoing Arab expansionism and Palestinian irredentism.

That is why it is time now to right the moral and historical wrong of Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan and rebuild Gush Katif.

THE COUNTRY's leaders talk of teaching Hamas a lesson by striking at its infrastructure or delivering a painful blow. I couldn't agree more. But while we are at it, let's also send a message it won't soon forget.

To put it simply: The more you try to kill us, the more we will rebuild. For every Palestinian act of destruction, we will undertake an act of reconstruction.

In the past eight years, Palestinian terrorists have fired more than 8,000 rockets at Israel. Each one of these potentially lethal explosive projectiles was intended to kill Jews. What could possibly be a more fitting response to this unprecedented wave of violence than to enable the return of Gaza's 8,000 Jewish residents?

Rebuild Gush Katif

This is not to imply a moral equivalence between the two. Just the opposite.

Hamas's main aim is to kill Jews, to reduce the Jewish presence in this region. Thus, it and its fellow jihadists must be made to understand that any attempt to diminish the number of Jews living in Israel will be met head-on by efforts to increase it.

So for every rocket fired against us, let another Jew return to Gaza and rebuild.

For every attempt that **Hamas** has made over the years to lessen the number of Jews, we will respond by boosting the figures.

Hamas' strategic vision assumes that the Jewish presence in this part of the world is temporary or transitory. Hence, to best combat it, we must do everything in our power to demonstrate that it is wrong; we are here to stay.

IN FACT, such an approach is not new, and has its roots in the classical Zionist response to the Arab unrest of 1936. After Arab rioters attacked Jaffa and killed 16 Jews on April 19, 1936, the Arab High Command launched a general strike and pressed the British mandatory authorities take steps to restrict the growth of the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel.

Zionist leaders David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann wisely rejected any attempt to limit Jewish immigration or land reclamation. They realized that such a stance would amount to appeasement, which would only fuel still further Arab aggression against the Yishuv.

In his memoirs, Ben-Gurion writes that "the Yishuv defended itself with courage, wisdom, and restraint... Not one Jewish settlement was abandoned; instead, new ones were established." Rather than yielding to Arab threats and violence, Ben-Gurion and the Zionist leadership pressed forward. In the face of those who sought to reduce the Jewish population, they responded by intensifying efforts to enlarge it as much as possible.

Our present leadership would do well to follow this example, by rebuilding communities such as Dugit, Netzarim and Neveh Dekalim.

This past Sunday, a group of former Gush Katif residents demanded just that. At a news conference in Jerusalem, they said they are ready to recreate the communities that were so senselessly destroyed during the 2005 retreat.

"Let us return home. We are ready at a day's notice to set up tents in the area until permanent construction can begin," the group said.

This is an initiative that all Israelis can and should embrace. Where the Palestinians have sought to inflict death, let us act to reestablish life.

That, more than anything, is the best possible Zionist and Jewish response.

Graphic

Photo: **FEMALE** SOLDIER at a staging area near the border with Gaza (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Soldiers shielded from war crime prosecution

The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

January 26, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. B7

Length: 823 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Body

Azbet Abadrapoh, Gaza Strip -- As the UN investigates whether Israeli soldiers committed war crimes in Gaza earlier this month, Israel decided Sunday all military personnel who fought in the **Hamas**-run Palestinian enclave will receive state protection from foreign prosecution.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza should know they are safe from various tribunals and Israel will assist them on this front and defend us, just as they defended us with their bodies during the Gaza operation," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Allegations that there may have been improper behaviour by Israel Defense Forces have been made by the UN and such agencies as Amnesty International.

Much of the territory, including most of Gaza City except for government buildings, was not touched by the war. The charges of misconduct centre on at least four communities in central and northern Gaza that bore almost the full brunt of attacks by Israeli forces.

One is Azbet Abadrapoh, just east of the Jabaliya refugee camp and about 1.5 kilometres from the Israeli border. This weekend, as residents combed through scores of flattened homes, Sannaa Awadalluh of the UN's Gaza office and an associate went around with clipboards already thick with notes.

"I am collecting tragic stories to send to our directors for analysis," Awadalluh said as a crowd swarmed her and an associate. "It is important for the UN to know exactly what happened here and also to find out what help is required now. We are particularly interested in knowing what happened to **women** and children."

Piecing together who did what when and where will be an immense challenge as so many people wanted their narratives chronicled. For Awadalluh, the most harrowing of the 70 accounts she had recorded so far is a mother who died while breast feeding her baby, who lay beside her corpse for three days before Israel allowed Palestinian medics into the area.

Ambulance driver Khalid Abu Aouk spent many days trying to co-ordinate with Israeli troops to rescue the injured and collect bodies. "They were very unhelpful," was one of his few relatively neutral comments.

Pensioner Ahmed Muhammad Baduan's street looked as if an earthquake had hit it. When his wife, Halima, was hit in the head by a piece of shrapnel fired from a tank he went outside and told an Israeli in the next street that his wife

Soldiers shielded from war crime prosecution

was wounded inside. But one of three tanks parked about 50 metres from his home fired, he said, bringing his already battered house down, killing his wife.

Asked whether **Hamas** should continue firing rockets into Israel, which was what provoked the war, Baduan replied: "They should stop throwing them because there is hard destruction here, but they do not listen to my speeches."

Laughing bitterly, he added: "I suppose they will not stop."

Israel Defense Forces entered neighbourhoods from which rockets had been launched and did what they had to do there to defend themselves, the IDF has said. This explanation was sometimes difficult to reconcile with the high level of destruction. Adding to the confusion have been accounts that soldiers gave to Israeli newspapers of how little resistance they encountered from **Hamas** forces, many of whom seem to have sat the war out.

On the other hand, it was extremely unlikely in the worst-hit residential area that residents were telling the truth when they adamantly denied any **Hamas** members lived among them and that their backyards and alleys had never been used to launch rockets.

In El Atatra, where officials from **Hamas** were compiling lists of the dead this weekend, most damage appears to have been caused by fires.

"The smell was terrible. We could not breathe," said Shahir Khdeir, whose son died in a blaze caused by an explosion that gained strength when he and his neighbours tried to put it out with water. Although he acknowledged he had never had heard of its existence until a few days ago, he said he was sure it was white phosphorous, which is not supposed to be used against civilians.

Israel has vigorously defended the conduct of its troops and has said that the weapons they used conformed with international law. While launching an investigation into the uses of white phosphorous shells during the 22-day war, the military censor's office has also ordered local and foreign media to blur the faces of army commanders so that they could not be identified and arrested while travelling abroad.

Khalil Al-Afar, who normally tends a strawberry patch, was not interested in the heated debate about whether Israel used illegal weapons.

"I don't know who to blame," he said, surveying the burned out shell of his home, where he and 30 relatives had been sheltering when it was set on fire by an Israeli shell. "We are not political and this was not our fault. All we want is peace.

"I am wearing a borrowed sweater and borrowed sweat pants because I own nothing now. What I ask is for the world to give us a hand so we can rebuild our lives."

Load-Date: January 26, 2009

God's foreign policy

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

April 20, 2009 Monday

All Editions

Copyright 2009 Bangor Daily News

Section: Pg. A6

Length: 238 words

Body

Robert McLaughlin's April 10 letter suggests that Israel has no right to defend itself and its suffering is phony. After the Jews went through the Holocaust, what does he expect them to do? The Israelis live in fear of being blown up at any time.

The Jews warned British and U.N. officials three times to get out of the King David Hotel before they blew it up. They chose not to leave. The Palestinian suicide bombers, Hezbollah, and **Hamas** don't give the Israelis the same warnings. In some cases, the Israelis don't strike back because these groups hide in the midst of **women** and children and know Israel will try to avoid civilian casualties. These groups couldn't care less if Arab **women** and children die as long as Israelis die.

The Jews never stole land from anyone. God gave the land in Israel to the Jews in a covenant between him and Abraham. A promise by God is forever. This is all in Genesis 12:1, 2, 7. The Jews have owned the land in Israel since then according to God. The Palestinian suicide bombers, Hezbollah, and **Hamas** should argue with God about this and leave the Jews alone.

God's foreign policy is short and to the point in Genesis 12:3. God will bless anyone who blesses Israel and he will curse anyone who curses Israel. God has blessed this country. The U.S. is the richest, freest, most powerful country that has ever existed. Could it be because we have always supported Israel?

Janice Bodwell

Kenduskeag

Load-Date: April 20, 2009

Pressure mounts for Israeli war crimes probe

Financial Times (London, England)

January 16, 2009 Friday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 683 words

Byline: Frances Williams in Geneva

Highlight: Civilian casualties

Some human rights experts think anger over Gaza could open the way for a trial abroad, says Frances Williams

Body

As Israel's military assault on Gaza nears the end of its third week, pressure is mounting from governments, the United Nations and human rights groups for alleged Israeli war crimes to be investigated and those responsible to be brought to justice.

Since the end of December almost 1,100 Palestinians have died and more than 4,400 have been injured, most of them civilians, including women and -children.

Under the rules of war, as laid out in the Geneva conventions and their protocols, both Israel and Hamas are obliged at all times to distinguish between combatants and civilians, avoid force "disproportionate" to the military gain and take all feasible precautions to minimise harm to civilians.

While Israel claims it takes great care to avoid civilians, the sheer scale of Palestinian casualties has fuelled widespread accusations of excessive force.

"The one-sidedness of casualty figures is one measure of disproportion," says Richard Falk, UN human rights envoy for the occupied Palestinian territories. Four Israeli civilians have been killed by Hamas rockets since the offensive began, with another nine Israeli soldiers also killed - four in a "friendly fire" incident .

Several specific incidents have also prompted calls for an independent war crimes investigation, including an attack last week on a UN-run school being used as a civilian shelter that killed more than 40 people.

In another incident described as "shocking" by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Israeli forces barred rescue workers for four days from evacuating wounded civilians.

Human rights groups also point to attacks on ambulances and rescue vehicles, and the indiscriminate use of heavy weapons that make civilian casualties inevitable. Amnesty International says Israeli soldiers, as well as Hamas, are also using Palestinians as a human shield.

Pressure mounts for Israeli war crimes probe

Moreover, Israel's definition of a legitimate military target appears to go way beyond what is permissible in international law to encompass anyone and anything suspected of supporting **Hamas**'s military or political apparatus.

"Military objectives" have included police stations, government buildings, mosques, the Islamic University and a money-changing office.

Prosecuting war crimes cases is problematic and past experience is not encouraging. Despite evidence presented by the UN and others, no Israeli citizen has ever been prosecuted for war crimes allegedly committed in previous military operations - in the occupied Palestinian territories or in its two invasions of Lebanon. Nor is it conceivable, at least in the near term, that Israel would put its own leaders on trial for conduct of a war overwhelmingly backed by Israeli citizens.

The creation of an ad hoc war crimes tribunal, or referral to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, is probably also a non-starter. Either would require authorisation by the UN Security Council, where the US, Israel's staunchest ally, has a veto.

But some human rights experts believe public outrage at what is happening in Gaza could open the way for the trial abroad of suspected war criminals covered by universal jurisdiction. That is because all countries have an obligation to search out those accused of "grave" breaches of the rules of war and to put them on trial or extradite them to a country that will.

Although domestic legislation is patchy and universal jurisdiction powers are often subject to government discretion, there has been far greater readiness to use those powers since the 1998 arrest on torture charges of Augusto Pinochet, the former Chilean dictator.

"We're in the early stages of a seismic shift in international law," says Christopher Hall, senior legal adviser at Amnesty International in London. He notes that lawyers attached to Israel's foreign ministry already analyse the risk of travel abroad for Israelis who could be targets for arrest once they lose their diplomatic immunity.

"It's like walking across the street against a red light," says Mr Hall. "The risk may be low but you're going to think twice before committing a crime or travelling if you have committed one."

Load-Date: January 15, 2009

Protest was not an example of love and peace

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

January 15, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A15

Length: 656 words

Byline: Dr. Marvin Levant, For The Calgary Herald

Body

Calgary Imam Syed Soharwardy's fairy tale rendition (Letter: Made in Canada, Herald, Jan. 7) of the pro-**Hamas** rally at Glenmore Landing could not have been the same event I photographed and recorded on Jan. 2.

Muslim Council of Calgary chairman Nagah Hage exhorted his flock of 175, including infants and teens, in both Arabic and English. Between the tirades that demonized Israel, comparing Jews to the Nazis, Hage whipped up the crowd by calling the Jewish state "barbaric, ruthless and arrogant" and led the crowd in a chant that said: "Olmert-Hitler, you're the same, the only difference is the name."

The demonization of Israel was portrayed in venomous placards and banners carried by children and parents. Israel was accused of "ethnic cleansing", "committing a holocaust", and of "outright murder". There were even swastikas on display--ironic, considering.

I am sure this anti-Semitic chorus was loud enough to be heard across the street at the Calgary Jewish Centre. The most egregious placard of all equated Jews with Nazis--a disgusting display anytime, but particularly tasteless, given that the Jewish community's Holocaust memorial was a block away.

They chanted: "Stephen Harper, hear us say, Jerusalem will be ours one day." In other words, the rally really wasn't about Gaza -- it was about **Hamas**'s stated plans to conquer Israel.

The crowd also turned on the lone Israeli supporter standing off to one side. This Christian Zionist's homemade poster read: "Canada supports Israel's right to security and self-defence." He also carried a small Israeli flag. This set the crowd aflame. A few tried to lunge for him but were held back by another protester who told the lone Israeli defender he should be grateful he hadn't been physically attacked, though he did have a boot thrown at him.

When the crowd approached the Israel supporter a second time, eight police officers had to stand in front of him to protect him. So the crowd went back to chanting "killers of children and **women**"--and they didn't mean **Hamas**, who use civilians as human shields.

For two full hours this disgrace continued--all on the mall's private property. Parking and business access was blocked, and many customers were clearly repelled by the Nazi symbols on the crowd's posters, and the chants. When one shop owner asked the police to clear the crowd because customers couldn't reach her shop, the response was "they would leave it alone and let it play out", as it was the "lesser of two evils".

Protest was not an example of love and peace

Some of the mob didn't just go to the mall. They actually had the temerity to park at the Calgary Jewish Centre -- adjacent to the Holocaust memorial there--despite the private parking sign. I suppose if conquering Jerusalem is your goal, trespassing on Jewish property in Calgary is no big deal.

In his letter to the Herald, Soharwardy claimed some protesters "parked their cars in front of houses, most probably Jewish" and that "some of the (Jewish) onlookers even smiled". Back in reality, there are no houses between the Jewish Centre and Glenmore Landing. The closest Jewish home is three blocks away. Perhaps what Soharwardy saw were the grimaces or shocked expressions of other home owners, when faced with posters with swastikas on them.

Soharwardy then gives a back-handed compliment to non-existent Jews for not attacking the verbally and visually violent crowd. "Isn't Canada wonderful!" he exults. He's thrilled this kind of bigotry can be proclaimed in Calgary with impunity.

As the crowd was departing, some passed in front of an orthodox rabbi, on his way to the nearby synagogue for the Jewish Sabbath.

The mob unfurled a flag of Hezbollah--a criminal terrorist organization, under Canadian law--and cursed him while making violent gestures and spitting.

Soharwardy's "fairy tale" is a nightmare. This is the true face of the protest.

Dr. Marvin Levant Is A Retired Calgary Radiologist Who Witnessed The Recent Pro-Hamas Protest At Glenmore Landing.

Graphic

Photo: Courtesy, Marvin Levant; An example of protest signs at an anti-Israel rally at Glenmore Landing on Jan. 2. ;

Load-Date: January 15, 2009

**Pope's lack of specifics on Gaza, Holocaust disappoint Muslims and Jews;
He was politely received at Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem Tuesday, but
clerics, judges, and Hamas representatives want stronger statements on
Israeli policies and Palestinian suffering.**

The Christian Science Monitor

May 12, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 961 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Body

A chief goal of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the Holy Land - healing tensions with both the Muslim and Jewish worlds - is looking to be a tall order. After his Monday visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, some Israelis criticized the pontiff for speaking only in general terms about the Holocaust and not mentioning the role of his native Germany and its Nazi regime. Many Jews around the world were outraged earlier this year when he lifted the excommunication of four right-wing bishops, one of whom has denied the Holocaust, in a bid to reestablish the Roman Catholic church on its traditionalist foundation. But the pope's mission of mending fences with Muslims is arguably a tougher one, especially after he quoted a medieval Catholic text in 2006 that depicted Islam as inherently violent.

He faces not only lingering Muslim resentment over that speech, but also Palestinian bitterness over a lack of progress on gaining statehood as well as the January war in Gaza - a new nadir in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At a meeting of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders on Monday night, the Palestinian Authority's chief Islamic judge took the microphone unannounced and called upon Muslims and Christians to unite against Israel. In a visibly angry speech not preapproved by the meticulous event schedulers, Sheikh Tayseer Tamimi accused Israel of murdering **women** and children in Gaza and making Palestinians refugees, and declared Jerusalem the eternal Palestinian capital. He also accused the Israelis of having "desecrated" the Old City's holy sites and said they had turned the city into "a prison." Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi said in an official statement that in "a meeting dedicated to dialogue, this intervention was a direct negation of what a dialogue should be." He added: "We hope that such an incident will not damage the mission of the pope aiming at promoting peace and also interreligious dialogue." On a Tuesday tour of Jerusalem's holy sites, the pope visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock with the top Palestinian cleric, Grand Mufti Muhammad Ahmad Hussein. Their dialogue was held away from the television cameras, amid extremely tight security. Afterward, the grand mufti said his part of the conversation focused on "our sufferings and we asked for justice in this Holy Land." He said he hoped the visit will contribute to peace. Asked how the pope responded, he said: "We felt he was receptive." The tense parleys and terse words are a testament to the fact that the pope is walking not just on holy ground, but into explosive territory. On Wednesday, he visits Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and now a West Bank city that is overwhelmingly Muslim. During his visit to the Aida Refugee Camp, which abuts a towering wall that is part of Israel's West Bank security barrier, Palestinians hope to throw a spotlight on their situation. He will also visit the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. On Thursday, he is also scheduled to hold mass for 40,000 people in Nazareth, followed by another on Friday at the Holy Sepulchre as he wraps up his visit to Israel. Muslims, too, want specifics Similar to critical Israelis, some Muslims

Pope's lack of specifics on Gaza, Holocaust disappoint Muslims and Jews He was politely received at Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem Tuesday, but clerics, judges,....

are looking for more specifics from the pope over past grievances. A senior Muslim cleric in the Palestinian Authority, Sheikh Ishaq Taha, says that while the pope has made efforts to repair the damage done to the Vatican's relations with the Arab world after his 2006 speech, it would be helpful if he made further clarifications. In a lecture, the pope read from a 14th-century text in which the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologos said: "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." The Vatican later explained that the pope did not intend to offend, nor did he endorse the words as his own. "I hope during this visit, the pope will use the opportunity to show his respect for Islam, because there are many who have not heard it," Sheikh Taha says. Palestinians, he adds, will also be listening for a stronger statement on Palestinian suffering at the hands of Israeli policies. They feel they have been hampered from being able to show the pope a variety of sites and to highlight issues such as home demolitions. "The reason this visit is so important is because of the hope that he will contribute to the peace process," says Taha. "But let's not forget that the occupation has intervened in his visit and has prevented him from arriving at certain locations." Palestinian Authority officials were prevented by Israeli police from having their own press conference on the pope's visit at an East Jerusalem hotel on Monday. Hard-liners look for criticism of Gaza war Harder-line Islamists say they expect little out of the pope's visit. Sheikh Mahmoud Musleh, of **Hamas**, says that Palestinians were disappointed that he didn't criticize Israel more forcefully during the war in Gaza in January. "He said he considered it an act of self-defense for Israel and did not say that it was a breach of human rights, or an act of excessive force. This adds fuel to the fire of his comments he made about our prophet two years ago," says Sheikh Musleh in an interview in his Ramallah office. "We find it strange that he is biased toward our enemy," Musleh says. "He has to stay an honest broker and not be biased. We will forgive him once we see he has gone on the right track." In Gaza, a parliament member from **Hamas** charged that Pope Benedict was "the most pro-Zionist pontiff in the history of the Catholic Church." Younis al-Astal said that other Muslim leaders' meetings with the pope were pointless because "Islam doesn't accept half solutions."

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

End of Document

Refugee numbers drop, but many who do flee find only trouble

The Salt Lake Tribune

June 27, 2009 Saturday

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Section: TOURISM; Business

Length: 289 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Washington » Fewer people sought refuge outside their homelands last year than in 2007, but the world remained an unwelcoming place for many who fled.

An annual survey of the world's refugees being published by the Committee for Refugees and Immigrants reported horrors:

» Egyptian border guards shot and killed more than 30 African migrants trying to cross Egypt's mountainous Sinai peninsula to reach Israel.

» Malaysian border officials sold people being deported to criminal gangs. The men often ended up on fishing boats, the women in brothels.

» Turkey tried to deport into Iraq 42 Iraqis and 18 Syrians and Iranians. Iraq authorities accepted only their countrymen, and when Turkish officials forced the others to try to swim to Iraq, four drowned.

» The Thai navy intercepted boats reportedly carrying 992 ethnic Rohingya from Myanmar. Sailors beat and kicked the weak and hungry refugees, forced them back into their rickety boats, towed them to sea, then cut them loose without engines and little food and water.

» In South Africa, raging mobs of poor South Africans swarmed into refugee camps in May and beat and set on fire the occupants. Mobs killed at least 62, injured 670 and drove away 80,000.

» Israel responded to Hamas rockets from the Gaza Strip with "Operation Cast Lead," which "ultimately killed more than 1,400 Palestinians and drove 90,000 from their homes." Hamas continued its rocket attacks, eventually killing three Israelis and wounding 200.

In all, the world had a 3 percent drop in the number of new refugees in 2008, from 14 million to 13.6 million. That was linked largely to a steep reduction in the number of Iraqis leaving their country as the U.S.-led war tapered off. In 2007, half a million Iraqis fled.

Load-Date: June 27, 2009

Refugee numbers drop, but many who do flee find only trouble

End of Document

Pro-Israel, pro-Arab and pro-peace; Canada's friendship with Israel doesn't mean we can't support a viable state for Palestinians

The Toronto Star

March 29, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A21

Length: 901 words

Byline: Bob Rae, Toronto Star

Body

There is a story about two Israelis meeting in the street. "How are things?"

"In a word, 'good.' In two words, 'not good.'"

I have just spent 10 days travelling in the Middle East, meeting with leaders in Cairo, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Amman, Damascus and Beirut.

It is a time of intense discussion and debate: between Hamas and Fatah over a unity government; among Arab leaders about putting life into their peace initiative; among Israeli political leaders about a new government; among everyone about Iran.

Surrounding it all is public opinion in the region, which wants peace and security but in which deep resentments and anger rise up: Israeli opinion remains incensed with the vitriolic rhetoric, the constant threats, and what they see as a lack of real understanding of their situation. Arab opinion is incensed with Israel's attack on Gaza, a possible right-wing government in Israel, and a peace process that in their eyes has gone nowhere.

Seven years ago, Arab leaders launched an initiative that said the Arab world would establish normal relations with Israel if Israel would accept the borders of 1967 and thus allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. There is some hope this approach will be revived at next week's Arab summit.

However, Iran espouses a radically different view. When its leaders talk of Israel's "occupation," they are not talking about what happened in 1967 and after, but of Israel's very existence and presence in the region. When they talk of "resisting the Zionist entity" and of their support for Hamas and Hezbollah, they are referring to a long-term vision of never-ending struggle.

Iran's refusal to comply with UN resolutions on the development of its nuclear program, its military buildup and role in supplying arms to Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which are publicly committed to the destruction of Israel, is destabilizing the entire region.

Not surprisingly, Israeli opinion has hardened as a result: both the Lebanon invasion of 2006 and the Gaza invasion of 2008-09 had widespread public support. Israelis point to the improved security on the Lebanese border and the dramatic drop in suicide bombs, which they attribute to the security wall, as evidence that regardless of how it plays elsewhere, their approach is working.

Pro- Israel , pro-Arab and pro-peace Canada's friendship with Israel doesn't mean we can't support a viable state for Palestinians

Israeli conservatives take this logic further, asserting that the conflict cannot be resolved, only managed - with Israel holding the upper hand.

What is troubling about the "managing the conflict" scenario is that it ignores how difficult living conditions are for most Palestinians. There are more than 500 roadblocks in the West Bank, making normal civilian and economic life extremely difficult. Israelis say "settlements are not an issue," meaning they will be resolved at the bargaining table, but continued building on deeply contested land is unquestionably seen as both a provocation and a barrier to peace by even the most moderate of Palestinians.

Israel's challenge is that **Hamas** and Hezbollah do not feel bound by the same rules of war and engagement as Israel. Rocket launchers are placed on the rooftops of schools and apartment buildings; military headquarters are buried beneath hospitals. These tactics are frequently used by guerrillas with popular support. But fighting these wars is painfully difficult. Rockets and bombs go astray, innocent men, **women** and children are killed, and the world is watching.

Being justified in a response does not mean the response will have a successful result. Life is not fair. Hitting back, and hitting back hard, will not necessarily produce the desired result.

Canada's friendship with Israel is deep and permanent. But that friendship does not mean we can be indifferent to the Palestinian claim to a viable state. The logic of the UN decision in 1947 to accept partition clearly implied there would be not just one but two states in the old Ottoman and British Mandate. We should be supporting the creation of a Palestinian state and showing more leadership in expressing what it will take to get there.

The Annapolis process set in motion an important effort to help the Palestinian Authority take greater responsibility for security matters, including assisting the Authority to train 6,000 members of the national security force and the 2,000-strong presidential guard. There are nine Canadians involved in this process. Canadians on the ground say the Authority is ready to take on more, that there is room to dismantle checkpoints and roadblocks. A wizened Fatah commander now in charge of the national security force goes even further. "Give us the tools to do the job and we shall do it." An old fedayeen fighter, he is ready to embrace the two-state solution. But he sees no deep willingness in Israel to walk down this path, which as he sees it only helps **Hamas**.

For the longest time Canadian foreign policy in the Middle East has been bedevilled by the notion that we must be either "pro-Israel" or "pro-Arab." We should be both. Our ties of emotion and friendship are deep with many countries, and we must be proud of our own history, our diplomatic achievements and commitments to human rights and international law.

Canada diminishes itself when it is less than it could be, when it chooses to see the world through a narrow lens, and when it turns every foreign issue into a partisan stance instead of an opportunity for statesmanship.

Graphic

STAR FILE PHOTO Israeli police stand on a lookout as Muslims gather for prayer around the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem during Ramadan. Canada needn't play a partisan role in the Mideast, Bob Rae says.

Load-Date: March 29, 2009

Israel strikes at Lebanon rocket site

The Evening Standard (London)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

B Edition

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London
**Evening
Standard**

Section: Pg. 2

Length: 482 words

Byline: MARTIN BENTHAM

Body

ISRAEL was today hit by rocket attacks from Lebanon. At least three Katyusha rockets landed in northern Israel, prompting residents to flee to bomb shelters, although there were no reported injuries.

Lebanese security officials said that three more Grad rockets about to be fired were discovered and dismantled by Lebanese troops.

Israel responded by firing at least eight artillery shells, while helicopter gunships flew along the heavily protected border. Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers sent out patrols. The clashes, which follow a similar exchange of fire last week, will raise renewed fears that the 19-day-old conflict in Gaza could spread to Israel's border with Lebanon in what would be a serious escalation of the fighting.

Hezbollah, the militant organisation which fought a month-long war with Israel in 2006, denied being behind last week's attacks.

It is likely that today's rockets were fired by Palestinian militants sheltering in Lebanon, which would reduce the likelihood of a serious conflagration.

In Gaza City, **Hamas** militants and Israeli troops fought hand to hand today. The ground offensive, which came as doctors warned of severe malnutrition across Gaza, was backed up by about 60 new air strikes by Israeli warplanes and renewed shelling from gunboats.

A cemetery in Gaza City was hit, destroying graves and scattering flesh and body parts. The Israeli military did not comment but rocket squads have used graveyards as launch-pads in the past.

Resident Ahmad Abu Jarbou said: "There was flesh on the roofs, there was small bits of intestines.

Israel strikes at Lebanon rocket site

My neighbour found a hand of a woman who died a long time ago, we put it all into a plastic bag." Israeli officials said the strikes had hit targets including a police court in Gaza City, rocket-launching sites, weapons-production and storage facilities and about 35 weapons smuggling tunnels.

In return, at least three rockets from Gaza were reported to have hit Israel.

At least five Israeli soldiers were injured in the clashes, while the overall Palestinian death toll is now approaching 1,000, including several hundred children and a substantial number of women.

Israel says that 10 of its soldiers and three civilians have died. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, is in Cairo for talks with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Mr Ban said: "I repeat my call for an immediate and durable ceasefire," he said. "It is intolerable that civilians bear the brunt of this conflict." Mr Ban is also due to meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders and senior politicians in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, but is not scheduled to meet any representatives of Hamas.

Options thought to be under discussion are the deployment of Turkish troops along Egypt's border with Gaza to prevent weapons smuggling by militants and the resolution of Israel's key demand that any peace plan must include measures that would prevent Hamas from re-arming..

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

End of Document

SRINAGAR RALLY AGAINST ISRAELI ATTACKS ON GAZA

Hindustan Times

January 16, 2009 Friday 6:14 PM EST

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Length: 233 words

Byline: Report from Asian News International brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Srinagar

Body

Srinagar, Jan. 16 -- (ANI): Hundreds of people led by functionaries of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Forum (JKLF) staged a rally on Friday to protest against continuing attacks by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza.

Carrying anti-Israel placards and photographs of victims of Israeli bombing, the protestors raised slogans and ridiculed the Israel national flag.

The protest march was addressed by senior Hurriyat leaders

"People who are bombarding hospitals and schools and killing

Women and children are criminals. We want to draw the attention of countries like America and Europe towards this problem," said chief of the JKLF Javed Ahmed Mir.

He said the Kashmir issue is similar to the problem of Gaza.

"We want to say that problem of Kashmir is similar to that of Palestine. People have been killed for many years. But no one has come to support us," Mir added.

The protest turned violent when the police fired teargas shells and used batons to disperse the stone-pelting mob in Lalchowk and Maisuma here.

Over a thousand persons have been killed in the Israel offensive that was launched on December 27 to curtail the **Hamas** rocket attacks on Israeli territory from Gaza.

Israel has accused **Hamas** of taking shelter among the civilian population and using sites such as mosques and schools as military posts. (ANI)

End SS

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SRINAGAR RALLY AGAINST ISRAELI ATTACKS ON GAZA

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Load-Date: January 16, 2009

End of Document

World - Olmert protects troops from war crimes charges

Morning Star

January 26, 2009 Monday

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Length: 273 words

Body

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced on Sunday that Tel Aviv will grant legal protection to soldiers who took part in the three-week onslaught on the Gaza Strip.

Mr Olmert confirmed that he has appointed Justice Minister Daniel Friedman to chair a committee to offer a co-ordinated defence against what he called 'self-righteous people' who might want to sue Israeli soldiers.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza need to know that they are completely safe from different tribunals and Israel will help and protect them," he said.

Israel's military censor has already banned the publication of the identity of the unit leaders who invaded Gaza.

Last week, United Nations human rights expert Richard Falk accused Israel of violating humanitarian law by conducting an offensive against "an essentially defenceless population."

And UN secretary-general Ban Ki Moon has demanded that those responsible for bombing UN buildings in the Palestinian territory should be made accountable, accusing Israel of using excessive force.

Israel insists that it undertook the three-week offensive to defend itself against rocket attacks launched by **Hamas** guerillas.

Over 1,300 Palestinians have been killed, including 437 children.

Eight Israeli human rights groups have called on Tel Aviv to investigate the scale of the casualties, describing the number of dead **women** and children as "terrifying."

US President Barack Obama is sending his Middle East envoy, former senator George Mitchell, to the region this week.

Egyptian mediators have kicked off behind-the-scenes negotiations in Cairo in a bid to broker a long-term truce between **Hamas** and Tel Aviv.

Load-Date: January 26, 2009

Blind in Gaza and Jerusalem

Daily News Egypt

January 25, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 928 words

Body

LONDON: I spent the New Year in Sydney, watching the fireworks above the iconic bridge welcome in 2009. The explosions over Gaza that night were not intended to entertain, but rather to break Hamas and discredit it in the eyes of Palestinians.

It was the latest resort to terrible violence in order to resolve how to share in peace what Christians still like to call the Holy Land. Mahatma Gandhi criticized the biblical justification of retribution, "œan eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.€ Followed through to its end, he argued, it would mean that all were blind. And so it has proved in Palestine and Israel. Blind in Gaza, blind in Jerusalem.

Much of what has happened was predictable, as well over 1,400 men, women, and children have died and more than 5,000 have been injured.

First, the United States justified the Israeli assault and blamed everything on Hamas, just as it used to pin all responsibility for whatever went wrong on Yassir Arafat and Fatah.

Second, despite French President Nicolas Sarkozy's welcome high-profile diplomacy, Europe has been irrelevant, if not quite invisible. As Israeli officials point out, Europeans are always there for the photo opportunity.

The Quartet's peacemaker, Tony Blair, is as unctuously nugatory as ever.

He appears on CNN , but has he actually visited Gaza since his appointment in the summer of 2007? No.

Third, as usual, Israel has accused of anti-Semitism those who have dared to criticize its disproportionate response to Hamas's indefensible rocket attacks and its collective punishment of Palestinians. An Italian cardinal, who admittedly spoke intemperately, was accused of using the language of Holocaust denial. By that standard, does my unqualified criticism of Hamas's rocket attacks make me an Islamophobe?

Coincidentally, the deadly attack on Gaza came at the same time that a clutch of America's most distinguished would-be Middle East peacemakers published books about how the task should properly be tackled. It all sounded a bit like a series of job applications €œ the war for President Barack Obama's ear.

Blind in Gaza and Jerusalem

One thing all these experts could agree on is that President George W. Bush was a disaster. American policy might as well have been made in Likud's headquarters. Even at the end, when the United Nations Security Council voted on Gaza, Bush was happy to humiliate Condoleezza Rice at Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's bidding.

These "wise men," advisers one and all to President Bill Clinton and other presidents, all seem to concede that the failure of the proposed Camp David accord in 2000 could not, after all, be laid solely at Arafat's door. Former Israeli premier Ehud Barak should carry his share of the blame. Moreover, they all criticize the Clinton-era practice of routinely clearing America's policy positions first with Israel, which is hardly likely to win Arab confidence or support.

The American diplomats' arguments about process did not on the whole carry over into disagreement about the content of a peace deal. All more or less agree on this. Two states. Security guarantees for Israel. A Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, adjusted by agreement through mutual land swaps. An end to most West Bank settlements. No "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, but financial compensation for them. Some system of joint or international sovereignty over Jerusalem's holy places and the division of the city so that it can become the capital of two states.

Of course, this is what should happen. And I suppose that it is conceivable that it could still happen with the help of welcome new mediators like Qatar and Turkey, whose prime minister called Israel's attack "a serious crime against humanity."

But I have begun to wonder whether it will really be possible to achieve peace on this basis. Fatah, and Palestinian moderates like President Mahmoud Abbas, have been totally discredited. Palestinians on the whole have been further radicalized.

Hamas, whose engagement and support is essential for any settlement, has sworn revenge. Every day, new Palestinian sorrows strike heaven in the face. The widows and the mothers of the dead weep and cry out for bloody justice. Should we be surprised? Had the British government pursued peace and the destruction of the IRA in Northern Ireland by bombing Catholic Derry, would that have alienated or won over Catholic opinion?

On the Israeli side, which political leaders really want a Palestinian state and are prepared to take the political risks associated with trying to establish one? Which of them are strong enough to deal with the West Bank settlers? There will be no peace settlement otherwise. Which leaders will teach the facts of life to the more extreme members of the Jewish diaspora in America? Who among Israel's leaders understands that reconciliation is more important than retribution and revenge?

However tough things looked in the past, I have never felt such a sense of despair about Palestine and Israel. Reason has been drowned in blood. It seems as though the politics of hope have given way to the politics of the cemetery. Poor Palestine. Poor Israel. Who is there now who can still light a candle in the dark?

Chris Patten is a former EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chairman of the British Conservative Party, and was the last British Governor of Hong Kong. He is currently Chancellor of Oxford University and a member of the British House of Lords. This commentary is published by DAILY NEWS EGYPT in collaboration with Project Syndicate (www.project-syndicate.org).

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Load-Date: January 29, 2009

In short

The Irish Times

March 26, 2009 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 13

Length: 518 words

Body

A roun-up of today's other world news in brief ...

Le Pen booed for Nazi comments

STRASBOURG French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen told the European Parliament yesterday that the Nazi gas chambers were a detail of the second World War, a view which has already landed him in legal trouble.

Mr Le Pen s remarks were greeted by boos and whistles from his colleagues.

He was charged and fined over similar remarks made on French television in 1987 and then in Munich in 1997.

In both cases he was fined for breaking French anti-racism laws. (Reuters)

Wilde items auctioned

EDINBURGH An ivory- handled walking cane and a brass inkwell believed to have belonged to Oscar Wilde were sold yesterday for more than 15 times their valuation.

The items went under the hammer at an auction in Edinburgh for £7,725 (EUR 8,323) despite being valued at £500 (EUR 538). (PA)

Woman serial killer sentenced

NEW DELHI India s first woman serial killer, who claimed at least 10 victims, has been sentenced to death by hanging.

K D Kempamma usually lured women to a temple near Bangalore on the pretext of performing rituals for their families well being.

Once there, she laced their food with cyanide and robbed them of their jewellery and money. (PA)

Worst floods in 40 years

LUSAKA Zambia and Namibia are facing their worst floods in at least 40 years as rains swell the Zambezi river to record levels, destroying crops and swamping entire villages, disaster officials and aid workers said yesterday.

Zambia has put its air force on standby to airlift people to safety and Namibia has declared a state of emergency in flood-hit areas. (Reuters)

In short

Therapists tried to alter sexuality

LONDON One-sixth of British therapists said they had tried to help gay, bisexual and lesbian patients become heterosexual, even though evidence suggests such therapies can be harmful, according to a survey to be released today.

Michael King of University College London, who published his findings in the journal BMC Psychiatry, said the number of therapists who said they had tried to help a person change their sexual orientation was surprising. (Reuters)

Gunmen shoot editor dead

GUWAHATI Unidentified gunmen have shot dead an editor of a newspaper in revolt-racked India's northeastern Assam state.

Police said a group of gunmen fired several bullets at Anil Majumdar, editor of the Assamese daily Aji. (Reuters)

Warrant issued for commentator

BANGKOK A Thai court has issued an arrest warrant for a leading left-wing commentator who fled Thailand in February after being charged with insulting the king, police said.

Giles Ungpakorn, of Chulalongkorn University, was charged over a 2007 book that criticised a military coup in 2006. (Reuters)

Hamas back in talks with Israel

DAMASCUS **Hamas** resumed indirect negotiations with Israel yesterday aimed at exchanging an Israeli soldier held by the group for Palestinians jailed by Israel.

The Egyptian-mediated negotiations broke down earlier this month when Israel rejected **Hamas**'s demand that it free 1,400 Palestinian prisoners, including about 450 long-serving inmates. (Reuters)

Load-Date: March 26, 2009

* JOURNALS

Weekend Australian

January 31, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 28

Length: 891 words

Body

ISRAEL UNQUESTIONED

ISRAEL alone was to blame for the war on Hamas and the Gaza Strip, Henry Siegman writes in the London Review of Books. The West failed to question Israel's claims that Hamas broke the truce between the two and that Israel had no choice but to attack. The claims were lies, Siegman says. Israel's tightened "throttle-hold" on Gaza during the truce meant that Hamas had to act. Israel broke the truce on November 4, when it entered Gaza and killed six Hamas members. And the US should take a firm stand in the region: "If Barack Obama picks a seasoned Middle East envoy who clings to the idea that outsiders should not present their own proposals for a just and sustainable peace agreement, much less press the parties to accept it, but instead leave them to work out their differences, he will assure a future Palestinian resistance far more extreme than Hamas, one likely to be allied with al-Qa'ida. For the US, Europe and most of the rest of the world, this would be the worst possible outcome."

WORK STAND BY YOUR MAN

WOMEN would rather be housewives than careerists, according to US journalist Megan Basham, who posits the theory in a new book, *Beside Every Successful Man*. Reviewing the book in *The American*, Laura Vanderkam says Alaska Governor and erstwhile vice-presidency candidate Sarah Palin, following Basham's advice, would be better off staying home and promoting her husband's career. To Basham's insistence that "Ask a group of mothers if they would continue to work full-time if they didn't have to and the answer will overwhelmingly come back No!", Vanderkam retorts with "The two-people-one-pay-cheque model Basham extols makes life harder, not only on working mums, but also on men who want to have a balanced life and spend more time with their children". Vanderkam says Basham's thesis has a blind spot. "Studies have found that a big reason professional women drop out of the workforce is not that they don't want to work, but rather that there is insufficient flexibility in their jobs -- partly because their male colleagues and bosses have such supportive wives that they don't need flexibility."

US MELTED POT

WHITE America was on the way out as minority populations increased and interracial marriage blurred lines, *The Atlantic* said. The nation was heading for its first post-white generation by 2023. Even as the US headed towards a "beiging", its culture had already changed from one of a centre-seeking assimilation to one "remade in the image of white America's multi-ethnic, multicoloured heirs". "Whether you describe it as the dawning of a post-racial age or just the end of white America, we're approaching a profound demographic tipping point. According to an August 2008 report by the US Census Bureau, those groups categorised as racial minorities -- blacks and Hispanics, East Asians and South Asians -- will account for a majority of the US population by the year 2042. Among Americans

* JOURNALS

under the age of 18, this shift is projected to take place in 2023, which means that every child born in the US from here on out will belong to the first post-white generation."

POPE BIGOTS IN FROM THE COLD

POPE Benedict XVI's decision to reverse the excommunication of four bishops cut off from the church, after they were consecrated by rebel French archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, triggered outrage. One of the four, English bishop Richard Williamson, is on record as denying the existence of gas chambers during the Nazi Holocaust. Lefebvre, who died in 1991, was excommunicated in 1988 by Benedict's predecessor John Paul II for having consecrated the bishops in defiance of the Vatican's authority. Germany's centre-left *Süddeutsche Zeitung* said, "The Pope's reconciliation with an offensive anti-Semite is shocking. The Pope is not recognising the fact that, as the head of more than 1 billion Catholics, he is not operating in a vacuum of dogmas and canon law. With the rehabilitation of the bishop, Benedict XVI is sabotaging the Christian-Jewish dialogue while endorsing those who have sharply criticised his papacy." The Pope was trying to mend a damaging schism and "of course [he] has to be concerned with the unity of the church. However, that which Benedict XVI is winning back on the right wing of the church, he could lose in the centre."

TWINS SIMPLE EXPLANATION

NAZI doctor Josef Mengele, notorious for his experiments at Auschwitz, was not responsible for creating a tribe of Aryan-looking twins in a small German-settled town on the Brazil-Argentina border, *New Scientist* reported. A book by Argentine historian Jorge Camarasa, *Mengele: The Angel Of Death In South America*, claimed that Mengele made regular trips to the town, Linha Sao Pedro. Shortly afterwards, the birth rate of twins began to increase. But Ursula Matte of the medical genetics unit at Porto Alegre Hospital in Brazil said inbreeding in the isolated town, not Mengele, was responsible for the high incidence of twins. She found that "from 1990 to 1994, the proportion of twin births in Linha Sao Pedro was 10 per cent, compared to 1.8 per cent for rest of the state of Rio Grande do Sul". "The existence of other twin towns around the world -- most in remote areas with high levels of inbreeding just as Linha Sao Pedro -- shows that external influence is not needed for this to happen," Matte says.

Load-Date: January 30, 2009

'We pray for his release every day'; Israelis cling to hope young soldier captured in 2006 by Palestinian militants will be freed

The Toronto Star

February 14, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 849 words

Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

There's a white booth by the corner of Azza and Balfour streets, bordered by stylized photographs of a certain young Israeli soldier and with the number "964" emblazoned on a large poster.

At least, those were the digits that appeared yesterday.

Today, the calendar takes another turn, and the "4" becomes a "5," indicating that 965 days have now crept past since June 25, 2006, when a young Israeli conscript named Gilad Schalit was taken prisoner by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip.

The shy, soft-spoken army corporal - since promoted to staff-sergeant and now aged 22 - has been a hostage ever since, the only Israeli soldier currently being held captive by Israel's adversaries.

"We pray for his release every day," said Tamar Kaplan, a 20-something Israeli woman who was taking a turn staffing the booth yesterday, along with her husband, Yariv. "It's important not to forget someone who is still alive."

By mid-morning, the couple had collected 24 more signatures on a running petition that is regularly presented to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, whose official residence is located only a couple of doors from the booth.

Tended every day for the past several months by friends, relatives, and supporters of the Schalit family, the marquee is a reminder, as Tamar puts it, "that there is still an Israeli soldier out there."

But possibly not for long.

Hopes for Schalit's release have been raised and dashed before, but there have lately been signs, however tenuous, that his freedom could at last be close at hand.

Unfortunately, those signs could also be the flashes of a cruel and double-edged sword.

"It's now or never," said Gershon Baskin, co-director of the Israeli-Palestinian Center for Research and Information, who in the past has played a behind-the-scenes role in attempts to free the soldier. "I think, if there isn't a deal before Olmert leaves office, there won't be a deal."

'We pray for his release every day' Israelis cling to hope young soldier captured in 2006 by Palestinian militants will be freed

Forced to step down as prime minister over so far unproven allegations of financial wrongdoing, Olmert will complete his term in office within a matter of weeks.

It is very unlikely, said Baskin, that Olmert's successor - thought likely to be right-wing politician and former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu - will be either willing or able to strike an early deal for Schalit's freedom.

The problem is that any such agreement will inevitably come with a huge and politically risky price tag - the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, perhaps as many as 1,400.

"No new government will want this to be their first act in power or their second or their third," said Baskin. "Now is the ideal time."

Schalit's capture nearly three years ago set off a chain of events that eventually resulted in Israel's month-long war against Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

Three handwritten letters and a videotape have provided evidence the Israeli soldier remains alive.

There are other reasons to believe a bargain for Schalit's release may be possible, if far from assured.

Less than a month after the formal end of a punishing 22-day Israeli military offensive in Gaza, indirect peace talks are underway in Cairo, as Egyptian mediators seek to forge a long-term ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which holds power in Gaza.

Israeli negotiators are now making the fate of Schalit an integral part of those indirect discussions, proposing his release as a quid pro quo for their agreement to a key Hamas demand - the lifting of this country's economic siege of Gaza.

Since March 2006, but with increased severity since Hamas seized sole control of Gaza in June 2007, Israel has restricted the movement of people and goods across the border, part of an effort to alienate Gaza's 1.5 million people from the militant Islamist organization now in power.

Hamas desperately wants to see those restrictions lifted and may be willing to meet Israel's terms, particularly if Palestinian leaders calculate Israel's next administration would be less amenable to a deal than Olmert is now.

"There may be a window of opportunity," said Eran Lerman, a former Israeli army colonel who now specializes in military intelligence and strategic analysis.

As for a prisoner exchange, Hamas has proposed a list of some 350 Palestinian men it wants released from Israeli-run jails, plus all the Palestinian women and minors currently being held.

Some of the men on the list were responsible for notoriously bloody acts of political violence against Israel.

"Really foul crimes," said Lerman. "Letting these people go would be very difficult."

As a lame-duck prime minister with little to lose, Olmert may be in a far better position than any conceivable successor to strike what would be a politically treacherous deal. He has said he is willing.

"The prime minister would like to have this resolved before he finishes his term," Olmert spokesperson Mark Regev said yesterday.

"What I can say is that, with the end of the operation in Gaza, conditions are now more conducive to Gilad's release."

Meanwhile, the talks continue in Cairo, talks that may or may not bear fruit.

Cautioned Regev: "I cannot report there has been any progress."

'We pray for his release every day' Israelis cling to hope young soldier captured in 2006 by Palestinian militants will be freed

Graphic

MENACHEM KAHANA afp getty images Protesters hold portraits of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit outside Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's residence in Jerusalem last month.

Load-Date: February 14, 2009

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The view from Israel

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

March 12, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. A19

Length: 279 words

Byline: Robert Haymond, The Edmonton Journal

Body

As an Edmontonian living in the south of Israel, I find Israeli Apartheid Week obscene.

Hamas has the stated goal of eliminating the state of Israel. Between 2005 and 2008, it has fired 5,700 rockets and 4,000 mortar shells at southern Israel. Since 2000, 19 Israelis have been killed by rockets and 18 by mortar shells.

Can you imagine the response of the United States if it was bombarded even once by Cuba or Mexico? Yet Israel engaged in protective measures and pinpoint reprisals for years until Israelis became fed up with a government intent on appeasing its international detractors rather than protecting its own citizens.

During the six-month truce ending in December 2008, 361 rockets and 303 mortar shells were fired at Israel.

Only after Israel tried every possible way to engage in a peaceful solution did it finally bomb Gaza military targets. Yes, some civilians were killed. The fact is, **Hamas** hid behind **women** and children in order to exploit international opinion for propaganda purposes.

Fathi Ahmad Hammad, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said: "For the Palestinian people, death has become an industry at which **women** excel and so do all the people living on this land. ... This is why we have formed human shields of the **women**, the children, the elderly and the mujahedeen, in order to challenge the Zionist bombing machine. It is as if they were saying to the Zionist enemy: 'We desire death like you desire life.' "

The international community has little understanding of the threat posed by fundamental Islamists, who would rather dominate the human population by violence than bring something of genuine value to it.

Robert Haymond, Edmonton

Load-Date: March 12, 2009

Palestinians demand freedom to rebuild

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

March 14, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 14

Length: 278 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, GAZA CITY

Body

ALMOST two months after Israel declared an end to its 22-day offensive on Gaza, life there has returned to a state of relative normality.

But with border controls between Israel and Egypt still allowing only food, medicine and limited fuel and equipment to cross, there aren't many signs of improvement either.

"We have enough food to eat, yes," said unemployed Gaza resident Hassan Naim, 23. "What Gaza needs is the stuff to build, to get the people back to work, to get the economy working again.

"This is not Darfur, where the people have barely enough to eat. This was a functioning society with factories and businesses and universities that has been turned into a prison, and we are still locked up."

With no concrete or reinforced steel, there has been no movement on rebuilding the thousands of homes and buildings smashed during the war.

Nor has there been an end to the hostilities between militants in Gaza and Israel. In the first two weeks of March, more than 50 rockets and mortars have been reported fired into Israel, with no casualties reported, and there have been more than 30 Israeli air strikes.

An Israeli bombing campaign of the border between Gaza and Egypt has virtually halted the smuggling business that supplied Gaza with most of its consumer goods.

On Thursday, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights released what it said was a final and definitive death toll from the 22-day conflict: 1434 dead, including 960 civilians, of whom 288 were children and 121 were women, 239 police officers and 235 Hamas militants.

The Israel Defence Forces have disputed these figures, estimating the number of dead at around 1250, two-thirds of them Hamas militants.

Load-Date: March 13, 2009

Palestinians demand freedom to rebuild

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Mel Frykberg interviews judge Thuraya Judi Alwazir; Q&A: 'More Women Need to Judge'

IPS (Latin America)

May 22, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1246 words

Body

Thuraya Judi Alwazir is one of few women judges sitting on the Palestinian Authority's Judicial Authority. Alwazir speaks here to IPS about her experiences in a largely male-dominated environment, on the rights of women in regard to honour killings and domestic violence, and on the death penalty as applied in the West Bank.&t;/

Alwazir was born in Lebanon to a Lebanese mother and Palestinian father. She studied law in Jordan and then completed a master's degree in law at Yale University in the U.S.

She worked as a lawyer in Jordan but moved to Gaza 12 years ago after marrying Jihad Alwazir, governor of the Palestinian Monetary Fund and son of the late Khilal Alwazir, or Abu Jihad. Abu Jihad was a founding member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. He was assassinated by the Israelis in Tunisia in 1988.

She worked at first in Gaza on World Bank projects aimed at unifying the legal systems between Gaza and the West Bank. She also worked as a legal consultant and lawyer. In 2002 she was appointed a judge on the Palestinian Authority (PA) conciliation court.

IPS: What does your current position involve?

Thuraya Alwazir: I am part of a three-judge panel in the Ramallah (central West Bank) district who adjudicate various civil cases. We do not oversee criminal cases as these are separated and fall under a different jurisdiction.

I am also the head of the planning and project management unit of the Palestinian Judicial Authority, and in this capacity I handle all sorts of cases including conciliation, criminal, commercial and law enforcement.

IPS: Can you explain the breakdown within the PA and the current composition of the judiciary?

TA: The PA comprises three authorities; the executive, legislative and judicial. The Judicial Authority consists of 180 judges, 21 of whom are female. There are two female high court judges, one in Gaza and one in the West Bank. The remaining female judges are divided between the conciliation and district courts.

IPS: The PA Judicial Authority has actively been seeking to increase the number of female judges in the last few years, why is this?

TA: The decision to recruit more female judges comes in the wake of a backlog of unresolved cases due to the political turmoil that has taken place here. This includes the Israeli occupation, the second Intifadah (Palestinian uprising) and the Palestinian infighting between Hamas and Fatah when the judicial system was seriously compromised.

Mel Frykberg interviews judge Thuraya Judi Alwazir Q&A: 'More Women Need to Judge'

Now that the courts are operating again at full capacity, the backlog has also been exacerbated by a significant increase in the number of new cases being brought to us by a public more confident in the credibility of our judicial system.

However, many of the PA's international donors have also pushed for stronger female participation in all walks of Palestinian administrative and governmental life, including the judiciary. To this end they have sponsored numerous programmes through various civil institutions aimed at empowering women and girls.

IPS: As a woman have you experienced prejudice from a predominantly patriarchal society, and do you think you've had to prove yourself more than a male judge?

TA: Yes, in some ways I do think it's harder. Some sections of society are prone to judge female judges by how they look, (and doubt) whether they are up to the job, and if they have the necessary qualifications.

However, Palestine was the first Arabic society to appoint female judges during the seventies. Furthermore, as a consequence of the protracted political struggle of our people against the various occupations, Palestinian women have long stood alongside men in the struggle for freedom and independence.

Women have been forced through circumstance to take on all the traditional roles and responsibilities of men, with so many men being killed and imprisoned by the Israelis, so the concept of woman as equal is not something new.

Additionally, the Judicial Authority has a policy of gender equality, and many families are now focusing on educating their daughters as well as their sons. Of course where poverty is endemic, the males take precedence due to their perceived role as the traditional breadwinners.

IPS: The West Bank operates according to the Jordanian Penal Code, and Gaza according to the Egyptian Penal Code. This has meant that the punishment meted out to a fraction of the perpetrators arrested for honour killings and domestic violence is very light. Rape is not recognised as a crime in marriage, and there are no specific domestic violence laws. Are there any plans to change this system?

TA: A draft for a new penal code was put before the Legislative Council, which is responsible for implementing changes to the law, several years ago. However, the council, which comprised a mixture of Hamas and Fatah members, has ceased to function due to the infighting between the two groups.

The draft law alone is not sufficient, and more shelters need to be established and more legal aid for women provided. But this again is outside the Judicial Authority's jurisdiction and needs to be pushed by civil society, women's groups in particular, and then approved and implemented by the Legislative Council when it is once again functioning.

IPS: With the apparent inability of Hamas and Fatah to reconcile, what hope is there for meaningful changes to the judicial system in the short term?

TA: Until there is reconciliation, the Legislative Council will remain crippled. When Hamas took over Gaza in June 2006, although the PA's judiciary there continued to operate, there was no integration of the penal and civil codes between the West Bank and Gaza.

There was also no cooperation between Hamas's security forces and the PA judiciary, so the enforcement of civil judgments was impossible. Eventually Hamas appointed its own legal system in violation of the independent judiciary and its laws. The two judicial systems in the divided Palestinian territories now operate independently of each other.

IPS: International human rights organisations have expressed concern about the number of Palestinians receiving the death penalty. What is your stand on this?

Mel Frykberg interviews judge Thuraya Judi Alwazir Q&A: 'More Women Need to Judge'

TA: Actually the death penalty was abolished under an Israeli military order during the seventies when Israel controlled the West Bank's legal system. The current civil and criminal courts of the PA still can't implement the death penalty. The death sentences that were handed out here were by PA military courts.

We have a problem with this and want to limit the jurisdiction of the military courts and return the trial of civilians guilty of treason, and other offences warranting capital punishment, to the civilian courts. A draft bill to this effect is currently before PA President Mahmoud Abbas who controls the West Bank.

And actually we are discussing the return of the death penalty to the civil courts. This is consistent with our Islamic beliefs and this is also supported by a number of religious leaders. It is not the place of the international community to impose its value system on us.

IPS: Do you see yourself as a role model for the next generation of Palestinian women, and what do you think should be done to promote women in law in Palestine?

TA: I would hope that I could be a role model for the younger women of my generation. I think girls should be encouraged through special programmes initiated by the Judicial Council, which should also support and guide female lawyers. © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: May 22, 2009

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Occupation the issue

therecord.com

January 21, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A12

Length: 270 words

Byline: Dwyer Sullivan

Body

Re: Canada Was Right To Vote No At UN -- Jan. 15

The problem is the occupation, not the resistance. Canada's lone vote among the 47 nations on the United Nations Security Council not to condemn the excessive massacre and humanitarian disaster being inflicted by the Israel defence force on the people of Gaza is disheartening, disgraceful and not in keeping with Canada's past reputation as a standard bearer for peace and human rights in the world.

I have been to the Palestinian West Bank three times in the past few years and am firmly convinced that the cause of the violence is the occupation. I have stood with the Israeli women in black who, for 18 years, have weekly pleaded publicly in downtown Jerusalem, "End the occupation." I have listened to Jeff Halper, an Israeli, condemn the Israeli home demolitions, to the Rabbis for Human Rights condemn the illegal collective punishment, and to the former Israeli soldiers testify through "Breaking the Silence" of the atrocities they committed while serving in the Israeli "occupation" forces.

In Gaza, besides the occupation there is also the lack of access to goods making it the largest outdoor prison in the world. When on Nov. 4, Israel assassinated six Hamas leaders, thereby violating the ceasefire agreement, did they expect Hamas to do nothing?

This is not a war between two equal parties. The world's fourth largest army is killing civilians, destroying the infrastructure of a stateless people inside a prison wall and it seems as if the Stephen Harper government is the only government in the world who does not know who to condemn. Shame.

Dwyer Sullivan

Kitchener

Load-Date: January 21, 2009

Israel defends troops against charges of brutality in Gaza

The International Herald Tribune

March 28, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 1132 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel is pushing back against accusations its soldiers abused civilians during the assault on Gaza, asserting that the overwhelming majority of its soldiers acted honorably and that the account of a killing of a woman and her two children appeared to be an urban myth spread by troops who did not witness it.

Officers are stepping forward, some at the urging of the top command, others on their own, offering numerous accounts of having held their fire out of concern for civilians, helping Palestinians in need and punishing improper soldier behavior.

"I'm not saying that nothing bad happened," Bentzi Gruber, a colonel in the reserves and deputy commander of the armored division, said in an interview. "I heard about cases where people shot where they shouldn't have shot and destroyed houses where they shouldn't have destroyed houses. But the proportion and effort and directions we gave to our soldiers were entirely in the opposite direction."

The accusations caused a furor here and abroad because they came on top of others that the civilian death toll was high and that soldiers took an unusually aggressive approach in Gaza.

The accounts that have received the most attention came from a taped conversation of Gaza veterans at a premilitary course, where soldiers told of a sniper's killing a woman and her two children walking in a no-entry zone and of an elderly woman shot and killed for approaching a commandeered house.

The army's advocate general has opened an investigation and has not yet issued a report. But officers familiar with the investigation say that those who spoke of the killing of the mother and children did not witness it and that it almost certainly did not occur. Warning shots were fired near the family but not at them, the officers said, and rumor spread among the troops of an improper shooting.

The second killing may also not have occurred, they said, although a similar event was recounted by Col. Herzl Halevy in January in Yediot Aharonot newspaper.

"We saw a woman coming toward us," he said then. "We shouted at her. We warned her a number of times not to get closer. We made hand motions. She did not stop. We shot her. When we examined her body we did not find a bomb belt."

Israel defends troops against charges of brutality in Gaza

Israeli commanders defend such actions because they say they confronted armed women in Gaza as well as Hamas gunmen dressed as women and in other guises, like doctors.

"We had a woman run at us with a grenade in one hand and the Koran in the other," Brig. Gen. Eli Shermeister, head of the military's education corps, said in an interview in which he displayed ethics kits distributed to all commanders. "What we know till now is that there was no systematic moral failure. There were not more than a few - a very few - events still being investigated."

Col. Roi Elkabets, commander of an armored brigade, told of occasions on which gunfire was resisted. His troops, he said, saw "a woman, about 60 years old, walking with a white flag and six to eight children behind her and behind them was a Hamas fighter with his gun. We did not shoot him."

Almost everything about the Gaza operation has caused controversy: how many Palestinians were killed and what percentage were civilians, whether the rise in the number of religious Israeli soldiers has led to zealotry, and whether the use of enormous military force was a legitimate response to years of Hamas rocket fire on Israeli civilians.

The dispute is a proxy for a debate, both here and abroad, over whether Israel should shift its policy toward the Palestinians and whether Hamas should be seen more as a resistance movement or as a tool of Iranian ambition and terror.

Those who are urging an end to the occupation and settlement of the West Bank and the boycott of Gaza so as to create a Palestinian state - either out of sympathy with Israel or contempt for it - have focused on the accounts of abuses.

The debate began within hours of Israel's attack in late December and continues daily. This week, Human Rights Watch issued a report citing six cases of improper use of white phosphorus by Israel and calling them evidence of war crimes. Israel has not completed its own study.

On Thursday, the military issued its first casualty count, saying 1,166 people have been killed; the count included 295 that it said were noncombatants, 709 that it called Hamas terror operatives and 162 men whose affiliations remained unidentified.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights in Gaza says the number of dead is 1,417, of whom 926 were civilians and 236 combatants.

Both the military and the center have lists of names. The Israelis include some 250 police officers under "Hamas terror operatives." The Palestinian center considers them noncombatants. The Israeli military argues that about 400 people die of natural causes in Gaza every month, a possible cause for the gap in the two counts.

Some soldiers have complained about the role of military rabbis and religious soldiers, saying that they have taken to their roles with the fervor of holy warriors, leading to more violence.

Stuart Cohen, a political scientist at Bar-Ilan University in Israel who is religiously observant, says that the army has indeed grown more violent toward civilians in the past 25 years, partly because the Palestinians have. But he says it has nothing to do with the increase of religious soldiers.

For 12 years he has been studying the correspondence between religious soldiers and rabbis on combat morality and overwhelmingly the rabbis have urged restraint, he said. While he cannot measure how that advice has been put into practice, he suspects it has had a real effect. And other religious soldiers said their behavior in Gaza had been especially respectful.

"When we entered houses, we actually cleaned up the place," said Yishai Goldflam, 32, a religiously observant film student in Jerusalem whose open letter to the Palestinian owners of the house he occupied for some days was published in Maariv newspaper. "There are always idiots who do immoral things. But they don't represent the

Israel defends troops against charges of brutality in Gaza

majority. I remember once when a soldier wanted to take a Coke from a store and he was stopped by his fellow soldiers because it was the wrong thing to do."

Yaron Ezrahi, a political theorist who lectures military commanders, said they rejected the notion of willful abuse by their troops. But the commanders say that more civilians lost their lives than should have and attribute it to two factors: faulty intelligence that led to attacking the wrong houses, and a failure, after issuing a warning to leave, to provide a safe escape route.

The top commanders say their consciences are clean.

"The question is, did we do all we could do to avoid hitting civilians?" General Shermeister, the chief education officer said. "My answer is yes."

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

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Israel Fights Accusations Of Abuses In Gaza War

The New York Times

March 28, 2009 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

Length: 1168 words

Byline: By ETHAN BRONNER

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel is pushing back against accusations of civilian abuse in its Gaza war, asserting that an overwhelming majority of its soldiers acted honorably and that the account of a killing of a woman and her two children appears to be an urban myth spread by troops who did not witness it.

Officers are stepping forward, some at the urging of the top command, others on their own, offering numerous accounts of having held their fire out of concern for civilians, helping Palestinians in need and punishing improper soldier behavior.

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Those who wish to press for an end to the occupation and settlement of the West Bank and to the boycott of Gaza so as to create a Palestinian state -- either out of sympathy with Israel or contempt for it -- have focused on the accounts of abuses. Those who think such moves would endanger Israel have dismissed them as a blood libel.

The debate began within hours of Israel's attack in late December and continues daily. This week, Human Rights Watch issued a report citing six cases of improper use of white phosphorus by Israel and calling them evidence of war crimes. Israel has not completed its own study.

On Thursday, the military issued its first casualty count, saying 1,166 people were killed. Of those, it said 295 were noncombatants, 709 were what it called Hamas terror operatives and 162 were men whose affiliations remained unidentified.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights in Gaza says that the number of dead is 1,417, of whom 926 were civilians and 236 combatants.

Both the military and the center have lists of names. The Israelis include some 250 policemen under "Hamas terror operatives." The Palestinian center considers them noncombatants. The Israeli military argues that about 400 people die from natural causes in Gaza every month, a possible cause for the gap in the two counts.

Some soldiers have complained about the role of military rabbis and religious soldiers, saying that they have taken to their roles with the fervor of holy warriors, leading to more violence.

Stuart Cohen, a political scientist at Bar Ilan University who is religiously observant, says that the army has indeed grown more violent toward civilians in the past 25 years, partly because the Palestinians have. But he says it has nothing to do with the increase of religious soldiers.

For 12 years he has been studying the correspondence between religious soldiers and rabbis on combat morality, and overwhelmingly the rabbis have urged restraint. While he cannot measure how that advice has been put into practice, he suspects it has had a real effect. And other religious soldiers said their behavior in Gaza was especially respectful.

"When we entered houses, we actually cleaned up the place," said Yishai Goldflam, 32, a religiously observant film student in Jerusalem whose open letter to the Palestinian owners of the house he occupied for some days was

Israel Fights Accusations Of Abuses In Gaza War

published in the newspaper Maariv. "There are always idiots who do immoral things. But they don't represent the majority. I remember once when a soldier wanted to take a Coke from a store, and he was stopped by his fellow soldiers because it was the wrong thing to do."

Yaron Ezrahi, a political theorist who lectures military commanders, said they rejected the notion of willful abuse by their troops. But the commanders say more civilians died than should have and attribute it to two factors: faulty intelligence that led to attacking the wrong houses, and a failure, after warning Palestinians to leave, to provide safe escape routes.

Israel lost only a handful of men and almost no equipment, which many attribute to its overwhelming use of force.

But the top commanders say their consciences are clean.

"The question is, did we do all we could do to avoid hitting civilians?" said General Shermeister, the chief education officer. "My answer is yes."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Destruction near Gaza City in mid-January. "I'm not saying that nothing bad happened," said one Israeli colonel who described efforts to avoid harming civilians.(PHOTOGRAPH BY TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)(pg. A7)

Load-Date: March 28, 2009

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Time for a new ally?

The Jerusalem Post

June 16, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 1326 words

Byline: LEON DE WINTER

Highlight: Israel cannot survive without a strategic partnership with a major international power that is forced, by the sheer size of its interests, to play the complex fields of the Middle East. The writer is one of Holland's most renowned writers and political columnists. He has published 15 books, most of them best-selling novels, which have been translated into a dozen languages. He received the prestigious Die Welt Literature Prize in 2002 and in 2006 he received the Buber-Rosenzweig Medal for Jewish-Christian Dialogue. He is an adjunct-fellow at the Hudson Institute.

Body

US President Barack Obama's Cairo speech was a historic event in many aspects. First of all it was remarkable that a Western leader felt legitimized to talk about Islamic truths, as if he were a Muslim theologian. Secondly, he approached the Israeli-Palestinian conflict even-handedly, as if the Jewish right to Israel and the Arab resistance to it have the same moral weight.

"For decades, there has been a stalemate: two peoples with legitimate aspirations, each with a painful history that makes compromise elusive. It is easy to point fingers - for Palestinians to point to the displacement brought by Israel's founding and for Israelis to point to the constant hostility and attacks throughout its history from within its borders as well as beyond. But if we see this conflict only from one side or the other, then we will be blind to the truth: 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."

Within this historic speech, Obama couldn't find words to describe the attack by various Arab armies on Israel the day it was created. He couldn't describe the terrorist attacks that followed the 1949 armistice. He omitted the growing anti-Semitism in the Arab media, the Arab schoolbooks, Arab radio and TV, in the preaching in the mosques. Twice Obama mentioned the anti-Semitic and anti-Christian Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas: "Hamas does have support among some Palestinians, but they also have responsibilities. To play a role in fulfilling Palestinian aspirations, and to unify the Palestinian people, Hamas must put an end to violence, recognize past agreements, and recognize Israel's right to exist."

Obama didn't mention the core message of Hamas: the worldwide destruction of the Jews. Ayatollah Khomeini, the instigator of the present Islamist revolution, defined world history, the course of human events, as follows: "From the beginning, the Islamic movement has been obstructed by the Jews. They were the first who developed anti-Islamic propaganda and conspiracies. And this is still the case."

In other words, opposing Israel, the nation of the Jews, is the driving force of the Islamist revolution, both Sunni and Shi'ite. It is its core. It cannot exist if it would give up its ambition to erase Israel. The destruction of Israel is its

Time for a new ally?

ultimate goal, its fuel, its body, its nature, its direction and its destination. Only through the destruction of the cunning, conspiring, obstructing Jews the Islamist revolution can reach its goal: the resurrection of the caliphate.

OBAMA EXPLICITLY decided to ignore this threat, and decided to leave Israel in the cold, or better in the heat of a nuclear explosion. This is what he said: "No single nation should pick and choose which nations hold nuclear weapons." The president meant: Israel, a single nation, doesn't have the right to deny Iran nuclear armament. Iran, an existential threat to Israel, cannot be stopped by Israel on its own - this should be matter of the international community, according to the president.

Through his Cairo address Obama made an end to America's alliance with Israel that has lasted over 40 years. Israel's strategic early allies were Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and especially France, which delivered its famous delta-winged Mirage jets that gave Israel its 1967 victory in the Six Day War. In that year, America, although with a public that was sympathetic to Israel, replaced the tanks Jordan lost. The French refused to deliver new Mirage jets and America hesitated for some time to sell F-4 Phantoms to Israel.

AMERICA WILL now act as even-handedly to Israel as the European Union. This approach hasn't created any progress in the years since the 1993 Oslo Accords. Corrupt Palestinian leaders have transferred billions to their Swiss bank accounts and the international community wishes to look the other way. Gaza could have been a better place by now if Hamas had tried to peacefully build civil institutions. Hamas did not. Without any necessity it fired thousands of rockets at Israel. The problem is - it is Hamas's core business to oppose the Jews.

The EU wishes to ignore all these events and clings to the idea of a "viable Palestinian state," which is an oxymoron. The Palestinians have tribal communities and only fake having a modern civil society. No civil institutions have been built because they are not in the interest of the leading Palestinian families.

The famous Jewish lobby has not been able to prevent Obama's change of direction. The truth is the lobby has always been a myth, and American Jewry, which is in majority an affluent, liberal, assimilated and only vaguely religious group, has been distancing itself more and more from Israel, which it considers right-wing, militaristic, chauvinistic, belligerent.

For liberal American Jews, Israel is a confusing phenomenon. They feel connected to Israel through the remembrance and legacy of the Holocaust, but they are highly politically correct and feel solidly at home on the campuses where generations of students have been brainwashed by the works written by the holy spirit of Arab studies, Edward Said. American Jewry was aware of the president's spiritual mentor in Chicago, Jeremiah Wright, a black racist and anti-Semite, and of his friendship with Rashid Khalidi, a Palestinian intellectual and anti-Zionist with whom he had a strong personal relation. The Jews preferred to side with him instead of worrying about his opinions about Israel.

And now, after the Cairo address, they will keep standing by him and distance themselves from an Israel that produces awful pictures of bombed buildings and mutilated bodies of women and children - American Jews, at cocktail parties in the Village or the Upper West Side, prefer Israel to act proportionately and to behave as decent, civilized, upper-class Jews, not as Middle Eastern warriors. Since the 1982 massacres in Sabra and Shatila, committed by Lebanese Maronites but attributed to Israel and Ariel Sharon, liberal American Jewry went on a long journey and arrived at a historic point: just like Obama, it gave up on Israel.

A SMALL NATION like Israel, a single and lonely modern democracy in a part of the world in which autocracies and tyrannies are the norm, cannot survive without a strategic partnership with a major international power that is forced, by the sheer size of its interests, to play the complex fields of the Middle East. It is too soon to create a lasting bond with India, a natural ally for Israel. India will emerge during this century as a major international power, both militarily as economically and scientifically, but it cannot give Israel yet the diplomatic and military backup it needs.

But there is another strategic player in the field who would welcome a partnership with Israel, especially with its cutting-edge electronic industries. Of Israel's 5.7 million Jews, more than 1 million have Russian roots. Despite the

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old anti-Semitism in Russia, there has been a strong melancholic bond between the two populations. In Russia, Jews have excelled in sciences and the arts.

Because of its continuous counterbalancing act with America, Russia has been maintaining ties to Iran and Syria, but it needs to diversify and update its economy and reduce its dependence on oil and natural gas income. It could use scientific and commercial ingenuity, qualities Iran and Syria are not able to deliver - Israel is. And Israel could use Russia's vast resources and the determination of its leader Vladimir Putin, a smart and ruthless leader who understands the cruel rules of the international power game.

Obama's loyalties, and those of the majority of liberal American Jewry, don't lie with Israel. So Israel needs to shop for another ally. In his offices in the Kremlin, Putin will receive its leaders with open arms, dark bread, marinated herring and some bottles of Stolichnaya.

Graphic

Photo: FOREIGN MINISTER Avigdor Lieberman arrives at the annual EU-Israel Association meeting in Luxembourg yesterday. When he continues on to Washington, he is not scheduled to meet with President Barack Obama, while in his earlier trip to Russia he met both with President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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The first casualty

The Jerusalem Post

February 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 754 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

Which is the greater factor in getting consumers of news to believe that "1,300 Palestinians, most of them civilians" were killed during Operation Cast Lead? Intrinsic anti-Israel bias - or a high degree of gullibility to manipulative international media coverage?

Put another way, do you have to be anti-Israel to believe Palestinian lies, or is Palestinian mendacity so well-constructed, so plausible, and so well disseminated by collaborative media outlets like Al Jazeera that even well-meaning people can't help but believe the worst of Israel?

These questions are prompted by some significant reporting in Monday's Jerusalem Post ("Int'l community was duped by **Hamas**'s false civilian death toll figures, IDF claims").

Even well-regarded Palestinian pressure groups have been claiming that Israel killed 895 civilians in the Gaza fighting. Operating on the basis of such "data," coupled with a poisoned wellspring of antipathy against the Jewish state, Mahmoud Abbas has been making the case for indicting Israeli cabinet ministers and military officers for international war crimes.

Pro-Palestinian campaigners allege that two-thirds of the Arab fatalities were civilian. The IDF insists that no more than a third of the dead were civilians - and not a one was targeted intentionally. So instead of "1,300 killed, most of them civilians," we now have reason to believe, based on the IDF's methodical analysis of 1,200 of the Palestinian fatalities thus far identified by name, that 580 were combatants and 300 non-combatants.

Of these 300, two were **female** suicide bombers, and some others were related to terrorists such as Nizar Rayyan, a top **Hamas** gunman who insisted that his family join him in the hereafter.

"The first casualty when war comes is truth," said US senator Hiram Warren Johnson.

Take, for instance, Arab eyewitness accounts of the number killed at the Jabalya UN School on January 6 - some 40 dead, maybe 15 of them **women** and children. The IDF says the actual figure is 12 killed, nine of them **Hamas** operatives.

With time, perhaps, the names and true identities of each and every one of the Gaza dead - including the 320 as yet unclassified - will be determined.

one point is indisputable: Despite the best efforts of both sides, the IDF wound up killing more Palestinians unintentionally than the Palestinians killed Israeli civilians on purpose. This is known as "disproportionality."

The first casualty

Israeli officials, given bitter experiences such as Jenin in 2002, when a grossly false narrative of massacre and massed killing was disseminated by Palestinian officials, should have long since internalized the imperative to try to ascertain the number and nature of Palestinian dead in real time.

But while the figure "1,300 Palestinians killed, most/many of them civilians" is now embedded in the public consciousness, it is emphatically not too late to try to set the record straight.

Atrocity stories are nothing new. The British have been charged with using them to create popular outrage during the Boer War. The allies used them against Germany during World War I - which, incidentally, allowed the real Nazi atrocities during WWII to be dismissed long into the Holocaust.

Nowadays, it matters what masses of uninformed or ill-informed people far removed from the Arab-Israel conflict think. Dry statistics released so belatedly will win Israel no PR credit in a world of 24/7 satellite news channels and real-time blogging. Nevertheless, the fact that an Israeli narrative is finally out there is significant. Perhaps responsible news outlets will want to reexamine some of their original reporting, along with the assumption that "most" of the dead were non-combatants.

Palestinian propaganda is insidious because those being manipulated are oblivious to what is happening. Chaotic images of casualties being hurried to hospitals, gut-wrenching funerals and swaths of shattered buildings create an overarching "reality." Against this, Israel's pleadings that the Palestinians are culpable for the destruction, and that the above images lack context, scarcely resonate.

Despite six decades of intransigence and a virtual copyright on airline hijackings and suicide bombings, the Palestinians have created a popular "brand" for themselves by parlaying their self-inflicted victimization into a battering ram against Israel.

Disseminators of news should have learned better than to take Palestinian death-toll claims at face value, least of all when sourced directly or indirectly from the **Hamas**-run government of Gaza.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Ceasefire all talk as missiles keep flying

The Courier Mail (Australia)

January 16, 2009 Friday

6 - Late City Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 21

Length: 500 words

Byline: Sakher Abu El Oun IN GAZA CITY

Body

ISRAELI strikes set hospitals, media and UN buildings ablaze yesterday as tanks rolled deep into Gaza cities even amid hope that the war on **Hamas** that has killed about 1100 people may soon end.

Hundreds of terrified civilians, many gripping wailing children, fled the advancing Israeli troops inside Gaza City as warplanes pummelled the battered Palestinian enclave where half the population is under the age of 18.

While battles raged on the ground, Egypt kept up Western-backed efforts to end the 20-day war that was launched on the Islamist **Hamas** in response to rocket fire and that has killed an estimated 600 civilians.

Despite the raging violence, UN chief Ban Ki-moon said: "I believe that elements are in place for the violence to end now."

Israeli envoy Amos Gilad arrived yesterday in Egypt.

Mr Gilad was to be briefed by Egypt's pointman for Israeli-Palestinian affairs, intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, the day after **Hamas** presented its "vision" for a ceasefire, limiting its acceptance to the plan's "broad outlines".

Shortly after Mr Ban arrived in Israel, a raid hit the main UN compound in Gaza, wounding three employees, setting fire to a warehouse filled with tonnes of aid and leading the UNRWA refugee agency to halt operations. "I have conveyed my strong protest and outrage and demanded a full explanation from the defence minister and foreign minister," Mr Ban told reporters after holding talks with Israeli officials as part of a regional truce tour.

The UN chief, who has for weeks called for a ceasefire in Israel's deadliest offensive on Gaza, repeated his call.

But Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni insisted the Jewish state would decide how and when to end its massive campaign.

In southwestern Gaza, an Israeli strike hit the Al-Quds Hospital in the Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood, where dozens of Israeli tanks rumbled into the streets in the post-dawn hours, sparking fierce clashes with Palestinian gunmen.

The flames were contained and no injuries were reported in the hospital, where hundreds of frightened civilians had taken shelter to escape the battles raging nearby.

Ceasefire all talk as missiles keep flying

An Israeli raid also hit a building housing several media outlets in central Gaza City, wounding two cameramen, in an attack slammed by the Foreign Press Association group for media in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

At least 37 people were killed in Gaza yesterday, but the exact number of casualties was likely to be much higher as the ongoing clashes blocked ambulances from reaching the wounded, medics said.

Since Israel unleashed its Operation Cast Lead on December 27, at least 1070 people have been killed and another 5000 wounded, according to Gaza medics. Among the dead are at least 355 children, 100 women, 117 elderly men and 12 medics, they say.

Israel says 10 Israeli soldiers and three civilians have died as a result of combat or rocket fire.

Palestinian militants remained defiant, sending nearly 20 rockets and mortars into Israel, without causing injuries.

Agence France-Presse

Load-Date: January 15, 2009

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UN reports offensive's toll on civilians rising

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 8

Length: 452 words

Byline: Ian Munro, New York, with Guardian

Body

THE proportion of civilian casualties in the Gaza conflict is increasing, according to a United Nations relief official.

UN under-secretary for humanitarian affairs John Holmes said 93 women and 275 children were among the 884 Palestinians killed since Israel launched its air strikes and invasion.

He said civilians were now estimated to comprise 42per cent of those killed. Earlier the UN had estimated that at least 25per cent of fatalities were civilian.

Mr Holmes said 12 medical workers were among the dead, but he said there had been no more Israeli attacks against UN installations.

Of the 3860 people wounded in the conflict, 1333 were children and 587 were women, "which means that 49per cent of the wounded are women and children", Mr Holmes said.

He said the casualty figures were supplied by the Palestinian Health Ministry yesterday. "We cannot independently verify these figures but they seem to us to be plausible; and what continues to be worrying is that the Palestinian civilian casualty rate appears to be still increasing."

He said Israeli authorities had reported that four civilians had been killed and 250 injured by Hamas rocket attacks, which are continuing. Also unable to be confirmed is Israel's claim to have killed 300 Hamas fighters.

Later figures put the toll of Palestinian casualties even higher than those cited by the UN, at 910 dead and about 4000 injured.

Despite the incident last week in which 43 Palestinians in a UN school were killed by Israeli shelling, the number of civilians seeking refuge in UN facilities had increased to about 30,000, Mr Holmes said. He said the UN did not describe its facilities as "havens" because it had no means to ensure they were safe except through co-ordination with Israeli forces.

The Gaza chief of the UN Relief and Works Agency, John Ging, speaking by video link, refused to respond to claims by Israel's ambassador to Austria that Hamas had infiltrated the UNRWA in Gaza.

"It's best not to debate these matters through the media, but to do justice to the sad and tragic event by having a proper full investigation," Mr Ging said. "We are just not going to continue to answer allegations that are unfounded

UN reports offensive's toll on civilians rising

... In all official interactions that we have had with the Israeli establishment, at all levels ... there has been nobody contesting our version of events."

Mr Holmes said the movement of humanitarian aid, which was stalled last week after Israeli forces shot dead a truck driver, had resumed but the Karni crossing used for shipping bulk amounts of food remained closed. He said the UN and the Israel Defence Forces had agreed to new communication procedures to avoid a repeat of attacks on UN facilities and personnel. -- With GUARDIAN

Graphic

PHOTO: Under siege: the Dali family cook a meal over a fire made from paper and cardboard refuse in the Gaza Strip's Shati (Beach) refugee camp as the Israeli offensive continues. PICTURE: AP

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

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Iran's president fires new tirade against Israel

AlArabiya.net

May 4, 2009 Monday

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Length: 573 words

Body

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad slammed Zionism as "occupation" and "aggression" Tuesday as he delivered his latest diatribe against the Jewish state on a visit to key Middle East ally Syria.

"The Zionist occupiers are destructive microbes, because Zionism itself is occupation, aggression, the use of assassination and annihilation," he told a joint news conference with President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian capital.

"Zionism was created to threaten us. To support the Palestinian resistance is a humanitarian and popular obligation," Ahmadinejad said in remarks in Farsi that were translated into Arabic. The Iranian president's comments came barely two weeks after he sparked a European walkout from a U.N. anti-racism conference in Geneva by equating Zionism with racism.

Ahmadinejad asked why it was the Islamist Hamas movement which controls Gaza that is blacklisted by the European Union and the United States, and not Israel after its devastating offensive against the territory at the turn of the year.

"They've attacked Gaza, killing people in their own land and massacring women and children... and yet it's the Palestinians they accuse of terrorism," he complained.

Ahmadinejad, whose visit to Damascus came as Defense Secretary Robert Gates toured U.S. allies in the region to reassure them about overtures to the Tehran regime by President Barack Obama, hit out at the continuing U.S. military presence on Iran's borders.

"They weren't invited in. They're unwelcome visitors who should leave Afghanistan and the borders of Pakistan," the Iranian president said.

"We don't want honey from bees that sting us. Efforts must be made to rid the region of the presence of foreigners... and to reform the unjust global political and economic system."

Standing together

Ahmadinejad said Iran and Syria were standing together to "resist foreign intervention and the major powers trying to impose their hegemony over the region."

The United States "has put pressure on Syria and Iran, but it needs us and wants to develop relations," he said.

"Circumstances are changing rapidly in our favor. We are on the road to victory."

Iran 's president fires new tirade against Israel

Syria's President Assad in turn defended his country's long-standing alliance with Iran on Tuesday and said a "strategic" relationship between the two countries contributed to Middle East stability.

Syria has re-enforced its alliance with Iran in recent years after they came under pressure from the United States for suspected nuclear programs and providing backing for armed groups in the Middle East.

"We have strategic ties ... which don't constitute an axis as some suggest, but serve the stability and strength of this region," Assad said.

"Our duty is to strengthen these kinds of ties."

The two countries, which are under different levels of U.S. sanctions, support the Lebanese movement Hezbollah and the Palestinian movement **Hamas**, whose exiled leaders live in Syria.

Hezbollah, the lynchpin of the relationship between Tehran and Damascus, is also the main opposition party contesting Lebanon's parliamentary elections next month. The two countries want to see the Shi'ite group fare well in the poll.

The sustainability of their alliance, however, is under some doubt as Syria pushes for a resumption of peace negotiations with Israel and the United States talks to Damascus after boycotting Syria for several years.

Ahmadinejad was also due to meet exiled **Hamas** leader Khaled Meshaal during his Damascus visit.

Load-Date: May 18, 2009

End of Document

Ambassador makes case for Israel as 'charm' tour comes north - The arrival of Queen Elizabeth this week overshadowed a visit of another lesser known dignitary. Allison Morris speaks to the Israeli ambassador Ron Prosor on his first official trip to Northern Ireland

Irish News

May 8, 2009 Friday

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Section: Pg. 3

Length: 468 words

Body

Ron Prosor has been the official ambassador for two years. Prior to that he held a top post as permanent under secretary with the Israeli foreign service - "a job I barely survived from," he said during our interview in the plush Culloiden Hotel in Co Down.

Coming so soon after the recent Israeli air strikes which battered the Gaza strip, the ambassador is on a charm offensive tour, trying to make a case for his people.

He freely admits that the state of Israel has a serious "image problem".

"As an ambassador I made a decision to get out of the embassy and make the case for Israel," he said.

"I think people don't know a lot about Israel, about our history."

At Northern Ireland's interfaces Palestinian flags can often be seen fluttering alongside the Irish Tricolour. Loyalist reaction to this was to fly Israeli flags in interface areas.

The ambassador says that while he is aware of the comparison of Northern Ireland's Troubles and the conflict in his own region, he feels there are few common links.

"We have to be able to learn everything we can but, to my mind, Northern Ireland's conflict is very different.

"People talk about human rights issues and criticise Israel - we are a democracy, we can take that -but people then say they support Hamas.

"Hamas, that not only treat women the way they do but, why not talk to the Palestinians themselves? Ask how Hamas treat their own brothers and sisters."

During his visit, the ambassador visited the Stormont assembly and took a tour of the so-called 'peace lines' that mark out Belfast's sectarian interfaces.

Since 2004 work has continued on the Gaza enclosure, a controversial 420-mile wall complete with a four metre deep ditch and electronic sensors.

Ambassador makes case for Israel as 'charm' tour comes north - The arrival of Queen Elizabeth this week overshadowed a visit of another lesser known dignitary.

Israel's 'separation barrier' has been condemned by human rights activists.

Palestinian land was confiscated in order to build the wall. Farmers and traders have been cut off from their land and their only means survival as a result.

However, Mr Proser is quick to point out Northern Ireland's own history for wall building in times of conflict.

"Look at how you call your barrier the wall of peace, the peace wall, what does that say?

"We are creating this wall which came into being because we need to allow both parts of the population, in a gradual incremental way, to be able to learn to live with each other.

"You have the same thing but you call it a 'peace wall'.

"No one in Israel wanted to build the walls, but because Israeli citizens were subjected to suicide bombers in the midst of Israeli cities day in day out, we had no choice.

"Now it's not even open to debate that there is a clear indication that where there is a fence there is a drop in terrorist activity, which allows the Israeli population to be more positive, to think about peaceful solutions than if they were bombed day in day out."

Load-Date: May 8, 2009

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AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN; "Russian-speaking" minister of foreign affairs counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia

What the Papers Say (Russia)

June 4, 2009 Thursday

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Section: PRESS EXTRACTS;; No. 100

Length: 803 words

Byline: Arthur Blinov, Nikolai Surkov

Highlight: AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN SAID TEL-AVIV WAS READY TO ATTEND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE IN MOSCOW; An update on the visit of Israeli minister of foreign affairs.

Body

Avigdor Lieberman, Israeli Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, proclaimed Tel-Aviv ready to attend the Middle East conference in Moscow but only if **HAMAS** and Hezbollah were absent from it. Leader of the political party of immigrants from the former USSR, Lieberman is convinced that relations between Israel and Russia should be elevated to a new level.

Born in Moldova, Lieberman is leader of Israel Is Our Home, a political party comprising immigrants from the countries that had been Soviet republics once. Visiting Moscow, Lieberman was received by President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and met with his Russian opposite number Sergei Lavrov.

Middle East situation and prospects of its settlement were in the focus of the talks.

It was during these talks and afterwards that Lieberman dispelled the rumors in the global media on the allegedly forthcoming Israeli preemptive strike at Iranian sites. As a matter of fact, the Israeli diplomat readdressed the problem to world powers. Recalling the menace constituted by the Iranian nuclear program, Lieberman said, "We are not going to bomb Iran. We do now want to be the ones solving this problem for the world."

Lieberman's statements concerning Middle East affairs were somewhat paradoxical. "Principal confrontation in the Middle East is within the Islamic world itself and not between Israel and the Palestinians or Israel and Arab countries," he said. He called **HAMAS** a threat to the recently formed Palestinian Administration of Salem Fayyad and Hezbollah to Fouad Siniora's Cabinet in Lebanon.

Israel threatens no Arab country, Lieberman said. As for the Arab peace initiative, the Israeli diplomat acknowledged it as acceptable in everything but the clause on refugees. "Israel is prepared accept the initiative without this clause."

Lieberman announced as well that his country did not plan to return the Golan Heights, occupied since 1967, to the Syrians - much less to do so as a condition for the talks. He added that development of Jewish settlements on the territories where the Palestinian state would be established was "no barrier to the peace process."

AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN " Russian -speaking" minister of foreign affairs
counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia

The visiting diplomat supported the idea of an international Middle East conference in Moscow this summer or autumn and said that Israel would participate as long as HAMAS and Hezbollah were absent. (Israel regards them as terrorists.) Lieberman said, however, that he wanted more information on the future conference. "If it is to be a real conference, then it is necessary to determine its parameters and list of participants, to decide what its objectives are supposed to be and what results should be expected," Lieberman said. "I suspect that all of that will be tackled after Obama's visit to Moscow, i.e. after mid-July."

Special attention in the course of the visit was paid to the Israeli-Russian relations which Lieberman appraised as being "at the highest point ever" but whose improvement was still possible. "We've never forgotten that the USSR was the first state to recognize Israel in 1948. We attach considerable importance to our combined efforts against with Nazism in the Second World War," Lieberman told Medvedev. Russia and Israel agreed to pool efforts against "falsification of history" and "to celebrate the 65th anniversary of Victory in 2010 together."

Speaking about his priorities, Lieberman said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was trying to change the international community's attitude toward Israel and improve the image of the country damaged by the media, first and foremost Israeli media. He suggested that Europe was more or less anti-Israeli due to the negative media coverage of the events in the Middle East.

Lieberman added that Israel was counting on Russia's understanding in the matter of relations with HAMAS. He reminded his Russian hosts that Israel had already made several goodwill gestures. Israel refused to recognize Kosovo as a sovereign state, its Knesset backed Russia's actions in Chechnya. Also importantly, Israel was selling no new weapons to Georgia and was but servicing the previously delivered merchandise.

The Israeli diplomat condemned the United States for the use of double standards in connection with Israel and said that behavior of lots of countries (he mentioned Pakistan and North Korea) was even worse. Lieberman emphasized that bringing up the matter of democracy in Israel was wrong when women in other countries of the region were still denied banal equality.

Lieberman said that US President Barack Obama and State Secretary Hillary Clinton insisted on establishment of the Palestinian state without knowing the true state of affairs in the region and in Israel and without even listening to Tel-Aviv's arguments.

Source: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, No 110, June 4, 2009, p. 1

Translated by Aleksei Ignatkin

Load-Date: June 4, 2009

UN moves to determine own Gaza war civilian casualty figures. After 'Post' publishes IDF info, UN official says it needs to 'gain clarity'

The Jerusalem Post

February 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 506 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ, Judy Siegel contributed to the report.

Body

Amid controversy over the number of Palestinian civilians killed and wounded during Operation Cast Lead against **Hamas** last month, the United Nations is working on compiling its own report to determine the exact figure.

On Monday, The Jerusalem Post reported that the IDF had compiled a list of names of more than 1,200 of the Palestinians reported to have been killed during the three- week conflict and that the civilian death toll was no higher than a third of the total.

UN officials, Physicians for Human Rights in Israel and the International Committee of the Red Cross declined to comment on the IDF report.

Work on the UN figures is being led by the office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO).

UN officials said Monday that researchers were scouring data on the number of casualties provided by the Palestinian Health Ministry, the IDF and Gaza-based human rights organizations. The work is complicated and will last several weeks, if not months, one official said.

Basing its work on the official Palestinian death toll of 1,338, the IDF's Gaza Coordination and Liaison Administration said it had identified more than 1,200 of the Palestinian fatalities and that 580 had been conclusively "incriminated" as members of **Hamas** and other terrorist groups.

Some 300 of the dead - **women**, children aged 15 and younger and men over the age of 65 - had been categorized as noncombatants, the CLA said.

Counted among the **women**, however, were **female** terrorists, including at least two **women** who tried to blow themselves up next to forces from the Givati and Paratroopers brigades.

Also classed as noncombatants were the wives and children of Nizar Rayyan, a **Hamas** military commander who refused to allow his family to leave his home even after he was warned by Israel that it would be bombed.

The 320 names yet to be classified are all men. The IDF has yet to complete its identification work in these cases, but estimates that two-thirds of them were terror operatives.

UN moves to determine own Gaza war civilian casualty figures. After 'Post' publishes IDF info, UN official says it needs to 'gain clarity'

"It [the IDF report] prompts inquiries," a UN official said. "The UN is researching from various sources the number of casualties to gain clarity on the number of people who were killed in the conflict."

Defense sources also reiterated their earlier claim that three civilians and some nine terror operatives were killed in an IDF shelling near a UN school in Jabalya in early January, and not 40 or more people as was widely reported at the time based on Palestinian claims.

A New York Times report from the Gaza funeral after the incident stated that "the row of bodies [were] uncountable in the press of the mourning crowd" and cited reports that as many as 40 people were killed in the shelling outside the school. It said Palestinian hospital sources reported that 10 of the dead were children and five were women, and quoted one mourner who said she had lost nine members of her extended family, age three to 25.

The defense sources Monday said that the IDF had studied the incident and was adamant that its figures were correct.

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End of Document

Obama's link to the Muslim world: Turkey

Christian Science Monitor

June 12, 2009, Friday

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Length: 803 words

Byline: Helena Cobban

Dateline: Adana, Turkey

Body

As President Obama looks for partners in the Muslim world, he should consider listening to the government of Turkey as much as he listens to Egypt's president. He could learn a lot from Turkey about how a smart Islamist party can be a valued participant in a democracy.

Turkey, a NATO ally, has been ruled since 2002 by a moderate Islamist party - the Justice and Development Party (AKP) - that has proved its commitment to democracy and pluralism at home and to an active, nearly always nonviolent, engagement in diplomacy abroad. And that's why the record of the AKP in Turkey is so compelling.

At home, after the party first won power, grass-roots supporters tried to leverage that victory to ban alcohol sales in some Turkish cities. The judiciary struck down those regulations - and the national government complied with the ruling.

Later, the national government tried to lift the country's longstanding ban on admitting scarf-wearing women to universities or to jobs in government. Once again, the courts struck down the proposal. And once again, the government complied without a protest. (That, though the wives of both the prime minister and the president always wear head scarves in public.)

In 10 days of travel, in three Turkish cities and vast swaths of countryside, I saw Turkish women wearing clothes that ranged from skimpy Western dress topped by tumbling - sometimes bleached-blond - hairdos, to a stylish version of Muslim hijab that involves an elegantly tied head scarf over a mid-thigh tunic and jeans, to the baggy black coverup of the ultrapious.

Most Turkish women are near the middle of that spectrum, and in many places young women with and without head scarves mingle easily, chatting and laughing together.

Regarding domestic affairs, one professor in Istanbul told me, "If you're a politically liberal Turk who cares about women's rights, the rights of the Kurdish minority, and religious minorities here, you couldn't find a better party than the AKP." I heard versions of that voiced by several other strongly secular Turks.

Back in early April, Mr. Obama came to Turkey and delivered a first important address to the Muslim world. Turks seemed delighted that he had included their country on his first trip abroad as president, and nearly all appreciated the respectful way he addressed the concerns of Turks and other Muslims.

Obama's link to the Muslim world: Turkey

On June 4, he gave another major address to the Muslim world in Cairo. Egypt, like Turkey, is a historic center of Muslim life. But the Turkish government follows policies that are much more in line with Obama's inclusive, diplomacy-focused approach to international affairs.

Turkey's two AKP governments have maintained good ties with Europe and with all Turkey's neighbors - including Greece, Iran, Georgia, Iraq, and Syria. In 2007-08, Ankara also undertook an important mediation effort between Israel and Syria.

But Ankara fell afoul of the Bush administration in Washington for a number of reasons. Most significantly, in 2003, Ankara - like many other NATO allies - strongly opposed the US invasion of Iraq, and it refused to allow Washington to launch part of the invasion from Turkey.

The Bush administration also objected to the good ties the AKP maintained with Syria and - after the hard-line faction won the Palestinian elections in 2006 - with Hamas.

While George W. Bush was president, he seemed to ascribe little value to the inclusive and generally de-escalatory policies the AKP government has pursued at home and in the broader Middle East. He preferred instead an approach to the Middle East that sharpened divisions between the two groups he defined as "moderates" and "extremists."

In the former group were the notoriously anti-democratic governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In the latter, any government or party that seemed to support Iran, regardless of whether - like Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah - they might have proved their popular support in democratic elections.

Indeed, in the Bush years, Washington worked actively to overthrow both Hamas and Hezbollah, and maintained what one Bush White House official has described as "a state of quasi-war" with Syria.

Several Bush-era officials openly questioned whether the electoral victories of Hamas and Hezbollah actually "proved" that a party could be both dedicated to Islamist principles and democratic rule over the longer term. Turkey's experience provides intriguing evidence that it can.

Obama should value Turkey's views on regional affairs. He may not be ready yet to go along with all the advice he receives from the AKP government in Ankara. But Ankara has much valuable experience that it can share with its NATO ally.

Helena Cobban is a former Monitor correspondent. Her latest book is "Re-engage! America and the World after Bush."

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Load-Date: June 12, 2009

OBAMA WANTS DIVISION TO END; SPEAKS FORCEFULLY ABOUT MUSLIM, PALESTINIAN ISSUES

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

June 5, 2009 Friday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 1012 words

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

Body

CAIRO, Egypt -- In opening a bold overture to the Islamic world yesterday, President Barack Obama confronted frictions between Muslims and the West, but he reserved some of his bluntest words for Israel, as he expressed sympathy for the Palestinians and what he called the "daily humiliations, large and small, that come with occupation."

While Mr. Obama emphasized that America's bond with Israel was "unbreakable," he spoke in equally powerful terms of the Palestinian people, describing their plight as "intolerable" after 60 years of statelessness, and twice referring to "Palestine" in a way that put Palestinians on parallel footing with Israel.

Mr. Obama's speech in Cairo, which he called a "timeless city," was perhaps the riskiest of his presidency, as he used unusually direct language to call for a fresh look at deep divisions, both those between Israel and its neighbors and between the Islamic world and the West. Among his messages was a call for Americans and Muslims to abandon their mutual suspicions and do more to confront violent extremism.

But it was Mr. Obama's empathetic tone toward the Palestinians that attracted the most attention in the region and around the world. His words left many Palestinians and their Arab supporters jubilant, but infuriated some Israelis and American backers of Israel because they saw the speech as elevating the Palestinians to equal status.

Mr. Obama said the bond between the United States and Israel was "based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied."

"On the other hand," he added, "it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people -- Muslims and Christians -- have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years, they've endured the pain of dislocation."

He said the United States "will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity and a state of their own."

Mr. Obama seemed to connect with his audience in his 55-minute speech from Cairo University as he quoted repeatedly from the Quran, the Islamic holy book, and occasionally sprinkled his remarks with Arabic, even beginning his address with the traditional Arabic greeting "salaam aleikum, or "peace be upon you."

OBAMA WANTS DIVISION TO END SPEAKS FORCEFULLY ABOUT MUSLIM, PALESTINIAN ISSUES

In the speech, which was broadcast and translated around the world, Mr. Obama sounded forceful, even scolding at times, as he promoted democracy in Egypt and women's rights and acknowledged that the United States had fallen short of its ideals, particularly in the Iraq war.

The president divided his speech into seven sections, standing at the podium like the university professor he was before beginning his political career. Mr. Obama sharply criticized what he called the "disturbing tendency" among some Muslims, both Sunnis and Shiites, to "measure one's own faith by the rejection of somebody else's faith."

But while he spoke uncompromisingly of the U.S. fight against al-Qaida, Mr. Obama never mentioned the words "terrorism" or "terrorist." That was a departure from the language used by the Bush administration, but one that some Middle East experts suggested reflected a belief by the new administration that overuse had made the words inflammatory.

Paul D. Wolfowitz, a former top Bush administration official, who was an architect of the Iraq war and a strong supporter of Israel, offered general praise for Mr. Obama's address. "I could have used less moral equivalence, but he had to get through to his audience, and it's in America's interest for him to get through," Mr. Wolfowitz said.

Mr. Obama's remarks will be closely parsed by Israelis and Palestinians, in part because when previous American presidents have used the word "Palestine," they have usually done so only in reference to a future Palestinian state, as former President George W. Bush did in March 2002.

"Now, Mr. Obama is saying 'Palestine' is a present reality," said Robert Malley, director of the Middle East program at the International Crisis Group, and a Middle East negotiator in the Clinton administration.

Mr. Obama's statement that "the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements" is also likely to be seen as a sharp challenge to Israeli assumptions that existing West Bank settlements will always be allowed to remain.

It was noteworthy that the only Palestinian political group that Mr. Obama specifically mentioned was Hamas, the militant Islamic organization that won Palestinian legislative elections in 2006. Hamas governs Gaza, but is loathed by Israel.

Mr. Obama called on Hamas to forswear violence and recognize Israel's right to exist, but Mideast experts said his mention was an acknowledgment that Hamas might have become a more important actor than the Fatah Party, controlled by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Mr. Obama said, "Hamas does have support among some Palestinians, but they also have to recognize they have responsibilities."

The president offered few details on how to solve problems and conflicts around the globe. But he offered up his own biography as a credible connection to his various audiences. His message touched on a lengthy list of challenges, but his Cairo appearance could simply be boiled down to this: Barack Hussein Obama was standing on the podium in this Muslim capital as the American president.

"I consider it part of my responsibility as president of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear," Mr. Obama said. "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."

Although Mr. Obama strongly condemned those who would deny the Holocaust, many U.S. supporters of Israel said they resented his comparison of it to the plight of the Palestinians. "I understand Palestinian suffering; it is terrible," said Holocaust survivor Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League. "But it is not on the other hand to the Holocaust."

Graphic

OBAMA WANTS DIVISION TO END SPEAKS FORCEFULLY ABOUT MUSLIM, PALESTINIAN ISSUES

PHOTO: Ashraf Amra/Associated Press: Wearing masks to conceal their identity, Palestinian militants from the Popular Resistance Committee watch President Barack Obama's televised speech in front of journalists yesterday at a training base in Gaza City.

Load-Date: June 5, 2009

End of Document

Al-Jazeera drew viewers on Web during Gaza war

The Salt Lake Tribune
January 24, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; National; World

Length: 214 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Doha, Qatar » American viewership of Al-Jazeera English rose dramatically during the Israel-**Hamas** war, partly because the channel had what CNN and other international networks didn't have: reporters inside Gaza.

But the viewers weren't watching it on television, where the Arab network's English-language station has almost no U.S. presence.

Instead, the station streamed video of Israel's offensive against **Hamas** on the Internet and took advantage of emerging online media such as the microblogging Web site Twitter to provide real-time updates.

During the 22-day conflict that ended last weekend, the station and its Arabic language sister, as they often do, aired far more graphic pictures than U.S. networks of dead and injured Palestinian children and **women**.

The images, viewed widely across the Mideast, generated enormous sympathy for Gazans in the Muslim world.

"Gaza ... was a breakthrough opportunity to make an impact with people who are less aware of Al-Jazeera than we'd like," said Tony Burman, managing director of the English-language channel in Qatar.

"There is an alternative perspective our channel provides, and Gaza was a good example," Burman said.

Al-Jazeera had another draw: Its reporters were inside Gaza while international networks such as CNN were barred by Israel.

Graphic

This image taken from a computer screen and released by Livestation on Thursday Jan. 22, 2009, shows Arab TV station Al Jazeera's English-language channel as made available on the Livestation Internet web site. The image shows Ayman Mohyeldin, Al Jazeera's 29-year old correspondent, who reported on Israel's recent military offensive live from Gaza Strip for 22-days, and also shows message blogs from viewers. Viewing figures point to big gains in U.S. online interest, suggesting the war gave the Arab station its first significant chance to break into the American market.(AP Photo/Livestation, HO) ** NO SALES **

Al-Jazeera drew viewers on Web during Gaza war

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Arab leaders: caught between emotionalism and realism

Daily News Egypt

January 28, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1887 words

Body

CAIRO: Last week it seemed obvious that Arabs had split into two camps.

On one side were the radicals meeting in Doha, surprisingly headed by Qatar and joined by countries like Iran, Syria delegates from ***Hamas***, all famous for publicly calling to wipe Israel off the face of the earth, or temporarily suspending diplomatic ties with Israel and the US.

On the other side, meeting simultaneously, was the moderate camp headed by Egypt and joined by countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan, which are keen on negotiating a peaceful solution between Israel and the Palestinians.

The general atmosphere was not encouraging. Never before in our recent history have differences between Arab states been so obvious. Although disagreements have always existed €" both publicly and behind the scenes €" at least they all occurred under one roof.

The day before the moderate states were to meet in Kuwait for an economic summit on Jan. 19, a local newspaper quoted Secretary General Amr Moussa as saying, "œI'm depressed" on its front page.

Other newspapers offered similar headlines that reflected the general Arab mood. The opening note of the host, Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al Sabbah, highlighted the horrible destruction of Gaza, urging the Arabs to come together and put an end to Palestinian suffering.

The following day, the mood was no different. During a Q&A session with Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Seniora, a Kuwaiti journalist, instead of asking a question, started describing the sad, weak state of the Arab world, how Arab leaders' hands were tied while Palestinians are being massacred by the hundreds, and how far we have sunk compared to the Golden Age of Islam when Arabs fought with their swords in every corner of the world.

œLet's revive pride to Islam and to ourselves,€ the journalist concluded, "œlet's take our rotten arms that we never dared to use, and fight; let's wipe out Israel.€"

His words were so passionate and eloquent that suddenly the hall turned euphoric, drowning out the journalist's words in applause and screams. The half-empty hall became overcrowded in seconds, and you could actually see

Arab leaders: caught between emotionalism and realism

tears in the eyes of some, mine included. My heart even started pounding, perhaps out of rage, sorrow, or disappointment, but I knew that at that very moment, everyone in the hall would have marched towards Israel to fight, with what and how didn't matter.

I knew that if I were in Mr. Seniora's shoes, who was still at the podium, I would have called my armed forces that very second and declared war.

But a few moments later, I paused and was shocked at my own reaction more than anything else. I realized how emotions can make you irrational, vulnerable and easily manipulated. I have never been pro-war and never will be. Interestingly, almost all the people in that hall shared my view. After all, we are all here in Kuwait supporting the moderates, not in Qatar with those I would describe as the radicals. Yet why were we so moved by these words? Quite simply, because we are all Arabs, and every true Arab with no exception, likes to hear these speeches. We all like to think of ourselves as strong and able to fight back aggressors, and defend our brothers and sisters all over the world.

But then again, we have to be realistic. That's the difference between some leaders and the rest of us.

What have the radicals accomplished?

Being realistic means we have to accept the fact that Israel exists and will continue to exist. The problem with Iran and its proxies, **Hamas** and Hezbollah, is that they do not want to accept this geopolitical fact. They undoubtedly know that Israel will never disappear, but they have to keep claiming that to score points with their own people, and with people in other countries to get them to turn against their own leaders who do not share their vision.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, mentioned more than three years ago and repeatedly afterwards that Israel should be wiped off the map. No one can deny the fact that he gained the admiration of many in the Arab world, but again we should pause and think twice. If he's really sincere, why didn't he even try to live up to his promise? What better opportunity than the current attack on Gaza? While Israel was at war with **Hamas**, Hezbollah could have started another war in the north; even better, the US is involved in two different wars €" both rejected by the majority of Americans €" and facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

So what is Mr. Ahmadinejad waiting for? Another 70 years for such an opportunity to come again? Or maybe to win the elections in June and try in the next term? The fact is that he never intended to go to war or to wipe Israel off the map. The West should have never taken him seriously; and more importantly the Arab people should never allow such empty rhetoric to manipulate them.

Now after four years in power, what has Mr. Ahmadinejad accomplished? The poor who elected him in the hopes of a better life are poorer, and the rich who can help provide a better life for the poor are also poorer. His country is isolated from the world due to UN sanctions, and according to many analysts Iran's economy is on the verge of collapse if the price of oil, now at \$42 per barrel, remains below \$75. Recent reports have emerged that the popularity of Mr. Khatami €" Iran's moderate ex-president €" is rising through the roof, even without announcing his intention to run in the upcoming elections. All this threat of destruction, for what? Simply to score some cheap points with some empty words.

On the international front, Mr. Ahmadinejad has supported **Hamas** and Hezbollah with funds and arms. Both groups have engaged in battles with Israel, but what did they accomplish? How many Israelis did they kill? In fact, in many instances they never hesitated to commit the major sin of killing fellow Muslims whenever their authority is challenged, such as in Lebanon in November 2007, when the Lebanese government tried to seize control of its national telecom network from Hezbollah; and in Gaza in July 2008, when **Hamas** seized control of the city, executing Fatah's soldiers and throwing them off rooftops.

Whether the conflict is with other Arab factions or directly with Israel, the outcome has always been to Israel's advantage while Arab losses total in the thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

Arab leaders: caught between emotionalism and realism

Those who believe that the Arabs can revive their Golden Age and conquer the world with their swords have to think again. Back then, we only needed faith and bravery to win a war; now wars are operated digitally thousands of miles away from battlefields where neither faith nor bravery are in the equation. In fact, you can lack both and still win a war by the push of a button. The unfortunate reality is that Arabs are trailing in these military technologies by tens of years. Those who believe that if Arabs unite and strike Israel as one, they can wipe Israel off the map also have to think again. Israel itself is not the problem. People seem to forget the Israel's patron, the United States, will never allow it to vanish, and neither will Europe or the UN.

In the 1973 war, Egypt and the Arabs did everything right. Perfectly synchronized attacks from Egypt and Syria were orchestrated; an oil embargo was secretly planned two months before the attack and announced a few days after the war started. When it finally seemed that the Arabs were winning the war, the United States intervened with major re-supplies and within a few days, the balance was back to Israel's advantage. What the Arabs need to understand is that regrettably they cannot prevail over Israel by the use of force, at least not under the current circumstances. History has shown us that Arabs lost land in every war they fought against Israel, and only gained land with peace. There is no shame in that; victories can also be achieved through peace.

The Moderates

Given Israel's military might and its consistent violation of UN resolutions, one might ask another question: What prevents Israel from wiping Palestine off the map? Is it a fear of Hamas? Or is it Israel's humaneness that prevents it from killing women and children?

In retaliation for a bunch of tin cans thrown at Israel's backyard, the casualty ratio on the last assault on Gaza and Hamas, which involved ground troops, was 1 to 100. That answers my first question. Over 500 of the 1,300 dead Palestinians were women and children, and that answers my second question.

Israel undoubtedly wishes to wipe out Palestinians, exactly the way we Arabs wish Israel never existed. But as strange as it may sound, what is truly deterring Israel is the good relationship between the United States and Arab countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. It's the gas and trade agreements with some Arab countries, and more importantly, it's the Arab-Israeli and Arab-US diplomatic ties that allow Arab countries to sit on negotiating tables and relentlessly negotiate a fair settlement with Israel so that Palestinians can finally live in peace.

American support for Israel is not an enigma; Israel is simply the only truly democratic pro-US country in the midst of a region that is of a great strategic importance to the US. The only way for Arab countries to undermine Israel's importance to the US is to be of greater value to the US.

The Arab saying "œthe enemy of my enemy is my friend" should in fact be "œthe friend of my enemy must be my friend, especially when it's the world's most powerful country.€

And it seems to be working.

On January 9, 2009 the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution condemning Israel. This is probably the first anti-Israeli resolution to pass without a US veto in maybe 35 years. The US abstained. Since 1972, the US had vetoed over 40 UN resolutions condemning Israel. This vote by all counts is considered a great diplomatic victory for Arab countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, who carry enough weight to pressure the US not to veto such a resolution. According to Israeli officials cited in the international media, the US abstention is "œalarming,€ "œdepressing" and "œmight be a turning point in the US-Israeli relationship.€

So ironically, the reasons why leaders like President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, and King Abdullah of Jordan are being accused by their own people of being traitors are the same reasons why Israel has been defeated in the UN, and a week later decided on a unilateral ceasefire.

It was not because of Hamas' ineffective Qassam (so-called) rockets; neither was it because of Iran's hollow words. Ironically, those who are accused of being traitors to the Palestinian and the Arab cause are the ones who chose to save Palestinian lives at the expense of boosting their own image in their home countries. Ironically, those who

Arab leaders: caught between emotionalism and realism

were accused of being traitors are the same ones truly mourning the deaths of their Palestinian brothers and sisters, while the deluded **Hamas** are celebrating their so-called victory over Gaza's ruins.

Rahim ElKishky is the CEO of Information Technology & Services CO. He sits on the board of several other companies, including EMS-International Herald Tribune/Daily News Egypt. ElKishky holds an MBA in General Management from Boston University.

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Israeli Military Says Its Actions in Gaza War Did Not Violate International Law

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

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Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The Israeli military on Wednesday presented the conclusions of several internal investigations into its conduct during the war in Gaza and stated that it had operated in accordance with international law, countering widespread international criticism over its actions and continuing accusations of possible war crimes.

The military said in a statement that it had "maintained a high professional and moral level" during the 22-day war, which ended Jan. 18, though it faced "an enemy that aimed to terrorize Israeli civilians whilst taking cover" among Palestinian civilians and "using them as human shields."

Israel mounted its attack on **Hamas**, the Islamic militant group that controls Gaza, with the stated purpose of preventing rocket fire on southern Israel from Gaza. But the offensive set off international outrage and condemnation as the Palestinian death toll grew, as United Nations facilities and medical teams came under fire and as allegations emerged of improper use of white phosphorus weapons.

This month, the United Nations Human Rights Council appointed an internationally renowned judge, Richard J. Goldstone, to lead a high-level mission to investigate allegations of war crimes during the Gaza war.

Though Mr. Goldstone, a former judge in South Africa and a former United Nations chief prosecutor for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, has said he will investigate possible violations by both Israel and **Hamas**, officials in Jerusalem have said it is unlikely that Israel will cooperate with the mission.

Gaza health officials said more than 1,300 Palestinians died during the war, but Israel disputes Palestinian claims that most of them were noncombatants. By the Israeli military's count, 1,166 people were killed, of whom 295 were noncombatants, 709 were what it called **Hamas** terrorist operatives and 162 were men whose affiliations remain unidentified.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights in Gaza put the number of dead at 1,417: 926 civilians, 236 combatants and 255 police officers. Israel says that about 400 Gazans die of natural causes every month, possibly accounting for the discrepancy in numbers.

Thirteen Israelis were killed during the fighting, among them 10 soldiers and 3 civilians.

Israeli Military Says Its Actions in Gaza War Did Not Violate International Law

Maj. Gen. Dan Harel, the Israeli military's deputy chief of staff, told reporters on Wednesday that the army "discovered a small number of mistakes, not many, among the dozens of incidents we investigated, and we have already examined them and learned lessons from them."

General Harel added that the army had "not found a single case of an Israeli soldier deliberately hurting innocent Palestinian civilians, whether from the land, air or sea." If any such case was discovered, he said, it would be treated with the full severity of the law.

Describing the mistakes as "unfortunate" and ascribing them to "intelligence or operational errors," the military said such incidents "were unavoidable and occur in all combat situations, in particular of the type which Hamas forced" on the army "by choosing to fight from within the civilian population."

Three separate investigations whose conclusions were presented on Wednesday dealt with specific events that were brought to the army's attention by the news media or other means. Two others examined general subjects, namely the use of weapons containing phosphorus and the destruction of infrastructure and buildings by ground forces.

In one case, where Israeli shells killed up to 40 Palestinians outside a United Nations school in the Jabaliya refugee camp, north of Gaza City, on Jan. 6, the soldiers were responding, according to the military, to mortar shells fired by militants in the vicinity of the school. Israel says that 12 to 17 Palestinians were killed, 5 of whom were militants.

Soon after the shelling, however, Palestinian hospital officials in the Jabaliya area told a reporter for The New York Times that 40 people had been killed, among them 10 children and 5 women. At a mass funeral in Jabaliya the next day, the reporter was unable to count the bodies in the press of the mourning crowd but described seeing the bodies of the children laid out in a long row on the ground. One of the mourners, Huda Deed, said she had lost nine members of her extended family, ages 3 to 25.

Another case investigated by the military involved the Daia family, 21 of whom were killed when their home, in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City, was hit in an Israeli strike on Jan. 6. Expressing regret for the attack, a senior military official said the army had intended to hit the house next door, which was a weapons storage site; the Daia home was struck because of an "operational error."

Israel has already come under heavy criticism for its use of white phosphorus in heavily populated Gaza. White phosphorus is a standard, legal weapon in armies, long used as a way to light up an area or to create a thick white smoke screen to obscure troop movements. But it can cause horrific burns, so using it against civilians, or in an area where many civilians are likely to be affected, can be a violation of international law.

Last month, Human Rights Watch issued a report citing six cases of improper use of white phosphorus by Israel and calling them evidence of war crimes.

The military said it used two types of munitions containing white phosphorus, incendiary shells for marking and range-finding, which it said were used in limited quantities, and nonincendiary types of munitions used to create smoke screens. But officials said that both types were used in open areas only, in accordance with the limitations of international law.

The military noted that these investigations, conducted by officers with the rank of colonel, were not a replacement for the central operational army investigation of the entire campaign, which will be concluded by June.

The findings are not exhaustive. For example, the case of the Samouni family, some 30 of whose members were killed when the building in which they had sought shelter in Zeitoun was hit on Jan. 5, remains unresolved. Maj. Avital Leibovich, a military spokeswoman, said that the case was still being examined, and that it was not yet clear if the Samounis were killed by Israeli fire.

Israeli and international human rights groups rejected the Israeli military's internal investigations as inadequate. Human Rights Watch called Wednesday's statement by the military "an insult to the civilians in Gaza who

Israeli Military Says Its Actions in Gaza War Did Not Violate International Law

needlessly died." The army leadership, the group said, is "apparently not interested, willing, or able to monitor itself."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Ali Mustafa al-Attar, 82, above, said that his home in Gaza was destroyed during the recent war between Israel and **Hamas**. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MOISES SAMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: April 23, 2009

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Israeli strikes continue to set Gaza ablaze

Daily News Egypt

January 15, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 818 words

Body

GAZA CITY: Israeli strikes set hospitals, media and UN buildings ablaze on Thursday as tanks rolled deep into Gaza cities even amid hope that the war on Hamas that has killed more than 1,100 people may soon end.

Hundreds of terrified civilians, many gripping wailing children, fled the advancing Israeli troops inside Gaza City as warplanes pummeled the battered Palestinian enclave where half the population is under the age of 18.

While battles raged on the ground, Egypt kept up Western-backed efforts to end the 20-day-old war that was launched on the Islamist Hamas in response to rocket fire and that has killed an estimated 600 civilians.

Shortly after UN chief Ban Ki-moon arrived in Israel, a raid hit the main UN compound in Gaza, wounding three employees, setting fire to a warehouse filled with tons of aid and leading the UNRWA refugee agency to halt operations.

“I have conveyed my strong protest and outrage and demanded a full explanation from the defense minister and foreign minister,” Ban told reporters after holding talks with Israeli officials as part of a regional truce tour.

The UN chief, who has for weeks called for a ceasefire in Israel's deadliest offensive ever on Gaza, repeated his call, saying the death toll “currently at nearly 1,100 people” had reached “an unbearable point.”

“We have no more time to lose, we must end the civilian suffering now,” he said.

But Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni insisted the Jewish state would decide how and when to end its massive campaign.

“We are doing our own assessments on a daily basis and according to them, we will decide when to stop,” she said.

In southwestern Gaza, an Israeli strike hit the Al-Quds Hospital in the Tal Al-Hawa neighborhood, where dozens of Israeli tanks rumbled into the streets in the post-dawn hours sparking fierce clashes with Palestinian gunmen.

The flames were contained and no injuries were reported in the hospital, where hundreds of frightened civilians had taken shelter to escape the battles raging just a few hundred meters away.

Israeli strikes continue to set Gaza ablaze

€œI brought the children to the hospital because they were scared at home, but here they are even more terrified,€œ 40-year-old Hossein said as he huddled with his wife and five children in the pediatric ward.

"We can't take this any longer. Look at my children, they're trembling," he said as mothers nearby tried in vain to console their crying children and make them laugh.

An Israeli raid also hit a building housing several media outlets in central Gaza City, wounding two cameramen, in an attack slammed by the Foreign Press Association group for media in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

In all, at least 37 people were killed in Gaza on Thursday, but the exact number of casualties was likely to be much higher as the ongoing clashes blocked ambulances from reaching the wounded, medics said.

Since Israel unleashed its Operation Cast Lead on Dec. 27, at least 1,070 people have been killed and another 5,000 wounded, according to Gaza medics. Among the dead are at least 355 children, 100 women, 117 elderly men and 12 medics, they say.

Israel says 10 Israeli soldiers and three civilians have died as a result of combat or rocket fire.

Palestinian fighters remained defiant, sending nearly 20 rockets and mortars into Israel, without causing injuries.

Despite the raging violence, Ban said: "I believe that elements are in place for the violence to end now."

Israeli envoy Amos Gilad arrived on Thursday in Egypt, which has been spearheading Western-backed ceasefire efforts.

Gilad was to be briefed by Egypt's pointman for Israeli-Palestinian affairs, intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, the day after Hamas presented its "vision" for a ceasefire, limiting its acceptance to the plan's "broad outlines."

"This crucial meeting should last two or three hours, and Gilad should leave this afternoon to inform the Israeli government for them to take a decision," a diplomatic source close to the negotiations told AFP.

"Israel doesn't seem to want to hurry, another shuttle visit could happen to reach an agreement in the context of the Egyptian initiative," the source said.

Although Egyptian and Spanish diplomats said on Wednesday that Hamas had accepted Egypt's truce plan, a Gaza-based leader of the Islamist group said after talks with officials in Cairo that it did not reject its "broad outlines," without accepting the plan outright.

Israel has made stopping its deadliest offensive on Gaza conditional on a complete halt to rocket fire from the territory and a stem to arms smuggling from Egypt into Gaza.

Amid the diplomatic push on Thursday are emergency sessions of the UN General Assembly and Gulf Cooperation Council.

Israel's offensive has sparked widespread concern about a humanitarian crisis in one of the world's most densely populated places where the vast majority of the 1.5 million population depends on foreign aid.

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Load-Date: January 21, 2009

Troops shielded from prosecution; Israel protects soldiers as UN holds preliminary investigation

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

January 26, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 715 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Dateline: AZBET ABADRAPOH, Gaza Strip

Body

The Israeli cabinet decided on Sunday that all military personnel who fought in Gaza would be given state protection from foreign prosecution.

The move comes as the UN gathers preliminary information for possible investigations into whether Israeli soldiers committed war crimes in Gaza earlier this month.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza should know they are safe from various tribunals and Israel will assist them on this front and defend us, just as they defended us with their bodies during the Gaza operation," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Allegations that there may have been improper behaviour by Israel Defence Forces have been made by the UN and agencies such as Amnesty International.

Much of the territory, including most of Gaza City except for government buildings, was not touched by the war. The charges of misconduct centre on at least four communities in central and northern Gaza that bore almost the full brunt of attacks by Israeli ground forces, artillery and warplanes.

One of the areas is Azbet Abadrapoh, just east of the Jabaliya refugee camp. This weekend, as residents combed through the ruins of scores of homes that had been flattened in the neighbourhood, which is about 1.5 kilometres from the Israeli border, Sannaa Awadalluh of the UN's Gaza office and an associate went around with clipboards already thick with notes.

"I am collecting tragic stories to send to our directors for analysis," Awadallah said as a crowd of people swarmed around her and an associate.

"It is important for the UN to know exactly what happened here and also to find out what help is

required now. We are particularly interested in knowing what happened to **women** and children."

Piecing together who did what when and where will be an immense challenge as so many people wanted their narratives chronicled.

Troops shielded from prosecution; Israel protects soldiers as UN holds preliminary investigation

For Awadallah, the most harrowing of the 70 accounts she had recorded so far was the case of a mother who died while breast feeding her baby, who lay beside her corpse for three days before Israel allowed Palestinian medics into the area.

Ambulance driver Khalid Abu Aouk spent many days trying to co-ordinate with Israeli troops to rescue the injured and collect bodies. "They were very unhelpful," was one of his few relatively neutral comments.

Pensioner Ahmed Muhammad Baduan's street looked like an earthquake had hit it. When his wife, Halima, was hit in the head by a piece of shrapnel fired from a tank, he went outside in the next street and told an Israeli, whom he described as a commando, that his wife was wounded inside.

But one of three tanks parked about 50 metres on the far side of his home fired, he said, bringing his already battered house down, killing his wife.

Asked whether Hamas should continue firing rockets into Israel, which was what provoked the war, Baduan replied: "They should stop throwing them because there is hard destruction here, but they do not listen to my speeches."

Israel Defence Forces entered neighbourhoods from which rockets had been launched and did what they had to do there to defend themselves, the IDF has said.

This explanation was sometimes difficult to reconcile with the high level of destruction. Adding to the confusion have been accounts that soldiers gave to Israeli newspapers of how little resistance they encountered from Hamas forces, who mostly seem to have sat the war out.

In El Atatra, where officials from Hamas were compiling lists of the dead this weekend, most of the damage appeared to have been caused by fires.

"The smell was terrible. We could not breathe," said Shahir Khdeir, whose son died in a blaze caused by an explosion that gained strength when he and his neighbours tried to put it out with water. Although he acknowledged he had never had heard of its existence until a few days ago, he said he was sure it was white phosphorous, which is not supposed to be used against civilians.

Israel has vigorously defended the conduct of its troops and has said that the weapons they used conformed with international law.

While launching an investigation into the uses of white phosphorous shells during the 22-day war, the military censor's office has also ordered local and foreign media to blur the faces of army commanders so that they could not be identified and arrested while travelling abroad.

Graphic

Photo: Canwest News Service; Pensioner Ahmed Muhammad Baduan stands before the ruins of his home in Azbet Abadrapoh, in Gaza, where his wife was killed in early January. Baduan wants Hamas to stop firing rockets at Israel. ;

Load-Date: January 26, 2009

UPSHOT; US-Israeli partnership

BusinessWorld

January 15, 2009 Thursday

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Section: Pg. S1/4

Length: 826 words

Byline: Bernardo V. Lopez

Body

The obvious partnership of the superpower and a tiny Middle East nation is mind boggling.

Both Republicans and Democrats in the US support Israel in their Gaza invasion because the rich and powerful American Jewish community, which controls media, Hollywood, hedge funds, investment banks, among other things, gives funds to their campaigns and their cause. It is a "power quid pro quo."

Their political power is dependent on this small rich community. That is why they are but glorified puppets of the power behind their power. They, in their myopia and failure to see the global perspective - they who turn inward to see only the face in the mirror on the wall - are under the mercy of this elite group which holds the destiny of the planet in its hands. This Jewish elite virtually controls not only America but also the world.

That the Obama regime is utterly pro-Israel is obvious. That was why he was silent for a long time. He knew a pro-Israel statement would draw flak. But Obama was shrewd. He knew he could not stay silent forever, so he let the legislators say it for him, so he would not get the flak directly. A late short statement was drowned by legislators proclaiming their support for Israel. Pro-Israel senators and congressmen from both Democrat and Republican camps issued shocking statements that would scandalize non-Americans, who have been condemning Israel for its bloodbath invasion. Even a few Americans who can see through the media mist is privy to the Obama ploy and to this sinister partnership.

Some of the statements of the legislators included blaming **Hamas** for the carnage by the Israelis, telling **Hamas** to stop first their rocket attacks if they want Israel to stop the carnage, placing emphasis on the rocket attack casualties of four and not on the 800-odd Palestinian casualties (as of this writing), a quarter of whom are **women** and children, being silent on growing international noncombatant casualties from Israeli bombings, namely journalists, UN personnel, and paramedics, and finally, vetoing the UN Security Council resolution demanding Israel to stop its invasion.

Already, there are threats of charges of war crimes to be put forward in The Hague. But the Israelis are arrogant, defying UN resolutions, saying the world has no right to decide on security measures in their own lands (the Gaza strip is not theirs), continuing with the bloodbath in spite of a worldwide call for them to stop their invasion. They are undaunted because they know America is behind them.

The goal of the overkill invasion is to force the Palestinians to condemn **Hamas** and stop its rocket attacks. This logic is pitiable because the result is the exact opposite. The carnage is prompting people to rally behind **Hamas**.

UPSHOT US - Israeli partnership

The Israelis are strengthening their enemy and catalyzing future retaliations. How can you support an enemy who is killing people all around you?

The US-Israeli partnership actually antedates both Obama and the Palestinian conflict. The Jewish tycoons became rapidly and intensely wealthy by funding both sides of World War I. They came to America and started taking over the economy. Today, they control media, filmdom, banking, large corporations and have people in Washington, the State Department, the National Security Agency, etc. The geopolitical partnership of the US with Israel is monolithic and invincible because it is the ultimate quid pro quo of power for power. Nobody can disrupt this powerful partnership. Getting a non-pro-Israel American president on the throne is virtually impossible. The American Jewish community will simply pour massive election funds on his rival. They have the capability to choose the president. Even if a non-pro-Israel president wins, he will be roasted at the stake by the Legislative and Judicial branches of government.

It is a repeat of history. The Christian Crusaders and Muslim Saracens were the giants who hemmed in the tiny Jews. They massacred Jews throughout history. But the Jews had a secret formula - participation in the ruling class of their enemies. The Jews participated in almost all powerful monarchies of the Middle Ages, Christian or Muslim. They participated in the Arab renaissance and the Western industrial revolution. It was like Moses being in the inner circle of the Pharaohs. The key to this success was participating without being absorbed. Throughout history, the Jews were conquered but their culture and religion remained intact. It is something they learned from the days of the Pharaohs. Whereas other conquered races are absorbed by the conquerors, whereas Filipinos became Christians, the Jews always maintained their culture and religion within other powerful cultures.

That the US-Israeli partnership will finally cause World War III is not impossible. By arming Israel to the teeth and using it as a wedge to pry oil from the Arabs, the superpower has triggered a runaway arms race that can lead to Armageddon.

eastwind_777@yahoo.com

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

End of Document

When it comes to Hamas and Israel, both have failed to listen to the UN's call for a ceasefire so I don't see Swansea council will make a difference ; 'Councils should concentrate on local services' the UN's call for a ceasefire so I don't see Swansea council will make a difference

The Western Mail
January 16, 2009 Friday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 19

Length: 572 words

Byline: Robin Turner

Body

WELSH councils were advised yesterday to concentrate on local services - such as collecting bins - instead of passing motions on global issues like ending poverty and the crisis in Gaza.

The Taxpayers' Alliance branded the idealistic motions a "waste of time and taxpayers' money" after details emerged of motions at one council meeting this week.

At their January full council meeting, Swansea councillors were debating notices of motion from nine Labour councillors, including group leader David Phillips, veteran campaigner Alan Lloyd and former mayor Robert Francis-Davies.

One motion called on the council to urge the Government to end the "dark and dangerous" battles going on in Gaza.

Another demanded the council begin talks with South Wales Police over the setting up of emergency shelters and a 24-hour hotline for trafficked people, and join the national "Not For Sale" campaign against trafficking.

A third motion asked that the council joins a national "stand up and take action against poverty" campaign.

But the motions, variants of which can be found in council chambers across Wales, were criticised yesterday.

Taxpayers' Alliance campaigns director Mark Wallace said: "No matter how laudable these motions may be, the councillors were elected to look after local problems.

"When it comes to **Hamas** and Israel, both sides have failed to listen to the UN's call for a ceasefire so I don't see that Swansea Council is going to make a difference. It's just going to waste taxpayers' time and money when they should be concentrating on solving local problems."

Independent Swansea councillor Ioan Richard accused fellow councillors of turning monthly council sessions into "a second rate polytechnic students' union meeting".

When it comes to Hamas and Israel , both have failed to listen to the UN 's call for a ceasefire so I don't see Swansea council will make a difference 'Councils

The Swansea Valley councillor said: "The sentiments in the motions are good ones that would be very hard to argue against. But shouldn't local councils be concentrating on ensuring the bins are collected or that planning applications are looked at?"

Part of the Labour group motion on Gaza read: "The situation in Gaza is a very dangerous and dark moment in both Palestine and Israel's histories.

"This council calls on the UK Government to redouble its efforts and, building on the links that already exist, urges both sides to start the dialogue that will end the carnage."

Part of its motion on human trafficking reads: "This council resolves to adopt a Not For Sale policy and on behalf of the council, the leader and lord mayor should sign the Council of Europe's fight against trafficking in human beings which the UK Government has already ratified.

"It also calls for talks with South Wales Police to establish for trafficked people, especially women forced into prostitution, "walk - in shelters" and secure long-term refuges plus medical and psychological assistance and 24-hour telephone emergency hotlines."

In response to criticism of the motions, Swansea Labour Party leader David Phillips said: "I am really amazed Coun Richard is raising objections to us wanting to do our bit to help."

His labour colleague Alan Lloyd, a founder president of the United Cities Local Government Campaign, said: "People will be shocked that a member of this council could speak out against this kind of humanitarian campaigning that we can all play a part in."

A spokeswoman for the Welsh Local Government Association said: "It is up to each council how it runs its meeting agendas."

Graphic

CONFLICT: An Israeli soldier stands on top of a tank at a staging area near Israel's border with Gaza prior a combat mission. The Taxpayers Alliance argues local councils should stick to local issues

Load-Date: January 16, 2009

Worldview: Mideast needs a more engaged U.S. to help broker peace

The Philadelphia Inquirer

January 18, 2009 Sunday

CITY-D Edition

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Section: CURRENTS; Inq Currents; Pg. D01

Length: 798 words

Byline: By Trudy Rubin

Inquirer Columnist

Body

At Madame Tussauds wax museum in Amsterdam, the figure of President Bush with bags packed has already been placed outside the building, while a waxen Barack Obama watches through a window.

The symbolism is clear: Much of the world eagerly awaits the change of U.S. administration.

Nowhere is that change needed more urgently than in the Middle East.

The carnage in Gaza - where Palestinian women and children have died by the hundreds as Israel tries to stop Hamas from rocketing its cities - is a grim epitaph for U.S. policies that made a bad neighborhood worse.

So it is welcome news that President-elect Barack Obama says "starting on day one, we . . . are going to be immediately engaged in the Middle East peace process." Such intense U.S. engagement is crucial. Without it, Israel's invasion of Gaza could have consequences that threaten its very future - and the region as a whole.

Failing a new U.S. strategy, the Gaza war could mark the final blow to the concept of a "two-state solution." That's shorthand for an Israeli and Palestinian state living peacefully side by side.

You may think this idea is a fantasy, but reflect on the alternative: a "one-state solution," in which Israel keeps control of more than three million Palestinian Arabs. Israel would then face two grim choices: Offer Palestinians the vote and soon lose its Jewish majority, or keep ruling millions of Palestinians by force and become a South Africa-type state.

Although Bush endorsed a two-state solution, he did little to promote it, letting the peace process languish until the end of his second term. Bush categorically backed Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, whose unilateral withdrawal from Gaza strengthened Hamas and undercut those who wanted peace talks.

The administration was solely focused on Iraq, even as Gaza became a virtual prison camp with all borders controlled by Israel. Nor did the administration press Israel to cease expanding settlements on the West Bank.

Worldview: Mideast needs a more engaged U.S. to help broker peace

Under such conditions, Palestinians turned toward **Hamas** - which at least provided social services. Young Palestinians and intellectuals now talk increasingly about the "one-state solution." Meantime, **Hamas**' rocketing of Israeli towns has further soured Israelis on the idea of two states.

So Obama will take office as the very idea of two states is dying.

The Gaza war has badly undermined those moderate Arabs who still support the concept, such as Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas, and the rulers in Jordan and Egypt.

It's nonsense to believe that Israel can forcibly install Abbas back in charge of Gaza; Abbas would be denounced as a puppet. The Gaza war will also make it harder to revive the 2002 Arab peace plan, which calls for all Arab states to recognize Israel in return for a two-state formula.

And the fighting also has threatened promising mediation by Turkey that had brought Israel and Syria together in renewed peace talks. Embarrassed by the Gaza war, Turkey has suspended the talks.

Yet the arrival of Obama provides a brief window in which a serious peace process might get restarted. He will have to use all his smarts and charisma to restore hope for change in the region and dispel suspicions he's biased.

He must convince skeptical Palestinians and Israelis that Mideast peace isn't a mirage, so they'll vote for peacemakers in upcoming elections. He must also persuade members of Congress not to interfere.

Some of the best advice on how to proceed is offered in a small book called *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East* by Daniel Kurtzer and Scott B. Lasensky (read excerpts at www.usip.org). Kurtzer, a former peace negotiator and U.S. ambassador to Egypt and Israel, is on Obama's short list to become a top Middle East adviser, and I hope he gets the job.

The pair stress that the president must make clear to Americans why Arab-Israeli peacemaking is a priority in a post-9/11 world. Rather than the passivity of the last eight years, the U.S. role should be proactive. It should aim for a final settlement and not get caught up in incremental steps.

The United States should involve other regional and international players in the process, backing Israel-Syria talks, for example, which were long opposed by the Bush team. And U.S. officials must press Israel to meet its commitments, like freezing settlement-building, even as they press Palestinians to cease violence.

Most crucial, the president must be fully behind any policies pursued by his secretary of state or special Mideast emissaries. Despite his full plate, this process won't move without him.

There's still a chance to rescue Mideast policy from eight years of fumbles, and Obama can't afford to miss that chance.

E-mail Trudy Rubin at trubin@phillynews.com.

See **TRUDY RUBIN** on D3

Load-Date: January 18, 2009

As Israeli Premier's Time in Office Nears End, Captive Soldier's Saga Gains Urgency

The New York Times

March 9, 2009 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 929 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

For the family of the captive Israeli soldier Cpl. Gilad Shalit, the waning days of the Olmert government represent a time of dwindling hope and growing despair.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has as little as two weeks left in office as his probable successor tries to form a new government. By then, Corporal Shalit, who turned 22 in captivity, will have been a hostage of Hamas for about 1,000 days.

The parents and friends of Corporal Shalit are pressing Mr. Olmert to clear his desk, and his conscience, by reaching an 11th-hour deal for the soldier's return.

"We think there is still a last chance before the prime minister ends his term," Noam Shalit, Corporal Shalit's father, said Sunday as he and the rest of his family began a sit-in at a protest tent near the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem.

"With a new government we do not know what will happen," he said. "They could do a reset and start another three-year nightmare."

The Shalit saga has gripped the Israeli soul. In a small country where 18-year-olds are conscripted into the army, complete strangers feel intimately connected with the Shalits. But people here also remember the names of youths who were blown up on buses by terrorists, and they are debating the morality of releasing those convicted of such attacks in exchange for Corporal Shalit, part of a list of prisoners Hamas wants freed.

On Sunday, across the street from the Shalits' protest tent, families of terrorism victims began a vigil of their own. They set up placards on the sidewalk outside the former Cafe Moment, where a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up about seven years ago, killing 11 Israelis and wounding 54.

One of those opposing the release of the convicted Palestinians is Yossi Mendellevich, an engineer whose son Yuval died at the age of 13 in a bus bombing in Haifa in March 2003.

As Israeli Premier's Time in Office Nears End, Captive Soldier's Saga Gains Urgency

"For a father to bury a boy of 13 and a half -- it should be the other way round," Mr. Mendellevich said. "His voice was changing, he was getting the beginnings of a mustache, and he got killed in a most brutal way."

Mr. Mendellevich argues that Israel has not fully examined other options for freeing Corporal Shalit.

"It is clear that if Gilad Shalit was my son, I'd be ready to give back Tel Aviv," he said. "But we have to also think of the parents of the kids who could yet be killed by those to be released."

Corporal Shalit was seized from Israeli territory by Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in a cross-border raid and was dragged into Gaza, wounded, in June 2006. He has been allowed no visits by the Red Cross. The last sign that he is alive was a handwritten letter to his parents last June.

Despite the pain involved, many Israelis across the political spectrum seem ready to release the Palestinian prisoners to secure his return.

"From a personal perspective," said Yael Barkai, 52, a teachers' trainer and a mother of four from Pardes Hanna in northern Israel, "everyone here has or had or will have a child in the army, or a cousin or a nephew or niece."

Ms. Barkai said she and her sister, Ruthi, 48, were bothered by Corporal Shalit's fate, to the point of dreaming about it at night. Feeling the need to do something, they decided to set up the Jerusalem protest tent six months ago.

The sisters e-mailed their friends, who passed the message on. Within five hours, Ms. Barkai said, they had replies from 300 Israelis prepared to sit in the tent in two-hour shifts from morning to night, seven days a week.

With Israel balking at releasing all the prisoners on the Hamas list and negotiations apparently stuck, members of the Shalit family came from their small Galilee village to join the volunteers on the sidewalk here in a last-ditch attempt to get their son freed.

Drivers honked their horns in solidarity, and children passing by in fancy dress costumes for the Purim holiday joined in a chant.

Mr. Olmert spoke out over the weekend against the public displays of sympathy for Corporal Shalit, saying they only raised Hamas's expectations and raised the price for his release.

But that did not stop a 15-year-old girl from Tel Aviv, who gave her name as Shir, from showing up at the tent on Sunday to show her support; nor Yehudit Mahlu, 72, from the Negev Desert city of Beersheba; nor Yaakov Milo, 57, from a village near Eilat, at Israel's southernmost point.

"Three years is enough," Mr. Milo said. "Otherwise, we'll end up with another Ron Arad."

Mr. Milo was referring to an Israeli airman whose plane was shot down over Lebanon in 1986. Mr. Arad was taken alive, but negotiations for his release collapsed in 1988. He never came back.

Indictment Looms for Ex-Leader

JERUSALEM -- Israel's attorney general announced plans on Sunday to indict the country's former president, Moshe Katsav, on charges of rape and indecent assault against women who worked for him when he was the tourism minister and president.

Mr. Katsav, who stepped down from the presidency in mid-2007, first faced an accusation of indecent assault in 2006 when he said he was being blackmailed by a former female employee. After her story was made public, other women came forward and the case grew more serious with the addition of the rape charge. Mr. Katsav then struck a plea bargain under which he would pay compensation and admit his guilt to the lesser charges in exchange for the dropping of the rape charge.

As Israeli Premier's Time in Office Nears End, Captive Soldier's Saga Gains Urgency

But in a turnaround in April, he pulled out of the deal, saying he preferred to stand trial. The original charges have now been restored.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: An Israeli with a painting of Cpl. Gilad Shalit on Sunday in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is being pressed to reach a deal for the soldier's return. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RINA CASTELNUOVO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: March 9, 2009

End of Document

Column: Boycotts hinder civilians, not their governments

University Wire

March 4, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 Daily Trojan via U-Wire

Length: 1055 words

Byline: By Arie Warshel, Daily Trojan; SOURCE: USC

Dateline: LOS ANGELES

Body

On April 25, 2005, the British Association of University Teachers voted in favor of the boycott of two Israeli Universities under the claim that these universities are "directly involved with the occupation of Palestinian territories contrary to United Nations resolutions." This preposterous decision was reversed after an outcry from both the international community (and, to their credit, many members of the AUT). Yet, in the Feb. 17 edition of the Daily Trojan, David Lloyd continued to champion the repeat of a similarly shameful boycott in the United States, at the University of South Carolina.

Lloyd asserted that "faculty who criticize Israel's policies, or challenge the political philosophy of Zionism and its disastrous consequences for the Palestinians are subject to insult, intimidation and even outright censorship." We wonder where Lloyd has observed such a dynamic, because in our (and others') experience, the opposite has been true. In fact, the situation UCLA professor Judea Pearl described in a Feb. 18 article in The Jewish Journal - "Colleagues told me about lecturers whose appointments were terminated, professors whose promotion committees received 'incriminating' letters, and about the impossibility of revealing one's pro-Israel convictions without losing grants, editorial board membership, or invitation to panels and conferences. And all, literally all, swore me into strict secrecy - we have entered the era of 'the new Maranos'" - is sadly much closer to what we have observed.

Also, we are disturbed by his comment about "threadbare accusations that to be critical of Israel is to be anti-Semitic." We would like the reader to ponder for a moment what connection exists between Israel's self-defense actions in the middle east and protesters in Copenhagen screaming that they want to "kill all Jews;" those in Belfast surrounding and menacingly harassing an Israeli-owned mall kiosk, which, considering the violence of the angry mob, must have terrified the staff; police having to break into a private home in Duisburg and tearing down a flag displaying a Star of David to appease stone and knife throwing protestors. Such motifs have recently repeated themselves at "protests against Israel" all over the world, in places as varied as London, Los Angeles and Caracas. Of course, criticizing Israel is not, in itself, anti-Semitic, but this does not change the fact that many people that do so are - and to deny this fact at a time when, according to experts, anti-Semitism has reached its highest point since the end of WWII is not just distasteful but also, frankly, quite dangerous.

On this note, Dr. Lloyd talks about the "insidious racism of the latter accusation, which seeks to identify Judaism with the 19th century European nationalist philosophy of Zionism, and all Jews with Israel" - identifying Zionism with racism is a naked anti-Semitic idea. That is, Zionism may be prejudice because it seeks self-autonomy for one and only one group; but this is precisely what makes it identical to nationalist movements in every country, whether it is

Column: Boycotts hinder civilians, not their governments

the Anglo-Christian nationalism that led to the "creation" of the United States, or that of Palestinians, predicted upon Islamic identity.

Similarly, while the situation in Gaza is horrific (and we do not want to belittle the suffering of the Gazans, at the moment mainly at the hands of Hamas), it is incomparable with South African apartheid, and to make such a comparison insults the dignity of those who suffered under apartheid. May we remind the reader that within Israel, Arabs have full citizenship rights and sit in the Israeli parliament. The reverse does not hold true in Gaza under Hamas, or in fact any fundamentalist Islamic theocracy. We encourage the reader if he or she so wishes to do some research on the status of women, for example (among others) under the hard line interpretations of Islam. That is an actual apartheid.

Hamas has violently taken control of this area, forcing out the comparatively moderate Fatah, and its ultimate goal is not just the destruction of Israel but also the creation of a hard-line Islamic dictatorship (which, if Iran and Afghanistan are anything to go by, it may well succeed in), as demonstrated by the orgy of violence it has perpetrated against its own people during and since the end of the most recent Israeli-Gazan conflict. The situation in Gaza is a ticking time bomb, and those who suffer most are the Gazans. That is the true humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which is hard to realize if one is blinded by hatred for Israel.

Finally, it appears that Lloyd is so full of bias that, while he suggests that Israeli academic institutions should be boycotted because they did not protest the "destruction of Palestinian educational infrastructure," there is no mention of the fact that Hamas missiles have managed for the first time to reach as far as Be'er Sheva, the largest city of the Negev, hitting, among other targets, a kindergarten, as well as forcing one of Israel's major universities (Ben-Gurion University) to suspend all classes due to the missile attacks. He criticized the silence of the Israeli academic institutions, but there was no protest by him or people like him about the missile attacks on Israeli universities. His argument about attacks on Palestinian Universities also conveniently neglects to mention the fact that the institutions targeted have been the most intense focus of missile production, for the sole purpose of terrorizing Israeli cities such as Be'er Sheva. We do not believe that Lloyd would have tolerated missiles from across the border in Los Angeles for one minute, but it appears to be OK for Israel to have to.

Now, perhaps the real reason for the boycott idea is the hope that it will first choke the Israeli education system and then, in turn, Israel as a whole, leading eventually to a hard-line Islamic republic (which is the aim of Hamas). After all, surely Lloyd is aware that regardless of what one's opinions of Israel are, in practice, boycotts and sanctions tend to only make the average individual suffer and usually have little impact on governments. Thus, Lloyd may argue that his proposition is not an anti-Semitic idea, but, if led to its eventual conclusion, it would surely please any anti-Semite.

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Load-Date: March 5, 2009

'These children are being shot in the head, I think this tells us something'; Israel denied that it has targeted civilians, but doctors in Egypt are treating large numbers of Gaza youngsters with bullets in the brain

The Sunday Telegraph (London)

January 18, 2009

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The Sunday Telegraph

Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 33

Length: 946 words

Byline: Topaz Amooore in Cairo and Yolande Knell in El-Arish

Body

DOCTORS OPERATING a brain-scanning machine at an Egyptian hospital near Gaza have been almost overwhelmed by the number of Palestinian children arriving with bullet wounds to the head.

On just one day last week, staff at the El-Arish hospital in Sinai were called to perform CAT scans on a nine-year-old, two 10-year-olds and a 14-year-old, each of whom had a bullet lodged in their brain after coming under fire during the Israeli ground assault on Gaza.

Among them was nine-year-old Anas Haref, who arrived with a bullet in her brain. Dr Ahmed Yahia, head of the trauma team, broke the news to her grandmother that the girl was not expected to live. "The bullet has damaged a big part of her brain," said Dr Yahia. "It came in, hit the skull wall and then changed direction downwards."

Dr Yahia, a professor of neurosurgery, believes that the bullet was shot from close range. "If it changes course inside the brain it has high velocity and its penetrative force is also high," he said. "I can't precisely decide whether these children are being shot at as a target, but in some cases the bullet comes from the front of the head and goes towards the back, so I think the gun has been directly pointed at the child."

Israeli officials continued to deny yesterday that their soldiers had deliberately targeted civilians, blaming **Hamas** fighters for sheltering in the houses of ordinary Gaza residents and using them as human shields.

But there is no disputing the scale of the suffering in Gaza or its heavy impact on the young.

The United Nations has counted 346 Palestinian children killed since the Israeli assault began, while **Hamas**, the radical Islamic movement that Israel has been trying to dislodge, says there are 410 children among the 1,201 Palestinian dead. Two of these were killed yesterday when an Israeli tank shelled a United Nations-run school in the north of Gaza.

An even larger number of children have been wounded - 1,630 according to **Hamas** - and a disturbing number of them have suffered serious injuries to the head.

'These children are being shot in the head, I think this tells us something' Israel denied that it has targeted civilians, but doctors in Egypt are treating lar....

Hundreds of victims of Israel's three-week campaign in Gaza have been transferred across the Egyptian border at Rafah for urgent treatment. They are seen first at El-Arish, nearly 40 miles from the border.

Dr Ayman Abd al-Hadi, a medical team leader at the hospital, said: "We've had one child with two bullets in the head and nowhere else. We think this shows something."

He praised the medical teams in Gaza for managing to save so many lives despite a shortage of staff, supplies and equipment.

"But only a very small percentage of children can survive bullet wounds to the head," he said. "If we see three children here who have survived bullet wounds to the head, there are probably 97 still in Gaza who have not."

Doctors at the small but well equipped hospital do not attempt to remove the bullets, but perform a full assessment and attempt to stabilise their patients before sending them to hospitals in Cairo, and in some cases abroad, for more complex treatment. Of those who survive, few will recover fully. Most child victims of such injuries are likely to be paralysed for life.

Other children have other horrific injuries - such as Samer, not yet three years old, who was shot in the back outside her home in Gaza, and had to wait three hours for medical help to reach her.

Her uncle, Hassan Abedrabo, said that Samer was hit by an Israeli bullet that damaged her spinal cord and left her paralysed. Her sisters, aged two and six, were shot dead in the same close-range attack as they tried to escape tanks bombarding their home in Jabaliya, north of Gaza City.

Their mother was hit twice but survived; Mr Abedrabo said that their grandmother, waving a white flag at the front of the terrified family procession, lost an arm to another bullet.

Samer has now been transferred to a Belgian hospital but the Egyptian doctors who treated her in El-Arish believe she will never walk again. Samer thinks she knows what happened to her. "The Jewish shot me," she said in Arabic. "And they killed my little sister."

Mr Abedrabo insisted that there were no Hamas fighters in their home when Israeli tanks opened fire last week. He is a supporter of Hamas's bitter political rival Fatah, led by the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas.

"The tanks opened fire on the fourth storey," said Mr Abedrabo. "About 30 people were sheltering on the ground floor as the tanks began pounding the third floor; then the second; then the first.

"I speak Hebrew, so I shouted to the Israelis. The officer said, 'Come out' so the women went first, waving a white flag. They opened fire from just 15 metres away. How could they not tell they were children? They could see them."

The hospital's psychiatrists, who see every patient, were particularly concerned about a 13-year-old boy who lay trapped, terribly wounded by shrapnel, for three days beneath the rubble of his home. Other family members lay dead around him, and he saw dogs begin to gnaw their bodies.

As international pressure grew on both sides to agree a ceasefire last week, there was little sign within Israel of public opinion turning against the campaign.

The country's Association for Civil Rights launched a protest over the plight of Palestinian children by taking out a full-page, obituary-style advertisement in the daily newspaper Haaretz.

Nirit Moskovitz, a spokesman for the group, said: "Israeli society needs to be reminded that actual people and innocent children are getting hurt. "

The doctors in El-Arish cannot independently verify the accounts given by Gazan victims. But nothing they have seen discredits claims by civilians that they have been deliberately targeted.

'These children are being shot in the head, I think this tells us something' Israel denied that it has targeted civilians, but doctors in Egypt are treating lar....

Load-Date: January 18, 2009

End of Document

**A Bias Against Israel Enough Is Enough Objectivity Sought Qualifications
Missing 'Double' Ceremony Left Bad Impression A Vote Against Pitts**

Sunday News (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)

January 18, 2009 Sunday

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Section: P; Pg. 3

Length: 1015 words

Byline: Letters

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

Body

GAZA STRUGGLE

When I first read Mr. Smart's column [Jan. 11], I thought he made several reasonable observations on the conflict in Gaza. He, like much of the American media, tries to be "neutral" but in fact shows bias against Israel.

Israel's logic in attacking Hamas in Gaza is clear: Eight years of attacks on civilians with mortar and rocket fire is enough. Hamas' ability to keep launching such attacks has to be destroyed.

Hamas' charter calls for the destruction of Israel, and it purposely attacks civilians. Its members, like many terrorists, are fundamentally cowards and hide behind civilian shields, which is a war crime. How is it that Israel is scolded for destroying schools, but nobody protests the fact that Hamas was storing and launching rockets from those schools? Israel does not want to re-occupy Gaza or even to destroy Hamas; it wants the rockets and other attacks on its people to stop.

How does one make peace with people who view dead children only as public relations tools? Golda Meir once said "Peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us."

Peter Whitcopf, Manheim Township

The war in Gaza is enormously distressing. The loss of life, the thousands wounded, the destruction of an urban, refugee city is a ghastly beginning to the new year.

The one glimmer of hope has been the very short truces between the combatants. An end to combat is possible. We strongly urge an immediate cease-fire and an immediate end to the blockade of Gaza.

But more is necessary. There needs to be immediate negotiations for a longer-term resolution of this 70-year-old conflict. Gaza should become the opening wedge for a permanent and comprehensive peace. Once again, it has been made clear that Israeli security and Palestinian liberation are inseparable.

Columnist Thomas Friedman rightly observed that Gaza is another "version of struggles being played out since 1948."

A Bias Against Israel Enough Is Enough Objectivity Sought Qualifications Missing 'Double' Ceremony Left Bad Impression A Vote Against Pitts

The new administration in Washington has pledged change. One place to begin is to bring its full diplomatic influence in concert with other nations to support a cease-fire and to join in active negotiations for a comprehensive peace. This will be possible if the American people say in emphatic terms, "Enough is enough."

John A. Lapp, Akron

Mr. Lapp is writing for the Middle East Interest Group of the Lancaster Interchurch Peace Witness.

I suggest Rabbi Jack Paskoff [letter to editor, Jan. 11] read Robert Fisk's 2005 book on the Mideast troubles. I suggest he at least think a bit about how the Palestinians feel about Israel and why they feel that way. Objectivity demands it.

Willis Ratzlaff, Lancaster

PERFORMING MARRIAGES

Your editorial "Hold our peace?" [Jan. 11] raises an interesting question. Exactly what does a person have to know to be able to perform a marriage?

A borough mayor can do it with no training in any religious doctrine. All he has to know is how to get elected. A captain of a ship can do it [editor's note: only a few] and needs considerable training in ship handling but none in politics or religion. A minister may know absolutely nothing about either sailing or politics.

The legislation does not seem to address necessary qualifications. It only states who cannot perform a marriage.

There must be many couples who would find it very meaningful to have their ceremony performed by a teacher, a boss, a grandparent, or even a respected friend. What could be wrong with this?

It's this type of legislation that gives strength to the argument that the Legislature isn't busy enough, so its members get involved in issues that don't really matter.

John Matthews, Conestoga

I read the editorial "Hold our peace?" [Jan. 11] with great interest. I think that the [proposed legislation] does not go far enough.

I suggest the Legislature pass a bill requiring that all legal aspects of a marriage be performed by an employee of the state (e.g., judge, county clerk, mayor, etc.). If a couple would then like to have their marriage "blessed" or "recognized" by their church, they could have their clergyperson do so. Many European countries do it this way and thus keep clear lines of separation between church and state.

The problem with the legislation is that it will not keep up with the changes in society. What if an online ordination required a one-year course of online study? Two years? Three years? Where is the line drawn? What is the definition of a "church"? The bill will require that with every development in society Pennsylvania will have to rewrite the law.

Let the state handle the legal aspects of marriage, and let the church handle the religious aspects of marriage.

The Rev. J. Patrick Peters, Rector, St. Paul Episcopal Church, Columbia

Editor's note: In its editorial last week, the Sunday News erred in crediting state Rep. Katie True as co-sponsor of a current bill to regulate clergy who may perform marriages in Pennsylvania. House Bill 1099, introduced in 2007 by Rep. Stan Saylor, of York, died at the end of last year's legislative session.

I am appalled regarding your article on the Kurdish practice of female circumcision. This article was totally unnecessary. I am sure the human rights activists are well aware of this archaic practice. The picture of the child

A Bias Against Israel Enough Is Enough Objectivity Sought Qualifications Missing 'Double' Ceremony Left Bad
Impression A Vote Against Pitts

crying left a bad impression on my mind for the whole evening. I wonder how many children asked their parents why she was crying. This article was a new low in sensationalist reporting.

Kathy Simpson, Willow Street

POLITICS

It amazes me that Congressman Joe Pitts continues to be re-elected.

After reading "How They Voted" [Jan. 11], there isn't a woman in Lancaster County who should cast a vote for him.

1. Pay-bias suits: giving plaintiffs greater standing to file suits alleging pay discrimination - Pitts voted no!
2. Wage discrimination: strengthening the federal law that bans pay discrimination based on gender -Pitts voted no!

This clearly tells me that Mr. Pitts doesn't care about the working public, especially women. Come on, women. Let's work (at the next election) to find a candidate who more accurately voices the opinion of constituents.

Mary Jane Kruger, Strasburg

Load-Date: January 19, 2009

Are you proud to be a leftist?

The Jerusalem Post

March 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 1923 words

Byline: Caroline B. Glick

Highlight: Our World

Body

In an article in interview with Teheran Times two weeks ago, Norman Finklestein, the notorious Hizbullah and **Hamas** supporter and all-purpose anti-Semite, called Israel a "vandal state," and "insane state," a "terrorist state," and a "satanic state." Last week Finklestein was the keynote speaker at both Emory University and Fordham University during their weeklong annual anti-Israel hate festivals.

Speaking to a cheering crowd at a packed auditorium on Emory's Atlanta campus, Finklestein claimed that Israel conducted its recent Operation Cast Lead in Gaza for two reasons. These did not include **Hamas**'s deliberate targeting of Israeli civilians, **Hamas**'s alliance with Iran, its charter that calls for the physical eradication of the Jewish people, its illegal imprisonment of Israeli hostage Gilad Schalit, or its decision to renew its attacks against Israel after a six month period of relative restraint.

In Finklestein's view, the first reason Israel launched Operation Cast Lead was because **Hamas** had begun expressing interest in peace. In his words, "**Hamas** were being too moderate, too reasonable. They wanted a diplomatic settlement to the conflict. To Israel, this is a recurring nightmare." The second reason that Finklestein alleged that Israel launched its offensive was because, well, Israel is just plain mean. As he put it, the operation was Israel's way of "reminding the Arabs who were [sic.] in charge." It was an attempt to "restore the Arab world's fear of Israel." Finklestein cited an unnamed "chief military analyst" to support his claim that Israel conducted a "massacre" in Gaza and did so with malice of forethought.

According to Emory's student paper, for his libelous, wholly fallacious remarks, Finklestein received a prolonged standing ovation.

In 40 university campuses throughout the US and Canada as well as in Europe and South America, last week students marked what Palestinian terror apologists have dubbed "Israel Apartheid Week." This was the seventh such week in the US, and the fifth in Canada.

In the lead up to this annual Israel vilification week, pro-Israel students were physically assaulted at San Francisco State University and at York University in Canada by their anti-Israel counterparts. In both cases, university officials opened disciplinary proceedings against the pro-Israel students.

At SFSU, two students were arrested by police for assaulting college Republicans who held an anti-**Hamas** rally. The two - from the campus's Palestinian student club and its Socialist union - now insist not only that the charges

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against them be dropped, but that the university re-educate its students to ensure that they understand that criticizing Hamas and other genocidal terror groups is a form of prohibited hate-speech.

THE LIBELOUS assertion that Israel - the only free, pluralistic, liberal democracy in the Middle East - is analogous to apartheid South Africa first took hold at the 2001 UN-sponsored anti-Jewish diplomatic pogrom at Durban, South Africa. In the action plan approved by the various non-governmental organizations that participated in the conference, activists were called on to bring about the international demonization of Israel as a racist state, and of Zionism - the Jewish national liberation movement - as a form of racism.

When Israel Apartheid Week was launched the next year, many local Jewish student and community activists in the US and Canada demanded that university authorities ban the clearly bigoted event from their campuses. To their chagrin, university presidents and administrators would do no such thing. Claiming that doing so would restrict academic freedom, the propaganda war against the Jewish state went forward and grew. And, in its wake, the freedom of pro-Israel students on college campuses throughout the West has become increasingly constricted and threatened.

Both through formal speech codes barring criticism of anti-Israel propaganda and violence, and through academic and physical intimidation of pro-Israel students by an increasingly vocal and aggressive coalition of pro- Palestinian professors, Muslim and leftist students, Israel's supporters on university campuses find themselves under assault. Today, seven years after the Durban Conference, Israel Apartheid Week has become a mainstay on the academic calendar, nearly as taken for granted as Homecoming Week and mid-terms.

The use of the term "apartheid" to describe Israel was a deliberate move on the part of Israel's enemies. It was aimed at neutralizing the capacity of Israel's supporters to defend the Jewish state and attack its enemies. Case in point is the campus debate which preceded Israel Apartheid Week at the University of Toronto. The student paper published two topical opinion pieces on the upcoming events. One asserted that Israel is an apartheid regime. The other argued that Israel isn't an apartheid regime.

On the surface, this seems fair enough. But it is nothing of the sort. Israel is the only free country and free society in the region. Pinning its defenders down by confining discussion of the region to the pros and cons of a complete lie serves to only obfuscate the depravity of Israel's enemies, not to enlighten the public about Israel.

While Israel provides the full rights of citizenship to its Arab minority, Jews are denied the rights of citizenship in every Arab League member state, and the Palestinians' fundamental demand is that no Jew be permitted to live in a future Palestinian state.

Then too, while Israeli women enjoy full equality under the law, women and girls in the Arab and Muslim world are systematically subjugated and enslaved. Muslim men who wantonly murder their wives, sisters, mothers and daughters can expect to receive little to no punishment for their crimes. The same holds for men who abuse their female relations. For their part, women in the Muslim world have either no legal rights to citizenship and civil rights or those rights are severely limited.

Gays, blacks, migrant workers, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists are systematically persecuted for their sexual preferences, their skin color and their religious beliefs. Even dogs feel the wrath of these societies where, since they are considered "unclean," children and adults alike routinely engage in their torture and killing.

But under the full protection of self-described liberal university professors, administrators and presidents, and due to the indifference of groups like the World Council of Churches, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Organization of Women, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, anti-Israel propagandists have been allowed to co-opt the language of liberty to advance the political aims of terrorists who aim to destroy liberty.

THE ACTIVE and passive support conferred on anti- Israel leftists and Muslims by these officials and groups has provided them with the ideological cover to take their activism to the next level: anti-Jewish violence aimed at

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intimidating states, universities, businesses and private organizations into cutting off all ties to Israel. Evidence of the success of this campaign is rife throughout Europe today.

In just one notable instance, for the past week Israeli tennis players, Amir Haddad and Andy Ram have been suffering the consequences of the Left's collusion with these anti-Jewish groups in Sweden. Haddad and Ram competed in the Davis Cup tennis championships in Malmo, Sweden. In an article in Yediot Ahronot on Sunday, Ram wrote, "In my entire athletic career, I have never before experienced such hatred and such a mixing of sports with politics." In spite of repeated entreaties by Israel, Swedish authorities refused to move the games from Malmo to Stockholm. With its enormous Muslim population, in recent years Malmo has been the site of some of the worst Islamic violence against non- Muslims - and particularly Jews, women and girls - in the Western world.

Due to threats of violence against Ram and Haddad, Swedish authorities barred fans from attending their tennis matches. As they played their opening match in an empty stadium on Saturday, thousands of violent Muslims and leftists rioted against police and attempted to break down the barriers protecting the stadium with the stated aim of killing Ram and Haddad.

The protesters claim that their desire to murder Israeli tennis players is due to Operation Cast Lead. But this is pure propaganda. Their desire to murder Ram and Haddad stems not from Israel's military actions to defend its citizens from murder, but from the protesters' hatred of the Jewish state. And that hatred stems from the same source as their misogyny, their hatred of the US and their support for the likes of Osama bin Laden and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

A 2005 Swedish government report indicated that in 2004, incidents of rape had increased 50 percent throughout the country. A Malmo police report noted that 68 percent of the rapists were minorities. As Islamic scholar Robert Spencer has noted, Islamic teaching views rape as a legitimate act against women and girls who behave in "non-Islamic" ways. In much of Scandinavia as well as in Muslim neighborhoods in France, women have begun wearing veils in order to protect themselves against roving gangs of Muslim young men.

The defilement of women and girls, like gay bashing, has nothing to do with IDF operations in Gaza. It has to do with the pathological nature of the cultures that condone and encourage the violence, and the Western governments and intellectuals who make excuses for it.

ALL OF THIS is hidden away from the public thanks to Western liberals' willingness to accept the legitimacy of events like Israel Apartheid Week. Due to the complicity of leftist authorities, the international discourse about the Arab and Islamic world and the cultures they have produced is diverted to false allegations against Israel.

Any attempt to point out that Hamas is genocidal; that Iran stones women to death, and systematically executes homosexuals; that Saudi Arabia is the most repressive society on the planet; that Egypt permits and indeed encourages female genital mutilation; that Jordan does not prosecute fathers, sons, husbands and uncles who murder their female relatives; is attacked and delegitimized. Those who raise these issues are accused of hating Muslims and of being secret Zionist agents.

So too, Islamic violence in the West is swept under the rug. For example, to date, no mainstream US media organ has reported that in Buffalo, New York Muzzamil Hassan decapitated his wife Aasiya on February 12 after he stabbed her to death. Just a few years earlier that same mainstream media had embraced this murderer as a paragon of Islamic moderation after he established Bridges TV network, which was supposed to show the American public how moderate Islam is.

For some reason, the same media don't consider it noteworthy that their moderate Muslim poster boy chopped off his wife's head a week after she filed for divorce. Certainly, no connection can be drawn between her ritual slaughter and Islam.

Sunday was International Women's Day. Throughout the West, feminists spent the day congratulating themselves for their great sacrifices for women's rights.

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Last Wednesday Saudi authorities arrested a woman for driving. Her arrest drew no protest from her Western sisters. Obviously, they were too busy defending Finklestein's freedom to disseminate lies about Israeli women to ignorant college kids to care.

caroline@carolineglick.com

Graphic

Photo: BEHIND THE VEIL. According to Islamic scholar Robert Spencer, Islamic teaching views rape as a legitimate act against women and girls who behave in 'non-Islamic' ways.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

The new blood libel

The Jerusalem Post

January 27, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 1031 words

Byline: ELI KAVON

Highlight: The Jews of Israel are libeled as heirs of the Nazis for one reason: to rob Israel of its legitimacy and ensure that it will be wiped off the map. The writer is on the faculty of Nova Southeastern University's Lifelong Learning Institute in Davie, Florida.

Body

On February 5, 1840, a Capuchin monk in Damascus vanished without a trace. The missing friar's fellow monks spread a rumor that, with the approach of the Passover holiday, Jews ritually murdered the Christian and siphoned off the man's blood to bake matzah. Under pressure from the French Consul in the city, the Muslim rulers of Damascus arrested several Jews for the brutal crime. Under torture, one of the Jews confessed to the ritual murder of the monk. Alarmed by the Muslim adoption of the medieval Christian charge of ritual murder against the Jews, world Jewish notables united to protest the death of one of the Jews in Damascus under torture. Even US President Martin Van Buren protested the injustice of this "blood libel."

In the end, the Muslim authorities released the surviving Jews and dropped the heinous charges. Thus, what became known as "The Damascus Affair," passed into history as just one of many libels against the Jews that repeat themselves-in a somewhat different guise-in today's world.

In the 21st century, the charge of the "blood libel" against the Jews is no longer solely a European phenomenon. In a disturbing transformation, Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East are breathing new life into this charge of ritual murder against the Jews. The popular media in Arab and Islamic lands often accuse Jews of using the blood of slain non-Jewish children for filling hamentashen on Purim and for baking matzah on Passover. But there is also another version of the blood libel in the Middle East that is far more complex and more insidious than the medieval Christian accusation of ritual murder against Jews.

That is the "New Blood Libel" - the charge that the modern Jewish State murders Palestinian civilians, especially children, in the name of Zionism. At rallies around the world organized by Muslims protesting Israel's recent invasion of Gaza, the chants of "baby killers" and "Israelis are Nazis!" were repeated again and again by the protestors. These sickening accusations have been picked up by Western media outlets and flashed on television and computer screens all over the world. The time has come for Jews and non-Jews-defenders of democracy and Israel's right to exist as a sovereign Jewish State-to respond to the haters of Israel and expose their new charge of blood libel to be as destructive and utterly untruthful as the medieval accusation.

Is a Gaza City in partial ruins due to Israel's response to repeated ***Hamas*** rocket attacks on Israel, indeed, a "concentration camp," as was the description recently put forth by a Vatican representative? Any of us not trapped in an Orwellian world of "Newspeak" know that Gaza City is not a post-modern version of the Warsaw Ghetto. The equation of the Israeli army with the Nazi SS is absurd. German mobile killing units murdered more than a million

The new blood libel

Jews in Russia, shooting men, women, and children into mass graves. Nazi Germany transported European Jewry to death camps in Poland where the victims were gassed and cremated. The Nazi Final Solution was a systematic program to destroy the Jews of Europe and, eventually, Jews throughout the world. There are no Israeli mobile killing units today in Gaza. There are no gas chambers or crematoria in Nablus. There has never been a systematic program by the Jews of Israel to destroy Palestinians. Blockades and checkpoints are not mass murder. They are safeguards to protect Tel Aviv and Jerusalem from suicide bombers. They are repressive - but they would not exist if the Palestinians truly wanted to live in peace with Israel.

The death of civilians in war is always a tragedy. The Israeli army in Gaza attempted to root out Hamas terrorists. They did not target civilians for mass execution. During World War II, German civilians were killed in Allied bombing raids on the cities of the Reich. Does that mean that the Americans and the British were war criminals? The Germans started the war and the Allies wanted to end the conflict as soon as possible through the bombing of German cities. The Palestinian civilians killed in Gaza died because the leaders they chose provoked Israel into invading territory that Israel abandoned years ago. That these facts need to be pointed out to those who accuse Jews of being Nazis is quite sad. The rhetoric of those who make these accusations does not spring from intelligent thought. They propagate this modern blood libel because they hate Jews.

The enemies of Israel libel the Jews of Israel as heirs of the Nazis for one reason: they want to rob Israel of its legitimacy and ensure that, one day in the near future, the Jewish State will be wiped off the map. They equate the threat Israel poses today with the threat Nazi Germany posed to the world more than sixty years ago. If the Nazis posed a peril to the world and, therefore needed to be defeated and destroyed, the same goes for Israel. In a tragic distortion of history and the truth, these haters of Israel create the rationale for the destruction of the State of Israel. If Jews in Israel are racists and imperialists, the modern blood libel posits that Israel has no legitimate reason to exist. If the Independence War of 1948 is an example of Jewish ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians - although we all know that it was a war in which the Jews had to fight off Arab armies in battles of self-defense - then the basis of Israel's existence is in doubt. If Gaza City is the Warsaw Ghetto, as the libelers claim, then Hamas is a group of freedom fighters, heroes of the free world. How absurd are these claims! If only the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto would have had sophisticated weaponry and rockets rather than just the pistols and homemade bombs with which they fought the Germans. If only the world would have protested the slaughter of Jews with the same vigor in which they have accused Israel of war crimes in Gaza.

How pathetic it is that the Damascus Blood Libel is still alive. The new libel is as disgusting and untrue as its medieval predecessor. To combat the new accusations we must arm ourselves with the facts and counter the lies with truth. Perhaps, one day, the world will move beyond outright lies and come to know the truth.

Graphic

Photo: HAMAS POLICE officers walk outside their office in Rafah on Sunday. If Gaza City is the Warsaw Ghetto, then Hamas is a group of freedom fighters. (Credit: Eyad Baba/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

[chatroom](#)

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

B - Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 28

Length: 1011 words

Body

TO the bodyboarder who helped my son who was in trouble at North Burleigh beach last Sunday around 6pm, thank you from the

bottom of my heart. - KK

THANK you Oz! I understand now. We label them terrorists - the 3000 Palestinians - & killing them is an acceptable solution. Reminds me of the Nazis. The magic word was Jews. Question: do we see the truth through the prism of our own individual bias? - Blonde

WENT 2 Miami Park on Sat 4 bbq. 2bbqs not working. Sent to another bbq only to be told it was his bbq and to remove ourselves from his area. Some1 should tell the idiot if u dont want 2 share our free parks and bbq to go back home. We did walk away because u are trouble. - Gaza

WELL done, Ricky Ponting. So much 4 the critics, what have u got 2 say now? Keep it up, Ricky. - Eil

TO the hoon who lost his sump on the traffic island near Seagulls, ha ha ha ha. - Haggar

HEY, Jez. It's not the hand of God that protects Israel, it's the zillions of US taxpayers' money and weapons. Without them, they are nothing. - Trev

THANK you to the lovely person that stole my bike from the Pines between Wed 7/1 and Friday 9/1. If anyone sees anyone riding a 1-of-a-kind, old white thin-framed bike with high blue handles, can you txt in to let me know or better yet get the bike back for me? Can't wait. Have to walk for half an hour before my hour bus trip to work now. - Jen

TO Bear, any dog can be dangerous, it depends on how it gets treated by its owners. Saying certain breeds should be banned is doggist and narrowminded. - Doglover

TO Jez at Cararra. The problem with all this war is the false idea of the existence of some kind of god. If they realised we all have to live life now and not worry about after life, we would all be better off. Looks silly to normal people to hurt and maim.

AS usual everyone is blaming the Jews. What would we do if Indonesia started lobbing bombs at us? - Caz

TOO much doom and gloom in Chatroom. Get rid of it.

chatroom

TO Super Human & E, with 4 people on earth, didn't Adam die from eating the apple & Cain killed Abel, so how did the world get populated? Isn't that incest? Abel had children with Eve? - Element

CAIN must have either married his sister or a female ape. - Wol

REFER back to a news story in 95 or 96 (can't remember what channel), the news crew were taken out off Cape Moreton and shown on the sounder where the Centaur lay. As a deckhand at the time we (the east coast prawn fishing fleet) all knew it was there, some having trawled up dinner plates from the ship. Its not far from the WWII ammunition dump. - Scuba

I THINK i know the Israeli cause, that is 2 b left alone, but can someone tell me what the Palestinian cause is? To eradicate the Israelis? - SJ

WHO cares about religious wars? Hamas, Israel, Iraq, Afganistan, who cares? Certainly not this Aussie duck. Let them go for it until there is nothing left but peace.

HOW good was the surf at the Alley on sunday the 11th, with the surf around 4 feet all you kooks on your mals were nowhere to be seen. - The Alley Magician

TO GB, you tell me 2 get some common sense yet u want council 2 fence lakes and rivers. If u cant swim stay at home and sook.

- Mr Reg

POMS, who needs em, especially those Chelsea supporters? - Hawkman

WB, i have done my research, in fact i was still goin 2 church last year. It all makes no sense, all the church wants is my money. Noah's ark, do u know how many types of animals, insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians and dinosaurs there are and how much food and water they need and the ark was not big enuf. Dont 4get the 2 new species they find in east asia every week and i think everything would b inbred. I can go on all day about the ark and whats wrong with it and dont get me started on other Bible stories. - Superhuman

TO all the shark experts and big tough trawlermen, a bit of shark carnage and no mention of old mate the hammerhead. They were probably stuck in your nets with all the bycatch. - David O

STEVE, Bilambil, European zionist Jews agitated for over 50 years for a 'homeland' and then stole land from the Palestinians who they proceeded to brutally suppress for 60 years. - Mel

2009, the year other people discover evolution. It's about time. There's never been any unrest because of cavemen has there? Ha ha, think about it. - Knottdogg

ALL u people crapn on about Hamas & Israel, u losers, start protesting about important stuff like the broadwater needs dredgn n immigrants catching n eatin undersize fish & crabs & the supermarkets rippn the local Aussie farmers off. Cmon, people, start aimn up! - Mudcrab Mute, Hope Island

WHY is everyone putting crap on the Jews? Just like world war 2 again. Blaming the Jews for everything. Down with

Hamas! - Manny

TO all u people going on about whether God's real or not, if u were bought up - I mean brainwashed - u would believe 2 kids should be brought up with no religion until 18 and then make up own mind. They are all hypocrites. Israel is a bigger country and has more guns so why pick a fight with em? I know i wouldnt go picking a fight with a bloke who is 6ft 5ins and built like a brick outhouse. No-brainer. - BJ, Nerang

LONG live Hamas and all its freedom fighters. - Stirrer

chatroom

HEY, Mark, u reckon only 18 Israelis have died in the last 8 years by Hamas. What about the hundreds of Israelis killed by Palestine's human bombers in crowded buses and shopping centres. Read The Bulletin more often and learn the real truth u naive idiot. - Ramrod

DK, are you trying to be funny? Cos you are not mate. Soft Diggers eh? You wouldnt get through the first week at Kapooka. Do you know where that is? Thought not. - Lewy

RE Superhuman. You can't. Soon, they will get help to set up their own borders. In the end you will be fighting to live on the council strip.

TOTALLY agree with lomax. i wonder when the oz cricket team will wear blue 2 support prostate cancer. - Cowboy up

ANY country that harms or kills innocent women and children definitely does not have God's backing. It's a shame they dont

find that out until afterlife. - SOS

TOADKILL, just spray dettol on them and they're gone. - Jag

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza

University Wire

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reveille via U-Wire

Length: 1053 words

Byline: By Xerxes A. Wilson, The Daily Reveille; SOURCE: LSU

Dateline: BATON ROUGE, La.

Body

Fady Hussein feels helpless as he watches televised reports of bombs blanketing the region where he spent his childhood.

For more than two weeks, Hussein has somberly followed the unfolding hostility. Day after day, he anxiously refreshes his Internet browser hoping to read about a cease-fire, but he more realistically anticipates far worse.

"Sometimes you feel like Israel doesn't have to care about anybody," said Hussein, a Louisiana State University graduate student and Gaza native. "Sometimes you feel like they just want to ruin your life. Gaza is very crowded. If you're bombarded by tanks, it's nothing but killing innocent people."

Billowing smoke from war-torn structures fills the Gaza skies where Hussein's family and home are deep in the middle of a dangerous conflict. Hussein'sÂ cousin was killed and his brother was injured during Israel's daily attacks on Gaza.

The escalation of violence began Dec. 27 when Israeli forces launched an air assault on the Gaza Strip to end rocket attacks the Gaza leadership group **Hamas** made against Israel. The current conflict has taken the lives of 13 Israelis, three of whom were civilians.

The death toll on the Palestinian side has reached an estimated 970, half of which are **women** and children. There have also been an estimated 4,300 injured as Israeli forces continue airstrikes and press further into the Israeli occupied Gaza strip.

A week ago, Hussein's cousin, Ahmed Hussein, attempted to rescue survivors inside a building recently hit by Israeli rockets. Soon after, Israeli F-16s pummeled the building, this time destroying the entire structure and killing Ahmed.

"On Al Jazeera I saw pictures of an injured guy, and I was like, 'Who is this guy? Who is this guy?'" Hussein said. "I didn't know my own brother. His face had been swollen from the strike."Â

Fady Hussein then called his mother, who told him of their family's loss. Nedal Hussein was injured by a rocket and was transferred to Egypt for surgery.

Stories like Hussein's are common throughout Gaza as the current conflict enters its 19th day.Â "I am very worried," Hussein said. "Thirty percent of Gaza has been destroyed so far."

Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza

The war in Gaza is a controversial topic among students and professors, because they disagree over who is to blame for this eruption of violence.

Krista Allen, history junior and representative of the Tigers for Israel group, blames the Hamas rockets for terrorizing and provoking defensive measures from Israel. "When you are being fired on at your population centers, you have the right to defend yourself from what is happening," Allen said.

Mark Gasiorowski, political science and international studies professor, said Israel has created a humanitarian situation in Gaza, leading to rockets being fired from Gaza.

During the last few months, Israel has restricted humanitarian support and supplies from entering Gaza, letting only about 20 percent of supplies into the region. About half of Gaza's population is eating only one meal daily because of these restrictions. This refusal to lift the blockade on goods and trade in and out of Gaza seems to be the reason for Hamas rocket attacks, Gasiorowski said.

Edward Shihadeh, sociology professor, blames Israel for "one of the most deplorable stories of colonialism remaining today" and provoking the attacks. "I've been to Gaza once," Shihadeh said. "It's a hell hole. It is one of the most crowded places on earth, and it is one of the poorest places on earth. For the people there, it is a prison."

Israel controls everything and everyone going in and out of Gaza because Israel has blockaded every border with Gaza, Shihadeh said. "Imagine if someone hemmed the United States in and started starving us," Shihadeh said. "We would be launching missiles, too. If you were living there, you would be doing the same damn thing."

Barry Weinstein, B'nai Israel Synagogue Rabbi emeritus and former university professor, said any blockade on Gaza is not the reason for the conflict, claiming Israel has sent humanitarian aid into the region. "The reason rockets are falling is because Hamas denies Israel the right to exist," Weinstein said. The cease-fire will happen when rockets stop falling on Israel, and there is no way Israel can allow its population to be subject to these attacks, he said.

Hussein feels this escalation in violence is a harsh reaction and the wrong solution to the conflict.

"If you curse me, can I kill you?" Hussein asked. "No, because it has to be proportionate. They [Israel] cannot stop the rockets. Hamas stopping the rockets and Israel stopping the blockade -- that is the solution."

Gaza's dense population creates a lethal situation for Hussein's family and Gaza civilians during this Israeli offensive, Hussein said. There are more than 1.5 million people living in Gaza's 140 square miles, according to the CIA. An average household has 15 to 20 people, so any rocket fired or bomb dropped by Israel will kill people, Hussein said.

About 15 people live in two rooms at Hussein's home in Gaza with no other place to take refuge from the violence.

"The whole neighborhood got threatened that the airforce will hit the area," Hussein said. "At the same time, you have no place to go. Any target that moves, they throw rockets at it. You can't drive a car. You can't go to your neighbors. You can't do anything ... Now my family starts to run out of many things."

University students are continents removed from the conflict but are still affected by this continuing turmoil in the Middle East. America spends billions of dollars in the Middle East, and oil prices are higher now than when the Middle East is calm, Gasiorowski said.

Shihadeh said the average American should care more about the conflict because they are financing it. "We pour billions of dollars into Israel, arming it to the teeth to keep this imperfect system going," Shihadeh said. "We should create a system where we don't have to prop it up with billions of dollars in weapons every year for the last six decades."

Hussein is set to graduate in May, but he has no place to go after. He can't return home because he will not be let in.

Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza

"Everything in Gaza is destroyed," Hussein said. "My passport expired. And to make a new one you have to go the Interior Ministry, and it is not anymore."

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End of Document

Shocked and Grieving Gazans Find Bodies Under the Rubble of Homes

The New York Times

January 19, 2009 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Length: 1129 words

Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE and TAGHREED EL-KHODARY; Nadim Audi contributed reporting.

Body

GAZA -- It was a day of digging and bitter discovery. Houses had lost walls, and the dead, after three weeks of war, had lost their faces. Families identified them by their clothes.

As the people of Gaza emerged from hiding on Sunday, they confronted, for the first time, the full, sometimes breathtaking extent of the destruction around them wrought by the Israeli military. Bombs had pulverized the Parliament and cabinet buildings, the Ministry of Justice, the main university and the police station, paralyzing Gaza's central nervous system and leaving residents in a state of shock.

Some places in Gaza City were bustling and matter-of-fact. Work crews in bright orange vests repaired power and water lines. Shops reopened. People lined up at bank machines.

But other areas ached with loss. In Twam to the north, thousands dragged belongings away from ruined houses; they were dazed refugees in their own city. In Zeitoun, families clawed at rubble and concrete, trying to dislodge the bodies of relatives who had died weeks before. The death toll kept climbing: 95 bodies were taken from the rubble.

More than 20 of them were from the Samouni family, whose younger members were digging with shovels and hands for relatives stuck in rooms inside. Faris Samouni, 59, sat alone, watching them. He had lost his wife, daughter-in-law, grandson and nephew, and he was heartbroken.

"Twenty-one are down there," he said, starting to cry. "One is my wife. Her name is Rizka."

The dead were badly decomposed, and families searched for familiar personal details that would identify them. One woman's corpse was identified by her gold bracelets. Another by her earrings. And a third by the nightgown she wore. The smell of rotting flesh was suffocating, and as they got closer, the diggers donned masks.

At 10:55 a.m., the body of Rizka Samouni emerged as an Israeli fighter jet roared in the sky. Other corpses followed. Houda, 18. Faris, 14. Hamdi, 21. The smallest corpse that emerged, from a different family, was that of a 4-year-old.

"They killed the elders, the children, the women, the animals, the chickens," said Subhi, 55, Rizka's brother. "It's a nightmare. I never thought I would lose all of them."

Shocked and Grieving Gazans Find Bodies Under the Rubble of Homes

Around noon, a worker from the Red Crescent ran up to the diggers. The Israelis had called, telling people to leave, he said. The families began to run, again.

"We have to go!" a woman shouted. "But where can we go? Where do we go?"

An Israeli military spokesman said the order had been issued because the Red Crescent had not coordinated its movement in advance. Later, permission was granted and the diggers returned to exhume the remaining bodies.

One of the areas worst hit was Twam, a neighborhood north of Gaza City, which by Friday afternoon had turned into a disorganized mass move. Donkey carts lurched over torn-up roads, spilling pillows and bedding into the dirt. People dragged bed frames and mattresses out of bombed-out houses. Small boys carried bookshelves. Curtains tied in giant sacks held clothes. Decorative cloth flowers fluttered from a half-closed trunk.

"It's madness," said Riad Abbas Khalawa, who was carrying a computer in one hand with his brother, who was carrying the other side. "Now our home is gone. There's no place for us to sit together as a family."

The question of what they thought Israel's goal was elicited a response from the entire throng listening to Mr. Khalawa.

"It's a war against us as people," a man shouted. "What happened to Hamas? Nothing!"

Beker Rahim, a 26-year-old who works for a water distributor, was walking with a cradle on his head, and a blue plastic jug of homegrown olives in his right hand. He had to move a corpse on Sunday morning from near his house, placing it respectfully at the gates of the mosque. As he walked up to his house, he saw it had been mostly destroyed and was unlivable.

The loss was staggering, and acutely felt in the Saker family, which looked like a theater troupe on a stage as they salvaged what remained from the third floor of their house, its walls shorn off, its insides exposed to the neighborhood.

The house had a special meaning. The family had lived for generations in a refugee camp, and six years ago had saved enough money to build it. This morning they came to find it in shambles, a crushing discovery.

"It was my dream and now it is erased," said Hadija Saker, 55, who ticked off the evidence, as she saw it, of Israel's unjust actions. She said Hamas lacked influence in the area. A teacher at a United Nations school lived on one side. A journalist on the other. Most painful, she said, were her lemon trees, which she had nurtured for years and now lay crushed under the sandy soil crisscrossed with the marks of tank treads.

Anger was compounded when people concluded that Israeli soldiers appeared to have been using their houses. The Sakers found wrappers for chocolate cranberry power bars and corn puffs with Hebrew writing. In another, a child found a tiny Torah.

In the upper middle-class neighborhood of Tal al-Hawa, Ziad Dardasawi, 40, a wood importer, was trying to process what had happened. As a supporter of Fatah, a political rival of Hamas, Mr. Dardasawi said that he despised Hamas, but that its rocket fire was no justification for Israel's military response.

"Let's say someone from Hamas fired a rocket -- is it necessary to punish the whole neighborhood for that?" he said, standing in a stairway of his uncle's house, where furniture had been smashed, and all the windows broken.

He drew on an analogy he thought would strike a chord: "In the U.S., when someone shoots someone, is his entire family punished?"

The Israeli actions made the situation more intractable, he said. "How can I convince my neighbors now for the option of peace? I can't."

He added: "Israel is breeding extremists. The feeling you get is that they just want you to leave Gaza."

Shocked and Grieving Gazans Find Bodies Under the Rubble of Homes

It was almost dark and the Samounis were finally burying their dead. It took time to find a car big enough to carry them all. A man had to stand in the back to keep them from falling out.

At the cemetery, a battery-powered neon light cast an eerie glow over men digging the graves. There was a moment of panic when **Hamas** militants launched a rocket not far away, but then nothing happened.

A final obstacle: There was not enough room to bury all the bodies. The family opened up an old grave to accommodate them.

A cousin, Khamis el-Sayess, observed bitterly, "Even our dead have no land."

But for Yasser Smama, a teenager who was also part of the crowd, there was almost a resigned hope. "Today is not the end," he said. "Today we bury our dead, and we pick ourselves up." Then he pointed at the sky, and said, "We have to be strong because they might hit us again tomorrow."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: In Gaza City on Sunday, relatives buried the bodies of members of the Samouni family who were killed in attacks by Israel. More than 20 bodies of family members were recovered Sunday.

Bodies of the Samouni family at a morgue in Gaza City on Sunday. They were killed in an Israeli attack on their home in Zeitoun. Later, family members, right, began burying the bodies, eventually discovering that there was not enough room for them all. (A6)

The mangled corpse of a Samouni family member was pulled from the ruins of the family home in Zeitoun on Sunday, near Gaza City, where the bodies were buried. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10) MAPS (A10)

Load-Date: July 3, 2011

The Bullets in My In-Box

The New York Times

January 25, 2009 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Length: 1524 words

Byline: By ETHAN BRONNER

Dateline: GAZA

Body

-- Faisal Hussein, a Palestinian leader who died at the start of this decade, used to tell a story about his first visit to Israel. The 1967 war had just ended, borders were suddenly opened and he took a drive to Tel Aviv, where at some point he found himself detained by an Israeli policeman. Questions and answers ensued. At one point the policeman said to him, "As a proud Zionist, I must tell you" At which Mr. Hussein burst out laughing.

What's so funny? the policeman asked. "I have never in my life," Mr. Hussein replied, "heard anyone refer to Zionism with anything but contempt. I had no idea you could be a proud Zionist."

I have written about the Arab-Israeli conflict on and off for more than a quarter-century and have spent the past four weeks covering Israel's war in Gaza. For me, Mr. Hussein's story sums up how the two sides speak in two distinct tongues, how the very words they use mean opposite things to each other, and how the war of language can confound a reporter's attempts to narrate -- or a new president's attempts to mediate -- this conflict in a way both sides can accept as fair.

Among Israel's Jews, there is almost no higher value than Zionism. The word is bathed in a celestial glow, suggesting selflessness and nobility. But go anywhere else in the Middle East and Zionism stands for theft, oppression, racist exclusionism.

No place, date or event in this conflicted land is spoken of in a common language. The barrier snaking across and inside the West Bank is a wall to Palestinians, a fence to Israelis. The holiest site in Jerusalem is the Temple Mount to Jews, the Noble Sanctuary to Muslims. The 1948 conflict that created Israel is one side's War of Independence, the Catastrophe for the other.

After Israel's three-week air, sea and land assault in Gaza, aimed at halting Hamas rocket fire, it is worth pausing to note how difficult it has been to narrate this war in a fashion others view as neutral, and to contemplate what that means for any attempt by the new Obama administration to try to end it.

It turns out that both narration and mediation require common ground. But trying to tell the story so that both sides can hear it in the same way feels more and more to me like a Greek tragedy in which I play the despised chorus. It feels like I am only fanning the flames, adding to the misunderstandings and mutual antagonism with every word I write because the fervent inner voice of each side is so loud that it drowns everything else out.

The Bullets in My In-Box

George Mitchell, the former Senate majority leader who is Mr. Obama's new special envoy to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, could find something similar when he arrives here.

Even though an understanding crystallized a decade ago over the outline of an eventual solution here -- Israel returning essentially to its 1967 borders and a Palestinian state forming in the West Bank and Gaza -- the two sides' narratives have actually hardened since attempts to reach a peace foundered.

So Mr. Mitchell, who once led a commission tasked with finding a solution to the conflict, will begin this latest effort grappling with two separate wars fought here, based on two very different sets of assumptions.

Opponents of Israel feel the Gaza fighting has demonstrated (again) everything they have always believed -- that Israel is a kind of Sparta that dehumanizes the Palestinians and will do anything to prevent their dignified self-determination. The ways in which Israel attacked -- the overwhelming force, the racist graffiti left on walls -- are what one has come to expect of that state, they say; those Hamas rockets were no challenge to the Israeli military behemoth, and, after all, who could blame the resistance fighters for launching them to protest the blockade and everything else about Israel's longstanding occupation?

Those for whom Israel is the victim and never the aggressor likewise saw in this war a reaffirmation of their beliefs -- that Hamas, an Islamist terror group, hides its fighters behind women and children; that Israel's army was an exemplar of restraint and respect, holding its fire when civilians were in sight, allowing tons of humanitarian aid in even while at war (what other army would be so decent?).

Abroad, people care deeply about this conflict. That should make it easier for a reporter to cover, because the actors and place names and history are familiar. But it turns out that like the actors themselves, the audiences have utterly distinct and contrasting sets of assumptions. Every time I fail to tell the story each side tells itself, I have failed in its eyes to do my job. That adds up to a lot of failure.

What's more, the competing war narratives are part of a larger narrative disconnect.

One side says that after thousands of years of oppression, the Jewish nation has returned to its rightful home. It came in peace and offered its hand to its neighbors numerous times only to be met with a sword. Opposition to Israel, this side argues, stems from Muslim intolerance, nationalist fervor and rank anti-Semitism, all fed by envy at the young state's success. Every time I write an article about the conflict that does not mirror this story line -- if, for example, I focus on Palestinian suffering or alleged Israeli misdeeds or quote a human rights group like Amnesty International -- I have proven myself to be a secret sharer with the views of the enemy.

As one recent complainer wrote, "To read your paper, all the questions and criticism are directed at Israel, and it is all based on a collection of anti-Semitic organizations masquerading as humanitarians."

The other side tells a different story: There is no Jewish nation, only followers of a religion. A group of European colonialists came here, stole and pillaged, throwing hundreds of thousands off their land and destroying their villages and homes. A country born in sin, Israel has built up an aggressive military with help from Washington in the grips of a powerful Jewish lobby.

Every time I fail to allude to that story -- when, for example, I examine Israel's goals in its Gaza war without implicitly condemning it as a massacre, or write about Israel in ways that do not call into question its legitimacy -- I have revealed my affiliation and can no longer be trusted as a reporter.

Since the war started on Dec. 27, I have received hundreds of messages about my coverage. They are generally not offering congratulations on a job well done.

"Thanks to you and other scum like yourself," said one, "Israel can now kill hundreds and you can report the whole thing like it was some random train wreck."

"Bronner," said another, "you're back to your usual drivel about only the poor filthy Arabs -- who voted for the Hamas people who got them into this predicament -- with incessant indiscriminate rocket fire on innocent Israelis."

The Bullets in My In-Box

There are also blogs and chat sites on both sides that spend time accusing all the journalists here of having agendas because our articles mention facts or trends that they consider a diversion from the real story.

Because Israel barred foreign journalists from entering Gaza until the war ended, The New York Times relied on my Palestinian colleague here, Taghreed el-Khodary, for on-the-ground coverage of the fighting.

We would speak several times a day as she cautiously went out. Her first stop was usually Shifa Hospital to get a sense of civilian casualties. Early in the war, at the hospital, she witnessed the murder of an alleged Israeli collaborator by Hamas gunmen. They shot him in the skull more or less in front of her. One of the gunmen told Taghreed that she should never mention what she saw to anyone. She told him there was not a chance she would stay silent, then made some calls to find out about other such events and sent me the information, which we published the next day.

A couple of Arab bloggers went after Taghreed with the worst insult they could come up with -- Zionist. She was a Palestinian Uncle Tom doing the bidding of her white-man bosses at a newspaper that, as one reader said in an e-mail message, "is fully complicit in the atrocities that Israel commits against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. You make it sound guiltless and reasonable. That's your assignment."

At the same time, Israeli officials and their backers declared that keeping reporters out of Gaza was the right move because no independent journalism could possibly occur in an area run by Hamas, which controls every utterance here. Have any of these people ever read Taghreed's work? Or any of our work out of here?

Many have but it doesn't matter because their belief in their own view is so overpowering that anything that contradicts it becomes a minor detail. As another reader put it, "Basically, you are aiding terrorists and causing the increase in bloodshed while telling one-sided stories, totally ignoring the whole picture."

He did say one thing I agree with: "You should not be a reporter if you are not telling the whole story, not just the parts that sell."

I would offer a mediator the same advice.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: GRIEF: Top, a funeral in Gaza for four brothers -- Bassem Suboh, Nashad Suboh, Sharif Suboh and Rizek Suboh -- Hamas fighters killed by the Israeli military. Above, a funeral in Beersheba, Israel, for Staff Sgt. Alex Mashvitski, killed in Gaza. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RINA CASTELNUOVO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (pg.WK4)
DRAWING (DRAWING BY DAVID POLONSKY)

Load-Date: January 25, 2009

FOR MIDEAST PEACE, END THE TEACHING OF HATE

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

January 24, 2009 Saturday

4 State / Suncoast Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 11A; YOUR LETTERS

Length: 2149 words

Body

Articles by Jeffrey Goldberg and Susan Taylor Martin - Jan. 18

Thank you, Jeffrey Goldberg, for the Perspective article, Why Israel can't make peace, and to the St. Petersburg Times for publishing it. It stirs the brain cells, as contrasted with merely strumming the heartstrings, as in the Susan Taylor Martin article (For civilians in Gaza, there's no escape from fighting). While Martin laments the plight of Gaza's citizens, and rightly so, she offers no basis on which to improve their plight. Goldberg on the other hand does, but his implied solution requires a change in ideology and religious dogma.

For once a newspaper article openly discusses the origins of **Hamas** and Hezbollah Jew-hatred, the true obstacle to peace. Further illuminating Goldberg's thesis is a book by Andrew Bostom, entitled: The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism, in which the writings of the Koran, Hadith and Sira on this topic are clearly advanced, along with the viewpoints of modern commentators. Only through such understanding, versus naivete, can the world community ever come to a solution on the plight of Gaza's residents, or to a larger-scale solution to jihadist terrorism worldwide.

Israel cannot solve the plight of Gaza's citizens. They tried by forcefully evacuating all Israelis from Gaza and ceding the land to the Palestinians, but the experiment was a failure, leading to the ascension of **Hamas**, an incessant shelling of Israel from Gaza and hence the necessity for the latest defensive war. Why the experiment failed is articulated in Goldberg's article and expanded on by Bostom. It is imperative that we all understand this.

Peace can only come when hatred ceases to be taught. This is not about moral equivalency; it is about moral behavior, and the onus must be placed squarely on those who promote hatred. To achieve Martin's implied goal of improved human condition we must heed the lyrics of Rodgers and Hammerstein, "You've got to be carefully taught," and Crosby, Stills and Nash, "Teach your children well."

Only when Palestinians cease teaching their children to hate Jews and other infidels will there be any chance for either a lasting peace in the Middle East or an end to jihadist terrorism worldwide.

Robert H. Weisberg, Tierra Verde

* * *

When you elect terrorists

FOR MIDEAST PEACE, END THE TEACHING OF HATE

I take issue with Susan Taylor Martin's article on Jan. 18. Her heart bleeds for the civilians in Gaza, but not for the innocent Jews who daily absorb rockets.

Gaza is run by a terror organization. Israel is run by responsible people. Hamas was duly elected by these very civilians whom Martin defends. Jews, on the other hand, want nothing more than to live in peace. That's why Gaza was given away in 2005, before it became a launching pad for Hamas rockets, intended to kill Jews. Martin is dead wrong in arguing that you can't blame Gaza civilians for electing Hamas to public office. Sorry, but it's a sad truth of history and international law that the people of rogue nations will get hurt when they elect psychotic despots to power.

If the so-called "Palestinians" want to become a real nation, all they need to do is put aside hatred and learn to be responsible about whom they put in power. Otherwise, they will sadly get caught in the crossfire when the "Zionist infidels" have to act in self-defense to take out Hamas.

Michael Stepakoff, Palm Harbor

* * *

Targeting the U.N.

We learned recently that Israel had attacked the United Nations headquarters in Gaza, destroying food and other humanitarian supplies that were stored there. A couple of weeks ago, they fired on a U.N. school, killing a number of children.

These are not new tactics. In April 1996, Israel attacked a well-known U.N. outpost in southern Lebanon housing over 800 Lebanese who had taken cover there. More than 100 were killed.

I don't think the Israeli army is so inept that these things were mistakes. I think it was sending the same message to the United Nations that it sent to the people of Gaza: "We are the most powerful military force in the Middle East and we are backed by the United States. So get out of our way."

Joseph A. Mahon, St. Petersburg

* * *

No tears for Gaza

Susan Taylor Martin is again writing from her extremely myopic vision of Gaza and Hamas. After picturing the poor, mistreated Gazans (having electing a terrorist government, exactly what were they expecting), she notes that the right of free passage never developed.

The reason it never developed was that the first people in line to cross into Israel were the suicide bombers seeking to blow themselves up on buses and in pizza parlors.

I have long suggested that the Israelis choke off Gaza. Stop all electricity, gasoline, water, medicine and allow them nothing. Shortly those old black-robed women will be in the streets beating Hamas with sticks. When the women get tired of all that squalor and their children dying, the problems in Gaza will start to turn around.

Lynn O'Keefe, Largo

* * *

Law of self-defense

The Palestinians, through their elected officials as well as many other groups, have declared total war on Israel, with their acknowledged goal as Israel's extermination. This is called "genocide," and no one doubts that if they had the means, they would do it.

FOR MIDEAST PEACE, END THE TEACHING OF HATE

How can any group that makes such declarations be considered anything but a pariah in the world community?

If Israel decided to completely wipe out this cancer that continually threatens them, who would blame them? This is called the law of self-defense, and it applies to nations as well as people.

Mitchell McConnell, St. Petersburg

* * *

Cruel killings

In Pakistan the Taliban recently bombed five schools as part of its effort to prevent the education of girls. Some boys schools were also bombed. This seems disgusting and primitive from our vantage point as a Western civilization. How could they be so cruel? Were they financed by Syria? Where were the weapons made?

By the way, Israel also bombed at least two schools in Gaza during the same period, using aircraft, munitions and financing from the United States.

Mark E. Reinecke, St. Petersburg

* * *

Seniors should remember: Some income beats none

"I'm on a fixed income." "I'm a senior citizen." "I can't afford that."

Sad to say (age-wise), these three statements all apply to me.

But I read an article on Jan. 10, Families feel COBRA's sting, that comments on the COBRA program, the cost of which "is prohibitively high for many, especially when compared with average unemployment benefits." Also there have been many recent TV spots about food stamps, unemployment, downsizing and outsourcing on a national level.

This makes me think of my fellow seniors as crybabies. True, a fixed income may limit you, but you can't deny it is an income. Medicare may not be what we had, but it is health care. All we have to do is live another month and we get paid - for living! The millions of people laid off have no income, save for unemployment which, according to the article, isn't even enough to pay for health care here in Florida.

We seniors lived in a society of American goods, made in America by Americans who never considered another country as a source of anything except immigrants, and which could be a vacation destination. Many of us retired from jobs where we spent most of our entire adult life. Now many of us have stock portfolios that demand performance from companies pretty much encouraging outsourcing and downsizing. Looks like we're doing this to ourselves, huh?

Joe Brickman, Largo

* * *

Out of work, and out of patience - Jan. 18, story

Unemployment mess

Your article regarding dealing with the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation really hit home.

My son, who lives in Brandon, has been trying to talk to a "live body" at that office for three weeks to no avail. I decided to call them, just to see what it was like. Their current voice mail says "Due to heavy calls, the average wait

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is one hour." At that point, their phone immediately cuts you off. Not only does their phone cut you off, but there is also no actual office where someone can talk to you face to face.

Obviously no one is going to contact the unemployment office unless they have lost their job. To subject these unemployed citizens to this type of treatment is unconscionable. After reading your article and visiting their Web site, it appears they are more set up for denying a claim than allowing someone to make a claim.

Helen Dewalt, St. Petersburg

* * *

Officials get their way

To paraphrase the late Rodney Dangerfield: "We can't get no respect." Howard Troxler in his Jan. 22 column (What did they think "contract" meant?) referenced the Pinellas County School Board breaking the contract between itself and the teachers' union. Even though it was a flagrant breach, the superintendent simply stalled until it was too late to change things and then said, we're going to do it anyway.

Unfortunately, with government officials, this seems symptomatic today. A glaring example is the Florida Legislature's raiding of the Lawton Chiles Endowment Fund. Just because the state is in a financial crisis they figure it's okay to penalize the least fortunate and take from a fund that was intended for the benefit of children affected by the scourge of Big Tobacco. How is it that we're able to aid private NFL football teams to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars for stadiums, but when it comes to children and education all of a sudden we ain't got no money? I guess we can't get no respect!

Stephen L. Goodman, Tampa

* * *

Middle school teacher contract

Think of the students

Being a middle school teacher, I have been able to read a lot of correspondence within the system that Pinellas County teachers and employees have shared in reference to their opinions about teacher contract negotiations and violations.

I support the fact that our contract was violated, and there should be some resolution and accountability. In fact, I was ready to support going back to five out of six periods a day for second semester simply because that is the proper thing to do. However, one conversation with my eighth-grade son during winter break completely changed my mind.

"Hey, Mom, are they really going to change our schedules and take away one of our classes when we go back to school second semester?"

"I don't know, honey? Why do you ask?"

"Because if they do, I'm going to lose one of my favorite teachers."

My heart skipped a beat. That was enough said for me.

Let's allow our children to finish the school year with the least amount of disruption as possible and do our best to resolve this issue before the start of the next school year. After all, our students are the reason we chose to become teachers in the first place.

Janet Whedon, Clearwater

FOR MIDEAST PEACE, END THE TEACHING OF HATE

* * *

Insurance inflation

I now know why insurance costs are so high. After a major surgery, it was necessary for me to get one of those seats you put over a toilet. I was provided one by a home health care group because the one I ordered wasn't going to arrive in time. The one I ordered was \$20 off eBay, practically brand new.

Then I received the statement from my health insurance on the claim from the home health care group. The cost was \$212! Now I'm sure it was newer, but something I paid \$20 for - and they charged \$212.

I found the exact chair online, regularly \$109, on sale for \$97. That's a difference of \$115. That is why our medical insurance is so high!

S. Bennett, Largo

* * *

Let's designate a "clothing optional" beachJan. 17, letter

An unsavory sight

Considering the tiny percentage of Americans who really look good with no clothes on, I believe we should be spared this dismal prospect.

My sister and her husband, both very liberal free thinkers, worked for a while at a nudist resort. They still shake their heads in amazement at how unappealing people look with no clothes on.

It's bad enough we have to be reminded of the pitiful physical condition of the average American in their swimsuits at the beach. Please spare us the sight of their nude bodies.

Pete Wilford, Holiday

* * *

Let's designate a "clothing optional" beachJan. 17, letter

An unwelcome option

My family has a long and happy attachment to Fort DeSoto Park/Mullet Key. Just before World War I, my father installed electrical generators at the fort under an Army contract. In my time I buried two whales and numerous sea turtles there as chief of the National Marine Fisheries Service Law Enforcement Division. All six of our children grew up exploring the beaches of the park. One of my sons was a lifeguard there. We now have a little wooden sailboat to teach our grandchildren to sail along the fort's northern boundary.

During all these years we have had free run of all the beaches at Fort De Soto Park with little or no concern for the safety (physical and moral) of our progeny. It will be a sad day for us and very many like us if the county should designate "clothing optional" areas of our beautiful park.

Charles M. Fuss Jr., St. Pete Beach

Graphic

FOR MIDEAST PEACE, END THE TEACHING OF HATE

Getty Images Two Palestinian children sit amid the rubble of a home in the Gaza Strip where as many as 29 family members were reportedly killed during the Israeli attack on the **Hamas**-controlled area. Associated Press Masked gunmen were among those declaring a **Hamas** victory after a cease-fire in Gaza.

Load-Date: January 26, 2009

End of Document

Ban and UN must recognize the Palestinians' right to resist

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

January 16, 2009 Friday 2:15 PM EST

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Length: 1478 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Jan. 16 -- At last, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon seems to be doing what he is expected to do. After more than one thousand Palestinians have died, one third of them children, Ban is taking some measures, which he should have taken the very first day Israel launched its barbaric attack on the defenceless Palestinian people in Gaza. His delayed action raises more suspicion regarding his impartiality.

Ban should have been more prompt and aggressive in his diplomacy. After all, he comes from a country which was, like Palestine, under occupation. Ban was born in Eumseong, a small farming village in Korea, while the country was forcibly being occupied by Imperial Japan. But after the Japanese left Korea in 1945 following its defeat in World War II, little Ban grew up in South Korea, which embraced American imperialism.

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, the six-year-old Ban came into contact with the Americans. There is little evidence in his biography to show that he had any liking for the socialist ideology of Kim Il-Sung, the North Korean visionary leader whom the West fought, hated and labelled as a Commie.

At the height of the Korean War, little Ban had a fascination for America and the English language. In 1962, he was sent to the United States after he won a Red Cross essay contest. He stayed with a US family for several months and was taken to meet the then US president John F. Kennedy. Years later, he earned a Master's degree from the JFK School of Government at Harvard University.

His American links and the pro-US policies of his country, which he represented, first as a diplomat in various world capitals and then as its UN envoy, gave little hope to the peace-starved world when he became the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations in 2007. His appointment as UN chief came at the height of US campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places -- campaigns which his country whole-heartedly supported and even took part in, despite their illegality and unpopularity.

The UN Secretary General is not the president of the world. He is technically the UN's CEO appointed by and answerable to the member states. In reality he has little power to defy the world powers. He can comment on world issues, but his office is virtually powerless to prevent a member-state from doing wrong. If he dares to speak out against the interest of a powerful state like the United States, he will have to pay a big price. He may even lose his job.

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the then UN Chief Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Egyptian lawyer-turned-diplomat, tried to create a new world order based on equality and justice and bring reforms to the world body -- reforms which the United States did not like. The Americans worked for his defeat when he sought a second

Ban and UN must recognize the Palestinians' right to resist

term. Kofi Annan, Boutros-Ghali's successor, was more realistic. He was critical of the United States policies, but his criticism was not vocal enough in his first term. Towards the twilight of his second term, he became somewhat outspoken and said the US war on Iraq was illegal. The result: he paid a big price. The Americans were in the forefront of a campaign against Annan over alleged corruption in the UN-sponsored oil-for-food programme in Iraq.

Unlike Boutros-Ghali and Annan, Ban was America's favourite. He does not have to be persuaded to be nice to America. When the Israelis launched their Operation Cast Lead to bleed the Palestinians, he knew the operation had US blessing. What came from his office were mere statements that called on both sides to end hostilities, made **Hamas** equally responsible for the crisis and, more or less echoed US sentiments.

There was condemnation in these statements but it made little impact. But what is more disturbing is that none of the UN statements recognised the Palestinians' right to resist occupation.

The Secretary General must refer to the UN charter once again to see whether the Palestinian people have a right to resist foreign occupation. Or he may ask international law experts. Most international law experts are of the view that the right of a people to resist outside aggression is found in Article 51 of the UN charter. They say resistance is the inherent and inalienable right of a people who live under subjugation and colonial or alien domination.

The US anti-war group ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), says:

"The right to resist occupation is a concept enshrined in international law. . . . This is not a matter of political or ideological affinity. Nor is it an issue of the tactics of war -- all of which are ugly. It boils down to this simple equation: On the one side are all the forces fighting a war against colonialism and occupation, and on the other side are the colonialists, neo-colonialist..."

It is sad to note that neither Ban nor any leader representing the so-called civilized West has recognized the Palestinian people's right to resist Israeli occupation, which is essentially colonialism. **Hamas** may be a banned terrorist organisation to the United States, but it is no different from the African National Congress which the much-respected Nelson Mandela headed to lead his people to freedom. How many Indians will label Subash Chandrabose who took up arms against the British a terrorist? Is the Vietnamese hero Ho Chi Minh a terrorist? If they are not, then why should **Hamas** carry this ugly label for exercising the Palestinian people's right to resist?

Will anyone call the Jews of Warsaw ghettos terrorists because they formed a resistance group to fight the Germans who were sending them to extermination camps? If they are not, then why **Hamas**, a group that took up arms to win freedom for Palestinians from Israeli occupation?

If what the Germans did to the Jews during the Second World War was a holocaust, what is happening in Gaza is also a holocaust. Did not Israeli Deputy Defence Minister Matan Vilnai in February 2008 warn the Palestinians of a "bigger shoah"? The Hebrew word shoah means holocaust.

In Israel's shoah in Gaza, 90 percent of the victims are civilians. One third of the dead are children. Part of this shoah is the two-year-old blockade of Gaza -- a blockade that has denied the Palestinians essentials such as food and medicine and basic utilities like water, electricity, gas and fuel. During World War II, Hitler sent Jews to extermination camps. Israel has already got some 1.5 million Palestinians in a prison called Gaza Strip, which is also Israel's gas chamber for the Palestinian people. The Nazis used poison gas to kill Jews; the Israelis are using white phosphorous to kill Palestinians, especially children and **women**.

The highly disproportionate use of force by Israel raises fears about Israeli moves to annex the Gaza Strip by forcing the people to leave this 350 sq. km area. Israel could then cite Exodus 23:23, 31 which says, "'For My messenger will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them.... And I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you."

Ban and UN must recognize the Palestinians' right to resist

The Western world which believes that the Israelis are the chosen people of God, will see nothing wrong if Gaza is annexed or even if Israel uses weapons of mass destruction to kill all the Palestinians. Many in the West see the destruction wreaked upon the Palestinians as God acting through the Israelis.

Meanwhile, the Arab and Islamic leaders, as expected, will turn a blind eye to the Israeli crime, paying obeisance to Israel's patron, the United States of America.

Abandoned by the Arab leaders and the West, the Palestinians are virtually fighting a lone battle. However, it is encouraging to note the moral support the Palestinians get from peace-loving and fair-minded people around the world, though they are a small minority. The Palestinian people are with **Hamas**. They reject what Israel, the United States, Egypt and other US lackeys say -- that **Hamas** is using civilians as human shields. It is not because they are scared of the poorly-armed **Hamas**, but because they trust the group which won the January 2006 election to the Palestinian assembly.

When the Gaza onslaught began on December 26, Egypt opened its border with Gaza -- not to allow the Palestinians trapped in the Gaza Strip to flee to safety, but to allow hundreds of Palestinian pilgrims returning from Haj via Cairo to go back to Gaza. When al-Jazeera television asked them why they were going to Gaza when they could stay on in the safety of Egypt, the people said they wanted to live and die with the heroes of Gaza.

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Load-Date: January 16, 2009

Palestinians return home to scenes of devastation in Gaza

The Irish Times

January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: FRONT PAGE; Pg. 1

Length: 342 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN in Jerusalem

Body

SHOCKED Palestinians emerged on to the rubble-strewn streets of the Gaza Strip yesterday to recover their dead and inspect their shattered homes after Israel declared a unilateral ceasefire and **Hamas** a conditional week-long truce.

The 23-day death toll rose to about 1,300, including 410 children, with 5,450 wounded. The fatality figure is certain to increase as bodies are recovered from the rubble.

Women sat weeping amid the ruins of their houses. Others sifted through the debris to gather cherished belongings.

Families who fled advancing Israeli troops began returning to barely recognisable neighbourhoods to discover who had survived and who had died. Thank God you are alive! The house can be rebuilt, God willing, Abu Daoud Amer consoled a friend.

Hamas, eager to show it still controls Gaza, sent policemen back on to the streets even the traffic police were out on mangled, cratered roads.

At Beit Hannoun, a farmer was killed and his son injured when inspecting their fields and a woman and her daughter were wounded when their home was hit by an Israeli shell.

Irish volunteer Caoimhe Butterly was with the Palestinian Red Crescent in the northern Jabaliya area, the site of heavy fighting, where she helped recover bodies. Thirty-eight were brought to the Kamal Adwan hospital in the morning, she said.

Salah Sakka, a former member of the Gaza City municipality, which serves 500,000 people, said: Planes, drones and helicopters are overhead [creating tension]. Water and sanitation are a catastrophe. Water and sewage pipes have been destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of people do not have tap water, 220,000 in Jabaliya alone.

Israel has rejected accusations by human rights agencies that it has committed war crimes by attacking densely populated urban areas with destructive and toxic munitions. UN Relief and Works Agency Gaza operations chief, Irish national John Ging, asked: Were they war crimes that resulted in the deaths of the innocent during the conflict? The question has to be answered. (Additional reporting: Reuters)

Load-Date: January 19, 2009

Palestinians return home to scenes of devastation in Gaza

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In this case, there can be no comparison

The Sunday Independent (South Africa)

February 01, 2009

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 319 words

Body

Peter Bills's article refers. He has written a mostly accurate and sensitive account of the death camp of Auschwitz.

In this camp, at least 1 million men, women and children were murdered. No one knows the true figure. The SS commander estimated that at least 4 million people were killed there. The records show a much smaller figure, but then the great majority who were sent to the gas chambers upon arrival were not counted.

These figures are details - they don't add or lessen the extent of the horror or the atrocity. Where Bills is completely wrong is in his comparison of Auschwitz with Gaza.

The victims of that and other death camps had not committed any offences against Germany nor were they a threat to that country. In contrast, the German Jews who were murdered there had served their Fatherland during the First World War and given their lives in the same ratio as their Christian fellow citizens. They had not fired 7 000 rockets and 3 000 mortar bombs at their fellow Germans.

They had not preached hatred against Germans from their pulpits, brought their little children up to state that they wanted to kill Germans and become suicide bombers or attacked and murdered their fellow citizens and neighbours at every opportunity over a period of 60 years.

With 80 rockets a day raining down on it, Israel finally decided to put a stop to this unwarranted aggression and protect its citizens. It was not a matter of vengeance. Had Hamas not bombarded Israeli settlements and towns over a period of eight years, this war would not have happened. Had Hamas not turned people's homes into legitimate military targets and, knowing that there was bound to be retaliation, protected its Palestinians in Gaza the way Israel protected its citizens, there would not have been corpses of little children laid out beside their shattered homes.

Don Krausz

Chairperson, Association of Holocaust Survivors in Johannesburg

Load-Date: February 1, 2009

Widows' grim plight

The Gazette (Montreal)
January 14, 2009 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 302 words

Byline: MAI YAGHI, AFP

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

Khaled Kahlut just popped out with his sons to buy some bread. Hit by an Israeli missile, they never came home. Now his widow Manal must learn to navigate through life in patriarchal Gaza with no men by her side.

The 32-year-old has joined a grim contingent growing by the hour in Gaza - widows who must now feed their families and live their lives alone in the conservative Palestinian enclave run by the Islamist **Hamas** movement.

"What am I going to do with my daughters, who is going to take care of us?" she said, wringing her hands.

In Gaza, where social trends have leaned toward the conservative even before the Islamist **Hamas** took control, the prospect of living alone as a woman is not a cheerful one.

Most **women** in the territory, where more than half of the 1.5 million population are children, do not work.

Tradition in Gaza holds that widows of "martyrs" do not remarry, so the prospect of finding another breadwinner is not a viable one - even if you are just 20 years old like Nidaa Hammuda.

She lost her husband and two brothers the same day Manal's husband and sons were killed.

The widow of her brother, Duaa Hammuda, 27, says she will educate their four children "in the mosques, like their father would have wanted to."

Zakiyah al-Madhun became a widow the same day as her 24-year-old daughter-in-law Riham after an Israeli strike near a UN school in Jabaliya killed 43 people. "They were hit by shrapnel when they passed the school in the street," said 60-year-old Madhun.

Many Gaza widows suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder several weeks after the loss of their husbands.

"As long as the widow does not know what the future brings, she can lose the will to carry on living and this generally gives way to depression," said Samir Zaqt, a psychologist at the Gaza Community Mental Health Program.

Widows' grim plight

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

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It's Short Step From Authoritarian to Totalitarian

The New York Times

March 5, 2009 Thursday

The New York Times on the Web

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Section: Section ; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. ; LETTERS

Length: 580 words

Body

To the Editor:

Re "Iran, the Jews and Germany" (column, The New York Times on the Web, March 2):

Roger Cohen maintains that his critics who compare Iran to totalitarian Nazi Germany are mistaken. He points to the relative freedoms of the Jews in Iran and to the pockets of democracy in Iranian society.

Hannah Arendt maintained that Nazi Germany became totalitarian only in 1938. Up until Kristallnacht, the Jews who were left in Germany tried to make the best out of their lives as second-class citizens. Kristallnacht changed the situation dramatically, when Jewish life came to a halt and everyone understood that there was no future for Jews in Germany.

The change from an authoritarian to a totalitarian state can be done in a fortnight, as the German and Soviet examples have shown, and the ramifications for the Jews in a society where they are vilified and symbolized as the reincarnation of evil should not be underestimated.

I agree that Iran is not as efficient as Germany. But even with the notable signs of discontent and rebellion against Islamist fundamentalism, which are the hallmark of many young people in Iran, I doubt that any of them will raise their voice if and when the Islamist regime redirects their venom from the Jewish state to the representatives of international Zionist imperialism in their midst.

Pinchas Goldschmidt Cambridge, Mass., March 2, 2009

The writer, the chief rabbi of Moscow and the chairman of the Conference of European Rabbis, is a visiting scholar at Harvard.

To the Editor:

Roger Cohen, apparently to indicate Iran's genuine acceptance of Jews, mentions the visit in 2003 of Mohammad Khatami, the Iranian president at the time, to a Tehran synagogue.

But one should take note of what Mr. Khatami actually said in the synagogue. He insisted on drawing a distinction between Judaism and Zionism and talked of "coexistence of Muslims, Christians and Jews in Palestine."

It's Short Step From Authoritarian to Totalitarian

It took no bravery on the part of Mr. Khatami to visit the house of worship of a small minority who dare not publicly disagree with him. A more believable sign of Iran's acceptance of Jews will be when Mr. Khatami returns to the synagogue and acknowledges Israel's right to exist.

Marc Mandell Norwich, Conn., March 2, 2009

To the Editor:

Roger Cohen asserts, "Iran has not waged an expansionary war in more than two centuries."

Is the operative word "expansionary"? Because Iran, through its proxies Hezbollah and **Hamas**, has been waging a continuing war of aggression against Israel for years.

Iran, Hezbollah and **Hamas** declare openly and repeatedly that their goal is the destruction of Israel and the death of every Jew in Israel. If they succeed, would not that be "expansionary"?

Many of the missiles that Hezbollah and **Hamas** have fired into Israel by the thousands have been supplied by Iran. These missiles are intended to kill and terrorize as many Jewish men, **women** and children as possible.

Michael S. Kolker Seattle, March 2, 2009

To the Editor:

Your column was like a breath of fresh air. American readers deserve to know both the good and the bad points of Iran, as you view it.

I am tired of the paranoia in our country about Iran and am disgusted by our government's general propaganda of demonizing countries that are not currently in our favor.

It is time that the educated class of this country is given a chance to sift through the hype and fabrication.

Sroor Asaduddin Houston, March 2, 2009

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: March 5, 2009

G2: Women: This Muslim life

The Guardian - Final Edition

January 16, 2009 Friday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN FEATURES PAGES; Pg. 19

Length: 320 words

Byline: Noorjehan Barmania

Body

I see my friend the South African Jewish Doctor, once a year, on her way to visit family in New York. We meet for coffee and talk about our changing worlds. This time, we talk of the ever-worsening crime situation in South Africa, the bitter wind blowing over

England, draughty English houses and the ill health of her dogs, slowly approaching what we really want to speak of.

I can wait no longer. "I'm sure you've been watching the bloodshed in Gaza and I'm curious. What do you think of the Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni? Her rhetoric is hawkish - she called Israel's war on Hamas 'a necessary war on terror'. It's very Bushesque - all wily politicking."

I take a breath. "Tell me. Livni: a great defender of Israel or just another politician trying to boost her flagging chances in the

February Israeli elections?"

My friend sighs. "It's complicated. No matter how secure or

affluent we (Jews) become, we'll always be in exile. We've metabolised that sense of impending

annihilation. Maybe Livni initially thought the two-state solution was viable but Hamas's ceaseless rockets eventually triggered the defender in her. I hope it's this

because the bloodshed is horrific. It's a high price to pay for a bit of cheap electioneering."

My friend's distress makes me change tack. "Talking of Jewish warriors, South Africa lost a great apartheid fighter two weeks ago - Helen Suzman. Remember how she'd stand up in the all-white parliament to chants of 'Go home to Israel' and she'd tartly reply that she was born in South Africa."

G2: Women: This Muslim life

My friend clarifies, "Ah, but she also called herself a 'passive Zionist' so she must have had a sense of the Jewish exile. I suppose it gave her a keen appreciation for the injustice of the apartheid system."

She smiles, "Well, for every Livni there's a Suzman." I smile back, relieved that we can talk, despite the blood lost between our tribes. I can only hope the same for Israel and Palestine.

Load-Date: January 16, 2009

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