

Date and Time: Thursday, May 2, 2024 6:41:00 PM EEST

Job Number: 223361918

Documents (100)

1. [Capture Makes U.S. No Safer, Dean Says](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

2. [Everybody Hates Somebody Somewhere](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

3. [The Tyrant Gadhafi Must Go](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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4. [Abraham's children chat](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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5. [Rage over Syria raid](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

6. [ALEX ALEXIEV: THE USA AND RUSSIA HAVE A COMMON ENEMY - SAUDI WAHHABISM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

7. [Iran sways Iraqis with food, aid](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

8. [Saturday Review: Religion & politics: My brother the quarryman: Arnold Wesker salutes a book that attempts to look impartially at the problems of the Middle East: The Other Side of Despair: Jews and Arabs in the Promised Land by Daniel Gavron 224pp, Rowman & Littlefield, £17.95](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

9. [LETTERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

10. [Saudis Support A Jihad in Iraq , Not Back Home](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

11. [borders on ridiculous](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

12. [HYPOCRITE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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13. [LETTERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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14. [Letters to the Editor](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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15. [The war over the peace prize](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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16. [SUICIDE ATTACKER KILLS AT LEAST 19 IN NORTH OF ISRAEL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

17. [Naming agent is an appalling breach](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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18. [Your Say](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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19. [LETTERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

20. [Fundraisers reveal the rule of money](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

21. [LETTERS: YOUR VIEWS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

22. [Shimon Peres : Time Is Running Out for Likud Party](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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23. [Quotes of the year](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

24. [Slick? No, this sick flick is just pulp fascism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

25. [JOURNALISTIC SINS OF COMMISSION](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

26. [How an Al Qaeda hotbed turned inhospitable](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

27. [*In The Promised Land?;Nancy Morris isn't your typical rabbi: for a start, she doesn't have a beard. But it's her personal journey from despair to happiness as Scotland's only woman in that position which truly sets her apart. As the festival of Hanukkah nears, Magin McKenna found her reflecting on the return of difficult times*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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28. [*The man who knew too much*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

29. [*Al Qaeda's profile: slimmer but menacing*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

30. [*It's heartbreaking to see our nation grow so divided*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

31. [Sex columnist didn't deserve to be on front page](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

32. [God's a bestseller - but there's a fundamental flaw](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

33. [WORLD REPORT](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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34. [Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

35. [YOUR SAY - LETTERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

36. [After 9/11, U.S. has a better idea of Israel 's plight](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

37. [*BURNING WITH CONVICTION; A GROUP OF IRANIAN EXILES - ANGERED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS THEIR*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

38. [*2003 THE YEAR IN REVIEW; A year dominated by conflict*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

39. [*WORLD REPORT*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

40. [*LETTERS TO THE EDITOR*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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41. [*The life of a JI detainee*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

42. [Pity the prison officers with a professional task](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

43. [The Clash Over Middle East Studies](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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44. [4.1. "PACIFICATION" OF CHECHNYA II](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

45. [WORLD REPORT](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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46. [Letters from the people](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

47. [*Navigating the map of a million wounded hearts*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

48. [*Online and Even Near Home, a New Front Is Opening in the Global Terror Battle*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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49. [*Crop of complaints from cosseted farmers*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

50. [*Kingmaker: \(Part 1\): Long a tourism magnet, Trinidad and Tobago's tropical beauty conceals a darker identity. Donna Jacobs investigates Trinidad's ties to terror and, in an exclusive interview, talks to the Toronto-educated man who holds the key to the country's uncertain future.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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51. [*High-profile arrests; few charges Jihad in London*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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52. [Yes, I think power drives you mad](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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53. [Letters to the Editor](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

54. [Readers' views:African goals still off target](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

55. [TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

56. [TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

57. [Death Is Celebrated and Life Means Less Than Nothing Three Authors Strive To Understand the Violent Evolution of Modern Terrorism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

58. [Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terrorism. While researching her book, a Harvard academic tries to find out why they believe they have a moral mandate to murder](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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59. [THE WEEK](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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60. [Letters to the Editor](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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61. [Hijacking History, With Few Facts and Fewer Sources](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to

62. [Jerusalem's growing web of walls](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

63. [Letters to the Editor](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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64. [Weekend: 2003: For Tony Blair, it was the year everything began to turn sour. The feeling grew that the nation had been duped into war, the Hutton inquiry was a potential time bomb, his most trusted lieutenants bailed out, top-up fees rankled and that lipstick moment at No 10 backfired. Then, on a winter evening, at a farm near Tikrit, his luck changed. Zoe Williams reviews the trajectory of the prime minister, war and other events of 2003.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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65. [Crush of humanity - Overpopulation - Diseases - Immigration - Food Shortages - Essay - 40 YEARS OF THE AUSTRALIAN - Part 1 of 13](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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66. [Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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67. [*Saturday Review: Essay : In the zone of the living: Can literature address the conflict in the Middle East? Linda Grant asks some of Israel 's best known writers whether fiction has a duty to reflect the unfolding catastrophe in the region: In the zone of the living*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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68. [*BACK ON THE PEACE TRAIN; NEXT WEEK, YUSUF ISLAM, A DEVOUT MUSLIM CHARITY WORKER FROM NORTH*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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69. [*BACK ON THE PEACE TRAIN; NEXT WEEK, YUSUF ISLAM, A DEVOUT MUSLIM CHARITY WORKER FROM NORTH*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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70. [*Beyond belief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

71. [*India 's 'lab' for divisive politicsHalf-century of pluralism under attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

72. [India 's 'lab' for divisive politicsHalf-century of pluralism under attack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

73. [G2: The Clinton interview: 'Mandela helped me survive Monicagate, Arafat could not make the leap to peace, and for days John Major wouldn't take my calls': On the eve of the publication of his eagerly anticipated \\$ 10m autobiography, Bill Clinton speaks exclusively to Alan Rusbridger and Jonathan Freedland in New York](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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74. [THE INVISIBLE; THE HUMAN COST OF THE 21ST CENTURY'S FIRST WAR IS ALREADY ENORMOUS.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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75. [Kerry's Undeclared War](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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76. [Fern Holland's War](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

77. [Hamas leader is murdered:](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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78. [HAMAS WRONG TO GLORIFY SUICIDE BOMB MOTHER'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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79. [LETTERS; HAMAS SUICIDE WARNING PROVES KILROY WAS RIGHT](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

80. [The Killing of the Hamas Leader](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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81. [Hamas a threat, too](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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82. [HAMAS FIGHTERS WAGING WAR AGAINST INNOCENTS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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83. [Calling Hamas by wrong name](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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84. [LETTER: HAMAS HYPOCRISY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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85. [A Murderous Group](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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86. [Israel 's strike put in context](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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87. [*Thousands bury leader*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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88. [*DOOM & GLOOM*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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89. [*Mum kills four in bombing*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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90. [*Women in suicide pact; MARTYRS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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91. [*BOMBER AND CHILD*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

92. [Quotable](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

93. [Israel Levels 3 Palestinian Authority Buildings](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

94. [ROW OVER PRISONERS MAY PUT TRUCE AT RISK](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

95. [Madonna cancels Israel dates](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

96. [Three stops and you're out: Madonna won't be performing in Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

97. [ARAFAT DEFIANT AS ISRAEL THREATENS HIS EXPULSION](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

98. [Palestinian Women Protest Aid Freeze](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

99. [Bomber kills 4](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

100. [SUICIDE BOMBER ON INTERNET](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 01, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

Capture Makes U.S. No Safer, Dean Says

New York Sun (Archive)

December 16, 2003 Tuesday

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Section: FRONT PAGE; Pg. 1

Length: 1293 words

Byline: By JOSH GERSTEIN Staff Reporter of the Sun

Dateline: LOS ANGELES

Body

Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean declared yesterday that the much-heralded apprehension of Saddam Hussein has done nothing to improve American national security.

"The capture of Saddam is a good thing, which I hope very much will keep our soldiers in Iraq and around the world safer, but the capture of Saddam has not made America safer," Dr. Dean said during a morning speech to a foreign policy group here.

The former governor of Vermont, whom polls show leading the Democratic field, stood by the anti-war stance that has drawn many voters to his campaign.

"The difficulties and the tragedies which we have faced in Iraq show the administration launched the war in a wrong way at the wrong time," Dr. Dean said. "The Iraq war diverted critical intelligence and military resources, undermined diplomatic support for our fight against terror and created a new rallying cry for terrorist recruits."

Dr. Dean's analysis of Saddam Hussein's arrest was entirely at odds with that offered by President Bush at a White House news conference earlier in the day.

"America is more secure as a result of his capture," the president said, adding that the whole world stood to benefit.

Senator Lieberman, a Connecticut Democrat and another contender for the nomination, issued a colorful rebuttal to Dr. Dean's assertion.

"Howard Dean has climbed into his own spider hole of denial if he believes that the capture of Saddam Hussein has not made America safer," the senator said. "Saddam Hussein is a homicidal maniac, brutal dictator, supporter of terrorism, and enemy of the United States, and there should be no doubt that America and the world are safer with him captured," Mr. Lieberman said.

Dr. Dean's 37-minute speech to the Pacific Council on International Policy was intended to dispel the fears of party leaders and some voters that the former governor lacks depth in foreign policy. His prepared remarks focused primarily on his view that the war on terror has been undercut by the Bush administration's failure to win support from the United Nations and from longtime American allies like France and Germany.

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"We can advance the battle against terrorism and strengthen our national security by reclaiming our rightful place as a leader of global institutions. The current administration has made it almost a point of pride to ridicule and dismiss these bodies. That is a mistake," Dr. Dean said.

He also mocked the administration for abandoning longstanding alliances in favor of "pick-up teams" of countries willing to join in a specific fight.

Dr. Dean's speech contained only a brief reference to the conflict between Israel and Palestinian Arabs. He called for a "just and lasting peace " in the region. He also said that America and Israel share a special bond." Our alliance with Israel is and will always be and must remain unshakable," he declared.

During a question-and-answer session, he was pressed for more specifics by questioners who suggested he was backtracking from his earlier statements about the conflict.

Dr. Dean acknowledged that his support for Israel has been questioned in some quarters. He said he will no longer call for an "evenhanded" approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because that term "is a codeword to certain people."

"I don't ever want to repeat that again," the candidate said.

Dr. Dean accused the White House of abandoning the Middle East peace process." This administration took a 15-month holiday from the effort," he said.

The former governor said he believed that the Palestinians "have a unique opportunity to embrace democracy in the Arab world." He said the participation of Palestinian women in politics was a positive sign and he maintained that a respect for democracy has taken root in Palestinian society.

"Many Palestinians have lived in the United States, in Europe, and in Israel, which is a democracy. They live next door to a vibrant democracy," he said. "They understand what a vibrant democracy is."

Dr. Dean also said that many Israelis, including members of the Likud party, are realizing that the country must surrender the West Bank.

"They can't hold on to the West Bank because if they do they're going to have a democracy perhaps, but not a Jewish state, or a Jewish state but not a democracy," he said.

Dr. Dean said that there was no way to achieve a lasting peace in the region while terrorist strikes against Israel continue. "When a bomb goes off in Jerusalem and kills 26 children, the Israelis will do whatever it takes to protect their children," he said.

Dr. Dean also said that Americans indirectly fuel the violence by buying imported oil.

"Our oil money goes to Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, which then turn it around and use it to fund Hamas, and worse, the teaching of small children throughout the Islamic world to hate Americans and Christians and Jews," the candidate said.

Dr. Dean said that he would take the Saudis to task while also trying to wean America from foreign oil.

"I would like to see a president who will stand up to the Saudis and say, 'Enough,'" he declared.

Two rabbis, who described them selves as standing to Dr. Dean's left politically, asked him if he was suggesting that Palestinians had to stop terrorist attacks on Israel before official peace talks could resume.

"That's not my policy at all," Dr. Dean said. "I make the observation that until the terror stops, the terrorists will probably be pretty successful in stopping peace from happening," he said.

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Dr. Dean also sought to make clear that despite his opposition to the most recent war in Iraq, he is no pacifist. He said he supported the earlier war in Iraq, as well as the use of American troops in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Outlining a policy he called the "Dean Doctrine," the candidate said he would use American military force in three situations: when the country was under attack, when the country faced an imminent threat, and to prevent genocide when international institutions had failed to act.

Dr. Dean said that he was realistic about the shortcomings of international organizations, but still believes that they are essential to keeping the peace.

Dr. Dean faulted the administration for failing to open bilateral talks with North Korea about that country's nuclear program. He said the White House was hamstrung "because the hard liners in the Bush administration somehow believed that the most powerful nation on Earth can be made to look bad by a small country which may or may not possess nuclear weapons."

Dr. Dean called a military strike against Iran or North Korea a "last resort," but he pointedly refused to rule such a move out, particularly in the case of the North Koreans.

"I believe the possession of nuclear weapons in North Korea could potentially qualify as an imminent threat," he said.

While Senator Lieberman criticized Dr. Dean for being soft on Saddam, Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri criticized the former governor for attempting to seize the political center.

Mr. Gephardt, who is also seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, accused Dr. Dean of trying to "reposition" himself on foreign policy and of breaking a promise not to make a political issue out of the Iraqi leader's capture.

"Howard Dean has been playing politics with foreign policy for over a year and his repositioning is just the latest Howard Dean political game," Mr. Gephardt,

During his visit to Los Angeles, Dr. Dean also attended two fundraisers: a lunch for the Democratic National Committee and a House of Blues concert for his campaign.

Despite his focus on foreign policy yesterday, Dr. Dean told the 200 luncheon guests that economic issues would dictate the outcome of the election next November. "The central issue in this campaign is about Enron," he said.

Load-Date: December 16, 2003

Everybody Hates Somebody Somewhere

The New York Times

November 16, 2003 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 7; Column 1; Book Review Desk; Pg. 50

Length: 1304 words

Byline: By Isabel Hilton; Isabel Hilton is a staff writer for The New Yorker and the author of "The Search for the Panchen Lama."

Body

TERROR IN THE NAME OF GOD

Why Religious Militants Kill.

By Jessica Stern.

368 pp. New York:

Ecco/HarperCollins Publishers. \$27.95.

SHORTLY after the 9/11 attacks, I was invited to dinner by a middle-class professional family in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad. It was an educated household and I was warmly entertained. It was the kind of home in which I expected to encounter a shared perspective, but I was wrong: my host was convinced that 9/11 was a conspiracy between the Jews and the Pentagon to give a pretext for attacking the Muslim world, and shared at length his suspicion that Freemasons had pulled the West's strings for a millennium. None of that family, as far as I knew, supported acts of terror. But mistrust of the Other and a sense of persecution -- preconditions common to all the terrorists that Jessica Stern encounters -- are worryingly widespread.

In "Terror in the Name of God," Stern recounts her four-year odyssey into the hearts and minds of religious terrorists. She talks to Christian, Jewish and Muslim extremists, violent anti-abortion warriors and admirers of Timothy McVeigh, and discovers how much they have in common. Nothing she finds leads the reader to suppose that any of the religious faiths is inherently more prone to violence than the other: the problem is not the words on the page, but how they are read.

A rough social template can be extrapolated from Stern's account: the leaders of such groups tend to have much younger, attractive and submissive wives who support their views; long hair, robes, veils and conspicuous deference are popular in all three faiths. The leaders tend to live in comfortable houses and enjoy the trappings of their power: large cars, acolytes and bodyguards. They talk in generalities about the justice of their cause and the Almighty's firm support. Those who serve as cannon fodder, on the other hand, are likely to be young, vulnerable, socially disadvantaged and poorly educated, and to have a sense of personal or collective humiliation. Violence for the cause gives them a feeling of purpose, dignity and the transcendent experience of serving, and perhaps dying for, ideals that they regard as pure. With faith, the weak become strong, the selfish become altruistic, and rage turns to conviction.

Everybody Hates Somebody Somewhere

If some of this sounds predictable, it is not to diminish the interest of Stern's account. A leading expert on terrorism and a lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, she has tracked down and interviewed an impressive range of activists in a variety of causes from Florida to Kashmir. On a subject that tends to be richer in rhetoric than in detail, a writer able and willing to get this close is hard to find.

These are not always profoundly penetrating encounters: there is an implicit bargain -- which Stern readily acknowledges -- that if you are allowed across the threshold it is because your interlocutor has an agenda that he imagines will be furthered. Terrorists need people to notice what they do and, for reasons of fund-raising and recruitment, want to convince a wider circle that the cause is just. Perhaps Stern's critics would deem this a reason to stay away, but they would be wrong. She is a levelheaded investigator whose knowledge of the background of groups like these adds perspective to her interviews.

A feeling of complete certainty, let alone absolute purity, is hard to come by in the examined life. To foster the conviction that God supports the murder of innocents requires a tightknit group and a settled hatred of the Other: in these circles, whites hate blacks and Jews; Jews and Christians hate Muslims and vice versa; anti-abortion crusaders hate gynecologists. All of them seem to have it in for homosexuals and most, even the Americans, hate contemporary America. Tolerance and women's rights, as Stern observes, are irritating to those left behind by modernity.

Consider this passage, part of a conversation with one religious extremist: American culture, he tells her, "is absolutely destroyed by Afro-Americanism. The lowest of the low." And: "America is also causing terrible damage . . . by exporting its culture. American culture should be treated the same as we treat drugs . . . as a poison. . . . In America, people have no education, no religion. They play with computers, television, pop music. These people have no values to fight for."

Is it a Muslim, raging at the evils of Osama's Great Satan? Is it a Christian in the United States, plotting to blow up another Federal building? It is, in fact, Avigdor Eskin, a millenarian Jew who believes, rather against the evidence, that the United States is conspiring to destroy Israel. To meet him, Stern, who is careful to share this kind of detail, dressed in a long skirt, long sleeves and a scarf that covered her hair, neck and shoulders completely -- an outfit that would have been equally de rigueur for a meeting with a strict Muslim. And as Eskin himself volunteers, they resemble each other in more than their dress code: "Here in Israel, we don't like to say this very loudly, but the radical right Jewish groups have a lot in common with Hamas." Both, Stern adds, have twin political and religious objectives and both use selective readings of religious texts and of history to justify violence over territory.

If to the outsider the manners are similar, each group believes itself to be uniquely favored by the Almighty, and each individual follows his own trajectory. A Palestinian suicide bomber might be suffering from what Stern describes as the epidemic of despair that afflicts his people. An American Identity Christian who was sickly as a child still burns with the humiliation of being made to join a girls' gym class at school. A young madrassah student in Pakistan says that the day he came to the religious school was the first time in his life he had enough food to eat or clothes to wear; two of his fellow pupils tell her that education and wealth are the two greatest threats to their cause.

The argument is often a fight about land and resources expressed through the powerful ideologies of identity. Some groups -- the mujaheddin who fought in Afghanistan or the Muslim warriors in Indonesia -- were created by state security services but have now escaped from control. Most enjoy ample funds and money has become, for many, a reason for continuing the war.

In between her interviews, Stern offers a cogent analysis of methodologies and structures: she distinguishes between lone-wolf avengers and organizations with hierarchies of command, between networks, franchises and freelancers, between inspirational leaders and leaderless resistance. She lays out the impact of the post-9/11 war on terror on organizations like Al Qaeda and confirmed my suspicion that both the rhetoric and the reality of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have boosted their numbers without crippling their capacity to harm. To fight today's terrorism with an army is like trying to shoot a cloud of mosquitoes with a machine gun.

The hard part, of course, is what to do instead. Stern describes how winner-take-all globalization provokes powerful resentment in a wide range of communities. Failed states, weak or tyrannical governments, social deprivation,

Everybody Hates Somebody Somewhere

arbitrary use of power and a perception of injustice -- all help generate recruits. The Internet and the easy availability of weapons helps empower the discontented. On an individual level, though, why one true believer in search of a transcendent experience should become a saint and another a terrorist seems to be chance: it can come down to the wrong company at the vulnerable moment. On a global scale, Stern ventures some general policy advice, without claiming to offer a solution. As a description of the problem, though, this is a serious and provocative beginning.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: November 16, 2003

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The Tyrant Gadhafi Must Go

New York Sun (Archive)

November 6, 2003 Thursday

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 1297 words

Byline: By CLAUDIA ROSETT

Body

In the war on terror, one of the strangest developments - and that's saying a lot - has been the step-by-step return to polite society of Libya's terrorist-sponsoring tyrant, Colonel Muammar Gadhafi.

Over the past year, the United Nations has dignified Colonel Gadhafi, first by appointing one of his ambassadors as head of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, then, on September 12, by lifting sanctions on Libya - after the Libyan strongman took "responsibility" for the 1988 Lockerbie airplane bombing and arrived at the first phase of a cash settlement with families of the victims.

Colonel Gadhafi has now been allowed to reopen his embassy in London. He's been dickering with Germany over compensation for his 1986 bombing of a Berlin nightclub, with France over compensation for his 1989 bombing of a French airplane over Niger. And, as the Libyan dictator waves around his billions in blood money, he has been demanding that America take a cue from the U.N. and lift the sanctions that for 17 years have barred our companies from doing business in Libya.

Other high points in what some have called Colonel Gadhafi's charm offensive include recent announcements that his regime plans to privatize 361 companies, and that Libya is prepared to spend **\$9 billion in a bid to host soccer's 2010 World Cup - with facilities already under construction.**

For several years, high-profile Western journalists have periodically been invited to visit Libya, sit with Colonel Gadhafi for an exclusive interview, and ponder such intriguing questions as whether terrorist despots can truly change their ways.

A classic of this genre was Colonel Gadhafi's chipper exchange with Newsweek's special diplomatic correspondent, Lally Weymouth, published last January under the headline "The Former Face of Evil."

For a better sense of the real face of Colonel Gadhafi, take a closer look inside Libya itself, a country that the strongman has run for 34 years as his own totalitarian wonderland - and still does. Libya, by every reasonable ranking and report, from Amnesty International to Freedom House to the State Department, remains one of the most oppressed societies on earth. There are no private newspapers; there is no independent rule of law.

Multilayered, pervasive surveillance is routine; so is arbitrary arrest; so is torture in prison; so is collective punishment of entire families for the actions of one individual.

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There are no private banks; there is no private enterprise of any substantial size. Libya's oil industry, with reserves ranked among the top 10 on the planet, accounts for 95% of Libya's exports, and belongs entirely to the state, which in effect belongs entirely to Colonel Gadhafi.

And, the only law being Colonel Gadhafi's word, one of the basic ways in which he keeps control is by constantly shifting his rules, so all Libyans must constantly be following his lead (a trait that ought to engage the attention of the Bush administration now reviewing sanctions on Libya).

A Libyan-born scholar, Mansour El-Kikhia, now a naturalized American teaching at the University of Texas at San Antonio, explains that Colonel Gadhafi has changed even the Libyan calendar so it is out of synchronization with both the Islamic world and the West. In an illuminating book published in 1997, "Libya's Qaddafi," Mr. El-Kikhia noted that "every year a new set of rules telling Libyans what to wear, eat, say and read is enacted by the regime. The country has become one of the most restricted in the world."

Has that changed? Ask a Libyan-American, Mohamed Eljahmi, 44. Mr. Eljahmi's older brother, Fathi Eljahmi, 62, was arrested 13 months ago back in Libya for speaking out against Colonel Gadhafi and calling for democracy.

Mr. Eljahmi was sentenced to five years in prison, at a trial he himself was not allowed to attend. He is now doing time in Tripoli's Abu-Salim prison, notorious both for wretched conditions and for a 1996 massacre in which the authorities shot hundreds of inmates.

On the international front, littered along Gadhafi's trail along with the outright terrorist acts for which he is now buying indulgences, there are odd incidents that should also leave us deeply wary. Three years ago, he provided some \$10 million to ransom 10 European hostages held by the Islamic terrorist group Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines. For this, he reaped the gratitude of the freed hostages, some of whom went to Libya to thank him effusively for his kindness. The net effect, however, was also the transfer, in broad daylight, of a big lump of cash from Colonel Gadhafi to terrorists in the Philippines. Was it ransom or funding?

Nor are Colonel Gadhafi's quarrels with the Arab League any cause for Western comfort. The strongman's switch from ardent Nasserite pan-Arabist to pacesetter in African politics began in 1992, when the U.N. imposed sanctions on Libya for the Lockerbie bombing, and Arab states declined to rally around him. So he refocused his favors on Africa.

There, his efforts to buy friends and influence fellow dictators eventually got Libya that chairmanship this year, as Africa's choice, at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. In Africa, Colonel Gadhafi has had a hand in a long series of bloody catastrophes, including in recent times the brutal presidency in Liberia of Libyan-trained Charles Taylor, and Colonel Gadhafi's support in the form of fuel and friendship for Zimbabwe's aging dictator, Robert Mugabe - who has held onto power by orchestrating his own cultural revolution, complete with mob attacks and famine for those who oppose him.

Libya has also surfaced in recent weeks in regard to the arrest of an American Muslim activist, Abdur Rahman Alamoudi, charged with an interesting medley of activities, including not only helping the terrorist group Hamas but also accepting \$340,000 in sequentially numbered \$100 bills from the Libyan government, apparently to lobby for the lifting of American sanctions.

And Colonel Gadhafi, on October 4, gave a speech to a group of women in the Libyan city of Sabha, in which he held up as models the suicide bombers of Baghdad and Gaza. As translated by the Washington-based Middle East Media Research Institute, Colonel Gadhafi urged these Libyan women to learn how to "booby-trap the car and blow it up among the enemy," as well as how to "booby-trap the children's toys, so they blow up on the enemy soldiers."

In the free world, so used to dealing in good faith, there abides this strange belief that even terrorist sponsoring tyrants can be redeemed - that a Kim Jong Il can be coddled out of his cruelties, that a Colonel Gadhafi can change his spots. Perhaps that's because in our daily lives, we experience almost nothing of what these regimes are truly like.

The Tyrant Gadhafi Must Go

We show far more insight into the tame, familiar realms of, say, our own corporate affairs, where we readily agree that gross mismanagement - an Enron, a WorldCom, a Global Crossing - can be remedied only by firing the executives responsible. We have yet to grasp fully that in raw, ruthless dictatorships - in the case of a Colonel Gadhafi, who has inflicted on his own people, for 34 years, gross misrule by force and terror - the same principle applies.

The true redemption of Libya cannot be achieved by accepting from Gadhafi - he of the booby traps - promises and blood money. That money, sucked from the oil wells of Libya, belongs by rights not to Colonel Gadhafi, but to the 5.4 million people of Libya. Genuine reform can only begin when he is gone.

As for the \$9 billion with which Libya proposes to put itself in the running to host the 2010 World Cup, El-Saadi Gadhafi, the second son of Colonel Gadhafi's second wife, has been telling the London press that it's a good investment. He should know. He's head of the Libyan soccer federation.

Load-Date: November 6, 2003

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Abraham's children chat

The Toronto Star
October 18, 2003 Saturday
Ontario Edition

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Section: RELIGION; Pg. L16

Length: 1294 words

Highlight: Over bagels and samosas, the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims seeks common ground The group strives to improve relations between these two religious groups in Toronto, by Ron Csillag

Body

Amicable small talk. Queries about work, kids, vacations. More chit-chat. Laughter. And food. Plenty of food. Middle East delicacies like hummus and baba ghanouj are sampled with spicy samosas and mounds of bagels. Food works. It's the great connector.

The bonhomie is undeniable and the lack of tension discernible among the 17 Muslims and Jews who gather this night at a Toronto Reform synagogue for one of their monthly meetings aimed at exploring each other's faith and finding common ground in their little corner of this overheated planet.

It's not a forced cordiality. Voices are sincere, well-modulated. Even the occasional joke is thrown in. Coming to blows, even verbal ones, is unthinkable.

Small steps for the children of Abraham, yet big ones at the same time.

No one on this night at least brings up terrorism, or Israel and the Palestinian conflict, although that has a presence of its own (referred to internally as "the elephant in the room.") And no one mentions the Qur'-an's vexing approach to Jews - describing them in strongly disparaging terms one minute and extolling them as fellow believers the next - or that the holy text forbids Muslims from befriending Jews (and Christians, too).

While those and other sticking points aren't swept under the rug, they aren't dwelled on either. Rather, the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims acts on the maxim "think globally, act locally." It focuses on improving relations between the two groups here in Toronto, home to about 350,000 Muslims and 175,000 Jews, by first establishing mutual trust and a comfort level, and then learning about each other's religions, rituals and place in the world. The two sides also plan to join forces on domestic issues.

For example, in August, the group wrote to Prime Minister Jean Chretien protesting the detention of 19 Pakistani Muslim Canadians on suspicion they might pose a threat to national security.

"We're trying to build bridges of understanding so that even if you disagree vehemently, you'll still see the other person as a person," explains the group's Jewish co-chair, Barbara Landau, a psychologist and mediator who specializes in conflict resolution.

"The idea is to listen as though the other person might be right."

Abraham's children chat

The dialogue was founded in 1996 by two colleagues in Ontario's civil service, Jack Stevens, an Iraqi Jew, and Shahid Akhtar, a Pakistani Muslim.

"We noticed there was interaction between Christians and Jews, and there were multifaith groups, but nothing between Muslims and Jews," says Akhtar.

It lay dormant for a while, but the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks rekindled the effort, this time as an attempt to defuse the anti-Muslim backlash. Just three days after the attacks, the group read a joint message at a Toronto City Hall rally affirming the ideals uniting them as Canadians, including valuing human life, mutual respect and co-existence.

There's no official membership. About 100 regulars are on the roster, evenly divided between Jews and Muslims, the latter comprising both Sunnis and Shi'as mainly from Pakistan, India and East Africa. There are very few Arabs, and no Palestinians.

"That's not deliberate," insists Landau, who helps run a separate Jewish-Palestinian dialogue.

"We are here to learn about each other as well as from each other," pronounces Akhtar this night in the boardroom of Temple Emanu-El, before introducing the guest speaker, Parveen Ali, a London, England-based lawyer and academic who talks about the role of women in Islam. She begins with the traditional Muslim greeting "Salaam Alekum," meaning peace be unto you - the same as the Hebrew "Shalom Alecheim."

The floor is then turned over to Rabbi Edward Elkin, spiritual leader of Toronto's First Narayever Congregation, who expounds on the role of women in Judaism.

Participants nod at the similarities and agree that in the broad spectrum of both religions, cases can be made for women's full equality as well as for their status as second-class citizens.

"The more orthodox you get, the less legitimate everything else is," observes Landau.

The group has hosted an interfaith Passover seder and a Rosh Hashanah dinner, and is planning a joint Ramadan-Chanukah celebration.

The interaction isn't limited to exploring each others' religious traditions. There have been a number of joint initiatives:

The Canadian Jewish Congress supported Muslims on two occasions when municipal officials, citing zoning laws, tried to stop construction of mosques in East York and Mississauga. Both projects were eventually given the green light.

Earlier this year, Canada's Pakistani community created a journalism scholarship in memory of Daniel Pearl, the Jewish reporter for the Wall Street Journal beheaded by Muslim extremists in Pakistan last year.

The Islamic Society of North America (Canada) joined the Jewish congress in supporting the provincial government's controversial tax credit for parents of children in faith-based schools.

In February, Canadian Jewish Congress and the Islamic Council of Imams-Canada called on the federal government to exempt ritual slaughter of meats from proposed animal-cruelty legislation.

And in 2001 Canadian Muslims and Jews came together to urge Ottawa to deny public funding to a group that sought to outlaw the circumcision of baby boys.

A Jewish-Islamic study circle sponsored jointly by the University of Toronto and Beth Tzedec Congregation is in its second year.

But what about the really heavy lifting: Israel, the status of Jerusalem, racial profiling, terrorism in the name of Islam, even whether to allow the Arab TV network Al-Jazeera into Canada?

Abraham's children chat

"Of course it comes up," says Akhtar. "It comes up all the time. We make it a point to talk about the difficult questions. But when we do, we do it in a most respectful manner, in a way we assume the other person could be right," he says, adding, with a chuckle, "We never come to blows."

Landau says her expertise in conflict resolution comes in handy.

"People who aren't listened to, escalate. When they are listened to, the rage dissipates. And when their stereotypical expectations aren't met, they move to curiosity.

"There's an old Jewish saying: 'God gave us two ears and one mouth.' We should listen twice as much as we should speak," she says.

But relations are sometimes strained.

The Jewish congress was dismayed when, in 2001, the Islamic congress gave a "media excellence award" to a local newspaper that supports Hamas and Hezbollah.

"We would welcome greater public acknowledgment (from Canadian Muslims) that terrorism is a real and present danger," says the Jewish congress' Manuel Prutschi, citing the two communities' divergent views on federal anti-terrorism legislation and racial profiling.

Another sore point is anti-Semitism. Jewish officials say that in Canada today, it emanates mainly from Muslim circles.

"We will pursue good and better relations with the Muslim community," says Prutschi, "but we won't hesitate to expose and fight anti-Semitism."

Farzana Hassan Shahid, a Muslim from Pakistan who's been in Canada 19 years, was moved to join the dialogue because she saw something welcoming among Jews.

"They appreciate the sanctity of life," says Shahid, who's president of the Ontario chapter of Muslims Against Terrorism, founded in Calgary in 1999. "They're very sincere in their efforts to promote peace and understanding. We need those in our community who are not convinced to see that."

For local interfaith activist Fredelle Brief, the dialogue comes down to "the issue of democracy in a time of terror. If we take away the civil rights of some, we take them away for all. And that's not something that's on the public's agenda."

Ron Csillag is a Toronto writer specializing in religion. He can be reached at csillag @ rogers.com.

Graphic

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JO-ANN DODDS

Load-Date: October 18, 2003

Rage over Syria raid

The Toronto Star
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Byline: Mitch Potter, Toronto Star

Highlight: Israeli air attack near Damascus is the first in 30 years U.N. convenes to discuss 'grave escalation' of tensions

Body

Syria strike sparks rage

Fears the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could sweep through the region were renewed last night after Israeli warplanes bombed Syrian territory for the first time in 30 years.

The Israeli Air Force raid on a purported Palestinian training base near Damascus came in retaliation for a weekend suicide bombing that killed 19 people and wounded 55 in the Israeli port city of Haifa.

The Palestinian group Islamic Jihad claimed the Haifa bombing, but disavowed any link to the Syrian base at Ein Saheb, 22 kilometres northwest of the capital, Damascus.

Residents near the site told the camp was abandoned by Palestinian militants decades ago. Ahmed Jirbril, head of the radical Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, said the camp belonged to his group and had been deserted for years.

The Israeli army circulated undated Iranian television footage of the camp in defending the strike. The images showed a military officer conducting a tour of buildings and underground tunnels packed with weapons and ammunition.

One security guard was reported wounded in the air raid. But the political fallout sent shock waves throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Emergency sessions of the United Nations Security Council and the 22-member Arab League were convened, with Syria signalling it would opt for a diplomatic response to what it called a "grave escalation" of Mideast tensions.

"Syria is not incapable of creating a resisting and deterring balance that forces Israel to review its" actions, Syria said.

In a letter of complaint to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Syria demanded measures to "deter the Israeli government from following provocative, aggressive policy against Syria."

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Israeli Ambassador Dan Gillerman said he was "outraged" at the Syrian demands, saying "it is as if (Osama) bin Laden would have asked for a Security Council meeting after 9/11," the Hebrew daily Haaretz Web site reported.

The Arab League later released a statement demanding the U.N. act to stop "the organized state terrorism and the practices of the Israeli occupiers against the Palestinian people as well as Syria and Lebanon."

At a joint news conference in Cairo, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak both condemned the action.

Schroeder said peace efforts "become more complicated when ... the sovereignty of a country is violated. This is why the action in Syria is not acceptable."

The French foreign ministry called the Israeli operation "an unacceptable violation of international law and sovereignty rules."

The strike was launched just hours before the start of Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. It also came on the eve of the anniversary of the 1973 war between Israel and Syria, when Israel fought off a Syrian attack aimed at reversing Israel's 1967 seizure of the Golan Heights, a strategic border plateau. Yesterday marked Israel's first military action deep in Syria since 1973.

Last night, the 15-nation council, meeting in emergency session, considered the Syrian-drafted resolution accusing Israel of violating the U.N. Charter and international law and expressing "grave concern with the escalating situation in the Middle East."

Syrian Ambassador Fayssal Mekdad, the only Arab council member, called for an immediate vote on the draft.

But U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte said the measure would first have to be sent to capitals for study and made clear the United States would not support the draft.

Other diplomats said there would be no action today, the Yom Kippur Jewish holiday.

Negroponte said it was important for Israel to "avoid actions that could lead to a further heightening of tension in the Middle East."

But, he added, "The United States believes that Syria is on the wrong side of the war on terrorism."

Yesterday, the leading Palestinian militant group, Hamas's armed wing, the Izz al-Deen al-Qassam Brigades, vowed to exact revenge against Israel for its air strike on the camp in Syria.

"We call on all the cells of the Izz al-Deen al-Qassam Brigades in all areas to quickly respond in the depths of the Zionist enemy to the treacherous aggression on Syria," said the statement by the Islamist faction's military wing faxed to . "Any assault on any Arab and Muslim country is an assault on the Palestinian people, part of the Arab and Muslim nation."

White House spokesperson Ken Lisaius said U.S. President George W. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon spoke by telephone yesterday and "discussed the attack on the terrorist camp in Syria. They also agreed on the need to avoid heightening tension in the region at this time."

Washington has repeatedly confronted Syria with demands for co-operation in its ongoing war on terror, accusing Damascus of sponsoring a range of extremist groups including militants bent on Israel's destruction.

In Israel, public reaction to the strike on Syria was virtually non-existent, as the country saw to the burial of the Haifa suicide bomb victims before withdrawing for the evening arrival of Yom Kippur, the most solemn day of the Jewish calendar. As is customary, television and radio programming was suspended and newspapers ceased publishing until tomorrow.

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In a written statement reporting the raid, Israel Defence Forces said "the army has started operating against those behind the attack, those who support (terror) and those who use the strategy of terror in order to harm the citizens of Israel."

Israeli government spokesperson warned yesterday that any country harbouring terrorists "will be responsible to answer for (its) actions."

Buffeted by continuing suicide attacks, the hardline Sharon government has worked through a long menu of military responses during three years of Palestinian intifada, including curfews, house demolitions and a continuing campaign of assassinations against suspected militant leaders in the West Bank and Gaza.

In the wake of double suicide bombings last month, the Israeli cabinet signalled its intention to "remove" Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as an "obstacle to peace in a manner, and at a time, of its choosing."

Last night, Arafat was huddled with his inner circle in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

In a sign of movement in the Palestinian leadership, Prime Minister-nominee Ahmed Qureia announced an eight-member emergency cabinet is to immediately "assert control over security" in Palestinian areas, possibly including action against militants.

With files from REUTERS NEWS AGENCY;

Graphic

AP PHOTO Among the 19 people killed Saturday when a Palestinian **female** suicide bomber blew up in a crowded beach restaurant in Haifa, Israel, were three generations of one family from the northern Israeli kibbutz of Yagur. From left to right: Bruriya Zer-Aviv, 54, her son B'tzalel, 30, his wife Keren, 29, and their two children, Noya, 1, and Liran, 4. Four members of the Almog family from Haifa also died. Alex Rozkovsky/REUTERS Relatives of Israeli Nir Regev who was killed in Saturday's suicide bomb attack in Haifa, weep during his funeral in Netanya yesterday. Nineteen people were killed and 55 wounded in the attack. AP PHOTO Among the 19 people killed Saturday when a Palestinian **female** suicide bomber blew up in a crowded beach restaurant in Haifa, Israel, were three generations of one family from the northern Israeli kibbutz of Yagur. From left to right: Bruriya Zer-Aviv, 54, her son B'tzalel, 30, his wife Keren, 29, and their two children, Noya, 1, and Liran, 4. Four members of the Almog family from Haifa also died. Alex Rozkovsky/REUTERS Relatives of Israeli Nir Regev who was killed in Saturday's suicide bomb attack in Haifa, weep during his funeral in Netanya yesterday. Nineteen people were killed and 55 wounded in the attack.

Load-Date: October 6, 2003

ALEX ALEXIEV: THE USA AND RUSSIA HAVE A COMMON ENEMY - SAUDI WAHHABISM

What The Papers Say (Russia)

July 11, 2003, Friday

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Section: PRESS EXTRACTS

Length: 1319 words

Byline: Yevgeni Bai

Highlight: EVEN IF INDIVIDUAL CHECHEN CHIEFS ARE NOT MEMBERS OF AL QAEDA OR OTHER TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS, THEY ARE ALL PART OF THE SAME ISLAMIC INFRASTRUCTURE. OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS, THIS EXTREMIST NETWORK HAS SURVIVED AND DEVELOPED PRIMARILY DUE TO SAUDI ARABIA.

Body

Several days ago, Dr. Alex Alexiev appeared as one of the chief witnesses at closed US Senate hearings on the problem of religious extremism. Dr. Alexiev has worked at the Rand Corporation, and as a consultant on national security to the Pentagon and the CIA; he is currently a senior analyst with the Center for Security Policy, and an expert in counter-terrorism.

Question: After the bombings at Tushino on July 5, President Putin said: "The Chechen guerrillas are not merely linked to international terrorist organizations, but have become inseparable from them - perhaps even the most dangerous part of the web of international terrorism." Do you agree?

Alex Alexiev: On the whole, I think Putin is right. Even if individual Chechen chiefs are not members of al Qaeda or other terrorist organizations, they are all part of the same Islamic infrastructure. Over the past 25 years, this extremist network has survived and developed primarily due to Saudi Arabia. It is quite clear to me that the most extremist and Wahhabi part of the Chechen movement - in Chechnya and Dagestan alike - is part of that terrorist network. These people are different from other Muslims living in the Caucasus. I'd compare them to the radical Palestinian group Hamas, or Pakistani terrorists, or Muslim fanatics worldwide, including in the United States. Izvestia, July 11, 2003, pp. 1-4

Question: You mentioned Saudi Arabia as the main sponsor of international terrorism. It is known that there are plenty of Saudis among field commanders in Chechnya. For example, a certain Abu Walid, who took over after Khattab the Jordanian was killed, and was also said to have been killed. Of the 19 terrorists who attacked America on September 11, 2001, 15 were Saudis. But Saudi Arabia remains America's major ally in the Mideast.

Alex Alexiev: Alas, that's true. From the early 1970s, Saudi Arabia started actively exporting Wahhabism - the main ideology of all terrorist organizations. Al Riyadh's financial capacities for doing this are truly boundless. Wahhabism has managed to penetrate many traditional centers which until then had practised moderate Islam. I am also seeing this process in Russia. The Saudis started sending their missionaries and directing money into your country back in the period of Gorbachev's perestroika. It was a real tragedy for the people of Chechnya. Their demands for autonomy, most of which were entirely lawful, were hijacked by the Saudi Wahhabis. Russia's leaders made the

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mistake of being unable to distinguish between radical extremists and supporters of traditional Islam in Chechnya; Russia immediately opted for war. Later on, Chechnya's current leader Akhmad Kadyrov understood the full danger of Wahhabism, but many years were lost.

Question: You wrote a book in the 1980s about the Soviet Army and how it was fighting in Afghanistan. Do you think the failures of the federal troops in Chechnya are primarily due to the low military readiness of the Russian Armed Forces?

Alex Alexiev: No, the problem does not lie in the military readiness of the Russian Army. In military terms, the Chechen guerrillas are not a problem for Moscow. The problem you Russians have in Chechnya is that a significant part of the population there has been subjected to powerful ideological processing. And you can't get anywhere with those people by using force.

The Chechnya problem will remain until the Russian leadership and the people of Chechnya edge the Wahhabis and destroy the basis for their multiplication. Suicide bombers that are ready to explode themselves for an idea cannot be overcome with arms - the longstanding experience of Israel is clear evidence. You have to destroy the source of the infection, which is the Saudi influence, Saudi money, and the entire Wahhabi structure.

Question: Can the United States and Russia fight this evil jointly?

Alex Alexiev: They ought to do this. This is their common enemy. I will quote just one example. A few days ago in Virginia, eleven people were charged with terrorism. They all are members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistani extremist organization that trains gunmen in its camps. It has stated more than once that it sends its "graduates" to Chechnya as well and that among them are natives of the United States, Central Asia, and Western Europe.

Question: President Putin calls for "scraping the Chechen terrorists out of their caves and destroying them." Do you agree with that?

Alex Alexiev: Yes, sure, they have to be neutralized. But how is that to be done? You can hold a referendum in Chechnya, announce amnesty, and elect the president; but if most people in Chechnya do not acknowledge this president, the conflict will go on. There are people in Chechnya who dislike Wahhabis, but at the same time they do not support Russia's policy in Chechnya. It is them you should establish contracts with, although they are not your friends. They can be critical and even warlike about Kadyrov's government, but at the same time, they are not linked to the Saudi radicals. The Russian leaders make a great mistake when they arrange an almost royal reception in honor of Abdullah Al-Turki, Secretary General of the Muslim World League a few days after the Nord Ost tragedy.

Question: But didn't he condemn the actions of the terrorists...

Alex Alexiev: This organization played a key role in creating Al Qaeda; in Chechnya, it is responsible for support of terrorist Movsar Baraev. By the way, I believe the U.S. government is also guilty of short-sighted policy in respect to these organizations.

Question: What can the United States do to liquidate the Wahhabi headquarters in Saudi Arabia?

Alex Alexiev: In fact, this is not that difficult. We know all organizations that sponsor terrorism by name. The largest of them are four, and they all are controlled by the Saudi government, namely the Islamic Guidance Ministry. They spend \$2.5 billion a year to disseminate their ideas. If this money flow to other countries is cut, the international terrorist network, of course, is not going to vanish right off, but it will grow significantly weaker. The very infrastructure of terrorism will be disrupted; thousands of Wahhabi mosques and madrasahs, the so-called cultural centers around the world, will no longer be supplied.

If this is not achieved, the international fight against terrorism will not be a success. It should be understood eventually: the Wahhabis are not only against the movies, schools, and women with uncovered faces, but they are also against traditional Islam. It is representatives of this type of Islam that Russia and the United States should ally with.

ALEX ALEXIEV: THE USA AND RUSSIA HAVE A COMMON ENEMY - SAUDI WAHHABISM

Question: Do you think the American leadership underestimates the threat from "the fifth column" of the Wahhabis in the United States?

Alex Alexiev: As far back as two years before the September 11 terrorist acts, I delivered a report at Congress hearings and warned of the threat of Wahhabis who had managed to subject most American mosques to their influence. They have huge resources - whereas traditional Muslims have no money for a major statement. Themselves, the Islamists assure that they are 6 to 7 million in America. I rather trust another figure, 2 million. A lot of them have succumbed to the Wahhabi influence. It is primarily about the Tabliehi Jammah organization that recruits "Jihadists." Its mosques and schools teach the art of hatred directed against Christians and other religions and that the Islamic flock should not integrate into American society.

This is what "the fifth column" is. Similar radicalization of Islam is happening in Russia, too, not only in Chechnya and Dagestan, but also in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and everywhere where Muslims live. Look at the Islamic websites on the Russian part of the Internet. They all are radically Islamic. For Russia, this is probably even a greater danger than for the United States.

Washington.(Translated by P. Pikhnovsky)

Load-Date: July 11, 2003

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Iran sways Iraqis with food, aid

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 01

Length: 1353 words

Byline: By Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: BAGHDAD

Highlight: Tehran's support of Iraqi opposition groups like SCIRI wins hearts and minds.

Body

Two months after the fall of Baghdad, it is easy to find corners of Iraq that resemble the neighboring Islamic Republic of Iran. Some schools are now regularly visited by religious guidance officials; mosques and universities are enforcing a stricter form of hejab, or Muslim covering for women; and poor areas devastated by war are receiving assistance from Iranian-funded organizations.

Perhaps more important, the most outspoken voice to emerge against US plans to redesign Iraq is the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). One of seven major Iraqi opposition groups, SCIRI is funded, aided, and until recently, headquartered in Iran's capital city, Tehran.

In this period of uncertainty in Baghdad - with political currents moving faster than efforts to form a transitional government - Iran's attempts to leave an imprint here are seen as either meddling or magnanimous.

To Washington, Iran is trying to destabilize the American-led rebuilding effort, discredit US influence, and perhaps even guide Iraq toward more theocratic foundations. Buttressing such claims, says one senior US official, is a laundry list of evidence - from media outlets that serve as virtual organs of the Iranian viewpoint to direct political involvement in various cities and "sightings of senior officers" of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iraq. Iran's Revolutionary Guards trained and funded the Badr Brigades, the military wing of SCIRI that has fanned out around Iraq and continues close cooperation with Iran, according to the senior US official.

But many Iraqis, religious Shiites in particular, see it differently. After more than two decades of Tehran's assistance to Iraqi opposition groups such as SCIRI and other anti-Baathist Shiite organizations, some Iraqis express gratitude. Tehran, through their eyes, is trying to help Shiites who were the subject of brutal oppression under Mr. Hussein's regime.

SCIRI leaders for their part insist they are acting in Iraq's interests and not taking directives from Tehran.

"We are not hiding our love for Iran," says Mullah Hamid Rashi al Saadi, a Shiite cleric from Sadr City, recently renamed for a senior SCIRI cleric assassinated four years ago. "But if you are talking about destabilization, it is not to the benefit of Iran that its neighbor is in a destabilizing situation. The US is always trying to blame Iran and consider it a terrorist country, but it is not."

Iran sways Iraqis with food, aid

While Mr. Saadi's ultimate dream is for Iraq to be ruled by Islamic law, he says it's not a practical goal at this time. "I am a religious man, and I really hope we are going to have an Islamic government, because we believe Islam is the best system to lead in this part of the world," he says in his SCIRI office here. "But the Iraqi people consists of many religious groups and opinions and because of that, a democratic government will have to come at the end of this period."

SCIRI was expected to be a key player in a national conference to be held soon after the war that would launch a transitional government. It outright rejects a new plan by L. Paul Bremer, the leading US official here, to appoint a political council instead. "Mr. Bremer has no authority to appoint a council," says Hamid al-Bayati, a leading member of SCIRI's central committee. "Without an Iraqi process, the people will reject the outcome of the appointments. If the people want us to have an Iraqi national conference soon, we will have it."

In the meantime, Mr. Bayati says, the Badr Brigades, whose *raison d'être* was to oppose the Baathist regime, is obsolete as a military unit. Now, SCIRI officials say, Badr is turning its former fighters into aid workers who are distributing food, setting up health clinics, and performing a wide variety of services that have gone completely absent since the war. "The American forces want to do these things by themselves," he says, "but these things cannot be done by the army. They need a civilian foundation."

Iran's pattern of support

On the other side of town, in a threadbare neighborhood called Habibiye, stands a rare sturdy and attractive building. It used to serve as a Baath Party meeting house. The hastily vacated building was occupied by SCIRI, which now uses it as a warehouse for distributing food and other supplies.

Surrounded by massive bags of rice, flour, soap, and other goods - the vast majority of it trucked in from Iran - a former militant with the Badr Brigades says that he's now in charge of giving out aid to needy people.

SCIRI has centers around Baghdad where people who used to depend on UN rations can get free food and medical care, says Hussein Ali Al-Bahar. "During Saddam's reign, we were force to fight, but now we give out food," he says. "We also provide protection for schools. We send clerics to schools to oversee and advise the teachers of religious principles."

Hussein Kazem, another local SCIRI official, says the neighborhood would have descended into anarchy if their organization had not stepped in to fill the government's shoes. "Two months have gone by without security, infrastructure, or services, and so the people are helping themselves, because there is no government here," he says.

The everyday assistance helps people through the hard times. It also goes miles toward winning hearts and minds. It is the same strategy that the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, or Party of God, successfully employed in Lebanon through the 1980s and 1990s. It is a tactic that also helped win converts to the Palestinian fundamentalist organization Hamas. When accompanied with political pressure, it is similar to the behavior that riled the Bush administration in its earlier regime-change project: Afghanistan.

"There is a pattern not unlike the pattern we saw in the early part of last year in Afghanistan, which is the genesis of Iran involving itself in a neighboring country," the senior US official says. "The goal is destabilization. It is negatively motivated - to create instability, to keep things in Iraq off-balance, and to keep us occupied. They have an interest in having things not go too well."

But with the recent upsurge in tensions between the US and Iran, riding on new charges by the Bush administration that Tehran is developing nuclear weapons and harboring senior Al Qaeda operatives, the stakes in Iraq are higher than they were in Afghanistan.

"They're playing a dangerous game," the US officials says. "One, they're likely to stir up resentment against them. And two, our own tolerance for destabilization activities is limited."

Iran sways Iraqis with food, aid

Maj. Gen. Ahmed al Hafagi, a military and security adviser to SCIRI, says it should not surprise the US that Iran is emerging as a prominent player in postwar Iraq. After harboring and aiding groups opposed to Hussein for so many years, some Iraqis treat it as only natural that Iran will try to reap the benefits.

"Iran absolutely has interests here it must protect in order to protect the national security interests of Iran," General Hafagi says. Like thousands of other Iraqis, he escaped to Iran and now feels that Iran must be treated respectfully. "Iran helped us for 23 years with billions of dollars, fighting against Saddam. And like we thank America, we thank Iran."

Impatient with US efforts

To be sure, some Iraqis are concerned about Iran's increased reach here. But, growing impatient with a road to reconstruction that is turning out to be much slower and rougher than many Iraqis expected, some blame the US for not stabilizing Iraq more quickly.

Even outside Shiite Islamic circles, some Iraqis accuse the US of looking for a scapegoat for everything that has yet to go Washington's way in postwar Iraq. And just as the US warns Iran to tread carefully, so must the US.

"It might be that they want to pressure Shiites under the pretext this is Iranian influence," says Bayati, the senior SCIRI leader.

If the US pushes too tough of an anti-Iranian line in postwar Iraq, some here say, it will be read as a battle to keep Shiites out of power. And that, many here remember, is one of the premises on which Iraq was founded.

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Load-Date: June 8, 2003

Saturday Review: Religion & politics: My brother the quarryman: Arnold Wesker salutes a book that attempts to look impartially at the problems of the Middle East: The Other Side of Despair: Jews and Arabs in the Promised Land by Daniel Gavron 224pp, Rowman & Littlefield, £17.95

The Guardian (London) - Final Edition

May 29, 2004

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Section: Guardian Saturday Pages, Pg. 13

Length: 1406 words

Byline: Arnold Wesker

Body

This seemed to me an important book when I read it; post-Madrid and post-Sheik Yassin, it is an urgent book to read. As Daniel Gavron writes: "Although it is the bombs and bullets that capture the headlines, numerous examples exist of friendly cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians." We are desperately hungry to know about them. This book is a kind of Jewish Via Dolorosa. David Hare spent a few weeks in Israel and interviewed a motley collection of Jews and Palestinians. Gavron, London born, has lived for 43 years in Israel, where he has worked as a journalist, written five books of non-fiction and two novels about life in Israel and its history, and was a founding member of the team that established the Palestine-Israel Journal. In his hugely intelligent and originally structured book he has interviewed and drawn portraits of 16 remarkable Palestinians and Jews. His conclusions are startling.

The late Professor Talmon of the Hebrew University once gave a lecture attempting to explain how the sociological and political development of the previous centuries led up to the Nazi holocaust. In it he used a very interesting phrase: "Release from awe and respect". European civilisation, he argued, had gradually evolved a state of mind in which "the group" was considered the instrument for either good or evil. There were no individuals, there were only groups. Attempting to evaluate the virtues and failings of each individual took too much time. It was simpler, cosier, to declare that "the group" was at fault. For some it was "the bourgeoisie" that was the instrument of suffering, while the working class was the instrument of change for the better. To the Protestants it was Catholics who caused the world's ills; for the Catholics the Protestants were to blame. Such thinking, Talmon argued, led to a release from that awe and respect which the individual could command. The group was too nebulous to require it, whereas the individual face forced us to have awe and respect. Confronting him or her made judgment a complex affair; it was easier to judge a group, which conveniently had no individual human face - no eyes to look into, no individual life to care about, no conscience to question.

The delight, optimism and sheer relief of Gavron's book is that it draws our perception away from the group - "the Arabs", "the Jews", "the Palestinians" - and focuses our attention on individuals. Instantly our hearts warm, and instead of our phobias about groups, our intelligence comes into play, we have awe and respect. And against a historical background, how well he's knitted their reported and actual speech, and how vivid and attractive they emerge, offering fresh pictures of Israeli/Palestinian life.

Saturday Review: Religion & politics: My brother the quarryman: Arnold Wesker salutes a book that attempts to look impartially at the problems of the Middle East....

It is true that suffering exists on both sides. Gavron is not afraid to spell it out. "Although the Palestinians have suffered far more than the Israelis, both sides have been harmed. There has been enormous damage to the Israeli economy; the Palestinian economy has been all but destroyed; the continuous disruption of both societies has resulted in irreparable harm to both national psyches."

To Gavron the basic problem is simple: "Two peoples lay claim to the same piece of real estate. Somehow it has to be shared, and the complications emerge in working out how . . . Israelis and Palestinians live among each other, entwined in a deadly, unbreakable embrace . . . There is no right or wrong here - simply different angles of vision."

In this clearly assembled, imaginatively researched selection of interviews Gavron offers those different angles of vision, many of which were, to me at least, unknown. How many are aware, for example, that Palestinians produced most of the world's Arabic computer software? How many know that in 1948 David Ben Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, "smashed the main Jewish dissident organisation, the Irgun Zvai Leumi"? - unlike the Palestinians' President Arafat, who refuses to disband the Arab dissident organisation Hamas.

His interviews begin with personalities from the past, such as Nasser Eddin Nashashibi, a Palestinian Arab of the old school and a member of one of the two most influential families in Palestine, the other being the Husseinis. Between them they owned urban real estate, olive and citrus groves, farms and businesses, and were fierce rivals. On his first meeting with Gavron in 1987, Nashashibi boomed out: "Good morning Mr Gavron. What a bloody mess! I don't know what the hell is going to happen, do you?" Although he's one of "yesterday's men", despite living through distress, disappointments and failed attempts to reconcile his people with the Jews, he is still able to declare: "My dear sir, it is nonsense to talk of unsolvable problems. Every problem has a solution. Reason can solve everything. But bombs, rockets and bullets have no place any more."

Such reasoning is echoed by another Palestinian, Tariq Essawi, who observes: "Whatever happens in this country, you are going to be here tomorrow morning, and so am I." What makes this rational observation poignant is that Essawi is one of two bereaved parents interviewed by Gavron. The other is an Israeli, Yitzhak Frankenthal. Both lost their sons. Essawi has a nephew who is planning to study law at the Hebrew University. That's an image few conjure up at the mention of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict - a Palestinian going to an Israeli college to study law.

Gavron's book is full of such fresh images: Lova Eliav, an Israeli pioneer and long-standing member of the Labour party who was once in line to take over the leadership, lost his position and prospects, and shocked his comrades, when he proposed the idea of a confederation of Israel, Palestine and Jordan, and even laid out a practical programme for joint exploration of resources; Adi Eilat, an Israeli refusenik who decided it was not soldiers who kill mothers and children that are to blame - they are merely frightened, jumpy young men in an abnormal battlefield. "It is the situation we have to change."

Samir Huleileh is the marketing and export manager of Nassar Jerusalem Stone, the largest quarry and stone-processing factory in the Middle East. Gavron records that: "It buys 40% of its raw materials from Israel, sells a third of its products to Israel, and exports to 32 countries via Israeli ports." Another fresh image, of life continuing through trade. An Israeli businessman says of Huleileh: "These guys are amazing. With all the curfews and closures, they keep operating. If there are only four available hours in a day, they will use them to the full. It's a pleasure to do business with them."

And what is one to make of Menahem Froman, a rabbi and passionate Zionist on intimate terms with both Ariel Sharon and Arafat, as well as with the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, and the former Archbishop of Canterbury, now Lord Carey? Froman thinks that the Jews should give up the conventional concept of national sovereignty and favours both an Israeli state and a Palestinian Arab state in all of Palestine. Jerusalem, he maintains, is too big for either Israel or Palestine. It can be the religious and cultural capital of the world.

The conclusion that Gavron reaches from listening to these diverse, reasonable and imaginative voices (13 men, three women) is that the Israelis and Palestinians have proved not only that they can live side by side but have declared that they want to live side by side; there is no other way. Most of them think it should be in two separate states. Gavron thinks otherwise. He believes - and this is what is startling - that they should live side by side in a

Saturday Review: Religion & politics: My brother the quarryman: Arnold Wesker salutes a book that attempts to look impartially at the problems of the Middle East....

single state, to be called Jerusalem. "The borders are already irrelevant," states Gavron in his final paragraph. "I am suggesting that Israeli and the Palestinian territories can be merged into a dynamic, multi-ethnic, culturally rich nation with new forms of co-existence between its different constituents . . . We must repudiate our phobias and prejudices and make a quantum jump . . . vaulting beyond despair." The Jewish, Palestinian and Christian voices within his book reaffirm a humane sanity of which we are all desperately in need.

To order *The Other Side of Despair* for £15.95 plus p&p call Guardian book service on 0870 836 0875. Arnold Wesker will have a five-night residency at the Guardian Hay Festival, starting this evening. See www.hayfestival.com for details.

Load-Date: May 29, 2004

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LETTERS

The Forward

April 23, 2004

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Section: Editorial; Pg. 8

Length: 1440 words

Body

Reports on Genocide Will Engender Action

The Forward published an eye-opening and crucially important article and an accompanying editorial in the April 16 issue about the ethnic cleansing campaigns in Rwanda 10 years ago and the one currently going on in Darfur, Sudan today ("Groups Question Own Inaction on African Killings"; "Genocide and Conscience"). We commend the Forward for bringing what threatens to be today's worst humanitarian crisis to the fore and we hope that the Jewish community is stirred into action as it was during the crisis in Bosnia.

We agree that the Jewish voice has been too silent in response to these tragedies; however we are terribly disappointed that even though the Forward spoke to me about the American Jewish World Service response, we were not mentioned in the piece. Such an omission is a slap in the face to the American Jews who did respond to the Rwanda genocide by supporting our efforts.

The American Jewish World Service sent more than \$130,000 worth of humanitarian assistance to Rwanda and is currently raising funds for emergency relief for the 1 million displaced people of Darfur in western Sudan. In addition, through our advocacy efforts we have joined a coalition of international relief organizations that has been instrumental in motivating the American government to negotiate a cease fire in Sudan and allow humanitarian organizations to provide relief.

There are many reasons that the Jewish and American response to these crises has been slow in coming. Not the least of them are the speed with which the ethnic cleansing campaigns are being conducted under the cover of civil war and the fact that journalists and humanitarian organizations have been denied access. We believe that as the American people, and particularly the Jewish community, hear about the gruesome ethnic cleansing of black African farmers by Arab militias in Darfur, they will respond.

Then our voices will unite once more, "never again."

Ruth Messinger

President

American Jewish World Service

New York, N.Y.

Nitpicking on President Misses Historic Stance

LETTERS

The April 16 editorial about President Bush's press conference on counterterrorism makes me think that I must have watched a different press conference than the Forward ("Bush and the Terrorists"). I thought that the president handled the questioners, who obviously had a political agenda, very well. The editorialist's criticisms of the president show a 20-20 hindsight.

What was lacking in the editorial was the failure to thank Bush for being the first major non-Israeli government official to recognize that Israel was not required to return to its indefensible 1967 boundaries, to recognize that Yasser Arafat is a terrorist, and to support Prime Minister Sharon's decision to leave Gaza, even if it means expanding Israel proper into the West Bank.

Sandor Shuch

Phoenix, Ariz.

Sarcastic Report Masks Campus Show's Success

I was saddened to read the April 9 feature article commenting on Hillel of Georgia's Campus SuperStar event ("Campus SuperStar' Sexes Up College Life With Song"). It amazes me how anyone could be so negative - and not manage to find one positive quote - about an evening that was magical and a program that is transformative.

Why would the Forward denigrate the "celebrity" of the judges, which included Steve Koonin, CEO of TNT and TBS, and Grammy award-winning music executives from Nashville? Not impressive enough for him? The contestants and audience seemed pretty stoked by their participation.

And that "cheesy" set was a real Coca-Cola Red Room (donated by Coke), the first of its kind to appear anywhere other than on "American Idol." How cool is that?

Many students partnered with community volunteers to stage SuperStar, one of the truly creative, ambitious, multicultural outreach and fundraising programs ever to be launched by a Hillel. The semi-final on my campus attracted 700 people - a great boost to our image - and proceeds from SuperStar has already helped fund a \$14,000 Israel awareness program.

So: What was the point in being sarcastic about what should be a model program for the entire country?

Missy Ball

UGA Hillel Student President

University of Georgia

Athens, Ga.

Nothing Heroic About Sharon's Gaza Bluff

Although he is surely entitled to choose anyone he likes, Rabbi Eric Yoffie's choice of Prime Minister Sharon as his hero "at this moment" seems a bit dubious. Better, as someone who describes himself as a dove, that he had chosen one of the Palestinian or Israeli negotiators of the Geneva Understandings or other peace proposals as his hero - or all of them, for that matter - for they have quite literally risked their lives for peace. Sharon himself has given the Geneva group credit for inspiring his proposal to withdraw from Gaza.

But it clearly requires a leap of faith to anticipate that most of the tents of settlement are about to be folded by the man who pitched them. Most commentators interpret Sharon's putative withdrawal from Gaza as a way of hardening Israel's claim and commitment to its settlements on the West Bank. That was the thinly veiled meaning of the letters exchanged between the Israeli leader and President Bush. And that was the explicit interpretation with which Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other hard-line Likudniks gave approval to the prime minister's

LETTERS

plans: extending the security fence eastward right into the heart of the West Bank to encompass Ariel and Emmanuel, thereby securing enmity and conflict into the indefinite future.

Sharon's tactical moves are in service to a strategic goal that Yoffie has rightly opposed: Israeli settlements deep in the heart of Palestinian territory. Soon enough, if Sharon has his way, his self-fulfilling prophecy will be complete. There will be no Palestinian prime minister - whose position was demanded by Israel and the United States - with whom to negotiate; no moderate Palestinian voices who are ready to contend, not just with the treacherous Yasser Arafat, but with the bloody executioners of Hamas as well. There will be no heroes - Palestinian or Israeli - left to do what is right.

Charney Bromberg

Executive Director

Meretz USA

New York, N.Y.

Significance of Shoah Lost in Book Review

Although I have not read Zosia Goldberg's memoir, "Running Through Fire: How I Survived the Holocaust," - and perhaps won't read it, for such accounts rouse many painful memories in me - I felt compelled to comment on Paul Auster's introduction to the book, as reprinted in the April 16 issue ("A Female Odysseus Tells Her Story").

I did not suffer as much under the German/Austrian Nazis as Goldberg, but I spent nearly a year in Vienna under Nazi persecution as a young boy and endured enough to feel that my voice may count for a little bit too. Let me add that although the Nazis destroyed the life of my family and robbed us of everything, I have never broad-brushed all German individuals, even of those times, as necessarily evil. As early as my service in the British army in World War II, for which I volunteered, I treated German prisoners of war decently and without prejudice - as hard as that was for me at the time.

Auster writes that Goldberg's account "contradicts nearly everything we have been told about German conduct during the war," and that (therefore) "the stark black-and-white picture we have drawn of the Holocaust dissolves into a muddled terrifying gray." He arrives at this conclusion by comparing two occurrences, namely isolated incidents of good conduct of some German individuals that mostly carried little risk (and sometimes did) with isolated incidents of bad conduct of some Jewish individuals, as if the two events belonged to the same domain of meaning.

In doing so, Auster forgets the real significance of the history of the Holocaust, which apparently needs to be restated again and again: Among the German/Austrian population, there were vast numbers of people who actively carried out the murder of Jews and millions of others.

This greased the wheels of the most organized and single-minded mass murder of any population, putting Jews under incredible pressures that required at times super-human bravery and endurance to just go on "living."

Many of us did show character and dignity under conditions hard to imagine for anyone who had not witnessed them. I can assert this of my own family, as narrated in my three-hour long testimony videotaped by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in December 1990.

Auster's comments saddened me. They show how easy it is for even the well-intentioned to fail to comprehend the essence of what really took place.

Henry Schmelzer.

Somerset, N.J.

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Saudis Support A Jihad in Iraq, Not Back Home

The New York Times

April 23, 2004 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 2; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1421 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR

Dateline: RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, April 22

Body

On Wednesday morning, just hours before a suicide bomber demolished a Saudi police building in downtown Riyadh, the family of a young man was accepting congratulations for his death in the jihad over the border in Iraq, the one that enjoys no small support here.

"He went to Iraq seeking martyrdom because of the recent events there," Abdullah al-Enezi said of his younger brother Majid, who was training to be a computer technician.

"America's unjust policy toward the Muslims is the main reason," Mr. Enezi said by telephone from the family home in Al Kharj, a town just south of Riyadh. "Everyone feels this humiliation; he's not alone, there are so many young men who wish they could cross over into Iraq to join the jihad, but they can't. Thank God he was blessed with the ability to go."

In Saudi Arabia, a strategic ally of the United States, violence against the occupation in Iraq is seen by many as jihad, or a holy struggle, but virtually no one accepts violence as jihad when it unrolls here at home, in the heart of what is supposed to be the most Muslim of countries.

In Iraq, attacks by American troops serve as evidence to some that the United States occupation of a Muslim land must be reversed. Requests for God to avenge American actions pour down from mosque minarets, and some women university students sport Osama bin Laden T-shirts under their enveloping abayas to show their approval for his calls to resist the United States.

But many Saudis consider the attack here on Wednesday a shocking and unsettling crime, especially since the attackers chose for their first major government target an office building that virtually every adult male must visit to collect a license or car plates.

A group calling itself the Brigade of the Two Holy Mosques posted an unverifiable claim of responsibility on two Web sites on Thursday, bragging -- in language that closely echoed Al Qaeda's -- that the attack rained devastation on the "criminal, apostate" Saudi government and warning of further strikes. Some viewed the claim as dubious because it did not name the suicide bomber.

Saudis Support A Jihad in Iraq , Not Back Home

The toll rose to five overnight, apart from the bomber, after a police captain died, the Interior Ministry announced. Saudi television also showed a pitched gunfight between security forces and militants in a residential neighborhood in the coastal city of Jidda in which three militants were reported killed.

"May God curse you, you vermin, you people of filth and not jihad," said a posting on one of the same Web sites where the responsibility claim was posted, adding, in case anyone missed the point, a picture of coffins draped in American flags over the caption, "This is jihad."

Experts on the topic believe that most Saudis do not view the two battles as even remotely related.

"When people see Israeli operations in Palestine and the American cruelty in Iraq, they feel angry and frustrated," said Abdullah Bejad al-Oteibi, a former fundamentalist now working as a legal researcher. "They cannot control their anger and they admire bin Laden, so that is why many people volunteer for jihad. But when there are operations here, people feel angry and betrayed."

No officials or analysts have a firm command of how many operate in either sphere. Although it is likely they rely on similar theological underpinnings to justify their actions, anyone acting within Saudi Arabia would have to be far more radical to overcome the heavy sanctions against killing fellow Muslims.

"They might be the same group of people, from the same pool of jihadis," said Jamal Khashoggi, an expert on Islamic groups and an adviser to Prince Turki al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to London.

"But to recruit somebody to fight in Saudi Arabia is way more difficult than to fight in Iraq," he noted. "You have to be really militant to believe that a country where religion is practiced day and night is apostate."

The difficulty, some experts believe, refers back to a slightly different interpretation of the concept of jihad espoused by the Wahhabi teachings that hold sway in the kingdom. Whereas most sects in Islam view jihad as necessary only when attacked, the Wahhabis view it as a means to spread their religion.

"You should never initiate fighting without a reason; you undertake jihad when you are 'defending' an Islamic nation, like the situation in Iraq or Palestine," said Abdel Rahem al-Lahem, a lawyer and specialist in militant groups.

The Wahhabi school, on the other hand, believes in smiting one's enemy first, Mr. Lahem said, although senior clerics preached against that idea last year after attacks here killed Muslims.

Saudi Arabia has a troubled history with preaching jihad, which was officially sanctioned against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980's. The ruling Saud family thought it could rid itself of the radical fringe, but instead their sponsorship now haunts them. Afghanistan became the training camp for elements now trying to overthrow them.

Hence there is no similar mobilization for going to Iraq.

"We do not believe in the American invasion of Iraq, it is illegal and illegitimate," said Soliman al-Oadah, a cleric once known for expressing hard-line views but whose pronouncements have grown more moderate in recent years. "We see that allowing people to go to Iraq has many negative points. For example, when the war is over, they will be trained and shaped in a way that could go out of control. They might go back to their home countries and act in bad way."

Fearing such an outcome, Saudi officials say they are ensuring that the long border with Iraq is sealed. They have installed heat sensors to detect movement, one official said, noting that events in Iraq are likely to inspire more problems at home.

"They can't do anything over there, and they think Arab governments are not doing anything," said Sayid A. al-Harhi, a senior adviser to Prince Nayif bin Abdel Aziz al-Saud, the interior minister. "They are consumed with anger which they transfer to their own government. If we let them, thousands would go, not just from Saudi Arabia, but from every Arab country."

Saudis Support A Jihad in Iraq , Not Back Home

Instead, the government has been trying to let off steam by, for example, allowing otherwise tightly controlled mosque sermons to inveigh heavily against the Americans.

"Oh God, avenge America, oh God, avenge its allies," the prayer leader at Prince Sultan bin Abdel Aziz mosque in a northern Riyadh neighborhood said last Friday. "Oh God, order your soldiers to show them torture, oh God divide them, oh God avenge them for what they are corrupting in Iraq."

Mr. Enezi, whose brother, 25, was killed fighting the Americans last Saturday, said he was unaware of any cleric swaying his brother's mind. He simply left one day about a month ago, entering Iraq from Syria.

"It was very normal, just like any other tourist crossing to Iraq," said Mr. Enezi. He called periodically to check in, and then his friends called to say he had died in a firefight with American marines near Qaim on the Syrian border. He was buried there.

"People are calling all the time to congratulate us -- crying from happiness and envy," Mr. Enezi said.

Even among prosperous, upper-middle-class Saudis it is possible to hear support for such actions, especially after the string of events in the past month with the killing of two **Hamas** leaders in Gaza and President Bush's endorsement of Israeli plans to keep West Bank settlements and to prevent the long-cherished return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. Often the anger takes the form of endorsing Mr. bin Laden's calls for fighting the Americans.

"Young people are wearing T-shirts with bin Laden's picture on them just the way people used to wear pictures of Che Guevara," said Tufful al-Oqbi, a student at King Saud University. "It's simply because he is the only one resisting. Even if we reject his methods, it's because there is no other way, because this is the only way."

Fowziyah Abukhalid, a sociology professor at the university, has noticed a parallel phenomenon among her students. "Many young **women** are saying 'My God, bin Laden is so charming,' or 'My God, bin Laden is so handsome,' " she said. "He is politically appealing, that is why they view him as handsome."

Such feelings are volatile though, depending on whether the attacks are inside or outside the kingdom. "People literally change their minds and feelings every day about bin Laden," Mr. Oteibi said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: April 23, 2004

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borders on ridiculous

The Sunday Herald

March 28, 2004

Copyright 2004 Scottish Media Newspapers Limited

Section: Pg. 20

Length: 1403 words

Byline: Alan Taylor

Body

TO the Creative Scotland Awards, the apex of the arts calendar, at the Hub in Edinburgh, where eight artists are each given (pounds) 30,000 to spend on pet projects. It is my infinite good fortune to find myself seated at dinner next to Euan Robson, MSP for Roxburgh and Berwickshire and deputy minister for parliament, who is described in the latest issue of Holyrood magazine as "the worst minister in the Executive", which is saying something, and "a tub of lard". On neither of these assertions am I a fit person to comment. What I will say, however, is that Mr Robson is probably the best-informed person I have ever encountered on the topic of litter in hedgerows in the Borders.

STV will have wee Bryan on his knees

THE Awards were hosted by Bryan Burnett, presenter of Scottish Passport, who perhaps for the first time in his short life was wearing long trousers. Mr Burnett said what a great pleasure it was to be in a room with so many creative people, in contrast to working at Scottish Television. Expect, henceforth, to see on the wee screen unflattering shots of Mr Burnett's knees. The Meenister for Culture, Frank McAveety, also broke a record, by not mentioning football in his speech. This was not the case at the National Library where, while announcing a £ 6.5 million grant to help purchase the papers of the publisher John Murray, he drew an analogy between Lord Byron's philandering and Footballers' Wives.

Mr McAveety is due soon to publish a much-anticipated cultural review, of which great things are expected. In particular, the existence of the Scottish Arts Council is rumoured to be in the balance. Recently, various literary bodies formed a pressure group, the Literature Forum for Scotland, which wants a new body, Literature Scotland, to take literary matters out of the hands of the SAC. Curiously, the SAC's literature department provided secretarial help for the Literature Forum. This is what's technically known as shooting yourself in the foot.

James Boyle, the SAC's chairman, likened the expectation of the report to plays by Samuel Beckett - including Waiting For Godot, Endgame and Krapp's Last Tape - none of which offered much cause for optimism. Mr Boyle, whose first term in office will soon be up, argued - apropos the cultural review - for the creation of a new award, which he called the Viagra Award, because it is sure to pop up some time.

How to put a kilt on a bowl of soup

I am heartened to see that the ancient practice of putting a kilt on a story is still with us. Following up the report about a surgeon who was suspended for taking an extra helping of soup in a hospital canteen, The Herald came up with the amazing revelation that the soup which caused the controversy was made by Baxters from Fochabers.

Jings crivvens! A spokesperson for Baxters said: "It is impossible to comment without first ascertaining all the facts." How very Confucian.

Kemp's literary career takes off

ACE fiddler - in the musical sense - Kenny Kemp, who in another existence ran this organ's business pages, won the business book award in this year's WH Smith People's Choice Awards for Go: An Airline Adventure. This stupendous achievement put Mr Kemp in the same room, if not quite yet the same league, as JK Rowling and Terry Pratchett.

His book was co-written with Barbara Cassani, who founded Go and who is now fronting London's bid to host the Olympics in 2012. Whether Ms Cassani will remain in charge is a moot point. Last week the Daily Telegraph reported that she said at the awards that Tony Blair is "not that bright" and is eager to see beach volleyball on Horse Guards Parade. Lawyers, I gather, are circling.

Meanwhile, Ms Cassani's legendary reputation for financial prudence remains intact. She and Mr Kemp split the £ 5000 prize money. She is worth in excess of £ 12 million, which was what she received for her stake in Go. He, I think we may safely assume, is not.

All things in moderation

THEY do things differently in the Kirk, where Alison Elliott will make history later this year when she becomes the first woman Moderator. Down the decades, consorts of the Moderator have always been female, but who knows what will transpire in the years ahead? I suppose it's just about conceivable - given current attitudes in the Kirk - that we could have a gay Moderator (if we've not, unbeknownst to us all, had one already) whose consort, presumably, would be of the same sex. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. This year the Moderator's consort is male, following in the tradition of Prince Philip, Dennis Thatcher and whoever the poor fellow is who toddles around after Anne Robinson. Mrs Elliott's husband is called Jo, a merchant banker based in Charlotte Square in Edinburgh, which is very handy for the church HQ.

As in previous years, a sum of money is available to help with the Moderator's expenses and those of their consort, who might be grateful for help in sprucing up her wardrobe.

I gather, however, that Mr Elliott has declined all financial assistance, which is very decent of him. (I can't believe I've just written that about a merchant banker. Forgive me Lord, for I know not what I do.)

All aboard the Tartan gravy train

NEXT weekend embraces Tartan Day when the United States of Amnesia celebrates its ginger roots. So successful has this event become that it has grown exponentially into six days that are all more or less bedecked in tartanalia. Our peedie parliament is, of course, sending a five-man - nae wummin - delegation which a Holyrood insider has kindly agreed to gloss for our American cousins.

Heading the list of the liggers - ahem, distinguished guests - is Donald Gorrie who, I'm told, is currently regarded as "the most reviled man in the parliament", following his U-turn on Airborne and his baleful remarks about Donald Dewar. Then there is Kenny McAskill, whose adventures with another battalion of the Tartan Army saw him miss a match at Wembley after he'd taken "a surfeit of sarsparilla". In contrast, Michael McMahon is regarded as "a safe pair of hands in the vicinity of a half pint". He is also, I see from The Scotsman Guide To Scottish Politics, the only MSP to have a photograph of his assistant, the lovely Nicole, on his website. David McLetchie, the Tory leader, is also going, though it will mean he will not witness his beloved Hearts slaughtering Celtic at Paradise. And finally, there is George Reid, a chain smoker, who must seek out the restaurant in fag-free Manhattan which provides a limo into which smokers may repair to inhale and respond to other urges. In a just world, similar facilities could be made available in the Lawnmarket to the Presiding Officer.

Dear diary, I'm Stihler sleep

borders on ridiculous

KEEN jogger, Catherine Stihler MEP, is also a dedicated blogger - online diarist - who shares her thoughts over the ether, however half-baked. "Woke up," she wrote on March 22, "to hear the news about **Hamas** leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, being killed by an Israeli missile. I think that this will have serious consequences." No kidding.

Neds woodwork but can't be bothered

MY undying gratitude to novelist Andrew O'Hagan for his definition of neds ("razor-cropped hooligans with a happy average of one O-grade in woodwork between them") and referring me to a ned website (www.chavscum.co.uk). The latter, which is "devoted to Britain's burgeoning peasant underclass", offers many synonyms for neds, including chavs, townies, kevs, skangers and scallies. It also contains helpful advice about how to spot neds, who invariably wear baseball caps, Burberry garb, trainers, gold pendants and big earrings. And it explains that neds are not exclusively male. Among the top celebrity neds are Christina Aguilera, Jade, Jordan, Jodie Marsh (whose ambition is to be the "new Jordan") and Daniella Westbrook. The Beckhams are rated the most famous ned couple. Is there nothing at which they don't excel?

The editor's decision is final

THREE cheers for Sheridan Morley, son of the more portly Robert, who was fired a year ago as theatre critic of The Spectator. In a letter in the latest issue of the magazine, Mr Morley denounces his successor, Toby Young, who has noted his "inability to locate the National Theatre" and "stay through a play until the end", and appeals to the editor, flaxen-haired half-wit Boris Johnson, to acknowledge he made "a momentary lapse of editorial judgement". Pigs, I fear, will fly first.

Graphic

Christina Aguilera ranks high as a celebrity ned Photograph: Michael Thompson/AP

Load-Date: March 30, 2004

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HYPOCRITE

Mail on Sunday (London)

February 29, 2004

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Section: FB; Pg. 1; Pg. 4; Pg. 5

Length: 1410 words

Byline: SIMON WALTERS

Body

THE Labour MP who exposed a Tory colleague's sick joke about the deaths of Chinese cockle-pickers himself broadcast tasteless jokes about Muslims over the Internet.

Nick Palmer, an aide to Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett, made lewd remarks about the sexual habits of Arabs, mocked the Koran, joked about groping Muslim priests and ridiculed their custom of praying to Allah.

The Broxtowe MP, who last week led the attacks on Mrs Winterton's tasteless remarks, emailed his jokes to more than 1,000 people and posted them on his official Labour Party website just five weeks after the attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001.

It came at a time when political leaders were calling for restraint to prevent a violent backlash against Muslims in Britain in the wake of the outrage in which nearly 3,000 people died. Mr Palmer's Broxtowe constituency is on the edge of Nottingham, which has a sizeable immigrant community.

The Muslim Council of Britain last night condemned Mr Palmer's 'tasteless' jokes. 'Following the tragic events of September 11, many people who would not normally say these things jumped on the anti-Muslim bandwagon,' said a spokesman. 'It is a shame Mr Palmer was one of them. These jokes are not funny, they are cheap and tasteless.' Mr Palmer was one of two Labour MPs at the private dinner where Mrs Winterton, the backbench Conservative MP for Congleton, retold

the sick joke from an email she had received about the 20 Chinese cockle-pickers who died at Morecambe Bay. The punchline was a hungry shark asking: 'Fancy going to Morecambe for a Chinese?' Mr Palmer, 54, toured the TV and radio studios last week, condemning her behaviour. He said: 'She needs to apologise. Most people may tell a joke privately which they wouldn't want broadcast. But when people have died in such a horrible way it seems awful to joke about it.' But he had no such reservations when he posted on the Internet a spoof Taliban TV schedule, which we recreate on the facing page.

'With apologies to those who think that one should never make jokes in a crisis, or fun of anyone's religious views, even the Taliban's (or indeed that it should be illegal to do so), I can't resist forwarding this,' he said. At the time, America was still mourning those who died in the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Tony Blair and George Bush were preparing to attack Afghanistan's Taliban regime while urging people to treat law-abiding Muslims and the Islamic faith with respect.

HYPOCRITE

Mr Palmer, who is a member of Labour's ruling national executive, last night denied he was guilty of double standards. 'That would have been true if I had been making fun of people who were killed in the World Trade Centre but I didn't,' he said. 'The Taliban are a perfectly legitimate target for satire.'

'I thought it was funny. This was a long time ago and I was making fun of the oppressors, not the victims. It was about fundamental extremists, not about Muslims. What worried me about Ann Winterton's joke was that it was about people who had recently died tragically.' Mrs Winterton said last night: 'This is a case of the biter bit. I will leave it to others to make up their minds about what happened.' Mr Palmer's spoof Taliban TV sketch was posted on his Labour Party website, BroxtoweInfo on October 19, 2001.

The joke schedule includes: '2am. The Gaza Strip. The adult hour where couples discuss their favourite strategic positions. 3am: A Book At Bedtime.

The Koran. Again. 6am: G-Had TV. Morning prayers. 9am: Shouts Of Praise. More prayers.' It features a programme starring 'Xena, a modestly dressed housewife' while a Middle East version of University Challenge called Madrasah Challenge features Bambah Kaskhain saying: 'Starter for ten, no praying'.

The Taliban TV soap is Middle-East Enders in which 'the entire cast is jailed for unislamic behaviour'.

Mr Palmer was educated in Austria and Denmark and was head of Internet services for genetically-modified crops giant Novartis at their Swiss HQ before becoming an MP in 1997.

Last week he revealed that Novartis pay Pounds 3,000 a year to finance his constituency newsletter in return for his help with 'occasional discussions on political issues relating to life sciences'.

Mr Palmer lists 'computer games' as one of his recreations and has spoken of the importance of using the Internet to keep in touch with local voters. 'I send an update to up to 1,400 constituents a week by email. It's hugely beneficial to have this sort of dialogue,' he said.

Asked to state his own religion, Mr Palmer declined to answer. His mother fled Russia after the revolution, and the family migrated to Britain via Poland and Germany.

The cat lover who fought for bicycle bells

ONE of Mr Palmer's achievements as an MP was to campaign for laws to make it compulsory for bicycles to be fitted with bells.

He backed moves to legalise cannabis and ban fox hunting and called for restrictions on the possession of air guns to 'reduce the wholesale slaughter of family pets.' During a debate on curbing child employment, he spoke in favour of allowing 13-year-olds to be paid to do computer work.

He has written a cook book made up of recipes from Labour MPs, and has also written two books about his favourite pastime, wargames, and edited a magazine about them.

He is a member of the Cats Protection League and Compassion in World Farming and is vice-chairman of the Labour Movement for Europe.

TALIBAN TV

THIS is mainly to say that I've now replied to half the 300 messages which Yahoo squirrelled away (those which people inadvertently sent to the Yahoo robot instead of to me) and the rest will get answers within the next two days. I hope that those who have emailed me in the last two days will accept my apologies for a slight delay before I get back to them.

HYPOCRITE

In the meantime, with apologies to those who think that one should never make jokes in a crisis, or fun of anyone's religious views, even the Taliban's,(or indeed that it should be illegal to do so) I can't resist forwarding this.(Before we get too smug, though, I suggest it also works as a satire on our wonderful television programmes...) Nick

ONLY AVAILABLE TO SUBSCRIBERS OF SKY DIGITALIBAN

06.00 G-Had TV.Morning prayers.

08.30 Talitubbies.Talitubbies say 'Ah-ah'.Dipsy and Tinky-Winky repair a Stinger missile launcher.

09.00 Shouts of Praise.More prayers.

11.00 Jihad's Army.The Kandahar-on-Sea battalion repulse another attack by evil,imperialist,Zionist backed infidels.

12.00 Ready,Steady,Jihad! Celebrities make lethal devices out of everyday objects.

12.30 Panoramadan.The programme reports on America's attempts to take over the world.

13.30 Xena:Modestly dressed Housewife.Xena stays at home and does some cooking 14.00 Only Fools and Camels.Dhal-Boy offloads some Chinese rocket launchers to Hamas.

14.30 Green Peter.The total number of Kalashnikovs bought by the milk bottle top appeal is revealed.

15.00 Madrasah Challenge.Two more Islamic colleges meet.Bambah Kaskhain asks the questions.

'Starter for ten,no praying.' 15.30 I Love 629.A look back at the events of the year,including the Prophet's entry into Mecca,and the destruction of pagan idols.

16.00 Question Time.Members of the public face questions from political and religious leaders.

17.00 Koranation Street.Deidre faces execution by stoning for adultery.

17.30 Middle-EastEnders.The entire cast is jailed for unislamic behaviour.

18.00 Holiday.The team go on pilgrimage to Mecca.Again.

18.30 Top of the Prophets.Will the Koran be No.1 for the 63,728th week running?

19.00 Who wants to be a Mujahadin?

Mahmoud Tarran asks the questions.Will contestants phone a mullah,go 'inshallah', or ask the Islamic council?

20.00 FILM:Shariah's Angels.The three burkha-clad sleuths go undercover to expose an evil scheme to educate women.

21.30 Big Brother.Who will be taken out of the house and executed this week?

22.30 Shahs in their Eyes.More hopefuls imitate famous destroyers of the infidel.

23.30 They think it's Allah over.Quiz culminating in the 'don't feel the Mullah'round.

00.00 When Imams attack.Amusing footage shot secretly in mosques.

The filmers were also secretly shot.

00.30 The West Bank Show.Arts programme looking at anti-Israel graffiti art in the occupied territories.

01.30 Bhuffi the Infidel Slayer.

HYPOCRITE

02.00 The Gaza strip. The adult hour where couples discuss their favourite strategic positions

03.00 A book at bedtime. The Koran.

Again

END

Load-Date: March 1, 2004

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LETTERS

The Forward
February 20, 2004

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Section: Editorial; Pg. 6

Length: 1444 words

Body

Harsh Tone of Bible Not Reserved for Gays

Columnist David Klinghoffer, it seems to me, adds to the confusion he so scorns when he cites Leviticus and "ancient Jewish midrashic tradition" to argue that Judaism condemns homosexuality ("Communal Confusion," February 13).

Yes, the Lord is alleged to have said, by the writers of Leviticus, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination" (18:22). Abomination seems to be a very strong word, but it is used more than once in the same book to tell us that "Everything in the waters that has not fins and scales... is an abomination to you" (11:10-11:12). Is Klinghoffer as exercised about the eating of shellfish by Jews as he is about the condoning of homosexuality and homosexual marriage by Jewish individuals and organizations?

Leviticus also tells us that "you may buy male and female slaves from among the nations around you" (25:44) and worse yet that we shall "put to death" he "who blasphemes the name of the Lord...." Indeed, "all the congregation shall stone him... to death" (24:16). And what are we 21st-century Jews to make of these explicit instructions?

Gerald Sorin

Director, Jewish Studies

SUNY New Paltz

New Paltz, N.Y.

David Klinghoffer takes liberal Jewish organizations to task for preaching a religion of "comfort" far removed from true Judaism when it comes to gay rights issues. Marc Stern of the American Jewish Congress seems to have swallowed this argument whole, suggesting that the conflict over gay rights is one between people whose morality is "purely secularly derived" and those whose morality is "determined religiously" ("Big Groups To Address Gay Rights Questions," February 13).

"Justice, justice shall you pursue" (Deuteronomy 16:20), "In the image of God" (Genesis 1:27) and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) are just three of the many passages from Jewish tradition that hold sway over my moral compass, and each leads me in the same direction.

The conflict over gay rights is not between secular and religious worldviews; rather, it is between two religiously derived worldviews that are in conflict with one another. To borrow Abraham Joshua Heschel's language, it is

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between those who seek to live by their understanding of "God's inner motives" and those who dwell only (or primarily) upon "His historical decisions."

Rabbi Larry Bach

El Paso, Texas

David Klinghoffer looks at Jewish support for secular recognition of gay couples and sees heresy, but a Jewish position opposing government discrimination against homosexuals should resonate for anyone who has seen photographs of the emaciated survivors of Nazi camps, some with yellow stars and some with pink triangles.

Whether or not there is a single Jewish position on homosexuality is not the point. All Jews should be able to agree that the state has no business legislating who can or cannot marry: Marriage is a spiritual, religious union and not a question for civil government.

Argue over whether a rabbi should honor the unions of these and those, but don't argue over whether the government should intervene.

Neil Litt

Princeton, N.J.

A Plan That Supporters Of Israel Should Back

The only thing misleading about the recent Americans for Peace Now survey of Jewish Americans regarding the Geneva initiative is Zionist Organization of America President Morton Klein's letter responding to it in your newspaper ("Poll Presents Geneva in a Misleading Light," February 13).

First, Geneva is not a product of "the Israeli far left," as Klein would have readers believe. It is supported by a wide range of Israelis, including former army chief of staff Lieutenant General (res.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Major General (res.) Gidon Shefer, Brigadier General (res.) Giora Inbar, Knesset member and former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg, Knesset member Amram Mitzna, Knesset member Yuli Tamir and former justice minister Yossi Beilin.

Second, on the issue of Palestinian refugees, Klein fails to mention that while Geneva does indeed discuss U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194, U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and the Arab peace initiative as the basis for solving this problem, it goes on to say that the parties agree that the rights mentioned in these resolutions "are fulfilled according to Article 7 of this agreement." In other words, regardless of whatever issues are raised in those documents, they are considered met by the terms laid out in Geneva.

Third, Klein fails to mention that the Arab peace initiative specifically talks about an "agreed upon" solution to refugees, meaning that Israel has the right to determine what a final formula for addressing refugees entails.

Fourth, Klein fails to give full weight to Israel's sovereign rights regarding how many refugees it would be required to absorb under the Geneva plan. The passage on this matter says that the option for refugees to move to Israel "shall be at the sovereign discretion of Israel and will be in accordance with a number that Israel will submit to the International Commission.... As a basis, Israel will consider the average of the total numbers submitted by the different third countries to the International Commission." Under no circumstances would Geneva require Israel to absorb any refugees if it didn't want to - that's the meaning of sovereignty. Israel may consider what other nations are doing with refugee numbers and still decide to accept no refugees. Hamas and Islamic Jihad understand that, which is why they object to this provision.

Fifth, Klein fails to mention that elsewhere in Geneva, the Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem would become the capital of a new Palestinian state. So even if Israel did decide on its own to take in a few thousand Palestinian refugees, those numbers would be more than offset by the several hundred of thousands of Arabs in East Jerusalem who would become citizens of a new Palestinian state.

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The Geneva initiative offers Israelis and Palestinians a working model for peace that will preserve Israel's future as a Jewish, democratic state - something that true friends of Israel should welcome.

Mark Rosenblum

Founder and Policy Director

Americans for Peace Now

New York, N.Y.

Overlooking Jewish Women Athletes

Let's hope that forthcoming celebrations of the 350th anniversary of the arrival of Jews in America will be more inclusive than your recent tribute to Jewish sports heroes ("In David's Footsteps," February 6). Just a little research would have demonstrated why Jewish women's role in sports history deserves more than a single paragraph on figure skaters at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

A short list of Jewish American women sports stars would include Lillian Copeland, one of the greatest track-and-field athletes of the early-20th century; Basketball Hall of Famer Nancy Lieberman, the youngest player in history to win an Olympic medal for basketball and the first woman to play in a men's league; tennis legend Julie Heldman, founder of the Virginia Slims Tour; Deena Drossin, the fastest female marathoner in American history and Helen Hines, who has won the wheelchair divisions of the New York Marathon three times and the Boston Marathon twice. To carry on the Mendoza tradition, there's boxer Jill "The Zion Lion" Matthews, one of pro boxing's top females in the 1990s.

Jewish women were major leaguers in "America's Game." At least five Jewish women played in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (memorialized in the film "A League of their Own"). One of the league's top players was 1946 all-star Gertrude "Tiby" Eisen, a pioneering American sportswoman and an outfielder who averaged 70 stolen bases a season.

Jewish Olympic glory? Who could forget gymnast Kerri Strug in Atlanta 1996? After sustaining a leg injury on her first pass, she courageously vaulted the U.S. team to gold on her second, an instant Olympic legend.

In commemorating the history of Jews in sports, the Forward should have recognized that Jewish women have made history here, as they have in nearly every field.

Nancy F. Vineberg

Director of Communications

The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute

Brandeis University

Waltham, Mass.

Unbaptized in Romany

In Joshua Cohen's interesting travelogue about Sighet, Romania ("Sighet and the Middle Ages," January 23), he reports that the local Romany (Gypsy) word for "Jew" is "Biboldo, derived from the same Latin root as biblio, meaning library, and liber, meaning book." Nice if it were true, but in Romany bi- means "un-" and boldo means "baptized" (from a verb meaning "dunk"). And biblio- comes from the Greek word meaning "book."

Robert A. Rothstein

Professor of Comparative Literature

LETTERS

University of Massachusetts Amherst
Amherst, Mass.

Load-Date: June 14, 2006

End of Document

Letters to the Editor

UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is Bradford

January 16, 2004

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Length: 1342 words

Body

Bradford violence 'vastly reduced'

SIR - I am writing in response to Marsha Singh's claims regarding "booze-fuelled" anti-social behaviour in the city centre.

Being a so-called "youth" I feel well discriminated against. I believe that violence and anti-social behaviour has vastly reduced recently compared to the violent times of the late 1990s. I think the police's presence in the city centre has helped and people are drinking more responsibly.

The bars and "clubs" (do we have any of the latter?) have become more upmarket and the West End is now a thriving zone that needs to be further enhanced to bring more money and employment into Bradford.

The statements against seem to be from people who do not enter the bars and only read statistics. Personally I believe that more bars and clubs need to be introduced to scatter people around therefore reducing chances of anti-social behaviour. The existing bars are becoming too full and causing problems. We need to take advantage of this and invest in new development.

Nightlife and social relaxation could be a catalyst to boost Bradford to higher levels. How can we be a city of culture without any aspirations to improve social areas?

Simon Whitley Cedar Drive Wyke.

Centre a 'midden'

SIR - Having just read Mike Priestley's comments in his most excellent column (T&A January 10) regarding the sad decline of the former Brown Muffs' building I have to say that he is absolutely spot-on.

I'm sorry to be brutal but in my opinion the city centre is at the moment an absolute run-down midden. It needs a miracle not just a new shopping centre.

Do they really think that the new proposed Broadway shopping development/Rawson Quarter will be the answer to Bradford's decline? What is wrong with the buildings we already have or had? Another waste of money!

When I was a child going into Bradford city centre on a Saturday afternoon was to me nothing short of a real treat: Busby's Brown Muffs Kirkgate Market etc etc.

I have lived here all my life and watched with great sadness the gradual decline of this once-great city to the wreck it is now.

Letters to the Editor

If we had followed Leeds's example Bradford wouldn't be in this state. Regarding Brown Muffs my uncle and late auntie worked there for many years having started at the "bottom of the ladder".

I have been in many times and it was the jewel in the crown.

Sadly those days are long gone. Ah well we can but keep that flicker of hope alive can't we?

Mark S Breen Bolton Hall Road Wrose..

Jigsaw complete

SIR - At last Bradfordians will hopefully unite and back the plans to transform Odsal and its surroundings. The city needs it.

As the gateway to Bradford this will also enhance the city centre when the regeneration plans are completed.

This is the final piece in the jigsaw enabling the green land of West Bowling Golf Club to be returned to Green Belt in the UDP for Bradford.

David A Robinson Greenacre Drive Wyke.

Mistrust for CRE

SIR - Is the outcry about Robert Kilroy-Silk's article ridiculous or is it ridiculous? In previous articles he has criticised just about every nationality on this planet yet apparently he is not allowed to criticise Arabs.

Why? Are Arabs somehow uniquely omnipotent and above any form of criticism? Unfortunately the Commission for Racial Equality has now got its talons into this which means that governments officials ministers MPs in fact anyone frightened to death of appearing to be in the slightest way politically incorrect will be jumping about like scared rabbits.

I have always mistrusted the CRE as being more likely to create unrest than solve it and this is exactly what it has done. If the CRE had left things alone only a few Sunday Express readers would have seen the article and either agreed or disagreed for surely that is still our right in this country.

Malcolm Wood Westercroft View Northowram.

Arab atrocities

SIR - The now notorious Kilroy-Silk article was an essay in ham-fisted generalisations which predictably called down upon his head the full wrath of the race relations establishment including sadly the BBC.

All the sound and fury however must not be allowed to drown out the legitimate argument which Kilroy however clumsily was trying to advance.

The insane butchers of 9/11 were not Martians nor do Hamas suicide bombers come from Estonia. Cutting off the hands of thieves and the public beheading of miscreants is not the norm in the Canary Islands. Australian women are not deprived of their basic human rights and treated as little more than bond slaves.

Yet all these atrocities unarguably occur among Arabs and Arab regimes. If it is deemed racist or Islamophobic to condemn such crimes against humanity then I must hold my hands up and plead guilty as charged.

And I would like to think the BBC has axed Kilroy's show simply because it is a lousy programme!

Peter Wilson Thornhill Grove Calverley.

Sickening acts

Letters to the Editor

SIR - It seems that hardly a day goes by in Bradford when there isn't a report of Asian gangs attacking a white person either during a car-jack mugging or common assault. Then they disappear like rats to the sewer but by themselves they are as cowardly as a mouse.

If this phenomenon was perpetrated by whites on Asians it would be a national scandal with the CRE demanding - and getting - high-profile action from the police.

Religious ministers of all faiths politicians of all colours and people of the politically-correct variety would be screaming from the rooftops.

Why the silence when it's happening from the other side? It's got to the stage when I dare not look indigenous people in the eye despite the fact that they are intelligent enough to realise that it's only a sizeable minority.

I say "sizeable" because there are far too many. There are many in the community close enough to them to shop them to the police. But they don't and it sickens me to the stomach.

I can only expect more public figures like Kilroy-Silk speaking their mind in the future and distorting the truth a little. But who can blame them?

M Zafar Fairbank Road Bradford.

Fair play needed

SIR - The suspension of Mr Kilroy-Silk and his programme is an outrage. It shows how far these "bleeding heart" politically-correct people will go bending over backwards to kow-tow to those who don't give a damn about this country.

Instead of doing good the Campaign for Racial Equality is causing more racial tension and hatred. In fact it is a mirror image of the BNP.

They have turned a blind eye to all the Muslim clerics who are travelling around the country preaching hatred of the infidels. Ban the CRE because they are dangerous.

In Bradford this week a centre has been set up for disabled people of Asian origin only. I'll bet the CRE won't complain about that but if it had said for "whites only" they would be screaming it as racist.

Equality is a two-way street and I would like to see more fair play.

N Brown Peterborough Place Undercliffe.

Book sale plea

SIR - Your report on the Central Library's decision not to sell local books raises part of a wider problem of how difficult it is for local publishers such as local history groups to sell their publications.

Since the major bookshops like W H Smiths and Waterstones ceased to stock local publications (unless massive discounts in the order of 35 per cent-50 per cent were offered which are impossible for small groups) the Central Library has been the only place in Bradford where local publishers could sell their wares for a small discount.

This was a welcome and much-appreciated service. It is a great loss to the community that this last "shop window" is no longer available.

Bradford has a rich variety of groups that promote local culture through publishing. Examples are Redbeck Press J B Priestley Society Bradford Historical and Antiquarian Society the Bronte Society not to mention dozens of local heritage groups and local authors who self-publish.

Surely the local library service should support local culture? Particularly books!

Letters to the Editor

Bob Duckett (Editor Bradford Antiquary; Aspects of Bradford) Holden Lane Shipley

Load-Date: January 16, 2004

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The war over the peace prize

Australian Financial Review

November 1, 2003 Saturday

Late Edition

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 27

Length: 1425 words

Byline: Story Andrew Clark

Body

The awarding of the Sydney Peace Prize to Palestinian Hanan Ashrawi has landed lord mayor Lucy Turnbull in a world of controversy.

An already sinister spiral of violence and revenge in which innocent civilians were paying with their lives for the political-ideological statements extremists on both sides wanted to make.

- Hanan Ashrawi, This Side of Peace

You have the power couple. She's mayor and he wants the keys to the Lodge. There's intense lobbying, claims of threats and standover tactics, pressure on the premier, abusive letters, and the airwaves are in meltdown.

At first blush it may seem like just another Sydney spat, with that city's raw combination of money, ego, ambition and proclivity for public invective coming into play. But this is before considering the cause conflict in the Middle East.

It is an issue that ignites fierce passion even in Australia. As Professor Stuart Rees, of the University of Sydney, points out, it is also the most important issue in the world.

The local controversy was ignited by the decision of the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Cr Lucy Turnbull, to boycott the awarding of the 2003 Sydney Peace Prize to Palestinian advocate Hanan Ashrawi, even though the city is the event's major sponsor.

Her decision followed a campaign against the awarding of the prize to Ashrawi by sections of the Jewish community, although others publicly endorsed the award. Turnbull denies her boycott was influenced by the campaign, or the fact her husband, Malcolm Turnbull, is contesting pre-selection in Wentworth, a safe Liberal seat in Sydney's wealthy eastern suburbs that contains a large number of Jewish voters.

Lucy Turnbull said she examined Hanan Ashrawi's record, and while she respected and admired her role, she claimed Ashrawi had supported the destruction of Israel and had described ***Hamas***, which supports the suicide bombing of Israeli civilians, as a "legitimate component of the Palestinian political spectrum".

The war over the peace prize

Turnbull's points parallel those made earlier by sections of the Jewish press. Shortly before Turnbull's decision was announced, the Australian Jewish News reported she attended a Young Business Forum dinner, a gathering of young Jewish people in business, where she was asked about Sydney City Council's support for the awarding of the prize to Ashrawi. Turnbull said she had reservations and was making further inquiries.

A few days later Turnbull made her boycott announcement.

Malcolm Turnbull denies he put pressure on his wife. But whatever the precise source of the pressure, it has been white-hot. Australian Jewish News, which circulates widely in Wentworth, has editorialised: "How unfortunate, then, that at the very moment that Australians were mourning and reliving the devastating hurt that terrorism has wrought, an Australian premier [Carr] is about to present a peace prize to an apologist for terrorism."

According to Michael Kapel, a member of the board of the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, which supports the hard-line Sharon government in Israel, "handing over cash and awards to mouthpieces for terror does nothing more than legitimise

an agenda of hate".

At the same time a petition against the prize has been forwarded to NSW Premier Bob Carr, a strong supporter of Israel, who remains determined to officiate at the handover ceremony in the NSW parliament next week.

The controversy became further inflamed as the focus switched from the correctness or otherwise of Ashrawi receiving the prize to the influence and tactics of some sections of the Jewish community in attempting to see she doesn't.

Rees, head of the Sydney Peace Foundation, rejects claims that Ashrawi is not committed to securing peace in the region. He says Ashrawi is "absolutely accepting" of the state of Israel.

He points out that she has campaigned against corruption in the Palestinian Authority and the summary execution of Palestinians accused of helping Israel, criticised suicide bombing, and pursued regular dialogue with prominent Jews, particularly women.

In her book, *This Side of Peace*, which is published by Simon & Schuster and is basically unavailable in Australia, Ashrawi makes numerous references to her work promoting a two-state that is, Israel and Palestine solution in the Middle East, including formation of an underground movement for dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

Rees says the campaign against Ashrawi's award shows "we are not allowed to speak without fear or favour about the biggest problem in the world. The issue is about courage in public life. The only thing Hanan Ashrawi has done is reach for the microphone, and not for the gun."

He says the first intimation he had that Lucy Turnbull was boycotting the award ceremony was when Australian Jewish News "rang up to crow about it".

The editor of Australian Jewish News, Vic Alhadeff, is "unable to say" if the paper was first to inform Rees. However, "the main issue has been lost sight of" and now "seems to be looking at the power of the Jewish lobby".

"No one is saying don't engage with Hanan Ashrawi. Absolutely talk with her, absolutely engage with her," he says. But the question remains: "Is she worthy of receiving a prize?"

Alhadeff says Rees's view that people cannot speak out on the Middle East "without fear or favour" is a "disingenuous response" and claims: "We have a very open forum in the Australian Jewish News. We have very robust letters."

"Jews are Australians and have as much right to speak out as anyone else."

The war over the peace prize

As for complaints about wealthy Jews pressing their anti-Ashrawi case, Allhadeff says: "It's not a crime to be financially successful."

Frank Lowy, Australia's second-richest man, has been identified as a key figure in the campaign against Ashrawi's award. According to a report in The Sydney Morning Herald, based on notes made by Rees, Kathryn Greiner, a Sydney City councillor and a former chairwoman of the Sydney Peace Foundation, told him: "They'll destroy what you've worked for. They are determined to show we made a bad choice. I think it's Frank Lowy's money. You don't understand just how much opposition there is."

In a subsequent letter to the Herald, Lowy, who heads the Westfield Group, said Greiner's reported comments "barely warrant a response but for the fact that they smear me and all others who have quite legitimately questioned the credibility of the award in this instance. My money has nothing to do with the issue and I resent the suggestion it has."

"The fact is that I have done nothing more than state my opinion as outlined above and beyond that I have no intention of adding any further to the debate."

Lowy pointed out that in his opinion piece in the Herald, "Gerard Henderson (October 28) wrote that there was genuine disagreement about whether, in light of the situation in the Middle East, Ashrawi was a suitable recipient of a peace prize. Henderson's article most accurately reflects my view."

The Weekend AFR contacted Lowy's office to seek further comment. A spokesman said Lowy was abroad but confirmed Westfield was a sponsor of the Sydney Institute, of which Henderson is executive director.

Last year London's Sunday Times reported Lowy had paid £250,000 to Lord Levy, the British Prime Minister's "special envoy to the Middle East" for business and consultancy services.

The issue became controversial when some British MPs raised what they saw as Levy's potential conflict of interest between being a consultant for a powerful multinational company and an ostensibly impartial and unpaid envoy to Israel.

Westfield said of Levy's role: "He was retained by, and reported to, our corporate head office in Sydney to advise on the UK retail market, to flesh out the shape of that market and to identify business opportunities that might suit Westfield's scale of operations."

Lowy has also provided \$30 million to fund The Lowy Institute for International Policy, headed by Dr Allen Gyngell, a former senior official in the Department of Foreign Affairs and one-time adviser to former Labor prime minister Paul Keating.

Asked for his views on the Ashrawi controversy, Gyngell said he did not want to comment because he had not made any extensive study of the situation.

Lowy said in his letter to the Herald that he is a "passionate" supporter of Israel. He fought for the creation of the Jewish state and is a big donor to the United Israel Appeal, which refines the resettlement of Russian and Ethiopian Jews in Israel.

Meanwhile in gambling-mad Sydney, bets are being taken about who will be appearing at next Thursday's award ceremony.

Graphic

The war over the peace prize

Four Illus: Ground for disagreement . . . (clockwise from top) award nominee Hanan Ashrawi, Lucy Turnbull with husband Malcolm, Stuart Rees of the Sydney Peace Foundation and Westfield chief Frank Lowy.

Load-Date: April 5, 2012

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SUICIDE ATTACKER KILLS AT LEAST 19 IN NORTH OF ISRAEL

The New York Times
October 5, 2003 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1350 words

Byline: By JOHN F. BURNS and GREG MYRE; John F. Burns reported for this article from Haifa and Greg Myre from Jerusalem.

Dateline: HAIFA, Israel, Sunday, Oct. 5

Body

A bomber charged into a crowded seaside restaurant in this northern Israeli city on Saturday afternoon and detonated explosives that killed at least 19 people, besides herself. At least three of the dead were children.

The attack, which also left 50 people wounded, raised the possibility of a harsh Israeli reprisal directed at Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

The suicide bombing was the first large attack since Israel decided in principle on Sept. 11 to "remove" Mr. Arafat even if it meant killing him. That decision followed two suicide bombings days earlier.

But the Israeli response to the Haifa bombing was measured, at least initially. It came in the early hours of Sunday when the military carried out two helicopter missile strikes in Gaza. In Gaza City, helicopters fired two missiles at the house of a wanted Hamas figure, but no one was hurt, according to Palestinian security officials.

In central Gaza, three rockets were fired at another wanted militant in an open field but missed him. Israeli troops also moved into Jenin, in the northern West Bank, and destroyed the house where the suicide bomber lived, Palestinians reported.

As dawn rose on Sunday, there was little activity outside Mr. Arafat's compound in Ramallah.

Israel's actions were in keeping with the kind it has conducted in recent weeks, and so far did not represent a major escalation.

Hours before the attacks, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon consulted with security officials in Jerusalem. "Everyone who has had a hand in this attack should worry," Raanan Gissin, a spokesman for Mr. Sharon, said when asked about Mr. Arafat. "We have the full right to take whatever measures we choose to take to defend the lives of our citizens."

The explosion at Haifa on Saturday, one day before Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, shattered several weeks of relative calm.

SUICIDE ATTACKER KILLS AT LEAST 19 IN NORTH OF ISRAEL

"I pray to God this will be the last bombing," said Joseph Assad, an Israeli Arab who rushed to the restaurant, where a relative worked as a waiter. The relative, Najjar Osama, the husband of Mr. Assad's niece, was among those killed, he said.

"If we continue with this bloodshed, we are all losers, Israelis and Palestinians, Arabs and Jews," he said.

The explosion blew out windows, overturned tables and left the floor covered in blood at the Maxim restaurant, a one-story stone building on the main road in Haifa, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. The restaurant was filled with families eating lunch on the Jewish Sabbath.

Police officers who spoke to survivors said that the young woman carrying the bomb, apparently in a concealed body belt, walked from an adjacent highway across a parking lot and up a short flight of stairs into the restaurant's glassed entryway. They said she was wearing casual clothes that made her indistinguishable from those in the restaurant enjoying an afternoon by the beach.

They said the scene inside the devastated restaurant suggested that she had walked some way out among the crowded tables before detonating the bomb, apparently with a finger switch.

Most Israeli restaurants employ security guards to check any suspicious people approaching entrances. Maxim's employed a heavy-set young man in jeans and running shoes standing outside a few paces from the stairs leading inside. After the attack, the guard's body lay on the asphalt beside the stairs, and the glass wall behind him was pitted with what appeared to be the sort of small caliber bullets fired by an automatic rifle.

But police officers at the scene said that they had no reports of a rifle volley before the attack and that the guard appeared to have died, like many of the diners, from shrapnel injuries.

Islamic Jihad, a group behind many suicide bombings, said in phone calls to news organizations that Hanadi Jaradat, a young woman from the West Bank town of Jenin, had carried out the attack. Ms. Jaradat's relatives said her brother and cousin were killed by Israeli troops in Jenin three months ago. Other reports said the bomber was a law student who was close to taking her bar examination. These descriptions could not immediately be confirmed.

Palestinian women have carried out several of the more than 100 suicide bombings by Palestinian factions in the last three years.

Haifa is known for its generally harmonious relations between Jews and Arabs, and the restaurant is owned by Israeli Arabs and Jews. The wounded included members of the Matar family, the Arab owners, the Israeli officials said. The Matars are Christians, and the restaurant's chimney had a white cross painted on it.

As he usually does, Mr. Arafat condemned the attack. "President Arafat considers this a serious attempt to compromise the national consensus in a critical situation," a statement released by the official Palestinian news agency said. On Saturday night, Mr. Arafat's compound was outwardly calm, with only a minimal Palestinian security presence outside.

But the Israeli government said the Palestinian Authority, led by Mr. Arafat, was responsible because it had failed to order the Palestinian security forces to crack down on violent groups.

"Anyone who fails to prevent attacks is as guilty as someone who perpetrates it," said Mr. Gissin, the spokesman for the prime minister.

After two suicide bombings on Sept. 9 that killed 15 people, Mr. Sharon's government decided in principle to oust Mr. Arafat. The government did not say when or how it might act, but indicated that the options included tightening the siege around his compound, arresting him and putting him on trial, sending him into exile or even killing him.

International condemnation was sharp and swift. Even the United States, Israel's strongest ally, objected to action against Mr. Arafat. In the following days, Israeli officials sought to play down the decision, saying they did not intend to move anytime soon against Mr. Arafat.

SUICIDE ATTACKER KILLS AT LEAST 19 IN NORTH OF ISRAEL

But in the aftermath of Saturday's bombing, several Israeli cabinet ministers said it was time for Israel to oust Mr. Arafat.

"Arafat is a terrorist. He was a terrorist for 30 years. Apparently he's going to be a terrorist for the rest of his life," said Eliezer Sandberg, the minister of science and technology. "We have to do something to change that, and the steps begin right here."

Despite Haifa's reputation for tolerance between Jews and Arabs, it has been a target for suicide bombers from the nearby West Bank. Because many Arabs are on the streets of Haifa -- about 10 percent of the population of 330,000 are Israeli Arabs -- Palestinian attackers are less likely to stand out. The most recent attack in Haifa was on a bus in March, killing 15 people.

For the last year, Israel has been building a barrier to prevent attackers in the West Bank from reaching Israel. The first segment, which was completed in July, runs for more than 80 miles along the northern West Bank and was intended to shield cities like Haifa.

But Palestinians can still go around the barrier at either end. Mr. Sharon's government on Wednesday approved the building of the next section of the barrier, which runs deep into the West Bank, to give at least partial protection to several large Jewish settlements.

Fearing a possible attack this weekend, Israel on Friday imposed a ban on Palestinians entering Israel from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel has often put such measures in place during Jewish holidays, but such restrictions have not always proved successful.

In other violence on Saturday, Israeli security forces in the West Bank town of Tulkarm tracked down and killed a Palestinian man believed responsible for shooting dead five Israelis in an attack last year, a military official said. Palestinians in the town said a young boy had also been killed, but the official said he had no information on that incident.

The Israeli forces shot dead the suspect, Sirhan Sirhan, who had been sought in the attack at an Israeli communal farm in November that killed the five Israelis, including a mother and her two children. Mr. Sirhan is not related to the man with the same name who assassinated Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Rescue workers removed the body of a victim of yesterday's bombing at a Haifa restaurant, which had been crowded with families eating lunch. (Photo by Getty Images)(pg. 1); The bomber who attacked a restaurant in the port city of Haifa, killing 19 people, was identified as Hanadi Jaradat, a law student from Jenin. (Photo by Associated Press); A small body was carried out of the Maxim restaurant in Haifa yesterday after the suicide bombing. Several children were among the dead. (Photo by Rina Castelnovo for The New York Times)(pg. 12) Map of Israel highlighting Haifa, the site of the bombing. (pg. 12)

Load-Date: October 5, 2003

Naming agent is an appalling breach

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

August 17, 2003 Sunday

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 2D; LETTER

Length: 1443 words

Series: LETTERS

Body

Re: Blown cover, by David Ballingrud, Aug. 10.

As someone who worked as an intelligence analyst for the U.S. government for some 35 years, I was appalled that anyone in any administration would reveal the name of a CIA undercover agent for any reason other than possible treason. Yet, this article tells me that someone in the Bush administration apparently did give the name of an agent to conservative columnist Bob Novak. Novak, apparently without further checking on the CIA person, published on July 14 in the Chicago Sun-Times that she "is an agency operative on weapons of mass destruction." So her career comes to a screeching halt.

I guess many of your readers will find it a mere coincidence that this occurred one week after her husband - former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Joseph Wilson - wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times stating his belief that "intelligence related to Iraq's nuclear weapons program was twisted to exaggerate the Iraqi threat." I find it hard to believe in this coincidence. It just fits too smoothly with many other acts carried out by members of the Bush administration.

It seems to me that someone should be facing jail time under the 1982 law making it a federal crime to reveal, without authorization, the name of an undercover agent. I'll believe that happens when I see it reported by Novak.

Jerry Loiselle, Tampa

Excuses and silence

Re: Blown cover, Aug. 10.

Last month, someone in the Bush administration compromised national security and put a woman working for the CIA in danger of losing her life. Why? Because her husband knowingly spoke about the Bush administration's manipulation of intelligence regarding Iraq's weapons programs. Yet, while stains on a dress were front-page news during the Clinton years, this article appeared on Page 1D.

Since he has been so quiet on this, President Bush obviously is more concerned with his ratings than with a CIA agent's cover and the resulting possibility of the loss of her life or compromised national security.

Naming agent is an appalling breach

During the Watergate hearings, someone said he would do anything to get Richard Nixon elected. Seems we have the same mentality and morals in the White House now. Funny how all those hypocrites who were so morally upset by Bill Clinton are either so full of excuses or so quiet now.

Daniel Favero, St. Petersburg

Disillusioned with Powell

Re: A look back at Powell's case on Iraq, Aug. 10.

AP special correspondent Charles J. Hanley's comprehensive analysis of Colin Powell's presentation of the Bush administration's case for war at the United Nations last February presents convincing evidence the secretary of state used allegations that now seem false and misleading to justify our going to war without waiting for the U.N. inspectors to finish their job.

Many Americans who have held Powell in high esteem as one who was skeptical of the Pentagon hawks' rush to war and who respected his integrity must now feel a deep sense of disillusionment about his joining in the "spin" that the White House was using to convince the American public that we needed to go to war almost immediately.

I am surprised that the Times has not yet commented editorially on this further evidence of how the Bush administration has misled Congress, the American public and the world in order to justify war.

William C. Wilbur, St. Petersburg

Tax plan off track

Re: Exemption examination, editorial, Aug. 10.

So now that former Senate President John McKay has finished "researching a citizens initiative" on sales tax exemptions (McKay weighs vote on killing tax exemptions, Feb. 4), he and former Sen. Jack Latvala have decided to fall back onto another version of the one proposed last year and killed by the courts.

This time the entire Legislature is to examine all the exemptions instead of a committee of 12 from the Legislature. What an embarrassing fiasco that would be with all the lobbyists and political manipulations that would run riot. Florida may just win back from California its title of most ridiculous political muddle.

As I stated in my letter Jan. 19, the only way to correct our state's woefully regressive sales tax would be to pass an initiative for the original proposal made by McKay, exempting only food, health care, prescriptions and residential rent. That would be, as your Sunday editorial concluded, "tax fairness."

Robert B. Pattee, New Port Richey

Try no exemptions

Re: Exemption examination.

The real solution to sales and service tax is to apply it to all the activities in the marketplace. When the market gets rolling and people are in the spirit of buying, the tax revenue will roll in by the hoards.

If a "tax on all goods and services" is applied with no exemptions, no exceptions, there would be no need in ever reviewing the inequities because there wouldn't be any. Everything in the marketplace would be subject to a nominal tax base and it could conceivably be much lower than the current rate if all items were taxed equitably.

Naming agent is an appalling breach

Tom S. Brown, Largo

Intractable Mideast

Re: Why is a fence against murderers too much to ask? by Charles Krauthammer, and U.S. policy of blaming the victim leaves Palestinians no hope, by Bill Maxwell, Aug. 10.

These side-by-side columns illustrate the intractable dilemma posed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Krauthammer talks about the Palestinian terrorist killings and the determination of Israel's government to protect the security of its citizens - if necessary even with a fence. Maxwell talks about Palestinian diaspora, dismissing the central issue of terrorism with a single phrase: "their means of protest." By thus trivializing the murders of hundreds of Jewish people, Maxwell confirms his critics' accusation of anti-Semitism.

It appears that the best we can hope for is an eventual precarious armed truce between neighboring sovereign nations - Palestine and Israel - such as already exists between Israel and the 22 Arab League nations (which will become 23 when Palestine achieves statehood), not one of which has a freely elected, democratic government.

But what then? Will the Arab League, which has made war on Israel four times in the 55 years of Israel's existence as a nation, continue to supply Palestine with weapons but no humanitarian aid? And when Israel repels the next Arab League military attack, will Maxwell still be deploring "Israeli-occupied land" while ignoring Israel's right to exist in peace?

Joseph H. Francis, St. Petersburg

Blaming the Jews

The questionable "blame the Jews" agendas in the Sunday Times letters are most discouraging. In addition we have the usual Israel-bashing column by that self-appointed expert on the Middle East, Times columnist Bill Maxwell. The letter writers and Maxwell find it impossible to understand the Jewish Israeli perspective.

One letter writer has the "chutzpah" to lament "abuses in the Al-Arian case." He sheds tears for the noble Palestinian noncitizen who brought terrorists to the University of South Florida as Islamic scholars, laundered money to Jihad and Hamas, and called for "Death to the Great Satan America." He overlooks the fact that the government's first obligation is to protect its citizens.

A second letter writer calls for "strong demands on Israel to end its occupation of land outside its country." The only "occupation" of land was that of Egypt and Jordan who occupied Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem in violation of international law. Israel was forced to enter these areas in defeating the armies of Arab countries that set out to destroy Israel.

As for Maxwell's lament that he cannot think of a good thing that has happened to the Palestinian people, he should recall that the Arafat he admires has taken millions intended for his people and salted it away for his own ends in Swiss banks. Arafat and his thugs have lived high in lavish villas while they manipulated their people.

Finally the Palestinians have not kept a single pledge. They continue to teach hate in their schools and practice terrorism against Israeli women and children. Maxwell denies the Israelis the right to defend themselves against murderers.

In conclusion we are greatly troubled by those who have exquisite sympathy for people who danced with joy after 9/11. Yet they damn the Jews and Israel. The words of Shylock in The Merchant of Venice come to mind: "He hath laughed at my losses, mocked my gains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a

Naming agent is an appalling breach

Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew organs, dimensions, senses affections, passions?" Blame the Jews is age old. Will it ever cease?

Norman N. Gross, president, PRIMER; chairperson, Anti-Hate Committee, Greater Florida B'nai B'rith, Palm Harbor

Load-Date: August 17, 2003

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Your Say

Herald Sun (Melbourne, Australia)

July 30, 2003 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 18

Length: 1534 words

Body

Only a park

will suffice

NO amount of public relations spin can disguise a form of private ownership of Point Nepean as an acceptable outcome.

Ownership of Point Nepean by charitable trusts, private foundations and educational institutions, as is being suggested by the Victorian Government, is no different from ownership by corporate developers or private individuals.

Victorians do not want a compromise, they want a Point Nepean National Park with 100 per cent genuine public ownership, management, control and accountability.

Compromise will result in an electoral backlash.

Jane Barrington,

Portsea

Poor, but

still busy

I TAKE offence at Judy Thallur's inference that rich people are busy people and poor people are layabouts with nothing better to do with their time than fill doctors' waiting rooms ("Medi-pay idea commended", July 28).

I am not a rich person but I certainly do not have a lot of time to waste.

I do not think that anyone, rich or poor, chooses to be sick.

Medical aid should be determined by need rather than money. We live in a "sick" world when dollars outweigh humanity and compassion.

Pauline Davis,

Frankston

Your Say

Pretty

policemen

SO police can have long hair, as long as it's neat, because Commissioner Nixon wants dress codes to be gender neutral.

Why not extend this logic to males wearing dresses? We should not be discriminatory toward police who like to cross-dress and as long as the dress is neat, why not?

Victorian police will finish up a "gay" lot and who knows, this look might even scare criminals.

Brian Handley,

Moe

In favour

of women

I WAS disappointed the ban on teenage girls playing footy against boys was overruled.

By trying to be treated like the guys, the decision by the tribunal is doing women in general a disservice. The boys say they wouldn't feel right going in as hard against a girl as they would against a boy.

It's not discrimination against women, it's discriminating in favour of women.

It's a sad day when males cannot treat women as special. Wouldn't Penny, Emily and Helen want a husband to treat them differently to his mates?

Jeremy Peet,

Belgrave

Knocked down

by hit-run taxi

ON Saturday night at the corner of High St and Glenferrie Rd, Malvern, I was crossing the road and was hit by a taxi.

The taxi was turning right through the intersection and I started crossing as the "green man" was flashing.

The driver did not stop and it is a miracle I survived. I spent the night in the Alfred hospital.

I would like to thank those people who were kind enough to stop and assist me. As for the taxi driver, it was cowardly of you not to stop and you should have your licence revoked.

Melanie Tschiersch,

Glen Iris

Missed by

airport x-ray

I HAVE a pacemaker and do not like walking through airport security scanners. My handbag went through separately.

Your Say

Imagine my surprise when I arrived in Brisbane to find my nail file had passed through x-ray security. I thought I would leave it in my bag on the way home to see what would happen.

Again, it went through the x-ray unnoticed while I had to remove jewellery and even my shoes to be scanned manually.

Qantas should certainly "seek an explanation from our security contractors as a matter of urgency", as they said when they missed a knife on a Queensland flight last week.

Helen Smith,

Melbourne

Equality will

oust bigots

RE "Happy to see Arafat gone too?" (July 25): The Palestinian Authority has about as much chance of controlling **Hamas** as the original Israeli authority had in controlling their extremists, the Irgun and the Stern Gang.

It was those Jewish extremists who in 1948 carried out the first massacre in this violent cycle.

It will only be when the almost authoritarian state of Israel recognises that all people are equal that the influence of extremists and bigots on both sides will cease to have meaning.

Jock Reid,

Templestowe

Best care for

Customs dogs

I WISH to reassure people that the dogs mentioned in the article "Super dogs left out in the cold" (July 24) do not belong to the Customs service.

There are no Customs dogs kennelled there, nor do Customs dogs work outside at the mail centre.

Customs is proud to have a world-class detector dog program. Its dogs are kept at a purpose-built kennels which is recognised as one of the best in Australia. The dogs get the highest possible standard of veterinary care.

Customs detector dogs are responsible for some 1600 seizures of prohibited and restricted goods each year and play an invaluable role in border protection.

Chris Ellison,

Minister for Justice and Customs, Canberra

Cheap at twice

the price

TO describe the mark-ups and dispensing fees pharmacies charge for stocking, dispensing and counselling patients as "bankrolling" is laughable.

When was the last time a lawyer/doctor/physio charged you \$4.66 for advice?

Your Say

A lot of people don't realise that a pharmacy ties a lot of its money in keeping well-stocked shelves of medications in readiness for a patient's needs.

Pharmacies, like any business, must make a profit to pay the rent and salaries. Such costs are not subsidised by anyone.

Throwing around statistics like a deranged mathematician is not the answer. What is needed is a balanced discussion of identifying community health expectations and how they can be met within the constraints of government and health professional resources.

Dr Arthur Pappas,

pharmacist, St Kilda East

Pharmacists

cost-effective

THE report "Drug money to chemists" (July 28) is correct in noting that it costs less than 25c in the dollar (and shrinking year by year) for the network of 5000 community pharmacies through which the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme makes medicines available to Australians.

That's a very cost-effective way for government to see that the right people get the right medicine at the right time, and with appropriate professional advice. The alternative is to set up a government bureaucracy where the costs would be much higher.

Stephen Greenwood,

executive director, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Barton ACT

Changes

to super

RE "Defence under federal attack" (July 22): Contrary to the assertion by your writer, defence superannuation is not a "self-funded scheme".

The scheme available to most members is a contributory scheme and a member receives all of his or her contributions and interest earned as a lump sum at superannuation age.

Any periodic payments made subsequently to the member are entirely government contributions and therefore funded by taxpayers. Compensation is paid as a lump sum and weekly incapacity payments are made where any income is lost as a result of an accepted medical condition.

Incapacity payments are reduced by any government-funded military superannuation being paid.

The Federal Government wants to end 30 years of complex compensation arrangements for the military with a scheme that enhances existing benefits.

Danna Vale,

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, ACT

Make a fuss

over nuke waste

Your Say

SCIENCE Minister Peter McGauran has ignored repeated calls to release the shortlist of sites for the national store for long-lived intermediate level radioactive waste.

This dangerous waste must be kept isolated from people and the environment for up to 250,000 years.

In August 2000, then science minister Nick Minchin said the search for a national store would be transparent and there would be significant opportunity for public comment.

Concerned residents of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane be warned: don't wait for the Federal Government to tell you what is going on, otherwise you can expect to be treated in the same way that 68 per cent of South Australians were treated.

Your opposition will be ignored and your land will be compulsorily acquired.

Loretta O'Brien,

Friends of the Earth, Collingwood

Health care

is a right

RE "Medi-pay idea commended" (July 28): May I remind Judy Thallur that we are discussing health, not airline tickets or hotel rooms.

It is appropriate that luxuries be paid for under the user pays system.

However, the health system should be sacrosanct. It is a right not a privilege and money should have no relevance.

What would Thallur think of a system where a doctor's preference went to the highest bidder? Does that sound outrageous?

Mick Smith,

Tocumwal, NSW

000 fines don't

ring true

THE presumption that unlocked handsets are one of the major reasons why 000 calls are made unintentionally is false.

In fact, the opposite is true. Most key-locked Nokia handsets dial 000 and 112 (which diverts to 000) without being unlocked first. An unlocked handset in a pocket or purse will dial crazy combinations of numbers but only very rarely 000.

Charging people \$5 for calling 000 will not reduce accidental calls, but will only make the 000 service cheaper to run.

To properly address the problem of accidental 000 calls, I suggest Mr Bracks talk to Nokia and have this silly feature removed or modified, not automatically jump on the "make the user pay" solution we are all getting a little sick of.

Paul Henry,

Glen Iris

Your Say

Load-Date: July 29, 2003

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LETTERS

The Forward

August 1, 2003

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Section: Editorial; Pg. 6

Length: 1491 words

Body

Accident Symptomatic Of Neglect in California

I lived in the Santa Monica area for about five years, and it is a complete illusion that it is some kind of paradise ("Soul-Searching Follows Farmers' Market Tragedy," July 25). That is the lie that Santa Monicans like to tell themselves, but, as is the case in Los Angeles in general, there are a tremendous number of people falling through the social service cracks.

Like the rest of Los Angeles, Santa Monica reflects a breakdown of our caring for the elderly - a point the editorialist powerfully brought out in the same issue ("The Survivors' Legacy"). In many ways, Santa Monica is a terrible place where the multimillionaires drive their late-model luxury cars while many people have no health insurance and cannot get adequate medical care. When I lived there during the early 1990s, homeless people were constantly cruising the alleys.

It doesn't surprise me that a tragedy like the one at the farmers' market could happen, because people are not taking care of each other there. Someone should have told that man to stop driving - but no one did. It happens hundreds, maybe thousands of times a day, only this was such a great tragedy that people had to take notice. But they still don't get it.

This is sounding more and more negative and bitter, but I'm speaking from lived experience: People don't care enough about each other there, and this is what happens. I hope this tragedy prods people to dig for the deeper problems in Santa Monica and Los Angeles.

Mark Klempner

Monteverde, Costa Rica

Crackdown on Militants Targeted Irgun, not Lehi

Opinion writer Moshe Maoz errs in writing that it was only after the Lehi assassination of British diplomat Lord Moyne that the Palmach forces turned in hundreds of Jewish militants to British authorities ("Waiting for Abu Mazen's Altalena," July 18).

As early as January 1942, Moshe Sharret addressed a meeting of the Jewish Agency for Israel's executive committee and demanded that the public cooperate with the police against the Lehi. Over the ensuing three months, more than a half-dozen Lehi members were kidnapped and handed over to the British police.

LETTERS

"La saison" two years later was an anti-Irgun campaign following Menachem Begin's proclamation of revolt and a half-year's worth of armed anti-British resistance. The Lehi had agreed to lower its profile. In meetings between Hagana and Irgun representatives in October, a month prior to the Moyne killing, Eliyahu Golomb threatened to "destroy" the Irgun. Preparations by the Palmach were already in high gear when Moyne was shot.

Undoubtedly, Moyne's assassination in Cairo provided a simple reason, but in fact the Lehi was untouched by "la saison," whereas the Irgun was seriously impaired.

Yisrael Medad

The writer lives in the West Bank town of Shiloh.

Israeli Arabs Live Well, But not Well Enough

Without a doubt, Israeli Arabs on average enjoy the highest standard of living of any Arab population in the Middle East ("Israeli Arab Wins Political Asylum in U.S.," July 18). Do these minorities have to deal with bias and discrimination by the majority in Israeli society? Of course, just as just about any minority must fight for equal rights in any other nation. But in the only true democracy in the Middle East, every Arab has the right to voice his or her personal opinions about almost any subject without fear of being killed or imprisoned by the authorities.

Nearly 100% of Israeli Arab children attend school. The more than 1 million Arabs in Israel are able to choose from over 20 Arabic periodicals produced in Israel for an Arab population that boasts a 95% literacy rate, the highest in the Middle East. The life expectancy rate is 72 years of age and the infant mortality rate is 7.6 for every 1,000 babies born, a dramatic decrease from 60.6 for every 1,000 in 1959.

Even though Israeli Arabs on average are much better off than Arabs in any other land, the gap between Arabs and Jews inside Israel regarding income, standard of living, infant mortality and education is still far too wide, and enemies of Israel are quick to point out these facts for less than charitable purposes. The result has been a dramatic increase by Israeli Arabs in the aiding and abetting of terrorists, as well as a rise in violent protests.

I believe that the time has come for Israeli Arabs to become equal to Israeli Jews in every respect - a daunting challenge, to be sure.

Joseph Yudin

Nir Yafe, Israel

Millennia-old Traditions Do the Time Warp

When I first saw the photo of the scantily clad woman gyrating next to the innocent looking young man at the top of the Fast Forward section in the July 25 issue, my first thought was that the accompanying text would be on the weekly Torah portion of "Parshat Pinchas" - the parsha which contains the tragic episode of the seduction of the Israelite men by the women of Midian.

Then I realized my mistake: "Parshat Pinchas" was the previous week's reading, and the photograph actually accompanied the article about bar mitzvah celebrations during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s ("Let's Do The Time Warp").

I've been to such bar mitzvah celebrations in the 21st century. I guess things haven't changed all that much during the last 3,000 years.

David Koerner

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Jewish Inmates at Risk From Proselytization

LETTERS

Rabbi Jerrold Levy, incarcerated in a federal prison in North Carolina, writes in a July 11 letter to the editor that Christian proselytizing does not greatly influence Jewish inmates because "the Jesus metaphor does not work for us Jews" ("Christian Jail Programs Instill Faith in Rebirth"). He concludes with a spirited defense of Prison Fellow Ministries and faith-based evangelical programs in general. Perhaps that's the case in federal prisons, but the "Jesus metaphor" seems to work for many in state penitentiaries.

The Forward's sympathetic treatment of Evangelical Christianity in letters and articles, as evidenced by the publication of Levy's letter, has resulted in at least one person's move to help Jewish inmates: me. After an 18-month hiatus, I've decided to "resurrect" my Washington State Department of Corrections volunteer badge and resume regular visitation with Jewish inmates at the local state prison complex.

Jewish and other minority inmates face incredible challenges, as do the directors and volunteers throughout the United States with Aleph and Jewish Prison Services International. Antisemitism flourishes in state pens, fostered by rural Bible-thumping communities, prison officers, Christian in-house chaplains and heavy-duty proselytizing by Prison Fellow Ministries and other fundamentalist church volunteers.

Getting prison officials to allow Jewish inmates to eat kosher food, receive religious books, wear kippot and tallitot, get matzo and other Pesach foods and light Shabbat candles is a never-ending battle. There are no such "constitutional impediments" for Christian inmates and their outside volunteers.

Levy's assertion notwithstanding, the "Jesus metaphor" is indeed a very powerful draw for Jewish inmates surrounded by Christians and prison staffs with scant knowledge or interest in Jewish observance, ritual practices and the psychological needs of Jews in prison.

Akiva Segan

Seattle, Wash.

No Legal, Political Basis For Freeing Prisoners

A July 25 editorial simplistically suggests suggests that Palestinian prisoners should be freed because Israelis "must accept that the Palestinians who attacked them over the years, however despicable their methods were not common criminals but fighters in a cause" ("Freeing Prisoners").

There are two basic facts the editorialist chose to ignore. Firstly, the "road map" directing the current peace process does not include prisoner release at this stage. What it does include, and what the Forward should urge, is disarming of Palestinian terrorist militias, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and Israeli dismantling of all illegal outposts. To the extent that one supports current Palestinian demands for the mass release of prisoners, one permits the Palestinians to shift the grounds of debate and evade their clear responsibility. Only renewed conflict will result.

Secondly, Israel's refusal to release prisoners "with blood on their hands" is well supported by international law. The individuals in question are not simply POWs who are typically repatriated at the end of a conflict. Many are, in fact, war criminals who dispatched, abetted and delighted in attacks against women, children and the elderly, just because the victims were Jews. These were not soldiers in a war, but murderers committing hate crimes.

In the aftermath of the Yugoslavian conflict, such miscreants are recognized as war criminals and so prosecuted by an international court. Why not in Israel?

That the Palestinians elide these points is not surprising, though it is regrettable. That the Forward avoids these distinctions is both regrettable and disingenuous.

Robert Moss

Metuchen, N.J.

LETTERS

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Fundraisers reveal the rule of money

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

June 29, 2003 Sunday

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 2D; LETTER

Length: 1352 words

Series: LETTERS

Body

Re: President's "Pioneers" set to tap state, June 22.

What an insult to the average American voter! Bush's "Pioneers" raised \$100,000 each for his 2000 campaign. Now a more elite status is in the offing: "Ranger" - if one can raise \$200,000 for Bush's 2004 re-election campaign. And who are these "Pioneers" and future "Rangers" - none other than corporate executives, lobbyists, developers and just plain rich, silver-spoon people with a security in life that millions can only dream of. Achieving this status, they receive special favors and even political appointments, not only for themselves but their spouses, children and relatives. Their arrogance disgusts me as all they are saying is: Step aside, average people! We have the money to buy the power.

Where has our country been led to since 2000?

We suffer the highest unemployment rate in nearly a decade.

We have the highest national budget deficit in our history. (We had a budget surplus in 2000.)

We still have a major health care problem with no resolution in sight.

We engaged in war, supposedly decided in our favor - yet it is still costing the taxpayer billions with no peace or definition.

Pioneers and Rangers will be coming in force as this is the real value placed on our country today. The rule of money! I will remain an average voter hoping to unseat Bush and his money train, and attempting to get our country back on track so all Americans can again enjoy our Democratic way of life.

Jack Burlakos, Kenneth City

Take a stand

Re: It starts with feeding people, Parade, June 22.

Pride in American citizen Louise Thomas and disgust in George W. Bush's campaign to media-blitz the citizens occurred all in the same day.

Fundraisers reveal the rule of money

When millions can be given so freely for a campaign, then why can the government not find the help for those who are in need of education, health insurance and food? It appears there is a widening of those who have and those who have not in this country, with our legislators being massaged daily by lobbyists and industrialists.

For those who want to return our country to its ideology of helping others, locate the speech by Bill Moyers, "This is your story - the progressive story of America." I quote from that speech: "What's right and good doesn't come naturally. You have to stand up and fight for it - as if the cause depends on you, because it does. Allow yourself that conceit - to believe that the flame of democracy will never go out as long as there's one candle in your hand."

Let not the voice of our forefathers be lost in the quest of those who fill their pockets and silence the voices of those who oppose their agenda. It is time to take a stand for democracy.

Norma M. Corry, Sun City Center

Not feeling safer

I am amazed and disappointed that the editorial Ashcroft's America and Robyn Blumner's column Shredding rights for no security gain, published in the June 8 Times, did not initiate more public outcry from your readers.

The United States wrongly accused hundreds of detainees and denied them basic due process, with the result that none of these detainees was guilty. Meanwhile U.S. taxpayer dollars foot the bill for excessively long confinement of people who are innocent of terrorist activity. Do I feel safer knowing that Attorney General John Ashcroft can take innocent immigrants or anyone defined as a "potential terrorist" in Ashcroft's personal view, lock them up and deny them U.S. constitutional rights? Absolutely not!

Americans are too comfortable and too often assume a "this can't happen to me" attitude. On June 22, a letter writer said, "I don't care how many foreign nationals have to be detained to guarantee my freedom. I don't care about a foreign national's rights." If this reader had done any research, he would have found out that none of the detainees had anything to do with terrorism, so the initial confinement was flawed and these persons posed no risk to his safety.

I'd like to see how he would feel if during an overseas vacation, he was randomly caught up in a sting that locked him away without due process or communication with lawyers or family. I bet he'd then be screaming for his rights!

My fear is that if Ashcroft is granted new powers to hold people indefinitely if they are suspected of terrorist ties (and you don't have to be a foreign national to be a suspect!) then it is my rights and every reader's rights that are at risk. Where will it stop? Do I feel safer knowing that my rights could mean nothing at all? Absolutely not!

Thank you, St. Petersburg Times, for speaking out.

Deborah Goodenough, Brooksville

A perspective too narrow

If the title of your Sunday opinion section, "Perspective," is meant to denote breadth of vision and comprehensiveness of view, that perspective was sorely lacking in last Sunday's edition.

With almost half the issue devoted to the Middle East, the only problems identified as obstacles to peace were the "settlements" (two articles) and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's determination to respond to every terrorist attack on Israel's citizens by attacking the terrorist leaders who organize and direct those attacks.

Not a word about the Palestinian terrorist organizations like Hamas that are dedicated to the destruction of the state of Israel - and for whom Tel Aviv is just another "settlement." Not a word about the vile anti-Jewish teaching that is

Fundraisers reveal the rule of money

unremittingly directed at every segment of the Palestinian community, but especially their youth - from schoolchildren to adolescents to university students. Not a word about the absence of any constituency - any organization, any voice - within the Palestinian community that is willing to come forward to advocate recognition of the right of Jews to live in peace in their own land, a right that was recognized by the League of Nations more than 80 years ago, and by the United Nations more than 50 years ago. Not a word about the hundreds of millions of dollars contributed by Western governments to the Palestinian Authority for the building of their economy - diverted to terrorism and private bank accounts instead of the development of a viable economy for their people. Not a word about the destruction of whatever private economy once prevailed in the West Bank, so that all the strands of power could be concentrated in the hands of the self-selected "leadership."

If that is your view of "perspective," it certainly is not what your readers have the right to expect.

Barry Augenbraun, Dr. Bruce Epstein,

co-chairs, Jewish Community Relations

Council of the Pinellas Jewish

Federation, Largo

No way to make law

Re: New law isn't just antidrug, it's antiparty, by Robyn Blumner, June 22.

The column concerning the new "antiparty law" (Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act) contained a reference to something far more sinister than this new law. Blumner noted that the subject act was inserted by Sen. Joseph Biden into the popular Amber Alert bill and passed without a single hearing, although the act had not been part of the Senate or House versions of the bill. This is a dangerous loophole in the way laws are created. The one law has nothing to do with the other. Why are such shady dealings allowed in this process?

Biden did a good job of hiding something he did not want discovered, apparently, and the system supports such dangerous actions. This is sneaky and certainly should cause mistrust of those who would use the process in such a manner. Shame on him!

John M. McNamara, St. Petersburg

Going too far

Re: Pvt. Lynch: Casualty of war and media hype, by Phil Gailey, June 22.

Pvt. Jessica Lynch will always be a hero in my thoughts forever. More than that, she is a living miracle to the fact that, even when being most egregiously injured, she had the strength and determination to tough it out and make it out from her Iraqi captors and be returned home to her native soil, alive.

Don't you think you may have gone over the line a bit by trashing a very severely wounded **female** soldier serving her country to get a better education and become a teacher? Do you guys kick grandmas, Easter bunnies and little kids for fun, too?

Larry A. Ridder, Spring Hill

Fundraisers reveal the rule of money

Load-Date: June 29, 2003

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LETTERS: YOUR VIEWS

Coventry Evening Telegraph

April 20, 2004, Tuesday

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Section: First Edition; FEATURES

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Body

PIC OF THE PAST: HERE'S a rare view of the M1 - with not a traffic jam in sight.

Britain's first official motorway had its first section opened in 1959 and was then extended in stages to its present length of the country from London and through the Midlands heading north to Leeds.

Among the milestones in its construction was the opening of this stretch in October 1964 - the Lutterworth extension near Rugby. Further north, a section through Leicestershire was subsequently opened in January 1965.

Were you among the first to sample life in the fast lane with the opening of Britain's new north-south link road? Do you remember what motorway driving used to be like in the early days of these six-lane superhighways?

If you have any memories prompted by our Pic of the Past, write to the Letters Editor, Evening Telegraph, Corporation Street, Coventry CV1 1FP.

Outdated prejudice is so hard to believe

CAN Ian Callaghan (Textline, April 15) be serious when he says he would call for a ban on all women drivers?

I didn't think it possible that anyone could hold such out-dated and prejudiced views!

It's a matter of public record that male drivers have more, and more serious, accidents, than female drivers do.

Young men between the ages of 18 and 25 account for more motoring accidents than any other group, a fact reflected in their higher insurance premiums.

A quick look through the Evening Telegraph's In The Courts column on Friday seems to bear this out.

Of 12 reported motoring offences, including dangerous driving, drink driving, driving without insurance, and driving without due care and attention, 11 were committed by men.

The 12th, Nicky, could possibly have been a woman, but looking at his/her record I doubt it.

Barbara Moore, Marlborough Road, Stoke.

Matter of opinion

RE: 'Councillor resignation call for "racist" radio comments' (Evening Telegraph, April 3).

LETTERS: YOUR VIEWS

What a hypocritical attitude of Cllr Akeister to say that Cllr Ravenhall's standpoint regarding his criticism of Coventry Airport owner TUI is unacceptable - because it unlawfully discriminated against someone, failed to treat people with respect and damaged the reputation of Rugby Borough Council.

Is Cllr Akeister's action in reporting Cllr Ravenhall to the National Standards Board, apparently behind his back and without prior consultation, considered to be treating Cllr Ravenhall with respect?

To some of us that read the many letters of Cllr Ravenhall, he is known as "Ravin' Ron", but he knows it is not said with malice.

And that is the problem today. Every word and phrase is analysed by the 'politically correct brigade' looking for some hidden meaning where none exists.

I disagree with Cllr Ravenhall regarding his views about environmental issues, but I support him in what he said on the Ed Doolan show and as far as I'm concerned he has nothing to apologise for.

Here is an idea guaranteed to get Cllr Akeister a ticket on the PC bandwagon - force Network Rail to change the name Waterloo station, but not yet, it drives the French nuts!

John R Lynch, Grendon Drive, Rugby.

... WHAT is wrong with having an opinion? I read the report about Cllr Ravenhall 'Councillor resignation call for "racist" radio comments'.

Cllr Akeister's comment about Cllr Ravenhall's comments going against the council's code of conduct is in itself a form of racism.

What the likes of Cllr Akeister mean is this: If you don't agree with what he believes to be right then YOU must be at fault.

I suppose the fact that I don't think this country should be swamped with asylum seekers makes me a racist as well does it?

History is part of our past as a nation and like it or not we all have opinions. In a democracy we should be able to speak them without fear or prejudice, not just agree with the likes of Cllr Akeister.

Cllr Ravenhall is right that discrimination and fascism is perpetrated by those who continually bulldoze their way against local opinion.

Rick Medlock, Mickleton Road, Earlsdon.

Peace in the Middle East is a fading hope

I KNOW it's very British to support the underdog and, in the case of the beleaguered Palestinians so-called cause, also very politically correct.

But how much longer are we going to delude ourselves into believing Hamas and Hezbollah are freedom fighters instead of acknowledging them for what they really are.

Yes, the Israelis should withdraw from the occupied territories - they have no right to colonise them. However, even if they did withdraw totally from these areas, would that see the end of the terror campaign that has been waged against them for so long?

People should recognise that what the Israelis do when they assassinate a leader of their enemies is only what we tried to do to the Nazi hierarchy during our own desperate struggle for survival 60 years ago ie. reduce their enemy's ability to inflict damage and therefore protect themselves better.

LETTERS: YOUR VIEWS

Eddie Morgan, Melbourne Road, Earlsdon.

Where are my letters?

I AM still waiting for three letters posted from Walsgrave hospital on Feb 18 and 25 and March 5. I am now on record as not attending my appointment.

After phoning Royal Mail, Bishop Street, Coventry, about my missing letters, I was told someone would phone me back the next day.

That was a week ago and I'm still waiting for that call.

Maybe someone from Royal Mail can explain what's happening to our mail.

Julie Wale, Farren Road, Wyken.

to the point

SUPERMARKETS are taking the heart out of our communities. Instead of walking to the local shop, we now drive for 10 minutes down the road to our nearest supermarket, which leads to a loss in community spirit and closure of small local shops.

These supergiants press farmers for low prices and their savings are not passed on to us. Time and again studies find that - from bananas to minestrone soup - the small, local shop often offers better value. The supermarkets keep a few key items cheap.

I encourage people to support the Green Party campaign to use their local shops more often to keep Midlands' communities alive.

Chris Williams, Green Party member, Birchley Rise, Solihull.

Wishful Thinking

If Jesus came down to earth today,

What would he do, what would he say?

He would heal the sick, the blind to see,

There would be hope for you and me.

There would be no fighting, brother against brother,

As Jesus taught us to love one another.

Oh let us pray,

For this beleaguered land,

And take Jesus by the hand,

Give him the love he gave to you,

For he is good and pure and true.

Mrs Freda Chinn

Kelmscote Road, Keresley.

LETTERS: YOUR VIEWS

RE: Sky blues plan to buy back ground - and bosses hope to sell it on again at a profit

(Evening Telegraph, April 3).

This prompts me to ask the question that is on many people's lips: How can the Sky Blues football club have sold their ground in the first place, never mind buying it back for resale at a higher value? Surely the ground should belong to the people of Coventry and be sold by the council, with the money being set against the vast sums being put up by the same council.

I just don't see the club getting an excellent venue and keeping the proceeds of the old one.

Brian M Phillips, Hipswell Highway, Wyken.

IF it's true what they say happened between David Beckham and Rebecca Loos then he's scored an own goal.

J Young, Curtis Road, Wyken.

Late show worth catching

David Hindley, aged 48, of Abbey Road, Whitley:

NYPD Blue, Channel 4.

THE series began in 1992 and follows the lives and careers of the squad of detectives in a precinct house (police station) in New York City.

The main character is Andy Sipowitz a middle-aged widower with a five- year-old son.

Each episode features two stories of different cases the teams are investigating plus their personal dramas.

The plots are very satisfying and have a realistic feel to them.

The plots can be very brutal at times, but the characters are always sympathetic and you really care what happens to them.

This is not a review of a particular show, but a piece to encourage people to watch an excellent drama.

I am glad Channel 4 is showing NYPD Blue, but unless you own a video it is almost impossible to catch this excellent show.

Robert Simpson, aged 53, of Bridgeacre Gardens, Coventry.

Black Books, Channel 4.

WHO would have thought that 'Debbie' from the Archers would be part of a classic, irreverent comedy that defies categorisation.

Along with the sublime Bill Bailey and the brilliant Dylan Moran, also one of the creators, Black Books provides pure escapism from the mundane, predictable programmes that swamp most channels most of the time.

After three series it is probably time to stop. Much like Fawlty Towers and Father Ted, preserving this gem for future viewing will ensure its legendary status.

Each episode, based mainly in a bookshop, provides the perfect location to insult customers, each other and anything else that moves. Without plots, rhyme or reason, just bathe in the glory of originality, a rare gift in these predictable times.

LETTERS: YOUR VIEWS

Load-Date: April 21, 2004

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Shimon Peres: Time Is Running Out for Likud Party

The Forward

January 16, 2004

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Section: News; Pg. 6

Length: 1497 words

Byline: Chemi Shalev

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Shimon Peres is once again aiming to become the next Israeli prime minister. He won't admit it, perhaps even to himself, but there is no doubt that Peres can already envision the evolving circumstances that might catapult him once again, against all odds and expectations, to the nation's top office.

Peres would have to overcome formidable opposition from a host of other Labor contenders, who believe his retirement is overdue. But at 80, Peres is still one of Israel's wildest and most vigorous politicians, and he wouldn't go down without a fight.

In an exclusive interview with the Forward this week in his Tel Aviv office, Peres pulled no punches in castigating what he views as the failed policies of the current Israeli administration.

Standing on the Knesset podium this week, Peres lambasted the Sharon government in scathing vintage-Peres form, as if he was a young and aspiring politician rather than his nation's elder statesman.

Peres believes in negotiations, anytime, anywhere and with anyone willing to talk. He would negotiate concurrently with both Syria and the Palestinians, and he believes the time is ripe. Surprisingly, though, Peres does not support the forced evacuation of Jewish settlements in the territories. As someone trained to aim for the impossible, he believes that even this obstacle can be overcome, simply by talking.

* * *

Q. Mr. Peres, have we, at last, reached the "New Middle East"?

A. One hundred percent. The crux of the idea of the "New Middle East," philosophically speaking, is my belief that - while Islam can confront other religions and remain strong - extremist and fundamentalist Islam cannot confront the new age and remain intact. This is the main confrontation - with fanatics who want to maintain outdated lifestyles and don't understand that one cannot survive with them. One cannot sustain antiquated agriculture, discrimination against women, and unelected leaders who are cowards and who are paralyzed. Just like all other cultures that have faced new eras, Islam has no choice but to adapt.

The process has already started, in certain places, like Turkey, and to some degree in the Pakistani army, and in Egypt to a certain extent. Now everything is beginning to fall like a house of cards. The Americans are in Iraq - not because they wish to conquer Iraq but because they want to prevent terror and weapons of mass destruction.

Shimon Peres : Time Is Running Out for Likud Party

I'd like to make a historical analogy, which encompasses both: I doubt whether the United States would have used nuclear weapons in Hiroshima were it not for the kamikazes, because a few dozen pilots destroyed their navy. That was the straw that broke the camel's back. On the other hand, one can just imagine what would have happened to the world if Hitler had possessed a nuclear bomb before Roosevelt. In essence, the United States is trying to prevent both things now in the world - no kamikazes, and no nuclear weapons in the hands of the kamikazes.

I also see the European Union arriving in the Middle East within five years, because the moment Turkey becomes a member, the E.U. will have common borders with both Syria and Iraq. I think that what happened with Gadhafi is amazing, and even the cease-fire in Sudan is very interesting.

So Israel could end up with no enemies. And that, of course, is a very big problem for the Likud.

Q. Is Israel reacting adequately to the situation?

A. I think not. In the beginning of his term, Sharon said he needs seven days of quiet in order to launch negotiations with the Palestinians. Now he's had 70 days, and nothing is happening. Each time, the conditions for negotiations are toughened. And if someone says that he will negotiate only when terrorism stops, he can be sure that terrorism will continue and that there will be no negotiations.

Q. We can see some changes in [Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's] attitude as well.

A. Yes, Assad has been orphaned from both his parents, both the Iraqi and the Egyptian, and like Sholom Aleichem he is proclaiming: "Oh joy, I am an orphan."

Q. But the Israeli government is not responding.

A. I don't think it is capable. It can make some formalistic response, but I don't think this government is capable of withdrawing from the Golan Heights, or even from parts of the Golan. If it cannot withdraw from Gaza, how will it withdraw from the Golan? In the Golan there aren't 1.2 million Palestinians. In Gaza there are.

Q. Aren't you disappointed with the Palestinian side as well?

A. I'll tell you the truth - I'm hardly interested. Only a person who is suicidal is disappointed. As long as you're alive, there's no room for disappointment. A year ago, I did not believe that there would be such dramatic change in Iraq, or in Libya. It forces me to be modest. But not just me. My critics as well.

Q. Should we then launch negotiations with the Palestinians immediately?

A. Of course. They shouldn't have been broken off even for a minute. Even Arafat, whom we criticize so much, fought in 1996 against the Hamas. Twenty activists were killed, thousands were arrested, their beards were cut off, and he confiscated weapons and archives. Anything is possible.

Q. Do you support the prime minister's concept or plan for unilateral disengagement?

A. I don't believe such a plan exists. I know that the ultimate in unilateralism is war, while the ultimate in peace is bilateralism. How will he disengage? Why should they disengage from us? What will he do with them? It's as if someone is being seized by a bear and says, I'm in favor of disengaging. You have to discuss the bear, not just the person.

Q. So you think the plan is unwise, or do you think Sharon isn't serious?

A. I think he intends something completely different. He has a miniature plan, to give the Palestinians 42% of the territory, to build an eastern fence as well, and to annex the land up to 15 kilometers from the Jordan River. He doesn't really hide his intentions. The Americans are aware of this, and they are worried, and that's why they are conducting a battle against the fence.

Q. They are criticizing the fence, but in the meantime it is being built.

Shimon Peres : Time Is Running Out for Likud Party

A. The eastern side isn't being built yet. And, in any case, Israel will have a major problem at the International Court of Justice in the Hague, and the Americans are well aware of this. We built a barricade in the West Bank so that we can climb on one in the Hague.

Q. Do you think Sharon will evacuate settlements?

A. I have a completely different view of the settlement issue. I think we should tell the settlers they have three choices: They can move to a bloc of settlements that we will build, they can move back to Israel proper, or they can stay where they are and we will take care of their security. I am opposed to coercion. There is no need for it. Why impose coercion on ourselves? Let them decide. Whatever they want.

Q. As you know, I am moving to Australia for a few years, and I must admit I am taken aback by the spontaneous outbursts of envy that I hear from everyone I tell. Generally speaking, aren't you concerned about the angst, the malaise, the bad feelings that are so rampant today in Israeli society?

A. As long as we are immersed in terror, in corruption, in rejectionism - we will pay the price. Israel could be a fascinating pearl, a country living on science and not territories. It should immediately embark on a major project of nanotechnology, which I am trying to advance. It should be a model to others, a small country that is like a big family. Our role model should not be the United States, but countries like Denmark or Finland, or Holland or Austria. These countries have a high standard of living, a policy of social welfare, a tradition of dialogue and not coercion.

We can be a brilliant and dramatic country. And I believe it's better to live in the Israeli drama than in pastoral Australia.

Q. But how will things ever change?

A. In Israeli politics, a party does not win its way to power, but rather loses its place in power. The Labor Party did all it could to lose power and grant victory to the Likud. I must admit, in fairness, that the Likud is now doing all that it can to lose power in the near future.

Q. But elections are to be held only in 2007.

A. The current situation can't last until 2007. The Likud has more time than reality does. This is a blind, tired government, intellectually and operationally paralyzed.

Q. So perhaps one should join them in the effort?

A. I don't think this government is interested. It is happy in its current situation. And there is no point in joining without a change in policy; it is better to fight for change from the outside than to join without any change.

Q. And when the next elections are held, who will be the Labor candidate? Shimon Peres, perhaps?

A. Whoever is selected. If there is someone else, better than me, so much the better. I am not seeking a title, I am seeking peace. As you know, I didn't fight for my current position. I was almost forced into it, simply because there was no other choice.

Graphic

IMAGE

Load-Date: June 14, 2006

Shimon Peres : Time Is Running Out for Likud Party

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Quotes of the year

Sunday Times (South Africa)

December 28, 2003

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Section: Opinion & Editorial; Pg. 18

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Body

'Our initial assessment is that the US forces will all

die.' - Iraqi Information Minister Mohammad Said al-Sahaf, also known as

'Comical Ali'

'I now know that when my time comes, Walter will be there to meet me, and I am almost certain he will hold out an enrolment form to register me into the ANC in that world.' - Nelson Mandela on the death of Walter Sisulu 'I'm so glad it's all over. It was a brilliant year, but my body simply cannot take it any longer.' - SA high jumper Hestrie Cloete, the International Association of Athletics Federation's woman athlete of the year 'There is greater admiration for Zimbabwe now than there ever was.' - Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, after his election as a regional vice-chairman of the African Union Quotes of the year "IF ANYONE attempts to intimidate you ... repel him and tell him that he is a small midget while we belong to a nation of glorious faith." - Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, to his countrymen, in January "You all have been watching LA Law or something too much." - US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, to reporters who fixated on UN weapons inspectors not finding a "smoking gun" in Iraq "Just as the Year of the Goat is centred on strong and clear motivation for peace, harmony and tranquillity during challenging times, we are equally intent on our mission to safeguard America and its people." - CIA recruitment advert aimed at Chinese-Americans

"Make no mistake, when the president says 'Go', look out, it's hammer time." - The US Fifth Fleet's Vice-Admiral Timothy Keating "I heard the people under my feet clawing and kicking but there was nothing I could do. The clawing carried on for five minutes and after the struggle died down there was total silence." - Neo Lithebe, after his rescue from the roof of a bus that had careered into a Free State dam, claiming 51 lives "When a black person says he does not like white people, that is not racism, it is prejudice ... Because whites created racism, blacks have no capacity to be racists ... they can only respond to it." - The ANC Youth League's Khulekani Ntshangase "Any colour you can think of." - Paint advert featuring a photograph of Happy Sindane, who grew up with a black family but, as a teenager, claimed he was kidnapped from his white family when he was six "We did not participate in the struggle to become a nation of hijackers, abusers of children and women or a society of fraudsters." - Archbishop Desmond Tutu "The beautiful thing about murder is that you get a body. It is different from other crimes where we work with averages." - Safety and Security Minister Charles Nqakula, rejecting Medical Research Council reports that 32 482 murder cases were reported in 2002 "Boys of integrity." - Father on his two sons, charged with others with the gang-rape of a matric pupil in a University of Pretoria hostel "Women and trousers are the cause of the world's ills." - Swaziland's King Mswati III, shortly after selecting an 11th wife "When I saw the summit, when I was about 30m away, I dropped down in tears because I felt like I was entering a very sacred place. I had to kneel down and pray and I got the energy to go on." - Sibusiso Vilane, the first black African to climb Mount Everest "An image of a penis

Quotes of the year

that continuously has sexual intercourse with the goddess of the air." - Cobie Swart, wife of a Brackenfell West Dutch Reformed Church minister, describing the church's tower "I am proud of my team. Proud but not happy." - Springbok captain Corne Krige after SA's 6-25 defeat by England in the first round of the World Cup tournament "We came here to win and didn't." - Then coach Rudolf Straeuli, after the 9-29 defeat by the All Blacks "It's got to rank up there as possibly the most disappointing thing." - Then cricket captain Shaun Pollock, after rain contributed to the match against Sri Lanka ending in a draw, eliminating SA from the World Cup "We cannot in good conscience ignore the fact that millions of our compatriots are starving, unemployed and oppressed ..." - Zimbabwean cricketers Andy Flower and Henry

Olonga, who wore black armbands during their World Cup match against Namibia

"This Hitler has only one objective: justice for his people, sovereignty for his people, recognition of the independence of his people and their rights over their resources. If that is Hitler, then let me be a Hitler tenfold." - Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe "I have always had a nagging feeling that for all their propensity for liberal values and civilised norms, these people South Africans are dirty." - Zimbabwean Information Minister Jonathan Moyo, after the Sunday Times reported on his shopping sprees in Johannesburg "We are near, so we don't have to shout as much as Britain does, otherwise we will injure Zimbabwe's hearing mechanisms. The law of physics tells you that, never mind diplomacy." - Foreign Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma "Any speculative reports on 'transitional government', 'transitional arrangements', 'exit plan' or 'exile' are at best wishful and at worst an undemocratic insult to the people of Zimbabwe." - Zimbabwean government statement, emphasising that Mugabe would not step down before his current term ended in 2008 "We are not going to be going around the African continent removing governments." - President Thabo Mbeki, on criticism of his government's response to the crisis in Zimbabwe "If leaders on the continent do not do more to convince President Robert Mugabe to respect the rule of law and enter into a dialogue with the political opposition, he and his cronies will drag Zimbabwe down until there is nothing left to ruin." - US Secretary of State Colin Powell "Personally, I don't know anybody who has died of Aids." - Mbeki "I really honestly don't." - Mbeki, asked then if he knew anyone with HIV "These things are affordable for South Africans, not like things like ARV antiretrovirals ." - Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, recommending a diet of garlic, onions, African potatoes and virgin olive oil for HIV-positive people "I believed that by shooting innocent black people I would keep my promise to God." - De Wet Kritzing, sentenced to life for the murder of three black people on a bus in 2000 "We have men sitting here in tears and who are busy cracking." - Rudi Lubbe, counsel for one of the alleged white right-wing Boeremag members who claimed that listening to Metro FM for 15 hours a day in Pretoria's C-Max prison was tantamount to psychological torture "Germans are stereotyped hyper-nationalistic blonds ... who noisily invade our beaches. German European Parliament member Martin Schulz probably grew up amid noisy belching contests after gargantuan beer-drinking sessions and huge helpings of fried potatoes." - Italian Tourism Minister Stefano Stefani. Schulz had objected to being called a Nazi by Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi "Work, work, work. I am almost a German." - Berlusconi, warming to a theme "Mussolini never killed anyone." - Berlusconi, in September "Italy is a great country to invest in. Today we have fewer communists and those who are still there deny having been one ... Another reason to invest in Italy is that we have beautiful secretaries ..." - Berlusconi, addressing the New York Stock Exchange "We are committed to the well-being and humane treatment of poultry." - KFC, after complaints of cruelty to animals "I'm not going to stop smoking. I don't swear, I don't drink. There is only one route to your lungs and it may as well be tarred." - Devout smoker Belinda Forbes "In many cases, black economic empowerment has been understood to mean the personal mega-enrichment of a handful of individuals who happen to be black." - SA Communist Party statement "I was RS452 and I have had enough of the lies and deceit." - Former human rights lawyer and apartheid spy Vanessa Brereton, on the code name that was claimed to belong to National Director of Public Prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka "I knew there was sufficient reason to conclude that he was most probably an apartheid agent." - Former Transport Minister Mac Maharaj, of Ngcuka, before the Hefer commission "My standard of proof is if there was a reasonable suspicion." - Former ANC intelligence unit commander Mo Shaik, on why he thought Ngcuka was a spy, although he was unable to provide conclusive proof to the commission "Not a single honourable member of the ANC out of all those I have worked with has ever suggested that I had sold them out." - Ngcuka. "I think all foreigners should stop interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq." - US Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, in July "I'm a follower of American politics." - Bush, in August "The best ambition for us is to die as martyrs." - Anonymous, on a loudspeaker, at a **Hamas** funeral in August "Ladies and gentlemen, we got him." - US Civil Administrator in Iraq

Quotes of the year

Paul Bremer after Saddam's arrest "I was in his torture chamber in 1979 and now he was sitting there, powerless in front of me, without anybody stopping me from doing anything to him. Just imagine. We were arguing, and he was using very foul language." - Mowaffak al-Rubai
Iraqi Governing Council member, who interrogated Saddam for 30 minutes after his capture "I find it very interesting that when the heat got on, you dug yourself a hole and you crawled into it." - Bush to Saddam

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Slick? No, this sick flick is just pulp fascism

DAILY MAIL (London)

April 23, 2004

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Section: ED_1ST; Pg. 52

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Byline: CHRISTOPHER TOOKEY

Body

Kill Bill Volume 2 (18) Verdict: Tarantino exposes his psyche, and it's not a pretty sight

The Good Old Naughty Days (R-18) Verdict: Hard porn from the early 1900s, and it's not a pretty sight either

THE second half of Quentin Tarantino's revenge drama is less gory and action-packed than the first - you'll have to work out for yourself whether that's a commendation or a criticism.

Volume 2 is certainly a lot less fun, and contains so many long dialogue scenes and pretentious monologues that it seems at times as if he's trying (for some inexplicable reason) to pay homage to The Matrix: Reloaded.

Thanks to Tarantino's visual flair, there are extraordinary moments. The catfight in a trailer between Uma Thurman and Daryl Hannah is superbly staged, and Quentin still knows how to frame a shot and use music to establish mood.

But the emptiness of Kill Bill is such that when Tarantino does a visually striking cut from wide open mountain spaces to a huge close-up of a character's eyes, the eyes tell us nothing about the character. It's just a vacuous exercise in directorial control.

Some sequences are grotesquely overextended, and one - a stopoff towards the end when our vengeful heroine encounters a Hispanic pimp - contributes nothing whatsoever.

The first Kill Bill could usefully have lost 20 minutes; the second is overlong by at least 45.

Whereas the first episode was a cheerfully trashy gorefest Charlie's Angels as directed by Genghis Khan - this is a more sombre effort, essentially a version of how Seventies kung fu movies from Hong Kong might have looked, had they been directed by an unholy triumvirate of spaghetti Western director Sergio Leone, Hitler-apologist Leni Riefenstahl and superman-theorist Friedrich Nietzsche.

The morality of both films is expressed by Bill (David Carradine), our heroine's enemy, teacher and an incorrigible windbag: normal notions of right and wrong are suspended when a hero has to survive.

This is a tenable philosophy under life-or-death circumstances, but a much less attractive one by which to live under normal conditions. It is, in fact, the selfishly corrupt code of many who operate under, say, African dictatorships or in the more sharkinfested regions of Hollywood.

Slick? No, this sick flick is just pulp fascism

The two films together could easily be entitled Triumph Of The Will had Riefenstahl not taken the title first. Tarantino is not only visibly excited by the exercise of power - both parts of Kill Bill are full of would-be iconic, posed images of brutality - he also gets aroused by notions of submission, especially by younger women to older men.

ALL THE usual idiots have hailed Thurman's heroine as a feminist icon, but look closer and you'll notice a woman who's frightened and abused in all sorts of photogenic ways, and achieves her revenge only because she makes herself subservient to men, whether they be Bill or her kung fu trainer.

The underlying sadomasochism of Kill Bill, posing as a kind of 'cool', is its second most sinister aspect. The worst is its fascism, reengineered for the 21st century to cash in on American neuroses.

The film argues, often with visceral power, that where someone has been foully betrayed and attacked (such as America was on 9/11), wholesale slaughter and destruction are justified without thought of proportionality or consequences for the innocent.

Indeed, the use of lethal technology (swords in Tarantino's films, superior air power in American foreign policy, or plastic explosives if you happen to belong to Hamas) is really, really cool. If people lose their limbs and lives as a result, that's funny. And they shouldn't have got in the way.

This is the philosophy, some people will argue, that underpins George Bush's foreign policy. I would prefer not to believe that, but it certainly underpins mass terrorism and suicide bombing, which is why the Kill Bill films are so uniquely repellent.

Tarantino does more than glamorise violence here; he makes a quasi-religion out of it. ONE reason why his heroine bonds at the end with her little girl (don't worry - I'm not spoiling any surprises here) is that she can recognise in her the killer that she is herself. The end of the film reeks of this kind of corrupt, egomaniacal sentimentality.

Kill Bill is more than an empty exercise in camp; it's sick, twisted and pernicious a hideous monument to one director's worship of power, violence and himself.

THE other cinematic talkingpoint of the week is The Good Old Naughty Days, a collection of ancient hard-porn short films from the 1920s and 1930s.

The men are, for the most part, elderly, knobbly chaps who wear curious wigs and facial hair to render themselves unrecognisable (or perhaps just immune from criticism).

One looks like the late Frank Muir and another like Alexei Sayle, both of whom I admire but neither of whom I have ever wished to watch having sex.

The acting is diabolical, the staging not much better and the effect remarkably unerotic.

I went in prepared to be shocked or disgusted, but erect male members and exposed female body parts hardly rank as out of the ordinary on screen these days.

The most astonishing aspect is how tedious and repetitive it is, even at 71 minutes.

It's almost worth sitting through for the last item, a scurrilous cartoon that is so inventively disgusting that it did make me laugh.

But generally, the clips have been lazily assembled, with an almost total absence of wit and precious little attempt at historical perspective.

The film's value lies in the fact that it proves hard porn existed long before the Swinging Sixties, but apart from that it's a terrible old bore.

Full of creases

Slick? No, this sick flick is just pulp fascism

Wondrous Oblivion (PG) Verdict: Destined for less than wondrous oblivion

HERE'S a cute little British movie that would like to be the next Billy Elliot or Bend It Like Beckham, but doesn't quite make the grade.

It's about an 11-year-old, cricket-loving Jewish boy (Sam Smith) growing up in South London in the early Sixties.

He finds a kindred spirit in the black Jamaican (Delroy Lindo) who moves in next door and who educates him in the mysteries of the game.

The film is way too long at 106 minutes, and there's an unpersuasive romantic subplot as the boy's repressed mother (Emily Woof) finds herself drawn towards her black neighbour. Though their scenes together are superbly played, writer-director Paul Morrison (who also made the stodgy interracial drama Solomon And Gaenor) might have done better to ditch them and concentrate on making his main coming-of-age story more subtle and surprising.

The film wears its message of racial tolerance too crudely on its sleeve.

The children involved don't have the right haircuts for the period, and could have done with cricket and acting lessons. And the story is just too simpleminded, as though aimed not quite at grownups.

Son of Seven's mayhem in Montreal

Taking Lives (15) Verdict: Serviceable thriller

Win A Date With Tad Hamilton! (PG) Verdict: Sweet but undemanding teen dating movie

BEFORE seeing Taking Lives, I knew nothing about it, and the first five minutes are very clever, inverting the audience's expectations as to which genre it is going to inhabit. If only the rest of the film were as fresh.

Angelina Jolie (left) plays an improbably luscious and immaculately made-up FBI profiler sent to help a couple of French-Canadian cops (Olivier Martinez, resentful but sexy, and Jean-Hugues Anglade, dishevelled and doomed). They have to solve a series of grisly murders in and around Montreal.

Ethan Hawke is the chief witness, having interrupted one of the murders in progress, and he's an artist, so able to draw a pretty good likeness of the culprit (a dead ringer for Kiefer Sutherland).

Ethan's such a nice guy and so obviously innocent that Ms Jolie finds herself falling for his bohemian charms.

Director D.J. Caruso is clearly a big fan of David Fincher's Se7en, and he copies it slavishly. This is the film for you if you like flashlights slanting through darkness, gallons of rain, ultra-gruesome corpses and nasty things dropping from the ceiling or coming at you from under the bed.

The plot doesn't make any sense - the role of the killer's mother (played by Gena Rowlands, no less) is particularly nonsensical - but the twists keep coming.

Attend Taking Lives with low expectations and it's a serviceable thriller.

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! won't win any prizes for originality either.

Kate Bosworth (the surfer babe from Blue Crush) plays a blonde, naive, checkout girl from the Piggly Wiggly grocery store in a small town in West Virginia.

She wins a date with Hollywood superstar Tad Hamilton (Josh Duhamel) who's meant to be a combination of Brad Pitt and Ben Affleck. No sooner have they dated than her wide-eyed innocence has won Tad's heart, and poor old Pete (Topher Grace) the nice guy who's been our heroine's secret admirer for years - feels left out in the cold.

Slick? No, this sick flick is just pulp fascism

Will Hollywood slickness prevail, or will good old-fashioned rural sincerity win the day?

This is a cute, inconsequential flick aimed at females of dating age, with a few witty lines (mainly from Pete, who has an improbably urban and sophisticated wit, a bit like Chandler's in Friends).

Bosworth is a little too cute for comfort, and looks less like a provincial checkout girl than a Baywatch babe; but if you go for that kind of white-bread smileyness, she's likeable.

Duhamel looks the part of Tad, but the role really needed a Brad Pitt to pull it off. Tad is so sweet and curiously innocent, even when he's giving his impression of Ben Affleck on a lads' night out, that he just doesn't convince as a Hollywood predator.

The role is essentially that of the bad guy in a Rock Hudson-Doris Day movie of the Fifties, and in the old days they would have made him enough of a swine to make us root against him. Here, I half wanted him to get the girl so she could save him from a life with Jennifer Lopez.

END

Graphic

SINISTER UNDERCURRENTS: UMA THURMAN HAS REVENGE ON HER MIND INSET: DARYL HANNAH AS ONE OF HER GROWING COLLECTION OF ADVERSARIES

Load-Date: April 24, 2004

JOURNALISTIC SINS OF COMMISSION

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TWO STAR EDITION

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Body

A Jewish settler named Avi Shapiro vows to eliminate the "sons of Arab whores." He dons his yarmulke and, along with 12 vigilantes, riddles a Palestinian taxi with bullets. A Pakistani youth unfurls a photo of the Sears Tower and sneers, like a villain in a Chuck Norris movie, "This one is mine."

Those are scenes that Jack Kelley, formerly a star reporter for USA Today [and no connection to Post-Gazette National Security Writer and columnist Jack Kelly], claimed to bear witness to in the Mideast. A devout Christian, he declared, "God has called me to proclaim truth." On March 19, his paper revealed him to be a fraud. That boy with dibs on the Sears Tower? Turns out he was a figment of Kelley's imagination. So was Avi Shapiro. More than two months into an ongoing investigation, it's clear that Kelley -- who quit USA Today in January -- fabricated those characters and others in some of the world's least stable places. He even wrote scripts for his co-conspirators to use in order to help him fool USA Today fact-checkers; the texts were discovered on his company laptop computer as part of the investigation.

But what stands out in Kelley's phony oeuvre -- remarkable by any standard, with imagined Cuban refugees drowning by moonlight and multiple fake decapitations at a suicide-bombing in Jerusalem -- is the way he trafficked in particularly explosive stereotypes. And what makes him emerge as a more dangerously misguided figure than his tarnished peers -- Jayson Blair and Stephen Glass among them -- is how influential those tales became.

On Sept. 30, 2001, for example, Tim Russert ran the Sears Tower kid anecdote past Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on "Meet the Press."

"I want to read that to you and our audience," Russert said, "give you a chance to think about it and talk about it ... How do we change their mindset?" (The secretary's reply: "There isn't a big 'they.' ")

The kid -- whose classmate completes the picture of evil in the story by telling Americans, "I will get your children, I will get their playgrounds" -- became a mascot of the dangerous new world post-9/11. The week he spoke to Rumsfeld, Russert also asked former Sens. Gary Hart and Warren Rudman to consider the report. Kelley's fiction inspired an Oct. 13, 2001, column by syndicated columnist Armstrong Williams, a conservative voice picked up in more than 75 newspapers. As readers passed his story around, the kid showed up in the letters section of Stars and Stripes, and in an Oct. 18 letter to the Syracuse, N.Y., Post-Standard. Shawn Harmon, a 35-year-old reservist, dared pacifists and "the whole UC Berkeley Crowd" to turn the other cheek, in the light of Jack Kelley's article -- proof, he said, that we have to "rid the world of this virus."

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As for Kelley's murderous Avi Shapiro: The Sept. 4, 2001, piece, wrote Arab Coalition for Media Equality spokesman Al Kadri in a Sept. 10, 2001, letter to the Canadian Windsor Star, was one that "everyone should read." According to Kelley himself, almost everyone did.

"Last August," he recalled in a 2002 CNN "Reliable Sources" roundtable discussion of fairness in Middle East reporting, "I wrote one cover story on Jewish vigilantes in the West Bank and how they fired on a taxi carrying Palestinian women and children -- received 3,000 e-mails per day, for 10 straight days. After that, we had to switch my e-mail address. Got seven death threats and got a bouquet of white funeral flowers sent to our building." Washington Post media critic (and "Reliable Sources" host) Howard Kurtz mentioned the anecdote in his column. The Slate.com daily summary of newspapers referred to the story a "long disturbing look at Jewish extremists" by a reporter who was "on a roll."

Plenty of people did question the story, calling it absurd from the first sentence (they laughed at the idea that Orthodox Jews would "put on their religious skullcaps" for a vigilante outing, reasoning they would have them on all day).

But that didn't stop Avi Shapiro from becoming a favorite among Israel critics, and also extremists -- in particular, Nazi sympathizers. As a torrent of e-mails complained about USA Today's depiction of Jews, an infamous Holocaust denier leapt to his defense.

*** Urgent message from the Zundelsite! *** posted Ingrid Rimland on her revisionist mailing list -- repeating the "urgent" line three times for emphasis. "I URGE you not to let this one courageous journalist down," she wrote. "Refrain from any abuse -- just show that we are classy, well-informed people, and that we detest the one-sided reporting of most mainstream media. Express your gratitude for the courage of Jack Kelley!" She wasn't alone. For Avi Shapiro, far beyond his cameos on mainstream Web sites debating the Mideast situation, was becoming a poster boy not just for occupation critics but for anti-Jewish extremists and crackpots. He was a living embodiment of what they'd been saying all along. A French Holocaust-denial newsletter at VHO.org posted the story under the words "HUMANISME JUIF" (Jewish humanism).

But before writing of Avi Shapiro, Kelley's other articles were frequently passed around among pro-Israel activists. In July 2001, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs urged members to send congressional representatives his (so far, still unchallenged) portrait of a Hamas family, which begins: "The Hotaris are preparing for a party to celebrate the killing of 21 Israelis this month by their son, a suicide bomber. Neighbors hang pictures on their trees of Saeed Hotari holding seven sticks of dynamite. They spray-paint graffiti reading '21 and counting' on their stone walls. And they arrange flowers in the shapes of a heart and a bomb to display on their front doors."

In fact, Kelley's previous reporting caused some observers to hesitate to dismiss his Avi Shapiro report. "To Kelley's credit," wrote OurJerusalem.com editor Jason Maoz in February, "he was the first journalist to report on Palestinians using ambulances as a cover for terrorist activities -- something heatedly denied by Palestinian officials."

Which brings up another explosive Kelley story -- and the question of whether it will still stand after USA Today's investigation. In it ("Street Clashes Now Deliberate Warfare," Oct. 23, 2000) Kelley saw -- he claims -- a street battle in Ramallah where an Arab rescue vehicle, a Red Crescent ambulance, dropped off "two buckets of rocks and a crate of bottles to be used as molotov cocktails." That's no casual observation, because it weighs in on long-standing debate between Israelis and Palestinians. While Arabs say Israelis are hindering ambulances without evidence of past abuses, IDF leaders contend that, on a few occasions, they've been shot at by gunmen in ambulances, or found explosives aboard the vehicles.

Kelley's contribution to the debate was widely cited by American pro-Israel groups. HonestReporting.com called Kelley one of "a few brave reporters." Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer mentioned Kelley's ambulance sighting in a piece that week called "Realities of War," and Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., followed up the next month by writing a protest to the International Red Cross.

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Whether that story turns out to be true or not, Kelley told a lot of people what they expected to hear. Don't we all expect those colorful foreigners of the Mideast to talk like Indiana Jones characters, calling their enemies "sons of whores," like Avi Shapiro, or uttering lines like "I will make my body a bomb that will blast the flesh of Zionists, the sons of pigs and monkeys," like the 11-year-old Ahmed in the (thus far undisputed) Kelley piece, "The Secret World of Suicide Bombers"? Who, feeling guilty about the deaths of civilians, wouldn't be soothed to read that Ahmed's small frame and boyish smile are "deceiving," because his vulnerability "mask[s] a determination to kill at any cost"? Or that school kids bombed in Afghanistan might not be so innocent after all, perhaps dreaming of blowing up a Chicago landmark?

Not long after 9/11, responding to a woman expressing qualms about hazards to "innocent bystanders" in Afghanistan, one Usenet poster replied by pasting the Sears Tower story into the newsgroup. The title of his post: "Know thine enemy." Someone called it blather.

"Blather?" the original poster replied. "Jack Kelley has balls of steel. Talk about courage! An American journalist going to visit a suicide bomber school and interviewing thousands of crazed fanatics screaming their hatred for the U.S.A. right to his face."

After struggling to cope with Stephen Glass' staggering spree of fabrication, then-New Republic editor Charles Lane said: "One of the parts of the answer that I've settled on is that so many of his stories revolve around stereotypes ... They fit into the pre-existing grooves that are already etched into everybody's heads, things we think or are predisposed to believe are true.

"So he's got stories about young conservatives who turn out to be total hypocrites about morality; he's got stories about department store Santa Clauses who turn out to be pedophiles; and he's got a big story about a pseudo-scientific exploration about why African-Americans are too lazy to drive taxicabs but immigrants will."

As it turned out, Jack Kelley's forgeries fit snugly into the pre-existing grooves of people all over the world looking for coverage of evil Jews, or cute Muslim boys who turn out to be devils.

Kelley is no longer on the Web site list of faculty of the World Journalism Institute, which trains Christians to be journalists. Its purpose: "The need to be faithful to the Christian example of accurately reporting (e.g., being reliable eyewitnesses) the work of God in today's world." And as reported in a Christian magazine in 2001, Kelley has said of his work: "I feel God's pleasure when I write and report. It isn't because of the glory, but because God has called me to proclaim truth, and to worship him and serve through other people."

The inflammatory truth he's proclaimed, of the world where Avi Shapiro and the Sears Tower kid live, may not be truth as we understand it. But Kelley found an eager multitude of believers ready to receive his truth and eager to award its messenger that rarest badge of honor: "Unbiased."

Notes

John Gorenfeld (www.gorenfeld.net), a journalist in San Francisco, wrote this for Salon.com.

Graphic

DRAWING: Ted Crow/Post-Gazette

PHOTO: USA Today's forger -- Jack Kelley.

JOURNALISTIC SINS OF COMMISSION

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End of Document

How an Al Qaeda hotbed turned inhospitable

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

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Byline: By Faye Bowers Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

Body

First of four parts

When Al Qaeda attacked Saudi Arabia on May 12 - and again on Nov. 8 - it brought home a cold, hard truth for the rulers of Riyadh: the house of Al Saud was now its primary target - even more so than the United States.

That realization is triggering a profound stir in the land where Al Qaeda and other militant groups have long drawn ideological and financial succor. After Sept. 11, Saudi Arabia went through a period of denial (15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi). But now there is perhaps no more determined partner for the US war on terror than this Middle Eastern kingdom. The royal family is rounding up suspected terrorists, cracking down on Al Qaeda's financial backers and radical clerics, and moving toward significant educational and gender reforms.

How it will turn out is not at all clear. "There are those who believe in controlled change, and those who say we should rip through the changes," says Khaled al-Maeena, editor of Arab News, in Saudi Arabia. "And there are those who say any change should come under the umbrella of Islam. All three are struggling to come to the forefront." Today, the Monitor begins a four-part series on the Saudi reformation.

Support for a tough crackdown on terror grew after two domestic attacks

The faces are everywhere - on display in restaurants, shop windows, and the opening pages of the main daily newspapers.

They are the 26 most-wanted young men in Saudi Arabia, sought in connection with the May 12 and Nov. 8 suicide bombings here that took the lives of 53 people, mainly Arabs. But nine Americans also perished in the attacks.

The bounty on these men is high: 1 million Saudi rials (\$ 267,000) each. Supply leads on a terror cell, and you receive \$ 1,867,000. Help foil a terrorist attack, and it's worth \$ 1,333,000.

The rewards, along with the public display of the suspects, are part of an unprecedented campaign by the Saudi royal family to enlist everyday Saudis in this battle against Al Qaeda.

After the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, in which 19 US servicemen died, Saudi Arabia was an unwilling partner. It wasn't much more compliant after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. But now, with the terror group's wrath striking the royal family's home turf, the small inner circle of princes has united and is going public, reaching out to its own

How an Al Qaeda hotbed turned inhospitable

population and to the US. "This is a wholesale change for the Saudis, with the publication of these names and pictures," says a Western diplomat posted in Riyadh. "Saudi hearts and minds are what is important now."

Al Qaeda made a huge mistake by attacking Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's two holiest shrines, says Mohammed al-Hulwah, head of the foreign-relations committee of the king's Majlis Ash Shura (consultative council). "Now, the government has declared a holy war on these terrorists," he says, pumping his fists for emphasis in his typically Saudi living room. The walls, drapes, and furniture are covered in pastels with geometric designs to comply with a religious ban on portrayals of people or animals. "Some people before were sympathetic with them, but now they are really starting to think and question."

Up until this point, say Saudi and US government officials, ordinary Saudis - as well as some members of the royal family - were in denial. They could not accept that 15 of the 19 hijackers came from this country. But with the two bombings in Saudi Arabia, ordinary Saudis have not only come to accept they have a problem with extremists, but are actively helping their government root them out.

One Saudi man, for example, phoned the new government hotline recently to report that Othman al-Amri, No. 11 on the most-wanted list, had stopped at his home while driving through the area. About a week earlier, someone tipped off the authorities to the location of Ibrahim al-Rayes, who was later killed by security forces. From May through the end of 2003, some 300 other terror suspects have been detained or killed, according to officials.

The Saudis have also become much more cooperative with the US. Teams of Treasury, FBI, and CIA officers are now based here, working hand in hand with Saudi officials at the Mahabith, Saudi Arabia's counterpart to the FBI. "We have very good cooperation right now," says a Western law-enforcement officer based here.

These teams are beginning to establish certain patterns. For example, they've been able to trace many of the guns they've captured to both Yemen and Afghanistan. Moreover, with each arrest that is made, the teams gather additional information that leads them to others. "Every time you catch someone, they have something with them that allows [the suspect] to get to the next person [within the terror cell structure]," the law-enforcement official says.

The information developed by the teams has led the Saudis to install heat-sensitive cameras and barbed-wire fences at or near the most frequently used smuggling routes along its border with Yemen. That has already begun to pay off. On Dec. 27, Saudi officials announced they'd arrested a little more than 4,000 "infiltrators" trying to cross that border, and seized a large cache of ammunition.

The cooperation includes the pursuit of financial backing for terrorists, too. Since this past spring, the Saudis have instituted a number of measures to block funding: Collection boxes were removed from mosques, and tighter restrictions were placed on financial transfers and charitable donations.

But preventing personal donations to Arabs perceived to be in need, like Palestinians, will be much more difficult for the Saudi government to control; nearly everyone here bemoans the treatment of Palestinians by Israel.

"We have to support our brothers in Palestine," says Nasser al-Rasheed, a bespectacled conservative Muslim who has the traditional untrimmed white beard. "I would give money to a Palestinian I trust. But I would not give to Hamas [the Palestinian resistance movement placed on the US list of terror organizations]. But how do you know [the difference]?"

On the international front, however, the cooperation has paid off. Last month, the US and Saudi Arabia jointly designated two European organizations as financial backers of terrorists: Bosnia-based Vazir (formerly Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, shut down in Aug. 2003), and the Liechtenstein-based Hochburg AG (formerly BA Taqwa, closed in August 2002).

Still, no one thinks the crackdown will end anytime soon. Officials estimate that between 2,000 and 10,000 mujahideen returned here from fighting wars in Afghanistan. "A subculture exists here, those who fell into what the Saudis refer to as jihadist or takfiri terminology," says the Western diplomat. "It's a group of people - 60, 600, 6,000, 60,000. We don't know the exact number, but it's not infinite."

How an Al Qaeda hotbed turned inhospitable

These jihadis have switched tactics as well, targeting intelligence officials. On Dec. 29, Lt. Col. Ibrahim al-Dhaleh parked his Lexus and stepped away just before it exploded. Earlier in the month, Maj. Gen. Abdelaziz al-Huweirini, the No. 3 in the intelligence service, was shot and wounded in Riyadh.

"We've got to recognize that we're fighting an ideology that springs out of a radical or xenophobic Islam," the Western diplomat says. "If we caught Osama bin Laden tomorrow, I am convinced Al Qaeda would be finished. But that won't end the war on terror. The ideology is entrenched in the Muslim world... We will probably be battling this for the next generation."

Tomorrow: A spiritual fight against religious extremists.

Behind the high walls of the foreigners' compounds, Americans hunker down

Inside the walls of their tightly secured compounds, foreigners in Saudi Arabia are essentially sequestered from Saudis. But despite toughened security measures, some residents say that Americans, in particular, are clearing out and leaving the country.

In the Al Yamama compound in Riyadh, which houses foreign workers who are helping develop this country, there are 370 connected, beige stucco townhouses - with two or three bedrooms. Near the center, there's a tiled open-air plaza with palm trees, surrounded by a grocery store, restaurant, flower shop, jewelry store, and preschool. A recreation room boasts raquetball, squash, and tennis courts as well as an Olympic-sized swimming pool. There's also a K-12 school.

"There are people here who hardly ever go off, or need to go off, the compound - especially now," says Jim Greenberg, an American businessman who's lived here for nearly 30 years. But, he adds, he and his wife, Lisa, have personally decided not to "change the way we live at all."

However, those who do go out generally travel in SUVs with tinted windows - mainly to prevent Saudis from seeing Western women inside who may not wear veils. "Inside that wall, I dress as I like," says Jan Quinn, an American expat who lives in a nearby compound.

She says life has drastically changed. For example, her four children who are attending school in the US are now afraid to visit. In fact, she says, this Christmas was the last they will spend together as a family in to Riyadh. Greenberg, though, still travels throughout the country and Riyadh - now home to 4.5 million where only 300,000 lived "in mud-brick homes" when he arrived some three decades ago.

Greenberg he also says that most of his colleagues have changed their habits - or left. There aren't exact numbers on US expatriates living in Saudi Arabia today, nor is there a historical record. The US Embassy here puts the number of Americans in Saudi Arabia today at about 30,000.

Greenberg, though, says he's seen the number diminish greatly over the years - especially after the May and November attacks. "This was probably an 80 percent American compound at one time," he says. "I suspect it's not more than about 20 to 25 percent now." One telling example, he says, is the school. When his four children left "a few years ago," the school was K-9 only and taught 2,200 kids. Today the school is K-12 and houses only 1,050 students.

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In The Promised Land?; Nancy Morris isn't your typical rabbi: for a start, she doesn't have a beard. But it's her personal journey from despair to happiness as Scotland's only woman in that position which truly sets her apart. As the festival of Hanukkah nears, Magin McKenna found her reflecting on the return of difficult times

The Sunday Herald

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Byline: Magin McKenna

Body

NANCY Morris thinks she looks terrible in trousers. That is why Scotland's only **female** rabbi always wears skirts. Yet the Canada-born 42-year-old is anything but conventional. As a woman in a job dominated for more than 2000 years by men, she knows she doesn't fit the old-fashioned image of a "typical" rabbi.

For starters, she wears lipstick - a glossy shade of burgundy - and her favourite outdoor wear is a snug, black leather jacket.

Drivers zipping along Ayr Road who happen to notice Morris approaching the unassuming Glasgow New Synagogue might be surprised to learn that she's the temple's rabbi.

But although orthodox branches of Judaism don't allow **women** even to stand on the bimah (pulpit), or to touch the Torah, more progressive branches have been ordaining **female** rabbis in Britain since 1976. As Scotland's sole reform temple, the Glasgow New Synagogue is the only one where **women** can hold the post.

"There's a certain mystique around rabbis," says Morris, illustrating the point with an airy hand gesture. "When we think of them, we automatically think of old men with beards." She touches her unwrinkled, beard-free face. "A woman doesn't fit that, so people are fascinated when a woman becomes a rabbi. It challenges their preconceived notions, doesn't it?" The question is rhetorical, but we can assume the answer is yes.

Morris's arrival in Scotland from Toronto in October was met with a buzz of excitement - particularly as it coincided with Alison Elliot's appointment as the Church of Scotland's first **female** moderator. Together, the events seemed to herald a splintering of the clerical glass ceiling.

Raised in Canada, where **female** rabbis are more common, Morris never considered herself to be "controversial" or "groundbreaking" as she has been dubbed in the media.

Having left a smaller congregation in Ontario, Morris simply saw the opportunity to replace Rabbi Pete Tobias in Glasgow as a challenge and an adventure. But it would be a while before the full ramifications of the job offer hit

In The Promised Land?; Nancy Morris isn't your typical rabbi: for a start, she doesn't have a beard. But it's her personal journey from despair to happiness as S....

her. "Some time after I actually accepted the position, I started thinking, 'Hey! I'm going to be the first woman rabbi in Scotland.' I think I may have told my friends as a joke," she says with characteristic enthusiasm.

Two months after her arrival, she no longer feels a need to linger long on the gender question. Al-Qaeda-sponsored suicide bombers have pulverised two synagogues in Istanbul, and there have been many reports in the press recently about the rise of anti-semitic attacks in Europe.

Morris, who initially felt drawn to Europe because of her scholarly interest in Holocaust studies, can't think of any other period since the second world war when things have been more difficult for European Jews. She sees the predicament as a combustible cocktail comprised of Europe's long history of anti-Semitism and growing anti-Israeli feeling in the West - two ingredients that, together, might prove explosive.

But asked whether she believes being anti-Israel is the same thing as being anti-Semitic, the rabbi replies with an emphatic "No". She believes, however, that for some people anti-Israeli sentiment serves as a socially acceptable facade behind which to hide anti-Semitic feelings.

"In many ways, people are hiding their anti-Semitism behind the idea that they are just being critical about the government of Israel," opines Morris, in a deflated voice. "It's partially fuelled by the news media and misplaced, misguided and oversimplified views of politics in the Middle East. It's much easier for people to understand and grasp the poor, oppressed Palestinians because they don't have a land, and hate the big, bad militaristic Israeli state. But it's much, much more complicated than that."

In her weekly sermons, Morris tries not to get political, or make moral judgments about Israel's politics because she fears alienating her congregation. Among Scotland's Jews, viewpoints on Israel are diverse and varied, and the rabbi wants to remain sensitive to all.

"The Jewish community is not homogeneous in its opinions," Morris maintains. "It ranges from being pro-Israel and very Zionist to confused and not sure what to think about the situation."

"I'm supposed to be a spiritual leader and moral guide; it's not my job to tell people how to think about Israel."

Yet Israel remains a deeply personal issue for Morris. In 1984, she spent a year studying at Jerusalem's Hebrew University at a time when the nation's spirits seemed eternally depressed by the situation in Lebanon.

Although her spell in Israel helped clinch her decision to become a rabbi, the year proved especially painful. She had recently lost her mother to breast cancer and battled the void left by that early loss. In Israel, Morris felt isolated from her family and the familiar world she had left in Canada. Because she grew up in a Jewish community that downplayed Zionism, she also found it difficult to relate to her Jewish peers who wanted to become Israeli citizens and start new lives in the Jewish homeland. "I have never felt so lonely in my whole life," she says wistfully. "Most of my friends that year were not Jewish."

Despite her initial loneliness, Morris left Israel with a love for the country. Later, she earned a Master's degree in Jewish History from McGill University in Montreal, and studied for a year in Vienna, while working on a thesis about one of Austria's long-forgotten revolutionaries: Ludwig August Frankl, who helped found the first Jewish-secular school in Palestine.

After completing her thesis, the next logical step for Morris was supposed to be a seminary, which would involve five years training to enter the rabbinate. Not sure if she felt a calling and unable to convince herself to make a leap of faith, Morris instead followed her lawyer father's footsteps and entered law school.

It turned out to be an unexpected disappointment. Although she earned high marks and a spot at one of Toronto's leading corporate law firms, Morris instinctively knew she had chosen the wrong path. She worked two years as a researcher and never made it into the courtroom until, a few weeks before her 36th birthday, she reached breaking point - she faced the terrifying challenge of admitting her mistake and re-entering the world of study. She finally felt her calling.

In The Promised Land?; Nancy Morris isn't your typical rabbi: for a start, she doesn't have a beard. But it's her personal journey from despair to happiness as S....

"I knew I had made the wrong choice for my life and that I was going to have to start all over again," she says, smiling shyly. "That's a very hard thing to admit to yourself. It was a slow process of trying to face up to all of that and to five more years of study and not really having the money to study."

Morris turned to a friend for advice. "I'm going to be so old by the time I graduate," she told him. "He said, 'You'll still be that old in five years - whether you do it or not'."

Morris was convinced enough to make the leap of faith. She trained at London's Leo Baeck College but in 2000 returned to Israel for a year's study, arriving to a booming economy on the eve of the current intifadah. Last summer's **Hamas** bombing of a university cafeteria proved shattering - only a year earlier the rabbi had been studying just a building away from the site of the bombing, and the impact of terror hit hard.

"It could have been anybody that day," she says, voice shaking slightly. She notes that no students from her congregation have this year applied for a free trip offered to Israel by an American Jewish charity.

Now, in her Newton Mearns flat where she lives alone, or in her synagogue office, the rabbi finds herself fielding phone calls about what she terms "urban myths" about Israel and September 11. Claims reported in the press - including the Sunday Herald - that Israel's Mossad intelligence agency may have known about the terrorist attacks on America, but not intervened, enrage and sadden her. "People are willing to believe anything about the Mossad and it's another horrible example of how you've got this creeping anti-Semitism in Europe that somehow gains a certain legitimacy - it's totally depressing," she sighs.

The Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, which arrives at sundown on Friday, commemorates an ancient victory against the Greeks and its only commandment is for Jews to display a nine-branched candelabra prominently in their windows.

Morris believes the holiday could not come at a more pertinent time: "It's about being proud to be Jewish. I think hiding and being fearful has never helped lessen anti-Semitism. It has had the opposite effect. When you're willing to be proud of being Jewish and you're unapologetic about who you are and what your identity is, people respond to that and are respectful."

Does Morris miss Canada? Of course, she says. Next spring, she may fly to Toronto to spend Passover with her family (she has three brothers, a niece and a nephew). But she insists the Glasgow community has been "very hospitable, taking me out, feeding me and making me feel at home".

And, apart from leading the celebrations at the synagogue, home is where the rabbi expects to mark the festival of Hanukkah. Quietly, each evening, she will light nine flickering symbols of hope.

Mini profile

Name: Nancy Morris.

Born: Montreal, 1961.

Rabbi Morris gained an MA in Jewish Studies before deciding to study law, and then switched career and trained to become a rabbi.

She served a Toronto congregation for two years, before taking up her post at the helm of the New Glasgow Synagogue last October to become Scotland's first **female** rabbi.

Graphic

In The Promised Land?;Nancy Morris isn't your typical rabbi: for a start, she doesn't have a beard. But it's her personal journey from despair to happiness as S....

Morris insists she tries to steer clear of politics and controversy over Israel when preaching to her Scottish congregation, but remains deeply concerned about the resurgence of 'creeping anti-Semitism' in Europe
Photograph: Kirsty Anderson

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The man who knew too much

Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

September 6, 2003 Saturday

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Section: WEEKENDER; Pg. W04

Length: 1570 words

Byline: Michael Jacobson

Body

A new book reveals former FBI agent John O'Neill, who died in the World Trade Centre collapse, warned that Osama bin Laden would target the Twin Towers. Michael Jacobson reports

TWO years ago on September 11, 2001, in the minutes after the planes slammed the twin towers of the World Trade Centre and before the towers came crashing down upon himself and thousands of others, John O'Neill would have been one of the few to know exactly what was happening.

O'Neill was a singular man, one who stood out in the sometimes shadowy world of the FBI and its counter-terrorism operations. As an agent, he sported cravats, custom suits, Gucci shoes and semi-transparent silk socks. He wore a 9mm revolver strapped to his ankle. He hit nightspots and rubbed elbows with the rich and famous.

His personal life was complicated. He lived with one girlfriend, Valerie James, but told at least two others he would be with them. None of the women knew about each other or that O'Neill, in fact, was married. Sometimes, one of the women, Anna DiBattista, would threaten to end their relationship.

"Just love, just love me," she remembered O'Neill would say.

Perhaps it was the flashy, even tawdry aspects of O'Neill's life that told against him during his time with the FBI, putting him off-side with some in authority and constraining his efforts to fight the al Qaeda terrorism network and its leader, Osama bin Laden.

In the new book *The Man Who Warned America*, author Murray Weiss reports that O'Neill was constantly frustrated in his efforts to fight al Qaeda.

That fight began in March 1995 when the newly-crowned FBI section chief for counterterrorism studied a rambling communique from a little known Saudi expatriate named Osama bin Laden.

At the time, US terrorism experts believed the biggest threats were Hezbollah and Hamas but, after reading bin Laden's angry diatribe against the Saudi royal family for allowing US military bases in their country, O'Neill was left in no doubt.

He met FBI deputy director Robert 'Bear' Bryant, believing that bin Laden was the world's most pressing threat.

"The first time I ever heard of bin Laden was from John O'Neill," says Bryant.

The man who knew too much

O'Neill also began discussing bin Laden with Richard Clarke, the national co-ordinator for counter-terrorism, comparing bin Laden to Adolf Hitler.

Over the next three years, O'Neill investigated al Qaeda's bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, was named special agent in charge of the national security division of the FBI's New York office and warned that terrorists could strike on American soil at any time.

Then on August 7, 1998, he received the news that US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania had been bombed. O'Neill called the office: "We have to get moving on this. I know who did this. It's bin Laden."

O'Neill wanted to lead the investigation into the attacks that had killed 247 people and was angry when told to wait. His anger turned to outrage when President Bill Clinton then announced to the world: "Today we have struck back."

Tomahawk missiles had been fired at a bin Laden camp in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan that intelligence sources identified as a chemical weapons facility.

O'Neill was not the only one who suspected Clinton's announcement, coming just three days after his televised admission about Monica Lewinsky, was a cynical attempt to divert attention from the scandal.

While the US strikes had no appreciable military impact, the inquiry that followed did define the structure of al Qaeda and identify its leaders and key soldiers. O'Neill had created the template for all international terrorism investigations.

THE last car to roll off the last ferry from British Columbia to Port Angeles, Washington, on December 14, 1999, was a steel blue Chrysler 300M. Customs inspector Diana Dean was puzzled.

The driver had detoured hours out of his way to make the ferry and, when Dean asked him to open the trunk, he bolted, only to be tackled by agents six blocks away.

Dean searched the car and found 10 large bags of whitish powder, the makings of one or more powerful bombs. Tattered scraps of paper were found in the driver's pockets with a single word, Gani, and a phone number with a 718 area code.

The arrest sent shock waves throughout the US Government. Intelligence had warned of possible millennium attacks but the White House and Justice Department decided to keep a tight lid on the arrest of Ahmed Ressam, an Algerian linked to the terrorist Armed Islamic Group.

When O'Neill finally received hard information from Seattle, he discovered Gani might be just across the Brooklyn Bridge. FBI agents traced Ressam's phone calls to a building in Flatbush and O'Neill assembled a team of agents for 24-hour surveillance.

For two weeks, agents and detectives watched Gani, otherwise known as Abdelghani Meskini, a suspected Algerian terrorist who had spent a year in Afghanistan and received advanced training in the use of explosives.

Finally, on December 30 and barely 24 hours before the first of the New Year's Eve revellers were expected to arrive in New York's Times Square, O'Neill gave the order to move in.

Meskini was questioned for the next 11 hours, revealing he had approached an Algerian in Montreal, Mokhtar Haouri, and asked if he would become a martyr for bin Laden. He was told to help Ressam, who was going to America to commit terrorist acts and 'light the fire'.

Agents fanned out across seven states to head off a millennium attack, tagging more than 40 people with ties to Ressam or Meskini.

But there were still the celebrations at Times Square. If there had been an attack, the NYPD and FBI had a plan to get the word out - The Voice of God, meaning they would tap into the vast speaker system set up for the celebration

The man who knew too much

and broadcast the voice of Mayor Rudy Giuliani or Manhattan South commander Alan Hoehl, letting people know what had occurred.

The attack never came and O'Neill relaxed with a cigar. He went up to the chic nightclub Elaine's about 2am and sipped Chivas Regal whisky. Everyone who knew him posed the same question: Is it safe?

"Of course, it is," he told them. "If it weren't, I wouldn't be here".

Happy as he was that night, O'Neill was becoming increasingly fed up with bureaucratic in-fighting. He was passed over for promotion to head the New York office in May 2000 and four months later, when the USS Cole was blown up by al Qaeda in Yemen, he was sent to lead the investigation.

There he ran into Ambassador Barbara Bodine, who seemed more concerned with preserving her relationship with the Yemeni government than helping the FBI.

Her dislike of O'Neill seemed to grow daily. He became the first FBI official in history to be denied 'country clearance' by a State Department official.

The danger to the FBI from hostile Yemenis grew so great that on Father's Day, June 16, 2001, O'Neill ordered his agents out of Yemen. Bodine was livid and insisted she was the only one who had authority to order an FBI pullout. She told the embassy's heavily-armed Marine guards and diplomatic security personnel to block FBI agents from leaving.

The bizarre stand-off lasted several hours. Finally, the ambassador was ordered by her superiors to release the agents and the FBI departed Yemen completely. Within two months, O'Neill retired from the FBI and accepted a new job, as director of security at the World Trade Centre.

ON Monday, September 10, 2001, O'Neill went to Rockefeller Centre to see its director of security, Raymond Powers. They spent nearly two hours discussing security procedures until the conversation shifted to bin Laden.

Powers commented it was ironic O'Neill had taken a job at a building that had already been attacked by Islamic extremists. O'Neill told Powers he was sure bin Laden would attack on American soil and expected him to target the Twin Towers again.

"It's going to happen," said O'Neill. "And it looks like something big is brewing."

The next morning, O'Neill was in his office on the 34th floor of the south tower when the first hijacked plane slammed into the north tower. O'Neill immediately called his 29-year-old son, JP.

"My father said he was OK and he was going to check the damage," said JP.

"I love you," O'Neill told his son before hanging up. At 9.03am, a second plane crashed into the south tower, unleashing another massive fireball.

By then, O'Neill had reached the concourse level, where he helped shepherd a group of children from a day-care centre to safety in the plaza. When he caught his first glimpse of the carnage, he knew immediately it was the work of bin Laden.

He called girlfriend Valerie James:

"Val, it's terrible. There are body parts everywhere."

Anna DiBattista dialled O'Neill's cell phone at 9.29am.

"Honey, I'm safe. I'm fine," he reassured her. "I've been in and out of the building."

She urged him to get out and leave.

The man who knew too much

"I can't," he said. "I'm helping people and doing things. I love you. I'll be OK."

At 9.49am, O'Neill headed toward the south tower. Sixteen minutes later, the top floors began to collapse.

Detective Louie Napoli, whom O'Neill sent to Pakistan three years before in search of suspects in the African embassy bombings, had been right under the north tower when it was struck. He asked everyone if they had heard from O'Neill, then realised the worst.

"He chased bin Laden all over the world and bin Laden caught up with him," said Napoli.

'It's going to happen. And it looks like something big is brewing'

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Al Qaeda's profile: slimmer but menacing

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Byline: By Faye Bowers Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

As US bombs strafed Afghan-istan one night in December 2001, the incessant blasts killed, among others, Mohammed Atef, Al Qaeda's No. 3 in charge of military operations. The next March, a US-Pakistani sting netted operations chief Abu Zubaydah, whom US intelligence officials decreed the next No. 3, tucked away in one of Pakistan's sprawling metropolises. A year later, a slumbering Khalid Sheikh Mohammed - the third No. 3 - was abducted in a dawn raid. More recently, the last known No. 3, spiritual counselor and operations coordinator Saif Al-Adel, was put under house arrest in Iran.

The story of Al Qaeda's multiple No. 3s is a story of how far the US has come in infiltrating and subduing Osama bin Laden's worldwide terror network in the two years since 9/11 - but also of the huge tasks that remain. These four men are part of the US success story in the war on terror: They're among the two-thirds of Al Qaeda leadership that US officials say have been captured or killed as a result of one of the most concerted worldwide dragnets in US history - and intelligence garnered from some of those detained.

Yet they're also the face of American setbacks, an Al Qaeda that bounces back like mercury dropped on a laboratory floor. The result, say intelligence officials, is that two years after the cataclysmic attacks on US soil, Al Qaeda is a weaker, more diffuse organization, but one that can still mount substantial attacks - in the US and abroad.

Indeed, the vanquishing of four No. 3s shows how constantly leaders must move and change tactics. But it also sheds light on Al Qaeda's organization and deployment - and, especially, on the depth of its following.

"Al Qaeda had a much deeper bench than we'd imagined before 9/11, and it clearly had a corporate succession plan," says Bruce Hoffman, an expert on terror at the RAND Corp. in Washington. "It's now clear that Al Qaeda's strength was not just its hard core, which existed before 9/11, but the layers below - and those other groups affiliated with Al Qaeda."

New insights have led government officials to say Al Qaeda is as dangerous, or more so, than it was before 9/11. And they continue to say the war on terror won't be won in months, but over several years.

"Despite these strikes against the leadership of Al Qaeda, it remains a potent, highly capable, and extremely dangerous terrorist network - the No. 1 terrorist threat to the US today," the FBI's chief counterterrorism official, Larry Mefford, told a Congressional committee in late June. "We remain concerned about Al Qaeda's ability to mount simultaneous and large-scale terrorist attacks."

Al Qaeda's profile: slimmer but menacing

To be sure, there have been tremendous successes in the effort to eradicate Al Qaeda. The Taliban regime was swiftly swept aside in Afghanistan, depriving Al Qaeda of its operational base. Since then, some 3,000 members have been detained. Treasury Department officials have blocked \$ 140 million in Al Qaeda funds.

The missing gauge of progress

One measurement of gains, of course, is the prevention of additional "spectaculars," as government officials call strikes on the homeland, like those of 9/11. That's no small feat. But it's difficult, most experts and government officials say, to set other benchmarks because there isn't a firm number of followers against which to measure thinning of the ranks.

"I think we have made a real difference in the subset of Al Qaeda that conducts terrorism," says a senior intelligence officer. "It would be hard for me to imagine we haven't made a dent. How much of a dent would be hard to guess because we don't have a baseline, a measure."

Most officials and experts now believe that Osama bin Laden acts as CEO over a top-down and bottom-up organization. The corporate structure is not clear. It's known only that Mr. bin Laden has a close-knit, compartmentalized group charged with heading military operations, recruitment, training, religious education, and other leadership functions. For instance, Mr. Mohammed, caught in Karachi, was allegedly responsible for 9/11 planning and logistics. He headed what officials call one "franchise." The problem is, they don't know how many other franchises are out there.

They do know that some 100,000 fighters trained at Al Qaeda camps during the 1980s and '90s. Most returned to their homes in more than 15 Arab countries; many now belong to local terrorist groups, or insurgencies, inspired and funded by bin Laden. Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia is an example. Members of this group carried out several bombings, including the October 2002 bombing in Bali, in which 202 people were killed.

The FBI's Mr. Mefford told the Congressional committee that the FBI knows of domestic support cells and has "ongoing operations directed against suspected Al Qaeda members and their affiliates in about 40 states." In fact, the Department of Homeland Security alerted communities last week that Al Qaeda operatives may use new tactics in the US - suicide car bombings, disguising themselves as women, or hijacking planes from Canada or Mexico into the US. And the FBI put out an alert for four suspected terrorists who may be hiding and scheming in the US.

Scope of targets - and challenges

But in addition to domestic threats, US interests abroad - especially in Asia and the Middle East - have long been, and remain, key sites for intrigue. With the chaos in Iraq, the time may be ripe for attacks and recruitment.

"I think you have the World Series of jihad going on now in Iraq," the senior intelligence officer says. "It's an unexpected gift for Al Qaeda and bin Laden. He's always said that Al Qaeda can't wage this global jihad by itself. He's been trying to instigate, inspire Muslims - and his attacks on the US over the years have done that." He says bin Laden counts on US policies - support for Israel, a quest for cheap oil, and cracking down on powerful Muslim nations - to inspire Muslims worldwide.

The Pew Global Attitudes Project, a survey of thousands in 44 nations released in June, showed that a significant number of those in the Muslim world trust bin Laden to "do the right thing regarding world affairs." Some 71 percent of Palestinians felt this way, as did solid majorities in Indonesia and Jordan - considered a close US ally - and nearly half those in Morocco and Pakistan.

Yet the US has leaned on Muslim allies to fight Al Qaeda, especially in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, home to 15 of the 9/11 hijackers and the "epicenter" of Al Qaeda funding, according to a US Treasury Department official in June.

Saudi Arabia has indeed made inroads - particularly since the May 12 attacks in Riyadh. The Saudis have captured or killed hundreds of jihadists and changed their financial system to keep funds from Al Qaeda. Yemen, the site of

Al Qaeda's profile: slimmer but menacing

two attacks in the past 2 1/2 years, including the strike on the USS Cole, has also proved helpful, aiding US intelligence and confronting its support for Al Qaeda - including "re-education" of its young jihadists.

But the very existence of these endemic support systems explains, also, why the war on terrorism is so long-term. "Much remains to be done," Treasury Department general counsel David Aufhauser told a Congressional committee in June. "We will continue to use every tool of diplomacy, regulation, law enforcement, and intelligence to attack terrorist financing."

Tracking terror since 9/11

9/01 - Al Qaeda members crash two hijacked planes into the World Trade Center towers and one into the Pentagon (photos at left), killing about 2,900. A fourth crashes into a Pennsylvania field.

10/01 - Opening of a US-led campaign to topple Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, who are believed to harbor Al Qaeda members including leader OSAMA BIN LADEN.

12/01 - US bombers attack the mountainous region of Tora Bora in Afghanistan. The US believes it has Mr. bin Laden and his top commanders surrounded, but they elude an intensive air campaign.

-MOHAMMED ATEF, military planner for Al Qaeda and suspected mastermind of the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, is killed in Afghanistan by an aerial bombardment.

- The US charges ZACARIAS MOUSSAOUI in connection with the Sept. 11 attacks. Mr. Moussaoui had trained at a US flight school in February.

1/02 - Alleged Taliban and Al Qaeda prisoners from Afghanistan are taken to the US Naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. They are designated "illegal combatants" and so are not protected as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention.

3/02 - ABU ZUBAYDAH, believed to be Al Qaeda's No. 3 after Mohammed Atef's death, is captured in a US-Pakistan sting and handed over to the US.

6/02 - Morocco arrests MOHAMMED HAYDAR AL-HAILI, alleged to be a top Al Qaeda recruiter.

7/02 - Congress votes to create a new Department of Homeland Security.

8/02 - Moroccan MOUNIR AL-MOTASSADEQ, on trial in Germany, is the first person convicted as a conspirator in the Sept. 11 attacks.

9/02 - RAMZI BINALSHIBH, believed to be a key Sept. 11 planner, is arrested in Pakistan.

10/02 - A bomb in a Bali nightclub kills 202. Suspicions center on Al Qaeda.

11/02 - In Yemen, US missiles destroy a car believed to be carrying six members of Al Qaeda, including ALI QAED SENYAN AL-HARITHI, a suspect in the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole. Separately, the US arrests a key planner in the Cole attack, ABD AL-RAHIM AL-NASHIRI.

1/03 - Muhammad Ali Hassan al-Muyad, a suspected Al Qaeda recruiter and financier, is caught in a CIA-FBI sting spanning Yemen and Germany. The US is now trying to extradite and prosecute him for funding Al Qaeda and **Hamas**.

3/03 - KHALID SHEIKH MOHAMMED, now considered No. 3 in Al Qaeda and an operational architect of Sept. 11, is arrested in Pakistan.

5/03 - Saudi Arabia's capital is rocked by the bombing of a housing compound for foreign nationals. Thirty-five people, including 12 Americans, are killed in the suicide car bombing, which bears hallmarks of Al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda's profile: slimmer but menacing

7/03 - Iran is believed to have taken some of Al Qaeda's top tier into custody, including bin Laden's son SAAD BIN LADEN; Al Qaeda spokesman SULAIMAN ABU GHAITH; and SAIF AL-ADEL, the latest to take the group's No. 3 post.

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It's heartbreaking to see our nation grow so divided

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Body

Re: In God - and the GOP - they trust, May 22.

David Klinghoffer has the country that I live in pretty much divided and even suggests that God may be a Republican. We are made up of liberals and conservatives. Those who go to church are Republicans and those who don't are Democrats.

I fought for my country. Not the Republicans or Democrats. It breaks my heart to see us so divided. The Congress has come to the place where it is Democrat or Republican. Where is us?

The very idea of this person suggesting that God may be a Republican is blasphemy. My God is a God of all people, black, white, yellow and red, Democrats and Republicans. He is also God of the people of the whole world. "For God so loved the world . . ." If I had a prayer, and I do, it is "Please, God, help us to "do unto others as we would have them do unto us.' "

United we stand. Divided we fall.

Cliff Bailey, Sun City Center

A liberal lashing

Re: In God - and the GOP - they trust.

As a profoundly liberal reader, I will try to balance my scourging by David Klinghoffer with these admittedly broad generalizations:

The debate between conservatives and liberals regarding licensing of firearms is not about gun control, it is about licensing firearms. "Gun control" is a propaganda term. Is automobile licensing "vehicle control?" Honest, responsible drivers or gun owners need not fear licensing.

Everyone, liberal or conservative, is responsible for supporting the needy to the maximum extent of their ability without themselves becoming needy. Liberals wish to outsource a larger portion of that responsibility to their government through taxes than do conservatives. There's logic on both sides.

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Affirmative action bothers conservatives. They know that blacks are free to compete successfully if they wish. The need for affirmative action bothers many liberals. They observe that effective wishing cannot exist without hope, a product of affirmative action.

The Iraq "war" troubles liberals, who believe that only Congress, after thorough debate, and through formal declaration can take responsibility for committing our young to die - a conservative idea. Conservatives argue that constitutional restrictions impede the impetuous reactions expected of "the leader of the world," and that moral choices in the matter of invasion and occupation are conditioned by circumstances. (The very liberal idea for which Klinghoffer hypocritically bashed me.)

Conservatives dislike safety regulation laws - for example laws governing air and water purity - that liberals attempt to promulgate. That is understandable. Compliance tends to lower profits. People must assume responsibility for their own health. They have a perfect right not to breathe.

On education, conservatives accept parental judgment of their children's best interests, also parental nonjudgment for other children, also the parents' ignoring children's interests entirely. Conservatives tend to accept a lot of things that don't cost them anything.

Remember, all the folks who vote conservatively are not conservative. Most are disadvantageously sold conservative ideas.

Bud Tritschler, Clearwater

Jesus isn't the GOP type

Re: In God - and the GOP - they trust.

I must admit, I smugly thought that I was a good Christian. I knew that Jesus said that one of the greatest commandments was to "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:31), and that we should feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison (Matthew 25:35-45).

But now I must admit that I am truly ignorant, or that my Bible is lacking. I have searched and cannot find the passages where Jesus told his followers to fight the Romans and bring about a regime change, or to use force and coercion to make others follow his will. Please show me, so that I might be a true Christian, the passage where Jesus instructs us to treat prisoners as less than human, or that "the ends justify the means." I know that Jesus instructed his followers to pay their taxes (Matthew 22:21), but cannot find the exemption for big business. When I ask myself "What would Jesus do?" joining the GOP is not the answer I get.

Paul Starr, Treasure Island

A simplistic description

The article In God - and the GOP - they trust was simplistic. I would like to comment that Democrats typically have a more complex view of responsibility that includes a global view. I'm a Democrat, and it doesn't just boil down to the individual, which is more in the line of Republican thinking.

Democrats hold to complex views of community, a more evolved philosophy than that of simply individual responsibility. Democrats usually understand that larger forces, commercial and political, require an entity to intercede in behalf of less powerful groups. Therefore, government should protect communities from being polluted by multinational corporations that are not vested in a local community and whose profit does not benefit any U.S. community in a significant way.

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It goes without saying that although conservatives don't want to be controlled, in general they want to control women's bodies and deny rights to gays. Republicans feel that individuals are "free" to be without health insurance. This kind of freedom I can do without. I would feel more free if I had the freedom to have health insurance, knowing that my government would intercede in some way on my behalf.

Conservatives and the religious may be joined at the hip because black-and-white thinking is less intellectually strenuous than the vagaries of the unknown - which tend to be very stressful. It is easier to think simplistically, rather than making an effort to evaluate. Easier to be "given" what to think by an ancient text, than to question. It may not be a coincidence that the more educated states tend to veer toward Democratic candidates, with the typically less educated states stodgily Republican and conservative.

My point is that saying that conservatives believe in individual responsibility and Democrats believe the individual is incapable of thinking for him/herself is a simplistic description.

Glenna Blomquist, St. Petersburg

Beware those who use God to divide

Re: In God - and the GOP - they trust, May 22.

David Klinghoffer opines that religious people are more likely to vote Republican because conservatives (and I guess religious people) believe in individual moral responsibility. He closes by suggesting that God himself is a Republican. At first I thought it was satire. I then realized that Klinghoffer was unfortunately not kidding.

While I'm sure that many religious people believe in individual moral responsibility (as do I), I believe that most religious people vote Republican because the Republican Party spends an enormous amount of time and money catering to religious people. Many of those catering methods are quite frankly misleading and irresponsible. The worst of those methods is the one utilized by Klinghoffer himself: suggesting that God himself is a Republican. Other than garnering your vote, what other intended result could there be for such a ridiculous suggestion? What if someone else suggests to you that God is a member of Hamas or al-Qaida? Now where are we? I guess it's the Republican God versus the Muslim God. Wish us all luck. We'll need it.

Beware of anyone suggesting that God is only on their side, not yours. My God doesn't pick sides.

Michael Markham, Clearwater

Selective views of WMDs

Re: U.S. troops find deadly nerve agent in Iraqi shell, May 18.

It wasn't surprising to see how the St. Petersburg Times glossed over the report of the sarin-laced shell in Iraq - that and the quote of former weapons inspector David Kay: "It doesn't strike me as a big deal."

Perhaps the Times editorial staff and Kay should have read and reported on the wire-service message that was reported on by the Wall Street Journal in the April 29 issue stating a terrorist attack in Jordan has been foiled - an attack that was directed at the U.S. Embassy, the Jordanian prime minister's office and the national intelligence headquarters.

Jordanian authorities say this attack consisting of high explosives and poison gas could have reached 80,000 persons. Jordan's King Abdullah called it a "major, major operation" that would have "decapitated" his government.

According to the Wall Street Journal report, the bomb, trucks and funds were said to have entered Jordan via Syria. It also stated that last fall Gen. James Clapper Jr., director of satellite intelligence for the Pentagon, said there had

It's heartbreaking to see our nation grow so divided

been an unusual amount of traffic - including possible weapons of mass destruction - between Iraq and Syria in the leadup to the war.

Perhaps if Congress had acted sooner and the United Nations' resistance was not there, these trucks could have been intercepted or destroyed. More important is the fact that none of the major news media have covered this story. Tell me it isn't "selective" journalism!

John McAuley, Dunedin

Stuck in Iraq for the wrong reasons?

I'm concerned that our strategy in Iraq is colored by the fact that we didn't find weapons of mass destruction or links to al-Qaida. Our failure to validate the reasons for the invasion seems to have redoubled our efforts to "democratize" Iraq. Whether or not the Iraqis want democracy is another issue altogether.

But imagine for a moment that we invaded Iraq, captured Saddam Hussein, and found all the WMDs we'd said were there and more. And what if, after 14 months in Iraq, we found ourselves in the same position we are in today, with American soldiers dying every day and a growing sentiment among the people of Iraq that the Americans must leave?

Would we insist on staying in Iraq and forcing Iraqis to accept a government of our choosing, or would we declare victory for our stated mission and set forth a schedule for an imminent withdrawal, while noting that it was up to the Iraqis, not us, to choose their form of government?

If the reason we will be in Iraq for the foreseeable future (and perhaps beyond) is that we were wrong about the reasons we started the war in the first place, then we need to reconsider what we're doing there. Needlessly sacrificing the lives of young Americans is too dear a price to pay for poor intelligence. In fact, it's not intelligent at all.

Meyer Baron, Gulfport

Is oil a problem or not?

Re: Gas prices and the war in Iraq.

Let me see, Democrats claim we are at war in Iraq for the oil. Now they are complaining that the president should do something about the price of oil.

Well, which is it? Or is it just bigoted hatred of President Bush? And, yes, I did say bigoted.

Allen Peck, Largo

Finally pointing out the obvious

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi last week called George Bush incompetent. Why is she the first national leader to have the courage to voice this? Any president who will initiate an unprovoked war without confirming his intelligence sources is incompetent! Also, as Rep. Pelosi sadly said, he is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of our soldiers. What a sorry state of affairs.

Who is responsible? Why is this so difficult for our nation to recognize and why have our national leaders been so slow to point out the obvious?

It's heartbreaking to see our nation grow so divided

Robert C. Kendall, Brandon

Graphic

CARTOON, DON ADDIS; Two elections officials are looking at an electronic voting machine, and one says, "That's touch-screen, not touch-scream."

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Sex columnist didn't deserve to be on front page

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Series: LETTERS

Body

What was the rationale for putting the April 19 article Sexual curiosity is college columnist's muse on the front page, at the top no less? Was this a pathetic attempt to sell newspapers, i.e "sex sells"? How in your wildest imaginings would this article be considered front-page news? Personally I found the subject of sexually explicit columns in college newspapers disturbing.

I would concede that the information might be considered newsworthy, but please, not on the front page. Surely with what is going on in the world today, you can find better front-page news!

Jennie Jordan, St. Petersburg

Spotlight more worthy students

Re: Sexual curiosity is college columnist's muse.

I am appalled by this story. How is it possible that a college student writing graphically about sex acts merits a headline story complete with photo on the front page? Why is this individual held up as some sort of newsworthy role model? Huge portions of this article were crass, vulgar, offensive and inappropriate.

There are numerous outstanding students with amazing accomplishments you could spotlight. Many could serve as fine role models and deserve to have their academic, artistic, musical and athletic achievements celebrated. Surely you could have found someone more deserving than a student who has dubbed herself "sex girl."

Words like decency and appropriateness must seem outdated and old fashioned to your editorial staff. But many do not wish to be assaulted in their homes with this corrosive influence. Furthermore, your paper is used in many classrooms in Pinellas County. No elementary school teacher should have to explain an article that borders on the pornographic, as this one does, to young children. The papers left stacked by the front office will need to be covered if future front-page articles are going to incorporate such explicit, graphic sexual material.

The bar is set far too low at the St. Petersburg Times. Raise it higher or lose those readers who still hold values dear.

Katherine Kissling, Safety Harbor

Sex columnist didn't deserve to be on front page

Paper needs higher standards

Re: Sexual curiosity is college columnist's muse.

Once again the lead article is about sex in what I can only imagine is a marketing effort to sell papers.

It certainly is not news that college newspapers carry columns about sex. Possibly it is newsworthy that a 20-year-old woman would discuss her graphic sex columns with her 17-year-old brother and grandfather, but that's a Dr. Phil show!

Raise your standards. If you must print such offensive material, move it inside.

Carol Turk, Palm Harbor

What were the editors thinking?

I have canceled my subscription to the St. Petersburg Times. I refuse to support a newspaper that leads its front page with a story on the "kinky" escapades of a young college student, including her musings on anal sex. As a Pinellas County high school teacher, I was particularly shocked that this article ran on the same day that the Floridian carries Xpress, a section devoted primarily to elementary and middle school students. Do you realize how many papers were on school campuses Monday due to the Newspapers in Education program? What were your editors thinking (or not thinking - as their poor judgment indicates)?

I was further angered by what I feel is manipulation on the Times' part. What are you trying to do? Float this type of article to further fuel the public debate that began with the exposure of Janet Jackson's breast during the prime of prime-time television? Enough.

Or was your purpose more crass in that you sunk to titillation in the hopes of increasing revenues? I sincerely cannot - and the lens with which I view the world is pretty liberal - comprehend why you would publish this article, and on the front page, no less. Maybe you need to change your masthead to "St. Petersburg Times: A Playboy Supplement." And I used to defend the Times when family and friends would refer to it as that "liberal rag."

Donna Hanak, St. Petersburg

Where is the news significance?

Re: Sexual curiosity is college columnist's muse.

I accept your judgment as to the newsworthiness/public interest of Stephanie Oliveira's sex column in the USF Oracle - but the top of the front page?

On Page 2 are items headlined Arabs promise to avenge death of Hamas chief and Arabs protest killing, denounce U.S. and Israel. Our foreign policy is killing us.

You must categorize news significance with a dart board.

Richard J. Lewis, Madeira Beach

Sex and rape are different things

I am writing in reaction to the April 19 article on USF sex columnist Stephanie Oliveira. I am the "sophomore English major" who wrote in response to Ms. Oliveira's Oracle article on rape.

Sex columnist didn't deserve to be on front page

I was both amused and angered by Ms. Oliveira's response to my letter.

"Say I'm a tramp, but don't say I don't care about rape victims" Oliveira is quoted as saying.

I would not call Ms. Oliveira a tramp, first because I don't believe that she is one, and second, because I do not agree with employing such degrading language toward fellow women. If Oliveira truly "cared" about rape victims, let alone women in general, she would acknowledge her position as a (self-styled) "sex expert" and banish such hurtful, judgmental language from her ever-expansive vocabulary.

I never stated in my letter that Oliveira does not care about rape victims, but I am stating it now. The purpose of my letter was not to attack Oliveira on anything other than the fact that rape is an inappropriate subject for a sex column. If Ms. Oliveira would put down her copy of The Guide to Getting It On for a moment in order to scan through Alice Sebold's Lucky or perhaps even Joyce Carol Oates' We Were the Mulvaney's, she would most likely see my point: Sex and rape are two very different things, and to confuse the former with the latter is not only insulting, its degrading, painful and dehumanizing. Not unlike rape itself.

Ms. Oliveira personalized my opinion as an attack against her column as a whole, which I find to be rather selfish. Oliveira can sit and type sexual innuendos and sexual taboos until she is blue in the face. More power to her. But when she crosses that line of tackling sexual abuse in the same vein as she does discussing porn shops and Cosmo articles, then her entire demographic shifts, and survivors of sexual abuse are included in a area under discussion that they most certainly have an aversion to: sex.

Lastly, I would like to state that survivors do need respect and support, even from people like Oliveira. What they do not need is a sex columnist attempting to pull victims back from their pain using the same platform occupied by "kinky" sexual positions and forays into local porn shops. No one can pull anyone back from anywhere. You either save yourself, or you remain unsaved.

Ashley Konrad, Palm Harbor

Think of the young people

Re: Sexual curiosity is college columnist's muse.

I think this article is absolutely disgusting and I wonder why the Times would put such trash on the front page or anywhere else in the paper. Is this the type of thing we want to promote in our society? Promoting this activity is what is causing much of our problems with our youth today. Is this subject appropriate for your young son and daughter? Please consider what your articles are doing to our young people.

Shirley Gillespie, Hudson

Disappointing decision

I'm very disappointed in your cover story in Monday's newspaper. Our country is in a war. Monday was the 9th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, and your cover story is about a girl writing a sex column for the USF newspaper. Is this what you consider news?

I am a mother of two young daughters who thankfully can't read yet. I don't think many parents want their children to read about anal sex on the first page of your paper.

I'm really disgusted by what passes for news and feel you are just trying to sell more papers by putting this kind of article on the front page. I truly hope you think next time before putting this kind of garbage in the paper. We have much more serious news going on in the world today.

Sex columnist didn't deserve to be on front page

Julie Mendez, Lithia

Reaching far for negative news

Having just moved back to Pinellas after 10 years suffering in Lakeland with their liberal "rag" the Ledger, I am equally miffed at the Times. A good example is the April 16 front page about a Providence, R.I., family who just lost a Marine in the Iraq war (A Marine comes home). I am the first one to mourn over the loss of a fighting man, but Rhode Island? Do we have to go there to find something negative about "George's" war? And then make it front-page news? Slow news day, guys?

Arriving over the Internet daily are pictures of how well we are doing over there. Pictures of soldiers helping children, children receiving gifts, schools being built, drinking water in homes that never had water before. And on and on. But, no. Let's talk about someone who was killed who doesn't live in Florida,

let alone the Tampa Bay area! Come on, guys - front-page news? I'd rather read about the bullet train.

Jim Hildebrand, Safety Harbor

Compliments are in order

Re: A Marine comes home, April 16.

Regarding your newspaper, it is only fair that I be as quick to commend as to criticize. Accordingly, I want to compliment the staff, including the editors, for the above referenced front-page story. The heartbreakingly poignant closeup photo of the three young women standing vigil as the casket of their 21-year-old friend arrives from Iraq has a political eloquence that words alone could never convey.

Therefore, enough said.

Phillips M. Evans, Largo

Capturing a tragic reality

The black and white photo of the three young women on the front page of the April 16 Times by Bob Croslin is excellent. It brings home the tragic reality of war. It should be nominated for a photojournalism award.

Jeremy Ray, Tampa

Offer some help for hungry children

Re: Backpacks help hungry children, April 15.

It seems incomprehensible to be able to spend more than \$87-billion in Iraq when children in the United States are hungry. The backpack program deserves help from the Bush administration as much as the war in Iraq. I am sure that there would be no opposition in Congress should the administration desire to help fund this worthy cause. There is enough "pork" around Washington to spare some for the children

Bennett Hoffman, Clearwater

Share your opinions

Sex columnist didn't deserve to be on front page

Letters for publication should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 1121, St. Petersburg, FL 33731. They can be sent by fax to

(727) 893-8675 or through our Web site at:

<http://www.sptimes.com/letters/>

They should be brief and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Please include a handwritten signature when possible.

Letters may be edited for clarity, taste and length. We regret that not all letters can be published.

Graphic

CARTOON, DON ADDIS; an army man address soldiers about the likelihood of them going home

Load-Date: April 21, 2004

God's a bestseller - but there's a fundamental flaw

The Times (London)

March 29, 2004, Monday

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Section: Features; Times2; 4

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Byline: Richard Morrison

Body

ITS PROMISE TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE AND PREPARE YOU FOR ETERNITY HAS KEPT THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE BY THE EVANGELIST RICK WARREN AT THE TOP OF THE U.S. BESTSELLER LISTS FOR 60 WEEKS. BUT RICHARD MORRISON ARGUES THAT ITS INSISTENCE ON ETERNAL RATHER THAN TEMPORAL VALUES MAY HAVE A MORE SINISTER RESULT

WE KNOW, of course, that God moves in a mysterious way. But The New York Times bestseller list moves pretty mysteriously, too. At, or near, the top of it for the past 60 weeks has been a book that has no sex, no violence, no thrills, no romance, no schoolboy wizards, no moodily unmarried thirtysomething women, nor any of the other literary ingredients usually deemed essential by an ambitious author who wants to hear the merry music of cash tills jingling.

No, the book snapped up by 15 million Americans over the past 18 months is, quite simply, a step-by-step plan for becoming a Christian. It tells you how to change your life in 40 days, and pass the entrance exam for Heaven. "Today the average life span is 25,500 days," it declares. "Don't you think it would be a wise use of time to set aside 40 of those days to figure out what God wants you to do with the rest of them?"

The Purpose Driven Life (irresistibly subtitled What On Earth Am I Here For?) is the work of Rick Warren, a Californian evangelist. Clearly, he is a man of rare missionary powers. He founded his own church -in Saddleback Valley, south of Los Angeles -in 1980 with 200 followers. It now has a weekly congregation of 18,000.

But Warren's influence extends far wider than that. He publishes thousands of his sermons on his website (www.pastors.com) so that other ministers, presumably those of a more slothful disposition, can download them at \$ 5 (£2.75) a go. About 8,000 preachers avail themselves of this useful crib each week, and 110,000 subscribe to his weekly "Ministry Toolbox" email.

Assume that each of those church leaders has a flock of several hundred trusting souls, and it becomes much easier to explain the vast market tapped by Warren. And the author has certainly not allowed Christian humility to stop him from utilising this network of evangelical churches stretching across the bible belt. "I created a new distribution channel," he says proudly. "I went direct to these pastors who have loved and trusted me for years." That allowed him to sell four million copies of The Purpose Driven Life direct to churches through his website. A nice little earner, at \$ 20 a book.

God's a bestseller - but there's a fundamental flaw

Then there are the spin-offs, which range from handy "scripture cards" to a leather-bound notebook in which new converts (Warren calls them "baby believers") can jot down their evolving theological thoughts. Though the notebook is mostly composed of blank pages, two million copies have been sold.

All told, the Purpose Driven phenomenon must have netted more than £200 million for Warren, his church and his publishers (Zondervan, a division of HarperCollins). Which raises some fascinating questions. Why do people buy it? What does Warren offer that is so persuasive, when there are thousands of evangelising Christian textbooks around? And, taken together with the box office triumph of Mel Gibson's biblical gore-fest *The Passion of the Christ* (a success all the more surprising in view of the trashing the film received in many "sophisticated" media circles), do the astonishing sales figures for *The Purpose Driven Life* confirm the suspicion that "the sea of faith", far from vanishing in the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" detected by Matthew Arnold more than a century ago, is in full flood again?

That certainly seems to be the case. And what makes Warren's success even more remarkable is that he makes no compromises to scientific thought, moral relativism or modern, multicultural sensitivities. All of that wishy-washy, post-Enlightenment sort of thinking he regards as "flawed" by "The Fall". What he offers is Christian fundamentalism at its most resolutely rigid. Perhaps that's part of its appeal. Everything is Bible-based (it's "our milk, bread, solid food and sweet dessert", he says), so naturally a diligent believer should be able to recite large tracts of it by heart. "If you don't have any Bible verses memorised, you've got no bullets in your gun!" he exclaims, a little chillingly.

And everything in the Bible is to be regarded as the literal truth. That includes the Book of Genesis, no matter how much of a fairytale it may seem to those with a smattering of geology or astronomy. At one point, for instance, Warren makes the curious claim that Noah "had never seen rain, because prior to the Flood, God irrigated the earth from the ground up".

The literal belief espoused by Warren also includes Revelation's graphic depiction of the "end of things". Warren, who spends much of the book telling us what God thinks and feels, disappointingly stops short of describing eternity. It would, he writes, be like "trying to describe the internet to an ant" -though I was reassured to learn that "in eternity you will receive a new, improved, upgraded body". He does, however, appear to be privy to some pretty sensational intelligence about the Day of Judgment. It will be terrifyingly like a conversation with one's editor, by the sound of it. "To all excuses," Warren writes, "God will respond, 'Sorry, wrong answer. I created, saved, and called you, and commanded you to live a life of service. What part did you not understand?'"

It is easy to mock such stuff, or poke fun at Warren's penchant for rhetorical flannel. "The heart of the matter," he tells us at one point, "is a matter of the heart." I'm sure they lap up such profound mots in Saddleback Valley.

But it would be foolish not to acknowledge that Warren is a very canny evangelist.

He divides his book into 40 short chapters; the reader is instructed to read and inwardly digest one each day. As Warren points out, the Bible is full of 40 day trials and transformations: Jesus, for instance, "was empowered" by his 40 days in the wilderness; and his disciples were in turn "empowered" during the 40 days between his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven.

But to the general reader, the book's format seems based not so much on theology as on something much more reassuringly familiar: the innumerable "self-help" manuals clogging up every bookshop in the land. And although Warren may vehemently deny that he is in the self-improvement psychobabble business ("contrary to what many popular books, movies and seminars tell you, you won't discover your life's meaning by looking within yourself"), he cunningly adopts many of that genre's strategies.

First the reader is encouraged to sign a "covenant", pledging to "commit the next 40 days to discovering God's purpose for my life". The following seven chapters are about throwing off bad old ways and material values. Each ends with a "point to ponder", a "verse to remember" and a "question to consider".

God's a bestseller - but there's a fundamental flaw

Plough through to Day 7 and you are considered sufficiently purged to proceed to the main business. "Congratulations! Welcome to the family of God!" Warren exclaims, before seizing the chance for a small advertisement. "You're going to need support. If you email me (see appendix 2), I will send you a little booklet I wrote called *Your First Steps for Spiritual Growth*."

The following 33 chapters take you through "God's purposes" for your life. Which are? Well, here's the odd thing. Other than giving vague tips about avoiding places where we might be led into temptation (like "sports bars"), there is surprisingly little practical advice about how one should conduct one's everyday life, or how society might be reformed to take better account of Christian principles. Perhaps that is because Warren takes the staunchly fatalistic line that "God never does anything accidentally, and he never makes mistakes".

So was the Holocaust part of God's purpose? Warren, who thinks that Christian testimony should "bypass intellectual defences", doesn't even begin to tangle with such knotty theological dilemmas.

What he does give us is a lot of heavy verbal bullying about supporting one's local church. "The first symptom of spiritual decline," he thunders, "is usually inconsistent attendance at worship services." But the faithful are expected to be a good deal more supportive than that. Money also features prominently in Warren's brand of Christianity. "Wealth is certainly not a sin," he says, encouragingly, "but failing to use it for God's glory is." In his church, he tells us, he has appointed a group of "CEOs and business owners" to be "Kingdom Builders". "They still try to make as much money as they can, but they use their wealth to fund God's church."

The faithful also have a duty to convert others -or to "save unbelievers for Jesus", as Warren would put it. "Imagine the joy of greeting people in Heaven whom you helped to get there," he trills. This missionary work, it seems, must be aimed even at people who resolutely don't wish to have anything to do with Warren's happy army of converts. "As long as there is one person in your community who isn't in the family of God, your church must keep reaching out."

So is that what the great, mind-blowing plan of *The Purpose Driven Life* boils down to? Going regularly to church, turning over a lot of your income to the local pastor, and hauling along all your neighbours as well? If so, one would have to regard it as a cynical but fairly harmless Christian marketing campaign, masquerading as a much grander exercise in existential self-questioning.

But I don't think Warren is quite as simplistic as that. What he preaches along with the vast majority of Bible-Belt evangelists -is a return to a truly medieval faith: one that postulates a system of wondrous rewards and horrific punishments administered by a judgmental God in the afterlife.

That may or may not be the case. I have no way of knowing, and neither does Warren. What is indisputable, however, is that if you drill such terror inducing beliefs into your faithful supporters, and urge them, as Warren does, to practise "instant obedience" to "eternal rather than temporal values" (which the trusted pastor is then free to define), you make them highly susceptible to irrational suggestions. And such planted ideas can range from the innocent and the innocuous to the downright evil, as the murderous or suicidal actions of numerous cults have tragically demonstrated over the years. It is, after all, the promise of life eternal in paradise that motivates the young suicide bombers brainwashed by al-Qaeda and *Hamas*.

I am sure that Warren's church offers nothing more sinister than happy-clappy songs and earnest Bible-study groups. But that's not the point. The worrying question is: if 15 million Americans are gullible enough to lap up the Mickey Mouse metaphysics of *The Purpose Driven Life*, what else would they buy, and who else would they believe?

Load-Date: March 29, 2004

WORLD REPORT

Windsor Star (Ontario)

April 5, 2004 Monday Final Edition

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Body

UK minister confirms 'no limits' migrant policy

London

Tony Blair was fighting Sunday to prevent the political row over immigration spiralling out of control after ministers confirmed that the government was operating a "no limit" policy on the number of immigrants entering Britain to work.

Patricia Hewitt, the trade and industry Secretary, said Britain's labour shortages meant more immigrant workers were needed. She rejected the idea of imposing any limit or quota as "old-fashioned central planning".

The Conservatives accused the government of setting the hurdles for entering Britain low so that potential immigrants no longer had to pose as asylum seekers. Downing Street announced that Blair would be launching a "cross-government assault" to tackle abuse of the system with an immigration "summit" at No. 10 Tuesday.

Compiled from Star News Services

Queen aims to rekindle Entente Cordiale today

London

Queen Elizabeth travels by Eurostar to Paris today for a state visit designed to rekindle the century-old Entente Cordiale with France after the long disagreement over the war in Iraq.

Launching a year of commemorations of the entente's centenary, the Queen will be welcomed by President Jacques Chirac on the Champs Elysees, which has been dressed up with Union flags and the tricolour.

The British and French governments have made a show of overcoming their differences over Iraq to co-operate on other pressing issues such as the European Union constitution, the creation of a European defence force and attempts to curb Iran's nuclear programme.

Police find explosives and arms cache near border

Bayonne, France

WORLD REPORT

Police swooped on a clandestine workshop used by the Basque separatist group ETA to make bombs and rocket launchers, arresting an alleged member of the group and seizing weapons and arms, police officials said.

Police identified the suspected ETA member as Zeberio Aierbe, 38. He was armed and carrying false papers, police said. They identified him with his fingerprints.

The workshop was located in an outbuilding of a house in Saint-Michel, a Pyrenean village close to France's southwest border with Spain and the town of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Police raided the house Sunday morning after surveillance confirmed that Aierbe was there.

Also arrested was a sheep farmer who owns the house. Bomb disposal experts examined the workshop. Police said rocket launchers used in ETA attacks in Spain and bombs were made there.

DaimlerChrysler will alter its executive pay system

Frankfurt, Germany

DaimlerChrysler AG plans to change the way it pays its top executives starting next year, but details aren't yet available, a spokesman said Sunday.

"We have already said we want to change the way we remunerate our top executives from March 2005 onward, but there is no concrete plan available as of yet," DaimlerChrysler spokesman Thomas Froehlich said.

Froehlich said it is "likely" that chief executive Juergen Schrempp will address the issue at the company's annual shareholder meeting in Berlin Wednesday.

High-speed train strikes metal, but does not derail

Dortmund, Germany

A high-speed train carrying 200 passengers hit six metal slabs attached to tracks near this western German city, but it did not derail after the driver applied the brakes, authorities said Sunday.

None of the InterCityExpress train's passengers were injured in the incident, which happened early Saturday. The 17-kg metal slabs had been screwed on to tracks between the towns of Kamen and Nordboegge on a line linking Cologne and Berlin.

Slovenes choose not to restore minority rights

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Slovenes voted overwhelmingly Sunday against restoring legal resident rights to thousands of members of ethnic minority groups who were deleted from the country's population register after Slovenia declared its independence 12 years ago.

The non-binding referendum has ignited nationalist sentiment in this small Alpine country, wedged between the Alps and the Balkans, of two million people. The official returns showed that 95 per cent of voters opposed reinstating permanent residency and other rights to the more than 18,000 people --mostly Bosnians, Croats and Serbs -- who were erased from state records under an administrative decision made after Slovenia declared independence from the old Yugoslav federation in 1991.

Former PM, one-time ally to face off in Slovak vote

Bratislava, Slovakia

A former authoritarian prime minister and his one-time ally will face one another in a runoff election that decides who will be the Slovak leader as it joins the European Union, according to election results Sunday.

WORLD REPORT

Vladimir Meciar's first place finish in Saturday's presidential ballot comes only weeks before Slovakia joins the EU. The smooth-talking nationalist and his opponent and former right-hand man, Ivan Gasparovic, finished one and two to eliminate the favourite, Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan. Turnout was only 47.94 per cent.

Since no candidate won 50 per cent or more of the votes, Slovak election law calls for the top two candidates to vie in an April 17 runoff.

Sharon says promise not to harm Arafat invalid

Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said his pledge to the United States not to harm Yasser Arafat no longer holds, declaring that the Palestinian president and the head of Lebanon's Hezbollah are potential targets for assassination.

In an interview set for broadcast today by Israeli army radio, Sharon also said for the first time that under his plan to leave the Gaza Strip, evacuated Jewish settlements would not be destroyed.

Sharon said that three years ago he promised President George W. Bush that Israel would not harm Arafat, but since then circumstances had changed.

"Arafat was (then) given red carpet treatment everywhere in the world. Today it is clear to the United States and to everyone just who Arafat is," Sharon said.

Israel and the United States are boycotting Arafat, charging that he is responsible for Palestinian violence.

March 22, Israel assassinated Sheik Ahmed Yassin, founder and leader of the violent Islamic **Hamas** movement and officials said Israeli forces would mete out similar treatment to others.

Summit must be held, but not before May: Mubarak

Cairo, Egypt

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, trying to revive last month's postponed Arab summit, said Sunday the leaders should meet in May and that he doesn't care where they gather.

Tunisia, the host of this year's March 29-30 meeting of the Cairo-based Arab League, called off the gathering 48 hours before it was to begin, citing disagreements among members on key agenda items such as a U.S. reform plan for the region and a two-year-old Arab peace initiative for Israel.

Mubarak met Syrian President Bashar Assad and Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir in Cairo Sunday for consultations on rescheduling the Arab summit.

Rwanda's survivors gather to remember genocide

Kigali, Rwanda

Survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda gathered in Kigali Sunday with foreigners who witnessed the slaughter, researchers and academics to discuss the consequences of the tragedy and how to prevent it being repeated elsewhere.

The three-day conference marks the start of official commemorations of 10th anniversary of the beginning of the genocide on April 7, 1994 and is also intended to raise global awareness about the killing.

More than 500,000 Tutsis and political moderates from the Hutu majority were killed in the 100-day slaughter, which was orchestrated by the extremist-Hutu government then in power in the central African country.

WORLD REPORT

"It is 10 years after the genocide and the world's awareness to what happened here is extremely limited," said Joseph Nsengimana, an adviser to President Paul Kagame.

Activists mourn victims of crackdown by China

Hong Kong

Hong Kong activists marked the traditional Chinese tomb-sweeping festival Sunday with a tribute to victims of the bloody crackdown on protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square nearly 15 years ago.

As tens of thousands flocked to local cemeteries to leave offerings for deceased loved ones, some local legislators laid white wreaths -- the traditional Chinese colour of mourning -- and bowed at a makeshift monument engraved with the inscription "Democracy's heroes are immortal."

Sri Lankan president wants talks with Tigers

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's president, whose political alliance won the most seats in parliamentary elections, plans to make a resumption of peace talks with Tamil Tiger rebels her "top priority," her chief aide said Sunday.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga's United Peoples Freedom Alliance took 105 seats in the 225-member Parliament in Friday's vote -- just eight short of an absolute majority -- and was in discussions with minor parties to join it to form a government.

Rabid vampire bats kill 13 in the Brazilian Amazon

Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

Rabies spread by vampire bats has claimed 13 lives on an Amazon river island, Brazilian news media reported Saturday.

The deaths occurred over the last 21 days on Portel Island, O Liberal newspaper reported. The island is about 2,400 km northeast of Rio de Janeiro.

In all, 19 people have been infected with rabies. Of those infected, 13 have died and six remain in hospital, two in very critical condition, the newspaper reported.

Since March 9, some 300 people have reported being bitten by the bats but most of them were vaccinated against rabies, O Liberal reported.

Health officials are working to immunize people and cattle to contain the disease's spread.

Quebec lynx released into wilderness of Colorado

Denver

Biologists released six Canadian lynx into the Colorado wilderness on a snowy day Saturday with high hopes they would soon make themselves at home.

Last winter, six **females** from groups released earlier had kittens, a major success for a five-year-old program that started off with four of five transplanted lynx dying.

Todd Malmsbury, spokesman for the state wildlife commission, said three males and three **females** captured in Quebec last winter were released Saturday, all wearing radio and satellite collars. The collars allow biologists to keep track of their movements and determine whether they are mating.

Three die, one wounded on Detroit's west side

WORLD REPORT

Detroit

A shooting on the city's west side early Sunday left three people dead and a fourth wounded, police said.

The victims had just left a party about 12:30 a.m. when they were followed by another vehicle, Officer Glen Woods said. Someone in the other vehicle opened fire, Woods said and then drove off.

Woods said a 22-year-old man, a 22-year old woman and a 21-year-old woman died. The survivor, a 21-year-old woman, was taken to a local hospital where she was listed in temporary serious condition. The shootings occurred on the eve of a planned citywide day of prayer against violence.

Police told television station WXYZ that the shooting stemmed from a dispute earlier at another location.

Graphic

Democracy sought in Nepal: Riot police charge supporters of Nepal's six largest political parties Sunday during a demonstration against King Gyanendra in Katmandu. Police fired tear gas and swung batons to disperse about 30,000 protesters demanding that the king allow a democratic government. AP photo: Binod Joshi

Load-Date: April 5, 2004

End of Document

Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

The New York Times

October 10, 2004 Sunday

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Byline: By JODI WILGOREN and DAVID E. SANGER; Jodi Wilgoren reported from Elyria, Ohio, and Davie, Fla., for this article, and David E. Sanger from Waterloo, Iowa, and Chanhassen, Minn.

Dateline: DAVIE, Fla., Oct. 9

Body

President Bush and Senator John Kerry stumped Saturday through four critical states, using increasingly acerbic language as they tried to capitalize on what they saw as the other's weak spots in a second debate that did not appear to give either man a clear edge.

First in Iowa, then at a sprawling rally in Chanhassen, Minn., Mr. Bush repeated his refrain from Friday night's matchup, saying that Mr. Kerry "can run but cannot hide" from his legislative record. The crowd began to shout the phrase back at the president, who declared "I could barely contain myself" when Mr. Kerry said he had never changed positions on Iraq.

"He must think we're on a different planet," Mr. Bush said, to huge cheers.

At an afternoon rally in the Cleveland suburb of Elyria, Ohio, before flying to Florida, Mr. Kerry asserted that Mr. Bush's stubborn unwillingness to acknowledge errors of judgment prevented him from fixing them, starting in Iraq.

"Do we want leadership, as it is called, that can't face reality and admit mistakes, or do we want leadership that sees the truth and tells the truth to the American people?" Mr. Kerry asked a crowd of more than 10,000. He was referring to Mr. Bush's vague response at the debate that he had "made some mistakes in appointing people" to a woman who had asked him to specify three mistakes of his administration.

"If George Bush can't see the problems," Mr. Kerry said, "and he's not willing to admit the problems, and he can't talk to America about the problems, you can't lead America to solve the problems."

The battleground back-and-forth reflected the tension in two campaigns that, about three weeks before Election Day, can both sniff victory. With several national polls showing a dead-heat race before the second debate, Republicans expressed confidence that Mr. Bush's improved showing on Friday would stem the slippage from his angrier performance in the first meeting.

But Democrats, buoyed by a week of developments that undercut Mr. Bush's claims of vigorous job growth and his main justification for invading Iraq, said they would not lose the momentum heading into the final debate, in Tempe, Ariz., on Wednesday.

Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

An Associated Press survey published Friday, just before the debate, showed Mr. Kerry leading Mr. Bush 50 percent to 46 percent, reversing Mr. Bush's 52 percent to 45 percent lead from two weeks before. The margin of error was three percentage points. Time magazine has the two deadlocked at 45 percent, with Mr. Bush having lost a six-point lead, and Mr. Kerry with a strong advantage among women.

"A week ago we were dead," one top Democrat said in a hotel bar in St. Louis before the debate. "What a business we're in."

But Mr. Bush may have stopped the slippage in the polls, or so his small army of aides and spinners argued as they followed him across the states that will most likely decide the election. An instant ABC poll of viewers of the Friday debate found that 44 percent said Mr. Kerry had won and 41 percent gave the advantage to Mr. Bush, with 13 percent saying it was a tie. The margin of error was 3 percentage points. In the first debate, viewers surveyed by ABC favored Mr. Kerry by a nine-point margin, 45 percent to 36 percent.

Starting with a breakfast in St. Louis this morning, then moving on to Iowa and Minnesota -- both states he lost by narrow margins four years ago -- Mr. Bush built on the critique of Mr. Kerry's Senate years that he began in the debate.

"Much as he tried to obscure it, on issue after issue, my opponent showed why he's earned the ranking, the most liberal member of the United States Senate," Mr. Bush said at the breakfast for Matt Blunt, the Republican candidate for governor of Missouri. "Senator Kerry was asked to look into the camera and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than \$200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise, he would have to break almost all of his other ones."

In Minnesota on Saturday, he tried a self-deprecating reference to the first debate, saying, "After listening to his litany of complaints and his dour pessimism, it was all I could do not to make a bad face."

Here on the outskirts of Fort Lauderdale on Saturday night, Mr. Kerry made an appeal to the heavily Jewish population, tacking onto his typical presentation a story about his visit to an Israeli air base and his aerial tour, saying the upside-down view during a loop in a small jet had given him a better understanding of the tiny country's vulnerabilities.

"Our job, Mr. President, is to hold those Arab countries accountable that still support terrorists -- Hamas, Hezbollah, Al Aksa Brigades," he shouted. "And I will not give one inch in our efforts to do that."

The candidates planned slower Sundays, with Mr. Bush relaxing at his Texas ranch and Mr. Kerry attending church in Miami before flying to New Mexico to prepare for the last debate. Mr. Bush next heads to Colorado.

Both sides said they were determined to detour from their weeks-long tussle over the Iraq war into more discussion of domestic issues. But Mr. Bush, at least, could not stop himself from returning to the question of Iraq again and again, insisting anew that the report issued last week by Charles A. Duelfer, the top C.I.A. weapons inspector in Iraq, proved that Saddam Hussein was a "gathering threat."

Many Democrats and independent experts say that interpretation of the report is close to misleading: The report said that Mr. Hussein dismantled his stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons, and all but gave up on his nuclear program. His powers weakened after 1991, it concluded, although the report speculated he was holding out hope of reviving his weapons programs once United Nations sanctions were lifted.

On the stump today, Mr. Bush said that the report proved Mr. Hussein was trying to "game the system" to destroy United Nations sanctions, and that once those sanctions were riddled with holes, he intended to re-start his weapons programs. That justified the war, he said.

Mr. Kerry's aides argued that the report showed there was plenty of time for diplomacy, and that a pre-emptive strike, defined in international law as a strike against a power about to lash out at another state, was not justified in March 2003.

Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

With the next debate devoted to domestic issues, just four days hence, both sides said Iraq would finally yield center stage.

"The president also has to deal with a lot of domestic issues every day in office, Congress and bureaucracies and regulations," noted Andrew Card, the president's chief of staff. "So he is able to walk and chew gum at the same time and do it well."

Speaking on a perfect autumn afternoon in Ohio from a stage festooned with hay bales and fresh apples and pumpkins, Mr. Kerry joked that he, too, thought Mr. Bush had made some mistakes in appointing people. He said the country needed "not a single-minded leader, but a clear-headed leader, not a headstrong leader, but a well-reasoned leader."

"You've seen the four years and you can measure them," he said of Mr. Bush's tenure. "You've seen the lost jobs, the lost health care, the lost opportunity, the lost respect in the world. You've seen lives that have been lost because of decisions that have been made that weren't the right ones."

For his part, Karl Rove, the president's chief strategist, was using Iraq for his own purposes to combine the charge that Mr. Kerry flip-flops with new attacks on his record. He showed up in a press tent in Waterloo, Iowa, to mark the second anniversary of Mr. Kerry's appearance on the floor of the Senate, where the Senator warned of what would happen if Mr. Hussein obtained weapons of mass destruction.

"I want to lay to rest any thought that Karen Hughes and Mike Gerson had anything to do with writing that speech," Mr. Rove said with a smile, referring to Mr. Bush's longtime adviser and his chief speechwriter. "The senator's a smart man, and I'm sure he wrote his own stuff."

Ms. Hughes, working the other side of the tent, said that Mr. Bush's task in the next few days was to tie Mr. Kerry's contradictions "to the realization that he really is a liberal who is out of touch with mainstream America," and pointed to his response Friday night to a query about why stem-cell research could not be conducted without further destruction of embryos.

"He seemed genuinely surprised that someone could have questioned the morality of stem cell research, one of the great moral issues of our time," Ms. Hughes told reporters after the president's rally in Waterloo. "He was uncomfortable, he didn't know how to answer."

Indeed, though the Democrats' advertising has already been dominated by domestic themes for the past week, Mr. Kerry nonetheless devoted nearly half his speech at the rally in Ohio to Iraq. Michael D. McCurry, a top strategist, said the core argument about credibility was the same, and that American voters are "ambidextrous -- they can actually keep two thoughts in their head at once."

Mary Beth Cahill, Mr. Kerry's campaign manager, said the Democrats would go after ***female*** voters by having Mr. Kerry talk about issues like stem-cell research, and with surrogate tours of swing states by military mothers and Sept. 11 widows. She said Mr. Kerry would hold town-hall meetings and large-scale rallies, and would probably also give some single-issue speeches, including one on energy policy.

One remaining question is how negative the campaigning will be, particularly for Mr. Kerry, who is still struggling to win the living-room test of likability.

"They're losing and they're going to get tougher," Steve Elmendorf, the Democrat's deputy campaign manager, predicted of the Bush campaign. "What they know how to do is distort John Kerry's record, and they're going to do more of it, and we're going to have to hit back hard."

As the past few roller-coaster weeks of the campaign have shown, the two campaigns' plans may be upended by news developments here and abroad; Mr. Kerry was handed powerful ammunition for his arguments last week with the Duelfer report on Iraq's weapons and a report showing weak job growth.

Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

"Those are gifts, but remember that underneath them are the wrong policy choices that we're talking about, they come about and land in our lap because of the policy and choices that the president made that were wrong," Mr. McCurry said. "We've got very strong arguments to make that don't rely solely on bad news dropping from the heavens every day."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: President Bush and his wife, Laura, at a rally in Waterloo, Iowa, one of several campaign stops the president made yesterday in the Midwest. He began the day in St. Louis, where Friday's debate was held. (Photo by Doug Mills/The New York Times)

Senator John Kerry addressing supporters in Lorain, Ohio. He campaigned in Ohio and Florida yesterday. (Photo by Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

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YOUR SAY - LETTERS

The Sunday Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

September 21, 2003 Sunday

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Section: FEATURES-TYPE- LETTER-COLUMN- 24/7 NEWS IN REVIEWLETTERSYOUR SAY / LETTERS; Pg. 92

Length: 1820 words

Body

No logic in wasting the Lodge

I FIND it hard to understand the logic of why our prime ministers, who are given the use of The Lodge in Canberra as their official residence as part of their top office, fail to use it.

After all the expensive refurbishment by various PMs -- that the tax-paying public paid for -- they choose not to use the Lodge because they want to live somewhere else. It's their choice, but at what cost to the tax payer? Who pays for their private travel? The tax-paying public.

That means \$2 million of Australian tax payers' money is wasted on flights to Canberra. The Prime Minister's private aircraft should be used only for official duties, not day-to-day travel because the Prime Minister has chosen to live in Sydney. He should have to pay for himself.

MATP

As a tax payer who worked hard to provide for my family, I had to find a house close to my employment because of the travel costs that I had to pay out of my wages, the same as the rest of the tax-paying public.

It is time that the misuse of public office is stopped. What makes this even worse is when patients in hospital gowns at Wollongong Hospital have to walk across Crown St, sometimes with a drip on a trolley, to get an MRI done at a private facility because the hospital has no MRI equipment, or even a licence to operate a public machine.

PETER EDWARDS

Primbee

Humanity on a slippery slope

IT seems the whole of humanity is on the wrong track. We really are on a slippery slope to nowhere. Humans are becoming less compassionate by the day.

I hear the Federal Parliament front bench laughed at Democrats leader Andrew Bartlett when he tried to talk about the ban on dog and cat fur being brought into Australia. I wish those who laughed could see film of these poor creatures being skinned alive.

Then we have the live export trade, where 57,000 sheep were stuck in the Arabian sea in 45-degree heat.

YOUR SAY - LETTERS

I am afraid we are not very far from the Christians in the lions den.

I have spent the last three years of my life studying the treatment of animals and it seems that until we start looking at the fundamentals of being decent, we are without hope. You only have to look around the world to see what a mess everything is in.

I have a special interest in laboratory animals. The amount of money wasted in that area is mind-boggling -- not to mention the cruelty.

SYLVIA RAYE

Blakehurst

Relegated to midnight

DON'T try to tell me it's not a male-dominated world. Peak time TV, night after night, we see football. And when is the women's netball shown? At midnight -- with highlights at 2pm Saturday! The most played and watched sport in Australia! Thanks, guys!

LYNDA YELLAND

Kurmond

Distorted logic on wealth

WHEN Prime Minister Howard replied to Opposition questioning in Parliament, he said: "The escalation in real estate prices has increased the wealth of a majority of Australians".

Can this man, who exhibits such an appallingly ignorance of elementary economics, be the leader of our country?

By what distorted logic has he reached the conclusion that every one who has some personal equity in a house will be wealthier now than if property prices had remained stable?

If they owned a house 12 months ago, then they still own a house -- unless they are living in the street. And if they sold their house at current inflated prices, then they will have to pay the same current inflated prices to get another, so how are they any more wealthy?

In fact, the inflationary pressures of skyrocketing property prices has massively diminished the value of everyone's savings, so in fact, a vast majority of us have been made poorer.

Not to mention the tragic plight of first-home seekers, who have been pushed completely out of the picture, with their hopes and dreams crushed.

D. BANNER

Coolbellup, Western Australia

Deal goes against the grain

BEFORE the US will sign a so-called Free Trade Agreement with Australia, it wants Australia to abolish "single selling desk" arrangements for wheat, sugar, barley and rice. This would endanger Australia's industries.

For example, at present AWB Ltd (formerly the Australian Wheat Board) is a large international grain trader, the sole exporter of Australian wheat. This guarantees supply and quality, thereby gaining premium prices for Australian farmers on world markets.

There must be no weakening of our "single desk" arrangements, especially while the US hands out huge (and increasing) subsidies to farmers.

YOUR SAY - LETTERS

ARNOLD JAGO

Mildura

Our quality of life

IN view of the fact that Premier Bob Carr has advised we will face water shortages in Sydney, why then are new land subdivisions being sanctioned? It seems something of a paradox to me.

Will the quality of life in Sydney be any better when we are 10 or 20 million souls as compared to today?

ZAC BAMBA

Ballina

Partisan approach

THE US has again demonstrated that it is unable to be the catalyst for peace in the Middle East. By vetoing a draft resolution in the UN Security Council calling on Israel to cease and desist from deporting or threatening Yasser Arafat, the US has shown its partisan approach to Middle East affairs.

The US continues to side with Israel in every dispute between that country and the Palestinians. It condemns **Hamas** and other Palestinian organisations that are prepared to use violence, while refusing to condemn the Israelis for their continued occupation of Palestine.

It continues to try to sideline Yasser Arafat, which only heightens his prestige amongst his own countrymen, while dealing openly with the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr Sharon.

Our own Treasurer, Mr Costello, has also acted in a biased and petulant manner by refusing to meet with Mr Arafat, while having no qualms about meeting with the Israeli leadership.

By following the dictates of his US masters, Mr Costello has reaffirmed Australia's inability to act as a fair and independent broker in the Middle East.

ADAM BONNER

Meroo Meadow

Politicians should butt out

THE way the Prime Minister is trying to turn the Bali anniversary into a political stunt and photo opportunity is beyond contempt.

No politician, of any party, should be appearing at the commemoration ceremony in Bali. They were not too quick to assist the victims and families at the time of the actual disaster. The media shamed Canberra into action.

Let the politicians have their moment in the spotlight at the Parliament House ceremony. Leave the Bali survivors, families and loved ones to commemorate the moment with their rescuers -- not pouting, opportunist politicians.

JOHN BERLIN

Maclean

Go now, Bob, go now

I SUGGEST that Premier Bob Carr look seriously at moving into Federal Politics at the earliest possible moment.

YOUR SAY - LETTERS

If he allows his Transport Minister to proceed with the latest savage increases in fares and taxes to bolster the public transport system, he has no chance of winning the next state election.

Increase road fees to encourage the travelling public to move to the public transport system, then slug them left, right and centre for using it, as well as cancelling some services?

JOHN WILLIAMS

Bathurst

TALKBACK

THE article on the chicken farming industry was shocking (ST, 14/9). There is great pressure, by consumers, for all "products" to be produced as cheaply as possible -- and yes, the profit margins are getting smaller -- but at what price per bird does a chicken farmer obtain a conscience if not at 53c? Would the birds be better cared for if the price was 10 times as much? What's the price for not being cruel?

A. NEALE

Gosford

THE suffering of chickens grown for Inghams does not surprise me. Living north of Mangrove Mountain, I pass these sheds regularly and the stench coming from the sheds is appalling -- enough to put me off eating chicken. I wonder what the tourists in the many passing coaches think when the stench engulfs their bus. Humans will never be free from their own ill-health and misery until they learn to live harmoniously with the rest of the natural world.

SANDRA JORGENSEN

Kulnura

PLEAS of people in the animal movements tormented by the cruelty they are trying to expose are seldom heard above shouts of leaders of the meat industries. Cruelty to chickens exposed by Animal Liberation and The Sunday Telegraph doesn't make easy reading. Thanks to your paper for having the courage to expose the facts.

GERT MUELLER

Ascot Vale, Vic

YOUR coverage of the farm raid by Animal Liberation not only exposes the disgraceful conditions these chickens endure, but also shows the public what they are actually eating. These poultry farmers can do whatever they like behind their factory walls, so it is about time the public were informed of the reality of intensive poultry farming.

CAROLYN BARNES

Brisbane, Qld

WE often agree with George Pell, but longer prison sentences are not the answer for all crimes. Anyone who commits a murder, rape or hurts a child should spend life in prison. We're sick of seeing victims pay a high price while the criminals spend very little time in prison, and seem to be given too many rights. We just want the punishment to fit the crime.

CONRAD & ULRICA BYRNE

Wagga Wagga

THE suggestion that late-term fetuses may smile (ST, 14/9) does not justify banning abortion. Human fetuses naturally have human characteristics; but it cannot be assumed that all human beings have a right to ongoing life.

YOUR SAY - LETTERS

Until an organism has developed a mind it cannot have an interest in life. Most abortions occur before the foetus develops a mind. After the foetus attains rudimentary consciousness it may have a very weak interest in life -- but certainly less of an interest than many animals killed for meat. And it is unlikely that the substantial interests of a pregnant woman should be outweighed by the interests of a foetus with little or no conception of the future.

BRENT HOWARD

Rydalmere

YOUR article about fetuses smiling said pictures taken of babies in the womb were evidence that fetuses can feel pain at 24 weeks when abortions are still legal. It also said that in view of this "... some experts have suggested that fetuses should be given painkilling injections before terminations are carried out". I have tried for days to think of words to describe my feelings towards these "experts" who think that there is humanitarian merit in providing painkillers before butchering a baby.

JOHN GARTSIDE

Kanahooka

PIERS Akerman's use of Swedish foreign minister Anna Lindh's death as a platform for launching an attack on the rationalisation of terrorism (ST, 14/9) is appalling. Not only that, but Akerman's arguments crossed all logically reasoned boundaries, and bordered on absurdity. This is exactly the kind of ill-informed nonsense you'd expect from someone who confuses people who try to understand and explain the causes of terrorism with terrorists themselves.

E. JARDINE

Castle Hill

LETTERS TO: The Editor, The Sunday Telegraph, Box 4245, GPO Sydney 2001 * Fax 02-9288-2307 *
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After 9/11, U.S. has a better idea of Israel's plight

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

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Body

Re: Our support of Israel hurts us in Iraq, by Nicholas Kristof, May 27.

Nicholas Kristof's criticism of American support for Israel - not President Bush's alone, since every poll shows that he is expressing the views of the American public - ignores two facts.

Point One: Twice in four years Israel has acceded to pressures from an American president to come to the peace table with major concessions - only to find itself sitting alone. When Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered to Yasser Arafat the most generous package ever contemplated by an Israeli government, there was no pressure from the Arab world on Arafat to accept. When his response was to launch a war of terror on Israel, the Arab governments did not do anything, publicly or privately, to deter him. And two years later, when Prime Minister Ariel Sharon acceded to the "road map," even though it would require painful concessions from Israel, the Arab governments did nothing to encourage Arafat to comply with the very first requirement of that peace plan: dismantling all terrorist organizations and establishing security systems that would deter terrorism. In fact, when the Palestinian political process actually produced a leader who seemed willing to take those steps, the Arab governments stood by and watched Arafat remove him without a word or gesture of concern.

In short, those in the Arab world cannot complain of one-sided support by America for Israel when they have done nothing to promote peace on their side.

Point Two: After 9/11, the world looks different. President Bush, and all Americans, began to understand what it is like to live with the knowledge that you face an implacable foe who is committed to your destruction, and who will violate every norm of civilized behavior to attain that goal. And President Bush, and all Americans, have a better understanding of why Israel cannot again delude itself into thinking that rhetorical flourishes and handshakes (the "Geneva Plan") can substitute for a true commitment to accept Israel's right to exist, a determination to stop attempts to destroy Israel through terrorism, and a willingness to sit down and work toward a true peace, and not a facade designed to disguise the continuation of the 56-year effort to drive Israel into the sea.

Barry Augenbraun, St. Petersburg

Mideast policy imbalance makes sense

Re: Our support of Israel hurts us in Iraq, May 27.

After 9/11, U.S. has a better idea of Israel 's plight

I can only agree with Nicholas Kristof's opinion piece on one item: U.S. Middle East policy is unbalanced, and justifiably so. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, and it is surrounded by neighbors bent on its destruction. The leadership of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, Islamic Jihad and other Arab terrorist groups have sworn to destroy Israel. They educate their children to hate Jews and encourage them to kill Jewish women and children. The Arabs resort to terrorism while the Israelis resort to force to defend themselves from terror. In light of our own country's war on terror, this "imbalance" is in our best national interests

It is hard to take the rest of Kristof's article seriously. He hurls his opinions without facts. He provides no evidence for his premises that our support for Israel "severely undermines our efforts in Iraq." His assertion that a "lofty aim of the Iraq war was to achieve a Middle East peace" is totally absurd. As I recall, the primary aim (whether justified or not) of the Iraq war was to protect the United States and other countries from WMDs. The secondary and unspoken aim of the war (whether justified or not) was to remove Saddam Hussein and replace him with a democratic government. Never was it an aim of the Iraq war to achieve Middle East peace.

Hopefully, one day Kristof will come to grips with the fact that our enemies are engaged in a world war against the entire non-Muslim world. We must understand the depths of their hatred. We, Israelis, Americans, Jews and Christians worldwide, constitute the front line in the war, wherever we are. It is our free democratic way of life, our very existence that provokes our enemy. But first, Kristof must abandon his "knee-jerk" reaction that, when in doubt, blame Israel for everything.

Bruce A. Epstein, Pinellas Park

A naive point of view

Re: Our support of Israel hurts us in Iraq.

Nicholas Kristof has swallowed Palestinian/Arab propaganda regarding Israel hook, line and sinker. To honestly write that "everywhere I've been in Iraq ordinary people have asked me why Americans provide the weapons Sharon uses to kill Palestinians" shows Kristof's extraordinary naivete. "Ordinary people" in Iraq have not had a free and open press in decades. Their understanding of the Palestinian/Israel problem is totally one-sided. Why isn't Kristof asking about the U.S. weapons George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan provided that killed Kuwaitis, Iraqis and now (probably) American soldiers?

To state so uncritically that "Sharon has done more to undermine Israel's long-term security than Yasser Arafat ever did," shows how Kristof has been manipulated by Yasser Arafat and slick Arab public relations. Ariel Sharon is a duly elected prime minister of the Israeli people. He can be voted out at any time. Yasser Arafat walked away from the most generous offer the Palestinians ever had.

It is not the policies of Sharon that have caused Palestinians to become or embrace Islamic extremists, but Arafat's corruption, stealing the money sent by Arab nations, the European Union and the United States. It is the Palestinian Authority's fault the Palestinian people have no infrastructure, no future, no hope, no state. Arafat is the leader of cronyism, bribery, murder and duplicity.

What is costing U.S. credibility is our prison abuses, a false premise for starting the war, dead Iraqi civilians, and our own unilateral actions, not our support for Israel.

Susan Segal, Palm Harbor

Seduced by Arab propagandists

Re: Gaza at a crossroads, editorial, May 28.

After 9/11, U.S. has a better idea of Israel 's plight

This editorial blames both President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for the current stalemate. An examination of the facts is needed.

It is a fact that every administration since the birth of Israel has seen fit to support democratic Israel. To ask President Bush to support Palestinian terrorists is absurd. To reward the supporters of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein who danced joyfully in the streets at the occurrence of 9/11 is ludicrous.

Apparently the Times has been seduced by Arab propagandists, including the local of followers of the jailed Sami Al-Arian, into denouncing Ariel Sharon as "heavy-handed." Sharon's sin is defending his people against the same kind of terrorism which we face.

Sharon has taken the most courageous step of announcing a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and leaving it to the Palestinians. Yet Palestinian terrorists, supported by Arafat, refuse to allow it to happen.

Finally, why is it necessary for our United States "to rehabilitate its own image" to satisfy the Arab tyrants who have supported terrorism?

Norman N. Gross Ph. D., Palm Harbor

An outrageous cartoon

Re: Michael Ramirez's "Sticks and Stones" cartoon, May 22.

Exactly what is Michael Ramirez thinking? He depicts an innocent(?) pebble being thrown and an out-of-control Israeli answering it by "kabooming" him into the next world.

A suicidally trained Palestinian can himself, or in a vehicle with a bomb, aim at a building, a crowd of Israelis, or board a bus and blow himself and 30 or so innocent people to kingdom come. There will be an article about it on Page 5 or 6 but no "cartoon" to indicate the insanity of it.

No such respect is shown to Israelis in his hateful, tasteless, outrageous and, as far as I'm concerned, anti-Semitic "cartoon."

Knowing as we do the Palestinian radicals' suicide/murder agenda, how is the man in the tank to know that the "poor little Palestinian" is simply throwing a pebble or something far more dangerous?

Wake up and smell the blood, Mr. Ramirez. War is disgusting for all concerned and tragically sad for many. It is many things but, definitely not funny.

Stan Rubin, New Port Richey

We are engaged in a religious war

Just because the learned modern moral relativists don't want to recognize the war with terrorists as a religious war, we should. The overly educated elites believe that we can reason with Muslim terrorists, to, shall we say, jawbone them out of their beliefs. I am willing to fully acknowledge the Muslims' rant: It is a war to the death with persons having antithetical beliefs to our Christian and constitutional writings.

Any leader who will not treat this as a battle to the death (ours or theirs) is not worthy of support. You know who you are. You want to reason with nonreasoning religious zealots. Let's give them their desire, death. Death to them in Iraq rather than more of our blood in the streets in the United States. What kind of choice is that? It is that stark a choice.

After 9/11, U.S. has a better idea of Israel 's plight

James Anderson, Palm Harbor

Undermining support for war effort

Journalistic terrorists? There is no better description of the St. Petersburg Times, whose editors, staff writers and cartoonist demean the efforts of our soldiers in Iraq. Thousands of acts of kindness, goodwill and charity by our servicemen have been well-documented and supported by photos. Yet the Times gives front-page coverage to the prison scandal and follows with a gruesome article about Marines who take care of dead bodies (Mortuary duty fills Marines with pride, dread, May 23). This is a deliberate propaganda effort aimed at changing the attitude of the American public and providing comfort to those who oppose our efforts in Iraq.

Constructing playing fields and providing uniforms for Iraqi soccer teams; building open-air malls for Iraqi shopkeepers; painting and fixing classrooms for Iraqi teachers and schoolchildren; restoring public utilities; helping Iraqi families with carpentry, plumbing or electrical problems; setting up district councils - these acts of compassion and kindness are never reported.

There are many Iraqis who do not want our troops to leave. They are afraid that another tyrannical government will come to power. Their views are never heard. The Times does a great job of undermining public support. I am ashamed to call it my hometown newspaper.

Jack Vanderbleek, colonel, U.S. Army

(retired), St. Petersburg

Support for administration is outrageous

I cannot cease to be amazed at the "outrage" voiced by pro-Bush readers who take not only the press to task for reporting facts, rather than the fiction perpetrated by the Bush administration, but also the television networks that chose not to interrupt their regular programs in order to carry the president's "important" speech.

I am more outraged at the writers' blind acceptance of the myriad lies, inefficiencies and misrepresentations of the Bush administration, its ill-judged attack on a sovereign nation (uninvolved with 9/11), the horrible record on the environment, economy, education, across-the-board arrogance, the dangerous plunge of world opinion for our country, and other actions/inactions that are detrimental to all of us.

Frankly, I do think that the networks' normal programming was more relevant than the president's address, which I diligently watched on CNN in the soon-destroyed hope that something newsworthy or at least "new" would come from the mouth of our leader. (By the way, I had been a registered Republican for more than 30 years - until last month!)

Keith P. Yeisley, Clearwater

Share your opinions

Letters for publication should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 1121, St. Petersburg, FL 33731. They can be sent by fax to

(727) 893-8675 or through our Web site at:

<http://www.sptimes.com/letters/>

After 9/11, U.S. has a better idea of Israel 's plight

They should be brief and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Please include a handwritten signature when possible.

Letters may be edited for clarity, taste and length. We regret that not all letters can be published.

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**BURNING WITH CONVICTION;
A GROUP OF IRANIAN EXILES - ANGERED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS THEIR**

The Independent (London)

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Byline: ARIFA AKBAR Protest and survive: police extinguish the flames engulfing Mohammad Vasoogh Imani outside the French embassy in London on 20 June; Imani flashes a victory sign in hospital (below left)

Body

Eleven days ago, about 150 Iranian protesters gathered outside the French embassy in Knightsbridge, London. It seemed, at first, much like any other demonstration: flags were waved, drums beaten, slogans shouted. Then one protester rushed forward from the crowd, chanting. His clothes were wet, and he was carrying a cigarette lighter. One witness thought he was trying to light a cigarette. Then, still chanting, the protester set himself alight, and his petrol-soaked clothes burst into flame.

The man in question, Mohammad Vasoogh Imani, 46, is a sympathiser of the left-wing coalition group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), and was just one among 10 Iranian exiles who have turned themselves into human torches across Europe since police raided the NCRI's office in Paris on 17 June and arrested more than 100 people. Eleven key members remain detained for suspected terrorist associations and financing, including Maryam Rajavi, the woman the group believe should be Iran's next president.

Two of these protesters became martyrs to the cause, including Neda Hassani, a 25-year-old Canadian who had been visiting London, and Sedigheh Mojaveri, a 40-year-old woman in Paris. The other eight survived but incurred horrifying injuries.

Imani suffered 35 per cent burns, which left him immobilised and bandaged from head to foot. But he has no regrets. In the burns unit at Broomfield Hospital, Essex, Imani remains impervious to his agonising condition and raises two bloodied fingers to form a victory sign.

"I was ready to be a martyr, to sacrifice myself in order to protest at the arrest of Rajavi, who to me, is a symbol of freedom against the tyranny of the Mullahs in Iran," he says. "I told no one that I was going to do it because I knew they would try to prevent me. I felt this was the way to pass on my message to my own people, to Europe and to the world."

Friends who witnessed Imani's protest hail him as a hero. One Iranian woman spoke of the "sublime spark" that entered his eyes at the point of ignition. It was as if his death-wish became transparent only in that instance, she said.

On the day he decided to set himself alight, Imani wrote an open letter to Jacques Chirac, addressing the French President with his grievances "in the last moments of my life".

BURNING WITH CONVICTION; A GROUP OF IRANIAN EXILES - ANGERED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS THEIR

Following her arrest, Rajavi made an explicit plea against self-immolation, but her followers have nothing but praise for this extreme form of protest. "Those whom we lost, we have not actually lost. They are alive in our hearts. I heard about others who had done it before I chose to do it and I admired them. I thought they were heroes. There's no doubt their actions had an impact on me," says Imani, a former political prisoner in Iran.

But what goes through the minds of those who immolate themselves in this way? How can anyone willingly condemn themselves to such agonies? And what is this organisation on whose behalf they do so?

Heshmat Zandi, the first of this wave of "human torches", is recovering from 40 per cent burns at London's Chelsea and Westminster Hospital after setting himself on fire on 18 June - also outside the French embassy. The 38-year-old mechanical engineering student from Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, echoes his comrade's readiness for death: "I did what I did consciously when I heard our leader had been arrested. I felt I had no other choice. I did not think twice; the regime and its accomplices had gone so far. They were going to sacrifice us all and I had to do something."

Two days after Zandi's televised protest in London, Ali Ghassemi, 43, a father of three sons who had fled Iran as a political refugee in 1989, was visiting Rome from Denmark when news of the Paris raid was broadcast. He went to a local petrol station to prepare for his death.

Lying in Rome's central hospital with 30 per cent burns to his back, chest and hands and anticipating his second skin-graft operation, he says he did not regret the action he had taken. "I tried to sacrifice myself to show my anger to the French government. My wife and three children were proud of me when they heard what I had done. My eldest son, who is 21, is on hunger strike in Paris now in the same protest."

All three protesters insist that their decision to take such action was made of their own volition and not through organisational pressure. As educated Iranian exiles who enjoyed the privileges afforded to the higher echelons of Iranian society under the Shah, who was toppled in the 1979 coup by the clerical Islamic Republic, they deny that theirs was the act of "brainwashed pawns", as detractors have suggested. They also reject comparisons made with disaffected teenage suicide bombers in the Palestinian Hamas movement.

"The resistance movement is live' as a result of this protest action. The action has already led to the release of so many who were arrested. Be sure, nobody can do this by order of an organisation. You cannot set yourself alight for a group. I know, I have been through it. The difference between me and the Islamic fundamentalists is our point of view. I chose to set my life on fire, not someone else's. I am conscious of what I have done and my reasons for doing it. What the fundamentalist does is based on fanaticism; what I want for Iran is democratic freedom," Imani says.

Opinion among Iranian exiles is divided on both the internal machinations of the NCRI and the ethics of a protest that involves suicidal tactics. The NCRI, comprising more than 500 member groups, acts as an Iranian parliament in exile. It has as its largest member the People's Mojahedin, which operates from military camps on the Iraq-Iran border and is a proscribed group within the UK, and features on the US and EU state lists of terrorist organisations.

Maryam Rajavi, who is married to the NCRI's leader Masoud Rajavi, was subject to an exclusion order in October 1997, which banned her entry to the UK on the grounds that the organisation contained a large faction of terrorists. The Foreign Office said at the time: "We have decided her presence in Britain is not conducive to the public good."

Dr Ali Ansari, an expert in the history of the Middle East who is based at Durham University, says that while the NCRI had been a popular group after the revolution, with the ability to draw thousands of protesters to the streets, it has become increasingly insular and sect-like since its leaders fell out with the Mullahs in 1981. Ansari adds that the NCRI, led by a charismatic husband-and-wife team, is viewed by many as run as "a cult of personality".

Massoud Shadjareh, the chairman of the Islamic Human Rights Commission, who gave evidence at a privy council select committee on terrorism in June, regards the NCRI as indistinguishable from the terrorists in the People's Mojahedin, which is estimated to have a 30,000-strong army.

BURNING WITH CONVICTION; A GROUP OF IRANIAN EXILES - ANGERED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS THEIR

He expresses doubt that the suicide bids lacked a pre-planned, co-ordinated element, and alludes to the dangerous grip that the organisation has on its sympathisers.

"I cannot believe it was done individually and without planning," says Shadjareh. "It is an extremely organised group which, unfortunately, has people who are willing to take extreme action to the extent that they ignite themselves to safeguard their leader. How can we confuse this with the right of people to seek democracy?"

Ali Safavi, a NCRI spokesman, says that attaching a terror tag to the resistance movement is unfair and objectionable. The organisation lays a heavy emphasis on democracy and women's equality, choosing a female president to spearhead the democratic process, he points out. The raid on the organisation angered NCRI members, who regarded it as a conspiratorial move by the French authorities to mollify the fundamentalist regime in Tehran. "Ten people decided to take drastic action on their own initiative because they felt there was no other recourse than to demonstrate their abhorrence in this way," says Safavi.

Laila Jazayeri, director of the Association of Iranian Women in the UK, and a NCRI supporter, thinks that the personalised concern for Mrs Rajavi's welfare was not misplaced when viewed in its cultural context. "A lot of loved ones died chanting the name of Rajavi in Iran. Now they are arresting the very person for whom these people chanted and died for." To regard the human torches as fanatics, reminiscent of medieval Islamic martyrs, amounts to a gross misunderstanding of Iran's revolutionary history, she believes. "The people who are protesting like this for Mrs Rajavi are the cream of Iranian intellectual society. They are setting their lives ablaze against fundamentalism and barbarism."

Yet critics insist that while the emotionally charged actions of the human fireballs may have granted the group a transient degree of attention, it was no effective means for achieving change and it distracted from the greater motives behind the month-long protests that took place last month to mark the crackdown by the Islamic Republic in June 1981.

Arman Farakish, of the Iranian Civil Rights Committee, says that while his campaign to move the reformation process forward in Iran was laborious, he believed this pace of change was more effective than shock protest. He had already worked with Amnesty International and the European Union to attain a moratorium on the stoning of woman in Iran, a result which was achieved through tireless lobbying.

But Safavi deems the moratorium a superficial appeasement to the West; stoning still occurs, but no longer in public. From his viewpoint, the situation in Iran has reached such a degree of brutality that evolutionary, peaceful reform is redundant. Using President Kennedy's words to justify the Mujahideen's continued presence within the NCRI, he says "when we make peaceful change impossible, we make violent change inevitable".

The human torches should "serve as an example for the people of Iran, that there are those who are willing to give everything to prevent Iranians and their freedoms from becoming the bargaining chips between Tehran and its Western interlocutors," he adds.

And as one poignant example, Imani shows no waning of commitment. "We will protest until the end. We will protest until Mrs Rajavi is released," he says from his hospital bed. And dismissing the daily agonies he suffers in Rome, Ali Ghossemi concurs, chanting the refrain: "Viva, viva Mrs Rajavi."

TEN HUMAN TORCHES

Ali Ghassemi 43, in Rome, Italy

Hadi Hohtasham 48, in Rome

Marzieh Babakhani 42, in Paris, France

Mohsen Sharifi 40, in Berne, Switzerland

BURNING WITH CONVICTION; A GROUP OF IRANIAN EXILES - ANGERED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS
THEIR

Mohammad Sani 48, in Paris

Mohammad Vasoogh Imani 46, in London

Hamid Orafa 21, in Paris

Heshmat Zandi 38, in London

Neda Hassani 25, died in London

Sedigheh Mojaveri 40, in Paris, died in London

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End of Document

2003 THE YEAR IN REVIEW;
A year dominated by conflict

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Body

JANUARY

- 1: Brazil's first elected leftist president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, takes office.
- 6: Tim Pawlenty is inaugurated as Minnesota's 38th governor.
- 10: North Korea, warning of world war, withdraws from nuclear treaty.
- 11: Gov. George Ryan clears Illinois' death row, commuting 167 inmates' sentences.
- 21: Grand jury indicts 17-year-old Lee Boyd Malvo on murder charges for alleged role in Washington-area sniper case.
- Census Bureau says Hispanics have surged past blacks to become largest U.S. minority group.
- 28: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Likud Party and other hawkish parties win Israeli election.
- 30: Richard Reid, who tried to blow up a jetliner with explosives hidden in his shoes, is sentenced to life in prison.

FEBRUARY

- 1: Space shuttle Columbia falls to pieces during descent; seven astronauts die.
- 7: Faced with a legislative deadlock on the Minnesota budget deficit, Gov. Tim Pawlenty cuts \$281 million from state spending.
- 14: Major powers rebuff United States in U.N. Security Council, insisting on more time for weapons inspections in Iraq.
- Cloning pioneer Dolly the sheep is euthanized.
- 15: Millions of people demonstrate worldwide against a possible U.S. attack on Iraq.
- 17: Stampede at a packed Chicago nightclub kills 21.
- 18: Arson attack on two South Korean subway trains kills 198.

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21: Rhode Island nightclub goes up in flames during rock concert; death toll eventually reaches 100.

MARCH

6: Democrats block President Bush's nomination of Miguel Estrada to federal appeals court.

9: Recep Tayyip Erdogan wins seat in Turkish parliament, clearing way for him to become prime minister.

12: Elizabeth Smart, 15, is found with two drifters, nine months after her abduction from her Utah home.

Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic is assassinated.

14: Hu Jintao is chosen to replace Jiang Zemin as China's president.

17: Rachel Corrie, 23, of Olympia, Wash., is run over by bulldozer and killed while trying to block Israeli troops from demolishing Palestinian home in Gaza.

19: President Bush declares war with Iraq. U.S. launches missiles at building near Baghdad in a failed attempt to kill Saddam Hussein.

20: U.S. and British ground forces invade Iraq.

23: U.S. Army maintenance convoy is ambushed in Iraq; 11 soldiers killed, seven captured, including Pfc. Jessica Lynch.

31: U.S. troops in southern Iraq shoot and kill seven women and children in a van when the driver fails to stop at a checkpoint.

APRIL

1: American troops rescue Pfc. Jessica Lynch.

3: Kirby Puckett, Twins Hall of Famer, is found not guilty of sexual assault charges following a nine-day trial.

5: Congolese rebel leaders say rival Ugandan troops and tribal fighters killed nearly 1,000 civilians in northeast Congo.

7: U.S. troops roll into Baghdad.

10: House passes bill creating national Amber Alert system and strengthening child-pornography laws.

23: Georgia Senate votes to change state flag, which had included Confederate emblem.

World health officials warn travelers to avoid Beijing and Toronto because of SARS virus.

28: Minnesota conceal-and-carry handgun legislation is signed into law.

MAY

1: President Bush lands aboard aircraft carrier, declares major combat over in Iraq.

Minnesota authorities link the April 17 murders of William Schwartz and his daughter Claudia in Minneapolis with the brutal killings of Hollis Chromey and her two teenage children in Long Prairie and arrest Christopher Earl, 20, and Jonathan Carpenter, 21.

5: Tornadoes kill 40 in Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee.

11: Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas says Palestinians are ready to accept U.S.-backed peace plan.

2003 THE YEAR IN REVIEW; A year dominated by conflict

13: Car bombings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, kill 34, including eight Americans.

Mass graves with thousands of bodies found at two Iraq sites.

14: Smugglers abandon more than 100 illegal immigrants in locked trailer at Texas truck stop; 19 die.

17: Terrorists set off explosions in Casablanca, Morocco, killing at least 40.

21: Christie Whitman resigns as Environmental Protection Agency administrator.

22: U.N. Security Council gives United States and Britain mandate to rule Iraq, ends 13 years of economic sanctions.

Congress completes work on \$330 billion in tax cuts.

23: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon agrees to submit U.S.-backed "road map" for peace to Israeli Cabinet.

25: Nestor Kirchner sworn in as Argentina's president.

27: Study shows women who take hormones for years run higher risk of Alzheimer's or other types of dementia.

31: Atlanta Olympic bombing suspect Eric Rudolph is arrested in North Carolina.

JUNE

2: Federal Communications Commission eases limits on media ownership.

3: Abdel-Ilah Elmaroudi, formerly of Minneapolis, is one of two men convicted in Detroit of conspiracy to provide material support or resources to terrorism.

4: Martha Stewart is indicted, pleads innocent in insider-trading scandal.

5: New York Times' top two editors resign after Jayson Blair scandal.

8: With four Wisconsin cases, monkeypox is confirmed in humans for first time in Western Hemisphere.

10: ImClone chief Sam Waksal sentenced to more than seven years in prison.

23: Supreme Court allows colleges to consider race in admissions.

26: Supreme Court strikes down state bans on homosexual sex.

JULY

5: Suicide bombers kill 14 at Moscow rock festival.

6: Liberian leader Charles Taylor accepts Nigerian asylum offer.

8: Iranian twins joined at head die after surgical separation.

10: Astronomers find oldest, most distant planet ever discovered.

13: Iraq's Governing Council holds first meeting.

18: Body of British scientist David Kelly, expert on Iraqi weapons, found after suicide.

21: Heavy fighting in Monrovia, Liberia, kills at least 70 as rebels enter city; U.S. Embassy hit by shell.

22: Saddam Hussein's sons Odai and Qusai are killed in blaze of gunfire and rockets.

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23: Liberian rebels announce cease-fire.

31: Minneapolis Schools Superintendent Carol Johnson announces she will resign to become superintendent of Memphis schools.

AUGUST

2: Liberia's Charles Taylor agrees to cede power.

5: Episcopalians approve gay bishop, moving church closer to possible split.

7: Bombing outside Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad kills 19.

8: Boston archdiocese offers \$55 million to settle lawsuits stemming from sex abuse by priests.

11: President Bush picks Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt to head Environmental Protection Agency.

14: Huge blackout hits northeast U.S., part of Canada; 50 million lose power.

19: Suicide bomb hits U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, killing 23, including top U.N. envoy.

21: Palestinian militants abandon truce after Israel kills Hamas leader in missile attack.

22: Alabama Supreme Court justices order Ten Commandments monument moved from courthouse.

Hopkins High School senior Jeffrey Parson is arrested for allegedly launching a variation of the Blaster computer worm, which infected more than 500,000 computers worldwide.

23: Former priest John Geoghan, key figure in Roman Catholic Church sex-abuse scandal, is killed in Massachusetts prison.

29: Mosque bombing in Iraq kills 85, including a key Shiite cleric.

South Dakota congressman Bill Janklow is charged with felony manslaughter in a car accident in which a Minnesota man was killed.

SEPTEMBER

6: Mahmoud Abbas resigns as Palestinian prime minister.

10: Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, 46, is fatally stabbed.

14: Swedes reject euro.

17: New York Stock Exchange Chairman Dick Grasso resigns amid furor over \$139.5 million pay package.

18: Hurricane Isabel pounds North Carolina, knocks out power to 1 million.

20: Gunmen firing from pickup truck fatally wound woman serving on Iraq's Governing Council.

21: Paul Martin is elected by Canada's Liberal Party to succeed Jean Chretien as prime minister.

24: Students Aaron Rollins and Seth Bartell are shot to death at Ricori High School in Cold Spring, Minn. Classmate Jason McLaughlin, 15, is charged in the shootings.

25: France says nearly 15,000 died in summer heat wave.

OCTOBER

2003 THE YEAR IN REVIEW; A year dominated by conflict

7: California voters recall Gov. Gray Davis, elect Arnold Schwarzenegger as new governor.

10: Iranian writer and activist Shirin Ebadi wins Nobel Peace Prize.

14: China launches first manned spacecraft.

15: Staten Island ferry slams into pier, killing 10 people.

Feeding tube removed from severely brain-damaged Florida woman at center of right-to-die battle.

17: Bolivian President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada resigns after protests.

21: Florida Gov. Jeb Bush orders feeding tube reinserted into brain-damaged woman.

Iran agrees to give foreign inspectors unrestricted access to nuclear facilities.

24: Last scheduled Concorde flight lands at London's Heathrow Airport.

27: Sixteen Holdingford, Minn., school employees _ 15 cooks and a custodian _ claim half of a \$190 million Powerball jackpot.

31: Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is sworn in as Malaysian prime minister, ending Mahathir Mohamad's 22-year reign.

NOVEMBER

2: U.S. military helicopter downed in Iraq; 16 soldiers dead.

V. Gene Robinson is consecrated as first openly gay bishop in Episcopal Church.

5: President Bush signs bill outlawing procedure known by its critics as partial-birth abortion.

Green River serial killer Gary Leon Ridgway confesses to strangling four dozen women over two decades, mostly near Seattle.

8: Howard Dean declines public money for White House race.

12: Truck bomb outside barracks in Iraq kills 19 Italians, 14 others.

15: Two Black Hawk helicopters crash in Iraq; 17 U.S. soldiers killed.

Two synagogues are bombed in Istanbul; 29 killed.

17: John Allen Muhammad convicted of capital murder in Washington-area sniper shootings.

Rush Limbaugh returns to radio after five weeks of rehabilitation for a painkiller addiction.

18: Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court rules ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional.

Scott Peterson is ordered to stand trial in California in the death of his wife, Laci, and her fetus.

20: Michael Jackson is booked on suspicion of child molestation, posts \$3 million bail.

A bank and the British consulate are bombed in Istanbul; 32 killed.

22: University of North Dakota senior Dru Sjodin is abducted from a Grand Forks mall. Convicted sex-offender Alfonso Rodriguez Jr. is arrested Dec. 1 in connection with her disappearance.

23: Eduard Shevardnadze resigns as president of Georgia after protests.

2003 THE YEAR IN REVIEW; A year dominated by conflict

24: John Allen Muhammad is sentenced to death for Washington-area sniper shootings.

25: Senate passes a bill adding prescription drug benefit to Medicare program.

DECEMBER

2: Police say 12 shootings along a five-mile stretch of Ohio interstate highway are connected.

3: U.N. tribunal convicts three media officials for roles in promoting 1994 Rwandan genocide.

4: President Bush lifts steel tariffs in face of unfavorable World Trade Organization ruling and threatened foreign retaliation.

8: Congress approves a measure to stem the flood of unwanted e-mail.

Rep. Bill Janklow, R-S.D., is convicted of manslaughter in car/motorcycle crash, says he will resign from Congress effective Jan. 20.

Mohammed A. Warsame is arrested in Minneapolis on suspicion of associating with Al-Qaida and having knowledge of Zacarias Moussaoui's activities in a terrorist training camp.

9: Owners of a Rhode Island nightclub and the tour manager for Great White rock band are indicted on charges related to the fatal February fire.

Former Vice President Al Gore endorses Howard Dean for the Democratic presidential nomination.

10: Appeals court orders a new trial for Florida teen sentenced to life for death of playmate.

11: Health officials say an early flu outbreak has hit all 50 states and is widespread in 24.

13: A 78-year-old woman says she is the daughter of the late Sen. Strom Thurmond and his family's black maid.

14: Saddam Hussein is captured.

18: Lee Boyd Malvo is convicted of murder in the Washington-area sniper case.

19: Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi agrees to halt his nation's drive to develop nuclear and chemical weapons.

23: Government announces the first suspected U.S. case of mad cow disease.

Jury spares Lee Boyd Malvo the death penalty, giving him life in prison without parole.

26: Earthquake hits historic Iranian city of Bam, killing at least 28,000.

Graphic

PHOTO

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WORLD REPORT

Windsor Star (Ontario)

July 22, 2003 Tuesday Final Edition

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Body

Best-selling author Archer released from Brit prison

London

Best-selling author Jeffrey Archer walked out of prison Monday, paroled after serving two years and two days of his four-year sentence for perjury and perverting the course of justice.

Archer, 63, had been convicted of lying during his successful 1987 libel action against the Daily Star newspaper, which claimed he had hired a prostitute.

In prison, Archer kept himself in the news and, occasionally, in trouble.

While at an open prison, he was allowed to work backstage at a theatre but violated prison regulations by attending a party at the home of a former Conservative cabinet minister.

In August, Archer signed a contract with Macmillan for two novels and a book of short stories. The first book, Sons of Fortune, a political saga he completed in prison, was published early this year.

Compiled from Star News Services

Murdered millionaire's wife now found dead

London

The body of the wife of a murdered millionaire businessman whose family went missing in February has been found in the sea off Dorset.

Detectives said the death of Nancy Chohan, 25, wife of Amarjit Chohan, 46, from Heston, west London, was also being treated as murder.

A search for the couple's sons, Ravinder, seven months and Devinder, 21 months and Mrs. Chohan's mother, Charanjit Kaur, 51, was continuing.

Court approves extradition of al-Qaida suspects to U.S.

Frankfurt, Germany

WORLD REPORT

A German court Monday approved the extradition of a Yemeni cleric to face charges in the United States of supplying weapons, militants and millions of dollars in funding to the al-Qaida terrorist network.

The court approved the extradition of Mohammed Ali Hassan al-Moayad and another Yemeni believed to be his assistant on condition the men not face the death penalty, Frankfurt state court spokesman Wolfgang Frank said.

The ruling needs final approval from the German government.

U.S. and German authorities say they learned in December 2001 that al-Moayad was involved in backing al-Qaida as well as the Palestinian Islamic militant group Hamas.

New UN health chief vows to boost fight against AIDS

Geneva

The new head of the United Nations health agency took office Monday, pledging to boost the fight against AIDS and other global killers.

Dr. Jong-wook Lee, the World Health Organization's director general, also said he wanted to improve international monitoring to help tackle outbreaks of diseases such as SARS.

Lee, a South Korean tuberculosis expert, was elected in January by the executive committee of the 192-country agency. He replaced Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Norwegian prime minister, who announced last year that she did not want a second five-year mandate.

Brundtland, 60, stepped down after successfully transforming WHO from a disillusioned and badly managed organization to a high profile agency.

Lee, 58, has spent 19 years at WHO and is the first South Korean to head a UN agency. He won praise for his low-key but efficient management style as head of the agency's Stop TB program.

Austrian doctors perform first tongue transplant

Vienna

Doctors in Vienna have carried out the first successful tongue transplant on a human being, the hospital where the surgery took place said Monday.

An unidentified 42-year-old man with a malignant tumour affecting his tongue and jaw underwent a 14-hour operation at Vienna's General Hospital on Saturday in which doctors removed the tumour and attached the new tongue, hospital spokeswoman Karin Fehringer said. The patient is in good condition, she said.

Weather delays recovery of 14 plane crash victims

Mount Kenya, Kenya

Bad weather prevented helicopters Monday from reaching a Mount Kenya plane crash scene to recover the remains of 14 victims, including three generations of one U.S. family.

Rangers and other rescue workers have hiked to the site at 4,900 metres on the side of Point Lenana, the third-highest peak of Africa's second-highest mountain. Mount Kilimanjaro is the continent's tallest peak.

The twin-engine Fairchild turboprop crashed there as clouds were clearing just before sunset Saturday, killing the two South African pilots and the 12 passengers. On board was a retired Emory University medical school professor, his wife, three of their children and their spouses and four grandchildren.

Sao Tome ministers free after first round of talks

WORLD REPORT

Sao Tome, Sao Tome and Principe

Military coup leaders freed seven government ministers detained in last week's bloodless rebellion in this tiny African island country and resumed talks Monday with international mediators on restoring civilian rule.

African envoys secured the ministers' release in talks Sunday with junta leaders who grabbed power Wednesday in this poor West African country off the coast of Gabon, a region of growing importance as a source of oil.

President Fradique de Menezes, who was visiting Nigeria at the time of the coup, has not been allowed to return.

Canadians arrive in Kabul to take place of Germans

Kabul

About 100 Canadian troops arrived in Afghanistan's capital on Monday to serve with the international peacekeeping force that patrols Kabul, a Canadian military spokesman said.

The soldiers, who arrived on a huge Canadian military jet, are among the first of more than 1,800 Canadians to be deployed to bolster peace in war-shattered Kabul, said Canadian Capt. Daniel Madryga.

"There's about 1,700 more to go. They're going to be arriving over the next three weeks," Madryga said.

Another 300 Canadian troops have been in Kabul for the last two months, building a camp to house the soldiers on the western edge of the city. Those 300 will be rotated out early next month when their job has been completed, Madryga said.

The Canadian troops will form the backbone of the 5,000-strong peacekeeping force and replace a roughly equivalent number of German soldiers who will soon head back home.

Explosion on the route to Hindu shrine kills seven

Jammu, India

Two grenade blasts by suspected Islamic guerrillas on the route to one of the most revered Hindu shrines in Indian-controlled Kashmir killed seven pilgrims and wounded 25 others Monday, police said.

The explosions occurred at a community kitchen on the route where thousands of people were making the steep climb to the mountaintop shrine of Vaishno Devi, near Katra town, police said.

"This is the work of militants," Insp. Gen. P.L. Gupta, the head of the police force in the Jammu region, told The Associated Press.

Swami Chinmayananda, India's junior interior minister, blamed Pakistan for the blasts.

"Pakistan is behind this. We do not know yet if it is the ISI (Pakistani intelligence agency) or the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (outlawed militant group), but some forces of this kind are behind it," he told the private NDTV India television channel.

Two Australians held by U.S. won't be sent home

Sydney

The United States is unlikely to repatriate two Australian terror suspects imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, because Australia wouldn't be able to prosecute them under its terrorism laws, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said.

WORLD REPORT

Downer told Channel Nine Television that David Hicks, 27 and Mamdouh Habib, 46, could not be tried in Australia because they were detained before the Australian Parliament passed terrorism legislation in June 2002, making it unlikely Washington would agree to release them.

Australia sends chief to tackle Solomons unrest

Honiara

Australia has confirmed the appointment of a special co-ordinator to oversee the 2,000-strong security force that will arrive in the Solomon Islands on Thursday.

Nick Warner, a former diplomat to Papua New Guinea, will take charge of the large civilian element of the intervention that will fund and work with the Solomon Islands' government.

The Solomons parliament requested the intervention after years of virtual lawlessness after a coup and civil war.

Islanders fight to stop huge sale of dolphins

Honiara

Up to 100 dolphins are being flown out of the Solomon Islands, provoking outrage from environmental campaigners worldwide and local people in a country where the animal is held in deep veneration.

The first 30 dolphins in what is believed to be the largest-ever catch were lifted on to a DC10 at Henderson International Airport Monday, sedated in shallow pools of water, in large, blue coffin-sized crates. Their destination was the Parque Nizuc resort in Cancun, Mexico. Australia has asked Mexico to block the import deal.

Anything from 70 to 100 animals have been caught recently off Honiara, about a tenth of all dolphins in captivity around the world.

Inept airplane thief gets 13 metres before crashing

Put-In-Bay, Ohio

A 20-year old man was arrested after he tried to steal a single-engined plane.

He didn't quite make it, travelling just 13 metres and crashing into two parked vehicles at the airport, the Ohio Highway Patrol said.

Aaron Anderson of Medina, Ohio, was charged with receiving stolen property, operating an aircraft while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, reckless operation of an airplane and operating an airplane without a pilot's licence.

Humpty Dumpty falls -- into the hands of thieves

Colorado Springs, Colo.

It might take all the king's horses and all the king's men to solve this crime.

Somebody took a 90-kg, 90-cm-tall statue of Humpty Dumpty from his perch on a downtown street. The statue, valued at \$20,000 US, was reported missing early Saturday.

"The world knows it's hot," said Dave Kosley, spokesman for the Downtown Partnership, which served as curator for an outdoor art program. "I don't see that anyone who has it would feel comfortable displaying it in their front room or back yard. It's probably in a frathouse bar."

The sculpture, by Minneapolis-based artist Kimber Feibiger, was among 19 works of art decorating downtown streets. Kosley said Humpty, with his green-and-white-striped trousers, should have been bolted to a steel plate with three bolts, but the artist used only two.

WORLD REPORT

Police officer injured at scene of earlier accident

Roseville, Mich.

A police officer was injured early Monday when a vehicle hit him as he was securing the scene of an earlier accident.

Roseville Police Officer Thomas Pfiefer, 26, was transported to hospital and later released.

"He suffered relatively serious leg injuries and will be out for a while," said Roseville Police Chief Richard Heinz.

Pfiefer was blocking 14 Mile Road in Roseville as police from Macomb County's Clinton Township were on the scene of the other accident.

Police say an argument at a bar between two women, one 39, the other 21, spilled out into the street. They are believed to have been hit by a car driven by a 22-year-old man. Pfiefer was among the first Roseville officers to arrive at the scene at about 2:30 a.m. EDT.

Pfiefer was then struck by another vehicle driven by a 29-year-old Clinton Township man. He became stuck under the car and was dragged beneath it.

Michigan storms knock out power to thousands

Detroit

A fresh round of storms moving across Michigan Monday knocked out power for 8,600 Consumers Power customers.

The outages were the result of "the spate of cells in the western side of the state that moved through the western portion of the state this morning," Consumers spokesman Kevin Keane said.

The majority of the outages were in the Grand Rapids region, with some also in the Muskegon area.

It was unclear when the latest outages would be repaired, he said, adding that the majority of those affected by weekend storms already had seen their service come back up.

Graphic

Second World War still killing: Austrian explosives experts check the scene where a Second World War U.S. bomb exploded near the train station in Salzburg, Austria, killing two men sent to defuse it. Associated Press photo: Kerstin Joennson

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

April 20, 2004 Tuesday

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Body

Bowing to Bin Laden a dangerous precedent

It has actually happened. Spain has bowed to Bin Laden and his murderous cohorts and will be bringing their 1300 troops home within a fortnight.

What a dangerous message it sends. What an insult to the 191 people who were killed in Madrid, not to mention the people who died in Bali, Turkey and New York.

Bin Laden is sitting in his cave now formulating the next weak country to attack that will give in to his demands. Let us hope Mark Latham's comments do not give him ideas about Australia.

MATP

This is a dark day for the righteous and Spain should be ashamed of itself. I wonder what line of thought they will take when another terrorist attack occurs in Spain. A truce with terrorists? It is not possible.

Benjamin Burns, Mardi

I find it amazing that some countries are condemning Israel for killing the leaders of Hamas, a known terrorist organisation which is continually using suicide bombers to promote its cause.

Instead of criticising a country trying to defend itself, the world should be condemning the use of suicide bombers, no matter what the reason for their cause.

If there were no suicide bombers, Israel would not need to retaliate. Any country has the right to defend itself. If this was happening in any other nation I am sure the leaders of that country would retaliate exactly the same way.

D. McGrath, Fairfield

How to cut award shows in half

Could someone explain why actresses insist on calling themselves actors, but award nights -- such as the Logies, Oscars or Emmys -- have a separate category for best actress? Should there not be just one category for both male and female actors and thus reduce the length of award nights by half?

Brent Hudson, Wahroonga

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is it just me, or does anyone else think we should re-name the Logies, "The Channel 9 Show"? It would have been nice to see stars from other networks interviewed on the red carpet, and not just every man and his dog from Nine.

Rebecca Murphy, City

Who cares who wins the Logies? It is only a promotion for a magazine. When the world is embroiled in a conflict that could change the fabric of our way of life, we have a bunch of no talent (so-called) actors and (not funny) comedians strutting around like prima donnas. We seem to have our priorities mixed up.

Henry Wechmann, Georges Hall

Hoon cameras

I see the usual argument for and against speed cameras is once again on the agenda. I would like to see some of these cameras placed not on the busy roads, but strategically aimed at the late night hooners that use suburban main streets as drag strips.

The police know exactly which streets I mean from the continued complaints they receive about this dangerous behaviour. After 10pm on any given Friday and Saturday in my area it is as if you are living in the middle of a race track.

D. Thompson, Concord

Knights' penalty

Just how many errors have to go unnoticed by on-field referees before common sense prevails in the NRL? Again we witnessed a thrilling match between the Roosters and Knights wind down in bitter circumstances due to a penalty that was not awarded to the Knights.

Steve Witt was unquestionably tackled without possession of the football, which would have created the ultimate finale for a then two-point game with only minutes left on the clock.

From the replay, there appeared to be no doubt that a penalty should have been forthcoming. From that point on, the remaining minutes belonged to the Roosters, who went on to register a 10-point victory under debatable circumstances.

When will the technology available finally be used to get the calls right? League teams, and fans alike, suffer bad calls week after week. It is up to the NRL to turn things around to make the focus of the game on the quality of play, not the quality of judgment.

Andrew Durnford, Lithgow

Fine mess we're in

The State Rail Authority has every right to fine people getting off an express train at certain stations. These are country trains for people travelling long distances to and from city work or appointments.

However there is a much bigger problem from May. All the trains on the Southern Highlands line will be terminating at Campbelltown and everyone will have no choice but to get on those already overcrowded and late suburban trains.

Pamela Colless,

Bargo

Your editorial (Daily Telegraph, April 16) states the SRA deemed it an offence punishable by a \$100 to get off an express train at certain stations. Perhaps your investigative skills are behind the times as this has been an offence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

under the Railway Act from 1912. It was brought in to stop delays to express trains as passengers alighting do not take as much time as boarders.

Tony Snow,

Port Macquarie

Tree plan

Could Premier Bob Carr please comment on a whisper that is gaining momentum. Is the chopping down of 11 Port Jackson and Moreton Bay fig trees in the Domain part of a plan to widen Hospital Rd and construct another building to suit the needs of politicians? Mr Carr's comments would be very welcome.

Suellen Moore,

Allawah

Wrong day

If the State Government believes that Anzac Day is so sacrosanct that shops should not be trading during the march, why has it made the public holiday the day after rather than April 25?

John Ready,

Cronulla

What's news

1.The Governor Marie Bashir has been awarded an unexpected pay rise by the State Government. What is the amount of the increase?

2. A Sydney man has been awarded joint guardianship of a son he fathered through donated sperm. What is the institution that made the decision?

3. What is the name of the prominent member of the Iraqi governing council who has asked for Australian troops to stay on?

4. Three United Nations police officers died in a gun fight that followed an argument over the situation in Iraq. Where did it occur?

5. Rove McManus won the Gold Logie for the most popular television personality. Who won the Logie for the most popular actor?

6. If there was a merger, with what council would Leichhardt residents like to amalgamate?

ANSWERS

1: \$13,000 (\$12,917) per year. 2: The Family Court of New Zealand. 3: Ahmed Chalabi. 4: In Kosovo. 5: Aaron Jeffery, of McLeod's Daughters.6: City of Sydney.

Creating the Aussie dream

Geoff Brown, convenor of the ADI Resident Action Group wants the site to remain as it has been for the past 50 years (The Debate, April 19).

It is a shame Mr Brown does not think the same of the land his house is built upon, which was untouched for centuries. I have lived in the St Marys area for the past 30 years and would be only too happy to see this land

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

redeveloped so that future generations, including my children, can stay close to where employment opportunities are and, more importantly, where their families are already established.

The site has had a three-metre fence around it ever since I was a child and I, along with everyone I know in the area, have never been able to access the site.

I hope Lend Lease develops the site to its full potential and creates a suburb that can encapsulate what the western suburbs are all about -- "the great Australian dream" at an affordable price.

Graham Shute, Penrith

Wetlands and lagoons, a plethora of fauna and flora (some of it on the endangered list), this is the ADI site at St Marys, a treasure trove of nature as well as a national treasure for us all.

We must save the ADI site for future generations -- what will they say if they are obliged to live in an overdeveloped and polluted environment which Sydney is rapidly becoming?

Jean Lopez, Blacktown

Heritage defiled

I am a resident of a heritage-listed Federation suburb in the inner-west of Sydney -- Haberfield to be exact. To paint a fence, to change a window or even to landscape your front garden means you are subjected to tight requirements imposed by council.

Yet all these efforts to maintain the heritage of this suburb, to beautify the area with restored nostalgic Federation-style dwellings and keep the aesthetic aspect of the area intact have been compromised by graffiti. Walls, bus shelters and shopfronts have been tagged by delinquents roaming the streets and Ashfield Council has done nothing to clean up the mess.

I have written to the council but have had no reply -- and it is not a priority for the police.

If the council is so intent on protecting the character of the area, why does it not do something immediately about these eyesores?

Angelo Ciaschetti, Haberfield

Train door scare

Two years ago I was travelling on a CityRail train with my three month-old daughter in a pram. I was getting off at Kirrawee and I had the same nightmare situation as Sharon and Matthew McLean (Daily Telegraph, April 19). The train doors closed and trapped the pram. My partner had already gotten off the train and it had started to pull away.

My partner alerted the guard who stopped the train but then, very rudely, did not apologise. It also was in front of a tunnel and guard rail.

We complained to CityRail and were told that the CCTV showed the doors were closed too quickly by the guard, who had given us probably about five seconds to get off the train with the pram.

We were sent a cheque for \$100 which was fair enough, but an apology from the guard would have been better. Obviously she did not realise she had put my child's life at risk.

I hope your report makes guards pay more attention.

D. Young, Kirrawee

Public not heard

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

At the invitation of one of the speakers, I went to Parramatta last Thursday to attend the public hearing conducted by the Senate on a future republic.

The tiny crowd consisted of four senators, Hansard reporters and an audience of 25, which included the speakers and media representatives.

From the floor, no comment or question was tolerated by the chairman, Senator Nick Bolkus, so many a howler went unchallenged.

Similar meetings for other states are proposed for working days, so the public does not seem to be wanted.

Oh, the submissions at the Parramatta meeting? Look forward to a "spaghetti and meatballs" political system.

K. McManus, Ashfield

To the point

Has Transport Minister Michael Costa taken into consideration the disabled when he makes the decision to fine taxi drivers who assist people through a private "network". I would like to put him in a wheelchair, making him completely dependent on taxis and see what he has to say then. There are not enough disabled taxis as it is without doing this.

Joan Sainsbury, Villawood

And I thought the liberation of East Timor was for humanitarian reasons, not oil. Silly me.

Dr Colin Hughes, Greenmount WA

Your comparison of Woolworths' price for pharmaceuticals with discount chemists (Daily Telegraph, April, 19) is misleading. The comparison should be made between Woolworths' prices and those charged by chemists that are not members of Pharmacy Direct, which is, after all, a discount pharmacy and not a retail business like the others.

Mrs K. Sugar, Baulkham Hills

It is disheartening to read disinformation purporting to be news, "Israel to keep seized land" (Daily Telegraph, April 16) should more accurately read "Israel to keep land captured from Jordan in a war of defence". The Gaza Strip was captured from Egypt in the same defensive war. Egypt was offered, but declined to take back, this land as part of a peace treaty. Jordan declined to take back most of the West Bank in similar circumstances.

Aaron Govendir, Dover Heights

Zero should be pronounced zero. not as "O". Zero is a digit, O is a letter. I have zero tolerance for this common mistake.

Sam Saidden, Parramatta

Kind words

Thank you to the trainers at the Job Find Centre, Parramatta, who have provided me with ongoing support to stay motivated after having completed a three-week extensive and intensive training program. It covered a broad spectrum of topics and from it I learned to believe in myself and to have the confidence to re-enter the workforce.

R. Halbreich, Westmead

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Letters may be edited.

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End of Document

The life of a JI detainee

The Straits Times (Singapore)

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Body

The recent terror attacks in Saudi Arabia and Morocco are a grim reminder that even though the Al-Qaeda network has been disrupted, its affiliates have not been de-fanged. What about Singapore's own Jemaah Islamiah members? How is their rehabilitation proceeding? M. NIRMALA speaks to sources close to the JI detainees to piece together this account of their life in detention.

AT THE Whitley Road detention centre, which once held communists and chauvinists and Marxist detainees, there is a new signboard.

It points towards Mecca.

Its purpose is to help the centre's newest inhabitants perform their five daily prayers as Muslims.

And their call to prayer each morning comes not from the radio or a nearby mosque, but Gurkha guards who knock on their cell doors to tell them it is dawn. Each detainee has his own prayer mat.

Life for the 31 members of the Jemaah Islamiah, netted in the two waves of arrests in December 2001 and September last year, has not been starved of religion, even though it was a twisted version of their faith that persuaded them to hatch deadly plans of chaos and carnage in Singapore.

They are in detention for punishment and reform. So after morning prayers, which are followed by exercise, then breakfast, they are sent to air-conditioned interview rooms with wooden chairs and tables.

Eighteen months after their arrest, daily interviews with intelligence officials continue to be part of their routine.

During the interrogations, which can last up to six hours at a time with short breaks in between, intelligence officers try to ferret out every conceivable strand of information so they can connect the dots in understanding the JI's organisational structure, connections with other networks and possible plans for future attacks.

While Insight has no information on how they are questioned, it understands that to protect the detainees against any possible abuse, there is a doctor who examines each of them every single day. Even the smallest scratch or blister on their bodies is checked and recorded.

The interviews, along with intelligence-gathering in and out of the country, has kept the Internal Security Department busy. The threat of terrorism, as the recent bombings in Riyadh and Casablanca reminded the world, still looms large.

The life of a JI detainee

The ambition of the JI, fashioned on the Al-Qaeda model, is to institute a regional Islamic order. Even after arrests across the region, it still has cells in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Intelligence gleaned from the JI detainees here, who have been described as foot soldiers in the chain of command, is shared with Singapore's neighbours.

It was exchanges like these which led to the arrest in Manila of explosives expert Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi, or 'Mike', in January last year.

Security analysts say only good information can stop or disrupt a determined attack by fanatics willing to die. Referring to the Israeli experience in getting terrorists to spill the beans, Dr Boaz Ganor, director of Israel's Counter-Terrorism Institute, says: 'Detainees are very hard to interrogate.

'They are trained to not give away secrets and to resist... When one is released, he goes back to his group and briefs others.'

The **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad terror groups in the Middle East have even published books to teach fellow terrorists how not to crack in an interrogation, he points out.

TEARS AND FEARS

WHEN they are not being interrogated or counselled, the detainees are taken out for exercise at an open yard near their cells twice a day.

Most of their time, however, is spent reading.

Their literary diet includes not just the Quran and books on Islam, but also self-improvement books such as The Unofficial Guide To Managing Time, Successful Web Marketing and Analog And Digital Electronics.

One detainee - perhaps underlining the JI members' own commitment to education, as revealed in the White Paper on their arrests - is trying to complete his degree in electronic engineering at the Open University. His lessons were interrupted after his arrest, and he now is looking forward to having them mailed to him.

The solitude gives the men, who are generally not allowed to interact with one another, plenty of time to reflect on the impact of their past actions on their future and families.

According to psychologists, the detainees typically wrestle with feelings of guilt, thinking they have failed as husbands, fathers or sons.

Many were the sole breadwinners, and their detention left their wives to fend for themselves and their young children. Some of these spouses have begun to work in order to earn an income, say sources close to them. A few are selling home-made curry puffs or taking in laundry.

Once a week for half an hour, family members are allowed to visit the men in a room where, unlike in conventional prisons, there are no glass partitions to separate them.

It is a time to catch up on family ties and news about the outside world. Some weeks, birthday cakes are cut, the children play and their fathers ask them about their schoolwork. And the **women** update their husbands on how they are coping.

Community groups, Muslim and non-Muslim, have helped with their utility bills, and schools have chipped in to pay for school uniforms, meals and books.

When they visit during the holy month of Ramadan, the families are occasionally allowed to bring treats such as dates and mountain honey for the detainees' breaking of fast.

The life of a JI detainee

It is not a case of ISD officers going soft, says one observer, adding: 'These small acts of kindness reflect a broad approach to rehabilitation aimed at re-integrating the detainee back to the mainstream.'

'A key part of this process is to emphasise the point that they were detained not for their religious beliefs, but for the acts related to terrorism which they pursued as JI members.'

So though family life may be disrupted, a lot of effort is put in to ensure families remain connected.

For example, sources say that intelligence officers arranged a special session to help one detainee counsel his daughter who was doing poorly in school. It worked. The girl passed her examinations and is now doing better.

On another occasion, when a detainee was allowed to see his sister and her new husband, some ISD officers chipped in to buy a wedding gift for him to give them.

One detainee could not visit his wife when she gave birth. Another could not see his grandson when he was born. They were given Polaroid shots of the newborns.

When the babies were big enough to be brought to the detention centre, the men sobbed as they kissed and held them for the first time.

But sometimes, at the weekly meetings, scenes of another kind are played out, say sources close to the detainees. Angry wives scold their husbands for leaving them in the lurch, and parents chastise their sons.

The men, say the sources, try and put up a brave front. But there are moments when they break down and cry.

The sense of having failed their loved ones can be such that, once, a detainee chose not to attend his father's funeral because he felt he would have brought more shame to his family - by law, he would have had to show up handcuffed and accompanied by policemen.

Instead, he called his mother and then traipsed back to his cell, sobbing.

The focus on cementing family bonds is an important part of the rehabilitation process. The aim is to build a strong support system for the detainees so that when they are released, they will not drift back into the clutches of the terror network.

'The public perception is that the detainees are treated by their captors in inhumane ways,' says a security analyst.

'Many do not realise that while in prison, a major part of the work is to build or rebuild the mental scaffolding or belief systems of the prisoners. This is the best way of preventing the growth of future generations of JI members.'

ROAD TO REFORM

BUT this rebuilding process is not always gentle. A tougher approach is also used to drive home some lessons.

The men, who do not get to read newspapers, are sometimes shown images of the aftermath of terrorist attacks - to make them see the horror they too could have caused.

According to sources who have spoken to them, the shock was unbearable for many when they were shown ugly newspaper images of charred bodies lying in bloody heaps after the Bali bomb blast.

Some turned ashen and a few wept, muttering 'Ya Allah! Tak sangka macam itu!', meaning, 'Oh Allah! I never thought it would be that way!'

So have the JI detainees recanted?

It is too early to tell, and followers of deviant religious groups are always the hardest to reform, say psychologists.

The life of a JI detainee

Dr Brian Yeo, a consultant psychiatrist, tells Insight that it is easier to reform people who join such organisations out of fear, hunger or greed.

But for those who do it for religion, the turning point is tough to reach because the converts believe that 'even if their lives, families and leaders are destroyed, there is a higher calling and a higher purpose in life'.

What is significant, say sources, is that a few of the detainees are showing that perhaps they were not observing all the proper teachings of Islam after all, because apparently now, they struggle to perform all the five daily prayers.

Such lassitude towards Islamic obligations is further confirmation, say the sources, that their terrorist beliefs were based on deviant teachings.

They add that the detainees are showing various levels of remorse, but Insight could not obtain more details.

According to the White Paper on the JI published in January this year, some of them still believe they are duty-bound to wage a jihad or holy war against the United States.

The toughest challenge for the authorities is likely still to be Ibrahim Maidin, the firebrand founding father of the Jemaah Islamiah in Singapore.

He told the judge who reviewed his case that he had failed only because 'Allah did not will the attack to happen and pre-destination cannot be overridden'.

Whether or not the detainees are fully rehabilitated will be known when their detention orders are up for review after two years.

Meanwhile, Muslim community groups are not giving up on them.

Bonding with fellow Muslims is seen to be an important feature of weaning them off their fanatical beliefs, say sources.

Muslim groups help the detainees' families cope by helping them pay for provisions, utility bills and childcare fees.

Some mosque leaders have also organised special briyani lunches for the men on Hari Raya Haji and Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

One of them was Ustaz Ali Haji Mohamed, chairman of the Khadijah Mosque. He says: 'It is very, very important not to cast them aside.

'We are trying to tell them that the community still cares for them and hopes they will repent and return to their families and communities to lead a peaceful, non-violent life.'

Prayers: 5 times daily.

Exercise: Twice a day at an open yard.

Interrogation: Daily, even 18 months' after their arrest. The interviews to gather information about the JI can last up to six hours at a time, with short breaks. To guard against possible abuse, a doctor examines each detainee every day.

Solitude: The men cannot interact.

Reading: Most of their time is spent reading books on Islam and self-improvement.

Family time: Once a week, relatives can visit for half an hour.

Rehab: They are sometimes shown images of bloody terror attacks.

The life of a JI detainee

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End of Document

Pity the prison officers with a professional task

Yorkshire Post

March 29, 2004

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Body

From: HH Greaves, Chester Avenue, Minstergate, Beverley.

Is it not astonishing that prison officers are being urged to show more respect to their charges, according to a report by Anne Owers, the chief inspector of prisons? (Yorkshire Post, March 25). As laudable as might be the intention of the report, I suggest that Anne Owers herself might benefit from serving as a prison officer, at the "coal-face" so to speak.

I believe that it is true that all serving police officers, including chief constables, are required to have served "on the beat"; and that applies even to the "fast-track" for speedy promotion of officers. Of course, there can be nothing wrong with the showing of respect to others, but that applies equally to the prisoners themselves. And it needs to be kept in mind that respect has to be earned.

Yorkshire Post

I suggest that the days when police and prisons' officers were recruited for their brawn rather than their brains, are long gone.

In a similar way, there was a time when some schoolteachers were attracted to the job for its unlimited and mostly uncontrolled opportunities to beat children, within the sanction of the law at that time.

Indeed, it is on record that many teachers accused of beating children excessively, were cleared of a charge of assault on the spurious grounds that the said beating was not given in passion. George Bernard Shaw once said: "Never beat a child except in anger".

Given that society no longer allows children to be legally beaten, does not mean that its legacy does not linger on. Beatings for some people is as addictive as smoking, and just as

hard to stop; and those afflicted tend to gravitate to jobs where power over other folk can be expressed.

Given that nowadays, prison officers are faced daily with potentially dangerous and violent people, they need to be highly trained in the arts of careful observation of human behaviour, so to avert precipitant acts of extreme violence, not only to protect themselves, but also the prisoners in their charge.

To my mind that makes these officers to be professionals in their own right, and worthy of being better paid as well as being valued by society. I should think the last need they have in doing their difficult jobs, is to be told by a few Miss Molly Coddles how to do the job itself.

Pity the prison officers with a professional task

It ought to be remembered that by far the greater number of prisoners are those who suffered from bad upbringings from broken homes and from being brought up in institutional care.

More to be pitied than blamed, and regrettably, society has not yet found a responsive way to help these unfortunate people, to help themselves.

From: Frank Littlewood, Wylam, Northumberland.

How much respect did the men pictured in your newspaper show for the people, especially the women, they brutally murdered or abused?

I ask this question in response to the observations made by the chief inspector of prisons regarding the way they are treated in Wakefield Jail.

The truth is that many of these creatures have committed crimes that are totally unacceptable and put them way past worthiness of any mark of respect. The enormous cost of keeping them in prison is equally unacceptable: they should have been put down as soon as they were convicted. What purpose is served by keeping them locked up until they die? Surely it is kinder and less barbarous to do away with them, which clearly is what they deserve and which after all, let's face it, merely advances the date of their inevitable departure from this earth. And, of course, it ensures that should any of them by chance escape nobody else will become victims of their wickedness.

From: David Shepherd, Laburnum Grove, Gomersal, Cleckheaton.

So conditions inside Wakefield prison have been criticised by prison inspectors. Oh dear. Must be terrible for the poor criminal fraternity. My heart bleeds. Whatever the conditions inside Wakefield prison, or any other prison come to that, the way to avoid them is simply to abide by the laws of the land.

Why don't we punish the wrong-doers?

From: Mrs Jean Evans, Norton, Malton.

Why are we being subjected to a deliberate attempt to protect those who commit unsocial acts against law-abiding citizens?

In one news bulletin last week (March 25) we heard of teachers increasingly needing treatment for stress caused by violence from pupils and their parents, false accusations, and disruptive behaviour. No sanctions now exist to combat such things. The last resort is exclusion and then special arrangements have to be made to teach these people elsewhere.

Police are constantly being accused of "picking on" various racial groups and being brutal to them. There is no redress against these accusations unless it can be proved that they are misplaced. This takes valuable police time and frequently ends in the accusations being proved to be false.

No wonder violence country-wide is increasing if the rules do so little to punish wrong-doing in all areas.

Don't mourn this monster

From: Terry Palmer, South Lea Avenue, Hoyland, Barnsley.

What imbeciles are we being led by here in the UK ? Certainly not by "Lionhearts". Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the proven Muslim terrorist and Hamas organiser who sends suicide bombers to kill innocent people in Israel, is assassinated on the orders of Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and who is then immediately castigated by our Home Secretary Jack Straw, calling the killing "unlawful". Does that mean the killing of innocent men, women and children by these Muslim monsters is legal?

No doubt Yassin along with another Muslim monster, Osama bin Laden, when either caught or killed, will also be joining the ranks of Ben Gurion, Makarios, Mandela, McGuinness and Mugabe, all past terrorists all with

Pity the prison officers with a professional task

one intention, that of trying and actually killing innocent men, women and children but all now forgiven and lauded sickeningly by governments worldwide.

Remember Lockerbie, the Twin Towers and Madrid? Every death by the hand of a Muslim, every death an innocent one perpetrated by a so-called follower of Islam without any regret whatsoever.

Jack Straw then has the audacity to call the death of one of these monsters "unlawful"?

He must be joking, he certainly does not speak on behalf of the majority of Britain that's for sure.

Labour should support PR

From: Quentin Deakin, Newark Road, Crossflatts, Bingley.

Labour's defence of its oddly named mass "experiment" in postal voting has tried to shift the ground from the principles of balloting to the obstruction of the upper house. If it is true that the Lords are unelected, it is also the case that the withdrawal of secret balloting was not part of Labour's 2001 manifesto. Nobody voted for it.

Secret balloting was introduced in 1872 after 40 years of campaigning: a democracy that takes itself seriously should be saying to young people that voting is an assertive action, not a casual matter of form-filling.

If Labour was serious about democratic reform and reinvigorating the public it would be introducing PR for all elections and Mr Blair would be supporting proposals for a fully elected second chamber.

Time to teach obedience

From: H Marjorie Gill, Clarence Drive, Menston, Ilkley.

It is time that we the taxpayers fought back against the compensation culture which is spoiling life for so many of us by restricting activities.

Far from people suing councils and schools for accidents happening when against all the reasonable precautions taken by authorities, naughty children and careless adults experience accidents, surely it is time that courts meted out punishment by sending the children to attend obedience classes and parents given community work clearing up eyesores, etc.

Perhaps schools could do more by having obedience classes before expeditions and awarding points for good behaviour and refusing to take children who misbehave as this would prove to be for the benefit of all the others and be a salutary warning to the next generation.

It is a sad state of affairs that children should not experience the joys of adventure holidays because of the careless behaviour of a minority.

Courts should be instructed that only the most demonstrably careless management should give rise to compensation.

Why should the lives of teachers and scout leaders, etc

be blighted by the threats of court trials when they have devoted their lives to helping others?

Blair's handshake with a man of terror

From: Andrea Hill, Oxfam Campaigns, Yorkshire, Park Square East, Leeds.

In seeking to reward Colonel Gaddafi for turning away from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, Tony Blair must not allow British weapons to become part of the terror and destruction that Gaddafi continues to spread across his own continent.

Pity the prison officers with a professional task

Libya is one of Africa's most prolific and unscrupulous arms dealers, which has sold weapons that have fuelled some of the continent's worst conflicts. Despite this record Blair is reportedly pushing for a lifting of the EU arms embargo so that British companies can once again sell weapons direct to Libya. Unlike with terrorism or WMD, Colonel Gaddafi has shown no signs of cleaning up his act on arms exports. As recently as 2003 Gaddafi sold a plane full of weapons to indicted war criminal Charles Taylor of Liberia, in breach of the UN arms embargo. The fact that the terror wreaked by Gaddafi's conventional weapons does not reach our shores, does not justify turning a blind eye to the reality of the suffering it creates. Tony Blair must not allow Britain to become party to this terror by allowing British weapons sales to such a régime.

Let's withdraw from Iraq and concentrate on peace

From: David W Wright, Little Lane, Easingwold, North Yorkshire.

One year on from the start of the Iraq war and there are still no weapons of mass destruction, but the terrorism and conflict continues worldwide.

Bush and Blair struggle to find new ways of combating terrorism but they appear to have overlooked some very fundamental reasons for the hatred and fervour of the Islamist extremists who are determined to expel the Western coalition from their territories.

While the Israeli/Palestinian conflict remains unsolved and the Western powers occupy Iraq and Afghanistan, Islam has a constant excuse and justification for viewing the West as invaders and to reinforce the incompatibility of Islam and Christianity.

The only solutions to this serious situation is firstly to withdraw

our forces from Iraq and Afghanistan and handover to the UN - and also for Islamic countries to help in the supervision and rebuilding of democracy (the Islamic alliance, however, has

been notably missing during

the whole of this conflict); the Israelis should leave the West Bank and finally Europe should revert back to sealing their borders and stopping all illegal immigrants/ bogus visitors by returning them to their host countries immediately.

A final acceptance by Bush

and Blair that they have made a huge mistake over WMD would

help towards restoring their shattered credibility, and they can still pursue Al-Qaida and the terrorists legitimately for the

September 11 and Madrid atrocities. In the meantime, perhaps

the leaders of the Islamic

and Christian religions might

practise what they preach -- love and understanding between all peoples.

Points

Surgeon in

the soup

From: Barbara Raine, Marlborough Road,

Pity the prison officers with a professional task

Shipley.

Reading the item in your paper headed "Surgeon suspended over croutons", I was reminded of a former colleague who was wont to use the expression "I don't believe it".

I felt like shouting those exact words on learning that a leading brain surgeon had been suspended in a row over a soup meal!

Imagine the cost of paying his full salary during the time of the investigation - money which could otherwise be spent on treatment. Add to this the loss to patients

who will fail to receive necessary - possibly life-saving - treatment. We are all losers in these situations.

Sports

rackets

From: Pauline Brown,

Pasture Close, Leconfield, Beverley.

I agree wholeheartedly with recent correspondents regarding background music in TV programmes but wonder if anyone else finds just as annoying the positioning of outside broadcast reporters in close proximity to noisy traffic, stations, crowds attending sporting events etc, making it necessary for them to deliver their report at the top of their voice to overcome the

adjacent racket.

Some of the content of their commentary is inevitably drowned

out and is therefore pointless. With the amount of sophisticated equipment now available is it not

possible for them to move to a

quieter spot to speak while

continuing to show the accompanying film?

Rail blow

for pensioners

From: GN Lewis,

Newport, Brough, East Yorkshire.

I read recently that Bradford had been described as the meanest council for wanting to charge a charity market £2,000.

I think the East Riding of Yorkshire will now qualify for this title. As from next month they are to withdraw concessionary rail travel for pensioners. Travel passes will still be available for use on buses, but for rail travel pensioners are advised to buy a rail card costing £18.

This will only entitle them to a third off the cost of a ticket instead of a half reduction they are entitled to at present.

United

we stand

Pity the prison officers with a professional task

From: John Murray, Moorside Road, Honley, Holmfirth.

Now that we are proposing to unite with the rest of the EU in a fight against terrorism, does the UK Independence Party still think we would be better off standing alone, because, as we're British, the terrorists wouldn't dare to attack us?

Load-Date: April 2, 2004

End of Document

The Clash Over Middle East Studies

The Chronicle of Higher Education

February 6, 2004, Friday

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Section: THE FACULTY; Pg. 8

Length: 2083 words

Byline: JENNIFER JACOBSON

Body

Brandeis University plans to open a Center for Middle East Studies this fall that, officials there say, will be free of bias.

It will not be solely focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is what most centers pay attention to, says Jehuda Reinharz, the university's president. And it will be "ideologically free," he says, "to the extent we can make that possible."

But offering a program in Middle East studies whose ideology offends no one may prove to be no less difficult than dividing an ancient homeland between two warring peoples.

Scholars of Middle East studies today find themselves in the middle of a war of ideas as politically charged as the region they study. The discipline's critics, often conservative supporters of the Bush administration, have denounced the programs as anti-American and anti-Israeli and have called for the creation of an advisory board to review them. The U.S. House of Representatives has already passed a bill to create such a board; the Senate will consider the measure within the next few months. Many faculty members and administrators, however, argue that such a board would curtail their academic freedom.

At the center of the debate is what the centers actually do, whom they are training, and what they are training them for.

Legislating Cultural Diversity

The first stone was cast in June, when Stanley Kurtz, a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, told a House subcommittee that many academics in Middle East studies were biased against U.S. foreign policy and discouraged students from entering government service.

The influential postcolonial theory of Edward Said, the late Columbia University professor of English, promotes the idea that "it is immoral for a scholar to put his knowledge of foreign languages and cultures at the service of American power," Mr. Kurtz told the subcommittee. The centers, many of which receive funds under Title VI of the Higher Education Act -- generally three-year grants of no more than \$500,000 -- rarely balance Mr. Said's work with that of scholars who disagree with him, Mr. Kurtz said.

The centers should correct that imbalance, he said, or else risk losing federal money. "Unless steps are taken to balance university faculties with members who both support and oppose American foreign policy, the very purpose of free speech and academic freedom will have been defeated," Mr. Kurtz told the panel.

The Clash Over Middle East Studies

His testimony helped persuade the House last fall to pass HR 3077 unanimously. The bill would create an advisory board to ensure that foreign-language and area-studies programs that accept federal funds "reflect diverse perspectives and the full range of views on world regions, foreign languages, and international affairs."

The board, made up of political appointees, would review the programs but not run them. Three members of the board would be named by the secretary of education, and one each by the majority and minority leaders of the House and Senate. "Nothing in this title shall be construed to authorize the International Advisory Board to mandate, direct, or control an institution of higher education's specific instructional content, curriculum, or program of instruction," the measure says.

Professors of Middle East studies fear not what such a board is supposed to do, but what it would try to do.

Amy W. Newhall, executive director of the Middle East Studies Association, says advisory boards in other programs, like that of the National Science Foundation, function as peer-review panels -- made up of academic experts in the field -- and so should the Title VI board. Otherwise, she says, political appointees, lacking expertise in Middle East affairs, would fall back on their particular political biases instead of any real knowledge when reviewing the centers.

Although the bill's language forbids the board to control curricula, the "potential for meddling is still very great," says Ms. Newhall, an assistant professor of Near Eastern studies at the University of Arizona. "Proponents certainly see it as intrusive." In fact, she says, "they're looking forward to it."

Mark Smith, director of government relations at the American Association of University Professors, says the presence of an advisory board would intrude on academic freedom and create "a huge, intimidating force over curriculum decisions, books chosen," and "approaches taken to the subject." Professors, and not legislators, he says, should be the ones responsible for determining course content.

Nezar AlSayyad, chair of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, says the idea for the advisory board is part of an effort by the Bush administration to wrest more control over what gets said in academe and in the news media.

"We get money from the federal government," he says. "That does not mean we do what the federal government says. As academics, we have academic freedom. That's our God-given right. Being in the academy means that we're allowed to form opinions actually based on intellectual discourse, not on political position."

A Particular Need

Area-studies centers were first created during the cold war, when the United States decided that it needed to know more about the languages and cultures of the rest of the world, including the Middle East.

Of the 118 area-studies centers receiving Title VI funds from the U.S. Department of Education, only 17 focus on the Middle East, up from 14 in 2001. Their areas of study usually include the Arab countries, Iran, Israel, and Turkey.

The House bill applies to all area-studies programs, including those on Russia, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. But Middle East studies gained new relevance -- and a bigger audience -- after September 11, 2001. There is little doubt that the bill is aimed squarely at Middle East studies.

Arizona's Ms. Newhall says she saw the enrollment in her class, "Middle East Humanities," jump from about 250 students before the terrorist attacks to 400 this fall. Jon Mandaville, director of the Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University, in Oregon, says his first-year Arabic-language class has grown from 19 students before 2001 to 50 students this year.

Neither of those classes is taught at a Middle East-studies center. The centers can use their Title VI funds to pay only for language instruction, fellowships for graduate students, and special lectures and discussions. Courses themselves are carried on by language or history departments. In fact, some professors and administrators at the

The Clash Over Middle East Studies

centers scoff at the idea of a review board, noting that lectures about such subjects as 19th-century Moroccan poetry shouldn't need reviewing.

In December 2001, Congress added \$20-million to Title VI, which governs foreign-language and area-studies programs, mostly for Middle East and Central and South Asia studies. The total budget now stands at \$95-million. A report that accompanied the appropriations bill said that the purpose of the increase was to produce more Americans with expertise on the Muslim world.

It "wasn't to generate 25 more professors," says Martin Kramer, editor of *Middle East Quarterly* and a proponent of the review board. "Title VI was supposed to increase the number of graduate students working in Muslim areas, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, from 200 to 400." The hope was that these people would then go into government service, he says.

But Middle East-studies professors often dissuade graduate students from pursuing careers in national security and discourage scholarly work on terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, says Mr. Kramer. "The message being sent is [that] doing anything related to Islamic extremism or groups that perpetrate terror is 'terrorology,' and that's not what we do," he says.

Mark Tessler, a professor of political science at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor who edits a series of books on Middle East studies, disputes Mr. Kramer's contention by ticking off several of the titles published this year by Indiana University Press. They include *Islamic Activism: Exploring Political Violence in Algeria*, *Hamas in Palestine*, and *Islamic Women in Yemen*.

"The notion that [these centers] are not doing their job and that they're soft on terrorism and anti-Israel -- that is just not the case in my experience," says Mr. Tessler, a former director of the Middle East Studies Center at the University of Arizona. He earned his Ph.D. from Northwestern University, lived in Israel for more than three years, and studied at Hebrew University of Jerusalem during one of them.

Taking the Money

Rashid Khalidi, director of Columbia University's Middle East Institute, contends that critics of the field are actually intent upon a "witch hunt." Mr. Khalidi, a professor of Arab studies at Columbia, has faced considerable scrutiny already. Some critics routinely accuse him of support for Palestinian terrorists and prejudice against Israel. This is the same group, he says, that has convinced House Republicans that there is gross bias against the United States and Israel in Middle East studies.

Mr. Khalidi doesn't know whether Columbia's institute will continue to seek federal money if an advisory board is created. "It depends on the language," he says. If the board "did have the kind of prosecutorial intent to search out malfeasance that is presumed but does not exist, that would be objectionable," he says. "The university might feel this was political infringement on academic freedom."

Kenneth D. Whitehead, a former director of educational programs at the Department of Education, says academe's concerns are unfounded. For eight years in the 1980s, he was executive director of a Title VI advisory committee. In 1987, the Reagan administration and Congress agreed to eliminate several advisory panels, including the one for Title VI.

The decision was made for financial reasons, says Terry W. Hartle, a senior vice president at the American Council on Education. "The federal government was running a budget deficit," and "each advisory board cost \$500,000," he says. The move to disband the Title VI board created no controversy, he adds, and it died quietly.

Mr. Whitehead, a career Foreign Service officer who speaks Arabic, says that during his tenure with the board, two university presidents led it, and that one of its members was John R. Silber, Boston University's chancellor. Also holding seats were representatives of all of the federal agencies with an interest in Title VI, he says.

The old board's purpose, not unlike that of the newly proposed version, he says, was "to promote competent language-area specialists to serve the needs of the United States."

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"It's not a scary thing," he says. "What does whether or not you're competent in Arabic or Chinese or Farsi have to do with academic freedom?"

If the centers are worried, he says, "maybe they shouldn't be taking the money."

Mr. Mandaville, at Portland State, doesn't yet know whether his center, which has received Title VI funds off and on since it opened, in 1961, will reapply for the money. He would rather receive it without strings. The next grant competition is set for the fall of 2005.

To him, the language of HR 3077 implies that a center's Title VI support is conditional on "the committee's potential review of your program, whether it serves national security interests."

In the past 20 years, about half of the students who have completed Portland State's undergraduate program in Middle East studies, which graduates 7 to 10 students each year, have gone on to government service, he says. The rest have gone to graduate school.

"We do serve the national interest," Mr. Mandaville says. "We always have. We don't need Congress to tell us to do this."

If the legislation passes the Senate and becomes law, he says, then "we become subject to the whims of whatever administration is in power," and to shifts in whatever part of the world dominates the news.

For now, Brandeis officials say only that they are unsure whether they will seek federal support for their new center. But the university's president, Mr. Reinharz, has some idea of one subject the program should focus on -- the study of Islam.

Plenty of think tanks and academic centers already deal with the subject of terrorism, he says. An examination of Islam, however, does belong in the new program's work, he says. Islam is "not by definition a fundamentalist religion," he says. "All religions have fundamentalist elements. Clearly it's of major concern today."

Load-Date: March 8, 2004

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4.1. "PACIFICATION" OF CHECHNYA[]

DEFENSE and SECURITY (Russia)

December 31, 2003, Wednesday

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Section: COMPANY PROFILES

Length: 2061 words

Byline: Vladimir Voronov

Highlight: LOCAL CONFLICTS

Body

2003 was full of events the Kremlin interpreted as signifying undeniable "stabilization" in Chechnya - the referendum, Akhmad Kadyrov's election, and the parliamentary election. What changed?

One such change is apparent. There are no more official reports on the losses sustained by the federal forces in Chechnya.

The losses did not go down this year. They remain more or less on the level of 2002. Officers of secret services this correspondent met and talked to on several trips to Chechnya confirm it. "Nothing has changed," they said. "They are still using land mines, we are still losing men." Is there anybody here who remains skeptical? Take a look at separate reports, say, submitted by bomb disposal squads.

Novoe Vremya, No 52, December 28, 2003, pp. 14 - 17

Well, even these reports will not last long. Like reports on the losses, the subject of Chechnya has quietly disappeared from Russian newspapers and TV.

There is one other innovation. When the war has to be mentioned (after terrorist acts or all sorts of emergencies like the one in Dagestan), all reports give the names of field commanders nobody knows. Aslan Maskhadov is mentioned infrequently, Shamil Basayev only when they need someone on whom to blame a terrorist act, Ruslan Gelayev when the Kremlin is out to irritate Tbilisi, Akhmed Zakayev - everybody knows when. Actually, the latter is out of the game now. Like Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev who is not even mentioned now. Abu Valid? Get serious, folks. Only the names even experts do not know are mentioned. Who are they? Where did they come from? One thing is clear: these new gunmen mean business; they are more radical than their predecessors. They do not accept compromises and do not respect anything or anybody.

That is how it looks. This is not a new tendency; it was first mentioned around 2000. It seems, however, that this tendency is becoming more pronounced now. The Chechen resistance resembles Hamas now, i.e. absolute terrorism becomes the objective. Not to mention transition of the hostilities from Chechnya to the rest of Russia.

I'm convinced that the explosions in Moscow and commuter trains in Stavropol are not an echo of the Chechen war. They are a new phase of the war. A phase Russian secret services are not prepared for. This assumption is reiterated by their inability to prevent terrorist acts (after all, terrorists are ahead of their opponents almost always) and by their professional incompetence. When the smoke of explosions clears away, specialists are unable to find the clue that will lead them to terrorists. In fact, even the arrest (by chance) of Zarima Muzhikhoyeva, a failed

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kamikaze, on July 10, did not lead secret services to at least the lowliest links of the terrorist network. Her testimony (according to the official version, that is) allegedly led to a kamikaze base in Moscow; while the clues left by the woman who had blown herself up in Tushino on July 5 and was identified had allegedly led to another base. The bases turned out vacated - nothing but equipment was uncovered. The investigation was unfortunately fruitless, or the terrorist acts that followed would have been prevented.

There are facts showing the quality of penetration of the enemy by domestic secret services. On December 5, the Ingush Regional Directorate of the Federal Security Service was fired at. The attack was preceded by a terrorist act committed by a kamikaze driving a truckload of explosives to the building on September 15, an explosion of a bike full of explosives near the Federal Security Service office in Khasavyurt (Dagestan) on July 17, a kamikaze attack on the Federal Security Service office in the village of Znamenskoye on May 12... If the Federal Security Service cannot defend itself...

The statistic of explosions in 2003 would have been impressive - had it been available. It is not, unfortunately, and every bit of information in the media has to be painstakingly counted. Here are but a few figures on the most scandalous terrorist acts. A coach full of OMON servicemen blown up near Khankala on April 14, kamikaze explosions in the Chechen villages of Znamenskoye and Iliskhan-Yurt on May 12 and 14, a kamikaze blows herself up near the coach full of servicemen near the AF base in Mozdok on July 5, explosions in Tushino (Moscow) on July 5, the failed terrorist act in the center of Moscow on July 10 (the device killed a specialist of the Federal Security Service), the Khasavyurt terrorist act on July 17, an explosion at the military hospital in Khasavyurt on August 1 (50 killed and 80 wounded), three bombs going off at approximately the same time in Krasnodar on August 25, minister of national policy of Dagestan blown up in Makhachkala on August 27, commuter train blown up near Kislovodsk on September 3, explosion by the Ingush Regional Directorate of the Federal Security Service in Ingushetia on September 15, a bomb at the car pool of the Nazran Border Detachment on September 20, explosion in the passenger train between Nazran and Moscow on October 22. There were terrorist acts on December 5 and 9 in Moscow afterwards. There were also explosions in Nalchik as well... As for the banal war of field charges, this war lasts all year long in Ingushetia. Using open sources only, this correspondent counted 20 reports on acts of sabotage against the federal troops beyond the official zone of hostilities, some of them being reports on attacks against whole convoys. There were explosions in North Ossetia, Yessentuki and Cheboksary, Astrakhan. Bombs go off in Dagestan but nobody can say if they are terrorist acts or disputes of the local criminals. What counts is that the bombs go off, and secret services cannot do anything about it.

Unlike in the first Chechen war, the change of phases in the second was fast indeed. From an open confrontation in late 1999 and early 2000, in spring 2000 already the Chechens switched over to the tactic of nocturnal attacks and war on communications. The latter included mine warfare. The war of field charges is regarded as the most efficient: explosions account for the majority of the losses of the federal troops. From the propagandistic point of view, however, kamikaze attacks remain the most effective. The first such attack took place on June 7, 2000 when a kamikaze-driven truck rammed the base of the Omsk OMON in Alkhan-Yurt. A checkpoint of the federal forces came under a similar attack in the October district of Grozny four days later. On July 2, 2000, kamikazes driving Ural trucks blew up two devices in Gudermes, and in Novogroznensky, Urus-Martan, and Argun centers. On December 3, 2001, the Government House in Grozny was blown up, several days before that a kamikaze blew up military commandant of the Urus-Martan district General Gadzhiyev. The Government House in Grozny blew up again on December 27, 2002 (according to the official hypothesis), killing 72 and wounding almost 300. This was probably the worst terrorist act, discounting the MI-26 helicopter killed above Khankala on August 19, 2002 (154 perished). This kill was the peak of the 2002 war of gunmen on the federal forces with the use of SAMs. In 2002, Russian aviation sustained the worst losses in Chechnya - 13 helicopters and one aircraft.

When the extremists ran out of SAMs, they reverted to the old tactic. There was the Nord-Ost first, an attempt to use Basayev's methods of the previous war. The lack of continuation does not indicate the lack of effectiveness - it merely indicates the expensive nature of every such terrorist act. The use of live bombs or kamikaze proved cheaper. Moreover, secret services have failed to find an antidote.

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It is difficult to say exactly what secret services know on the subject of kamikaze but that not much is clear - there are lots of white spots in reports on how the motives of the women, their selection or conditioning (emotionally, not technically), etc.

Organizers of the terrorist acts have an edge here - when the walking bomb goes off, there is nobody left to testify. Hence the abundance of hypotheses after the terrorist acts - who these widows and sisters are and where they come from, what they are (Black Widows or the so called Basayev's Rijadus Salikhiin unit), their numerical strength (36, 50, etc)... They must be unmatched as conspirators (they cannot be caught) or what? Even the count is something: no real facts on numerical strength, methods of selection, training methods, location, instructors, etc.

Neither there is any information on who and how sets the tasks or on the basis of what criteria. The comments on the December 9 explosion near the National in Moscow confidently agree that the women were out to make it to the Duma but got lost or the equipment malfunctioned. All this rubbish is reported seriously - with references to some witness who had allegedly been asked "Where is this Duma of yours?"

Let us finally face it: kamikaze themselves do not choose the target or the approach routes. The ones who send them do. Walking bombs are not sent randomly but only after reconnaissance missions. Kamikaze themselves do not choose the moment. Their controllers (including the ones nearby) do.

As for the unsanctioned explosion of a kamikaze among passersby, in the areas literally overcrowded with policemen and security in civvies - that is out of the question: At least because the kamikaze are women who speak with a distinct Caucasus accent. More importantly, emotional frame of mind of the volunteer (or conditioned) kamikaze is unstable, and no controller will risk an experiment. And the target is simple - we are ready to blow up everything including the Red Square.

All of that explains to some extent why such terrorist acts are relatively infrequent (in Russia). Select a dozen or two would-be kamikaze, and how many will the natural selection leave? Fewer. So, dozens are out of the question for the time being. There is one other nuance. The button-pushing controllers are not in a hurry to meet Allah. Or how can we explain the explosions in the streets, or stadiums? The controller would not get down into the underground crossing where he himself might perish. Or into a subway where there may be problems with remote control...

The kamikaze actions - are they a system or chaotic attempts by enthusiasts? The former hypothesis is more probable: enthusiasts-amateurs would have been caught by the dozen, but only pragmatics with pipelines can blow up something and disappear without a trace. It follows that the Chechen terrorist network in Moscow is a hard fact of life, right?

It is clear already that terrorist acts are not arranged by banal field commanders and not from Chechnya (this idea was already voiced). Physically and technically, organization of a terrorist act from Chechnya in Moscow is impossible. When and where it has to go off, that is. An explosion of a bomb, live or otherwise, requires warehouses (or what passes for them) and living quarters. Not to mention reconnaissance of the object, its selection, examination of access routes, assistants in charge of providing, cover, observation, assembly of the device, controllers... Plus secrecy. Can all of that be provided by gunmen seeking shelter in the mountains and their exposed contacts? Unlikely. That means moles in Moscow itself.

It is clear of course that selection is unlikely without the help from field commanders fighting in Chechnya. Who else can provide the potential kamikaze? But this is where their role probably ends - otherwise investigation would have probably led there, rather than nowhere. It does not!

Because the walking bombs, women, are handled the other men, the ones who do not grant interviews, make statements, put up demands, and - what counts - do not communicate with the kamikaze themselves. All of that leads to an unsavory conclusion - that a new wing is being formed in Chechnya. The wing that relies on pure terrorism and that has moles in Russia. Sad but secret services know little if anything about all of that. They do not know who organized the terrorist acts! Hence the traditional excuse that international terrorism is to be at fault - plus its representative Abu Valid. Nobody knows where this information came from - neither the Federal Security Service nor Foreign Intelligence Service of GRU has any serious assets in the Arab world or extremist organizations.

4.1. "PACIFICATION" OF CHECHNYA []

Load-Date: December 31, 2003

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WORLD REPORT

Windsor Star (Ontario)

November 14, 2003 Friday Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. C2; News; Brief

Length: 2234 words

Dateline: London; Lima; Mexico City; Washington; New Delhi; Frankfurt; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Berlin; Vienna; Jerusalem; Trenton, N.J.

Body

Good news for Charles as media backs off scandal

London

It was all good news for Prince Charles on British front pages Thursday.

For the first time in nearly two weeks, he wasn't mentioned on any of them.

The storm over the allegation that couldn't be reported has abated.

But can it last? Given the public's media-fed fascination with Charles, his former marriage and royals in general, don't count on it.

The odd affair of the unspoken allegation began Nov. 1, when a British court granted an injunction to stop the Mail on Sunday newspaper from printing the allegations of a former royal valet, George Smith. It also forbade identification of a "royal servant" who said the story was libel and sought the injunction.

Compiled from Star News Services

The gag order began to unravel, however, when the Guardian newspaper went to court to argue the identity of royal servants who sue should not be given a cloak of anonymity which is denied ordinary Britons.

Peru's Congress approves more charges for Fujimori

Lima

Congress has approved more charges against ex-president Alberto Fujimori, alleging he trafficked arms to Colombian guerrillas, sanctioned torture, was responsible for the disappearance of student activists and mismanaged charity funds, officials said Thursday.

Fujimori's government collapsed amid a corruption scandal in November 2000 and he has since lived in Japan, where he is protected from extradition by Japanese citizenship. He has denied any wrongdoing and insists the allegations against him are politically motivated and lack proof or credible witnesses.

Peruvian prosecutors have piled up more than a dozen charges against Fujimori, including illegal wiretapping, corruption and authorizing death squad killings, in hopes of pressuring Tokyo to extradite him.

WORLD REPORT

Mexico City prosecutor calls for drug legalization

Mexico City

Mexico City's top prosecutor said Thursday he thinks Mexico should consider a "gradual" legalization of drugs, in order to reduce the influence and power of drug-traffickers.

"I think they (drugs) could gradually be legalized, starting, for example with the prisons, where there is a whole mafia structured around control of the drug trade," said City Attorney General Bernardo Batiz.

Batiz's statement was significant, given his boss -- Mexico City Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador -- is seen as a leading contender for presidential elections in 2006.

Should Lopez Obrador win, he would control Mexico's anti-drug strategy -- and legalization could cause a policy clash with the United States.

Spy loses appeal, judge says clemency unlikely

Washington

A federal judge on Thursday rejected convicted spy Jonathan Pollard's latest attempt to fight his life sentence for selling military secrets to Israel.

U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Hogan, who is chief judge of the court, also noted in a blunt order that Pollard seemed to have little hope of ever winning a pardon from the president.

Hogan's ruling means Pollard will remain in a federal prison and that his lawyers will not win access to sensitive government documents they hoped would help sway the White House to free their client.

Hogan dismissed Pollard's claim that previous lawyers did not do all they could to help him avoid or appeal his life sentence.

The judge also denied the request of Pollard's new lawyers to see five classified documents they say influenced another federal judge to impose the surprise life term in 1987.

Married men spreading AIDS virus through India

New Delhi

The virus that causes AIDS is being spread through India's general population mainly by married men, who have unprotected sex with prostitutes, according to a study released Thursday.

About 610,000 Indians contracted HIV last year, increasing the overall number of infected Indians to about 4.5 million, said the study funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. That is the second-highest total in the world after South Africa.

In four of the six most affected states, the virus was contracted by businessmen, men in the service sector and hotel employees, said the study, which used federal and state government data.

Sex workers' clients, "particularly married males, act as the bridge groups aiding (the spread) ... into the general population."

The study, citing India's National Aids Control Organization, found that more than 85 per cent of India's HIV cases are caused by unsafe sex.

Court backs extradition of terrorism suspects to U.S.

Frankfurt

WORLD REPORT

Germany's supreme court said Thursday it has approved the extradition of two Yemenis to the United States, where they are wanted on charges of supporting al-Qaida.

The Federal Constitutional Court said Sheikh Ali Hassan al-Moayad and his alleged assistant, Mohammed Mohsen Yahya Zayed, could expect a fair trial in the United States, rejecting the complaints they filed against lower-court decisions backing extradition.

The final decision on extradition lies with the German government.

The two were arrested Jan. 10 in a sting operation at a Frankfurt hotel, where they had expected to meet a wealthy American Muslim.

U.S. and German authorities say they learned in December 2001 that al-Moayad was involved in supplying money and militants for Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network as well as to the Palestinian Islamic militant group **Hamas**.

Court halts extradition of Chechen envoy to Russia

London

A British judge on Thursday ruled that Chechen envoy Akhmed Zakayev will not be extradited to Russia where he faces mass murder charges.

"I have come to the inevitable conclusion that if the (Russian) authorities are prepared to resort to torturing witnesses, there is a substantial risk that Mr. Zakayev would himself be subject to torture," District Judge Timothy Workman said in Bow Street Magistrates Court in central London.

Zakayev's lawyers fought his extradition, saying he would be persecuted for his political beliefs and would not receive a fair trial. He is wanted in Russia on 13 charges, including kidnapping and taking part in the murder of more than 300 militia officers. Moscow alleges that Zakayev fought against the Russian Federation between October 1995 and December 2000.

Cleric blames sin for dry spell; Saudis pray for rain

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudis on Thursday heeded their king's call and prayed for rainfall and a leading cleric blamed its scarcity on the sins of the island country's citizens.

Noting seasonal rains were late, King Fahd on Saturday urged fellow Saudis to perform a special prayer for rain this week.

In the first 10 months of 2003, rainfall in the Gulf state is said to be below the annual average of 15 centimetres. There have been recorded falls in western Saudi Arabia, most recently this week, but no figures were immediately available.

Saudi's top Muslim cleric, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul-Aziz bin Abdullah al-Sheik, said God was holding back the rain this year because Saudi people had been "immersing in sin."

Memorial approved for gay victims of Nazis

Berlin

Germany will build a national memorial to homosexuals persecuted and killed under the Nazis, complementing a memorial to the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust, a parliament committee decided Thursday.

WORLD REPORT

Nazi Germany declared homosexuality an aberration that threatened the German race and convicted some 50,000 homosexuals as criminals. An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 gay men were deported to concentration camps, where few survived.

The bill to build a separate memorial to persecuted homosexuals in Berlin passed the lower house's culture committee with the support of the governing Social Democrats and Greens.

Agency blasted for saying no proof of nukes in Iran

Vienna

The UN atomic agency is coming under fire for saying it has no evidence that Tehran tried to make nuclear weapons.

In a report detailing two decades of Iranian nuclear activity, the agency said Iran was guilty of numerous secret experiments, including uranium enrichment and the production of small amounts of plutonium that effectively put the nation in violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

But the document, presented this week to the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors, also praised Tehran for co-operation and openness. It said the agency had found "no evidence" of an Iranian nuclear weapons program.

Family of Sept. 11 victims blast White House deal

Washington

Relatives of people who perished in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks say a federal commission accepted too many conditions in striking a deal with the White House over access to secret intelligence documents.

The Family Steering Committee, a group of victims' relatives monitoring the work of the independent commission, criticized the agreement. Under the deal, only some of the 10 commissioners will be allowed to examine classified intelligence documents and their notes will be subject to White House review.

"All 10 commissioners should have full, unfettered and unrestricted access to all evidence," the group said in a statement Thursday. It urged the public release of "the full, official and final written agreement."

Transsexual athletes can compete in Olympics

London

Athletes who have undergone sex change operations will be eligible to compete in the Olympics for the first time under new rules being finalized by the IOC.

The International Olympic Committee convened a meeting in Sweden last month of medical experts in the field and will announce its policy in the next few weeks.

"We will have no discrimination," IOC medical director Patrick Schamasch said Thursday.

Details are still being worked out, but Schamasch said transsexual athletes will be eligible for the Olympics once they have passed a certain amount of time after sex-change surgery.

"The trend is to have an ineligibility period," he said. "Then after certain conditions have been fulfilled, the athlete will be able to compete in his or her new sex."

The exact length of the waiting period hasn't been determined. Schamasch said officials want to make sure that any side effects of hormone therapy have worn off.

WORLD REPORT

Schamasch said he didn't know whether there were any potential transsexual athletes in line to compete in next summer's Athens Olympics, but noted that several international sports federations have asked the IOC for guidance.

"We need to be proactive," he said.

The rule covers both male-to-female and female-to-male cases.

Some contend transsexual athletes have a physical advantage against other women. Men have higher levels of testosterone and greater muscle-to-fat ratio and heart and lung capacity. However, doctors say, testosterone levels and muscle mass drop after hormone therapy and sex-change surgery.

Until 1999, the IOC conducted gender verification tests at the Olympics but the controversial screenings were dropped before the 2000 Sydney Games.

One reason for the change was that not all women have standard female chromosomes. In addition, there are cases of people who have ambiguous genitalia or other congenital conditions.

Over the decades, there have been various accusations of men impersonating women and competing in the Olympics.

"The eligibility of transsexuals to participate needs to be clarified and dealt with," Arne Ljungqvist, the IOC medical commission chairman who organized the meeting of experts in Stockholm.

One of the best-known cases of transsexuals in sports involves Renee Richards, formerly Richard Raskin, who played on the women's tennis tour in the 1970s.

Recently, Canada's Michelle Dumaresq made news competing as a mountain bike racer. Formerly Michael, Dumaresq had sex reassignment surgery in 1996 and competed for Canada at last year's World Championships in Austria. She finished 24th in the downhill discipline.

"I'm in contact with several other athletes with a trans history and some could qualify for the next Olympics," she said in an e-mail message. Dumaresq still has a license to race. While mountain biking is an Olympic event, her discipline is not.

AP-ES-11-13-03 1658EST

Palestinian leaders ready for summit with Israeli

Jerusalem

Looking ahead for the first time after months of impasse, the Israeli and Palestinian prime ministers on Thursday prepared for a summit, possibly within days.

Despite conciliatory statements, however, expectations are low that the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan can be revived. Neither side appears closer to making concessions, such as a crackdown on militant groups by the Palestinians, or a removal of dozens of settlement outposts by Israel.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia convened his cabinet for the first time Thursday, a day after it was sworn in following two months of political wrangling.

Records show boy had eating-disorder history

Trenton, N.J.

WORLD REPORT

The oldest of four boys allegedly starved by their adoptive parents had developed a serious eating disorder long before he was placed in the custody of child welfare officials, according to confidential state records cited in a newspaper report Thursday.

Another of the boys was born prematurely to a drug-using mother and was once diagnosed as possibly suffering from fetal alcohol syndrome, according to the same records.

State officials argue that the boys, found weighing less than 45 pounds each, were starved by their adoptive parents. The adoptive parents are charged with aggravated assault.

Graphic

Britain's Prince Charles, a colonel-in-chief of the Army Air Corps, arrives at the regiment's base at Middle Wallop, England, Thursday, where he toured the base. AP Photo: Martyn Hayhow; Gov. Jesse: A stern-faced Jesse Ventura stands on a high perch under dark skies and wears a red, white and blue tie in his official gubernatorial portrait, unveiled at the state Capitol in St. Paul, Minn. Thursday Ventura did not speak after the unveiling. AP photo: Jim Mone

Load-Date: November 14, 2003

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Letters from the people

Anchorage Daily News (Alaska)
August 25, 2003 Monday, STATE EDITION

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Body

Why build a permanent fence for temporary facility and so close?

A recent letter reflected a misconception that residents are protesting 34 miles of barbed-wire fencing because they will no longer be able to "trespass" on someone else's property ("Residents have enjoyed trespassing on Army land, but it's not theirs," Aug. 21). More important issues of aesthetics, property value, Muldoon revitalization, safety and basic neighbor relations are at stake.

Since the Stryker training program is scheduled to relocate to Fairbanks in 2010, residents question the necessity of a permanent fence for a temporary training site. A steel pipe fence already secures the Fort Rich property, establishes a clear border and prevents vehicles from accessing military land. The training site will be placed well inside this current borderline. If additional security fencing must go in, build it back a few yards along the power line that already exists, maintained by the cleared roadway that already exists, away from homes that already exist!

Barbed-wire fencing installed 10 paces from the back doors of hundreds of homes is dangerous to children who live there. It's not inconceivable that kids could hurt themselves attempting to retrieve their baseballs. Without environmental impact studies, it's easy to roll one's eyes at concerns regarding wildlife traffic and salmon streams.

The military is willing to set fencing along the freeway back among the trees so it won't be an eyesore. Don't people who live along the northeast side of town deserve the same consideration?

-- Kim Hagen

Anchorage

Army must not want fence input if it's already taking bids to build it

According to some senior appraisers, houses in most Muldoon neighborhoods will lose up to 20 percent of their current value if the military builds the proposed fence.

Despite what appears to be intentional misinformation and noncommunication, I was happy to read that Col. Boltz wanted to "hear and listen" to what people thought of the \$10 million fence. Imagine my surprise to learn that the military has already advertised for bids on the construction of that very same fence. In other words, the military is using your tax dollars to hold public meetings to solicit input to "define the issues" on a project they already are contracting to build.

Letters from the people

I, like most Americans, am a staunch supporter of our military in this treacherous time. However, I believe this project has been poorly handled and is a waste of money that could be used to train our troops.

The fence has nothing to do with terrorism; it was already planned. The military says that it is needed to protect us from live firing, yet several other options would provide greater safety. There have been no incidents resulting in liability or injury. By law, the military is required to fully evaluate economic impacts and wildlife. It has not.

Col. Boltz, please stop hiding behind the process and talk to us!

-- Sandra Key

Anchorage

If fence lowers property values, rest of city must make up tax revenue

As a homeowner in one of the East Anchorage neighborhoods who will be seriously impacted by the proposed military fence, I urge everyone to read the environmental assessment and attend the public meetings. It has been stated that homes stand to lose up 20 percent of their value. Multiply that by the number of homes affected, and that's the lost tax revenue made up by you!

Our communities have traditionally been marketed by Realtors for the recreational access to military lands withdrawn from the Bureau of Land Management. The military has been aware of the public use and has permitted it. Adjacent communities have long been grounded on this premise.

Building a fence will have untoward negative impacts. Wildlife will be forced to move in a north-south direction when, historically, they have moved east-west. Cows and calves, sows and cubs could be separated on either side of the fence. This will increase unsafe conditions for wildlife and residents. The Stryker Brigade will increase the risk of wildfire, as stated in the environmental impact study. Imagine wildlife trapped behind the fence during a wildfire!

We need an environmental impact study of the fence to study all the issues thoroughly. East side community councils along with public officials have been working ardently to address these issues and need our support.

I, for one, respect and appreciate our military. There are many potential solutions to discuss.

-- Catherine Heady

Anchorage

President's credit-card-like spree makes our children pay the bill

Well, those of us with children got a little gift from the Republicans in power. My check was for \$1,600. That's not a small amount for my miserable little bank account. I will be spending it the way most parents will this time of year: school supplies, clothes and winter gear for the kids. It helps a great deal, for now.

But we need to stop and think where that money came from. It is money that does not exist, anywhere. It was not created by any productive work. Our government borrowed the money. Then it spent who knows how much in processing and mailing (more borrowed money). And it amazes me how many Americans think this is just fine.

To top it all off, we have a president who boasts about not passing on to future generations the problems that must be confronted today. It is future generations that will be forced to pay this back.

Does this president think he can buy our votes at the expense of our children's future? What many parents are doing now (myself included) is exactly like going on a credit card spending spree. And this is meant to help revive our economy?

-- Tony Arant

Letters from the people

Anchorage

Airport criers knew what to expect, and always compare similar items

Two things have gotten me riled up recently. The first is the story about the noise from the airport bothering those who live around the airport. The second is a letter to the editor stating the rich should pay more in taxes because they use more government services.

Let me address the airport complaint first. The only people with the right to complain are those who lived in that area before the airport was built in that area. If you moved to the area after the airport was built, then you knew about the noise or the potential for noise to be generated. You chose to move there knowing about the noise -- live with it. Don't complain because of your poor choice.

Second, to Mr. Farleigh, in your letter Aug. 17, "Higher-income people should pay more; they use more public services," you state that Mr. Hickel uses more government resources, but you compare apples and oranges. You used as an example a business, the Hotel Captain Cook. You compared Wally Hickel with John Farleigh or John Farleigh's daughter. You compared John Farleigh with the Captain Cook. My understanding is that businesses are taxed differently. As an example, the Captain Cook pays a bed tax. Do you pay a bed tax, Mr. Farleigh? Make comparisons of like items.

-- Bruce Brown

Anchorage

Dog parks seem to be a magnet for unruly, uncontrolled animals

I am frequently at University Lake, and since the doggie park was approved, I have seen nothing but less and less responsible pet owners in the area. The biggest problem seems to be dogs that just don't want to come back to their owners. I run with a leashed dog, and every time I am at the park dogs run up, jump up and follow us, and the owner is unable to control his pet. I have not heard one person even apologize for tripping me or getting me all wet with their water-soaked dog. It appears that owners who bring their pets here are thinking that this is a doggie free-for-all where anything goes if the dog wants it that way!

-- Joyce Goodell

Anchorage

It's all about location, whether we talk federal dollars or highways

Location is the life breath of any ongoing concern, be it good or bad. A couple of examples:

Don Young and Ted Stevens are not really responsible for the tremendous federal money flow into the state. Alaska is strategically located on the Earth. Any goober elected to the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives would have a hard time getting out of the way of the massive federal military dollars flowing into Alaska projects and the military, all for national security reasons.

In comparison there are not a lot of federal dollars going to Iowa. It's been that way for years, and it will continue.

Certain parts of the Seward Highway are dangerous because of how they were designed. The design has substantially increased the risk of driving certain parts of the highway. This problem needs to be addressed: Have the State of Alaska hire a road contractor to place some photo-radar stations at the most dangerous locations of the Seward Highway. After the contractor has collected enough money from speeding tickets -- about a day -- he can have the proceeds to redesign these dangerous locations to include a nice grassy median separating the highway into north and southbound corridors.

Location, location, location.

Letters from the people

-- Harold Borbridge

Anchorage

Bigger roads need to be built now; state should stop with two-laners

When is Alaska going to start building our highways for the future? With the ever-increasing death toll, when will our politicians give us modern roads? We should have four lanes from Fairbanks to Anchorage and four lanes from Anchorage to Kenai and Seward. If they were to start building now, maybe by 2010 we might have safer roads. They keep building two lanes with the occasional passing lane thrown in.

Our new construction should have been done back in the '80s. In 10 more years our roads will be built for what we needed in the '90s. The traffic is pushed and herded down our highways because there is only one lane each way. We need modern highways, and our elected officials should get them for us.

Our governor should lead the way to the future on our highways, and we should all follow. It's the one thing that we all have in common.

-- W.E. Dunham III

Anchorage

Cutting longevity bonus not sound, and it damages state's integrity

I am a Republican in total agreement with Rep. Ethan Berkowitz's Compass of Aug. 19 ("Dems: Longevity bonus worth a fight"). The longevity bonus is the imperfect result of a noble idea: Reward seniors for their service as citizens of Alaska. Despite flaws, it has been a good program. Many seniors planned for retirement and developed self-reliance. Gov. Murkowski's veto seems to save money, but when loss of self-determination, welfare bureaucracy, bankruptcies, medical bills, etc., are factored in, it is obvious that retaining, not removing, the bonus is far more cost-effective.

Gov. Murkowski surmises that if not all elderly Alaskans receive the bonus and some don't really need it, then it should be done away with. This is like having a lifeboat full with 20 people, five of them swimmers, with 20 more in the water, and saying the only equitable solution is to tip the boat over and put everyone in danger of drowning. Some solution.

The state of Alaska made an agreement to honor the service of its citizenry. Gov. Murkowski has broken that pledge and put into question the integrity of any future dealings between Alaska and any person, institution or business. It is a matter of trust, and all of us, especially our many wonderful seniors, deserve much, much better.

-- Mark White

Palmer

Why can't state attorneys see Duncan's job is a violation of trust?

Remember back in February when a complaint was filed with the Alaska Department of Law against the commissioner of administration of the Knowles administration, Jim Duncan? He was accused of ethics violations and is now business manager for the largest union of state employees, ASEA.

Is it any surprise that attorneys who are state public employees have taken six months and not yet found anything wrong with this violation of public trust?

-- Donn Liston

Anchorage

Letters from the people

All Mideast terrorists need to die for any hope of peace in the region

Thursday morning I read about another homicide bombing in Israel ("Israel grieves for children killed on crowded bus," Aug. 21). Next to the larger photo of a Jewish man mourning the death of 200 people including six children was a photo of the perpetrator of this murderous attack; I will not honor him by calling him a man. He was holding his own children; I don't think they were on the bus with him. This demonic wretch only targeted Israeli children and is nothing new in the region. He used tactics that date back to the pharaohs. He still believed in religious ideals from the 10th century B.C. If you kill all the children, you eliminate the race. Attacking women and children is honorable to these monsters.

So here is the question: Where are the protesters? There will be no peace in the region until every last Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist is dead and Yasser Arafat is in exile or prison. This is war. It is not nations fighting this time. It is ideology. They will stop at nothing less than the total annihilation of Israel and the West, and they will fight as long as there is one left standing. This is in fact World War III.

-- Theron McGrew

Anchorage

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Navigating the map of a million wounded hearts

The Sunday Star-Times (Auckland, New Zealand)

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Byline: HUBBARD Anthony

Body

George Bush took the Road Map - a new peace plan for Israel and Palestinians - to the Middle East last week: But the plan faces enormous obstacles, as Anthony Hubbard reports from Israel ' THE SUN wanes over the tawny hills of Jerusalem, and Sherri Mandell pours out her woe. Her 13-year-old son Koby was bashed to death by Palestinians, and his blood painted on a cave wall. "This conflict is not about land, it's about cruelty and education," she says.

Koby and his friend Yosef Ish-Ran wagged school two years ago and hiked into the hills near their home in the West Bank settlement of Tekoa. "They had nothing but their lunches, and they were met by Palestinians who saw an opportunity to express their hatred," she says.

The terrorists were never caught, says Mandell, an American immigrant to Israel with her husband, Rabbi Seth Mandell, and their four children. Nobody knew Koby was missing, so the killers had time to escape. How can she be certain the Palestinians did it? "There's no other explanation."

Jews and Palestinians, she says, have different reactions to tragedy. The bereaved Jewish mothers who go to "healing retreats" run by the Mandells rarely talk about hatred and revenge. But the Palestinians are "trained to hate . . . the entire Palestinian Authority teaches the people, 'If you find an innocent Jew, kill him'. That's what they're taught to do. They start that in nursery school, teaching them to be warriors in their cause. They train for hate. We train for peace."

Peace won't come from above, she says, from a Road Map. It must come from within Palestinian society.

Ibrahim Tyour has a different view of the conflict. He and his two brothers were burying their father last year in a cemetery in Gaza, where 900,000 Palestinian refugees live. Israeli soldiers fired on them, smashing Tyour's right arm.

Now he is hooked up to a machine in the Khan Younis health centre. While the muscles in his arm have improved, his hand remains useless. He looks sad and thoughtful. "It was my destiny. I trust that God will bring something good for me," he says through an interpreter. "I hope I will recover soon."

What does he think of the Road Map? "Peace depends upon what the Israelis want. If they want peace they can have it . . . I don't hate the Israelis. The two people were born to live together. The leaders of the states are controlling the peoples. If they want peace they will prevail."

Tyour, who worked for 11 years in Israel, now worries he will be unable to provide for his wife and four children.

Navigating the map of a million wounded hearts

This is the land where the two national stories never mesh. The Israelis call the 1948 war against the Arabs the War of Independence. The Arabs call it Al Nakba, the disaster. Fifty-five years on, the two sides remain under mutual siege.

The Israelis live in a first-world economy and in constant fear of suicide bombers. In downtown Jerusalem, heavily-armed police wander about with bomb dogs. A special motorbike squad is trained to roar towards the bomber and "disarm" them. A nervous security man waves a chemical wand over customers at the door of McDonald's.

The Palestinians, meanwhile, live in squalor under Israeli military occupation. To visit the West Bank and Gaza is to see the dark side of the dream of the Jewish State: it is a land of grey hovels, yellow dust, bombed-out apartment blocks. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who lost their homes during the 1948 war squat here in misery.

The Road Map, sponsored by the US, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia, seeks to end the violence and establish an independent Palestinian state by 2005.

The challenges are awesome.

The Israelis and the Americans see Palestinian president Yasser Arafat as a terrorist leader who foments violence against Israel. Arafat had the power to stop terrorism, officials say, but not the will. However, Mahmoud Abbas, the new Palestinian prime minister, "has good intentions", according to a senior Israeli military intelligence officer.

The Palestinian Authority has to fight against terrorist groups like Hamas, he told journalists in Tel Aviv. "There is no other way than to jail or execute their leaders or dismantle their infrastructure." In the meantime, Israel continues its war against terrorists, assassinating key figures and demolishing homes.

Doesn't this just radicalise other Palestinians and add to the cycle of violence? "No," says the officer quickly, and the military PR woman sitting beside him joins in too. "It's deterrence," they say in unison.

The US and Israel refuse to deal with Arafat and don't like other countries doing so. New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff annoyed the Israeli government by meeting Arafat last month. "New Zealand is not seen as a friend of Israel," said a well-known local journalist.

Goff, sightseeing at Jerusalem's Wailing Wall, was politely defiant. "We try to take a balanced view," he says, as a line of Orthodox Jews pray at the wall, bobbing and bowing like black marionettes. "I am seeing the deputy prime minister, and members of the Knesset and the president of Israel."

Why shouldn't he also visit the duly-elected president of the Palestinians? One Palestinian shopkeeper in Jerusalem's old city noticed the Kiwi gesture. "Ah yes, your president has been here," he says, plainly delighted at the Ariel Sharon government's annoyance.

In the Golan Heights in the north, you can see how much the Israelis have to lose. This is a land of wheat, grapes, and spas. Here, on land won from the Syrians in the 1967 six-day war, the Israelis have made the desert bloom.

In the south, in the Negev desert, Israeli irrigation is turning the sands into farmland. The dreary town of Beersheva has blossomed, if that is the word, as new immigrants have flooded in. White buildings march out into the desert where New Zealand and Australian horsemen charged the Ottoman Turks in 1917. "It was the Anzacs who liberated Palestine, not the Brits," says the Israeli foreign affairs staffer, knowing this will go down well with a bunch of Anzac journalists.

A local professor says the Anzacs helped build Israel. The British got Palestine as a UN mandate after WWI; they promised the Jews a national homeland there; in 1947 the UN decided there should be both a Jewish and a Palestinian state.

Navigating the map of a million wounded hearts

"Our claim (to the land) is better than any other claim," says Nazi-hunter Efraim Zuroff, who a decade ago sent the New Zealand government a list of alleged Nazi war criminals who had emigrated down under. "Our people are the only people in the world who managed to come back to a homeland 2000 years after being sent into exile."

The problem was that the Zionists - who started coming to Palestine in 1878 - found it was occupied. Far from being "a land without a people for a people without a land", Palestine contained Palestinians. They did not want to hand it over, either: and thus began the mounting conflict.

Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, says of the 1948 war: "Three years after the Holocaust they wanted to destroy the state of Israel, which was the shelter for the few Jews who survived in Europe. At any philosophical level this was an outrage, a total outrage. But the truth of the matter is that their standards are simply not the standards of the western world."

Zuroff claims, as many other Israelis do, that the Palestinians left their homes during the war "because their leaders told them, 'we will bring you back on the tanks of the Arab world'."

In fact, a new school of Israeli historians disputes all this. The Oxford scholar Avi Shlaim says what the Zionists and Israelis typically wanted was land, not peace, and they were prepared to use force to get it. Russian Zionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote in 1923 that Jewish settlement must proceed under the protection of a force independent of the locals, "behind an iron wall which they will be powerless to break down". It was military force that caused the Palestinians to flee, according to this school of history, not opportunism.

Certainly the iron wall is still present. The Israelis are building an enormous fence around much of the West Bank, at a cost of about \$ 2 billion, to cut off the suicide bombers. It is also building a huge steel fence along the border between Gaza and Egypt.

Israel says allowing the refugees back would mean the Arabs would dominate: "It would mean the end of the Jewish State," says an official. Palestinians argue that at least the 600,000 who left should have the right of return. Once again, this is an issue that the Road Map must solve.

ENTER THE West Bank and Gaza, the area Israel won in 1967, and the world changes. Here, the iron wall is everywhere. Tanks, watchtowers and barbed wire protect Jewish settlements that have sprouted throughout the occupied territories. "When the settlements grow, they confiscate the land nearby," says Isa Qarra, a Gaza-based official with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (Unrwa), which has looked after the refugee camps for more than 50 years. "Sometimes they give verbal notice. Sometimes the bulldozers just arrive."

Qarra, a refugee himself, points to a vast field of ploughed dirt, bulldozed so the military had a clear view of any threats to the nearby settlement. "They took the land from the Abuhouli family, who are wealthy and well-known farmers. They used to grow olive trees and citrus here."

The paradox is obvious: here the Israelis removed the blooms and returned the land to desert.

At the gateway to another settlement by the beach, a group of Palestinian women and children moil in the hot sun. "The electronic detector at the gate has been broken for three days," someone explains. The Palestinians, who live inside the settlement, cannot get in.

Olfrat Zorob, a crippled 15-year-old who cannot walk, had left with her mother to visit the hospital. Now she is stranded outside. For three days she has had to crawl from the town through the dust back to the gate to see if she can go home.

"Every day I weep because it is very difficult," says her mother Ikram, throwing her arms in despair. Olfrat sits in the dust and tilts her face in the blazing heat: a twisted mask of misery. As the journalists wield their cameras, a loudspeaker blares from the military watchtower nearby: "No photos! No photos!" A group of boys is swimming in a blue waterhole surrounded by rubble. "They are swimming here," Qarra explains, "because they are not allowed to swim at the beach." The beach is for Israeli settlers only.

Navigating the map of a million wounded hearts

At Rafah, near the border with Egypt, is a vast mess of bulldozed earth and smashed steel and concrete. It was here that a young woman from the International Solidarity Movement lost her life to Israeli gunfire. A journalist clammers over the ruin to take photos, and Qarra calls: "Don't go over there. There is an Israeli tank behind the building and it could shoot you."

Rafah is a warren of despair, of breeze-block hovels and corrugated iron huts. At the end of an alley is the place where a young peace worker lay down in front of a bulldozer: more than 500 homes have gone under the blade. "The bulldozer covered her with sand, and then tried to uncover her again," says Unrwa's Khalid Ashour.

"It broke her ribs and cut a 15 centimetre cut along here," he says, pointing at his jaw. She died. A British television cameraman was killed near here.

In the West Bank, Palestinian Authority official Zahira Kamal says: "How can we guarantee an end to terrorism when the Israelis destroy our homes and assassinate people? They have killed 2000 people, wounded 30,000 and 13,000 people have seen their houses demolished. There is 60 to 70% unemployed. People are deprived of their right to movement, to health services and education. And then we have to do something for the Israelis!"

The deputy planning minister, Samih Ahid, concedes that the mosques are preaching against the Israelis. "But that is because we are under military occupation. The worst thing that can happen to a nation is to be occupied. What would happen if New Zealand had been occupied by Japan? Wouldn't you resist?"

CAPTION:

Palestinians inspect the rubble of their destroyed houses in Rafah, a "warren of despair". Photo: Gamma

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Online and Even Near Home, a New Front Is Opening in the Global Terror Battle

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Byline: By ERIC LIPTON and ERIC LICHTBLAU

Dateline: CLIFTON, N.J.

Body

The flags that sprouted after the Sept. 11 attacks still flap on lawns and flutter on poles outside well-tended homes here, about 15 miles from Manhattan. Looming above them is a concrete tower that houses a real-estate firm, an office supplies company -- and, until recently, investigators fear, an outpost of Al Qaeda.

On the second floor, an Internet company called Fortress ITX unwittingly played host to an Arabic-language Web site where postings in recent weeks urged attacks against American and Israeli targets. "The Art of Kidnapping" was explained in electronic pamphlets, along with "Military Instructions to the Mujahedeen," and "War Inside the Cities." Visitors could read instructions on using a cellphone to remotely detonate a bomb, and one even asked for help in manufacturing small missiles.

"How can this be?" asked Cathy Vasilenko, who lives a few doors away from the Fortress ITX office. "How can this be going on in my neighborhood?"

Federal investigators, with the help of a small army of private contractors monitoring sites around the clock and across the world, are trying to find out. Ever since the United States-led coalition smashed Al Qaeda's training grounds in Afghanistan, cyber substitutes, which recruit terrorists and raise money, have proliferated.

While Qaeda operatives have employed an arsenal of technical tools to communicate -- from e-mail encryption and computer war games to grisly videotapes like the recent ones showing beheadings believed to have been carried out by Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi -- investigators say they worry most about the Internet because extremists can reach a broad audience with relatively little chance of detection.

By examining sites like those stored inside the electronic walls of the Clifton business, investigators are hoping to identify who is behind them, what links they might have to terror groups, and what threat, if any, they might pose. And in a step that has raised alarms among civil libertarians and others and so far proven unpersuasive in the courtroom, prosecutors are charging that those administering these sites should be held criminally responsible for what is posted.

Attempting to apply broad new powers established by the Patriot Act, the federal government wants to punish those who it claims provide "expert advice or assistance" and therefore play an integral part of a global terror

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campaign that increasingly relies on the Internet. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee recently, called such Web sites "cyber sanctuaries."

"These networks are wonderful things that enable all kinds of good things in the world," Mr. Wolfowitz said of the Internet. "But they're also a tool that the terrorists use to conceal their identities, to move money, to encrypt messages, even to plan and conduct operations remotely."

Many question the government's strategy of trying to combat terrorism by prosecuting Web site operators. "I think it is an impossible task," said Thomas Hegghammer of the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, an agency that monitors the use of the Internet by Al Qaeda. "You can maybe catch some people. But you will never ever be able to stem the flow of radical Islamic propaganda."

He pointed out that it is difficult to distinguish between a real terrorist and a make-believe one online. "You would end up prosecuting a lot of angry young people who do this because it is exciting, not because they want to actually participate in terrorist attacks," he said. "I don't think it helps you fight Al Qaeda."

The government faces many hurdles in pursuing virtual terrorists. While many militant Islamic message boards and Web pages reside on computer servers owned by North American Internet companies, outfits like Fortress ITX say it would be impractical -- and unethical, given that the company sells server space to clients who then resell it -- for them to keep track of all of the content stored within their equipment.

"It is hideous, loathsome," said Robert Ellis, executive vice president of Fortress, after viewing postings from the Abu al-Bukhary Web site his company hosted. "It is the part of this business that is deeply disturbing." His company shut down the site within the last month after learning of it from a reporter. The intense focus on Muslim-related sites like Abu al-Bukhary, in an era when domestically produced anarchist manuals are commonly available on the Web, has provoked charges that the anti-cyber sanctuary effort is really a misguided anti-Muslim campaign that is compromising important First Amendment rights.

This effort "opens the floodgates to really marginalizing a lot of the free speech that has been a hallmark of the American legal and political system," said Arsalan Iftikhar, legal director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations. "Globally it really does nothing but worsen the image of America in the rest of the world."

Tracking Cyber-Terror

The detective work begins in a northeast city in a compact office set up by a self-proclaimed terrorist hunter. This is the headquarters of Rita Katz, an Iraqi-born Jew whose father was executed in Baghdad in 1969, shortly after Saddam Hussein's Baath Party came to power.

Finding terrorists has become a crusade for Ms. Katz, who began going to pro-Palestinian rallies and fund-raisers disguised as a Muslim woman in the late 1990's, then presented information to the federal government in an effort to prove there were ties between Islamic fundamentalist groups in the United States and terror organizations like **Hamas** or Al Qaeda.

Federal agencies, including the National Security Agency, the F.B.I. and the Department of Homeland Security, monitor suspected terror sites on the Internet and sometimes track users. Private groups like Ms. Katz's Search for International Terrorist Entities Institute and The Middle East Media Research Institute are also keeping track of the ever-changing content of these sites. Ms. Katz's institute, which relies on government contracts and corporate clients, may be the most influential of those groups, and she is among the most controversial of the cyberspace monitors. While some experts praise her research as solid, some of her targets view her as a vigilante. Several Islamic groups and charities, for example, sued for defamation after she claimed they were terrorist fronts, even though they were not charged with a crime.

Sitting under wall maps of Europe, the Middle East and the United States -- including one pinpointing locations of suspected terror cells or possible supporters -- Ms. Katz and her team of computer technicians and researchers spend their days searching the Internet for any new messages from militant groups and new addresses for terror

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sites. Her institute, based in a city she does not disclose, also has a small crew in Israel, which allows the organization to monitor sites around the clock.

"We are trying to think the way terrorist organizations think," said Ms. Katz, "The Internet today has become a front in the war itself."

Keeping tabs on these jihadist sites -- several hundred exist -- requires vigilance, as videos and statements uploaded by different groups often appear only briefly. A recent Tuesday was a particularly busy day. The Islambouli Brigade, a militant Islamic group, turned to one popular message board site called islamic-minbar.com, operated out of the Netherlands, to release the names of two women it said were responsible for the Aug. 24 explosions of two Russian planes and to claim responsibility for an attack at a Moscow subway station. "When we pledge to avenge our Chechen brothers, we do not break our promise," the Aug. 31 posting said.

Jaish Ansar al-Sunna, a group that has surfaced in Iraq, posted a video on its Internet site showing the bodies of 12 Nepali contractor workers who it had taken hostage and killed. The site was taken down that same day, but then reappeared on a computer server of a Utah-based Web hosting company.

While staffers at Ms. Katz's office rushed to translate these postings, others were busy snooping by using a special software program to electronically suck up more than 15,000 computer files from a Web site, or referring to a custom-made database to identify sites with common administrators, an assignment initiated by a government request. This week, they watched postings on the Web site Ansarnet.ws/vb alerting followers that a hostage had been killed, then directing them to a video showing the beheading of an American engineer held hostage in Iraq.

A crucial question, of course, is whether a site is simply offering inspirational rhetoric or is genuinely linked to terror strikes. Often, Web site exhortations are followed by acts of violence, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are connected.

In late May, for example, shortly after a kidnapping guide appeared on an online magazine called Al Battar, a wave of kidnappings and beheadings started in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Last December, a 42-page essay published on a Web site called Global Islamic Media observed that "the Spanish government could not tolerate more than two, maximum three blows, after which it will have to withdraw as a result of popular pressure" from Iraq. Three months later, bombs tore apart trains in Madrid, resulting in the eventual departure of Spanish troops from Iraq.

In Clifton, the digital images and terrorist manuals from Abu al-Bukhary's site resided, like data from thousands of other Internet pages hosted at Fortress ITX, inside a sprawling computer room. Pointing to the wall of boxes with blinking lights, Fortress executives said they did not know who controlled most of the Web sites on their servers, as they sell space to clients who then resell it to countless others. "It is like an orange you buy at the supermarket," Mr. Ellis said. "Try figuring out what farm that came from."

Strategy of Prosecution

Knocking militant groups off the Internet for a day or two by urging individual Web hosting companies to shut down the sites didn't accomplish much, Ms. Katz believed. So the government, in an unusual alliance with Ms. Katz, has been testing a different strategy in the last year.

Sami Omar al-Hussayen would be their first target. The 35-year-old father of three had arrived at the University of Idaho in 1999 to pursue a doctorate in computer science. In his spare time, Mr. Hussayen, who lived in Moscow, Idaho, established a series of Internet sites with names like liveislam.net or alasar.ws ("the generation") and served as a regional leader of the Islamic Assembly of North America, a group that described itself as a charitable organization, but which prosecutors said recruited members and instigated "acts of violence and terrorism."

Along with news from the Middle East and interviews with scholars, the sites included more disturbing information. Videos displayed the bodies of dead suicide attackers as a narrator declared "we had brethren who achieved what they sought, and that is martyrdom in the cause of Allah." Requests were posted for donations to Chechen groups

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that were trying to "show the truth about Russian terrorism." Clerical edicts appeared on topics including "suicide operations against the Jews."

The Justice Department, which declined to comment for this article, did not claim that Mr. Hussayen had authored the most militant items. Instead, by registering the Web sites, paying for them and posting the material, he was charged with providing material support to a banned terrorist group.

But Mr. Hussayen's lawyers said their client was expressing his free-speech rights. The Internet is the modern equivalent of the soap box, said David Z. Nevin, one of the lawyers. "They were wildly too zealous," Mr. Nevin said about Ms. Katz and the Justice Department. "This was not within a country mile of the kind of behavior that this nation has any business trying to criminalize."

The jury was unconvinced by the government's case, and acquitted Mr. Hussayen in June after a monthlong trial. "We went through files and files and files of evidence -- transcripts of telephone calls, bank statements, all the e-mails, information from the Internet -- and we could not substantiate that he was directly involved with a terrorist organization," said Claribel Ingraham, one of the jurors. "It just wasn't there."

The setback in Idaho has not stopped the government from pursuing similar cases. In late July, a warrant was issued in Connecticut for Babar Ahmad, resulting in his arrest in London Aug. 5. The 30-year-old computer technician at a London college is accused of setting up Internet sites from 1997 to 2003, most prominently azzam.com, to recruit terrorists and raise money for them. "If you're going to use cyberspace, we're there and we're paying attention," said Kevin J. O'Connor, the United States Attorney from Connecticut, after Mr. Ahmad's arrest.

The trial has not started -- the United States is trying to persuade British authorities to extradite him -- but already Muslim groups and civil libertarians in Britain are assailing the case. In a letter from his prison cell that was posted on the Internet, Mr. Ahmad asserted that he was imprisoned "to strike terror and fear into the hearts of the docile, sleeping Muslim community."

Ms. Katz said she was not discouraged by the criticism of the prosecutions. "When you call for the death of people and then it results in actions -- that is beyond the First Amendment," she said. "You are organizing a crime."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Rita Katz heads an institute that monitors Web sites around the clock for clues to the plans of terrorists. (Photo by Sabina Louise Pierce for The New York Times) Chart: "Seeking Clues to Terror Online" As federal investigators examine Web sites they suspect of having links to terrorist groups, investigators are warning that the sites' creators and administrators could be held responsible for what they post. A look at three sites that have come under scrutiny: AZZAM PUBLICATIONS -- www.azzam.com OVERVIEW -- Web site that offered articles, photos and videos about Muslim issues focusing in particular on Afghanistan, Chechnya and Bosnia and frequently urged readers "to undertake military and physical training for Jihad." INTERNET SERVER HOST -- California Regional Internet Inc. of San Diego. Site is no longer active

its creator has been arrested. ABU AL-BUKHARY -- www.abualbukhary.net/vb/ OVERVIEW -- Internet message board, part of a larger site that features forums on a variety of topics including current events, literature and prayer, as well as extensive sections focused on military studies where terrorist tactics and equipment are discussed in detail. INTERNET SERVER HOST -- DedicatedNow division of Fortress ITX of Delawanna, N.J., until it was taken down within the last month. AL BATTAR -- www.hostinganime.com/sout19/index.htm OVERVIEW -- Web site

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that is the posting board for Al Battar, a biweekly electronic magazine that describes itself as a product of the military committee of Al Qaeda and offers detailed advice on kidnapping, firing shoulder-mounted missiles and building hideouts.INTERNET SERVER HOST -- Hosting Anime, address unknown.

Load-Date: September 23, 2004

End of Document

Crop of complaints from cosseted farmers

Yorkshire Post

August 30, 2004

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Length: 2260 words

Body

From: Paul Samways, Queens Street, Skipton.

Here we go again. Farmers are seeking a crumb of comfort, writes Chris Berry (August 26), and this time it's because the weather is too wet. Is this the same crumb they seek when it's too dry? Or too hot, or too cold?

Now I'm not aware that "weather" is something unique to farmers, so why are they alone to be regarded as a "special case"? Among others presently suffering are those making sunglasses, swimsuits, flip-flops, anti-perspirants, plus their suppliers and all those who retail the finished articles. Ice cream and candy floss sales will be down, as will takings at the launderette because there is less washing to be done for the local holiday B&B.

Probably skin cancer will reduce, so drug companies will be out of pocket. Let's give them all a fat cheque from our taxes - and while we're at it, set up a couple of government departments with a few thousand more civil servants to administrate the money, fund advisers, initiate surveys and publish long studies.

Yorkshire Post

I can immediately offer Mr Berry and his fellow farming apologists five industries that are "attracting poorer prices for their primary products than two decades ago" - car manufacturing, electronics, domestic appliances, air travel, clothing. The difference is that they have learned to operate efficiently and make the best of the cards they are dealt, while our farmers just sit on the emotional high ground - and a few billion pounds of assets - and claim not to be businesses at all. As a result, they are excepted as a "special case" from just about every rule in the land, from inheritance to State Aid.

There is no group more cosseted than farmers, and if they put as much effort into running their farms efficiently as they put into organising Chris Berry and his fellow lobbyists to whinge for them, I for one would be mightily pleased.

Israeli action not to blame for terror

From: Leon Collins, Sandmoor Lane, Leeds.

Michael Meadowcroft attributes the present sad situation of the Palestinians (August 20) to a single Israeli action, the killing of the "engineer", a **Hamas** terrorist and explosives expert who had already carried out two successful bus attacks which resulted in dozens of civilian casualties, which included children.

He says: "I am in no doubt that the present situation is the continuing result of that one Israeli action".

This one-sided partiality is quite breathtaking. The present Palestinian intifada started almost a year before the incident he refers to and it followed Yasser Arafat's refusal to accept a peace agreement which would have

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provided almost everything he was demanding. This intifada has claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Israelis, Arabs as well as Jews. Unlike Israeli reprisal actions, these victims are nearly all non-combatant civilians, with a high proportion of women and children.

But the intifada was not the beginning of Palestinian terror. It started from the very commencement of the Israeli state. Between 1948 and 1951, almost a thousand Israelis were killed in Arab terrorist attacks. Again, in the mid 1990s there were over 600 Israeli casualties, all from terrorist attacks. The terror is constant, as is Israeli helplessness in knowing how to respond.

For Mr Meadowcroft to then suggest that it has all resulted from a single Israeli action makes one wonder what drives him to write in this way and why he chooses Israel when we live in a world where there is killing and injustice on such a vast scale.

A problem of hatred

From: Rick Davis, San Anselmo, California.

"Of course Israel will continue to exist", writes Michael Meadowcroft in his article "The Suffering of Palestine" (August 20).

Sadly, there is no "of course" about this statement. That is the crux of the problem, and if Mr Meadowcroft can make this statement along with his opening "some of my best friends are Jewish" (and probably black too?) he may well be guilty of Orwell's charge that many in Britain would rather die than acknowledge secret feelings of anti-semitism.

Firstly, Mr Meadowcroft confuses Jews with the policy of this Israeli government, the implication being that his criticisms apply to both. This is how criticism of Israel crosses the line.

Secondly, he fails to acknowledge continued Jewish oppression that calls for the continued existence of a Jewish refuge state.

Thirdly, he fails to acknowledge that there are way too many nations in our world today that still call for the end of Israel, notwithstanding the resolution of the Israel/Palestine issue. The problem is far greater than resolving the "short-term" conflict over the Palestinian homeland territory. It is a conflict of millennia, not decades or even centuries. It is the problem of Jew hatred.

I have just ended a three-day conference addressing anti-semitism and the progressive Left. The Left's focus is on recent times, not on 3,500 years of oppression. That is what makes me doubt "of course"!

John the Baptist's life

From: Walter Metcalfe, Central Avenue, Shipley.

Having read "John the Baptist 'comes to life' with cave find" (August 17), I note that there is little in it that connects with Scriptural authority. Shimon Gibson himself was somewhat diffident about the finds - others said "no proof".

First, Scripture never names John the Baptist's home town; it refers to "a town in the hill country of Judea" (Luke 1:39).

Second, we know he was in the desert at the time of his calling, so perhaps there was a cave, (Luke 3:2).

Third, anointing and feet-washing are not on John's biblical agenda, but we know that he baptised along the River Jordan - "Now John was baptising at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptised" (John 3:23).

This article really belongs in some apocryphal slot; but the prize gaffe must be "John who was just a figure from the Gospel, now comes to life". He was not "just a figure", he was the supreme prophet preceding Jesus Christ who

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testified of him - "Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11).

When John proclaimed a baptism of repentance, it was not "his ideas of baptism" but a challenge to the traditions and the law, which challenge Jesus Christ endorsed when he said: "For all the Prophets and the Law were until John".

(Matt 11:13).

Sex, love and tenderness

From: Frank Littlewood, Wylam, Northumberland.

For once I don't agree with Marjorie Gill (Letters, August 21). The sex that she so clearly disapproves of cannot be ignored or loosely set aside, because it is life's essential procreative element; we are all made by it: we are surrounded by its universal presence; every flower on every plant is an expression of sex, every living creature is ruled, along with its need for food, shelter and protection from predators, by the instinctive drive to reproduce itself, and in one way or another sets out its stall for that purpose. And we human beings have precisely the same instincts; they are part of us.

Unfortunately, for a strange variety of reasons, the expression of this instinct has come, except in carefully designated circumstances, to be regarded by prudish minds as "filth". And of course, in common with all human activities, is widely abused. But in spite of all that's said, sex is love, and one of the most beautiful things in the whole of life is the tender embrace of a man and a woman who truly love each other. The really sad folk are those who have forgotten, or have chosen to reject this.

Strikes are old-fashioned

From: Mrs J Evans, Norton, Malton.

I enjoyed Mr Woods' letter ("Striking appearance", August 26) but feel surprised that he should smile when discussing such things as strikes and ruined holidays.

The whole point is that today there is no need for strike action. If the Government is to be believed, no-one should be unable to get a job.

To pretend that it would be impossible for discontented workers to leave and get work elsewhere is simply untrue. The fact is that we are importing from so-called second world countries workers to fill the gaps in our essential services. At this moment, surely, striking is old-fashioned.

To bring in farmers and hauliers presumed by Mr Woods to be anti-Labour seems strange. The ballot of General Elections is secret, isn't it? I doubt that all the employees at BA are paid up-union members or even Labour voters, so why confuse the issue with politics?

If he needed a modern strike as a comparison, why not try the firefighters?

Disastrous memorial to much-loved princess

From: Mrs Jean RM Searle, Hillcrest Rise, Cookridge, Leeds.

Last week I was in London and took the opportunity of visiting the Diana, Princess of Wales, memorial.

Over the past few weeks I have read and seen the coverage in the media, but I wanted to make my own judgment about the success, or otherwise, of it for myself. I was appalled that so much money could have been spent on such a ghastly creation; it is not stimulating, and not even pleasing to the eye. It is all and more what the critics have

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written. The place looks unkempt as the surrounding grass has little or no grass growing, a few pathetic trees planted in the middle, the granite still has algae growing on it, etc. It presents itself as a farcical financial folly.

I am saddened that this is the memorial to a woman who was loved by so many, gave pleasure and understanding to many; yet this horrendous architectural disaster is what is left, for us the public, to remember her by.

Foxhunters are not the ogres their opponents make them out to be

From: Phyllis Capstick, Old School House, Hellifield, Skipton.

People do not congregate with the intention of causing cruelty to any animal. A fox is either killed, usually almost instantly by one or two hounds, or it escapes scot free.

A fox is a wily animal and is not "chased over long distances and then savaged by a pack of hounds". If Heather Holmes (Letters, August 20) had ever watched a hunt, as I have, it doesn't happen like that, but she and many others do not want to believe or even listen to the true facts.

She has this image fixed in her mind and she won't believe anything else.

I would ask her to go and witness a few hunt meets and see the reality.

A hound will kill a fox as quickly as possible for fear of being bitten by the vicious animal.

Many people see the fox as a furry little animal that does no harm to anything, but this is not the case.

Foxes do a lot of harm in the countryside, to ground-nesting birds, to poultry, sheep and lambs and all foxhunting people do is to try and keep the harm they do, to a minimum.

Foxhunting people are countryside and animal-loving people. They would not deliberately cause suffering to anything (what about the suffering the fox causes?)

These people are not the ogres that anti-hunting people like to make them out to be; they care about the countryside and the animals and wildlife therein, and they try their best to keep the countryside a lovely place to be.

From: William B Thompson, Park House Green, Harrogate.

Concerning cub hunting, or autumn hunting as the hunters like to call it, in the words of a former hunt servant: "It is a barbaric, hideous business in which the victims are utterly inexperienced and still dependent on their mothers".

I have no reason to doubt the word of this former hunter.

Points

Winners and losers

From: Max Nottingham, St Faith's Street, Lincoln

RUDYARD Kipling's If is the most popular poem in the country. Didn't it win a BBC poll?

Take the line about treating "triumph and disaster just the same". The Olympic Games have made good television; but it does make you wonder about four years intense training for a rather unlikely moment of glory. No one deserves to suffer like Paula Radcliffe did. I was surprised that a vehicle wasn't on hand to remove her from the cruel camera's gaze. I suppose competitive sport never was about just "taking part". But if the media were less excitable we could have a slightly more rational attitude to winning and losing.

Liberal justice

Crop of complaints from cosseted farmers

From: David Quarrie, Lynden Way, Acomb, York.

Terry Yorath was three times over the allowed drinks limit, he was speeding and he knocked down and severely injured a young lady who was innocently and correctly standing on a road central reservation in north Leeds. For this he was fined a mere £500, had his driving licence withdrawn for 30 months and he has to do some community service work.

There is no deterrent here for drink drivers. Until this country adopts truly draconian measures of deterrents and punishment, there is no hope of the quality of life improving.

We have adopted, since 1946, evermore liberal and soft policies, all of which result in massive failure and yet no-one will alter course.

Verdict on Blunkett

From: BH Sheridan, Redmires Road, Sheffield.

Bernard Dineen rightly attacks some sections of the Press, especially The Guardian, for applying double standards in their judgment of New Labour's David Blunkett and Tory politicians David Mellor and Tim Yeo (August 23).

However, in a recent editorial, his own employer, the Yorkshire Post appears

to agree with The Guardian, at least with regard to the Home Secretary's dating a married woman. While implicitly condemning Kimberly Fortier's behaviour as a matter for her own conscience, it states that David Blunkett has a right to seek "personal happiness".

Letters and litter

From: Austin Myall, Springwood Hall Gardens, Huddersfield.

Further to the letter from Iain Morris ("Litter menace", August 23), I have often seen rubber bands on the footpaths near where I live. I presume

Load-Date: October 31, 2004

Kingmaker: (Part 1): Long a tourism magnet, Trinidad and Tobago's tropical beauty conceals a darker identity. Donna Jacobs investigates Trinidad's ties to terror and, in an exclusive interview, talks to the Toronto-educated man who holds the key to the country's uncertain future.

Ottawa Citizen

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Byline: Donna Jacobs

Dateline: PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad

Body

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - Trinidad has a troubling kind of beauty.

Ostentatious wealth flourishes in disturbing proximity to severe poverty. Exotic restaurants abound not far from garbage dumps where people fight vultures for scraps of food. The vibrant Carnival rocks the island with explosions of colour and music while people lose lives and loves in almost daily shootings and kidnappings. The gorgeous sight of the sky turning blood-red from a flock of scarlet ibises twists the heart. And so will the sight of a baby being bathed at a ditch waterpipe.

Trinidad is a study in extremes.

Citizen Special

Under the Shadow of the Swords

It's April 2003, 19 months after terrorists took down all of the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon.

I am in a mosque compound in Trinidad, waiting to meet Yasin Abu Bakr, the imam of the Jama'at-al-Muslimeen. The name translates to, simply, Muslim Group.

Known as Jamaat, it is widely regarded as radically Islamic, and has mosques throughout the country.

It's hard to get a precise Jamaat membership figure for Trinidad, but estimates start at 20,000 -- almost two per cent of Trinidad's 1.3 million population. (Jamaat is not active on Trinidad's smaller tourism-driven sister island, Tobago). The group's growth hasn't gone unnoticed.

Even Trinidad and Tobago's prime minister, Patrick Manning, tells me he is concerned about Jamaat's recruitment rate among poor black Afro-Trinidadians.

As Jamaat's influence grows and spreads, the international community is taking fresh notice -- especially since Sept. 11, 2001.

Kingmaker: (Part 1): Long a tourism magnet, Trinidad and Tobago's tropical beauty conceals a darker identity.
Donna Jacobs investigates Trinidad's ties to terror....

A year ago, the British government warned against travel to the islands due to the threat of terrorism, prompting the temporary cancellation of cruises. This followed a newspaper report that a radical Muslim group, The Islamic Front, planned a biological or chemical attack on U.S. and British interests in Trinidad if the two countries invaded Iraq.

"With our weapons we are going (to) reach you. We will reach you where you sleep, we will reach you where you take your baths, we will reach you where you take your meals and have your drinks, even a glass of water you hold in your hand to drink may not be safe," said a statement that appeared in the Trinidad Express.

The statement was given to a reporter who was taken, blindfolded, to a lab where he said chemical and biological weapons were being created. Jamaat dismissed the group and its leader, Umar Abdullah, as marginal. The government said it was a bogus publicity stunt. Abdullah insisted that he is a security threat.

Only a few weeks ago, airline bomb threats shut down the airport, Piarco. Coastal and port security is tightening.

Last month, Manning assured U.S. President George W. Bush that Trinidad was moving to protect energy supplies from terrorism by upgrading its coast guard, adding a radar system and two new patrol boats to monitor the coastline.

I have gone to Trinidad and Tobago to try to make sense of this, to gauge the threat of Jamaat and to try to reconcile the tropical glory of the islands with the dark stories about terror.

It was a journey that gave me the unsettling feeling that Trinidad, for all its breathtaking beauty and powerful industrial base, is really a ticking time bomb. And I suspect it's not a matter whether the bomb will go off, but when.

Visitor From the North

Sitting in the mosque, also waiting to see Yasin Abu Bakr, are three men and a woman. They don't look at me.

The mosque office is small. Its only art is a map of "The Muslim World" that colour-codes an impressive march of Islam around the globe. North America is least Islamic.

The map is probably meant to encourage Trinidadian Muslims, but amidst this sense of hostility, it looks like a battle plan.

Finally, a man in a white Muslim gown and fez arrives.

"Why are you here?" he demands.

I tell him I have an appointment to interview Yasin Abu Bakr, news he receives with disapproval.

The four people in the waiting room tense up, as do I.

"What?" I ask, with bravado. "Are you going to frisk me?"

Much tense silence as he glares at me.

Suddenly, he laughs.

"Frisk you? You just came from Canada," he says. "I don't want SARS."

Everyone else laughs.

Trinidad's Strategic Importance

Trinidad and Tobago, the southernmost islands of the Caribbean archipelago, won their independence from Britain in 1962. Today, thousands of North Americans escape the winter each year by booking holidays in the twin-island nation, especially Tobago, with its miles of white sand beaches and average temperature of 30C. Next month, the

Kingmaker: (Part 1): Long a tourism magnet, Trinidad and Tobago's tropical beauty conceals a darker identity. Donna Jacobs investigates Trinidad's ties to terror....

islands will attract plane-loads of visitors for their annual celebration of Carnival, a famous Mardi-Gras-like festival similar to those held across South America and the Caribbean at this time of year.

But I wonder how long this will continue untroubled.

With its petroleum exports to the U.S. and Europe, Trinidad is strategically crucial. Its southern-based powerhouse industrial complex keeps churning out oil and chemical products to the world.

It is a base for the world's energy giants, including BP Amoco, British Gas, EOG, BHP Billiton, Exxon Mobil, Trinidad's state-owned Petrotrin and such Canadian companies as PetroCanada, Talisman Energy, Vermilion Oil and Gas and Methanex, the world's largest methanol company.

Yet, Trinidad is shot through with corruption and destabilized by profitable money-laundering, drug and gun smuggling from a terrorist-rich South America 12 kilometres away -- where al-Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah are well-ensconced.

(Opposition leader and former prime minister Basdeo Panday has said outright that al-Qaeda is here and has ties to the government.)

Bakr arrives with a small entourage. After another wait, I am summoned to finally meet this man face to face.

We had spoken by phone over a period of a year -- harsh interviews focused on allegations he was planning an Islamic uprising in this oil-rich Caribbean country.

After all, it wouldn't have been his first. Only 10 years before, 114 Jamaat members launched a bloody coup that made headlines around the world.

During the six-day insurrection, Bakr's lieutenant, Bilaal Abdullah, and his armed followers stormed Trinidad and Tobago's parliament. They trussed up the ailing prime minister, Arthur Robinson, who was shot in the leg. Another MP bled to death of his gunshot wound; the attorney general was also shot. Other legislators lay tied.

One Jamaat member crashed a car into the police headquarters, killing a guard in the explosion. Meanwhile, Bakr took over the state television station to announce to a stunned country he had overthrown the government. Jamaat maintains it was an act of self-defence, that it had advance warning security forces were coming to kill the Jamaat leadership.

Bilaal Abdullah -- who renounced Jamaat membership in 1993, is critical of Jamaat now and is a paid adviser to Manning -- explains the coup was never an Islamic act. He tells me a week ago, 114 men "could not rule our country and it would have been wrong and will always be wrong for a tiny minority to impose their will on the nation by force of arms and take over the reins of the state machinery. But it is also wrong to single out a minority for destruction through abusing the power to command the security forces."

In all, 31 people died and 693 people were injured in the shooting and looting which caused \$36 million in property damage.

The coup ended when Bakr and Abdullah negotiated an amnesty with the government. However, security forces rounded up the 114 insurrectionists anyway, charged them with murder and treason and put them in jail. Two years later, they were freed after a court upheld the amnesty.

Post-9/11, the coup seems still more ominous. Trinidadian parliamentarians and businessmen told me Bakr had links to Libyan and Sudanese terrorists, and possibly to al-Qaeda. There is speculation that Jamaat has been busy setting up cells all over the Caribbean and in Latin America: in Guyana, Surinam, St. Vincent, Grenada, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Kitts, Belize, St. Lucia and Antigua, though Jamaat denies this.

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Political sources told me Jamaat had penetrated the government at the highest levels in exchange for helping Manning's People's National Movement (PNM), a leftist party, to win at the polls.

The methodology, say opposition politicians such as Senator Robin Montano, was a sophisticated voter-padding scheme funded with public money. The PNM gave Jamaat millions of dollars in social and job-program contracts. Jamaat directed the money to its members who, in turn, registered and swung the vote in four key ridings.

Bakr describes himself as a "kingmaker."

"Whichever party we support, wins," he says, matter-of-factly.

Montano says the PNM-Jamaat tie mirrors Indonesia's tolerance of Islamic terrorism which turned Bali into a soft target for al-Qaeda. The result was the October 2002 nightclub bombings that killed 202 and injured 300.

Terrorism expert Mark Ensalaco is familiar with Bakr and the 1990 coup. He says al-Qaeda is adept at finding a haven, or an operations base, in countries with Islamic organizations sympathetic to some -- if not all -- of its aims.

"If you look at the Americas, there are only a few places like that, and Trinidad makes perfect sense as a place where you would suspect al-Qaeda."

Ensalaco, director of International Studies and Human Rights at Ohio's University of Dayton, has studied Osama bin Laden and Middle East terrorism for a book he is writing, *From Black September to September 11 -- A terrorism history from 1968-September 2001*.

Al-Qaeda, he says, can "patiently organize in places where they think they can prosper. I think you have one in Trinidad and Tobago."

They could use Trinidad and Tobago to launder money, solicit funds, or, he says, "move their people through the Americas."

However, if they are planning terror operations, "natural gas becomes a potential site of terrorist attack."

In time, he suggests, al-Qaeda might step in and take over an existing organization. "If al-Qaeda or groups in the global terror network have an interest in Trinidad and Tobago, and if they begin to make contacts, they can just simply push aside Bakr."

Social Unrest and Rampant Crime

While intelligence experts worry about Trinidad's allure as an anti-U.S. anti-Britain terror target, ordinary people told me simply that they feared another coup. But this time, a coup would take place in a less-stable Trinidad, one buffeted by violent crime. Many citizens blame Jamaat's predominantly poor black members for the crime rampage; the sudden infusion of millions of dollars into social welfare programs has fuelled a murderous rise in the gang-controlled gun and drug trade. In 2003, a record 229 people were murdered.

But a new, sinister crime -- kidnapping -- has shattered what remains of Trinidad's sense of security.

It has also raised racial tensions between the country's equal populations of Indian and African descendants. Most kidnap victims are Indians; most kidnappers are blacks. (The indigenous populations have dwindled.)

The Afro-Trinidadians are descendants of slaves brought from Africa by Europeans from the 1500s. The Indo-Trinidadians descend from indentured servants whom the British 'imported' from East India after slavery was outlawed in 1845.

Socially and economically, Indians are winning. They dominate retail, industry and the professions. Wealthy Indians school their children abroad. They carry themselves with elan and a sense of easy superiority over visitors and locals -- as the saying goes, "more British than the British."

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But the blacks have a champion in two key Trinidadians: Prime Minister Patrick Manning and Bakr. Manning's PNM is largely supported by blacks.

He eagerly sought and received Bakr's help in winning the October, 2002 elections -- even if Bakr had al-Qaeda ties. Bakr describes himself as an "adviser" to Manning on matters concerning black youth.

In our talks, I sensed a revolutionary fervour in the charismatic Bakr, although he speaks as a social reformer.

Clearly, he is no Osama bin Laden, but what is he? And what risk does he pose? And how does social unrest, much of it generated by Jamaat, create an environment that is ripe for international terrorism?

From Ryerson Grad to Radical

Bakr greets me from behind his large desk with a genuine smile. He looks even taller than his six-feet-four-inches with his white Muslim fez.

My first thought is of who Bakr used to be. In his previous life, he was Lennox Phillip, an Anglican-born police officer. Phillip read the Koran in 1969 and converted to Islam and Bakr was born.

Yet his two identities often converge. On this day, Bakr speaks enthusiastically about Canada, where, in the '70s, he graduated from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and worked in film production at CBC's Toronto office. He has already mentioned his friendship with Nancy Sinclair, daughter of legendary journalist Gordon Sinclair.

It is easy to forget, when you talk to him, that he is under surveillance by the CIA, FBI, Britain's MI5 and MI6 and possibly by Canada's CSIS and the RCMP and has been for some time since the coup and even before, when his ties to Libya triggered Western suspicions. He is barred from entering the U.S. and Canada and was scooped up for interrogation by MI5 at London's Heathrow Airport.

His office is as simple as the other buildings on the religious and educational compound. The large open-air mosque dominates at 1 Mucurapo Rd. in St. James -- a western suburb of the capital city, Port of Spain.

Bakr is a staunch personal friend of Libya's Col. Moammar Gadhafi.

"He is the most beautiful human being I have met in my life," he says. "As a leader to his people, he is par excellence."

Like Muslims from scores of countries, Bakr reportedly has received millions of dollars -- he won't say how much -- from Libya through his membership in the World Islamic Call Society (WICS). These funds went exclusively to his mosque, schools and medical centre, he says, and not to support the spread of radical Islam throughout the Caribbean.

WICS describes itself as an Islamic benevolent society with UN recognition.

Washington Times columnist and president of the Center for Security Policy, Frank J. Gaffney Jr., describes WICS as a "well-known and longstanding Libyan-controlled funding vehicle for terrorism."

Abdul Rahman al-Amoudi, recently indicted in the U.S. for illegal ties to Libya, has admitted to laundering hundreds of thousands of dollars, some of it from Libya, in Saudi Arabia before depositing it in the U.S. for his American Muslim Foundation.

He selected and trained U.S. Muslim military chaplains, including Capt. James Yee, now held on suspicion of espionage at the Guantanamo, Cuba detention centre for Taliban and al-Qaeda operatives.

Two of Bakr's sons have received religious education in Libya. Jamaat members have taken military training there, and, according to Trinidadian newspaper reports citing "intelligence sources," a small group of Jamaat members just recently returned from Libya.

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Bakr's loyalty to Gadhafi costs him in public opinion, especially now with Libya's confession of complicity in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Even as the aging Libyan leader makes a public repentance to Bush, promises millions of dollars to the 270 victims' families and promises to renounce violence in order to end UN sanctions, Great Britain is reportedly signing oil deals with Gadhafi.

Bakr was elected to the WICS executive council in 2000, the same year its general congress called for jihad against Western "tyranny and imperialism," "sacrifice until martyrdom" and "liberation of Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean." Explicit in this manifesto is the eradication of Israel.

At the same meeting, it denounced "all aspects of violence, terrorism and extremism."

Bakr also attends meetings of Gadhafi's World Islamic People's Leadership (WIPL) which has primary headquarters in Tripoli, and secondary headquarters at the Taric Islamic Centre at 99 Beverly Hills Dr. in Toronto. Both have ties to UN agencies, including UNESCO, and operate as Muslim charities. Nonetheless, the suspicion still exists among more moderate Muslims that the group is also involved in uncharitable activities towards the West.

Proclamation of Innocence

In person, Bakr keeps his Caribbean good humour throughout a stream of questions on Jamaat's alleged links to kidnappings for ransom and terrorism, both domestic and international.

During the 2002 national election, did he dispatch a band of Jamaat members to intimidate voters in four key ridings where he became kingmaker with easy access to a grateful Prime Minister Patrick Manning? Is he linked to al-Qaeda, **Hamas** and other Islamic terrorist groups?

"No and no," he says, to each question.

He parries even the sharpest questions without rancour.

"I have extreme patience," necessary for any man, he implies, with four wives and 15 children. But, finally, after an hour, he pounds the table. Not in denials but in an aggressive attack on successive governments that he says break trust with the black people of Trinidad.

"There are too many people in this country who are not fed. The ghettos are hungry and starving. People have nothing to eat on a daily basis. The basis of the economy is oil and the money belong to the people and the money do not get to the people."

He is almost out of breath, almost shouting.

"They live in poverty, squalour and destitution. This country is the largest producer of methanol, the largest producer of ammonia in the world. This country was an oil-producing nation since 1912, long before the Arabs had any oil. We have asphalt. We have water. We have very, very fertile land. If you spit outside, something will grow. Where is all this money?"

He says corrupt politicians steal public funds needed for food and medicine. He claims his complaints about corruption have made him a government target. In August, Bakr had his first run-in with the law since the coup. He was arrested for conspiracy to murder two Jamaat members in June whom he'd expelled for "unislamic activities." The two men had denounced Bakr and Jamaat on radio for tolerating criminal activity. One of the men was injured and the woman with him was killed in a shooting that followed the radio program.

The alibi Bakr offered to the court: He was working at the state-owned Petrotrin oil company 100 kilometres away at the time he was supposed to be ordering the killing of the two men. (The alibi shows how freely Bakr operates -- even gaining a work pass at the high-security oil patch.) The case is still working its way through the courts.

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His alleged co-conspirator has fled the country. Bakr says he was charged because "some people in the People's National Movement government think that I am getting too powerful. That is actually what was said. 'Take him down.' That is the word."

Ordinary Trinidadians gossip about regular meetings between Bakr and Manning.

"People say that you often see the prime minister," I say.

"I will see the prime minister," he answers quietly, "if I want to see the prime minister."

'Carvin' Out De Hills'

"I'm going to take you on a tour," says Bakr, "to the other side, where women still have to bathe at a stand on the side of the road. See for yourself; 27 per cent of people live below the poverty level. That means no food, no shelter, no clothing.

"Mr. Manning have a budget of \$20 billion (Trinidadian, roughly \$4.3 billion Canadian) ... show me what is happening."

In this most wealthy Caribbean country, one-quarter of the people live in poverty despite the \$11 billion Canadian gross domestic product. Most of Trinidad's wealth comes from its large petroleum industry. The U.S. relies on Trinidad for two-thirds of its imported liquid natural gas. Other exports include chemicals, steel goods, fertilizer and sugar, cocoa and coffee.

I've already gone by cab to the poor, crime-ridden eastern Port of Spain suburb of Laventille. We drive up and down the hills, past hovels, and homes under repair, past curious children who want their photos taken. One offers me a plastic bead necklace with a large green crucifix as a gift.

But Bakr wants me to see other places, worse places. We agree to meet the next day, a third meeting.

Bakr isn't here. In his place, he has selected a high-ranking Jamaat member from the entourage at the mosque. Sadiq Al Razi drives his small Japanese car (apparently without suspension system) with purpose. We are silent for the first 10 minutes.

We pass a large, elegant condominium complex. He points to it bitterly.

"I can't go in there."

"Why not?" I ask, thinking of the fear Jamaat provokes.

"Because I'm a black man. I could go there today because I'm with a white woman."

Al Razi relaxes, introduces himself more fully and allows a few personal questions.

He, too, is an imam whose mosque is in prosperous Point Fortin, home of Trinidad's lucrative petrochemical industry. As civil engineer and technician by training, he worked as a quality auditor in design and construction on a large Atlantic LNG (Liquid Natural Gas) installation.

Our first destination is Goodwood, where businesspeople live in huge houses on the sides of wooded hills. A bulldozer is making a large shelf in the hill for another.

"Carvin' out de hills ..." he says, slipping into Carib. "And this is nothing, nothing" compared to the country's more wealthy sections.

It's not, he insists, the wealth that angers him.

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"No, if they earned it, more power to them. I'm saying the wealth is circulating among the rich and nothing is reaching the poor people. These people don't recognize that sooner or later, sooner or later, the shit is going to hit the fan and" -- a short laugh -- "is going to spill on them."

Next, he takes me past the former U.S. army base in Chaguaramas, which was established for training and transit during the Second World War, at Trinidad's northwest tip.

While I notice the U.S. is unloved by nearly everyone I encounter, Canadians are seen as good employers, for their petrochemical investments and for more than \$40 million in Canadian International Development Agency and the International Development and Research Centre grants over the past 40 years.

The newspapers, rich with anti-American sentiment, reinforce public resentment against American ideology and actions, especially the Iraq invasion. Some Trinidadian oil workers fear a revenge terror attack on the U.S. and British-owned multinational petroleum industry.

I asked Bakr about the situation in Iraq and he was, predictably, sympathetic to Saddam Hussein.

I ask Bakr point blank if he is a security risk to his country.

"I don't know what all the fuss is about," he says, innocently.

"How can I be a security risk? I live here. I born here. I am a security risk to whom?"

Divisions Along Racial Lines

Now Al Razi and I arrive at nearby Staubles Bay, home of the coast guard and the drydock for rows of multimillion-dollar yachts. They're used only a few times a year, says Al Razi.

"Many, many are running drugs. There are big, big drugs going in and out, mostly cocaine, some heroin, from Venezuela. You can see Venezuela right there, 12 kilometres away."

(Trinidadians will name off hotel-owners and other businessmen whose sudden drug-financed wealth purchased businesses and mansions. Some go legit afterwards. There are few secrets on this island.)

Bakr insists that 95 per cent of kidnap victims are involved in the cocaine trade.

Trinidad is a drug dealer's and money launderer's haven. The Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago puts the processing of "dirty money" from drugs alone at \$6 billion -- more than half the country's 2002 GDP.

"And not one prosecution -- not one," Al Razi growls, "in this country, because these people own the judges."

Al Razi says Trinidadians are angry and cynical as corruption and injustice "continue unabated. Police force, politicians, the judicial system -- they are all very, very corrupt."

Al Razi says he is starting a trade school, affiliated with Jamaat, to train unemployable, unskilled black youths in pipefitting, instrumentation, welding and fabricating. Most companies he's asked to contribute have declined their help. It's shortsighted, he says.

"Every 50 youths they help to rehabilitate will be 50 fewer desperate men who will be coming at them in kidnappings and robberies."

While Jamaat is not the only Muslim group in Trinidad, it is by far the most vocal and most controversial and draws unwelcome notice to Trinidad's many moderate Muslim organizations. In fact, it's hard to determine the number of Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago. Estimates range from six per cent, as reflected in the 1990 census, to 12 per cent, the figure used by international Muslim organizations. That puts the Muslim population between 65,000 and

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130,000. The census figures are likely out of date as they predate Jamaat's heaviest period of recruitment, following the coup.

Al Razi echoes the general statement that Islam is the fastest growing religion in Latin America and the Caribbean.

"Tens of thousands of young people in Trinidad have become Muslims over the last 10 years. I know about more than 25,000."

(Prime Minister Manning doesn't give numbers but, in his words to the Citizen, Jamaat is busy recruiting.)

"Young men's parents are keeping them back. As soon as they get an opening, (young black men) come to the mosque. They see this as something they can relate to."

Bakr sees wealth and status divided along racial lines.

"For 25 years we fought against the PNM because we felt they were doing nothing for the African people.

"It is now at the stage," he thunders, "that 99.9 per cent of the doctors are Indians and 77 per cent of the lawyers are Indians and 95 per cent of the people in prisons are African and 86 per cent of the people in the mad house, the crazy house, are African."

Depending on which group's political party is in power, the aid and benefits swing markedly in their direction. Indians and Africans dominate the island's populations at 40 per cent each.

The chief remaining ethnic populations: mixed 18 per cent, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Portuguese, native Indian and Creole 1.2 per cent and white 0.6 per cent.

Love Mixed With Fear

Al Razi drives to the Sea Lots. This is the worst place I've been on the island. We drive through quickly, too quickly, and I have to ask him to return and drive around this tiny tin-shack community within view of downtown towers. When the tide rises, the bare earth turns to mud and floods the tiny shed homes.

"These people live as rats," says Al Razi.

The stench among the tiny corrugated shacks is overpowering -- somewhere between that of rotted garbage and carrion.

Al Razi looks at a young woman who is washing her baby at a roadside pipe.

"They don't need to live like that."

Yet, this, even this, isn't the worst. In nearby Beetham Estates, Al Razi says, there is a dump where people fight the vultures for scraps of refuse. "I could take you there, too, but I don't want to. That place is very, very dangerous. Sick."

Poor people, wealthy people -- everyone is still traumatized by the 1990 coup and the death, injury and destroyed businesses. Some well-known figures still refuse to speak to Bakr or shake his hand. He is not forgiven.

His refusal to publicly apologize for the coup rankles. But some days he takes a softer tone.

I caught up with him, by phone, during Ramadan 2002.

"Is the coup one of your mistakes?" I ask.

He begins, as he often does, with a story.

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"Let me answer you this way. Imagine you were to come into your house and you saw somebody murdering your daughter or your son. You kept telling them to stop that act of aggression and to stop murdering and oppressing your children. And a gun went off and some of the peop

Graphic

Colour Photo: Illustration by Robert Cross, The Ottawa Citizen; (See hard copy for illustration).; Colour Photo: (Donna Jacobs); Photo: Donna Jacobs; Yasin Abu Bakr, leader of a failed coup attempt in 1990 in Trinidad, was open to discussion about his alleged ties to terrorism. Though he denies ties to al-Qaeda, he readily admits that his group, Jamaat, 'rules the streets.'; Photo: Shirley Bahadur, Associated Press; Supporters of cheer Yasin Abu Bakr, imam of the Jama'at-al-Muslimeen (Muslim Group) in Trinidad. The group's membership is estimated at 20,000 -- almost two per cent of Trinidad's 1.3 million population.; Photo: Donna Jacobs; Sources say Jamaat has penetrated the government at the highest levels in exchange for helping the People's National Movement, a leftist party, win at the polls.; Photo: Donna Jacobs; A young woman washes her baby at a roadside pipe at Sea Lots, an impoverished tin-shack community within view of Port of Spain highrises. Jamaat officials complain that 'these people live as rats.'; Map: (See hard copy for map).; Photo: Donna Jacobs; Poverty and crime run rampant in Port of Spain suburb Laventille.; Photo: Donna Jacobs; Goodward Estates -- where businesspeople live in huge houses on the sides of wooded hills -- is one example Jamaat points to as how the rich are getting richer (some from drug dealing, money laundering and government corruption) while the poor get poorer.; Photo: Donna Jacobs; Sadiq Al Razi, an engineer by training, is a high-ranking Jamaat member. Trinidadians are angry and cynical, he says, as corruption and injustice 'continue unabated.'; Photo: Donna Jacobs; Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Patrick Manning has assured the Americans that Trinidad is moving to protect the islands' energy supplies from terrorism.

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High-profile arrests; few charges Jihad in London

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Body

On Fridays, in front of north London's Finsbury Park mosque, what begins as a call to prayer ends up sounding like a battle cry to jihad, or holy war.

A hooded muezzin calls out in the middle of the road, and worshippers gather.

They've been praying outside for more than a year, since the mosque was shut down after a police raid. They don't have a permit, but police block traffic nonetheless.

Then come the enforcers, swaggering to and fro as they prepare the way for Abu Hamza al-Masri, the cleric the British government accuses of inspiring terrorists.

"Yo! Yo! No pictures," a man with a headscarf covering all but his eyes shouts to a photographer.

Other bodyguards bark at worshippers not to talk to reporters.

A hulk of a man, dressed all in black, tells police that a TV cameraman is too close to where his leader soon will be standing.

The road is a public space, an officer says.

"You don't want to have a bad day," the man in black replies. "You have your rules, we have our Islamic rules."

The cameraman is moved back.

It's a balmy spring day and 100 worshippers stand barefoot on blue plastic sheets spread out on the road.

Music that clearly isn't part of the program blares from an apartment overlooking the street.

So, when Hamza finally appears wearing a black turban and microphone, it's to the incongruous sounds of rap.

"Seek the way of death," he says in English, his voice booming through loudspeakers.

"Try to do actions that subject you to death ... because you would love to go to paradise.

"You would love to meet your Lord."

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He then attacks what he calls the "racist" state of Israel and accuses Jews and Zionists of "controlling all the banks."

The Zionists, he adds, kill Palestinian children and steal Palestinian land.

He shifts to Iraq, where he says "explosions" targeting U.S. soldiers are the work of Muslims who "love death" and defend their land.

"All of these people, they are keen to die honourably, for the sake of God, for the sake of religion. It's a culture we are proud of," he declares.

"Our beloved Prophet said if you die to defend your religion, you are a martyr. If you die to defend your honour, you are a martyr. If you die to defend your property, you are a martyr," he bellows.

"So die honourably. Don't die humiliated."

With his one eye and metal hooks for hands, 44-year-old Hamza has become the notorious public symbol for what police insist is a growing terrorist threat on British soil.

Again on Friday, a top police official described a strike by extremists against Britain as "inevitable."

"I think there are people out there that wish us harm, and I think they will continue to wish us harm for some time to come," said James Hart, police commissioner for the City of London.

Long accused of turning a deaf ear to locally based, Al Qaeda-linked extremists, British police are intensifying a crackdown that began after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

But mainstream community leaders among Britain's 2 million Muslims detect a backlash.

Heavy-handed police tactics, they charge, are pushing Muslim youths into the arms of extremists.

"They have alienated a large segment of the Muslim community because of the police action," says Inayat Bunglawala, whose Muslim Council for Britain meets regularly with Home Secretary David Blunkett.

The crackdown is a far cry from pre-Sept. 11 days, when French authorities coined the term "Londonistan" and accused Britain of striking an implicit pact with extremists: Don't bomb us; we won't bother you.

The British tradition of granting asylum, and London's role as a hub for international banking and the world's media, made the city a magnet for exiles and radicals across the Middle East.

It became a money-laundering centre for extremist activities abroad. But British residents could not be prosecuted for planning attacks outside the country until the Terrorism Act of 2000.

By 1994, Osama bin Laden had established a "media office" in London under the control of his associate, Khalid al Fawwaz. It operated freely until 1998, when Fawwaz and two Egyptian associates were arrested under U.S. extradition warrants linking them to the bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

All three remain in jail while waging legal battles against extradition.

By 1994, London was also the home of a leading preacher of radical Islam, Palestinian cleric Abu Qatada. A Spanish judge describes him as Al Qaeda's spiritual ambassador in Europe.

Police estimate that up to 1,000 British Muslims were recruited during the past few years to fight for the deposed Taliban regime in Afghanistan or to train in Al Qaeda camps.

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At the Finsbury Park mosque, where police suspect some recruiting took place, worshippers included Zacarias Moussaoui, accused of intending to be the 20th airplane hijacker on Sept. 11, and Richard Reid, convicted of trying to explode a shoe bomb on a U.S.-bound flight from Paris.

A BBC poll in December, 2002, indicated that 8 per cent of Muslims surveyed believed Al Qaeda would be justified in launching terrorist attacks in Britain.

Recently, Sir John Stevens, commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, spoke of a "definite link" between Islamic extremists in the United Kingdom and the cell that carried out the March 11 train bombings that killed 191 people in Madrid.

The U.K. crackdown began with a post-Sept. 11 law that allows suspected terrorist who are not British citizens to be held indefinitely without charge.

A dozen are behind bars, including Abu Qatada, all being held under conditions described by Amnesty International as "cruel, inhuman and degrading."

Bunglawala says he recognizes that Britain is a terrorist target. His council and other Muslim groups have even drafted action plans in the event of an attack to confront an expected rise in "Islamophobia."

In March, the council sent a letter to imams of Britain's 1,000 mosques, asking them to report to police any activities that suggest a terrorist threat.

The letter was written after eight London-area men were arrested and linked to half a tonne of ammonium nitrate fertilizer that can be used for bombs. In Ottawa, Canadian software specialist Momin Khawaja was arrested in connection with the alleged plot.

Thousands of British Muslims have had their homes searched or been randomly stopped and questioned.

Bunglawala accuses police of casting wide arrest nets in fishing expeditions. But a spokesperson for the Association of Chief Police Officers says some of the most valuable information about suspected terrorists comes from within the Muslim community.

"We're not targeting Muslims, we're targeting terrorists," he says.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, 572 people have been arrested for suspected terrorism offences.

Of those, 97 were charged with such offences and 289 were released without charge. The rest were charged with crimes not related to terrorism, including violating immigration laws.

Only six people have been convicted of terrorist-related activities, two of them non-Muslims.

The arrests are accompanied by frightening media tales of would-be terror attacks that fuel distrust of Muslims. But releases generally go unmentioned, fuelling a sense of injustice among Muslims.

Last week, all 10 people arrested a week earlier - headlines had them preparing a chemical attack on a Manchester United soccer game - were released without terrorism charges.

High-profile arrests in alleged plots to release poison gas in the London subway, and to use ricin in a chemical weapons attack, resulted only in convictions for fake passports.

A story still discussed widely in the community is of a 29-year-old London-area Muslim whose home was raided by police last December. He claims he was handcuffed prostrate in his prayer room and repeatedly beaten while laughing officers asked, "Where is your God now?"

He was released without charge seven days later. The Police Complaints Authority is investigating his claims.

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Exacerbating anger is Britain's close alliance with the United States on Iraq and in Israel's conflict with the Palestinians.

Last month, when U.S. soldiers assaulted the besieged Iraqi-rebel stronghold of Falluja, Bunglawala was stunned to see 15 gruesome pictures of the battle's victims posted on the bulletin board of his London-area mosque.

Printed from the Al-Jazeera TV Web site, they showed bloodied corpses, mostly of women and children, from a battle that has killed at least 600 Iraqis.

Young men crowding around the pictures were livid, Bunglawala says, and called on God to help the Falluja resistance.

They railed against a perceived Western double standard: Arab attacks against occupying forces in Iraq and Palestinian territories are terrorism, but attacks by U.S. or Israeli soldiers against Arabs are in the name of democracy and self-defence.

Radicals such as Omar Bakri Mohammad, another London cleric, exploit this sentiment to recruit Muslims to their cause, Bunglawala says.

Bakri's influence is being questioned in a trial that began Monday in connection with the first British citizens to become suicide bombers.

On April 30, 2003, 21-year-old Asif Hanif blew himself up outside a Tel Aviv bar, killing three people and injuring 65.

With him was Omar Sharif, 27, who ran away after his bomb belt failed to detonate. Sharif was found mysteriously drowned in the Mediterranean 12 days later.

Sharif's sister, 36-year-old Parveen, is charged with inciting her brother to commit the act, while his wife and his brother are charged with failing to disclose information that might have prevented the bombing.

All pleaded not guilty.

Sharif was the youngest of six university-educated children, all born in Britain to Pakistani parents.

He made three trips to Damascus to study Arabic and the Qur'an, lived in west London and had three children, one a 7-week-old daughter, at the time of his death.

On April 10, he and Hanif had travelled to Damascus. Two days later, they used their British passports to enter Israel. Before carrying out their suicide mission in the name of the Palestinian group Hamas, Sharif sent e-mails to his family back home.

To his wife, he wrote: "We did not spend a long time together in this world, but I hope through Allah's mercy and your patience we can spend an eternity together."

He asked her to pray that Allah "makes me sincere, firm and that he accepts my actions."

His sister e-mailed him: "Stay focused and determined. You have no time for emotions."

After the attack, police searching Sharif's house found material from Al Mahajiroun, a radical group founded and led by Bakri.

Bakri admits to knowing Sharif, but denies any knowledge of his bombing plans.

The material in Sharif's house included notes his wife made of a Bakri lecture entitled: "What the West refers to as suicide bombings, which we refer to as Martyrdom Operations."

Ten days ago, Bakri gave a similar lecture, in English, to 50 young men in a community centre in east London.

High-profile arrests; few charges Jihad in London

The audience sat enthralled as the rotund sheikh delivered a talk with the rhetorical flare of a Baptist preacher. At the sound of key phrases, or the name of Osama bin Laden, they shouted in unison: "God is great."

"He is a great man for me," says Bakri, 45, referring to bin Laden.

Bakri was born into an affluent family in Syria, moved to Saudi Arabia and fled to Britain in 1986 after hearing he was to be arrested for preaching jihad at university campuses. He has been granted indefinite leave to stay.

He claims there are 1,000 members in his group, describes the Sept. 11 attacks as "retaliation" for U.S. policy in the Middle East and calls the hijackers who slammed planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon "the magnificent 19."

In his lecture, he makes clear that Al Qaeda will strike European cities if bin Laden's recent offer of a truce - in return for foreign troops pulling out of Iraq within three months - isn't accepted.

He insists he doesn't want to see attacks in Britain, although he rejects everything about the country.

"Any Muslim that joins the British army, the police or parliament - he becomes an apostate," says Bakri, who wants to see Britain transformed into an Islamic, Taliban-style state.

"There's no legislator but God. That's why Muslims do not follow, obey or submit to anyone but almighty Allah."

Referring to Tony Blair, he says: "You can call yourself prime minister, but in my eyes you are kuffar" - a non-believer and non-Muslim.

He describes suicide bombers as following the path to paradise, a place where everyone lives in massive palaces. Room after room is filled with beautiful maidens in baths and "rivers of milk and honey" flow everywhere.

His young listeners giggle with eagerness.

Bakri and Hamza controlled the Finsbury Park mosque until its trustees, who opposed the radical clerics, shut it down after the police raid in January, 2003.

The British government now wants Hamza out of the country. At an unprecedented legal hearing to strip the Egyptian-born cleric of his British citizenship last week, government lawyers accused him of harbouring and encouraging terrorists.

Yemen wants him for allegedly planning terrorist attacks there, but the cleric denies terrorist links. He also denies recruiting British Muslims to fight abroad.

He recently told the Star he doesn't want British Muslims to fight in Iraq because that would result in a premature victory against the United States.

Better for U.S. soldiers to stay longer in Iraq, so that more of them will die, he said.

"It's not in the interests of Muslims that Americans go out of Iraq now, because they have to learn lessons harder than Vietnam.

"So, we would like them to stay a bit longer, really." "Muslims do not follow, obey or submit to anyone but almighty Allah'

Graphic

High-profile arrests; few charges Jihad in London

RANDY QUAN FOR THE TORONTO STAR A masked member of Abu Hamza al-Masri's entourage keeps an eye on media and police observing the radical cleric's incendiary Friday sermon on the street outside the shut-down Finsbury Park mosque. RANDY QUAN FOR THE TORONTO STAR With his one eye and metal hooks for hands, 44-year-old London firebrand cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri, here holding a street service in north London, has become a notorious public symbol for what British police insist is a growing terrorist threat on British soil. RANDY QUAN FOR THE TORONTO STAR With his one eye and metal hooks for hands, 44-year-old London firebrand cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri, here holding a street service in north London, has become a notorious public symbol for what British police insist is a growing terrorist threat on British soil.

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Yes, I think power drives you mad

The Times (London)

March 30, 2004, Tuesday

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Section: Features; Times2; 8

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Byline: Andrew Billen

Body

Wole Soyinka, the writer and activist, argues in this year's Reith Lectures that the powerless become terrorists, but too much power can drive a leader insane

Oracular, poetical, ironical -to be frank a little windy -this year's Reith lecturer is not an easy man to paraphrase. But I'll have a go.

Wole Soyinka will suggest in his Climate of Fear lectures that terrorism is a question of power. Without power, the oppressed seek to avenge their indignity with violence. Have too much power, and the gods send you mad. The righteous terrorist who starts out fighting a genuine tyranny is therefore fated to end up insane, crazed by the power he has to inspire fear in others. Thus Osama bin Laden, the holy warrior ridding Afghanistan of its Soviet invaders, is last seen giggling in his cave at the death of 3,000 American office workers.

"Clearly", says Soyinka, "he is not even now without a vision, the vision of a purified Arab nation and an Islamic world. But on the way he's become mentally warped."

Perhaps the Nobel prize-winning Nigerian playwright, poet and political activist should leave it there, playing shrink to al-Qaeda. But he goes on, taking his diagnostic skills to the White House. George Bush, he tells me, hears voices.

"He's another Joan of Arc. He believes he's carrying out the will of God, that he is acting directly on orders from God. And that is dangerous. That puts him more or less at the same level as Osama bin Laden."

People won't like him saying that, I caution.

"I know they won't but they have to consider the possibility that there's a grain of truth in what I'm saying. We're looking into people's make-up, their motivations. If you believe you are acting under divine orders then that is very dangerous for us on Earth. I don't consider Bush is the kind of contemptuous terrorist that bin Laden is, but I believe it is possible for two people walking in different directions to do so from the same kind of psychological make-up and basic motivation.

"Incidentally, I separate Bush's motivation from Blair's. I think Blair is an unfortunate, tragic figure who acted from the best of motives, and the reason I say this is because of his conduct in Kosovo. He was the one who pulled Europe together and made the Americans enter the war on behalf of the Muslims. This was a very powerful signal for the whole world, a powerful signal to the Muslim population. And I believe it's the same kind of principle which led Blair to act precipitately (in Iraq)."

Yes, I think power drives you mad

He is conducting this morning's tutorial on terrorism in the busy lobby of a building near Hyde Park. He is dressed, disappointingly, in shirt and jeans rather than in the tribal robe he wears for the Reiths, but his fine face is good value, topped by excessive white curls that turn him into a cross between Albert Einstein and the juvenile Michael Jackson. It is hard to credit he is 69.

It's two weeks since he recorded his first lecture, *The Changing Mask of Fear*, at the Royal Institution, and what weeks they have been! In Piccadilly on lecture night, amid an audience of BBC executives and past Reith lecturers, terrorism was the subject of polite intellectual scrutiny stimulated by wine and canapes. During the Q and A at the end, one clever clogs suggested it would shortly become clear that al-Qaeda did not actually even exist. Two days later there was Madrid.

Now, even as we meet, comes news that Israel has assassinated Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the "spiritual" leader of Hamas. A few days on and Tony Blair will glad-hand Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Terrorism seems to be everywhere, even if it is sometimes hard to know who the terrorists are. Indeed, as I later say to Soyinka's annoyance, some people even consider him a terrorist for holding up -or so it was alleged -a radio station 40 years ago.

When the BBC acting Director-General Mark Byford, in his speech of thanks, spoke of the authority with which Soyinka spoke he was not, naturally, thinking of this.

He had in mind the two years that Soyinka was locked up by Nigeria's military Government for supposedly "spying" for Biafra during the 1967-69 civil war. He was never charged and, in fact, his mission to the Biafran leader, General Emeka Ojukwu, was to persuade him of the folly of separation. After his release he began an "exile of despair" in France but returned to Nigeria in 1975 for a university post. Twenty years later he was again forced to flee a military regime in Nigeria, escaping over the border after a 12-hour bike ride.

He now lives primarily in Los Angeles although, after the dictator Sani Abacha's suspicious death in 1998, he has got back his Nigerian passport. He has just returned from visiting his homeland to help prepare the elaborate funeral of his (third) wife's father. His relationship with Nigeria is a rollercoaster, he says, and he is on a downward plunge: "The President of the nation and myself had a slanging match on the pages of the newspapers. I accused his Government of certain deficiencies and his party of harbouring a nest of killers. Plus ça change."

If, then, Soyinka is an expert on terror, his specialism is state terror and he majors in African dictators. A recent Soyinka play, *King Baabu*, reworked Alfred Jarry's absurdist masterpiece, *Ubi Roi*, turning the mad king into a composite of African tyrants from Idi Amin to Abacha. His lectures will contain several digs at Robert Mugabe. Every time a dictator falls, he says, he uncorks a bottle of wine.

About the motives of the terrorist, however, Soyinka's guess is hardly better informed than yours or mine. He has suffered more than most, but that, unless you are Christ Himself, does not necessarily bestow wisdom. These lectures -or the drafts I have seen of them -show him thinking deeply about terrorism's causes but his thoughts remain flamboyantly conjectural. They are certainly not free of writerly hyperbole. If we are to take seriously, for instance, his comparison of Bush with bin Laden we must, presumably, also take literally his complaint to me that political correctness in American universities has degenerated into "fascism".

What truly fascinates is how his own life corresponds to his insistence on the importance of dignity as a human right, the lack of which, as in the case of the Palestinians, he regards as a prime cause for terrorism.

Now, Soyinka is one of the most dignified people I have ever met. His very comportment denotes a steady evaluation of his own worth. Yet he has been subjected to appalling indignity. For most of his 27 months in jail in Kaduna he was chained and left in solitary confinement. He went on hunger strike, suffered the mental torture of being told repeatedly he was on the verge of release and was almost blinded by the dry Saharan wind that blew through the cell's glassless window, leaving his right eye permanently damaged. He says that a slave can never have dignity. Can a prisoner?

Yes, I think power drives you mad

"It's a very good question. The difference being a prisoner is that you're in a microcosm of your own and therefore you can aspire to some dignity in relation to your jailers. In fact, you're freer internally than your jailers, because your jailers are constantly receiving orders -'Treat him this way, take away his pens, his writing paper, you know, humiliate him some more.' But you are in your own world. It's a community of one and you control that community completely. So while there are moments when you feel extremely frustrated and you have a sense of humiliation because you cannot walk out, once you've transcended that, it's possible to actually make them feel inferior to you."

You do not, however, need to be jailed to have your dignity tested. In 1954 Soyinka arrived in Britain to study at Leeds University. In 1957 he moved to London as writer in residence at the Royal Court, where his play, *The Invention*, was staged. His academic credentials and career success did not, however, make him any less "coloured". His adventures finding digs are memorialised in his poem, *Telephone Conversation*, in which a potential landlady asks exactly "how black" he is.

Facially, I am brunette, but madam, you should see
The rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet
Are a peroxide blond. Friction caused - Foolishly madam -by sitting down,
has turned My bottom raven black.

He offers to show it to her.

"Discrimination was very strong, very subtle, very hypocritical," he recalls. "But I made up my mind from the beginning that I would ignore it. Only on a few occasions did I feel like somebody had stepped on my toes with hobnail boots and I reacted in a very loud, near-violent way. There were a few scuffles. But since the approach of the British was a very hypocritical one, I decided mainly simply not to notice."

On the contrary, he noticed so carefully he took precise revenge in his poem, much anthologised at the time. Similarly, in prison he wrote constantly, using lavatory paper and cigarette packets. His prison memoir, *The Man Died*, is considered one of his finest works. To indulge in a little speculation myself, it seems that human dignity is bound up with the ability to express yourself -and to find someone to listen.

As is apparent from his memoirs, *Ake: The Years of Childhood*, even aged 3 Soyinka considered it his mission to proffer opinions and ask questions. Born in Abeokuta, south-west Nigeria, his father, Samuel, was headmaster of the local primary school. His mother, Grace, was a respected political force in the community who led a protest against a tax on women. He joined in her political battles and the larger fight for independence from British rule.

Typically, however, when commissioned to write a play to mark independence in 1960, he annoyed the government by devising an allegory, *A Dance of the Forests*, in which the "half-child", Nigeria, feared she would be born dead.

He was equally assured when it came to his writing style, although he has frequently been accused of prolixity, obscurity and self-consciousness. Scolded by black writers for borrowing from Western rather than exclusively African mythology, he asserted his right to write in whatever style and tradition he wanted.

The "negritude" campaign for an authentic black African literary voice waged by his friend, the Senegalese poet and President, Leopold Sedar Senghor, never really recovered from Soyinka's put-down that "a tiger does not proclaim its tigritude".

In 1986 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature, becoming -belatedly, some cattily noted -the first African and first black to be so honoured by Swedes.

Their motivations," he says now, "were their problem, never mine."

Significantly, the only time Soyinka was driven to violence was when his voice, in the guise of his democratic vote, was ignored. In 1965, after a fixed election in western Nigeria, he reportedly burst into the local studios of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation and at gunpoint ordered the tape of a speech by the fraudulent new premier to be replaced by another telling him to get out of town.

Yes, I think power drives you mad

Soyinka spent three months in prison awaiting trial and was then acquitted of armed robbery on a technicality. He left court on his supporters' shoulders.

Soyinka reminds me that he was found not guilty. Is he saying it wasn't him?

"Let's speak in the third person. Let's look at this figure, since we are on the subject of terrorism. I would not say that holding up a radio station to publicise the true result of an election and to remove a tape broadcasting a lie was a terrorist act. We were living at the time under a terrorist regime. If there were any acts of terrorism -and there were several recorded -those acts were perpetrated by the Government."

Was the gun loaded?

"I don't know. You're asking me questions that are prejudicial. But I doubt very much if anybody would be foolish enough to walk into a place like that, swarming with policemen, with an unloaded gun."

He must have been a passionate young man, I say. Switching to the first person, he agrees that even at school he stood up to bullies. He tells me a story from the early Seventies. He was driving in Upper Manhattan when a taxi in front screamed to a stop. A woman leapt out, followed by a man who took her by the shoulders and began to pound her head against a wall. Soyinka got out and knocked him down, only for the woman to pummel him, shouting that she loved her man and to leave him alone.

"I said, 'Please take her home, I beg you, and give her the beating of her life.

You love each other. You deserve each other. Please go home and beat her shitless.' And I ran back to the car and fled."

Only afterwards, he says, did he realise how stupid he had been, a black man taking on a white man in a white city. But Soyinka has never felt inferior to anyone, not as a child, not among the racists of our own islands, and not when jailed by a dictator. That he can imagine himself into the mind of the pathetic, voiceless terrorist who, like some crazed reader of Alain de Botton, uses violence to address his status anxiety, demonstrates what a true artist he is. Wole Soyinka's first Reith lecture will be broadcast on Radio 4 at 8pm on April 7.

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Letters to the Editor

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

August 30, 2003 Saturday

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Section: FEATURES-TYPE- LETTER-COLUMN- LETTERS; Pg. 22

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Body

Clear message on trees

Like Michael Ronayne from Emu Heights (Letters, August 28), I too hope last weekend's gale has whipped off the blinkers from the eyes of Mr Carr, the energy companies and the councils involved.

I love trees as much as the next person, but the wrong species in the wrong place will again inevitably lead to death and destruction. Last week's gale was a gale -- just that -- and need not have caused the disruption that it did.

In our area, we suffer a power cut approximately every six weeks: nevertheless, Energy Australia refuses to clear trees from the vicinity of power lines, saying it is the council's responsibility. The council in turn blames green interests, and nothing is done.

MATP

It is time for sensible, pragmatic policies: clearing trees from power lines, phone lines, overhanging the roads and around houses will cost money, but in the long run will save millions of dollars and hours of work by the SES, bushfire brigades and energy companies.

Why the authorities cannot even see the PR value of such a move is beyond me.

W Reymond,

Cedar Brush Creek

Transport at a loss

I'm sick of hearing about the projected debt of both the state rail and bus services (Daily Telegraph, August 28). These essential public services should never be considered money-making or break-even concerns. Public transport should be subsidised, as is our right as taxpayers. Already, the cost of public transport for some of us is financially crippling in a state/country where the divide between rich and poor is ever increasing. Surely, the governments, both state and federal, secure enough revenue-raising from other sources to heavily subsidise basic services such as health, education and public transport.

Jens Ward, Manly

Regarding Henry

Letters to the Editor

Bob Carr, in the past four weeks I have watched the demolition of a perfectly good 500-bed hospital, the historic and highly regarded Prince Henry Hospital at Little Bay. In the same period, the Prince of Wales Hospital has not been able to cope with casualty admissions and more seriously, a friend of mine has had life-threatening brain surgery postponed twice because of "lack of a special room".

The decision to demolish a working hospital was no doubt recommended by the public service machine. Its flawed research obviously influenced the decision to hand 90 per cent of the hospital side over to developers as no "true believer" would have knowingly taken such a short-sighted

decision on this.

But it is not too late to correct things. The CBD, inner west and eastern suburbs are collectively both the densist and the fastest-growing residential areas in NSW; why not have some vision and reserve the bulk of the site for a new hospital -- if not a public hospital, then a private one?

I am sure that any invitation to the private sector to build and operate a 300- to 500-bed private hospital on the site on favourable lease-back terms would be highly successful and when built, would relieve the existing patient waiting lists at Prince of Wales.

Bob Stuart, Little Bay

It's amateur hour

Colin Phillips should be ashamed at his comments on Nick Flanagan's amateur status. He should have checked his facts before his outburst. As a result, Nick's triumphant return home was turned into a media scrum when he deserved much better.

Remember Phillips was responsible for the debacle of the unplayable greens at last year's Australian Open. It's time Phillips took his clubs and strolled off into the darkness.

John Kelly, Beacon Hill

Join the greed club

NSW clubs are not miserable, nor is Michael Egan -- both are just plain greedy!

Clubs should be about somewhere to go for a reasonably priced meal, a free or cheap live show, and a five-buck fling in the machines if you feel lucky.

Clubs today are more about minimal joining fees, swanky surroundings, reasonably priced drinks and row after row of shiny new pokies bleeding dry members with no alternative style of club entertainment.

If the State Government and the clubs were really about helping the community they would swap half the amount of pokies for good free entertainment, leaving more leisure time and money for outdoor family life.

Brian Johnson, Gynea

Little atmosphere

If that's the best show that Mars can put on for Earth every 60,000 years, I'm damned if I'm going to hang around for the next one.

Paul Shipton, Roseville

Father needs answers

Letters to the Editor

ABC managing director Russell Balding criticises Piers Akerman's very cogent column "Aunty trips up on its balancing act" (August 26). Mr Balding makes no mention of what occurred last Friday: an interview by ABC national radio with me, to focus on the Malki Foundation, was cancelled because, as the producer wrote to me "it will ... be difficult to proceed without appearing unbalanced".

The Malki Foundation (www.kerenmalki.org) exists to honour the memory of my murdered daughter, born in Melbourne and murdered in Jerusalem at age 15. It provides equipment and therapies for families, with no regard to their race or religion, so long as they want to give their disabled children the best possible home care. On Wednesday, this human interest story was going to be a national radio feature. The following day -- not. What changed? The fact that a terror attack -- the "massacre of the children" -- took place on a bus a few minutes from my Jerusalem home, proudly executed by **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad terrorists.

My wife and I have been determined to ensure that Malki's death two years ago never becomes a mere statistical blip.

The MD says the ABC "never tried to argue there was a moral equivalence between the death of Malki Roth and the murder". But Palmer himself said he dropped the interview with the murderer's father as he "was unable to present the counterpoint". To many people, the notion there is a counterpoint to a child's murder will be grotesque. It greatly hurt my wife and me.

Mr Balding's letter says that whatever the ABC did, The Daily Telegraph did the same or worse. But I have carefully read its report of my daughter's murder. The paper's treatment of the story is fair and reasonable. The ABC's treatment of me was not.

I am preparing a brief for Mr Balding with copies of all the e-mails between Palmer and me. I will ask him to inform himself about the judgment and approach of the journalist he seeks to defend. His answer will be very important to me.

Arnold Roth, Jerusalem

Matilda's in our hearts and we'll raise the roof

The brouhaha which is surrounding the use of Waltzing Matilda at the World Cup has a simple solution.

Until 1984 we had a national anthem (God Save the Queen) and a national song (Advance Australia Fair). After the latter was proclaimed the national anthem we were left with no national song, yet the precedent and tradition remain.

Many nations have national anthems and national songs: the former are mostly used on formal and solemn occasions and the latter on more informal and joyous occasions.

Waltzing Matilda is a most emotional and moving tune. Its formal recognition as a national song is likely to prove very popular indeed -- and encourage its wider use.

And once formally recognised, the song could then be played and sung anywhere.

Harold Scruby, Ausflag

I, for one, will not be gagged by an Irish-based mob of cultural police. On October 10 the thousands of Australians in the stands will sing Waltzing Matilda. Let's show the rugby world we will not be silenced. If the RWC was to be hosted by Ireland, I'm sure they'd be singing renditions of Danny Boy.

Beverley Watts, Moss Vale

If you'd just stop whinging for a moment and bothered to listen to what the IRU was actually saying! You as a crowd can sing all you want, whatever you want. But the song that was a jingle for billy tea, otherwise known as Waltzing

Letters to the Editor

Matilda cannot be performed before the game. Why don't you all pull your heads out of your tuckerbags and for once acknowledge the Aboriginal culture that would be more than welcome by the IRU?

Fiona Cull, Cronulla

Yes, we want to sing Waltzing Matilda at the rugby ... but we don't want to sing the version that you have published (from Ray Chesterton's article,

August 29).

This is not the version that I learnt at school nor is it the version that is sung at rugby internationals all over the World -- this seems to be some attempt at updating or dare I say it politically correcting an otherwise great Aussie icon.

I don't think so!

Into the bin with this version -- we'll sing the other one anytime.

Matthew Ferguson, Cremorne

Sing it with pride

Why should the Premier, Bob Carr, be sending the IRB a "detailed submission making a case for the song to be allowed"? Matilda? Allowed? In our own country! Have some pride Mr Carr. We will be singing it not once but twice -- loudly!

Simone Bond, Edgecliff

Kind words

My husband Peter was admitted to hospital on August 21 and 22 and we would like to thank nurses and Dr Hunt for their care and kindness. Despite a very stressful job, they were concerned and cheerful all the time in helping my husband recover.

Marion MacCaffrey, Bexley

I applaud The Daily Telegraph for displaying such compassion with the cover story and editorial about Kristina and her little boy. It restored my faith in human nature. She's been punished more than enough and her son should not suffer on her behalf.

Naomi Parry, Katoomba

To the point

If that's the best show Mars can put on for Earth every 60,000 years, then I'm not going to bother hanging around for the next one.

Paul Shipton, Roseville

Politics is a dirty business, so they say. Whatever gave them that idea?

Thelma Digby, Lane Cove

What is the point of that commercial featuring Dr James Wright telling us all how we can minimise waste? It's on every five minutes on four television stations. No wonder there isn't enough money for the hospital system.

Ted Mitchell, Baulkham Hills

Letters to the Editor

What's news

- 1 What is the official figure for Australia's current account deficit?
- 2 How long was HMAS Sydney away serving in the Persian Gulf?
- 3 Who was named Hollywood's highest-paid **female** movie star?
- 4 Name the bank behind this week's \$1 billion raid on AMP shares?
- 5 Which Australian striker is playing with Scottish Premier League outfit Aberdeen?

ANSWERS

1: \$12.7 billion. 2: Five months. 3: Cameron Diaz, who earned \$74 million in 2001/02. 4: National Australia Bank. 5: David Zdrilic.

Word power

CANTANKEROUS

Someone who is grouchy, ill-tempered, quarrelsome or otherwise painful, is said to be cantankerous. In fact, the word can be used as a fitting description of troublesome computers, children, colleagues, animals or substances or anything else that brings difficulty. According to the Cool Words website, its origins are the subject of some debate, although it is generally agreed cantankerous has been in use since the 1770s at least. Wordsmiths believe the root of the word lies in the Middle English expression, contekour, which was used to describe a pugilist in those times. It, in turn, was derived from conteck (strife, contention). One theory suggests a word conteckerous may have sprung from this, later to be influenced perhaps by cankerous (spreading of corruption) and rancorous (bearing spite or malice). An alternative theory sees cantankerous based on the Irish word canran, meaning strife or complaining.

In search

DAVID (DIA) DAVIES

I wish to contact the relatives of the late David Davies (aka "Dia") who resided for many years at Buff Point and later at Coffs Harbour. I have some items which would be of sentimental value to his relatives who were last known to live in the Cessnock area. Please contact Frank on 95254113

ST ANNES SCHOOLS

St Anne Convent School, Bondi Beach, is holding a combined reunion with ex-students of Marist Brothers College. It's on Sunday, October 19, 2003. Mass will be at 11am at St Annes Shrine followed by lunch and refreshments at the school hall. Partners of ex-students are welcome to attend. Inclusive cost will be \$40 per person or \$70 per double. For details contact John Wheeler on 92239747 or e-mail jjwsol@bigpond.com, phone Lyn Maidment on 93899977 or e-mail lynmaids@hotmail.com by October 3.

BRIDGET BRODERICK

I am seeking information for Bridget Broderick/Brodrick nee McCarthy born Cork Island around 1787. She arrived in NSW in 1833 as a convict aboard Buffalo, accompanied by one son. She had two sons Jeremy (or Jeremiah) and Edward Charles. I have no more information until Bridget was given a conditional pardon on June 9, 1855 and given permission to live in Bathurst, NSW. Edward Charles married Marion Hansell -- my great-grandparents -- at St James Church of England Sydney on the June 9, 1875. They had 12 children -- one was Eva, my grandmother. Any information, please contact Lurline Robinson on 97433540 or e-mail lurlinerobinson@bigpond.com.

HAZELBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Letters to the Editor

I am searching for ex-pupils from Years 5 and 6 from 1960 for a reunion. Call Norma Lloyd on 96706683 or e-mail loryd@bigfoot.com.au.

Mail

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Letters should be no more than 250 words, clearly typed or neatly hand written. Name and address and phone number must be supplied for verification.

Letters may be edited.

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Readers' views; African goals still off target

The Sunday Herald

July 20, 2003

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Section: Pg. 8

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Body

ALTHOUGH President Bush's visit to Africa turned a welcome spotlight on the difficulties the continent faces (News, July 13), it is the recent United Nations Development Report for 2003 which sheds the most light on the predicament of one of the poorest regions in the world. It shows that the continent is woefully far from meeting the Millennium Development Goals which were agreed by every country in 2000.

It had been agreed to halve the number of people living on less than 70p per day by 2015. At the present rate it will take until 2153. The UN report shows that of the 54 countries where life grew harder in the 1990s, 20 were African. One in three people in Africa go hungry and life expectancy in some countries has fallen to 37 years.

It is time for a concerted effort by the wealthy nations of the world to make the international trade rules work for the poor. We welcome the call by the UK International Development Committee for the focus to remain on development at the World Trade Organisation Ministerial in Cancun. Britain should not allow "new issues" of competition and investment to be introduced. The UN report demonstrates that even to meet past promises, we have to do much more. It is time to put the Millennium Development Goals back on track.

Paul Chitnis

Chief Executive

SCIAF

Cuillins stink

In April 2000, at a meeting in Portree, it was agreed that representation would be made to the Scottish Executive demanding a full enquiry into the legal ownership of the Cuillins due to the serious doubt over John MacLeod's claims of title. It was also felt a moratorium on the sale should be declared until it has been clearly established who owned the Cuillins.

The Crown Estate "found no evidence to support a legal challenge against John MacLeod of MacLeod's title to the Cuillins". When pressed further, it turned out that in counsel's opinion John MacLeod's title was merely capable of including the Cuillins. In other words, three years on, legal ownership of the Cuillins has not been clearly established in law.

How can it be said that parts of the Cuillins already belong to the John Muir Trust, or to the Scottish Executive's agricultural department, or to Forest Enterprise? From whom did they get legal title? The real fundamental problem

Readers' views;African goals still off target

at the very root and heart of this issue, as the Sunday Herald headline correctly has it is: "Whose Land Is It Anyway?" (Seven Days, July 13)

As Roseanna Cunningham, MSP for Perth, said to parliament on Wednesday 20 March 2002: "There is a scandal about land ownership in Scotland, which goes back to when land was first enclosed and treated as though it belonged to an individual, rather than to communities. The ownership of great tracts of land by individuals is a concept that ordinary Scots have never accepted."

There is no doubt, in my mind, that the Cuillins are, and should continue to be, in perpetual national common ownership, and should be managed under the democratic control of the local community. My argument is based on the fact that, in the Celtic tradition, the land was owned in common by the people. Therefore, it is my view that John MacLeod's questionable claim to title, based on a Crown charter of 1611, would fail because the Crown had no legal right to take the land off the people in the first place and, secondly, the Crown had no legal right to subsequently convey huge tracts of land to nobles who in return for favours became vassals of the Crown.

The people of Skye should make a firm stand. Accept no fudge. Take your land back, and get the fact firmly established in law.

Robert Stewart

Dunvegan

Ross-shire

IAN Bell's article on the attempted sale of the Cuillins of Skye illustrates the appalling maladministration of land ownership in Scotland. This is something which the Irish and Norwegian governments have, in their respective countries, tried to address by progressive policies to extend land ownership and regenerate rural populations. These policies have worked, so why can they not be implemented in Scotland?

It is truly horrific that over half of private land in Scotland is owned by 243 individuals. Part of the problem was that when the class system was destroyed by advancing competition, the land held by the clan chiefs, in common for their people, was privatised. In effect, stolen from the people. In Ireland the same process is being reversed by making parcels of land from big estates available to ordinary people so that they can work on it, return to the countryside and re-populate rural areas.

Yes, community land purchase in Scotland has helped to redistribute land and is a step forward. But much more needs to be done. For instance, the land reform legislation has gone not nearly far enough. The treatment of tenant farmers has been scandalous.

Ian Bell's article shows how necessary land redistribution and social solidarity are, to solve the present land ownership problem in Scotland. The Scottish parliament should look at this again and this time not be duped by the dead hand of landlordism which Ian Bell so powerfully explored in his article.

Randolph Murray

Perthshire

Salmon alarm

I AM writing to express my mounting frustration at the stance taken by the Sunday Herald against the Scottish salmon farming industry.

I feel that our industry is subject to a barrage of criticism based, it seems, on the opinions of a single anti-salmon farming activist, the oft-quoted Don Staniford. I would not, of course, deign to consider salmon farming above fair criticism; indeed I respect opinions but only when based on facts and good science.

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Your article last month on salmon labelling ("Food agency caught out over salmon labelling delay", June 15, News) provide Don Staniford of the Salmon Farm Protest Group with a platform. For the record, salmon farmed in Scotland is not "marinated in dioxins and PCBs" and is not genetically modified.

Brian Simpson

Chief Executive

Scottish Quality Salmon

Island strife

TIM Cox makes an interesting point about many incomers being supportive of Gaelic and Gaelic-medium education (Readers' Views, July 13) and this should be acknowledged and welcomed.

It should also be noted though, as Mr Cox points out, that the majority of those moving to the islands are of retirement age and simply do not have young children to be enrolled at the islands schools Gaelic or not.

That house prices in the Western Isles have increased massively over the past few years is not an issue for discussion, it is a fact, and it is a fact which is sadly beginning to price many young people out the area. This is not of course, a situation unique to the islands, recent publicity has highlighted this problem across in the capital of the Highlands, Inverness. The key difference though, is that the rise in house prices in Inverness is being driven by rapid and on going expansion and development through large-scale investment in the area, attracting employers and jobs and making Inverness an exciting and attractive place for people of working age.

The Hebridean housing market meanwhile, has been driven by middle-aged or elderly couples selling up in the Lowlands or England, and using their (relatively) massive purchasing power to pursue their idea of an idyllic lifestyle in the world of Castaway or Two Thousand Acres Of Skye. We should question whether this is of long-term benefit to the level of economic activity or sustainability of the areas affected.

It is sad that Mr Cox also includes a dig at supposed Hebridean antipathy towards Gaelic as part of his letter. This is a massive issue which does not deserve to be treated using such throwaway comments regarding islanders' use of Gaelic.

Mr Cox should note that Gaelic-medium schools are a recent phenomenon and until now, almost all of those schooled in the Hebrides missed out on any element of Gaelic being incorporated into their primary education. This is not their fault for not choosing to learn it, it is something for which those responsible for education provision in this country should feel the deepest possible sense of shame, and look to rectify over the coming years.

Ruaridh Mac Leoid

Inverness

Ariel threat

SO Palestinian prime minister Mahmoud Abbas is a "moderate and a reformer" (News, July 13). A comforting cliché for some, perhaps, but one which is meaningless in the current context.

It will take more than moderation and reform to deal with Ariel Sharon, a man who has always had trouble with the truth. And unless Mahmoud Abbas faces up to the truth, peace will continue to be that much talked about but elusive concept.

The whole philosophy of the occupier, whereby the Palestinian people have to earn their rights, with the occupier acting as judge and jury, has to be openly challenged. Just as Sharon's recent, well-publicised advice to the settler movement to continue as usual, but to be quiet about it, cannot be ignored.

Readers' views;African goals still off target

The continuing humiliation at checkpoints, sewage-filled trenches and earthen ramparts around villages, the demolition of homes, killing and injury of civilian men, women and children, destruction of economic infrastructure should be condemned for what it is - terrorism Knesset-style.

As for Israel's "fence", no self-respecting politician, Palestinian or otherwise, can afford to ignore its ramifications - both for peace in the area and for the consequence of the Palestinians under occupation. At times twice the height of the Berlin Wall with watch-towers at regular intervals, this concrete monstrosity is set to devour a further 10% of Palestinian territory. It already separates farmers from their land. The once prosperous market town of Qalqilya is now surrounded, as if by a concrete bottle, with one road in and out. At the whim of one occupation soldier, the residents can be imprisoned.

And where does all this leave the forces of "moderation and reform"? I suspect that Mahmoud Abbas will have to search far and wide to find a military occupation which ever bowed to such qualities. This leaves Hamas, Islamic Jihad et al which, I also suspect, will suit Ariel Sharon and other like minded warmongers perfectly.

Hugh Humphries

Glasgow

A call to arms

WHILE I am no apologist for the Blair administration's apparently excessive emphasis on Iraq's alleged possession of WMD in the run-up to the recent Gulf war, Iain MacWhirter is being somewhat disingenuous in his claim that the "case for going to war against Saddam Hussein" was exclusively based on the "imminent danger" of his supposed weapons of mass destruction. (Seven Days, July 13).

As I recall, there was also the by no means insignificant matter of Saddam's serial flouting of UN Security Council resolutions dating back to the conclusion of the first UN-sponsored Gulf war in 1991, and culminating in an unanimously passed resolution in November 2002. By the strict terms of this resolution Saddam was required to detail the whereabouts of the weapons material he was known to have possessed prior to the previous withdrawal of UN weapons inspectors in 1998 or alternatively to indicate precisely how and when he had disposed of such WMD material. As even the otherwise compliant chief UN weapons inspector, Hans Blix, was unable to deny, Saddam was still failing to comply with the UN resolutions.

As that resolution also committed the Security Council to consider "serious consequences" in the event of Iraq's continuing non-compliance, a question arises as to what precisely was meant by the use of this phrase. Surely it didn't just mean a slap on the wrist from the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan?

Ian O Bayne

Glasgow

Radiation row

I READ with interest the article in the Sunday Herald on June 26 concerning radioactive pollution in the Solway Firth sediments. I also read the letter on July 6, refuting the article's claims.

What cannot be disputed is the fact that my children played on the Solway sands on a regular basis a few years after the Windscale/Sellafield reactor fire. Two of my children have since developed cancer while one of my grandchildren died of leukemia and there was no history of cancer in either my or my husband's own family.

Anne Wilson

Boat of Garten

Stormy weather

Readers' views;African goals still off target

I HAVE been an assiduous and generally satisfied reader of the Sunday Herald for several years. However, I find the comment in Alan Taylor's diary on July 13 (News) labelling as "ridiculous" the award of an honorary degree to Heather Reid totally inappropriate.

In addition to being "the weather" Heather Reid is well known for her volunteer work in the public understanding of science and outreach activities to increase the number of women in science. For example, we at Strathclyde have been honoured to guest Heather as the David and Isabella Elder lecturer in the year 2000. Her talk attracted a record 420 secondary-school pupils from all over Scotland.

Heather is a graduate of Edinburgh University from which she holds degrees in physics and satellite imaging, she is a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society and the Institute of Physics, she delivers guest lectures at the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde, works for the Science Festival and the Glasgow Science Centre, has been a successful chair of the Institute of Physics in Scotland and continues to do work for the Secondary Teachers of Physics.

In all these activities she has been appreciated for her professionalism and infectious enthusiasm for science and physics in particular.

For a paper that constantly deplores the lack of science and technology graduates in Scotland, I find quite upsetting that Mr Taylor assumes that the award from Paisley University to Heather Reid was unjustified.

I congratulate Heather Reid, the scientist, the weather forecaster, the champion of public understanding of science, the model for thousands of present and future Scottish graduates, for a well deserved Honourary Degree from the University of Paisley, her native town.

Prof Gian-Luca Oppo

Department of Physics, University of Strathclyde

Prof William Firth

(Head of Department of Physics, University of Strathclyde)

Prof David Saxon

(Chairman of the Institute of Physics in Scotland)

Prof John Chapman

(Head of Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow)

Dr Carol Trager-Cowan

(Convener of Science and Engineering for All committee,

University of Strathclyde)

Graphic

The current situation in Skye underlines the historical inequity of Scottish land rights Photograph: Kirsty Anderson

Load-Date: July 21, 2003

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TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Windsor Star (Ontario)

March 25, 2004 Thursday Final Edition

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Body

Postcard funds could have gone to health care

What a waste of money to put postcards on the side of a building to the tune of \$270,000. (Postcards Record History, March 19.)

Why not put that money toward health care, namely for angioplasty. I have friends who have had to wait to have this done in London. According to news stories, \$1.5 million are needed for this and \$270,000 was wasted on postcards.

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I would say the money would have been a darn good start towards a very useful and lifesaving target.

But what do I know, I'm just a taxpayer who pays and pays and pays.

BRUCE SOVRAN

Kingsville

LETTER OF THE DAY: Canadians still rely heavily on U.S. security

I hope I am not the only one troubled by recent news regarding our Canadian security. Let's start with one major concern. Canadians who are still U.S.-bashing need to have their heads examined. After Sept. 11, 2001, Canadians should be awakened to the fact that their civilized way of life is in jeopardy from a bunch of cowardly, religious extremists.

Are we forgetting 25 Canadians were also killed in the attack? Don't think these cowards are going to sit there next time and say, "Oh no, we can't bomb Detroit, all those innocent Canadians will be killed!" or, "We can't bomb Windsor, they're Canadians!"

It is our government and ultimately we as voters, who have come to rely heavily on the United States for our security. I would personally like to thank them. It is our responsibility to control our own country's security, which includes upgrading our military, changing our pathetic immigration practices and our shortsighted views on airport and nuclear power plant security, which are prime Canadian targets.

A recent story ran in The Star involving al-Qaida trainee Abdurahman Khadr, quoted him as being Canadian. He wants the federal government to help one of his brothers, who is being held by the U.S. in Guantanamo Bay. He also wants to bring over his younger brother, who is paralysed after being in a shootout with Pakistani soldiers. Boy, we sure can pick 'em.

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

What can we do about our (lack of) security? Start using your vote and start writing the government to make changes now. Save your peace protests and the wood from your signs for the environmentalists. al-Qaida doesn't want peace. It wants to annihilate western civilization and Christendom with it.

CHRIS RODD

Cottam

Consider annual fee for public broadcasting

Public broadcasters in Canada should consider making their audience pay a yearly fee in order to generate enough revenue. This would mean commercial-free programming and no money from taxpayers.

This is a much better option than government privatizing or cutting funding to public broadcasters.

ZENON STUPNYCKYJ

Windsor

Cellucci should suffer attack of bad air from U.S.

I am writing in support of Windsor Police Chief Glenn Stannard's challenge to American Ambassador Paul Cellucci (The Star, March 20).

Stannard threw down the gauntlet and said if Cellucci has specific information that Windsor is under any greater threat from a terrorist attack than was the case in the days immediately after 9-11, then he should share that intelligence with the proper police authorities, or just button his ambassadorial lips.

It could happen here or it could happen in any one of a dozen different Canadian centres, but what is the point of shining the spotlight on this border town unless he knows something definitive?

Ambassador Cellucci, I suggest that you visit Windsor and stay long enough to get a whiff of the rotten air blowing over from Michigan. You should read the studies that tell us those lethal windstreams carry tons of carcinogenic particles into Windsor, from a variety of industrial sites in Michigan. You should study the figures that show elevated incidents of virtually every kind of cancer affecting Windsor residents.

We are already under airborne attacks from Americans and the Americans don't give a damn. It is probably impossible to table the exact number of Canadians who have died or have otherwise been seriously affected by deadly air pollution from the U.S. The Brophy-Gilbertson report was drawn from a study of 17 communities. Windsor goes through the roof on every count.

If no one has been able to prove that Michigan is culpable with absolute certainty, neither has anyone been able to produce evidence refuting the assumption. Until that happens, we have no option but to accept the presumptive smoking gun theory.

So, Ambassador Cellucci, you should save your breath, time and energy warning Windsor about possible terrorist attacks when we are living with threats from another form of friendly fire.

CARL MORGAN

Tecumseh

Only women who really need it should use FRO

As I read the article, Support Office Ruins Lives, critics say, I could have been reading about my husband's situation. It was only after my husband's divorce that his ex-wife insisted the support payments go through the Family Responsibility Office, despite he'd been paying his support regularly for almost four years. The reason: she

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

wanted to be paid at the beginning of the month, not every two weeks as had been the practice. We did not find out until years later that in the four months it took the FRO to set up the support payment, they had sent automatic arrears notices to the credit bureau. We insisted this be removed from his credit rating because he had never been in arrears.

I'm a support recipient and never contemplated using the FRO. No one had to tell me the support amount needed to be varied when my daughter finished high school and didn't intend to go to university right away. I don't threaten my ex with the FRO if the support payment is a couple of days late. If my ex-husband lost his job due to circumstances beyond his control, the support payment would be amended. I'm not a saint, it just seems to be the reasonable and rational thing to do. Besides, the FRO was set up to target deadbeat dads.

What a sad message they are sending their children and what a disservice to women out there who really need the time and resources of the FRO. It's the martyr syndrome at its best.

MELINDA STRBA

Woodslee

Not just deadbeat dads registered with FRO

We have yet to have a positive experience with the FRO. It's just the norm that when parents divorce, in most cases mom gets custody, dad has an empty wallet. Yet, I do believe most people do not understand what happens when the FRO gets involved with support payments.

Try calling to check on your case. You can be put on hold for hours, not get through at all, or if you happen to contact an actual person, they have no idea what you are talking about or can't answer your questions.

Try finding out why the FRO deducted more than half your paycheque. Oops, their error they say, but nothing can be done about it now. They'll just keep it for a future payment to the ex.

Try getting a correct or proper statement of payments. Never has one ever been right in our case. And, when you send them all your receipts, no proper adjustment follows. What they say is always accurate, regardless of proof.

Children do need support and our payments are regularly made. However, I think many people feel that one is registered with the FRO because they choose not to pay. That is not always the case. But try dealing with them, it's not an easy task.

TRICIA MELOCHE

McGregor

No assembly-sector investment; no parts jobs

The recent quotes attributed to Dennis DesRosiers regarding the state of the Canadian automotive industry were both unfair and inaccurate. To blame the CAW for the loss of jobs in auto assembly is simply ignoring the facts.

It is also misleading to say the auto-parts sector is extremely healthy.

It is a well-known fact that where assembly goes, parts follows. By Des-Rosiers' own admission, Canada has seen very little new investment in the assembly sector and, therefore, parts jobs have been affected. The decision not to build the new DCX plant is just one example, the closure of the Pillette Road plant and the announced closure of others in Ontario and Quebec, mean the loss of assembly and parts jobs.

The CAW is actively involved in the pursuit of a national automotive trade policy to address this situation. What is difficult to understand is why the senior levels of government are not.

JOHN TOTH

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Windsor

Letter to dog dumpers, you know who you are

Letter to a dog dumper: I pray you read this. I don't expect you to feel any remorse because people of your kind are lacking in humane feelings, but maybe someone will recognize you and that may make you feel ashamed.

For some incomprehensible reason, you took two beautiful Chows to the Lakeshore Conservation Area and abandoned them to the elements. But Chows are extremely loyal, intelligent animals and so these two dogs stayed in the area, waiting for you. They even laid in the middle of the road so they wouldn't miss your familiar vehicle, waiting patiently, trusting that you would come back. No one really knows how long they were there without food, water or shelter.

Anyone who is looking for a good, loyal, family dog, please call or visit the Lakeshore Dog Pound. Most of the dogs there are well-trained, affectionate and eager to please.

GAIL WATSON

Essex

Bush ran roughshod over allies, including Canada

If you can ever get beyond your pro-Bush editorials, do you think you can pause long enough to extract the basic principles that should guide pre-emptive military interventions?

Since the very inarticulate President Bush has been forced to stumble about in search of a postwar justification of the invasion, what are we to make of his principles? I want to make certain I understand just what it is you find so admirable about the Bush doctrine and the bullying manner in which he ran roughshod over his allies, including Canada. How shall we characterize his principles? How about, might makes right? Or what about, the ends justify the means?

The point being, even if the outcomes in Iraq are ultimately largely positive, the Bush process has been crude and ignoble. And shame on The Windsor Star for not saying so.

FRANK WHITE

Windsor

Editor's response: Jimmy Carter was diplomatic, intellectual and ineffective. This week, Hamas threatened the U.S., had sober second thoughts and publicly withdrew its threat. President Bush may be crude, ignoble and even inarticulate, but he is effective.

Little rain leads to car damage in parking lot

To the inconsiderate people who let their shopping carts hit our car in the Zellers' parking lot at Tecumseh Mall on Saturday -- a sarcastic, thank you. After an outing with my family, we returned to our car to find three shopping carts wedged between our car and the car next to ours. Upon closer inspection, there were numerous scratches to the paint on the driver's side.

Now, because you were too lazy to walk your shopping cart back to the store or the cart corral, I have repairs to make. I cannot believe how inconsiderate people are in this city because they are afraid of a little rain. You know who you are. Thanks for ruining our day and our car.

JOANNE NOBLE

Windsor

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Who is making big bucks off of beef farmers?

My concern is with the farmers in Essex County. I know we may not be the biggest producers of beef in Canada, but I feel we have to support the local guys. Someone seems to be getting rich off these farmers ever since the mad cow scare. One way I feel we could help these farmers would be to start buying our meat directly from them. If the consumer stops buying meat from the supermarkets and the stores feel the same pinch the farmer has, then maybe someone will find out who is making the big bucks on the beef market.

The local farmers take the cattle to the abattoirs, where it's cut, wrapped and inspected. I purchase all my beef this way and have done so for some time. I feel it is the only way to enjoy beef. It's fresh and you can ask questions about what they are feeding their cattle. If everyone across Canada would do this, I bet we would get answers. Essex County has been known to be a great farming community, let's stick together and help out each other.

D. WRIGHT

Windsor

Put more funds into health care, not offices

I am sick of the government not fixing our medical system. There are people dying due to lack of facilities. My father has had one heart attack, three operations for a hernia and an aneurysm. His heart rate has been staying at more than 95 but the earliest appointment for a heart specialist is June 16 and he has to go to London.

He has already had an operation in the Chatham hospital, his doctor has left town and he is now forced to drive about 30 miles to see another one. If the government put money into the places needed instead of into fancy lawn ornaments and new offices, there would be less people dying and more being offered to the sick and needy.

If they can't figure this out, then why are we voting for them.

TRACY ARMSTRONG

Windsor

Take a walk, use less gas, maybe bring down prices

It seems soaring gas prices have sparked some unrest with citizens. I have heard many a theory for who is to blame for such highway robbery. Perhaps you've received e-mail messages suggesting different boycott strategies.

I would like to call to mind the basic principle of economics, supply and demand. Spring is near, take a walk to the store, bike with your friends and family and carpool to work, because the more you need the product, the more it will cost. These not-so-novel suggestions might have positive side-effects for the environment.

KRIS BARRON

Tecumseh

African Canadian building fundraiser successful

To all those who supported our We Have a Dream bowling fundraiser. By attending and/or donating raffle prizes, we had a successful three days. We also thank WI-TV.

On behalf of the African Canadian building fund, I thank you.

LEILA DENNIS

Windsor

Try applying Scriptures in our daily lives

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Re: The Passion Of The Christ.

The movie has an impact. The physical pain Jesus suffered was a pain that no other could bear. Jesus's strength came from being the son of God.

Jesus showed love by taking all of our weaknesses upon himself to make it possible for us to battle the evil one, Satan. Jesus stands for truth and the truth has set us free.

Are we willing to accept the truth? We can by reading the Scriptures and apply them in our lives.

C. DESCHAIINE

Windsor

Remember your manners, maybe get better service

My question to readers is this: what has happened to manners and courtesy?

Are please and thank you and acknowledgement of greetings a thing of the past?

As a worker in the service industry, I witness the lack of all of the above daily and feel both sad and frustrated.

Has the general public forgotten the lessons in manners taught to us by our parents and teachers, or are we just too busy to care?

Whether you are dining in a restaurant, ordering at a drive thru, buying an item of clothing or simply filling up your gas tank, please remember that a simple smile and thank you goes a long way.

It costs nothing nor takes any time out of your busy schedule to be polite. You will find you get better service because of it.

Thank you and have a nice day.

ZOE HUMPHREYS

Windsor

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TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

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Body

Abortion punishes baby for its mother's mistake

It's frustrating to hear that some women feel they deserve a choice when they are faced with an unwanted pregnancy. They had a choice. They had the choice to have sex. After that, it's not a choice, it's a responsibility.

Whatever happened to taking responsibility for your actions? I can understand that if the woman was raped, she didn't have a choice and abortion in that case is more understandable, but most women who have abortions come off as selfish.

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To take a child out of this world when they are all we really have for the future is appalling. Just because you don't want it, doesn't mean someone else doesn't. There are couples all over the world who desperately want children and can't have them and here women are taking away any chance these babies have to live and be loved.

Abortion is final. There's no going back. It's something you'll have to live with the rest of your life. Women say they can't give their baby up for adoption.

Think about your baby, this incredible one-of-a-kind creation that someone is guaranteed to love if you can't. The pain and regret you'll feel after aborting your baby can't compare to the appreciation you'll receive from the new parents of your adopted baby. Yes, it would be hard, but that's life.

To the women who gave their babies up for adoption, you're my heroes.

To the women who chose abortion, good luck with having to live the rest of your life with the reality that you punished your baby for your mistake. That was very responsible.

KATRINA CHORDASH

Harrow

LETTER OF THE DAY: A trucker's view on other drivers

Re: Plans to retest Ontario drivers. Just over a week ago, the morning of the 12 car pile up on 401, I was east-bound in my truck at the Dutton cut off. With a flatbed tractor and two cars ahead of me in snow, a car came out of nowhere, westbound on the eastbound lane. I could barely see as the tractor and the two cars drove out of the way.

I was able to miss both cars just as I saw this other small gray vehicle pass me by going west. It was only by the grace of God I was able to miss it, too.

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

That is only one of the many times I have had to guess what a car driver is going to do. It's like they get their driver's licence and then throw the rules away. Every rule they had to learn is lost.

They should also put a minimum speed on the 401, because going too slow is almost worse than going too fast. I was travelling through Toronto when ahead of me all the traffic was diving to the left and I followed and what did I see? A guy, a grown man, driving with his knee steering the car, talking on his cellphone, while writing down information from the person on the phone. All of this while doing 60 km/h, in a 100-km/h zone, in the centre lane no less. The fines for going too slow should equal the speeding fines.

And for those people who think that "I've had my licence for 40 years, I don't need get retested." You're the ones it's for.

You're just the person who is most likely to fail, bad habits and all. Truck drivers have to be retested and so should you.

TOM LIVINGSTON

Windsor

Will retesting drivers have any real effect?

Re: Retesting of drivers.

It seems sensible at first glance, but then the thought hits: They're tested, they drive well, they're back on the streets, they're driving like maniacs again.

How much would we have to pay for retesting which would mostly just maintain the status quo?

GAIL AYRE

Windsor

Loss of local auto jobs will affect many others

I am a senior manager in the automotive sector and am currently watching a lot of people I know suffer, as such I write this.

I am an autoworker. I was just laid off. Yes, I made a lot and perhaps you have little sympathy and you think we are paid too much. Well, consider holding an eight-pound part and having to pick one up and insert it into position every 30 seconds for eight to 10 hours in a row. See the point?

Also, I have some considerations. Yes, I made \$80,000 a year. And I hear a lot of people talking about the companies in North America who produce here, but are not Big Three and how it is OK to buy from them. Well, where do the profits go? You are paying someone over in Asia or Europe to do my job. I am your neighbour and customer also.

I have two vehicles. Guess what, the bank will be getting them back. What do you drive as the banker?

I was planning to have my driveway paved this summer. What do you drive at the construction company?

I was planning on having trees installed in my back yard. What do you drive at the landscaping company?

My child needs a computer for school. What do you drive at the retail store?

My other younger child needs braces. What do you drive at the doctor's and dentist's office?

Now none of this will happen, but see the effects of your decisions in your own life. But rest assured, someone far away from our community will benefit due to your decision and the profits will leave North America all together.

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

When 800 jobs disappear at approximately \$85,000 apiece from our community, guess how many trees, driveways and computers are getting purchased.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

Tecumseh

Buy North American goods and save jobs

Re: Buy Canadian and American. I commend Ed Wilder for his letter to the editor that appeared on April 3, China, Japan Grow, Our Economy Suffers. We are losing jobs to overseas manufacturing since wages overseas are much cheaper than products made here.

It's obvious that these industries are only concerned about maximizing their profits. Their products are manufactured overseas, then brought back here to be sold. They are draining our jobs from us.

I encourage people to buy products made in Canada or the U.S. where they are manufactured by employees from companies over here. Save our jobs and economy!

JASON SEVINGY

Windsor

Board ignores a teacher's real day

I am outraged with recent claims in the media concerning the impending teachers' strike. My grandson is a teacher with the Greater Essex County District School Board and on March 26 he was instructed to distribute a letter to all of his students stating the board's position.

In the letter, it was stated that teachers only work 300 minutes, or five hours, a day. This was a very biased look at what a teacher does during their average workday.

My grandson informed me that he begins work at 8:30 a.m. and usually does not leave the school until 4:30 p.m. He is supposed to receive one 40-minute uninterrupted lunch, but the reality of the job is that he often cannot even find time for a bathroom break.

Teachers are not just instructors, they're counsellors, coaches, mentors and sometimes the only person a child can talk to.

What about all the at-home time spent marking and planning? What about the numerous evenings devoted to compiling report cards?

I hope parents are not swayed by the board's recent newsletter and can see the reality of the situation.

G. MATISZ

Windsor

Acting professionally would benefit teachers

It has always been my understanding that salaried professions are never measured by the time involved, but by the output. In Roseann Danese's Friday article, Teachers' Union Increases Pressure, I read about the withdrawal of administrative duties by the public elementary school teachers and the dispute over 200 versus 150 minutes of paid prep time.

Students -- and their school boards -- should not be held hostage.

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Despite Greater Essex public elementary teachers earning \$8,500 more than the provincial average, it seems to me that this Windsor tradition of union threats and strikes has prevailed. For example, where else do you have Canada's largest and most notorious autoworkers' union representing casino workers?

The prep time dispute, something that would cost an additional \$1 million to \$3.5 million, is one of the most ridiculous quarrels I have seen as someone who has been through the public system.

Such an expensive change in policy would involve accountability -- could we also initiate a policy that would keep these employees to account, making sure that 200 minutes (no less) of paid prep time is accounted for?

As long as unionized teachers keep up the facade of being in brotherhood with factory labourers, public regard will remain uneasy.

Can you image if the Ontario Medical Association functioned more like a union? There would be public outcry if medicare were placed at risk.

If teachers want the recognition of being professionals then they should drop their work-to-rule mentality and anti-government vocabulary.

Dalton McGuinty, the answer to their prayers, is the same politician who introduced Bill 14 in 1992 that would effectively take away a teacher's right to strike.

In my opinion, professionalism begins with a good attitude. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario certainly does not exercise one.

Local president Hilda Watkins says they are exercising restraint. If anything, it should be them being restrained from impairing the education of our kids.

MATTHEW ALEKSIC

University of Toronto

Fumes from the trucks are also bad for truckers

With all the talk of trucks giving off deadly fumes, it's nice to see that local studies have been done to determine just how dangerous heavy and congested traffic is.

A few weeks back, I was watching Jeopardy and one of the questions was, what is the No. 1 job in Canada? I was pretty surprised to hear Alex Trebek say that it was truck driving. Now, just because I heard it on TV doesn't mean I necessarily believe it, but because of the show's nature and because Trebek is Canadian, I tend to.

Every time I think of the diesel fumes spewing from these trucks, I can't help but worry for my husband, who drives one 60 hours weekly.

As much as a rightful society hates to see them barrelling down their neighbourhood roads, everyone knows how critical product delivery is to our lives.

Drivers and their loved ones worry over the dangers incurred in driving these massive machines, as well as the long hours they are made to drive because of laws condoning such hours.

There is also worry over what the constant exposure of being in and surrounded by other trucks does to the driver's, as well as the public's, health.

The coal miners had canaries. Can anyone from the university respond as to the amount of toxins found in the truck cabs?

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Perhaps the large amount of money spent on where to put truck corridors should be at least matched with how to fuel vehicles with less poisonous substances.

If it's as bad for the truckers as common sense dictates and with such large numbers of our workforce employed in the transport of goods, leaving the the compassionate element aside, think of the monetary impact this could have on an already burdened health-care system.

S. ROMANO

Amherstburg

Thanks to all volunteers who picked up garbage

This is just a quick line to thank councillor Alan Halberstadt and the other people for giving up their Sunday to pick up garbage in the Memorial Park area.

If it is not already done, I would like to suggest that a sentence of community service include a couple of hours picking up the garbage that unthinking and uncaring people leave behind in our parks and on our streets.

Once again, thanks.

D. HANSON

Windsor

City should adopt stiffer litter fines

I am a former Windsorite and even though I do not live there, I still love to visit often.

I read the column from The Star's Gord Henderson about taking out the trash. I often check in and see what's happening in the city.

I agree with what he wrote and wonder why there is so much ignorance from people and how carelessly they discard their trash.

People of Windsor need to get a grip and follow some of the rules and programs implemented.

Windsor is a beautiful place -- where and when maintained. Give a bit of effort and pitch in and do your part in keeping it clean and maintained.

I know other cities would not allow this ignorance from people to continue. There are big consequences for such ignorance.

Maybe people would get a grip if they were hit with bigger fines in their pocket books.

MAGGIE NEILSON

Calgary, Alta.

Willistead needs to be cleaned up

After walking through Willistead Park on March 31, I was outraged to again discover more colourful tag (spray paint) markings. The maintenance building, cement pillars surrounding the park, garbage cans, signs, etc.

I am embarrassed to call Windsor my city because it looks like a dump. We need to catch those responsible and make them clean up their mess.

We need to have cameras in place and patrols that answer calls when these crimes are reported. We need help.

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Please do your part to police your neighbourhood. As for our city leaders, please take action now.

B. MARSHALL

Windsor

Detroit casino workers looking at Windsor

Although it is sad to see our union brothers and sisters on strike at Casino Windsor, I would like to let them know that the workers at the Detroit Casinos fully support their efforts to negotiate a fair and equitable contract.

We are all in the gaming industry together, regardless of which side of the border we work on. I work in one of the Detroit casinos and we are all supportive of their efforts, as Windsor workers are basically setting the standards for all of us in the gaming industry.

Although to our management, the bottom line is the revenue, our basic concerns regarding wages, pensions and dignity in the workplace are the same as our union brothers and sisters in Windsor.

To them I would say, keep up your fight, we are all looking to you to make conditions better in the gaming industry for all of us. You have our support. Remember, the first half of the word Solidarity is solid.

REBECCA FOURNIER

Belle River

Instead of Beyonce, use Canadian star

I find it totally inappropriate for Beyonce Knowles to appear on the front cover of Monday's paper, when there are more deserving Canadians, with more talent, that should have been on the cover.

It would have been nice to see a picture of Sarah McLachlan, Sam Roberts, or Nickleback.

Sunday was the Juno awards -- Canada's way of celebrating our greatest musical talent, which Beyonce is not a part of.

SARAH CARUSO

Windsor

UN must do more to end terrorism

It is not hard to imagine that the United Nations Human Rights Commission would condemn Israel for killing Sheik Ahmeed Yassin.

Both he and his replacement, Abel Aziz Rantisi, have nothing but hatred for Israel and anyone else who gets in their way.

While all these militants conceive every possible way to murder as many as they can, they only get a passing glance from the same members of the Human Rights Commission. Israel is in a fight for its life and its very existence. If it takes a huge wall to achieve its goal to live without fear, then so be it.

President Bush is in a constant struggle at home and abroad to bring democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan, while Israel is in a desperate struggle to keep it. Unless the United Nations starts acting in unity to put an end to groups like Hamas, then such terrorism will be spread worldwide.

R.J. MUNFORD

Harrow

TALKING POINT A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

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***Death Is Celebrated and Life Means Less Than Nothing; Three Authors
Strive To Understand the Violent Evolution of Modern Terrorism***

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Body

No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century

By Walter Laqueur

Continuum, 288 pages, \$24.95.

* * *

Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power In a Violent World

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

Basic Books, 240 pages, \$23.

* * *

Terror and Liberalism

By Paul Berman

W.W. Norton & Company,

214 pages, \$21.

* * *

Recent NBC/Wall Street Journal and Gallup polls indicate that American concern about terrorism has dropped to pre-9/11 levels. What will it take for the American public to again take terrorism seriously? Three books offer dramatically different approaches to the same problem, founded respectively on reason, faith and emotion.

Walter Laqueur is one of the world's most insightful historians and commentators, having written on an astonishing variety of topics, from the history of Zionism and German Jewry, Communism and Fascism, to guerilla warfare and

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terrorism. His latest book is a frightening overview of global terrorism in the 21st century, when science and paranoia have finally given individuals power to destroy the world.

Laqueur charts the history of terrorism and its depressing evolution of violence and justifications. Nineteenth-century terrorism was typically executed by revolutionaries who sought to free the people from oppression but who took great efforts to protect innocents from harm. Highly discriminating attacks on officials rather than society gave 19th- and early-20th-century terrorism the character of "propaganda by deed." Such care and high-mindedness eroded throughout the 20th century, as terrorists from both Left and Right began to attack not simply high but middle officials, and, importantly, to regard society as a whole as their enemy. Fear and panic became goals, and in the 21st century these have yielded to the actual destruction of as much of an enemy society as possible.

Technological ability to actually carry out mass casualty attacks is only part of the reason for the shift toward violence that annihilates all. As all three writers point out, and as 9/11 horrifically demonstrated, the new terrorism is radically different ideologically, if not "spiritually." While a brief summary cannot do justice to Laqueur's argument and wealth of evidence, at least three elements are involved: the means and language of European totalitarianism, Islamic religious fanaticism and abnormal psychology of small, highly paranoid groups. Central to all is suicide. And its enemies are secular, pluralist and diverse societies, quintessentially the United States.

Here all three writers, Laqueur most deftly, show that old categories of Right and Left no longer apply. The Left's rage against "globalization" is precisely the same as the Right's loathing of the "new world order" and the Islamic world's fear of "Westernization." These three camps have actively joined forces against the society that personifies these chimeras. The otherwise absurd spectacle of Trotskyites and Christian Identity morally and practically joining together, and giving support to Islamic Jihad and the IRA, is understandable only by dissolving the categories of the past. The new unifying themes are anti-imperialism, anti-Americanism and antisemitism.

But the most important category that must be dissolved is regard for life itself. Modern terrorism is incomprehensible without taking note of the themes that are at the core of Laqueur's book: Islamic fanaticism, jihad, suicide and anti-Americanism. The rise of bin Laden and Al Qaeda is well understood, but their efforts to conduct jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan and then the world were only given meaning by teachings of Egyptian Islamists. Their emphasis on jihad - in its original and unapologetic sense of total war against infidels - was fused to the notions of heroic self-sacrifice and rationalized slaughter, as understood from, on one hand, early Islam, and on the other hand, Nazism.

The result is an ideology where death is celebrated and life means less than nothing. Finding well-educated individuals with weak senses of self to carry out suicide attacks in pursuit of global religious domination has proven all too easy. But unlike other suicide terrorists, such as Tamil Tigers, Islamic groups from Hamas to Al Qaeda have made civilian casualties their goal. This has been supported by edicts from Islamic religious leaders and overwhelming indoctrination of Islamic societies in antisemitism and anti-Americanism. Others ranging from anti-globalization groups to neo-fascists share rage against the West but have not yet declared suicide the answer. But, as Laqueur notes, the smaller the groups, the more paranoid and vicious the ideology. Coupled with new technologies making it possible for mad scientists or merely clever graduate students to unleash plagues of microbes, we truly stand at the threshold of a new era of terror.

Terrorism will not go away, and Laqueur points to Central Asia, Algeria, Kashmir, the Balkans and Nigeria for continuing Islamic terror. Left-Right fusion makes the possibility of anti-Western violence extremely high. And eventual use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists is not a probability but a certainty. But the prerequisite for any resistance to terrorism is the ability to describe things clearly. As Laqueur points out in connection with 9/11, academics and the media share responsibility for creating an environment in which the religious roots of Islamic terrorism have been dismissed, those raising them are accused of racism, and critical semantic and moral distinctions are intentionally blurred. As Laqueur puts it, Jack the Ripper was not an "amateur abdominal surgeon" and terrorists who kill indiscriminately are not "activists," like union organizers.

Death Is Celebrated and Life Means Less Than Nothing Three Authors Strive To Understand the Violent Evolution of Modern Terrorism

Jean Bethke Elshtain shares Laqueur's concern about distinctions. Elshtain teaches ethics at the University of Chicago. She belonged to a small but courageous group of academics who composed and signed the public statement "What We're Fighting For" after 9/11, an assertion of universal human values and the American obligation to defend them. The plain truth of Islamic terrorism for Elshtain, as she describes in her new book, "Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power In a Violent World," is found in the words of bin Laden and other jihadists; they are fighting a global religious war against infidels, not in response to grievances but to establish total Islamic domination. By combining religious and political totalitarianism, the new Islamic terrorism has no "philosophy of limits." To misdescribe this is to engage in denials and lies that facilitate terrorists and their destructiveness.

Elshtain's cataloging of media, religious and academic misrepresentations makes for painful reading. Looking deeply at apologists who seek reasons for "rage" or understand "grievances," she notes an essential racism that asserts that terrorists are less than full moral agents who cannot respond with anything except violence. She goes further and analyzes the rhetoric of apologists, who ignore facts, lie, use old categories in order to prove old categories and question the motives of those who disagree.

These apologists often combine a form of racism with old-fashioned Stalinist thinking. Part of the problem is the culture of academia, where professors clone themselves and their very clever ideas and where new ideas can threaten the entire edifice. Another is the American Left's inability to take religion and religious language seriously, an issue discussed in detail by Paul Berman in "Terror and Liberalism." Critics who conflate the personal and the political are objects of Elshtain's particular disdain. Elshtain quotes the anti-Nazi theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer: We cannot retreat into the "sanctuary of private virtuousness" when confronted with evil and injustice. Even more profoundly, "responsible

action" involves contamination.

But what we must seek is justice, not revenge. On this, Elshtain engages with the "just war" tradition, traced from Saint Augustine through theologians Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr. Christianity was never absolutely pacifist, and Elshtain is upset by 21st-century churches that have adopted this anti-historical and irrational stance. To traditional Christians, evil is real, and sometimes, she writes, God-fearing people must follow earthly authorities and "serve our neighbor and the common good by using force to stop wrongdoing and to punish wrongdoers." Peace is not an absolute good, she argues, and neither is justice. Just-war thinking must be carefully applied to satisfy a number of criteria, not least of which are proper declarations in response to specific unjust aggression, proper intentions and actions with proportionality and discrimination.

These criteria set a high threshold. In Elshtain's view, this has been easily met in the war against terrorism and the defeat of the Taliban. Her book was written before the recent Iraq war, which for Elshtain could be theologically justified by love of our neighbors or "equal regard for others based on human dignity and our common humanity." Have these wars been executed with proportionality and discrimination? Yes, even though civilians have been killed. But to ask whether it was worth it is to explicitly suggest that the alternative was a choice of equal moral weight. Iraq today may be a deeply imperfect place, but people are not being fed feet first into plastic shredders.

Elshtain has insights on every page, but her chapter on the missing legacy of Niebuhr and Tillich is a centerpiece. She cites, for example, Tillich's broadcasts into Nazi Germany decrying the demonic order and its "symbols of death." One of the most horrific features of Nazism for Tillich and Islamism as well for Elshtain is the willingness to sacrifice children. Tillich pointed to the German philosophical legacy of Kant, Fichte and Hegel and their glorification of "internal freedom," which provided a retreat into a dream world from the indecent one that enslaved Germans. Parallels with the 21st-century Islamic world seem inescapable. Similarly, she cites Niebuhr's relentless insistence on moral responsibility and moral discrimination. The hard choices facing us cannot be met with "perfectionist pacifism," nonparticipation in morally ambiguous politics or without the contamination that results from decisive action.

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The stakes are high. Islamic terrorism aims at, among other things, overthrowing the essential bases of American society: the moral equality of individuals, separation of church and state and the political equality of women. The American Left in particular has been silent on the nature of the threat, but there is every reason to take the Pashtun Taliban saying, or threat, seriously: "Women belong in the house or the grave."

Appeasement and dissembling will not work, and abandoning beleaguered peoples, even to respect their cultural "difference," is to disregard their humanity. Elshtain echoes Abraham Lincoln's call for Americans to "disenthrall themselves," to escape dogmatisms that blind us to the realities of terrorism and Islam. Nationalism and religion too must be seen as still powerful, evolving forces. Elshtain's prescription is succinct: "The only defense against terrorism in the short run is interdiction and self-defense. The best defense against terrorism in the long run is building up secure civic infrastructures in many nations." In the 21st century, human dignity needs a guarantor, and the United States is the only possible candidate. Perhaps that assertion is an article of faith, but examining the world as it really is, there is no practical or moral alternative.

Laqueur presents an erudite and dispassionate overview of terrorism's recent past and likely future, and Elshtain a moral understanding of the war against terrorism from the standpoint of Christian theology. Berman's focus is narrower still. His remarkable and impassioned critique is an indictment of liberalism's failure to confront Islamist terrorism, because it seems incapable of taking either the facts or the essential role of faith seriously.

Situated in the American Left-liberal tradition, Berman argues that a deep-seated liberal desire not to think ill of others, motivated in part by an utter faith in human rationality and a healthy dose of post-colonial guilt, has produced a dangerous critical void when it comes to Islam. He usefully pairs two North Africans, the Franco-Algerian philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and the Egyptian Islamist theologian Sayyid Qutb, to explore the nature of Islamism, its embrace of death as a fundamental goal and the liberal response. One cannot easily do justice to Berman's passion or eloquence. His readings of Qutb, the leading theoretician of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and intellectual godfather of Al Qaeda, demonstrate how absolutist readings of the Koran meshed perfectly with the language and doctrines of 20th century totalitarianism, namely fascism and Communism. Islam presumes to be a total system to begin with, and modern totalitarianism provided the scientific methods and mentality of death worship. The irrational element, the mass pathology of suicide culture and the suicide bombers it offers up is a kind of commonplace to Laqueur, who after all, left Germany in 1938. But Berman is positively agonized. And long before Samuel Huntington, Qutb eagerly anticipated the 'clash of civilizations.'

Islamic totalitarianism and its "pathological attachment to murder and suicide" are the 21st century's equivalent to Nazism and Stalinism, Berman argues. And the century's first challenge is getting well-meaning people to believe there is a problem. This is not easy and never has been. Berman's description, for example, of the reactions of pre-World War II French socialists strikes particularly acute nerves. Anti-war socialists, always eager to approach matters rationally, managed to find "truth" in Hitler's "excesses." "The impositions of Versailles, the exploitation of financiers, the pre-war hawks," writes Berman, "[t]heir reasoning was impeccable; 'Weren't some of the hard-liners, the French hawks, who favored war - Jews?'" In the end, the anti-war socialists voted to join Petain's government. Then as now, Left and Right have little meaning and in any case meet happily on the dark side of the moon. The labels are broken; hate is hate.

Unaddressed, however, is whether there is something intrinsic to Islamic theology that makes it uniquely susceptible to the cult of death Berman so ably describes. Other religions embrace martyrdom from time to time, but none displays the theological passion for annihilation as Islam. The question for Berman is not whether this is an authentic Islam or a forgery. It is authentic. The question is, what is moderate Islam doing about it? And the answer, frighteningly, is almost nothing.

Berman's almost belated advocacy of a third way, liberal democratic quasisocialism, is deeply unpersuasive. But his criticism of Bush's militant, Wilsonian, muscular liberal internationalism is properly directed at their failure to communicate. He is absolutely correct that the war of ideas is being poorly fought, but he offers no practical suggestions beyond revival of Arthur Schlesinger's 1949 call for "new radicalism." Web sites with Arabic translations of John Locke and John Stuart Mill would do more.

Death Is Celebrated and Life Means Less Than Nothing Three Authors Strive To Understand the Violent Evolution of Modern Terrorism

If our cause is just and our enemies relentless, how are we to proceed? Endless interfaith dialogues are as meaningless as they are comforting. Certainly there can be no discourse with radicals; as Elshtain dryly puts it, sadists are not interlocutors of equal moral weight. And strong arguments can be made for giving death-eaters what they want, only on our terms. But a 21st-century response to terrorism surely must have two aspects, most obviously that the best defense is a strong offense. Intelligence capabilities, discussed only by Laqueur, must be enhanced and monitored for effectiveness and legality. New procedures that infringe on our convenience will become permanent. Metal detectors, bomb-sniffing dogs and background checks will become commonplace, as will profiling, wiretaps and midnight raids.

It is naive to think American or European life will be as blithe and benign as the easy days before 9/11. But vigilance, prudence and self-confidence hardly produce a police state. Assertive action against terrorists, individuals, groups and states necessarily involves violence and, increasingly, pre-emption. To suggest the threats, especially from weapons of mass destruction, do not warrant pre-emption is magical thinking. Again, the question is not whether terrorists will use weapons of mass destruction, only when and where.

But against this backdrop is another less tangible but equally important aspect of defense. The United States is defined by jagged pluralism and obvious diversity, and its messy but effective tolerance and representative institutions. Americans collide with each other and send off sparks, causing some differences to dissolve and others to harden. A walk up Second Avenue shows the process in motion. If we stop believing in this process, whether melting pot or pressure cooker, where Americans combine into new wholes while retaining old strengths, then we are fatally weakened. This is what protects us. This is why we fight.

Graphic

IMAGE

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Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terrorism. While researching her book, a Harvard academic tries to find out why they believe they have a moral mandate to murder

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Body

Events in Iraq have shown that a war cannot be prosecuted against terrorists without giving some thought to what motivates new recruits to the terror cause. In interviews with religious terrorists over the past six years I have been trying to discover what makes someone join a holy-war organisation and what makes them stay. I started by talking to an American: a repentant leader of an Identity Christian cult in a trailer park in Texas. From there I went to Pakistan, India, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, and Indonesia. I talked to Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sikh and Hindu radicals. I visited extremist seminaries in Indonesia and Pakistan that recruit the cannon fodder for global jihad. I toured refugee camps in Lebanon and Kashmir. A Pakistani charity arranged for me to see the new homes it provided to families of "martyrs," and to meet the martyrs' mothers, not all of whom were able to keep up a facade of pride. Since September 11, I do not feel safe interviewing terrorists in the field. Now I talk only to "retired" or jailed terrorists and arrange for local interviewers to administer detailed questionnaires, querying terrorists about their motivations.

Some of the operatives I spoke to have since been killed. I met two ***Hamas*** leaders in Gaza who were assassinated this year by the Israeli government- Ismail Abu Shanab and Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi. And two operatives I met on death row in the US have since been executed. One of them - Mir Aimal Kansi - had murdered two employees of the CIA; the other - Paul Hill - had killed two abortion clinic staff. There were many differences among the various holy warriors. Some were intellectuals. Some appeared to be on a spiritual high; others seemed pumped up on adrenalin or the adventure of living at least partly on the run. A Sikh terrorist I met in Lahore said he never stayed two nights in the same place. Some clearly enjoyed their status and power. Sheikh Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of Hezbollah who was said to have survived an alleged CIA-led attempt on his life in 1985, exuded the air of a man who feels he has the best possible job in the world.

Some were obviously angry. I sensed in many that their commitment to the cause was a thin veneer covering some deeper, more personal need. For some, jihad had become a high-paying job; a few admitted they would like to quit but couldn't afford to. Some were unexpectedly rich, while others lived in slums.

A leader of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, a group known for beheading foreigners and for its close alliance with Osama bin Laden, took me to meet his second wife, a startlingly beautiful young woman from Saudi Arabia, a country he

Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terror....

visited regularly on fund-raising missions. He had ensconced his new wife in an outsized white mansion, leaving the first one at his parents' farm.

Despite these differences, it is possible, after this long journey, to identify some common themes that might help to explain how violent Islamic nihilism continues to spread beyond the lawless pockets and failed states where terrorists tend to thrive, and into the cities of the west.

My interviews suggest that people join religious terrorist groups partly to transform themselves and to simplify life. They start out feeling humiliated, enraged that they are viewed by some "other" as second class. They take on new identities as martyrs on behalf of a purported spiritual cause. The spiritually perplexed learn to focus on action. The weak become strong. The selfish become altruists, ready to make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in the belief that their death will serve a supposed public good. Rage turns to conviction. They seem to enter a kind of trance, where the world is divided neatly between good and evil, victim and oppressor. Uncertainty and ambivalence, always painful to experience, are banished. There is no room for the other side's point of view. Because they believe their cause is just and that God is on their side, they persuade themselves that any action - no matter how heinous - is justified. They know they are right, not just politically, but morally.

In their view, arrogant one-worlders, humanists and promoters of human rights have created an engine of modernity that is stealing their identity. The greatest rage - and the greatest danger - stems from those who feel they can't keep up, even as they claim to be superior to those who set the pace. Over time, in some cases, cynicism takes hold. Terrorism becomes a career as much as a passion. What starts out as moral fervour about humiliation and deprivation becomes a sophisticated organisation. Grievance can end up as greed - for status, attention, political power or money. The rest of the world needs to understand this dynamic, and exploit it in every possible way, by sowing discord, confusion, and rivalry among terrorists and between terrorists and their sponsors.

While the terrorists I met described a variety of grievances, almost every one talked about humiliation. The Identity Christian cultist told me he suffered from chronic bronchitis as a child and his mother discouraged him from exerting himself. He had been forced to attend the girls' physical education classes because he couldn't keep up with the boys. "I don't know if I ever got over the shame and humiliation of not being able to keep up with the other boys - or even with some of the girls," he said. The first time he felt strong was when he was living on an armed compound, surrounded by armed men.

A man involved in the violent wing of the anti-abortion movement told me he was "vaginally defeated", but now he is "free", by which he meant celibate and beyond the influence of women.

A Kashmiri militant founded his group because he wanted to recreate the golden period of Islam, "to recover what we lost... Muslims have been overpowered by the west. Our ego hurts... we are not able to live up to our own standards for ourselves."

The notion that perceived humiliation could be an important factor in explaining terrorism has struck some academics as far-fetched. But my argument is not that humiliation and relative deprivation alone are sufficient to create a terrorist. Terrorist leaders offer a "basket" of emotional, spiritual and financial rewards to potential recruits, designed to appeal to a variety of followers whose needs and desires are understood to change over time. The leader has to understand his followers' psychology, to have a feel for what they want, "what they are thinking, what is missing", the repentant Identity Christian cultist told me.

Leaders cynically take advantage of their zealous recruits, manipulating them with an enticing mission, ultimately using these true believers as their weapons.

For the broad-based dystopic movement inspired by al-Qaeda, the new world order - al-Qaeda's term for globalisation - is a perfect foil. It is better for the youth of Islam to carry arms and defend their religion with pride and dignity than to submit to the humiliation of globalisation, bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote in his putative autobiography. He refers to global institutions such as the United Nations and international relief agencies as tools in the new crusaders' arsenal. "In the face of this alliance, a fundamentalist coalition is taking shape," Zawahiri

Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terror....

writes, warning that its growth will continue to accelerate. "It is anxious to seek retribution for the blood of the martyrs, the grief of the mothers, the suffering of the detainees, and the sores of the tortured people throughout the land of Islam."

The purpose of fighting the new world order, in Zawahiri's view, is to restore the dignity of humiliated youth. Violence is a "cleansing force" that frees the oppressed youth from his inferiority complex, despair and inaction, making him fearless and restoring his self-respect.

It is in this context that the war in Iraq and, in particular, the heart-wounding images of American soldiers humiliating, torturing and killing Iraqi prisoners, becomes so important. If bin Laden were writing a script for George Bush and Tony Blair to follow, would he not command them to attack and occupy a Muslim country in defiance of the international community and in violation of international law? And would it not be his fondest wish to see "the new crusaders" humiliate those Muslims, and themselves, in the most graphic possible way? Having those soldiers then photograph their crimes might have seemed too much to hope for.

In assuming itself to be above the law in many instances, but especially in regard to detaining and interrogating supposed terrorists, the Bush Administration has made a serious moral error. It is the human condition to be imperfect; to seek to understand the mind of God, but also, tragically and frustratingly, to fail. Talking to religious terrorists has taught me this: when we become moral swaggarts, when we are so certain that God is on our side that we believe ourselves to be beyond the reach of normal moral inquiry or law, we make ourselves vulnerable to the basest aspects of our nature.

The first step in the direction of a perilous righteousness was when Bush announced on September 20, 2001: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Jim Wallis, an evangelical Christian activist and editor of Sojourners Magazine, responds: "To say that they are evil and we are good, and that if you're not with us, you're with the terrorists - that's bad theology." He points to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: "Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, your adversary's eye, your enemy's eye, and not see the log in your own eye? Why do you see the evil in them but not in yourself?"

A year after 9/11, Bush continued in a similar vein, referring to America as the hope of all mankind. He referred to a light shining in the darkness, which the darkness will not overcome. That line is from the Gospel of John, Wallis explains. "But it's about the light of Christ and the word of God. Now, all of a sudden, it's meant to be America as a beacon of light to the world. (Bush) changed the meaning of the text. It's no longer about the word of God, the light of Christ, it's about us."

Omar Bakri Muhammad, the leader of the London-based radical Islamist movement, al-Muhajiroun, asks potential followers: "When will people see this war in Iraq and Afghanistan for what it really is - a Christian Crusade, full of the indiscriminate murder, rape and carnage just like, if not worse, than the Christian Crusades of 'Richard the Lionheart' and his own band of thugs in the past. Surely this is a wake-up call for all Muslims around the world who have any dignity left. Anyone... where our land, war, peace and honour is one, must do all he or she can to protect the men, women and children being tortured and humiliated in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is too late to stop the atrocities which have already taken place but it is not too late to drive these nasty infidels out of Muslim land once and for all."

Even before the revelations about the torture of Iraqi prisoners, al-Qaeda used the war in Iraq as a recruitment tool for their global battle against the "crusader alliance". They have long been aware that tension within the alliance over the Iraq war is a vulnerability. A number of polls show that support for that war is diminishing and antipathy to America is increasing. In a wide-ranging poll conducted a year after the Iraq war, the Pew Foundation found that the majority of Americans still believe that Bush made the right decision in going to war in Iraq and that the US will ultimately achieve its mission there. But since the publication of photos of prisoners being tortured, a USA Today/Gallup poll showed 58 per cent of Americans disapprove of Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq, and 54 per cent said going to war "was not worth it".

Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terror....

Elsewhere around the world, a majority of those polled said that the war in Iraq has diminished their trust in the US. A growing percentage of Europeans would like to see Europe's foreign policy and security arrangements made independently of the US. British respondents - a majority of whom had supported the war in a poll taken a year earlier - are now significantly more critical, with only 43 per cent (down from 61 per cent) now saying it was right to go to war. The March 11 attacks in Madrid precipitated the surprise victory of Spain's new prime minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, elected partly because he promised to remove Spanish troops from Iraq. Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski has suggested that he was deceived when his country agreed to participate in the coalition. As the Iranian cleric Rafsanjani noted gleefully in a sermon on the first anniversary of the war, "They are drifting apart. A gap has appeared in this group which they call a coalition."

But while the war has increased tensions within the western alliance but it has united the terrorist groups. On a website described by the US government as "jihadist," Hani al-Sibai, the director of the London-based Al-Maqrizi Centre for Historical Studies, says: "Iraq is currently a battlefield and fertile soil for every Islamic movement that views jihad as a priority." He notes that "the continuation of the anti-occupation resistance will produce several groups that might later merge into one large group." Very few of the participants in the Iraqi "jihad" are members of al-Qaeda, he says. "Even if the US forces capture all leaders of al-Qaeda or kill them all, the idea of expelling the occupiers and non-believers from the Arabian Peninsula and all the countries of Islam will not die."

Outside Iraq, a surprising array of groups has joined al-Qaeda in targeting the new world order and its instruments. Albert Huber, a Swiss neo-Nazi who converted to Islam and who is popular with both Aryan youth and radical Muslims, is calling for neo-Nazis and Islamists to join forces. Huber was on the board of directors of the Al-Taqwa Foundation, which the US government says was a major donor to al-Qaeda. Matt Hale, leader of The World Church of the Creator, an American white supremacist organisation, is disseminating a book that exposes the "sinister machinations" that led to September 11, including the involvement of Jews and Israelis.

A totalitarian Islamic revivalism has become the dystopic ideology of the new world order. In an earlier era, its converts might have described their grievances through other ideological lenses, perhaps communism, perhaps Nazism. In Europe a radical transnational Islam, divorced from its countries of origin, is appealing to youth in depressed or high unemployment areas, says Olivier Roy, research director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research. Leaders of the radical groups are often from the middle classes, many of them trained in technical fields, while followers are more likely to be working-class dropouts, he says.

Members of the London-based al-Muhajiroun openly support al-Qaeda. Several men arrested on suspicion of organising a terrorist attack in London in March had been followers of this movement, according to Omar Bakri Muhammad, the group's leader. Al-Qaeda used to be a group but has become a phenomenon, Muhammad told the Lisbon Publico newspaper. "The September 11 attacks made Muslims realise they have power, that the rebirth of Islam is inevitable and we are entering a new chapter in history. That is why we started a new calendar then. We are now in year three of the age of al-Qaeda." It makes no difference whether bin Laden is dead or alive, he said, the movement has taken off.

We must not romanticise al-Qaeda and its networks of nihilist minions by assuming that they have clear objectives that they could ultimately achieve, or that we could, if we chose, appease them. The groups that subscribe to al-Qaeda's ideology have a grandiose vision but no set goals. The purpose of lethal attacks is to rally the followers at least as much as it is to horrify and frighten the victims. The goals continue to shift - from forcing US troops out of Saudi Arabia or coalition troops out of Iraq to sowing discord in the west to setting Iraq aflame with sectarian tensions. To achieve these shifting goals, the movement aims to create a clash not only among civilisations but also within civilisations. The ultimate objective is to "purify" the world - replacing the new world order with a caliphate of terror based on a fantasised simpler, purer, past.

In thinking about how to respond to terrorism, it is important to realise that we are unlikely to persuade terrorists to change their approach. Terrorists, I have found, become professionals and, after some time on the job, it can be hard for them to imagine another life. But terrorists and guerrillas rely on the broader population for support. Mao

Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terror....

Zedong described insurgents as fish swimming in a sea of ordinary people, whose occasional support they require. We are competing with the terrorists for the hearts and minds of the ordinary people who make up that sea.

Jessica Stern is lecturer in public policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and author of "Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill" (HarperCollins 2003).

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THE WEEK

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Body

WHAT TO SAY ABOUT . . . MADONNA

What happens when you're a pop star who has reinvented yourself so many times that the only incarnation left untried is a "retiring, poetry and children's book-writing English Jewess and mother of two"? You try it for a couple of years, get bored and then go on a 50-date "Re-Invention World Tour" of the United States and Europe, of course.

"If anything, the name seems a bit too obvious," you chortle, echoing The New York Times's review of Madonna's opening concert on Monday. "You don't see John Kerry crisscrossing the country on a tour called Lots of Speeches.

"Her marriage to Guy Ritchie, her new career writing children's books, her diminishing interest in sexual provocation: all of this may make Madonna happy, but it doesn't keep her fans salivating. So her new tour is designed to remind them why they loved her in the first place."

Shame it hasn't, then, you note, quoting a couple of unhappy reviews. First, the Los Angeles Times: "Message to Madonna: bring back the sex. Or at least something with flesh and blood, please. In launching her world tour Monday at the Forum, Madonna traded most of the old sexual teasing for social commentary, and she's no John Lennon, friends even though she sang Lennon's Imagine at one point."

Then the New York Post: "Madonna's blonde ambition is fading to bland. Just over a decade ago, when the sassy provocateur created a firestorm by displaying her blonde ambition in a pointy cone bra, it would have been insane to suggest she would mellow to the point of wearing buttoned-up army fatigues onstage."

"Never mind the sex," you concede. "We just want her to bring back the cone bra." Note that the show was filled with less-than-sexy references to Iraq, prison abuse and the West Bank, all backed by such get-up-and-dance hits as "I'm burning up, burning up for your love".

And then moan about all that preachy Kabbalah business the ancient Jewish mysticism that is the spiritual flavour of the month for this artist formerly known as the Material Girl. The irony of singing Papa Don't Preach while wearing a "Kabbalists do it better" T-shirt wouldn't have been lost on Madonna, you advise, but that doesn't make it forgivable.

And all that faith wasn't enough to take her to Israel, was it, you declare, noting that she canned her concerts in the Middle East hotspot. It was her manager who wouldn't let her go "because of the attack on the leader of Hamas",

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you explain, invoking your knowledge of the US TV show Access Hollywood. "It's not a good idea to go there and do concerts," you say, paraphrasing Maddy and pretending to understand her logic.

Maybe it's best she doesn't, you smirk, noting soberly that a rabid Jerusalem Post columnist called Shmuley Boteach this week labelled her "a slut". If only she was that simple, you observe. It would certainly be a whole lot easier to make sense of the show.

EDITORIALS

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Heavy-handed Americans

The British army has already expressed its disquiet at the heavy-handed approach of the US military in Iraq. Indian peacekeepers had experience of this in Somalia in 1993, when the US-led UNITAF ran offensive operations against the militia of Mohammad Aidid. In the decade since, the US has apparently learnt nothing. India should not even think of sending peacekeepers until US forces are out of Iraq and there is a genuine UN-run blue-helmet operation in place. New Delhi, May 27

The New York Times

Cowbell dining

At the Parker Meridien hotel, US\$1000 (\$1400) will get you a six-egg frittata with lobster, cream and 10 ounces of sevruga caviar. Staff ring a cowbell when the egg dish is served, lest other diners miss the event . . . This says less about the considerable wealth of some in the city than it does about the return of shamelessly ostentatious consumption and a curiosity about what the very high-end market will bear. The folks at Le Parker Meridien realise they won't be selling many \$1000 frittatas. Besides, it makes the \$28 French toast look like a bargain. New York, May 25

Independent

Bush's five-step plan

Mr Bush repackaged existing policy into a five-step plan that was intended to convey the impression, at least, of a firm hand at the tiller. Peer a little closer, however, and the "plan" proves to be an edifice constructed on the most fragile foundations. The hard truth is that a president who prides himself on his ability to shape the agenda is utterly at the mercy of events. If there are many more suicide bombings, urban insurgencies and US casualties, even far finer words than those Mr Bush uttered on Monday evening will not matter a whit, and he will end up a one-term president like his father. London, May 26

The Asahi Shimbun

Overboard nationalism

Last autumn, the Board of Education ordered schools to raise the Hinomaru flag and sing the nation's anthem at formal assemblies without fail. As a result, about 250 teachers and staff were disciplined for failing or refusing to comply. Some principals asked students to sing Kimigayo at the top of their voices, warning that teachers would otherwise be punished. We are not saying there is anything wrong with hoisting the rising-sun flag or singing Kimigayo. We simply believe these national symbols should not be forced on people. Threatening punitive action, it seems to us, is going way overboard. Tokyo, May 28

THE NATION

VICTORIA

All the bare facts

THE WEEK

A news service that hides nothing from the viewer will soon be available around the world, thanks to a Victorian company. The Naked News, a Canadian-produced "infotainment" program on cable TV, will be made available to mobile phone users. Announcing the deal this week, the Melbourne-based GoConnect said The Naked News featured an all-nude cast who delivered "the serious and lighter side of the news". Newsreaders, one of whom is from Adelaide, begin reading reports clothed, but disrobe as the story unfolds.

ACT

Cabinet leak

A faulty plug installed by ASIO caused a flood big enough to fill a suburban swimming pool in the federal cabinet room last month, resulting in \$700,000 damage. ASIO had installed a small perspex window to enable it to inspect the firewater system before each cabinet meetings, but the window ruptured.

QUEENSLAND

Doggone, they're gone

Thieves who stole 11 puppies from a Brisbane pet shop have released nine of them. Irene Harrison, of Daisy Hill in city's south, found the nine huddled around her letterbox on Wednesday. Two, a mini fox terrier and a maltese-cross mini fox terrier, are still missing.

TASMANIA

Back on the market

Sydney colonial convict-turned-success Mary Reibey would be watching wryly. Her son Thomas's 1819 Entally House, pictured, one of Tasmania's most significant public historic properties, is up for grabs again. In 2002 a NSW couple almost clinched a 99-year lease on the 22-room property with the National Trust for \$500,000, but an outcry against the privatisation led them to withdraw. Now the State Government has sacked the trust. The Heritage Minister, Ken Bacon, said the trust's lease would end in July.

NSW

Strong mussels

The Penrith Lakes are going to get a clean-out with the help of thousands of mussels from Warragamba Dam. Mussels feed off the nutrients in dirty water they die if they are in an area that's too clean and it is expected the new colony will result in clear water. The project, by the University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney and Penrith Council, has been delayed because of low water levels in the dam.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Dangerous primary school

A Perth primary school has hired security guards and started padlocking its gates because it says its teachers are being threatened, punched and kicked by students and parents. The situation has got so bad that the school built a fence and parents have to phone the office to get in.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Not in the family

The Sydney restaurateur Peter Doyle is reportedly demanding a Darwin restaurant change its name. The Northern Territory News reports that the owner of Sydney's famous Doyles Seafoods has had his lawyers write to Tim Doyle, 26, of Darwin, telling him to find another name for his Doyles Family Restaurant, which opened last week. "We are

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a family restaurant and at the most have only two prawn dishes and one fish and chip dish on the menu," the Darwin Doyle said, adding he was not related to his famous Sydney namesake.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

House prices rising

Adelaide house prices are outperforming those for the rest of the country, says Australian Property Monitors. While prices fell by 7.5 per cent in Sydney and 12.9 per cent in Melbourne, Adelaide saw a 2.7 per cent rise in the March quarter over the December quarter. The median price there is now a massive \$245,000.

TRAVEL RULES AND REFORMS

Editorial

The Australian, May 25

Just as it was forced to reform MPs' ridiculously generous superannuation entitlements under political pressure from the Opposition Leader, Mark Latham, the Howard Government has now been forced to address MPs' travel entitlements under the pressure of public concern over the Draper case . . . Any review that is just a Band-Aid to make the current embarrassment go away tightening a requirement here, sharpening a definition there will be yet another sidestep of real reform by the Howard Government.

Editorial

The Daily Telegraph, May 25

No doubt the stresses and strains of public life involve numerous personal sacrifices and if MPs seek to avail themselves of the consolation of their spouses' company on "study trips" abroad, who would blame them? Well, here's the thing. The guidelines state that a spouse must be a husband or a wife, or a de facto. Mr Sands was neither a husband, nor a de facto, so he was not entitled to travel at our expense with Ms Draper. End of story.

Editorial

The Sydney Morning Herald, May 25

By standards of plain English, the rule is clearer than most statutes. MPs can be accompanied only by spouses or de factos and then by only those living with them "on a genuine domestic basis". That is the rule made by parliamentarians for parliamentarians. But the Government cites a 1993 ruling by the Remuneration Tribunal, which apparently took words of clarity and precision and gave to them a meaning so broad a jumbo jet would fly through the loopholes. If the Remuneration Tribunal trampled on the Parliament's clear intention, what has the Parliament been doing for the past 11 years to reassert its will? The answer, of course, is that politics has accommodated the corrupted rule with a nod and a wink, choosing silence in the hope the rort would proceed unnoticed.

Editorial

The Adelaide Advertiser, May 25

Mrs Draper may have been unlucky to be . . . singled out. But another SA federal MP, Patrick Secker, has shown just how out of touch members can be on this issue. It is about time, he says, that someone pointed out that if MPs take a spouse on an overseas trip, they have to downgrade from first class to economy.

OBESITY THE RISE AND RISE

Editorial

Independent, May 27

THE WEEK

There can be no simple solution to Britain's obesity crisis because no single factor is responsible; the problem is bound up with the way we live our lives. But that is not to say there is nothing we can do to combat the problem and, as the Commons Health Select Committee report today makes clear, the costs of allowing the nation's waistline to expand any further would be disastrous. Obesity is already costing the NHS around £3.5 billion (\$8.95 billion) a year, and we will reap an undesirable harvest of rising levels of diabetes, cancer and heart disease in years to come.

Editorial

The Times, May 27

The clamour from svelte policymakers for draconian action to reduce obesity is more deafening than ever, after the declaration by the Commons Select Committee on Health that an obesity "epidemic" has hit Britain. The picture of sedentary guzzlers burdening the National Health Service is certainly worrying. But it is hard to accept that all these people are gormless, innocent, helpless and hapless victims of cynical marketeers, incapable of a single independent thought.

Editorial

The Scotsman, May 27

A call to ban the advertising of junk food is not necessarily the way ahead. Despite having banned adverts from being targeted at children, Sweden has as much of an obesity problem as anywhere else in Europe. Similarly, bans on tobacco advertising do not seem to have reduced smoking rates, particularly among young women. The problem is not advertising; the problem is that people like to eat foods that are high in fat and sugar, but are not doing enough exercise.

Editorial

The Guardian, May 27

The big disappointment is the readiness of the MPs pushed by Tory members of the committee to give the food industry three more years to clean up its act on junk food. Just how unrealistic this is was demonstrated by the British Soft Drinks Association's immediate rejection of the committee's suggested "traffic light" warning system on unhealthy food too much sugar, salt or fat. The simple truth, which Parliament must face, is that the food industry will not reform unless it is forced to.

Boris Johnson

The Daily Telegraph

Instead of whimpering about obesity, it would also be a good thing if we reclaimed the word "fat". What's wrong with it? Sometimes people call me fat. It stings. It works. And rather than engage in this pointless assault on apple pie, politicians might also speak up for motherhood. Not only are we having too few children, but motherhood, in all its aspects, is a very good way of losing weight.

QUOTES

We did not enter the coalition [of the willing] on the basis of opinion polls last year and we have absolutely no intention, on the basis of opinion polls, of altering our position at the present time.

The Prime Minister, John Howard.

Yes, and the community I represent says "yes, yes, yes". It would be very beneficial for the community in terms of reduction of crime and helping [users] get the support they need.

THE WEEK

Sydney's Lord Mayor and the MP for Bligh, Clover Moore, on decriminalising heroin and setting up a safe injecting room in Redfern.

I am going to answer yes but I would not class it an affair or a relationship.

Joanne Lees, on a question about having a sexual relationship with someone other than her boyfriend, Peter Falconio.

Marriage . . . is the union of a man and a woman . . . entered into for life.

The amendment to the Marriage Act rushed through Federal Parliament to ban same-sex couples from marrying and from adopting children overseas..

I've made it clear that, with two papers, the way I and my family have been treated is an absolute disgrace because at the end of the day, I'm a nice person and loving husband and father, and that's what I've made clear to these people.

Footballer David Beckham.

You don't know if you're going to turn a corner and get a handshake or a bullet, and I don't like that.

Victorian anti-corruption policeman Sergeant Simon Illingworth.

Cut out the booze. No more drinking and become a man instead of a little boy.

Sonya Mason, the mother of NSW rugby league player Willie Mason.

I've heard of people taking hatchets to their own heads after a disappointing result in the State of Origin.

A journalist in PNG.

THE FALLOUT

Grassy diet: An Indian from Kanpur, known as Gangaram, says he can't survive without eating a kilo of grass every day, the Hindustan Times reports. He says the grass gives him energy and a sense of being close to the environment.

Polly wants a . . . : To mark World Parrot Day on Monday, the World Parrot Trust in Britain has launched what is believed to be the world's first DVD for parrots. The 80-minute PollyVision: Strictly for Parrots aims to relieve the boredom of captive birds. "[Parrots] need a great deal of stimulation, or they get bored and depressed, and as humans do, they develop psychological and behavioural problems," said the film's producer, Jamie Gilardi.

Mum's the word: A motorcycle taxi driver in Bangkok has been reunited with her long-lost mum after almost 20 years. Laddawan Danpaibunpol, 29, asked a radio station for help, and after a couple of days it found 48-year-old Waleeporn Suksusil sleeping under a bridge. The woman was too upset to explain why she abandoned her then 10-year-old daughter.

Quality pizza: Italian legislators are mulling over a law laying down rules to protect real Neapolitan pizza. The draft law all three pages, eight articles and six sub-clauses specifies details like the size, height of the centre and crust and correct ingredients. If made to rule, restaurants can label their pizzas Guaranteed Traditional Speciality.

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Letters to the Editor

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Body

Please give us back our beautiful views

From childhood, I retain memories of a wide open plaza in front of the ferry wharves at Circular Quay in Sydney, with an uncluttered and beautiful view of Sydney Harbour. It was also possible, as I remember,

to catch views of the harbour when walking down the various north-south streets leading to the quay.

The construction of the Cahill Expressway blotted out one of the most beautiful harbour views in the world. It must also rank as one of the most ugly and poorly designed structures in the world.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if, after next Saturday's elections, the new Lord Mayor of Sydney had the vision, foresight and commitment to work with state and federal governments to demolish this obscene blot on the Sydney landscape. The overhead roadway could perhaps be retained, if necessary, supported by more modern, slender support structures.

MATP

All public transport including rail would be placed underground with an appropriate interchange. This would restore the open plaza in front of the ferry wharves and once again give the general public the opportunity to enjoy the unique beauty of Sydney Harbour.

Do any of the candidates for Lord Mayor have the necessary vision and commitment and are they up for the challenge?

John Chippendale, Marsfield

Obscure crews

Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson says he has been concerned about maritime safety issues for some time, yet the Government has allowed flag of convenience ships to come to Australia with foreign crews.

We don't know who they are. How do we know that cells have not already been set up around our ports?

Lyn Gray, San Remo

Open road's an invitation

Letters to the Editor

The Sydney Harbour Bridge is the international icon of our country and could be the prime target for a terrorist attack. I was astounded to learn that the roadway under the south pylon is still open to traffic.

A small van packed with a home-made nitrate bomb, similar to that used in Oklahoma City, and in such proximity to the abutment of the lower arch could easily buckle this vital structural member. This could cause the whole roadway above to fall. The uppermost arch would be of no help, as this was primarily used to span the gap.

I would feel more secure if this roadway was terminated at least 20m from the pylon and protected with bollards to prevent vehicle access.

Bill Barlow, Concord West

The latest news from Morocco is that the probable mastermind behind the Spanish atrocity is the scion of a wealthy Casablanca family. Osama bin Laden was a wealthy businessman before he became a full-time terrorist; the Saudis who carried out the September 11 attacks came from financially comfortable families; and to finance terrorism on the global scale that it has now reached requires a lot of money.

Moreover, if there is a lot of poverty in the Islamic world, there is also a lot of wealth. Well-meaning correspondents who tie themselves in philosophical knots to excuse the evil of terrorism by citing the poverty of Islamic countries are profoundly and dangerously misguided.

There are many areas of greater poverty around the world but the people of those countries have not engaged in a terrorist war against the West.

Norman Rich, Newport

Walkers run risks

It really is amazing how little some people value their own lives. Early morning drivers in our leafy suburbs are continually dodging walkers and joggers in dark clothing, travelling with their backs to following vehicles.

Often they are well out from the kerb, not using the footpath provided.

If pedestrians must walk on the road, they should face the oncoming traffic.

K. Williams,

Beecroft

Jungle rules

Business Council of Australia president Hugh Morgan thinks that Australia's corporate giants are being strangled by rules (Daily Telegraph, March 23).

Mr Morgan ought to identify the rules he was referring to, because when it comes to big business downloading its financial obligations to small business operators, the only rules that apply are the rules of the jungle.

Des Wilson,

Glossodia

Odd look

I can't believe Kym Wilson has been chosen as a fashion agent. The photograph of her at the weekend made me cringe. Who wears dark tights with open-toe sandals?

Carol Swensen,

Letters to the Editor

Sutherland

Hands off

If Bankstown councillors feel they can make money by investing in KFC outlets, they should use their own money and not ratepayers' (Daily Telegraph, March 22, and Letters, March 23).

Rates are levied to provide the basic services that councils need to provide for the community, not for a share club for councillors to improve their investing skills.

Henry Beckett,

Darlinghurst

League's sex scandals stem from players' lack of respect

Emily White (Letters, March 22) believes that we should get rid of cheerleaders at rugby league matches.

I can inform her that she knows little about families. I have two grand-daughters who I take to St George Illawarra games all the time and both love to watch the cheerleaders. My seven-year-old even wants to be a cheerleader and has done so for at least three years.

The sex scandals are there because the players have not been taught to respect females, and no other reason. If everyone respected each other we would remove a lot of problems.

Robert Murphy,

Werrington Downs

Yes, the Bulldogs' board has made some hard decisions, but the board and, importantly, club sponsors now have to consider whether these actions are sufficient to satisfy what is demanded by community standards of decency and decorum. While football results are essential for the viability of a club, community standards are essential for the viability of a society.

Bruce Reid, Kareela

Pines will stay

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has no intention of removing Norfolk Island pines in Botany Bay National Park at Kurnell ("Kurnell's European symbols facing the axe," Daily Telegraph, March 22).

These are commemorative plantings that will form a major part of the Middens to Monuments Walk. If those pines along the foreshore die, Norfolk Island pines will be replanted in their place.

Nor do we have any intention of removing the flagpole, which is an important site for flag-raising ceremonies. It will continue to fly the Australian, NSW and Aboriginal flags.

The replica anchor at the entrance to the park was placed there in 1972. We will be improving the entrance of the park to make sure it reflects the importance of the site as a place of national significance. This may mean retaining the replica anchor where it is, or it may mean moving the anchor to another prominent area of the park with information signs explaining its history.

Mike Patrick, NPWS regional

manager, Sydney South

Letters to the Editor

Back in the early 1970s, the National Parks and Wildlife Service wanted to demolish huts that had been built in the Depression at Crater Bay, below Dobroyd Head, Balgowlah Heights. This was stopped by the Land and Environment Court, which held that the huts were part of our heritage.

Perhaps the court needs to intervene at Kurnell.

Ian Foster, Willoughby

To the point

If the video referee was afforded, via an audio feed, the same insight into the musings of the TV commentary team as viewers, we would have far fewer clangers in rugby league. Fix it, someone. You're losing fans.

Brett Jack, Bonnyrigg Heights

After watching the Rugby World Cup and now the Super 12 competition, I cannot help but notice the number of fat blokes running around. No wonder England won the World Cup. Each of their players was toned and appeared extremely fit.

Trevor Buchanan, Berkeley Vale

In Federal Parliament, battle is joined: the bovver boy is back.

Don McLaren, Newport

I recently had a holiday in Sydney on my first visit in six years. The city's public transport made it so easy to get around. The station at the airport is a great idea -- only 10 minutes to Central.

D. Gardner, Hampton Park, Victoria

The water level at Warragamba Dam has dropped below 50 per cent despite all the rain we have had lately (Daily Telegraph, March 22). Obviously, the dam is in the wrong place. Move it.

Paul Shipton, Roseville

Kind words

I wish to thank the Lennox Head Golden Oldies Rugby Union Club (Stags) for their many acts of kindness to my family over the years.

Last Saturday marked the tenth anniversary of my husband's death and the Stags painted the interior of my house in remembrance of Glen. These wonderful men have continued to show an ongoing commitment to my family in many ways, with graciousness and a generous spirit.

Thank you to organiser Bindo, to president Beachy and to all the workers for your support. You embody the true spirit of the Golden Oldies.

Julie Nash, Lennox Head

I wish to congratulate the Prince of Wales Hospital emergency department for the attention I received on March 7-8, 2004.

The doctors, nursing staff and ambulance officers were so kind and considerate and every test was carried out. My heartfelt thanks to all concerned.

Joan Gates, Randwick

What's news

Letters to the Editor

1 Steve Mortimer has resigned as chief executive of the Bulldogs. In what year did he play his last game for the club?

2 What words did Mark Latham use to describe Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in Federal Parliament on Monday?

3 Name the Hamas founder and spiritual leader who has been assassinated by Israeli forces in Gaza City in an attack that killed seven others.

4 The Cremorne home of which two-time Olympic gold medallist was broken into at the weekend and memorabilia taken?

5 How many Sydney teams will compete in the relaunched national soccer league, announced on Monday and due to start in July-August 2005?

6 Name the actor who will be the new Dr Who when the TV series returns next year.

ANSWERS

1: 1988. 2: He called him a "rotten, lousy disgrace" and was forced to withdraw the remarks by Speaker Neil Andrew. 3: Sheik Ahmed Yassin. 4: Kieren Perkins. 5: One. 6: Christopher Eccleston.

In search

ODELL/BLACK

These families mentioned in a recent In Search entry asked for a reply to an internet site. As I do not have those facilities and as this family comes into my research, could the person who entered their inquiry please phone Max Sawyers on 96232339 or write to 8 Cooina St, Colyton 2760, to share family details.

RAAF REUNION NO 3 EX-APPRENTICES WAGGA

We are holding a reunion for ex-apprentices of No 3 intake 1949-1951. The reunion will be held on Saturday, May 22, 2004, at Dubbo. We need help in locating the following: Pete Kenny, Ray Millard, Pen Miller, Allan Bain, Bullet Baker, M. Boyden (Herb), Richard Head, Roy Toy, Peter Gibson, Jim Wallace, Bernie Stevens, Nuggett Wilson, Phil Cummings (Uncle Remus), Alex Hulol (Akka), Roy Downie. For more information please contact 25 Stonehaven Ave, Dubbo, NSW 2830, phone 68825169, fax 68852060.

NEIL ELLIS

Searching for Neil Ellis. Neil went to Darwin High School in 1971. Son of Vin and Toni Ellis. All very keen South Melbourne (Swans) supporters. School friends Alex and Bruce would like to make contact. Please phone 0401994548.

IRWIN CEMENT TUBS

I would like to obtain a photo or image of Irwin cement laundry tubs that I used in my laundry until the 1970s. Also the kerosene washing-up dish of the 1930s. Please contact Gloria Woolbank Hodgson, 49508648.

THE SEA AROUND US

I am an invalid pensioner and have no phone but am very sincere in my search for a sentimental and influential book from my first six years of life. This book was of the Little Golden Books series of the late 1950s or early '60s when they had hard covers. The book was called The Sea Around Us and it provided me with the only direction in life that I was sure of: scuba diving. It was truly a revelation because of its superlative artwork. I will pay up to \$30 for a copy in excellent condition or \$15 in reasonable condition, plus postage. Please contact Adrian Elliott, 11/459 Dowling St, Surry Hills 2010.

Letters to the Editor

KEN NICKS

I am seeking the whereabouts of my father, Ken Nicks. I was born August 20, 1979, in Coffs Harbour. My mother is Wendy Vorhauer. Ken is somewhere near Kent, maybe Lillydale. He might work in a hospital. Yvette, 0418440056.

If you have a reunion or are seeking information, send the details to In Search, Letters Editor, PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001 or email us at letters@dailytelegraph.com.au. Include a contact name and phone number. Emails should not include attachments.

In search

EMILY LISTER

I am trying to locate distant family members, who I believe lived or may still live in the Neutral Bay area. These relatives are related via my grandmother (Emily Annie Lister) who recently died. My grandmother was born in London on June 13, 1913. Her father was Thomas Daw, a soldier in the Coldstream Guards and her mother was Susan Daw (nee Wood). I do not know the dates of birth of either Thomas or Susan Daw, other than Thomas would have been about 23 years of age. Thomas was killed on October 29, 1914, in Belgium during World War I. Susan Daw later remarried an Australian soldier and emigrated to Australia. My grandmother was brought up in this country by her aunt and uncle in Yorkshire. It is known that Susan Daw (nee Wood) and her new husband also had children, two twin sisters called Lily and Gladys, who may have been born about 1921 in the Neutral Bay area. Andrew G. Lister, 9 Well Ings Close, Shepley, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 8FG, United Kingdom. E-mail andylisters@aol.com

SILVER SALVER

I am searching for a silver salver presented to Charles Henry Thomas on August 3, 1864, in Goulburn, NSW. The salver, which is inscribed, was presented for courageous and praiseworthy service in the Goulburn floods. Charles Henry Thomas died on May 2, 1893, and on his death his son Edward Francis Thomas is said to have inherited the salver. Edward was a solicitor with a practice in the town hall, Auburn St, Goulburn. He was the son of Charles Henry Thomas. Edward had two children, Estelle b 1893 and Zilla b 1897. I am seeking this salver so I may obtain a photo of it for my family history chronicle. Terence Payne, 42612300, e-mail tpay3593@bigpond.net.au

WILLIAM McCANNON

I am seeking information on the descendants of William McCannon and Catherine Cruse, married Richmond, Tasmania, in 1852, Known children Michael b. 1851, William b. 1855, George b. 1857, Joseph b. 1861, John b. 1864, Ellen b. 1866 and Thomas b. 1867. Please e-mail P. McCarthy at mccannongenealogy@yahoo.com.au

ANNIE JANE HUDSON nee STEELE

Searching for descendants of above, b. 1881 Hillston, former resident of Australia St, Newtown, before 1960s and late of a Smithfield nursing home during 1960s. I would like to hear from anyone who has a connection for family history. Contact Brian Morgan at 49526340 or bmorgan@telpacific.com.au

GEORGE COLLINS

Trying to locate children or grandchildren of George Fredrick Collins, married Pauline, lived in Bankstown, NSW. George Fredrick Collins known as Jack was only son of Anne Maria Collins nee Stratton. Contact me on 49870074, reverse charge accepted after 7pm.

JOHN BARRETT

For family history purposes I am looking for descendants of John Patrick and Alice Margaret Barrett (nee McKee), late of Westbourne Rd, Lindfield. Alice died in 1975 and John in 1984. They had a daughter Helen Margaret

Letters to the Editor

(married George Gray) and a son John Michael (married Jacqui). Please contact Carole Cutts on 43925151 or MICAR@bigpond.com

ELIZABETH SCHULTZ

I am researching Elizabeth Schultz (b. 1873 Victoria) who married Robert Young (b. 1873 Victoria, d.1919 Braidwood NSW) in 1902 at Newtown, NSW. They had five children: Mary J.C. (b. 1903 Newtown) who married John P.R. Stewart in 1928 at Burwood. Robert N. (b. 1905 Camperdown) who married Laura A. Hannon in 1935 at Randwick. Lillian F.E. (b. 1907 at Camperdown, d. 1927) married Phillip A. Holman 1926. Ronald C.C. (b. 1909 Newtown) married Mollie P Scott 1934 at Katoomba. Donald G.C. (b. 1911 Hurstville) married 1932 Marion M. Dewar. I would love to hear from any descendants for my family tree. Contact elaine63@bigpond.com or 244 Peechelba St, Albury, NSW 2640.

STEPHEN KEAN(E)

My ancestor Stephen Kean(e) arrived from County Clare, Ireland, in 1841 and settled in Bathurst. Family connection remained there for nearly 100 years to my father's generation (born 1933). Eager to meet/share info with other researchers looking into this name and related names -- Prendergast, McQueeney, etc. Contact Greg Kean on gregk@uca.org.au

Mail

PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001

Fax

Letters Editor, Daily Telegraph, 01-9288-2300

Phone

1900-969545. Calls cost 82.5 cents including GST per minute. Mobile and pay phones extra.

Email

letters@dailytelegraph.com.au

Letters should be no more than 250 words, clearly typed or neatly hand written. Name and address and phone number must be supplied for verification.

Letters may be edited.

Load-Date: March 23, 2004

Hijacking History, With Few Facts and Fewer Sources - Correction Appended

The Forward
November 7, 2003

Correction Appended

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Section: Arts & Letters; Pg. 14

Length: 2791 words

Byline: Benny Morris

Benny Morris teaches Middle Eastern history at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and is the author of, among other books, "Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001" (Knopf/Vintage 2001) and "The Road to Jerusalem: Glubb Pasha, Palestine and the Jews" (I.B. Tauris, 2002).

Body

Free Jerusalem: Heroes, Heroines and Rogues Who Created the State of Israel

By Zev Golan

Devora Publishing, 315 pages, \$21.95.

* * *

Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement

By S. Ilan Troen

Yale University Press, 341 pages, \$35.

* * *

In five or 20 years' time, I imagine, Palestinian writers will begin to churn out "histories" of the Palestinian intifadas against Israel, focusing on the deeds of the liberation fighters/terrorists who were the spear point of the struggle. They will insist that these men were brave, noble, humble, loyal, respectful and selfless; that they loved their mothers/fathers/children/brothers and sisters; and that, in other circumstances, they would never have hurt a fly or raised their voices in anger. And the Palestinian chroniclers, in the manner of nationalist hagiographers, will avoid mention of the buses and coffee shops and passengers and clients - men, women and children these "heroes" and "heroines" bloodily, regularly dispatched to the hereafter. Instead, when resorting to detail, the chroniclers will focus on attacks on soldiers, on the courage, resolve, wiliness and self-sacrifice of their heroes and heroines in taking on, and defeating, their far better-armed foes.

Zev Golan's new book is just such a chronicle, except his "heroes" and "heroines" are the Jewish fighters/terrorists of the Irgun Zva'i Le'umi (the IZL or "Irgun") and Lohamei Herut Yisrael (the "Lehi" or, in British parlance, "Stern Gang"). According to Golan, it was they who fought off the Arab assailants in the disturbances or pogroms of 1920,

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1921, 1929 and 1936 through 1939, while the mainstream, socialist-led Haganah sat back and watched (adopting a policy of havlaga, or restraint); and it was they who drove the British out of Palestine; and they who, as in the subtitle, "created the State of Israel." Moreover, they "helped lay the foundation for a future Jewish army."

Most of these claims are pure nonsense. But, to be sure, they are rooted in current intellectual currents. Since the Likud assumed power in Israel in 1977, the Israeli right has been trying to hijack Israeli history by magnifying its own role in that history and, specifically, in the creation of the state. This book falls into that pattern - indeed, caricatures it. While modern historiography (by such scholars as Michael Cohen) supports the view that Irgun and Lehi operations substantially, perhaps even decisively, contributed to the British decision in 1947 to evacuate Palestine, the claims that the Irgun and Lehi beat off the Arabs in the 1920s and 1930s, created the State of Israel and helped create the Israel Defense Force are all figments of a propagandistic imagination. And to write of the Zionist establishment's policy of "nonresistance" to the Arabs between 1936 and 1939 is simple calumny; thousands of Haganah members spent long days and nights guarding settlements, and dozens of them, in the Special Night Squads and other units, spent weeks and months chasing and killing Arab fighters.

Golan, who is described on the dust jacket as "a well known Nazi-hunter" (I didn't know that the hunt was still on) and director of the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, a right-wing think tank in Jerusalem and Washington, tells us that he bases his story, or collection of stories, on books of memoirs of Irgun and Lehi fighters and on the "yellowed newspapers [and] the archives of the Jabotinsky Institute and the Bet Yair Museum in Tel Aviv." Here, says Golan, one finds "the history of modern Israel." Unfortunately for the Israeli right and its "historians," the history of Zionism and Israel is to be found in the infinitely larger, richer archives of Zionism's mainstream institutions and parties, the Central Zionist Archive, the Israel State Archive, the IDF Archive, the Haganah Archive, the Labor Party Archive, etc. And while I, too, like yellowed newspapers, their importance pales in comparison to the treasures to be found in these major archives. The same applies to the Jabotinsky and Stern collections. For example, the papers in the Haganah Archive of the Haganah Intelligence Service Internal Department, which monitored the Irgun and Lehi, are far more important to understanding the functioning and history of these two groups than the combined papers - often not much more than newspaper clippings - of the Jabotinsky and Stern collections.

Golan hagiographically reviews the careers of such men as Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist stream of Zionism, and Avraham Stern, the founder of the Lehi, and focuses on the particular stories of individual fighters/terrorists, such as Eliahu Hakim and Eliahu Bet Zuri, who assassinated British Minister Resident in the Middle East Lord Moyne in November 1944, not knowing - like Golan himself - that Moyne was by this stage a supporter of a Jewish state. The murder greatly angered Moyne's close friend, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and may thus have contributed significantly to the deferment of Jewish statehood.

One may or may not view the Irgun and Lehi policy of attacks on British Mandate personnel from 1944 through 1948 as a legitimate means of evicting a foreign occupier. But Golan completely fails to describe the dark side of the Irgun's (and, to a lesser degree, Lehi's) activities vis-à-vis the Arabs - the mass indiscriminate murder of civilians in retaliation for Arab attacks on Jews during the 1936-39 Arab Revolt and the start of the 1948 war. These bombings preceded, and resemble nothing so much as, the contemporary Hamas-Islamic Jihad-Tanzim bombings of Israel's buses and markets (which the Arabs contend are in reprisal for Israel's oppressive occupation and specific attacks on Arabs by Israeli troops). In one obtuse, deliberately obfuscating reference to the Irgun bombings in 1937 through 1938, Golan writes of the "planned retaliatory bombings in areas used as rendezvous by the Arab gangs." Later, he briefly mentions the repeated Irgun bombing of the Haifa market (which he claims, without offering any proof, deterred further Arab attacks on Jews in Haifa), without giving the reader any sense of the mayhem and fatalities caused, as he does when referring to Arab attacks on Jews. (Indeed, Golan devotes three whole pages to describing in great detail the British torture of one Irgun operative, Benjamin Zeroni, the man who planned the Haifa market bombings.) He doesn't tell his readers that on July 6, 1938, an Irgun bomb, placed inside milk canisters in that market, killed 21 shoppers and wounded 52; or that three weeks later, on July 25, another bomb, in a pickled cucumber can, killed 39 shoppers and wounded at least 70 at the same site. Nor does he tell us that the exiled Jabotinsky, ostensibly in charge of the Irgun, objected to these operations. The Lehi's robbing of banks, including Jewish-owned banks, in the early 1940s is described by Golan as "relieving" these institutions of their funds.

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But, clearly, attempting to whitewash the Irgun and Lehi weighed on Golan's mind. At one point, Golan states:

A cursory glance at the above list of almost two dozen acts of sabotage and mayhem perpetrated by the Lehi reveals not one directed at women, seniors riding buses, innocent people walking to work or children playing in schoolyards.... To specifically target women and children would have been unimaginable for any of the Hebrew forces.

Golan seems to be arguing against comparing the Irgun and Lehi with contemporary Palestinian terrorists. But his argument won't fly. I see no difference between planting bombs in Arab markets (1937-38) designed to kill as many shoppers as possible and planting bombs on Jewish buses (2000-03) designed to kill as many passengers as possible. Killing as many civilians as possible is, in both cases, the name of the game.

Having avoided serious research, Golan has produced a book that consists almost wholly of anecdotes and yarns, of the sort the old underground survivors, now in their 80s, tell their grandchildren around the family fires. Serious historiography cannot be based on oral testimony elicited decades after the event or on self-serving, self-aggrandizing memoirs.

The book is chock-full of ultra-nationalist (not to mention racist) clichés and epithets. Golan writes of "yelping," "slithering" and "excited" Arabs, and of their "sinister villainy." And it is marred by passages of embarrassingly incorrect purple prose such as: "When the hour was right, the hills knew - though shepherds and sheep and soldiers did not - the glance of one man would be enough to shake the hills and bring the dreams to life."

The book features an endless stream of factual errors: Jabotinsky did not cross the Jordan River "westward in the British conquest of the Holy Land." Indeed, the British army, under General Allenby, conquered Palestine in two giant spurts, by driving northeast from the Sinai through the Gaza Strip and Beersheva toward Jaffa and Jerusalem and then, in 1918, into the Jezreel Valley, on the way to Damascus. Golan writes that "Tel Hai held on for two and a half months though surrounded by Arabs bent on razing it to the ground." But there was no months-long siege; it was a one-day skirmish in which six Jews were killed, at which point the bulk of the defenders abandoned the site and withdrew. Jabotinsky did not found the Haganah - he was instrumental in founding the Jerusalem Haganah unit, one of the components of the national Haganah, founded mainly by a group of veterans of the socialist Hashomer Hatzair movement. The "Border Army" he writes of, presumably referring to the Transjordan Frontier Force, was not "the forerunner to the Jordanian Legion," by which I think he means the "Arab Legion." The legion was founded before the Transjordan Frontier Force. And so on.

While the Irgun and Lehi were out murdering Arabs and British soldiers, be it out of vengeance or to eject the foreign occupier, the organized Yishuv - the Jewish Agency, the socialist parties (Mapai and Mapam), et al. - spent much of the 1930s and 1940s setting up the infrastructure of future Jewish statehood. A crucial component of this infrastructure was the 200-odd settlements, most of them kibbutzim, which later served, in 1947 and 1948, both to define the Jewish-held part of Palestine and to secure it

against Palestinian and outside Arab aggression.

In "Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement," Ilan Troen, a professor of history at Ben-Gurion University in Israel and Brandeis University, gives us a sweeping overview of the development of Zionist settlement policies, rural and urban, between 1882 and 2000, in Palestine/Israel. He describes the farming villages established by the First Aliya of 1882 through 1903, the kibbutzim and moshavim set up in subsequent decades, Israeli urban development policy and praxis before and after 1948, the establishment of the development towns and villages in the 1950s and 1960s, the settlement of the West Bank and Gaza Strip after 1967 and the urban-development of Jerusalem (and, to a lesser degree, of Haifa and Tel Aviv) since then. Troen's chapters on the staggered changes in Jerusalem are one of the book's better parts, though there are lapses: He fails to clearly and honestly describe the June 1967 razing of the Mughrabi Quarter opposite the Wailing Wall and the expulsion of its inhabitants.

Generally, Troen is careful to mask his politics; perhaps he wishes not to give anyone offense. The book generally maintains a neutral, even keel. But occasionally Troen lapses into paeans of admiration for the efficiency and daring

Hijacking History, With Few Facts and Fewer Sources

of the Zionist enterprise. And in the matter of the post-1967 settlements, in his conclusions he briefly allows himself cautiously worded hints of criticism.

Troen sometimes makes telling points - about the connection between the settlers' European baggage and background and the type of settlements they built in Palestine; or on the reasoning behind the urban planning and praxis in and around Jerusalem before and after 1948 and 1967. But the book makes for a tiresome read, partly because of the author's verbosity. There is an abundance of padding; everything must be said at least twice, it seems. We are told that, in Ottoman times, Jerusalem was "a provincial backwater of no political or material significance" and, a mere four pages later, that it was "an insignificant provincial center."

But Troen's prose is the minor problem in this largely disappointing book. His chief defect is that, having taken on a mission to describe a vast enterprise, spanning more than a century and innumerable sites, he spends most of his time analyzing and explaining rather than describing what actually happened; the basic facts about events and processes are often lacking. At the end of the day, the reader is left with very little actual knowledge. For example, we never actually learn how the post-1967 West Bank, Gaza, Golan and Sinai settlement enterprises took off; who decided what and when; when and where were the first settlements established; how were they constructed and with what purpose, etc. Nor do we learn about the major, revolutionary post-1948 urban projects that changed the face of Jaffa-South Tel Aviv and Tiberias, or the vast rural upheaval that changed the face of Palestine and replaced some 400 Arab villages with a similar number of Jewish settlements.

And often, when Troen stoops to detail, he is maddeningly wrong. He tells us, for example, that the British Peel Commission issued its findings in January 1937 (in fact, it was July); that the commission recommended the "partition" of Jerusalem (it recommended partitioning Palestine; Jerusalem, along with Bethlehem and a strip of land leading to the Mediterranean coast, was to remain in British hands); that the United Nations partition plan of November 1947 did not include the Negev in the Jewish state (actually, most of the Negev was earmarked for the Jews); that the inhabitants of Majdal (Ashkelon) fled in 1948 (more than 2,000 remained, leaving for Gaza only in 1950); that "by November 1948," Israel had decided not to allow the return of the Arab refugees (this position was adopted already during June-August 1948); that the Jordanians bombarded "Tel Aviv and Jerusalem" on June 5, 1967 (they did not bombard Tel Aviv); that in 1967, "a consensus emerged [in Israel] that called for exchanging most of the newly conquered territories of the West Bank for recognition and peace" and that Israel "offered the exchange of conquered land for a peace treaty" (in fact, the secret Israeli Cabinet decision of June 19, 1967, which Troen fails to mention, offered Egypt and Syria the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights in exchange for peace but failed to offer a territorial compromise in, let alone all of, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in exchange for peace), and that "both the 1929 riots and the intifada of 2000 began in Jerusalem with an attack on Jews at the Wailing wall." (Neither began with an attack on "Jews at the wall," though the wall figured as a reason in both outbreaks.)

One reason for the plethora of mistakes, I would conjecture, is that Troen, like his fellow "historian," Golan, never, or almost never, actually looks at primary, archival materials; his book is based almost completely on secondary works, articles and memoirs. A trawl through his footnotes reveals only a handful of references to documents and files in archives - and more often than not, these references are mistaken or incomplete. One footnote refers to the number of a file deposited in the Central Zionist Archive without citing either the record group in which it is found or identifying the document from which the quotation is taken: Is it a letter, a memorandum, a cable? By or from whom to whom? From what date? Without these, what is the point of the footnote? Troen, who asserts - correctly - that the Haganah/IDF had major input on settlement policy, the location of settlements, etc. during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, and perhaps beyond, failed completely to consult the Haganah and IDF archives. This reader emerged with a feeling that when Troen ostensibly quotes from a document, he in fact is quoting from a secondary work that is based on an archival source.

The picture that emerges is of a "historian" floundering in an uncharted sea: He knows relatively well the island on which he has found haven. But beyond, all around, is a frothing sea of general Zionist/Israeli history and the Zionist-Arab conflict, of which he knows little or nothing. Thus this story of Zionist settlement - in itself wonderful, moving, dramatic, perhaps ultimately tragic - lacks real context and meaning.

Correction

Due to an editing error, the pre-World War I Hashomer defense organization was incorrectly identified as "socialist" in a November 7 book review ("Hijacking History"). The defense organization had no connection to the later, socialist Hashomer Hatzair party and youth movement.

Correction-Date: November 13, 2003

Graphic

IMAGE

Load-Date: June 14, 2006

End of Document

Jerusalem's growing web of walls

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

October 6, 2003, Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 2947 words

Byline: By Nicole Gaouette Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Highlight: Israelis are erecting a network of barriers in East Jerusalem after years of deadly attacks. The barrier is changing lives on both sides.

Body

Jamal Dirawi jolted awake to the thunder of fists pounding his front door. 1 a.m. He shared a tired glance with his wife and got dressed. This had happened before. In the weeks to come, it would happen again.

That July night, Israeli border police arrested Mr. Dirawi and 15 others in his village for entering Israel illegally. Dirawi was born here, just south of East Jerusalem. He was living here in 1967 when Israel declared the area part of greater Jerusalem. The villagers weren't told until 1992. When they applied for proper identification as Jerusalem residents, they were denied, making them illegally present on land they had never left. Now they are trapped.

Dirawi and his neighbors don't have the ID to enter Jerusalem, to the north. An Israeli settlement hems them in on the west. To the south and east, Israel's new security barrier cuts them off from Bethlehem, their urban hub, and the West Bank beyond. And as bulldozers blazed the barrier's path, the border police raids began.

"A government man came [in March] and said they want this area as a no man's land, that they'll cut our electricity and water," Dirawi says. "After this man, we've seen no good. Israel wants our land, but it doesn't want the people."

After three years of conflict that has claimed over 800 Israeli lives and shattered many more, Israelis desperately crave the safety that the barrier seems to offer.

They believe a physical divider will stop suicide bombers from entering Israel proper, despite events like the Oct. 4 suicide bombing in Haifa, where the barrier is already complete. On the other side of that divide, in the West Bank, the barrier's rapid construction is altering lives, the landscape and, critics say, foreclosing on the possibility of a viable Palestinian state - all factors that will deepen Palestinian anger and motivation to strike at Israel. As this is happening, the barrier is shaping the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in other ways. Indeed, the barrier's dusty path through Jerusalem highlights like nowhere else how Israel uses law, policy, and construction to control lands the Palestinians claim as their own.

"Jerusalem is being radically changed in a way it hasn't been for centuries," says Daniel Seideman, an Israeli lawyer who heads a group that provides planning services to residents of Palestinian East Jerusalem. "It's the first time there has been a serious intent to build a wall around the city since the 16th century," Mr. Seideman says. "It's certainly the biggest change to Jerusalem since 1967."

Jerusalem's growing web of walls

Though the US has said that the Palestinians must act first to stop militant violence, it has expressed concern about the barrier and raised the possibility of financial penalties against Israel.

"The wall is not really consistent with our view of what the Middle East will one day have to look like, two states living side by side in peace," US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice told reporters on Sept. 22. "We understand that the Israelis have some security concerns [but] it is extremely important, if it is going to be built, that it not intrude on the lives of the Palestinians, and most importantly, that it not look as if it's trying to prejudge the outcome of a peace agreement."

Jerusalem has always been a crucible for ethnic, religious, and political tensions - "a golden basin filled with scorpions," one Arab resident wrote 10 centuries ago. A metaphor for peace, holiness, and the divine for adherents to the three major monotheistic faiths, the city has endured massacres, sieges, war, desolation, and repeated rebuilding over its 4,000-year history.

For Jews, as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon recently said, it is "the capital of the Jewish people for the last 3,000 years and the united and undivided capital of Israel forever."

Arab Christians see Jerusalem as the birthplace of their faith, while Arab Muslims declare it the third-holiest city in Islam, the place where Mohammad rose to heaven to receive the word of God and upon returning reportedly said that, "to die in Jerusalem is almost like dying in heaven."

Religion infuses and complicates the political struggle over Jerusalem. It underlies the decision by foreign mediators to make the city a "final status" negotiating issue, leaving the thorniest topics to the last. And it's one more reason why barrier construction here is so problematic.

Israel has already built 84 miles of barrier that include two sections the Ministry of Defense calls "Circling Jerusalem." Totalling almost 11 miles, these two barriers, when seen on maps, resemble giant brackets separating Jerusalem from Palestinian neighborhoods to the north and south. A third Jerusalem section was approved on Aug. 20, the day after a **Hamas** suicide bombing claimed 20 lives and galvanized support for the barrier (see part 3 of this series online at www.csmonitor.com/barrier).

This section will run some 38 miles through the eastern part of the city. Safety does not come cheap. At \$ 4 million per mile, the barrier's price tag will reach at least \$ 1 billion, but Israelis want a divider as quickly as possible, no matter the cost.

Controversy is slowing things down. US Secretary of State Colin Powell has repeatedly and publicly called the barrier "a problem" most recently on Oct. 3.

This is because the barrier veers from the Green Line border between Israel and Palestinian territory and dives into the West Bank, where Palestinians hope to establish their state.

The most contentious barrier section runs down a central section of the West Bank near the settlement of Ariel and would involve a 12-mile indent if Ariel were to be included. Israel approved that 270-mile barrier section Oct. 1, leaving a gap in the barrier opposite the settlement.

Israeli media and analysts widely expect Ariel to be included inside the barrier in a few months. In the meantime, four separate barriers and obstacles will be built east of Ariel and other neighboring settlements.

In Washington meetings on Sept. 21, Israeli envoys told the Bush Administration that the barrier's route has been determined only by security considerations and is not intended to create future political borders.

The US concern is that the Ariel diversion, along with other detours, would make it hard to create a Palestinian state out of one, uninterrupted piece of land. If Israel extends the barrier around Ariel, the US has threatened to deduct monies from the \$ 9 billion in loan guarantees it gave Israel this year.

Jerusalem's growing web of walls

Israel media noted, however, the US silence about the Cabinet approval of the Ariel section. In the Ma'ariv newspaper, analyst Ben Caspit noted that Israeli politicians expect the US to disengage from the conflict over the coming year due to coming elections and other foreign concerns, thereby allowing Israel more freedom to act.

That has yet to happen though. On Oct. 3, Secretary Powell said the administration was having "intense discussions" about Israel's plan to leave gaps in the barrier. "The gaps in and of themselves do not satisfy me," he told the Washington Post. "The question is what becomes of the gaps in due course... We have not yet come to a conclusion about what to do and what our action should be."

Even so, the US has doubts about the Jerusalem barrier. This is a sensitive area where the barrier will have a substantial impact on residents, and from a security perspective, its route is counterintuitive. As it winds around the hills of East Jerusalem, the barrier dips beyond Israel's boundaries for the Jerusalem municipality and into the West Bank, so that some 60,000 to 70,000 West Bank Palestinians will be on the "Israeli" side of the fence. At the same time, Palestinians with Jerusalem ID and lives that revolve around the city will be left outside.

Inside the city, surveillance cameras will oversee a 26-foot-high wall, high tech intrusion-detection fences and a patrol road. This barrier won't divide Palestinians from Israelis.

Instead, it will separate Palestinians from Palestinians, cutting people off from their families, jobs, schools, hospitals, community graveyards and land. Already, students, housewives, and others are climbing over or squeezing through gaps in the 8-foot concrete blocks plunked down in the middle of East Jerusalem's Abu Dis neighborhood.

"There is so much human pressure on both sides of this wall," says Mr. Seideman, looking down on the concrete divider from the hilltop courtyard of a local hotel. A wiry, rumpled man with intense green eyes, he anchors his conversational flood with facts, figures and historical detail.

Below him, the makeshift concrete wall squats along the edge of a dusty, litter-strewn street, a precursor to the barrier to come. The registrar's office of Al Quds University lies on one side. On the other, a gaggle of female students heave themselves up and through a chink in the barrier.

"While they can do it, people are going over the wall, under the wall, around the wall; residents have marked gaps in the slabs for people of various girths," Seideman says.

This barrier-induced pressure on communities in and around East Jerusalem is building. Seideman worries that it will radicalize one of the most peaceful Palestinian areas during this conflict. And many residents now wonder aloud whether they'll have to move to reach jobs and schools.

This pressure is amplified by other Israeli actions around the contested city - road creation, settlement expansion, and building restrictions on Palestinians. The overarching purpose, Israeli analysts say, is to shape Jerusalem's demographic profile and, by doing so, its future.

Hassan Abu Asleh spent his working years laying the physical foundation for life in East Jerusalem.

Mr. Abu Asleh's career as an urban planner and surveyor began with the Jordanians who ruled the eastern side of the Green Line until the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. When the Israelis annexed the eastern half of Jerusalem, "they took me with my table, my chair, my pencils, and maps. They needed me," says Abu Asleh. He retired last year to an airy, open home he built in East Jerusalem's Sur Bahir neighborhood, just north of Jamal Dirawi's village. Time has bleached Abu Asleh's close-cropped hair and lined his skin, but his hazel eyes still convey the thoughtful intelligence evident in early photos.

The Israelis were new to East Jerusalem in 1967, but they had ideas. Abu Asleh watched them extend the city's boundaries, confiscate Palestinian land for settlements, and institute new construction rules in East Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's growing web of walls

"Nothing happened to Palestinian land in Jerusalem without me having a finger in it," he says. "After the war, people had to apply again to build and the Israelis said, 'Wait, we want to do new planning,'" He pauses. "Today there are places that still haven't got permission to build."

Planning - the decisions about whether you can build, where and what you can put up - can determine the potential and limits of a community, and, to some degree, the lives of the people residing there. Building a school, park, business, or even just a home extension creates new options for communities and families.

In East Jerusalem, a thicket of bureaucracy and an absence of planning have stilled that potential. This is a deliberate policy, critics say, driven by the Jerusalem municipality's stated goal of maintaining a ratio of 72 Jews to 28 Arabs in the city.

Abu Asleh nudges aside the bowl of fat purple figs on his coffee table and pulls out maps of the Palestinian villages now part of Jerusalem.

Large kelly-green splotches enliven the charts, connoting the city's "open green spaces." These aren't parks, but private Palestinian lands where all building is forbidden. These areas make up 54 percent of East Jerusalem, according to the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHD).

In the already crowded areas where building is allowed, complex restrictions and legal and financial hurdles delay construction for years.

And as Israel continues to confiscate land, the squeeze on Palestinian East Jerusalem grows ever tighter. Abu Asleh has only to look out his living room window to see 1-1/2 acres of family land seized for the creation of a Jewish neighborhood in 1970. This July, a confiscation notice arrived for his remaining 2-1/2 acres, claimed for barrier construction.

"It makes me feel ill," he says, curling a fist against his chest as he turns from the window. "I have the land under my feet now, that's it. And it's not just my story; it's the story of everyone in my village. There's not an inch for people to grow or expand."

As a result, when families expand, Palestinians build illegally.

In response, Israel demolishes. Israel has destroyed an estimated 2,000 Palestinian homes in Jerusalem since 1967 and has more than 1,000 demolition orders outstanding, according to ICAHD.

"It is part of the strategy," says Shuli Hartman of Bimkom, a group of Israeli architects and planners who study Israel's use of urban planning. "There has been no planning in these neighborhoods, so anything they do is illegal."

After a home demolition, families are forced to move, often outside Jerusalem. If they do, the Ministry of Interior invalidates their ID; they can no longer enter the city legally.

"In Jerusalem, Israel turned urban planning into a tool of the government, to be used to help prevent the expansion of the city's non-Jewish population," Amir Cheshin wrote in his 1967 book, "Separate and Unequal: The Inside Story of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem." A retired army colonel, Mr. Cheshin went on to become a mayoral adviser on Arab affairs in Jerusalem.

"The idea was ... to move as many Arabs as possible out of the city," he wrote. "Policy in east Jerusalem was all about this numbers game."

The floor-to-ceiling windows in Benny Kashriel's office offer a view of single-minded determination in the form of row upon row of neat, new steeple-roofed houses. Mr. Kashriel is mayor of Maale Adumim, the 30,000-strong settlement east of Jerusalem. As an assistant to Israel's housing minister in 1980, when Maale Adumim was founded, then as mayor for the past 14 years, Kashriel has been concerned principally with the settlement's safety and growth. He says the Defense Minister recently assured him that Maale Adumim will fall within the Jerusalem

Jerusalem's growing web of walls

district fence, part of the barrier projected to swing out some 9 miles into the West Bank, far beyond the current borders of the settlement's urban center.

Kashriel, an urbane man with a politician's easy warmth, says he isn't all that impressed. "The fence doesn't give security," he says. "It's more a temporary medicine for politicians under pressure."

The mayor believes security can be built in other ways, though, and there are seemingly few restrictions on his community's expansion. "In the next five years, we'll build neighborhoods between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim and you won't even know you're leaving Jerusalem," he says. These neighborhoods, along with the barrier, form what Israel calls the "Jerusalem Envelope."

Another 2,000 units planned for the settlement's eastern edge will extend its reach toward the West Bank city of Jericho.

For Kashriel, the impetus to build on the West Bank side of Jerusalem amounts to a case of "us or them." "If Maale Adumim wasn't built 23 years ago, there would be one big belt of Palestinian towns around the east of Jerusalem," he says.

While the barrier and Israeli housing regulations are converging to squeeze Palestinians out of Jerusalem, the Maale Adumim expansion project - named "E1" and deemed a top priority by the Defense Ministry - will effectively block any future Palestinian state from attaining easy access to Jerusalem, says Jeff Halper, coordinator for ICAHD.

"Jerusalem is being transformed from a city into a region that cuts the West Bank into north and south islands," he says. "E1 is the key to dividing and controlling the West Bank."

Seideman likens Israeli policy in and around East Jerusalem to Russian Matryoshka dolls. "It's about containment, within containment, within containment," he says of the barrier, the settlements, the E1 plan and the roads that ring East Jerusalem. "Every time the Palestinians turn around they bump into something. You think you're finished with one doll and you get another."

The image of imprisonment resonates bleakly for Jamal Dirawi. The border police no longer rob him of sleep - a court appeal put a temporary stop to the raids - but anxiety keeps him awake now.

"We have the advantage of our families and houses, but we're becoming prisoners on our own land," he says. He's sitting under a leafy almond tree in his front yard surveying the village's golden-green hills. He used to tell visitors proudly of an Israeli journalist's description of Nu'man as "Eden." Now it is becoming something altogether different.

The water and electricity haven't been shut off yet, but the army confiscated 36 acres of land this month and began the final barrier section around his village last month. A political consultant for the Palestinian Authority, Dirawi sounds increasingly worn out. "It's a matter of days before life shuts down here, they're squeezing us out of this place," he says. "We don't know yet if they're going to build us a gate to get in and out."

His 6-year-old daughter wobbles by on her bike and training wheels. He worries about what to say on the day the barrier cuts her off from her school in a neighboring village. It's easier to find words for the adults around him. "We're going to stay," he says. "We're not leaving." He says it again, perhaps to convince himself as much as his listeners, and then adds an afterthought. "We have no place to go."

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Load-Date: October 5, 2003

Letters to the Editor

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

July 1, 2003 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES-TYPE- LETTER-COLUMN- LETTERS; Pg. 16

Length: 3367 words

Body

Chiefs' approach to safety off the rails

Two modes of public transport, yet two vastly different standards of safety, regulation and concern for the welfare of the travelling public.

Imagine for a minute the outrage that ministers of the Carr Government would rain upon the aviation sector if the same sloppy standards that appear prevalent in the state rail industry were to be evident in our national airlines.

As a licensed pilot, I am only too aware of the myriad regulations, orders and other in-flight procedures that must be complied with on every flight to ensure the safety of all who use our skies.

As the rail network is integral to the working and social lives of so many people, why is it that the standards and regulations that apply to its operation appear to play fast and loose with their safety and well-being?

That The Daily Telegraph has been able to find a dozen drivers from one Sydney rail bridge not doing their jobs overly well suggests a systemic failure in the operations of the state's rail system.

MATP

What price must the travelling public pay before this government acts to clean up the mess? Does the Carr Government not care for their safety?

Doug Miell, Queanbeyan

I read your article on the lack of safety which is evident with some train drivers with great interest.

May I suggest that this is but one symptom of a general culture of lack of safety throughout State Rail? Such a culture does not come from the bottom upwards -- rather it can only come from the top downwards.

In other words the Government, the SRA board, managers, supervisors and the union have to be imbued with a sense that safety is the most important thing.

Please look at the entire problem. The drivers are just one symptom of a sick safety culture.

Brian Swan, Epping

I put train drivers up there with airline pilots and ship captains. They are conservative and cautious. We put our lives in their hands every day.

Letters to the Editor

A few photos of newspapers on train dashboards, and sun visors lowered to stop the sun shining into the drivers' eyes, are no grounds to condemn them.

Tony Horneman, Maroubra

Conquering Caesars

As pointed out by Professor Michael Chapman in the article "Caesar rise leaves health system holding the baby" (Daily Telegraph, June 30), elective caesareans include those where the woman had a previous difficult birth.

Many of these caesareans are probably unnecessary as the success rate of having vaginal birth after caesarean in cases where it is medically possible is about 70 per cent. The sad fact is, however, that many women, especially those choosing private obstetric care, are not encouraged and informed enough by their specialist to pursue this option.

If more women were encouraged and supported in a choice to try for a vaginal birth in these circumstances then the elective caesarean rate would drop.

In many European countries this is normal practice, whereas in Australia it is an uphill battle in many places to get the obstetric care to support that choice.

I underwent an emergency caesarean in a private hospital in Sydney that, after dissecting the facts, I do not think was necessary, I will be birthing my next child in a public hospital. I have full private health insurance. However, it covers very little of the cost of an independent midwife -- my first choice in care. If I chose an obstetrician, I would be most likely have the baby in a private hospital where statistics have proven that there is a higher intervention and caesarean rate.

H. Sibly, Miranda

Railroading good drivers

Coming from a family containing a number of NSW train drivers, I need to make a number of points after your article on train drivers and safety (Daily Telegraph, June 30).

The drivers pictured had papers and other items on their dashboards, which (especially on the Tangaras) are a full arms' length from their chest. From the very steep angle the photos were taken it would be impossible see if they were actually reading anything but their instruments.

One driver pictured may well have been glancing at a book. It is a ring-binder containing either a rail roster, or timetable. Perhaps he should

ignore it, guess his route and sail through the next station stop, leaving angry commuters in his wake? I think not.

In regard to sun visors, any fool would rather have his early morning or late afternoon driver use them to keep the sun out of his eyes, rather than be blinded by the glare. In any case, again from the angle of the published photos, it is impossible to see how far the shades are blocking the view, if at all.

Drivers, as noted by your correspondent, are paid reasonably well. However, most people rostered on 3am starts or 2am finishes and working a number of weekends each month, would also hope to be well paid.

Mark Southcott, Thirroul

As a former train driver, having been medically retired after 26 years service in 1988, a touch of reality is needed in regard to your article, Blind to the Danger (Daily Telegraph, June 30).

First, it is not uncommon to see car and truck drivers with newspapers on their dash boards, not just train drivers.

Letters to the Editor

There also is a reason for the blinds in the driver's cabin, and that is to cut out the sun. At most times of the day there is a need to have the blinds drawn to varying degrees, as at some part of the journey the sun will affect your vision. It is far better to have the blind down then be constantly standing up raising or lowering it.

Transport authorities argue motorists need to have breaks at least every two hours to maintain their vigilance. Suburban train drivers are expected to be in their cabins for up to three hours without a break, with only a change from one end to the other to sometimes give a themselves a break.

XPT and Explorer drivers are in the cabin by themselves for hours at a time. Each is expected to be vigilant at all times.

One other thing is the very simple fact that if the driver loses his concentration, and a collision occurs, he is more likely to suffer than anyone else on the train.

Colin Hussey, Shalvey

Origin of a cooling off over footy

Ten years ago, the days leading up to the State of Origin would see everyone in the office getting the paper and talking about the game.

The following day would be dominated by post-match talk about the fights, big hits and the spectacular feats of Meninga, Lewis, Stuart and Daley. How times have changed. I do not recall one person speaking about the game in the lead-up to the second Origin clash.

Where has the passion for State of Origin gone?

The State of Origin is beginning to look out-dated. In the AFL, the Victoria v South Australia clashes were major events -- but once the Adelaide teams entered the national competition, the state clashes lost their significance and disappeared.

With a state of origin battle occurring every time the Broncos run on to the field, one could begin to feel the NSW v Queensland games may follow the same downward path as the AFL.

Andrew Verdon, Chifley ACT

Bitter brew in World Cup

Soccer Australia is suffering delusions of grandeur if it believes that Oceania deserves direct qualification into the World Cup.

In soccer terms, we are a sporting backwater. We do not rate a blip on the radar in the global sport.

Australia will continue to languish in its current depths of obscurity until it gets its house in order and becomes a truly national game.

Only then will our national team begin to play at a world-class, competitive level and we will receive international recognition.

David de Vere, Parramatta

I am disgusted to hear the news that FIFA has reneged on its decision to grant Oceania a direct route into the World Cup.

This is basically a stab in the back for soccer in this region and once again, we become the nomads of the qualifying process. FIFA has acted in a very unprofessional manner.

Letters to the Editor

How are we expected to develop as a region in footballing terms if we are tossed around from continent to continent to qualify for this tournament?

John Gouskas, Haberfield

Blame greed, not stamps

Ridiculous housing prices are the result of greed and not stamp duty.

Instead of using low interest rates sensibly, we are being lemmings, rushing to our doom by paying the obscene asking prices and participating in the wild bidding levels at auctions.

Grow up, folks, and accept your fair share of responsibility for inflating the cost of housing. Add to that the rapacious greed of real-estate agents who are having a whine about increased stamp duty but are making absolutely no effort to reduce their own percentages. It is also the greedy real estate agents who encourage us to both ask for and even pay these stupid prices. Think about it.

Jackie Muir, Hamilton

The name is murder

Please stop referring to Palestinian "militant factions" and "extremist groups" and start calling Hamas, Hezbollah and fellow travellers what they plainly are: terrorists.

There is no justification for terrorism, whatever the grievance, and whitewashing it in this way serves only to legitimise murder as a political tactic.

Calling Amrozi a "militant" would be treason to 88 dead Australians. Shame on you for making exceptions when the victims are Israeli.

Rhys Weekley, Neutral Bay

To the point

Given that it is only a matter of time before Bob Carr introduces a tax on the air we breathe, I was wondering if anyone has any advance knowledge as to how the tax might be implemented. If I can find out whether the tax will be applied on (a) volume of air breathed or (b) on number of breaths taken then perhaps I can develop an appropriate method of breathing for tax minimisation purposes.

Barry Taylor, Putney

What does the future hold now for Australian soccer? The setback caused by FIFA withdrawing automatic World Cup qualification for Oceania is devastating.

Ben Turner, Springwood

Kind words

On arrival back at Sydney Airport on Monday, June 16, after a delayed (fog-affected) flight from Kalgoorlie, we found a trolley, collected our luggage and went to the airport railway station.

We bought tickets to Pennant Hills from friendly staff and a staff member opened the wide gate to let our trolley through. He then came down in the lift to the platform, helped us with the three cases and then took the trolley back upstairs for us.

People criticise CityRail and its employees but this man was really great.

M. and P. Cooper, Bigga

Letters to the Editor

On Sunday, June 15, at Narellan, I watched 26 strong and courageous rugby league players battle it out in a game of Group Six football.

Their strength and courage, however, paled in comparison with one young man, who watched the game from the sideline.

Lukie, you are a true inspiration. Your amazing strength and spirit is an example for us all. I wish you the best in your continued recovery.

Cheryl Rouse, Liverpool

In search

BATHURST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Bathurst Public School is 150 years old and to celebrate, we are holding a Heritage Ball on August 23. The ball will be held at the Memorial Entertainment Centre at 7pm. Tickets are \$55 and are available at the school or by calling 63313923. For more information, contact Dennielle on 63314783 (h).

BELFIELD BULLANTS

Looking for all Belfield Bullants for a reunion on the October long weekend. This reunion will coincide with Brian Duffy's 70th birthday bash at Narromine. It will be a great chance to catch up with Bullants we have not seen in many years. Please contact his daughter Gayle on 98352266 or e-mail gaylecherub@bigpond.com and let me know if you can come.

BERKELEY EAGLES

The Berkeley Eagles Baseball Club (Wollongong) is celebrating its 30th year with celebrations on Friday, July 11, and Saturday, July 12. Past and present members who would like to attend should contact Brett Shipp, 42286990, or Warren Fleming, 42844365. RSVP by this Saturday.

AFTER THE DELUGE

Does anybody have a tape of the second episode of After the Deluge? I have the first episode if anyone wants it. Contact Tony on 96292626, 0418249330 or tonyo52@bigpond.net.au

BELL/MELLON/BOWYER

Seeking information re Cora (Betty) Bell, last known address Annandale, also descendants of Ted and Mona Mellon, last at Ultimo, and Arthur Bowyer, stationed at Beresfield army camp early 1940s. Possibly has a son born at Crown St Women's Hospital 1943-44? Any leads to Y.Tolhurst, 50A Wallis St, Forster 2428, phone 65545779.

SYDNEY GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Leavers 1953. Afternoon tea planned for November 1, 2003. Please help with names and addresses. Contact Jocelyn at jocneb@bigpond.net.au or Wendy on 96689772.

ANGEL DESPERATELY WANTED

Has anyone taped the episode of Angel that was aired on June 10 on Channel 7? I would be willing to pay any costs involved. Contact Trudy Lincoln, 98105463.

POEM

Letters to the Editor

Could anyone supply me with the words of a poem which was read to me as a child by my mother. The only words I remember are: "If you're waking call me early, Call me early Mother dear". Any information to Bill Stewart on 43907763.

ERSKINEVILLE O.C.

CLASS 1938-39

Holding its 65-year reunion at a date to be decided. Missing from previous reunions are the following pupils (now 75 years young): Bill Duncan, Jim Grahame, Bruce McPherson, Ray Moss, Don Sneddon and Don Watt. Would anyone having news of these ex-students please contact Ken Broughton, 95212601 (please leave a message if phone is unattended).

MARIO LANZA

Keenly searching for the following Mario Lanza movies: That Midnight Kiss; Because You're Mine; For the First Time. Also any Mario Lanza biographies. Will pay. Contact Jan Chandler, phone 49435171 or 0416235171.

SUE LARDEN

Seeking contact with Sue Larden. We knew each other in the Potts Point area in the mid-1970s and lost contact when she moved to the Coogee Beach area. Currently believed to be living near Telopea and possibly working in or near Liverpool. Any information, please contact Guye on 0403953935 or PO Box 3077R, Rosemeadow 2560.

MARJORIE BLOM nee ROBERTSON

I am searching for a friend. She has since married again and I don't know her present married name. She was my bridesmaid when I was married in 1948. Please contact Phyllis on 95209261.

SHIRLEY WILLIAMS nee WINDLEY

We grew up in Paddington in the 1940s. She had a son Colin born early 1950s. Her husband died a few months later and the last address I had was the Caravan Park at Narrabeen. Contact Joy Curtin nee King, 44432853.

ST MARY'S/ALL SAINTS' LIVERPOOL

Ex-students' annual reunion. Sunday, August 31. Mass 11am, All Saints' followed by lunch at Liverpool Catholic Club. Bookings essential. Ring 96028129.

If you have a reunion or are seeking information, send the details to In Search, Letters Editor, PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001 or email us at letters@dailytelegraph.com.au. Include a contact name and phone number. Emails should not include attachments.

Exchange

QThere are two songs I have not heard since the 1920s. I wonder if anybody can tell me the words in full. One is a number sung to the tune of Danny Boy, of which I only remember odd phrases. It is called The Legend of ... and some of the words include "My heart as Thor towards the moonlit heaven" and "Where Earl Fitzgerald rides the rath around". The other is a carol as follows: "Cradled all lowly, behold a Saviour holy, a Saviour meek and mild". We sang both songs when I was at school in England in the 1920-30 decade.

Ian Harvey, Blacktown

I think the second is a Christmas carol titled Cradled All Lowly, also known as Bethlehem and The Shepherd's Nativity Hymn, and was written by Henry Brougham Farnie in 1865. The words are not quite as Mr Harvey remembers them, but quite close: "Cradled all lowly, behold the Saviour Child! A Being holy, in dwelling rude and wild; ne'er yet was regal state of monarch proud and great, who grasped a nation's fate, so glorious as the manger-

Letters to the Editor

bed of Bethlehem. No longer sorrow as without hope, O earth! A brighter morrow dawned with that Infant's birth. Our sins were great and sore, but these the Saviour bore, and God was wroth no more: His own Son was the Child that lay in Bethlehem. Babe weak and wailing, in lowly village stall, Thy glory veiling, Thou cam'st to die for all. The sacrifice is done, the world's atonement won, till time its course hath run, O Jesus, Saviour, Morning Star of Bethlehem." As for the first song, I have no idea.

Miles Fisher-Pollard, Hunters Hill

Q I wonder if anyone can settle my sleuth-like mind regarding Inspector Morse or John Thaw. My wife and I are avid Morse watchers and on quite a few occasions I have remarked that he has something wrong with his right leg, as he appears to flip his right foot as he walks. To me it indicated that he had suffered an injury to that leg or that he had a prosthesis of some kind.

J.Brown, Bexley

My search on the Internet revealed that when John Thaw was 15 he tripped over a kerb and broke his foot while rushing to school. This accident left him with a slight limp which, although it didn't hurt, tended to drag when he got tired.

Cheryl Lindeman, Parkes

Exchange also thanks Clare Lister of Mt Colah and Reg Squire of Avalon.

Q I understand that my Italian-born grandfather was interned for security reasons, along with other foreign nationals, during World War II at a camp in Waterfall, NSW. How widespread was this practice and when was it implemented? What became of the camps?

Mark Ippolito, Lismore

Italians and Germans living in Australia (some naturalised citizens) were arrested at the beginning of World War II. The German wool buyers were sent to Darlinghurst and Long Bay jails and eventually incarcerated for the duration of the war at a camp at Tatura, Victoria. There were three compounds: German men; Italian and German families; and Palestine Jews who were Nazi sympathisers. There is a museum in Tatura and some remnants of the camp outside Tatura.

J.M.Butler, Kenthurst

Question

Why did Sir Cliff Richard, Sir Elton John and Sir Michael Caine get knighthoods under those names when their real names are Harry Webb, Reginald Dwight and Maurice Micklewhite?

Philip Daley, Paddington

Word power

TIMELINE

B.Turnbull of Bathurst has language matters in mind. She writes: "As a regular Daily Telegraph reader, and having great admiration for the high standard of journalism evident in all publications, I would appreciate answers to two questions on 'the right word in the right place'. Every time the word 'timeline' is used and seems to fit in to make the point quite well, there is a discussion among certain people as to whether this is a true word in the English language or just a 'coined' word used instead of deadline. Quite a few people search dictionaries to clear this up. Also, when reciting The Ode of Remembrance, the deeply moving 'They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old' always prompts discussion on whether the correct grammar should be '... we who are left'. From schoolday memories, is it correct to put 'that' after 'we', which is personal, when 'that' goes after an impersonal word such as 'dog' or 'hat'?"

APOPHTHEGMS

In a piece on the journalist, author and broadcaster Malcolm Muggeridge published in The Spectator, Christopher Howse wrote: "On the surface he was a satirist and an entertainer, with that strange drawling voice and a jaw that contorted as he delivered caustic apophthegms". An apophthegm is a concise saying or maxim.

What's news

1 Father and son petrol distribution team Kelvin and Raymond Sidebottom have been fined how much for tax evasion?

2 Name the broadcaster who has been forced to apologise to an Aboriginal woman over comments on a native title claim on the North Coast.

3 Name the Cameroon soccer player who collapsed and died during a Confederations Cup match against Colombia.

4 Who wrote the play, Last of the Red Hot Lovers?

5 Which company produces an all-wheel drive vehicle called the Cruze?

ANSWERS

1:\$53 million. 2:Alan Jones. 3:Marc-Vivien Foe. 4:Neil Simon. 5:Holden.

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Letters should be no more than 250 words, clearly typed or neatly hand written. Name and address and phone number must be supplied for verification.

Letters may be edited.

Load-Date: June 30, 2003

Weekend: 2003: For Tony Blair, it was the year everything began to turn sour. The feeling grew that the nation had been duped into war, the Hutton inquiry was a potential time bomb, his most trusted lieutenants bailed out, top-up fees rankled and that lipstick moment at No 10 backfired. Then, on a winter evening, at a farm near Tikrit, his luck changed. Zoe Williams reviews the trajectory of the prime minister, war and other events of 2003.

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Body

The war against Iraq lasted only 27 days. Deaths are still occurring, on both sides, but actual combat lasted barely a month, a month that defined the year. 2003 will not be remembered as the year Gordon Brown launched a kind-of challenge to Tony Blair. It will not go down as a year in which anything remotely memorable happened with the euro. It certainly won't be the year in which Iain Duncan Smith became the first Tory leader to be ejected without having fought an election since Austin Chamberlain. It will be the year we went to war.

The probability of the attack on Iraq increased by imperceptible increments. Having made so much the previous November of resolution 1441, it seemed unthinkable that Blair would then go on to defy the will of the UN as one half of a bold new US-UK axis (also known as the Axis Of Always Being In Complete Agreement). But by February 15, UN opposition notwithstanding, the war seemed real and present enough to raise more than a million people for a demonstration, making it the largest public protest ever. For the record, it was also the first march that, if you hadn't attended, you had to pretend you had, or at least make up an excuse. It was extremely gratifying that it dwarfed the Countryside Alliance march of the previous September but, with hindsight, reaching the end of a year when the war has been and not gone, and fox-hunting has still not made it into the Queen's speech, you have to conclude that, well, size isn't everything.

In February, there was still the prospect of a parliamentary rebellion, although no one was surprised when just 121 MPs voted for an anti-war amendment at the end of the month. Two weeks later, Robin Cook resigned on principle. Clare Short didn't. She left it until May, when she resigned on the principle that, if she didn't, she'd be chased from the building by dogs. Cook was applauded with enormous vigour and a lot of standing up in the House of Commons as he delivered his case that history will be astonished at the diplomatic miscalculations that led us to war. He was treated with such warmth and apparent accord, in fact, that it makes you wonder whether these ovating MPs had either a) forgotten how they had voted a fortnight ago; or b) there were just 120 of them clapping very loudly.

Mind you, there was a lot of inconsistency going on at the time. Many people who objected to the war on the strongest possible grounds still remembered how funny it was to call the French cheese-eating surrender monkeys. In fairness, this was partly a tribute to the Simpsons, from which the phrase derived and which

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celebrated its 300th episode in March, making it the longest-running cartoon ever. On the eve of war, French president Jacques Chirac called an attack on Iraq illegitimate and dangerous, which the rest of the UN thought was a bit rich considering at least half of it could be said of half his children. On March 20, when the attack began, Blair said with pained sincerity to the people of Iraq, 'Our enemy is not you but your barbarous rulers.' I wonder why the people of Iraq didn't rise as one and say, 'Well, kill them then!' By day five, there had been more allied deaths in helicopter crashes than from enemy fire. The extraordinary peril of this mode of transport raised the possibility that, one day, the developed world will have invented so many dangerous war-related items that it will be able to organise satisfying combat without any other countries needing to get involved.

The war had its human faces: Jessica Lynch, the 19-year-old supply clerk whose rescue from an unguarded Nassiriya hospital dominated the US bulletins and resulted in a \$ 1m book deal (the death in the same attack of Lynch's friend Lori Piestewa, a native American mother of two, received a fraction of the coverage); David Williams and Ronald Young, the two American PoWs shown on Iraqi television, rescued two days before the war ended; Ali Abbas, orphaned and maimed in a bomb attack, who arrived in Britain on August 8. Six weeks later, he was pictured with Sven-Goran Eriksson, in a photo-op designed, one assumes, to show how well he was adjusting to his new life without arms or parents.

By the end of April, two weeks after the end of the war, there had been 164 allied casualties, 2,320 Iraqi military casualties, and between 1,252 and 2,325 Iraqi civilian casualties (the first estimate from Iraq, the second from the Iraq Body Count Organisation). These figures continue to rise. In August, the UN headquarters in Baghdad were bombed, killing 24, which raised the spectre of terrorist organisations whose targets were basically random, rather than governed by anti-Americanism. The year's terrorist attacks in Riyadh, Casablanca, Jakarta and Istanbul have sharpened this troubling picture. By September, 38 of America's 55 Most Wanted had been captured or killed. By the middle of this month, they'd found their Ace Of Spades in a spider hole.

The original dossier brouhaha was about the February 2003 document. Iraq's Infrastructure Of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation (or, according to Jack Straw, a complete Horlicks) had been filched from a 12-year-old PhD thesis in a groundbreaking incidence of someone actually reading a 12-year-old PhD thesis. In fact, the real broadside was to come from the dossier of the September before, Iraq's Weapons Of Mass Destruction: The Assessment Of The British Government, in which the original 45-minutes-from-attack claim was made. Early on May 29, Andrew Gilligan reported on Radio 4's Today programme that the dossier had been made in secret; he repeated this in the Mail On Sunday two days later, adding that it was Alastair Campbell who had inserted the 45-minute claim. In a post-Hutton internal inquiry at the BBC, it was decided that the corporation's higher-profile reporters should not write for newspapers, since that was how the trouble always started.

But the row with the BBC was all a sideshow to a sideshow: the drip-by-drip exposure of weapons inspector Dr David Kelly. Geoff Hoon overruled the advice of his top civil servant in bringing Kelly before the Foreign Affairs Committee, where the scientist insisted that he was most unlikely to have been Gilligan's source for the story. Campbell wrote a very pompous, bullet-pointed letter to the BBC, haranguing it for its shoddy journalism in allowing a reporter to use only one source. The BBC stood by Gilligan for the time being, although he was later reprimanded for his loose use of language. What they should have said was, 'Well, come on, at least we actually spoke to a proper scientist and didn't plagiarise a bleeding student.'

Dr Kelly killed himself on July 17, but even this didn't put a stop to the government's shambling insensitivity. Downing Street spokesman Tom Kelly made his 'Walter Mitty' comment before the funeral had even taken place, while Hoon missed it to go on holiday, leaving John Prescott to take his place. By the end of the Hutton inquiry, Gilligan had admitted that describing Dr Kelly as an intelligence source was a slip of the tongue; Blair had admitted that, whatever had happened, the responsibility was ultimately his; Campbell had resigned arguing bizarrely that it had nothing to do with the Gilligan affair; and Hoon had resolutely stuck to the position that, whatever had happened, it wasn't his fault. He'd been in the room, but distracted by a bee. The focus was by now entirely on who was responsible for the sad death of Dr Kelly; the crucial question of whether deliberate lies were told to strengthen the case for war? weighed in at a distant second.

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And so the war began and ended not just with the wrong answers, but with the wrong questions. The capture of Saddam Hussein brought a mood of demented triumphalism, with Blair and Bush looking as if all their Christmases had come at once. Public support for the war hit an all-time high of 47% approval rating, according to a Guardian/ICM poll of just before Bush's visit to the UK in November. And yet surely the capture of Saddam is not enough to justify the war. He was effectively finished the minute the war was lost: whether or not he is brought to trial or left to live out the rest of his life in a hole is relevant only in the retributive sense. At the time of writing, we still have no weapons of mass destruction; ergo, we have apparently been lied to by a government or, in the best case scenario, are being governed by a person of poor judgment. This doesn't seem to be doing Blair much harm, amid the curious frisson of seeing a dictator with a torch in his mouth.

Meanwhile, the year has brought Israel and Palestine no closer to any kind of peace agreement, with 177 Israeli deaths and 630 Palestinian. What optimism followed the appointment of Palestinian prime minister Mahmoud Abbas came at least partly unstuck when he resigned in September. He was replaced by Ahmed Qureia, who faces many of the problems his predecessor did, viz, everyone thinks he's in the other guy's pocket. Besides making regular incursions into Palestinian territory, resulting in the deaths of both Hamas operatives and civilians, and the death of one ISM volunteer, American Rachel Corrie, Israel's most inflammatory move of the year was the construction of its insecurity fence.

At the Labour party conference in October, it was widely agreed that Blair had weathered the Iraq storm. He was warmly received, and there was nothing like the rebellious bad feeling that some had anticipated: the surge of public support for the war, which reached a 63% approval rating by the time it ended, seemed to be mirrored within the ranks of party itself. Gordon Brown's challenge of "This Labour party (is) best when we are boldest, best when we are united, best when we are Labour" was well received but swiftly bettered.

Last month's Bush visit, despite the protests, passed off well and a Guardian/ICM poll found a 62% majority of Labour voters in favour of the trip, believing the US to be a force for good, not evil, in the world. Until they found Saddam, the prime minister's year had not been a good one. Top-up fees and foundation hospitals shored up the accusations that he's basically a Tory in, erm, Tory clothing. His own health problems put a dent in his self-styled image of the young invincible. And then the pictures in Marie Claire magazine, featuring Cherie and Carole Caplin in a teen lipstick-fest on the edge of a bed, made the whole damn lot of them look weird.

But if you're in the business of feeling a generous, seasonal sympathy for whole families, then save it for the Windsors. I bet the Queen is kicking herself that she blew her famous iannus horribilisi judgment on the year that Windsor castle burned. How to describe a year in which every weasel who'd ever met Diana came out with some new and often crazy revelation about her? What to say about the Prince Charles allegations, which can be discussed only on the famously discreet internet, except that, at the very least, it makes the palace look like an extremely bad employer? How to name the ignominy of not even being the richest woman in England anymore, having been outstripped by JK Rowling? Annus disgustingus? The speculation about Prince Charles in particular is a terrible blow to the dignity of the family, considering that the worst disrespect accorded them last year was Peter Sissons's burgundy tie on the occasion of the death of the Queen Mother.

This isn't to say there wasn't happy news. There was a birth, which is always nice, and there was an Africa-themed 21st birthday party for William, which was a bit postcolonial, a bit ilook at the natives and their colourful accessories!i, but which cheered the place up, the intervention of comedy terrorist Aaron Barschak notwithstanding. Prince Harry caused an amount of ill-feeling when he decided to go to a rugby match instead of a Remembrance Day service. But then we won the final so, although no poll was conducted, I think it's safe to say that the nation now respects his decision, considering how we have a Remembrance Day every year and win the rugby union World Cup about once in a never.

Jonny Wilkinson is the undisputed hero of the year. He is so heroic that now everyone wants a really thick neck and a ruddy complexion. The lap of honour on December 8 mustered 750,000 people, who didn't get into any fights and were in no way arrested. They are an inspiration to us all. They showed football fans what happens when

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you're resolutely middle-class, and demonstrators what happens when you're in a good mood and not moaning about anything o the police really like you.

The other prince of sport, David Beckham, had a mixed year: the flying boot episode with Sir Alex Ferguson was followed by almost-instant success with his new club Real Madrid, though there were rumours, denied every other week, of marital trouble. The Spanish press took against Vics because she never smiled, little realising that she never smiles over here either, so it was nothing personal. Football generally has had an atrocious time, with the Premiership acting out drugs and sex fantasies that sound like the product of some diseased fascist imagination, trying to scare everyone into locking up their daughters in turrets. Not even the daunting perfection of Thierry Henry o as a player, but mainly in the va-va-voom advert (iees ze rabbit of course!) o can lift the fortunes of this sport. And nobody likes it any more, anyway, having switched to rugby. Paula Radcliffe broke the world record in the London marathon. She is a difficult athlete to hero-worship, being so modest and workmanlike, but she's still a heroine. Or, at least, an extremely fast runner.

Her achievement was especially timely considering the ongoing climate change, which suggests that soon the marathon will have to be discontinued because we'll all be way too hot. The evidence of our own senses told us something funny was going on from June through August, as each new day was more beautiful than the last, and England's beaches showed scenes of such warmth and comfort that it was as if we'd all achieved a perfect, hassle-free emigration to Australia. Papers were full of animals in sunglasses and children leaping gleefully into the sea. We started to wonder whether we might be able to cultivate some wine-growing regions, along with bananas and figs and tropical birds. Little marred the goodwill until France released its August death figures, which showed 15,000 excess fatalities on previous years. They were predominantly in the 75-94 age range, and were unambiguously put down to night-time temperatures so high they left people no chance to recover from the excessively hot days. Attention turned to finding a solution, of which there is only one o air-conditioning, the widespread use of which will exacerbate global warming and make everything that much worse.

Figures released at the close of the year show the warmest summer since records began in 1721, across western and central Europe. Scientists are increasingly reluctant to put this down to normal climate change; the director of the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, Professor Phil Jones, said, iThe final degree of it is likely to be due to global warming, caused by human action.i And sure, people have been saying that for years, but meteorologists almost never do. We seem to have taken this in our stride, however o the grimmest predictions so far are about the adverse effects on the truffle industry (too hot for both truffles and pigs), and what we can expect in the way of skiing conditions (not very much snow).

The plucky defender of the environment was Ken Livingstone with his congestion charge, launched in February to a chorus of angry car drivers who threatened great things in the way of protest, but in the event didn't get round to it because they wouldn't get out of their sodding cars. Underestimating the tightness of the average Londoner, Livingstone thought this would spin a lot more money than it actually does. But on the plus side, the roads are lovely and clear, pretty much, and many buses now have a bendy bit in the middle, which is great fun to stand on while going around a corner. When you're 12.

Scientists also discovered this year that fish can feel pain. So we can all stop that dumb argument with people who call themselves vegetarians but still eat tuna. And Sars, which looked so potently dangerous in February, when the first five fatalities occurred in China, petered out in June, although the World Health Organisation still has fears it may recur. Over the year, Sars killed nearly 800 people, across 25 countries. At one point, the WHO was warning travellers off Toronto, which enraged the Canadian prime minister who contended that his country was far too posh to suffer such a stigma.

Gay Christians saw victory in America, defeat in the UK, as Canon Gene Robinson became the first openly gay bishop in the Anglican church, in New Hampshire. Over here, Canon Jeffrey John was forced to refuse his appointment to the Reading bishopric, lest he cause a schism. Rowan Williams managed to sound regretful and at the same time rather neutral about the business, which is a skill of his, although I suspect that, in the long run, the

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festering resentments within our Anglican church will turn out to be more damaging than the more violent wounds inflicted on the American institution.

Culturally (well, TV-wise), this has been the year of the poll. First we were asked for our favourite book. A lot of people said *Catch 22*, sparking a national debate about whether or not they were only saying that to sound cool. Other people said children's books, which are enjoying a resurgence among adult readers thanks to the film adaptations of *Harry Potter* and *The Lord Of The Rings* o the latter came out top in the BBC's the Big Read.

We were also asked for our least favourite Briton (Tony Blair came in at number one; Jordan at number two. Strange, no? Oh, and by the way, she did have sex with Gareth, after all). We were asked for our favourite old building that needed renovating, and there were whispers of a ipolitical idoli, whereby a parliamentary candidate would be chosen in the manner of Will Young. At the moment, it's in the foothills of discussion about whether or not it perverts the electoral process. Look forward to that one for next summer, then. There was a surge in hidden-camera programmes, where regular people are asked daft questions by comedians, with differing results (Three Non-Blondes, hilarious; Little Friends, woeful).

Two dramas o *State Of Play* and *The Deal* o made politics (and journalism) look far more glamorous than they are, and the hellmouth was shut down once and for all in the last ever episode of *Buffy*. Eagerly awaited novels from Martin Amis and Helen Fielding met a mixed response, especially Amis's, which elicited praise and derision in equal measure. Fielding's reviews weren't that mixed, in fact: *Olivia Joules* And *The Overactive Imagination* was met with a fairly unanimous iit's no *Bridget Jones*i.

Dizzee Rascal won the Mercury Award, Radiohead released *All Hail To The Thief*, and Will Champion, the drummer from Coldplay, tried to sue his next-door neighbour for accidentally getting into his minicab. Twit. Girls Aloud spent the whole of January at No 1, but were badly let down when Cheryl Tweedy punched a nightclub toilet assistant in the face; she was convicted of the attack, but cleared of racially aggravated assault. Vinnie Jones was convicted of slapping a fellow passenger in an air rage incident. David Blaine and Derren Brown both attempted to do themselves in o Blaine with starvation, Brown with a gun o and both failed (I think it was just a bid for attention). Michael Jackson had a bad year, topped with the Martin Bashir treatment and tailed with his arrest for child-molesting.

The film year kicked off very literarily, with Soderbe

ugh's remake of Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, and a number of very thoughtful films featuring women with orange hair (Julianne Moore, mainly, in *The Hours* and *Far From Heaven*, although Nicole Kidman is clearly a ginger as well, and Meryl Streep looked a little coppery). Ang Lee remade *The Hulk*, which was proper scary, and Quentin Tarantino returned with *Kill Bill*, to the delight of the whole world, even though it was like a really long pop video with extra death. Bookies are still laying odds on *Love Actually* being the highest grossing British movie ever. It is so very charmingly British, with its prime minister, and its tea-lady, and its snow, and Christmas, and class structure, and plentiful tea. It makes you want to go, iReally? This century? Are you sure?i But it's been an unsettling year, full of half-truths and conflict, lurching debate, nebulous threats and palpable violence, impassioned but never quite credible rhetoric. And a Berlin courtroom watched a video of a cannibal frying up a penis, then reading a *Star Trek* book while his castrato had a warm bath. Some years are just crying out to be rounded off with 18 deluded Curtis characters, nobbing each other.

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Crush of humanity - Overpopulation - Diseases - Immigration - Food Shortages - Essay - 40 YEARS OF THE AUSTRALIAN - Part 1 of 13

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Body

Nobel prize winner Peter Doherty reflects on how the nation can use its intellect to address the world's great problems in the next 40 years.

THE AUSTRALIAN HAS been around for most of my long career as a research scientist. Before that there was no national newspaper.

Melbourne and Sydney had quality dailies, but this was not the case for my home town of Brisbane.

I recall very clearly how delighted I was by those first issues. Others to whom I have spoken recently have similar memories. Since then both "The Oz" and the world in general have changed enormously. What has happened during those 40 years? The answer clearly has to be "a hell of a lot".

MATP

I will focus on some issues that fascinate me. Much of what happens in Australia reflects global trends that are in many respects outside our control. Even so, the way we respond to such challenges defines what we are. There is no doubt in my mind that the single most important change over the past 40 years is the doubling of the world's population.

Most of this growth is in the developing world. We have gone from about 3 billion people in 1960 to the current count of 6.4 billion. The figure for the year I was born (1940) was 2.3 billion. The guess for the number of people on the planet at the time of Christ ranges from 200 million to 300 million. Throughout history, the control of key resources such as land, water and oil has defined social systems and determined patterns of war and alliance. Though gradual population increase promotes prosperity in countries with stable infrastructure and democratic institutions, the combination of explosive growth and poverty can be disastrous for marginal economies.

Can we be surprised that these past decades have been increasingly associated with conflict, massive refugee migrations and environmental degradation? Why should we in our well-resourced "lifeboat continent" of Australia care about this?

The effects of climate change are global. The winds and the migratory birds that can carry infectious diseases do not recognise national boundaries. The oceans that surround us extend to the shores of some of the most densely populated lands on Earth. The depleted catch means that Australia, like many other countries, is involved in permanent, low-key, undeclared fishing boat wars. A visceral fear is that our lifeboat will be swamped if too many

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try to climb on board. The "razor-wire lifeboat" strategy of the Tampa-Pacific solution has already created major tensions in this society. Such questions will continue to agonise successive generations of Australians, especially if the predictions of global warming are indeed true and many low-lying areas and islands are inundated.

How else does this global population explosion impact on us? If you go to the web, you will find that the characteristic common to many of the key political flashpoints is very high birth rates.

Just watching the world news will leave you with the sense that there are large numbers of young men with little better to do than wave rifles in the air.

Abdel Aziz Rantissi, the recently assassinated leader of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, was one of 12 children born to a family in a refugee camp.

The Israel-Palestine conflict makes sense if you simply look at the issue as two expanding populations competing for marginal resources of land and water. Rwanda was the most densely inhabited agrarian society on Earth when it blew up.

The resources of this small planet are finite.

We have been progressively running down the supply of arable land in the rich and the poor world.

Fresh water is becoming a major problem in many countries and, with possible climate change, looms as an enormous and immediate difficulty for Australia. Water has rapidly become a priority for federal and state governments. All of us need to do what we can at a personal level to save water.

Most people are not happy with the idea of drinking recycled sewage, though my eminent colleague Nancy Millis, chancellor of La Trobe University, believes that, provided it is treated appropriately, this would be one way to go. A good sharemarket tip might be to invest in bottled water companies.

Solutions that could address problems of drought resistance, soil erosion and salt accumulation by the use of genetically modified plants are anathema to some aggressive and extremely well-funded environmental groups.

Look carefully at what they are saying and take the trouble to read competing arguments before you buy into these scenarios. Most of the US population has been eating GM food for years.

Asthma rates, one of the favourite anti-GM targets, have actually been falling in New York City. Plant molecular genetics is extremely strong here, and Australian farmers are early adopters of new technology. We risk losing our competitive edge if we become a nation of rigid anti-GM ideologues.

More than 800 million people do not get enough

to eat each day. Nobody believes that GM can be the complete answer to global hunger and all agree that the utilisation of GM technology must be properly regulated. However, even the most altruistic, publicly funded efforts of the international agricultural community to expand food production and to correct nutritional deficiencies with engineered plants are being increasingly frustrated. If you want access to an African perspective, go to the web and read Kenyan scientist Florence Wambugu's Statement on Biotechnology in Africa to the Committee on Agriculture of the US House of Representatives.

Loss of forest environment proceeds almost unabated, even in wealthy countries. This in turn puts tremendous pressure on native animal species. At a recent infectious disease meeting in Texas, Beatrice Hahn - who works on AIDS-like viruses in non-human primates - raised the possibility that there will be no gorillas or chimpanzees in the wild within 20 years.

Two factors are at work. The first is the increase in hunting "bush meat" for food. The second is infection with the terrifying ebola virus.

MY PROFESSIONAL OBSESSION IS VIRAL immunity - not plant science, environmentalism or demography. Though Malthus predicted the population explosion more than 200 years ago, none of us was prepared for AIDS. The early 1980s marked our first awareness that we had a serious problem with a major outbreak of the fatal wasting disease in the gay male populations of San Francisco and New York. It took some time to sort out what was going on and to isolate the causative virus. Even then, there was silly debate within elements of the scientific community about whether the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the cause of this acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). In fact, HIV may not kill directly; it just works to destroy the immune system so that the patient dies from cancer, tuberculosis or a number of other bugs that do not normally pose a problem. Academic arguments can be dangerous.

The confusion created in the minds of some political leaders resulted in policy decisions that have had disastrous consequences.

The AIDS pandemic is still far short of its full potential. Rather than diminishing the social disruption and erosion of infrastructure that have been a major consequence of the population explosion, AIDS has just deepened the problems.

Many African nations are losing their young professionals, their teachers and their farmers.

The disease is spreading in India, Cambodia and Vietnam. Australian public health workers are very concerned about what could happen in Papua New Guinea. AIDS is a heterosexual disease in the developing world, with women being particularly at risk. More than 3 million people, including at least 600,000 children, are expected to die of AIDS within the coming year. The current calculation is that 3000 new infections are occurring each day.

Being infected with HIV is no longer an almost certain death sentence for those in rich countries

that have access to triple drug therapy. The rapid development of these antiviral agents reflects the enormous power of modern molecular medicine.

Even so, there are concerns here and in the US that the availability of therapy is leading to an increase in high-risk behaviour. Whatever one may think about the current marriage debate, it makes sense from the public health aspect for gay males to form stable, long-term relationships. Many efforts are being made to supply cheap drugs to poor countries. The possibility of treatment has the enormously positive effect of bringing people into clinics, where they can be helped and counselled.

An affordable, very limited drug treatment schedule can prevent transmission to the newborn.

The AIDS research community is exploring every possible strategy for making an effective vaccine. My laboratory is involved in two programs, one in Australia and one in the US. None of the current vaccine candidates is, however, likely to give complete protection. The best hope at this stage is that there may be a decrease in the numbers of infected cells, which will in turn limit the extent of transmission. Such predictions are based on experiments in monkeys. Unfortunately, HIV does not grow in laboratory mice, so the pre-clinical testing has to be done in non-human primates. In the end analysis, however, the "proof of principle" for any AIDS vaccine is to give the product to people in an endemic area.

Such studies are mostly at an early stage. The type of well-resourced, absolutely honest, public awareness campaigns that were used so successfully to stem the progress of AIDS in Australia and Europe can also be highly effective elsewhere. The rapidly expanding epidemic in Thailand was cut significantly when all elements of society, including the King, the military and religious leaders, supported a campaign based on ABC, "Abstinence, Be faithful, use a Condom". The same approach has worked in Uganda and Senegal. The harm reduction and international health programs led by Nick Crofts and Mike Toole at Melbourne's Burnet Institute are making a major contribution by adapting such strategies to different cultural and economic realities.

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Given the severity of the AIDS problem, you may be asking how this will impact on the predictions for population growth. Current estimates are that the size of the human family will stabilise at about 9 billion by 2050.

The impact of about 300 million deaths from AIDS over that time may be seen more in the resultant social dislocation, grief and rage than a dramatic fall in total numbers. The possible strategic implications, including recruitment to terrorist agendas, are not escaping the attention of security agencies. We must surely do everything we can now to expand both the magnitude and the acuity of our foreign assistance in this area.

Encouraging data suggest that women everywhere are seeking to reduce family size.

Any trend towards the empowerment of women can, of course, be deeply threatening to the established power structures of traditional, patriarchal societies and religious organisations.

In my opinion, the single most important assistance we can give is to help provide comprehensive health clinics and economic opportunity for poor women. Sadly, because of sensitivities concerning the abortion issue, some conservatives in the US have been working to compromise family planning initiatives around the world.

Access to appropriate care and reproductive advice can serve to diminish the spread of HIV, to hold birth rates to tolerable levels and to promote the general well-being of families.

THE POPULATION EQUATION IS VERY different when it comes to Australia, Japan and Europe. Birth and marriage rates continue to fall.

Nobody has yet worked out how to sustain prosperity in a situation of declining numbers.

The US maintains growth largely by immigration and has had a spectrum of amnesties since 1986 that allow illegal (but otherwise law-abiding) immigrants to become citizens. President George W. Bush recently floated the possibility of a further amnesty, but the idea is not popular with the electorate at large. Maybe we could be a little more relaxed about this issue.

We worry a lot about the fact that a million Australians, or 5 per cent of the population, are now expatriates. The rapid increase in this trend over the past few years reflects the international "population churn" of globalisation. Australia is, in turn, attracting talented people who were born elsewhere. The current policy of facilitating immigration for the best and brightest makes a lot of sense. Though the "national face" may be changing, the accents and basic attitudes make current first-generation Australians seem much like everyone else.

The success of modern medicine has greatly altered the age profile in countries such as Australia. A major factor has been the enormous success in treating high blood pressure and cardiovascular problems. Surgical intervention has dramatically improved the quality of life for those with coronary artery disease, while cholesterol-lowering statins are highly effective preventive agents. We are also doing much better with some forms of cancer, and have recently seen the emergence of the first very specific anti-cancer drug, Glivec. This is a synthetic chemical that blocks the action of a faulty growth control protein in chronic myelogenous leukaemia and some other tumours.

The Australian capacity to exploit such "rational drug design" approaches will be greatly facilitated by the new synchrotron.

The strength of our medical research community is such that Australia can reasonably hope to stake out a position in what will, in coming decades, be a magnificent enterprise, both from health and economic aspects. The first locally made designer drug was Relenza, developed by Mark von Itzstein, Peter Coleman and Graeme Laver.

Their success depended on more than 40 years of research by Graeme on the influenza neuraminidase protein. Relenza has not yet been a great commercial hit but remains, together with its orally administered equivalent Tamiflu, the best protection that we have against a global influenza pandemic. The recent experience with SARS, which cost Asian economies more than \$28 billion, and the possibility that the extraordinarily virulent H5N1 bird flu could cross into humans, has increased our consciousness of the extreme danger that respiratory infections pose.

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At least in the drug development area, innovation progresses increasingly from basic science studies in universities and research institutes to small start-up biotechnology enterprises, to purchase of their intellectual property (or the total operation) by Big Pharma.

Though it may be unlikely that any major pharmaceutical operation will want to establish a physical plant here, recent deals between Australian groups and the US Merck company have shown very clearly that we can be highly competitive at the discovery or early development stage that leads to novel drugs and vaccines.

The need is for Australian resources to support the initial basic research through peer-reviewed grant mechanisms, then to find the resources to take the potential product through to early human trials for safety and efficacy. Such clinical trial facilities have recently opened in Brisbane and Melbourne.

The new therapeutic interventions represented by designer drugs such as the statins and Glivec have the common feature that they are expensive, at least until they emerge from patent protection.

Even though such products have the potential for considerable saving by increasing productive life spans and decreasing hospital and surgical costs, they can provide a major shock for those attempting to budget healthcare dollars.

The other unintended consequence is that the longer we live, the more likely we are to develop chronic, expensive, degenerative neurological problems such as Alzheimer's disease.

A BIG PROBLEM IN COUNTRIES SUCH as Australia is the weighting of both resource allocation and personal wealth to the elderly.

Most of our healthcare dollars are spent on people at the end of life, often to prolong a low quality of existence. There is a lot of discussion about the morality of, for example, withholding support at the inevitable end of life, but relatively little attention is given to the ethical implications of the way healthcare budgets are divided.

A major challenge for the future is to redress this imbalance in resources between old and young, rich and poor. James Wolfensohn, the Australian who heads the World Bank, speaks with great conviction of the necessity for the wealthy nations to provide greater help for the developing world.

The communications revolution means that all people see, and many have ambitions to enjoy, an idealised version of the Western lifestyle.

The challenge is to move to a state of greater global equity, while at the same time protecting the environment and maintaining prosperity. The word that should remain at the forefront of our thinking is "sustainability".

How can Australia best contribute to future global stability? Perhaps our greatest advantage is that the relative lack of population pressure allows us the flexibility to experiment and to look carefully for practical solutions. We inhabit an ancient, physically degraded island that shares many aridity and environmental problems with developing countries. The spectrum of expertise in research and practice that we continue to build has great potential for the development of broadly applicable, green, sustainable and innovative technologies oriented towards the restoration of fragile ecosystems and the defeat of disease and hunger. Though it may be long term, there must inevitably be some major economic opportunities in these areas.

TIME CAPSULE - POPULATION 1964-2004

BOTH sides of the debate about how many people Australia can sustain without damaging the environment and our quality of life are equally certain they are correct. Either way, the figures can't be ignored. Since 1964, Australia's population has grown from 11.1 million to just over 20 million today. Evidence of how this has changed the nation is before our eyes. Our cities are larger and more crowded, but it's arguable whether our quality of life has suffered. There's less space and less fresh water, but then in 1964 we wasted both resources without giving much thought to tomorrow.

Crush of humanity - Overpopulation - Diseases - Immigration - Food Shortages - Essay - 40 YEARS OF THE AUSTRALIAN - Part 1 of 13

In 1964, about 30 per cent of Australians were under 15. Today it's only 20 per cent. Then, about 8.5 per cent of us were over 65; now it's more than 12 per cent, rising to more than 20 per cent by 2034 when the last of the baby boomers will reach retirement age.

Maybe an ageing population will consume less and ease the pressure on the environment. But that would reduce demand and could slow the economy to a virtual stop. It seems unlikely in the near to medium term that there will be a rise in fertility that would help to top up Australia's population. Without a natural increase, the nation could once again turn to large-scale immigration with all its attendant social strains.

- Graeme Leech

TIME CAPSULE - FOOD 1964-2004

SINCE 1964, the Australian diet has changed from meat and potatoes - with perhaps peas, cabbage and pumpkin - into one where the choice ranges from Italian to Thai. Our food today is more sophisticated, better prepared and healthier - which makes the growth in obesity all the harder to comprehend because Australians are also obsessed with non-fattening foods.

Fast food is the norm. Forty years ago, the corner milk bar would do a good trade in burgers and chips.

In the 21st century, our fast-food options range from Lebanese to Portuguese. Japanese sushi bars serve low-cholesterol lunch boxes while American-style quarter-pounders and fries are cheap and pervasive.

Outside the nation's shopping malls, however, there is an unresolved debate about genetically modified foods and how GM crops might affect human health. British biologist Richard Dawkins says "a wheat grain is a genetically modified grass seed, just as a Pekingese is a genetically modified wolf". But anti-GM campaigners fear the introduction of such modified foodstuffs will have unforeseen consequences for human health.

It's a debate that will not be easily resolved, but a hungry world will not worry too much about whether their soya is GM-modified or not.

The question for Australians is: should we be growing and exporting the product?

- Graeme Leech

FOOD CONSUMPTION

Commodity ... 1968-69 ... 1998-99

Meat (kg) ... 85.9 ... 71.6

Bacon/ham (kg) ... 3.6 ... 8.7

Poultry (kg) ... 8.3 ... 30.8

Seafood (kg) ... 5.6 ... 10.9

Dairy products (kg) ... 25.4 ... 23.3

Fruit (kg) ... 86.5 ... 135.0

Vegetables (kg) ... 124.3 ... 162.0

Eggs (no.) ... 222 ... 137

Wheaten Flour (kg) ... 77.4 ... 69.7

Crush of humanity - Overpopulation - Diseases - Immigration - Food Shortages - Essay - 40 YEARS OF THE
AUSTRALIAN - Part 1 of 13

Breakfast foods (kg) ... 6.8 ... 7.9

Table rice (kg) ... 1.9 ... 7.1

Bread (kg) ... 59.5 ... 53.4

Oils and fats (kg) ... 14.3 ... 18.5

Sugars (kg) ... 51.9 ... 43.4

Tea (kg) ... 2.3 ... 0.9

Coffee (kg) ... 1.2 ... 2.4

Aerated and carb. waters (L) ... 47.3 ... 113.0

Beer (L) ... 113.5 ... 93.2

Wine (L) ... 8.2 ... 19.8

Source: ABS

TIME CAPSULE - DISEASES 1964-2004

FORTY years ago, Australians worried that their children might contract tuberculosis or polio - diseases that have now been virtually eradicated. Infant mortality was an unhealthy 19 per 100,000 births today it is under five - and smallpox vaccinations were made compulsory.

The death rate from all cancers was roughly the same as today except for lung cancer, which was rising to a plateau in the early 1980s of 50 per 100,000 men.

It has since dropped to about 35 per 100,000 men. Among women the trend is similar but delayed by about 10 years.

One in five adults suffers from a cardio-vascular condition and 4 per cent nearly half a million - have heart disease.

Despite fears in the late 80s that HIVAIDS might become widespread, just 0.1 per cent of Australians are living with the condition that is now manageable in many cases. But HIV-AIDS was a harbinger of new diseases that are cause for concern.

New strains of malaria pose a risk in the north, as do the spread of other insect-borne diseases. An influenza pandemic has often been predicted and could yet kill millions around the world.

The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, that originated in China was a useful alarm for health officials.

Perhaps the greatest fear for the future is the possibility that animal diseases could jump the species barrier.

Indeed, some scientists believe SARS passed from animals to humans.

The recent bird flu outbreak in Southeast Asia is a case in point.

- Graeme Leech

TIME CAPSULE - IMMIGRATION 1964-2004

Crush of humanity - Overpopulation - Diseases - Immigration - Food Shortages - Essay - 40 YEARS OF THE
AUSTRALIAN - Part 1 of 13

BACK in 1964, when Donald Horne published *The Lucky Country*, Australia's population was 87 per cent Anglo-Celtic and 83 per cent of us had been born here. Today, about 75 per cent of Australians were born here. New citizens come from more than 200 countries, with the Chinese and other Asians collectively matching those from Anglo-Celtic sources.

These immigrants have helped put the muscle behind Australia's economic expansion.

They created demand for goods and services and contributed to the fabulous variety of cuisine and culture. Nearly 4 million immigrants have settled here since *The Australian* was first published. At the peak of immigration in 1969-70, more than 185,000 passed through our ports. Only 52,000 entered in 1975-76.

More than 100,000 are expected this year.

Given our record of accepting thousands of refugees fleeing oppression in the post-war era, it seems inevitable that this tradition will continue. But in future Australians could also open their doors to people escaping natural catastrophes, such as rising sea levels.

- Graeme Leech

Load-Date: July 16, 2004

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

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Series: UNITED BY FAITH: THE STORY OF HERNANDO COUNTY'S MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Body

PART THREE OF SIX

The men in the Hernando County mosque had just finished wishing peace to the Muslim brothers next to them after the Friday afternoon prayer when Ayman Joud stood to speak.

Joud, a doctor of internal medicine, wanted to issue an invitation to a political fundraiser the next day at the home of urologist Nazir Hamoui.

The candidate has been "very fair" in her views, Joud said, and everyone who comes should bring his checkbook. The blatantly political announcement caused not a one of the 46 men in the mosque to bat an eye. And more than a dozen raised their hands to say they would attend.

The candidate - a black woman from Georgia named Cynthia McKinney - is someone the men in the mosque will probably never get a chance to vote for. The congressional seat she seeks - and held until two years ago - serves a district 400 miles away in suburban Atlanta.

As the men began to exit the mosque, Joud handed them a flier about McKinney. It praised her willingness to speak for the rights of Arab-Americans and American Muslims, and her willingness to speak against "the dehumanization of Palestinians and Iraqis."

Unmentioned on the flier was the stance McKinney is best known for: her declaration two years ago that the Bush administration knew the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, were coming but took no action so his friends could reap profits from a war.

McKinney's comments - made just six months after the attacks - created a storm of controversy. Even a prominent fellow Democrat called her "loony." And McKinney lost the congressional seat she had held for a decade.

But recent questions about what the Bush administration knew prior to 9/11 and why it went into Iraq have struck a chord with many local Muslims, who see McKinney as a woman unafraid to speak the truth. And two years after her defeat, they are lining up to support her political revival.

In fact, McKinney's perspective is tame compared to some of the everyday political viewpoints expressed by members of Hernando County's Muslim community.

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

Mohammad Shuayb, a dentist born in Syria but raised in Hernando County, says Bush wasn't misspeaking shortly after Sept. 11 when he called the war on terror a "crusade."

"It is an open-ended war on Islam," Shuayb said.

Mahmoud Nimer, a cardiologist born in a Palestinian refugee camp, said Bush's decision last month to end any semblance of America's neutrality in the Middle East peace process is part of some greater plan to prepare Israel for the apocalypse.

"He is preparing the Middle East for the return of Jesus," Nimer said.

Those are just examples of the strong sense of alienation that local Muslims feel when it comes to the present course of American foreign policy.

For a community of immigrants who explain their original vision of America in Ellis Island terms - a beacon of liberty, a land of opportunity - these are difficult days.

Until recently, America had been as good as advertised. Muslims found prosperity and freedom of movement unimaginable in the countries they left.

Then came 9/11 and the war on terrorism.

"We knew this was going to bring terrible consequences for Muslims in general," said Ghiath Mahmaljy, a spiritual leader in the Muslim community who left the repression of Syria 25 years ago.

When laws such as the Patriot Act flew through Congress, Muslims began to worry that its powers of surveillance would be disproportionately used to invade the privacy of Arab-Americans.

As their unease grew, certain Muslim charities - including two that received \$1.3-million from Muslims in Hernando County - were shut down and investigated for links to terrorism.

For many Muslims, "random" checks at the airport have never been random.

And former University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian, whom many local Muslims know and appreciate for speaking out for the Palestinians, was charged with raising money for terrorists. Hatem Fariz, a Muslim living in Spring Hill, was pegged as his accomplice. Local Muslims think both men are innocent.

"We have seen when the government takes control," said Rodwan Hiba, a gastroenterologist who came from Syria. "When the government takes control, and you as a citizen do not have control, it is scary."

As the war on terrorism in Afghanistan blossomed into a confrontation with Iraq - a leap most local Muslims cannot comprehend - some began to fear the beacon of American justice was about to flicker out.

"We all want to fight real terrorism," Mahmaljy said. "What I'm seeing, what I feel, is that it is becoming a pretext for violating civil rights in the United States and a pretext for violating the sovereignty of other countries."

As they continue to disavow - and some say apologize for - the actions of the Sept. 11 hijackers, local Muslims are starting to get a bitter taste in their mouths.

That was especially true when President Bush stood next to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon last month and endorsed a new direction for America's policy in the Middle East.

Many Muslims, such as Nimer, see Palestinian blood on Sharon's hands. For them, it appears Bush has given America's final blessing to the land grab that created Israel in 1948 and made refugees of the Palestinians.

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

When most Americans were focused on the rising body count of American troops in Iraq last month, local Muslims were also reacting bitterly to the pictures of dead Iraqi babies in Fallujah - images beamed into their homes via the Arab news network Al-Jazeera, images most Americans haven't seen.

Local Muslims shake their heads in disgust at the beheading of an American by people who praise Allah as they do the deed. But they recoil at the sight of naked Iraqi being abused by American soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison.

They see the death and destruction on both sides. And they wonder what happened to the righteous cause of answering the Sept. 11 attacks. It is from this perspective that their political desperation grows.

"We've been apologizing since 9/11, and every single day we keep getting attacked," said Shuayb. "It bums me out because I grew up here."

His father, gastroenterologist Husam Shuayb, puts it in a different perspective.

"I don't think the United States is like when I came here in 1972, when I felt the freedom," he said.

At this point, local Muslims just hope the beheading of an American by men praising Allah will not lead to a backlash. Beyond that, they are hoping, somewhere, to find a sympathetic ear in the American political wilderness.

Alienation replaces admiration

Four years ago, Muslims thought they had found such a person in Republican George W. Bush.

On social issues such as abortion and gay rights, Bush's conservative views fit their own. His aversion to taxes was sweet music to this community of wealthy doctors. And his discussion about his faith, albeit Christian, left the impression he valued religious freedom.

More important, Bush had come out against the use of "secret evidence" in deportation and criminal proceedings. At the time, Al-Arian's brother-in-law, Mazen Al-Najjar, was in jail on such secret evidence. Bush even went so far as to pose for a campaign photo with Al-Arian.

The overtures spoke to Arab-Americans.

On Election Day, more than 90 percent of Florida Muslims, estimated then to number nearly 60,000 voters, cast ballots for Bush in an election decided by fewer than 600 votes.

Less than two years later, Bush's response to the terrorist attacks had so alienated local Muslims that they were lining up to give money to Cynthia McKinney, a Democrat who supports abortion rights but someone unafraid to speak out against Bush.

The \$33,800 that local Muslims gave McKinney in 2002 - most of it at a single fundraiser in June - was more money than local Muslims spent on candidates they could actually vote for in Hernando County. Ginny Brown-Waite and Karen Thurman, for instance, received only about \$22,000 in their race for the congressional seat serving Hernando.

There's no word yet on the results of the recent McKinney fundraiser promoted in the mosque last month. But it drew some of the same contributors who turned out two years ago.

Aside from McKinney, Hernando's Muslim community has sent money to candidates in Michigan, California, Alabama and Illinois. More important than geography is finding someone who has shown concern about secret evidence, the nature of the response to Sept. 11 and the rights of Palestinians.

Of those three issues, support for the Palestinians seems to resonate the loudest.

Views through the prism of Palestine

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

Most Americans see the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as an indecipherable cycle of killing and revenge killing - all adding up to a hazy mess. But for a Muslim community nearly unanimous in its view of the conflict, the Palestinians are victims who continue to be terrorized by Israel while the rest of the world sits idly by.

"We all sympathize with the plight of the Palestinians," Mahmaljy said. "These people have nothing but misery. They have no rights. They have no life."

No, local Muslims say they do not condone the suicide bombings that have killed scores of civilians in Israel - people whose only crime was to get on a bus.

"There is never any justification for the killing of innocent children," said Syed Ali, who came to Hernando from India.

Nevertheless, some say the decisions by Palestinians to resort to suicide bombings against Israel are a byproduct of the hopelessness and oppression they face.

Nimer vividly recalls the village near Jerusalem that was once his family's home. As a young man, he was shown the trees his grandparents planted and the streets his parents roamed as they came of age.

Nimer would love to go back. But he and his family - all Palestinians - have been cut off from their ancestral home. Israel, in seeking to make itself more secure from suicide bombers, will not allow Palestinians into the area.

Israel took control of the area in 1948, when it established its statehood. Land and property were redistributed to Jews seeking a homeland after the Holocaust.

Israel refers to this as the rebirth of its nation. Palestinians - even those such as Nimer who have since moved to America - see it as the beginning of a continuing nightmare.

"Some were killed, and some were kicked out," Nimer said. "Basically, Israel was built on terrorizing the Palestinians out of their land. They did not want to leave."

Husam Zarad, a Muslim doctor in Spring Hill, says his family was one of the thousands who fled their homes after the 1948 massacres that preceded Israel's statehood.

For five years, Zarad's family lived in tents at a refugee camp in Syria. They thought world opinion would turn and they would be restored to their home near Haifa. Eventually, they gave up, tore down the tents and built houses in the refugee camp that would become Zarad's birthplace.

His family remains there to this day.

Nimer, born nearly a decade after the establishment of Israel, has seen his ancestral village only through the eyes of a visitor. But since the escalation of violent confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis in 1985 even that sort of access has been cut off.

"We lost all our property," Nimer said. "We are refugees."

When you ask local Muslims about Middle Eastern terrorism, this is their definition: what Israel has done to the Palestinians for the past 56 years.

Nimer has a catalog of examples:

In 1948, 254 Palestinian villagers were killed in Deir Yassin, a western suburb of Jerusalem. Israel called it a battle, Palestinians a massacre. But the deaths sparked the Palestinians' flight from their homes.

In 1982, hundreds of Palestinian villagers - including women and children - were massacred at the Lebanese refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. The killings came at the hands of a Lebanese Christian militia, but Israel bore much of the blame for authorizing the militia's movement.

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

In 2002, an Israeli pilot dropped a 1-ton bomb on a Palestinian residential neighborhood. The bomb killed its target, a militant leader of the terrorist group Hamas. But it also killed 15 others, including several children.

"Palestinians are getting killed in their homes. Palestinian kids are going to school, and somebody shoots at them and that's fine," Nimer said. "But the person who is trying to free himself is (called) a terrorist."

Nimer sees Ariel Sharon as a common thread through much of that history, particularly at Sabra and Shatila in 1982, when Sharon was in command of the Israeli defense forces.

So when Bush refers to Sharon as "a great man of peace," as the president did last year, Nimer grows nearly nauseated. "There are probably very few war criminals that have hands as bloody as Sharon does," Nimer said.

Declarations such as the one uttered by the president cause America to lose credibility in the Arab world, Nimer said.

"The free world is the biggest hypocrite that ever existed," he said.

Local Muslims say Americans are ignorant of such history because the American media have filtered out the Palestinian point of view. They say Jewish ownership of television networks and national newspapers has resulted in the news being biased in favor of Israel.

For that reason, they get their news from overseas, using satellite providers such as Dish Network to tune into Al-Jazeera or any number of broadcasts emanating from the Middle East.

They lament the fact that more Americans do not share their outrage about Palestine.

"It's a central crisis," Zarad said. "If you know the truth, you will be passionate about it."

Even charity viewed with suspicion

In sizing up how Hernando County Muslims see the world, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the Palestinian cause.

Some think it is the real reason that Sami Al-Arian is in jail.

Al-Arian, whom local Muslims know and respect for articulating the Palestinian argument, has visited Hernando's mosque - most often to seek support for his Muslim academy in Tampa.

Last year, Al-Arian was arrested and accused of raising money for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, an organization the U.S. government has deemed a terrorist group. The organization is blamed for the deaths of more than 100 people in Israel.

Arrested with Al-Arian was Hatem Fariz, who lived in Spring Hill and attended the mosque for less than a year. The case sent shock waves through Hernando's Muslim community.

Aside from knowing Al-Arian and Fariz, four Hernando Muslims were members of the board of Al-Arian's school, which was described in a federal indictment as a front for terrorist fundraising. A handful of local families even sent their children to school there. Members of the mosque were asked to donate money to the school as recently as two weeks ago.

The case is due to go to trial next year, but local Muslims say they simply do not believe Al-Arian and Fariz were supporting terrorists.

"They don't like Al-Arian because he was very effective at what he was doing, which was to show what the truth is in the Middle East," Nimer said.

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

Samar Shakfeh, a local Muslim who once served on the board of Al-Arian's school, sees a tragic irony in Al-Arian's downfall: "One day, Dr. Al-Arian is invited to the White House, and the next day he is in jail."

Beyond politic concerns, Hernando Muslims send money to various charities that include those serving poor Palestinians.

For Muslims, it is mandatory to give 2 1/2 percent of one's standing wealth to the poor each year. But some of their giving has come under intense government scrutiny.

Two Muslim charities in particular - the Global Relief Foundation and the Benevolence International Foundation - received \$1.3-million from 15 local doctors in the five years prior to 2001.

Imad Tarabishy, a local orthopedic surgeon who sometimes delivers the weekly sermon at the mosque, gave nearly \$800,000 alone.

Before Sept. 11, such giving went unnoticed. But in searching out the funding sources for terrorism, the U.S. government began alleging that Global Relief and Benevolence International were funneling donations to al-Qaeda.

Tarabishy has declined to discuss his donations with the Times. But late in 2001, he told the Associated Press that he knew no more about where his money went than anyone else who donates to a church or a charity.

He assumed it went to the needy Muslims the charity had pledged to help. "Every penny I ever paid, I paid to a United States-approved, tax-deductible charity," he said.

Global Relief and Benevolence International have had their tax-exempt status revoked. And the government has frozen Global Relief's assets.

Last fall during Ramadan, representatives from an organization called Kind Hearts visited the Hernando mosque. One of the representatives, Khaled Smaili, preached about the blessings of charitable giving during Ramadan.

Kind Hearts sought money for impoverished Palestinians - money to buy food baskets and Ramadan meals, and to pay for new schools and clean water systems. It wasn't clear how much money came through then. But Smaili said local Muslims had pledged \$30,000 to \$40,000 to Kind Hearts the year before, though not all the pledges were fulfilled.

Within two months of the visit, the Washington Post reported that Kind Hearts was among 24 Muslim organizations having their financial records reviewed by the Senate Finance Committee, which is looking into alleged ties between charities and terrorism.

Also appearing on that list was the Islamic Society of North America, an umbrella group whose trust agency holds title to the property where the Hernando mosque sits.

Local Muslims say honest charities and positive, progressive nonprofit groups are being swept up in a dragnet by the government they helped elect.

"The power that has been given to (Attorney General) John Ashcroft is out of control," said Mahmaljy, one of the local Muslim leaders. "And the public isn't doing anything about it."

Seeking benefits through involvement

Local Muslims are seeking those sympathetic ears by getting more involved in the political process, as their support of McKinney illustrates. After giving just \$23,000 to congressional campaigns in 2000, they spent \$96,500 in 2002.

They have established ties - through cash and personal relationships - with local politicians such as U.S. Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite, state Rep. David Russell, County Commissioner Nancy Robinson and Sheriff Richard Nugent.

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

Some of the connections were made even before Sept. 11. And after the attacks, Russell visited the mosque to hear concerns and, after someone fired a bullet into the mosque, Nugent offered extra patrols there.

The sheriff, whose agency was peripherally involved in the arrest of Hatem Fariz last year, said there are good people and bad people in every ethnic group and every community.

By and large, Nugent said, the local Muslim community's friendships with Al-Arian and its contributions to charities under scrutiny do not concern him, and its outlook on politics gives him no cause for alarm.

"From what I know of the Muslims that I know, I think they are as American as anyone else," Nugent said. "Do they have some strong beliefs? Of course. So do I."

Russell, who says Husam Shuayb saved his father's life in 1985 by discovering cancer in his colon, similarly says, "There are good apples and there are bad apples. The Muslims I know and have known for years are good people."

Now, as Muslims see their interests threatened, these political connections are becoming more important. And broadening the community's influence has become part of the lessons they learn at the mosque.

"This is the system here in America. The money and the votes count," Ahmed Bedier, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, told worshipers recently while delivering the Friday sermon. "This is the system here in America."

The Muslim most local politicians are familiar with is Adel Eldin, a cardiologist who gave more than \$10,000 to candidates in 2002. He continues to build friendships with Republicans even as many Arab-Americans are abandoning the GOP.

Eldin says he wants to work within the system.

"Everybody is a lobbyist," he said. "I want to be a Muslim lobbyist."

Others, such as gastroenterologist Rodwan Hiba, aren't sure the fight is winnable.

In Syria, Hiba remembers a government officer pointing a gun at his head when he objected to the officer cutting in front of him in a bread line.

"We took oppression for granted in Syria," Hiba said. "Here, we realized what it meant to be a human being."

Hiba tells this story to make a point about the direction in which America is heading.

"I see it going that way," he said.

For Hiba, to remain in an America that is a shadow of its former self would be difficult. But the way America has changed since 9/11 has him considering a return to Syria - where he would be living under government oppression, but at least doing so among a nation of Muslims.

"I am a very proud American citizen. I don't want to be treated as a second-class citizen. I do not want to be discriminated against," Hiba said.

"I'm here. I'm doing a service. I'm trying to be as helpful as much as I can. All I'm asking back is respect."

- Times researchers Caryn Baird and Kitty Bennett contributed to this project. Robert King can be reached at (352) 848-1432. Send e-mail to rking@sptimes.com.

Learning the system

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

In 2002, Hernando County Muslims gave \$96,500 to federal candidates nearly four times more than they gave in 2000. Most of that money went out of state to candidates with an affinity for issues dear to Muslims and Arab-Americans. Here are the candidates, their party, state and the amount of money received from Muslims in Hernando County.+

Local Muslims also gave \$6,500 to the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

The out-of-staters

Cynthia McKinney

Democrat, Georgia, \$31,800

Has been a frequent critic of America's pro-Israel policies and has shown sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Also, over State Department objections, sent a member of her staff to Iraq in 1999 to survey the impact of sanctions against the Iraqi people. Said Bush administration may have had advance warning of Sept. 11 attacks but did nothing so its friends could profit.

Earl F. Hilliard

Democrat, Alabama, \$16,000

Has expressed sympathy for Palestinian and Muslim causes. Joined McKinney in sending staffers on the 1999 mission to study the impact of sanctions on Iraqi civilians. Like McKinney, was defeated in the 2002 election by a lesser-known opponent backed heavily by Jewish donors and pro-Israeli PACs.

David Bonior

Democrat, Michigan, \$14,800

Led the effort in Congress in 2000, and again in 2001, to restrict the use of secret evidence to detain or deport immigrants a response to the fact that Mazen al-Najjar of Tampa had been locked up on such evidence for three years. Once the No. 2 Democrat in the House, Bonior gave up his post in January 2002 to seek the governor's mansion in Michigan. By the time he made the choice to run for governor, he had already received nearly \$15,000 from Hernando County Muslims for his 2002 congressional campaign. Abdullah Al-Arian, son of Sami Al-Arian, worked as an intern in Bonior's office.

Merwyn Scott

Democrat, Georgia, \$5,800

A candidate in Georgia's 12th Congressional District, Scott's claim to fame was that he had been McKinney's chief of staff.

Muslims find strength in faith, frustration in politics

ON THE WEB: Find the series and more, including part of a recent message delivered at the mosque and a call to prayer, at <http://www.sptimes.com/united/>

Graphic

PHOTO, Courtesy of Al-Arian family via Associated Press; GRAPH; PHOTO, (4); Former University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian, center, and the rest of his family meet President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush during the 2000 presidential campaign in Plant City.; Graph illustrates how much money Hernando; County Muslims gave to federal candidates in 2002. Listed are candidates, their party, state and the amount of money each received.; Cynthia McKinney; Earl F. Hilliard; David Bonior; Merwyn Scott

Load-Date: May 18, 2004

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Saturday Review: Essay : In the zone of the living: Can literature address the conflict in the Middle East? Linda Grant asks some of Israel's best known writers whether fiction has a duty to reflect the unfolding catastrophe in the region: In the zone of the living

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Body

"Many Israelis fell ill with the Saudi flu that winter, and some died of it . . . The flu also infected the inhabitants of the Palestinian Authority, and there too, many people died. Sometimes the illness and the severe cold brought fighters on both sides to their knees, and created the illusion of a ceasefire."

Orly Castel-Bloom: Human Parts .

By the second week of the Iraq war last year I was so tired of the yackety-yak, the Big Ideas and Big Words of British intellectuals about the Bush-Blair Axis of Evil that I got the first of BA's resumed flights to Tel Aviv in April, taking note of the sign for the nearest air-raid shelter at the baggage carousel at Ben Gurion airport. The novelist David Grossman said he had a gas mask and vial of Atropine, the anti- nerve-gas agent, for me, with accompanying booklet explaining their use. If Saddam really did have WMDs I'd soon find out. I only meant to go for six days but a flat in the Bauhaus centre of the city came up, and so I extended my stay to three weeks. Grossman negotiated a knock-down rate for me at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem for two nights. There were about a dozen guests.

I went to meet the novelist Aharon Appelfeld at the restaurant and art gallery where he goes every day to write. We talked about literature for two hours, about creation, no politics. "You can write with your head, or you can write with your heart, but to write real literature you must write with your whole being," he said. I abandoned the novel I was writing and began a new one.

The war turned Israel into one big bu'ah - a bubble; not yet knowing that the WMDs were a smokescreen, the Israelis created a kind of human shield around themselves of ordinary living. One night Grossman arrived home from having dinner with me and his anxious young daughter asked where he had been, so he told her a bedtime story: "Israel has a tourist," he told her, "and the government is issuing a commemorative stamp and a commemorative coin whose denomination will be called a linda. You will go to the post office and ask for two lindas for your letter, or say, have you change of a linda?"

Two weeks ago, a mother of two small children blew herself up at the Erez checkpoint at Gaza, killing four soldiers. Two days later the cartoon in Ha'aretz depicted a woman trudging along with a suicide belt round her waist. The caption - arrived at after intense debate in the newsroom - was "Damn it, I forgot to turn off the gas."

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Black jokes and new words had emerged in the country since the start of the intifada. Like dogs whose ears can hear certain notes that human ears cannot, the whispered syllables pigua - suicide bomb - became audible above the sound of a jet engine. And all the time people spoke of ha-matzav , the situation, which encompasses the collapse of the Oslo talks in July 2000, the ensuing intifada, the election of a right-wing government, the recession, poverty, government corruption, world opinion, anti-semitism.

Last October, I came back to Tel Aviv for four months. The reasons for my visit were personal, not political, connected with Appelfeld's remarks about literature. Writing every day in a small rented apartment near the sea I noticed how the beach started to take over my novel. "It's not surprising," said the playwright Joshua Sobol. "In Israel the sea is our only good border."

I wanted to know if literature could be created out of ha-matzav , and indeed whether any of the Israeli writers I knew were intending to create a fiction of the intifada years. If there was anyone who could, it was Appelfeld, whose masterpiece, *Badenheim 1939* , is the greatest novel of the Holocaust, largely because it deals with it indirectly, through allegory and even satire. Appelfeld was born in 1932 in Czernowitz, one of those towns that never knows from one day to the next which country it's supposed to be in. You wake up in Romania and go to bed in the Ukraine. A wealthy, assimilated, left-wing, German-speaking family, the Appelfelds spent their time looking for vacation resorts with no Jews. When Appelfeld was seven, in 1939, his mother was shot dead near his house and he and his father were transported to a concentration camp where his father vanished. At 10, Appelfeld escaped from the camp and spent three years foraging in the forest, sometimes travelling with gangs of Ukrainian thieves, used by murderers and prostitutes to steal for them, until in 1944 the Red Army found him and adopted him as a kind of mascot. He had barely spoken for years. He emigrated to Palestine on his own, aged 14, in 1946. In 1953 he found his father, an old man working in an orchard picking oranges.

I asked him whether fiction should reflect the current conditions of Israeli life. Two days before, I had sat in the bedroom of a 13-year-old boy murdered in a bus bombing in Haifa. I looked at his trainers, his Harry Potter books. My tongue felt like wood. Language had nothing to say, it couldn't help me.

"The tragedy of Israel is that we are living in an over-dramatised situation," Appelfeld said in his very quiet voice. He is a small bald man with glasses. He usually wears a peaked cap and is unnoticed as he sits at his cafe table, writing. "Horror is following horror, therefore it dulls the sensations. This is a threat that hangs permanently over us. It becomes banal, it repeats itself on the radio and the TV. It's killing and again killing. Wonderful people are dying and we expect those people to become a symbol of something meaningful in life, but because there are so many of them, it becomes banal. I know this feeling because I was a child in a ghetto and a camp and you lose touch, people are always passing away, disappearing, yet you continue to eat and sleep."

In Europe there is, I said, a widespread expectation that Israeli writers, culpable as Israelis, should address first and foremost the occupation. "A writer first of all deals with the individual and his weaknesses and pain," he replied. "This is a writer, not a prophet; he should be judged by every sentence he has written, not his politics." We were joined by Grossman, who had just finished writing what he called "my bestseller", the introduction to the Geneva accords, which would be distributed to two million households in Israel. On the one hand, Grossman has been politically active in the negotiations leading up to the signing of the Geneva accords last December, and has written searing journalism about the promise and collapse of Oslo; on the other, politics don't appear in his literary work. "My last two novels have had nothing to do with this reality," he said. "My last novel, *Her Body Knows* , I started when the intifada started. My whole world collapsed. The future that was so near suddenly evaporated, so I began to write about something that had nothing to do with it, I had to remind myself what were the real things. I could write about how a national psyche is created but it's so much more intriguing to understand why a wife is jealous of her husband. This zone of human behaviour is where I want to be."

Grossman describes the existential nature of Israeliness as a central problem in how to write about the country, and how the country is seen by others. "We are regarded as a metaphor," he said. "Since we started as a nation we were a big story, we are the Bible, and if you are already a story you are not real. Israelis are addicted to this condition and it makes it difficult for us to be normal, to adapt to the pettiness of routine." And then he ventured a

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devastating thought about Jews: "Maybe we were different because we never had the opportunity until now to inflict cruelty and suffering. That is such a nightmare for me."

As it happened, a literature of Oslo had begun to emerge in the very period that the prospects for a permanent settlement collapsed totally. AB Yehoshua is one of the few Israeli writers who (perhaps because he lives in bi-national Haifa where he teaches at the university) has attempted to document the Arab-Israeli experience, while young Arab-Israeli writers have also begun to emerge, such as Sayed Kashu'a, whose Hebrew-language collection of short stories, *Dancing Arabs* (2002), was on the Israeli bestseller lists for months. Yehoshua had already started his novel *The Liberated Bride* in 1998. "When I began (it), the peace treaty was in trouble but the breakthrough of Oslo was done so my interest was in writing about our relationship with Israeli Arabs," he told me. "This is a book about borders - how far can a father-in-law go behind his son's back to help him? What does a man say to his wife and what should he not say? What will be the frontier between us and the Palestinian state? For all our history as Jews we were crossing borders, it was Zionism that brought us back to the idea of having borders (of our own). After the six day war, the abolition of the border poisoned the two peoples.

"When the intifada started I didn't change the plan of the book because I didn't know that it would last so long and that it would have such a profound effect. The Arab Israelis were the main protagonists, not the Palestinians. It's very hard to describe an enemy from the inside but understanding the Arabs is the key to understanding ourselves, our crisis in the world and without solving it we will deteriorate."

Since September 11 and in particular the start of the Iraq war, throughout the world intellectuals have wanted to create a voice of opposition to the global forces that are seen as threatening social and political justice. The bind that Israeli writers have been placed in is that of being required to create acts of witness that will resonate universally while living in the complex daily realities of life in Israel. A martyr in the resistance in Hebron is a mass murderer when he gets to Haifa.

Sobol, whose play *Ghetto* won the 1989 Evening Standard Award, said: "I could hardly think of writing a play that would not address the situation or that would be out of context with the violent events. Either the situation is being addressed directly or indirectly." His play *Eye Witness* (2002) deals with an Austrian conscientious objector during the second world war, and *Real Time* (2002), as yet unproduced either at home or abroad, addresses the subject of the reservists' protest in Israel, which Sobol is involved in as an adviser.

Real Time tells the story of a young officer in an elite unit who has to carry out a mission to demolish 20 Palestinian houses. He decides he can't order his soldiers to do the job so he comes home to his parents for the weekend to try to work out what to do, and the play deals with the discussions he has with his father, his uncle and his men. At the end he decides to face a court martial rather than carry out what he regards as an inhumane act.

"The first version was ready two years ago," Sobol said. "The theatres are afraid of staging it, but I think the Israeli public is ready. *Eye Witness* played for six months at the Cameri with full houses; nobody was fooled that it was just about conscientious objection during the second world war. The audience here is so open, and not only left-wingers. Many young people came to see it. I concluded that the Israeli audience is mature and ready to deal with these questions. They want to be confronted with an artistic insight into the situation. It is so loaded and so terrible that they need to be offered a more articulate way of dealing with it."

But if *Real Time* remains unperformed in Israel, it would face the same difficulties finding a theatre abroad: "Something has happened recently to the refuseniks," Sobol said. "I see their attitudes are changing. They are fighting anyone who accuses them of a lack of patriotism. *Real Time* will create a problem for Europeans because the protagonist is a declared Zionist and yet he is also a refusenik. I think that my protagonist has reached the point where he will be as disconcerting to a left-wing as to a right-wing audience. "

The one Israeli writer who has documented life during the intifada was thought to be the very last person who would do so. Castel-Bloom's novel *Dolly City*, written a decade ago, was a surreal urban dystopia set in Tel Aviv, about a mother going to the most extreme lengths to protect her son from harm. When her most recent novel,

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Human Parts , was published in 2002, a literary critic at Ha'aretz said perhaps it was not that Castel-Bloom had turned realist, but that reality had turned Castel-Bloomian.

The novel, a bitterly funny satire of Israeli society and its media, draws on her own experience as an impoverished single mother. It takes place during an unusually cold Israeli winter when everyone is coming down with the "Saudi flu". A Kurdish mother of four gets her 15 minutes of fame on TV after a government report on poverty but the terror attacks drive poverty from the screens. An Ethiopian model tries to persuade her Ashkenazi boyfriend to marry her to satisfy her family while he wonders gloomily why anyone would bring a child into a country with no future. His ex-girlfriend, an unemployed divorcee, hoping that a dentist will give her free treatment, tries to work out whether he is left- or right-wing by decoding his responses to a radio talk show, so she can appear to agree with him. And throughout the novel the president of Israel roams the country, making his official appearance at one funeral after another.

"I had promised myself to write something realistic and I had already started before the intifada," Castel-Bloom said. "The cold was there, and the flu, but the bombs started when I was 70 pages in. I felt that I could not ignore the situation and I restarted the book adding this dimension. I wanted to testify as a witness, to cross the lines of daily journalism into literature. At the start of the intifada when the Palestinians lynched two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah, this was the moment I stopped writing and began to deal with the latest broken dreams. At the beginning I told my daughter only to take taxis but I ran out of money and gave her permission to play Russian roulette on the bus."

Human Parts rejects the media's view of the conflict, the banality of reporting in the Israeli media. "In my novel I wanted to achieve a distance, to give a legendary effect. 'A very long time ago - two days ago - there was a country . . .' It gave me the ability to observe the behaviour of the media, the cliches they are using. With every terror attack you have a ritual - Soon Breaking News - (flashing) over Seinfeld , so you know 13 people are dead." The routine in every news bulletin is to ask which faction - Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade - has claimed responsibility. For Castel-Bloom, the word responsibility sanitises the atrocity: "The big question is, 'Who is taking responsibility?' Listen to that word, it is a total distortion of moral values, it's not who is responsible, it's who is to blame. As a spectator of this coverage you have to fill the gaps. 'The road was washed.' Of what? 'The event is over.' You know the event is not over at all."

Friends in Britain suggested to me that the way forward for Israeli writers was to create an alliance with their counterparts on the Palestinian side, to find some solidarity with each other, out of which a new humane literature could emerge from this region that might begin to recognise the pain of the other, and to respect the other's trauma - Nakba (the Arabic word for catastrophe) or Holocaust. But this is not a rational or humane part of the world.

"There is almost no contact now between Israeli and Palestinian writers," Grossman told me. "In the early 1990s I organised a group which met for almost three years, secretly, in Jerusalem or Ramallah, under the umbrella of some foreign embassies. The problem was that when Oslo started the Palestinians became very nervous, they said they got hints from Arafat not to contribute to the normalisation of Israel. Oslo was not very popular. Things continued on an informal, personal basis, by phone, I (remained) close friends with two of them, but Izzat al Gazawi died last year. I dedicated the Hebrew edition of Death as a Way of Life (2003) to him. They had big expectations of us. They thought we could change the politics here and when they saw that we couldn't deliver the goods, they despaired of the possibility of doing something with us."

For 20 years Grossman has been vilified by the Israeli right for his opposition to the occupation, attacked and threatened, while Sobol is involved, together with Arab-Israelis, in a legal challenge against the nationality laws. Castel-Bloom is considering joining Machsom Watch, a group of Israeli women who monitor abuses at checkpoints. All of Israel's major writers with international reputations could be described as liberal-left Zionists who view with distaste and anger those who deny Israel's right to exist. Less well-known abroad, and on the right, are the poet Naomi Frankel, a settler in Hebron, and Moshe Shamir, who after the Six Day War moved from the left to support the Greater Israel movement which seeks to expand Israel's territories. On the anti-Zionist far left are the poet and

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translator Aharon Shabtai whose collection *J'accuse* , accuses Israel of crimes against humanity, and Yossi Sukary, whose work deals with the experience of Sephardi Jews in Israel.

Israeli politics are exceptionally disputatious and polarised but according to Joshua Sobol, most writers feel isolated, marginalised and silenced both by the right at home and by an anti-Zionism abroad that is drifting into anti-semitism.

All the writers I spoke to view with distaste and anger those who deny Israel's right to exist. And all the writers I spoke to raised the question of the revival of anti-semitism. In the Middle East it is hard to avoid. Yehoshua has just written an essay on its origins, describing the anti-semitism of Seneca, who sounds like the prototype of Himmler ("the Jews are a criminal people"). The Egyptian government has recently inaugurated a new library in Alexandria in which each country and people is represented by a book. The selection for Israel and the Jews was *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* , the anti-semitic 19th-century forgery that invented a cabal of Jews plotting to control the world. When, in November, Unesco demanded the book be removed, the head of the library said he didn't understand why its inclusion was considered anti-semitic or offensive.

For Grossman, the revival of anti-semitism generates fear, anxiety and paranoia in the Israeli psyche, which drives the public to the right. "Since the intifada and the anti-semitism in the Islamic world, the average Israeli feels swept into the Jewish world of tragic aspect, of being the eternal outsider, and all the old feelings surface," he said. "We are cornered now, it's dangerous for us and others. I'm not sure our leaders will act rationally when these primal fears of ours will dominate."

Israeli artists and academics face increasing difficulties in finding international platforms for their work. Castel-Bloom is as savage about cultural and academic boycotts abroad as she is about the Israeli media, and particularly those Israelis who publicly support or even call for European academic and cultural institutions to cut off ties with their Israeli counterparts: "We have a few people here who are collaborating with this boycott, they have the Kapo gene," she said, referring to Jews who collaborated with the Nazis, often out of a desire to do something to help fellow Jews.

Sobol argues: "The collapse of communism has meant that too many people have lost their god so they become aggressive and full of hate," he said. "There is no element in the world that is going to help the Israeli left. The right in Israel tells us, you leftists have no friends in Europe, look, they're boycotting your academics. Anti-semitism has a certain character, it starts with anodyne symptoms and because it is taken as a common cold no one deals with it at that stage and it erupts as a deadly disease later on. The de-legitimisation of Israel's right to exist is a preparation of the minds of Europe to accept a genocide of us. The anti-Zionists and the Jewish left who collaborate with this de-legitimisation are playing with fire."

Appelfeld says calmly: "The things that happened to me in Europe are continuing to happen. I have been hated by the Ukrainians, I am hated by the Palestinians. In Europe my parents were misunderstood and I continue to be misunderstood. It follows me. What can I do? Last time I was in Europe I had a feeling that they think everyone here has a tank outside his apartment and in the morning he gets into it to go to Jenin and kill a child. But perhaps we are just human beings. Bald people, with glasses."

As to whether there can be a literature of *ha-matzav* , he says, "I do not believe a writer can change regimes. What is happening here in Israel has to wait 50 years or more to become literature. We are now in the journalistic phase, not the literary phase, it cannot become literature, so in the meantime I am still writing about my childhood in Europe, which was not spent among Arabs, but Ukrainians."

Aharon Appelfeld and AB Yehoshua will be appearing at the Bath Literary Festival on February 28, in a session chaired by Linda Grant. They also appear at Jewish Book Week, February 28-March 7 2004, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1.

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**BACK ON THE PEACE TRAIN;
NEXT WEEK, YUSUF ISLAM, A DEVOUT MUSLIM CHARITY WORKER FROM
NORTH**

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Byline: ROBERT CHALMERS Morning has broken: Islam holds assembly at one of his four Islamia schools, above; and showing Prince Charles around in 2000

Body

My last day of research into the life of Yusuf Islam began in the British Library, which houses two volumes of his writings on Islamic philosophy, and ended in the Dirty Water Club in north London, where Kim Fowley, his one-time collaborator, was on stage French kissing a woman far 40 years his junior. "Come and join us," the 64-year-old American shouted, over the deafening grind of his garage band, pointing to a teenage girl in the audience. "I am richer than your pimp."

On my way to the venue, I'd been reading *The Secret Path* by the English mystic Paul Brunton - the text which set Cat Stevens on a course that would see him abandon popular music, embrace the Muslim faith and adopt the name by which he has been known since 1977.

"Are we spirit entities - bright and radiant from God, temporarily housed in our bodies?" Brunton wrote. "Or are we mere lumps of animated matter - no better than monkeys?"

This last question is one that Fowley's every gesture seemed to answer with a resounding yes. He soon lost all interest in singing, preferring to simulate intercourse with one of the women he'd coaxed up on stage, pausing occasionally to make comments of such startling lewdness that the band due to go on after him refused to perform at all, instead reading out a statement condemning his performance as "degrading and obscene".

"I was disgusting, I know," Fowley told me afterwards. "But there were lesbians here tonight. They bring out the worst in me."

If you were looking for an illustration of the unhinged extremes of the world Islam renounced, it would be hard to improve on this evening with Fowley, a maverick performer who has worked with the Beach Boys and the Byrds, among others. And yet Fowley has a unique place in Cat Stevens's history: he wrote the lyrics for the singer's debut recording, "Portobello Road", which was the B-side of "I Love My Dog" in 1966 and one of the most charmingly atmospheric songs Stevens ever released. In recent years, the two men's paths have not crossed: Islam considers that picking up a guitar might be considered an act of blasphemy. Fowley's main worry seems to be that he might not manage to be profane enough.

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"I Love My Dog", I tell Islam, when we meet, on a bright autumn afternoon outside Queens Park in north-west London, was the first single I ever bought. But for some reason it is "Portobello Road", in which the acoustic arrangement anticipates Stevens's later hits, which has haunted me since - perhaps, I explain, because I've never been able to make out the opening two lines. I don't seriously expect him to be able to help with this, and yet, 37 years on, as we walk across the park, he recites the lyric without hesitation.

"What key's it in?"

"C."

I mention that I saw his co-author a couple of nights earlier. Islam's eyes shift slightly.

"How was that?"

I tell him.

I expected him to arrive in his robes, but he's wearing corduroy trousers, a sweater and an anorak. His beard has been cut to a less formidable length than I've seen in some pictures. He leads the way to a bench, in a quiet garden, fenced off from the rest of the park. Islam is modest, engaging, and immediately likeable. Strange as it may sound of a man of 55 who has a past, there's an unfeigned naivete about his manner. He has retained the London accent he acquired when he was growing up above his father's cafe in New Oxford Street. Formerly on the books of the agent who handled John Osborne and Peter Finch, Islam gives the impression of someone constantly striving to speak in a way some would define as correct: he often says "one" rather than "you", but still drops the odd "H" when fired up.

Passers-by appear not to recognise the man who sold 50 million albums in a career lasting little more than a decade, with international hits such as "Moonshadow", "The First Cut Is The Deepest", "Peace Train", "I Can't Keep It In" and "Wild World".

It's been 27 years (barring a brief appearance at a charity concert) since he gave a live performance. A week tomorrow he will make his return to the stage, hosting a concert at London's Royal Albert Hall in aid of the four Islamic schools he's set up a few minutes' walk from here. He'll be performing some of his old repertoire, including "Peace Train", with a South African vocal group. Sharing the bill will be Prince Naseem Hamed.

"Is the Prince going to sing?"

Islam laughs. "I don't know what he's planning. I thought we'd situate him close to the Muslim rap group."

Absence has not diminished the singer's appeal for a new generation: Islam has been working on a composition for one of his greatest fans, Cerys Matthews; Boyzone covered his 1970 hit "Father and Son" and the same tune was shamelessly appropriated by the Flaming Lips for their 2002 track "Fight Test". Not that Islam will have come across Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots.

"Oh, I did," he says. The resulting dispute was settled out of court. "Quite honestly," he adds, "I was honoured. It was a nice version of a nice song."

When speaking for publication, he is a curious combination of innocence and profound suspicion. He hasn't forgotten the day in February 1989, when an undercover reporter attended a speech he gave in Kingston-on-Thames, and he was asked about the fatwa on Salman Rushdie. From his response, which he insists was grossly misrepresented, the Today newspaper ran the headline "Kill Rushdie says Cat", engendering a reputation Islam has never quite shaken off.

There are subjects he prefers to avoid, and Rushdie is prime among them. He is worried, he says, that this article may not adequately describe his charity work - a legitimate concern in that, properly chronicled, his ministry would fill a book. Whereas many entertainers perform minimal acts of philanthropy, then wear them like a plume, for Islam

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charity is his life - whether he's acting as a peace envoy in Iraq, an ambassador for Unicef, or delivering aid to Sarajevo.

He was recently refused entry to Israel after that country's intelligence service suggested he had knowingly contributed to the war chest of Hamas - an allegation which, given his life-long commitment to peace and transparent integrity, seems nothing short of risible. Cat Stevens's royalties have been the mainstay of his four "Islamia" schools, the oldest of which celebrates its twentieth anniversary this month. Only one receives state funding (an entitlement Islam lobbied for 12 years to secure); the others remain private, from choice. He sent his own five children to the schools, which consistently top academic tables in Brent.

"I always had a conscience about money," he says, "and felt a responsibility to share." The current focus of his charity work is Small Kindness, which he founded in 1999. "It looks after orphans, mainly," he says, "in areas of the Balkans where there is gross poverty."

Some might perceive an inconsistency between his wariness of stringed instruments, and the fact that he bankrolls good causes from his back catalogue. His relationship with his past is an ambivalent one, as I discover when I mention the main website dedicated to Cat Stevens. It contains numerous press cuttings, not all of which venerate him. One reporter, I tell the former star, refers to Stevens as "the best bullshitter in the world". Another details his relationship, shortly after he converted to Islam, with Lucy Johnson, who had formerly worked as a stripper in Boston under the name Princess Cheyenne. In the article, she complains that "he says we should give up everything, then flies to Washington just to get his teeth capped". It's an allegation which casts some doubt on the bold indifference to dental catastrophe ("If I ever lose my mouth/All my teeth, north and south...") he professed in "Moonshadow". The whole website, I suggest, bears witness to his admirable candour.

"Do you mean catstevens.com?" Islam gives me a look which indicates he has no idea that the Princess is up there. "That's not under my total control."

The same site offers Cat Stevens mugs, coasters and wall-clocks - all, no doubt, lucrative sources for his good works.

"If people raise money in my name," he says, "sometimes I am unaware of it. I don't think we receive any funds from those things."

"Who does?" "I don't know. I'm not responsible for that."

It's hard to believe now, but there was once a time when rock stars were envied not just for their looks, wealth and exotic companions, but for their philosophical insights. For most performers, a sudden conversion to Eastern religion was simply an indication that they had been taking too many hallucinogens: it was a recognised hazard of the profession. And in time, in the vast majority of cases, it went away. When Stevens became a Muslim, the general assumption was that he'd soon return to his old recreations - smoking and drinking for England, baking his fudge cake (which, on one occasion, his mother tasted, liked, and spent the afternoon in a state of altered consciousness) and generally behaving in a way which was - to quote an associate from his secular days, "not exactly celibate".

But in Stevens's case, an inquiring mind and a sense of morality were evident from the first days of his childhood. Born Steven Demetre Georgiou, he was the son of Stavros, a Greek-Cypriot, and Ingrid, a Swedish Baptist. Steve, like his brother David, who manages him, had a Catholic education. His sister Anita is rumoured to have locked him in a cupboard when he had impure thoughts.

"We all went to Catholic school," Islam says. "Anita took that seriously."

"So if you had a predisposition to guilt..." "My education brought it out perfectly, yes. Anita is a good soul."

"But she did shut you in a closet."

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"Right."

In and out of the cupboard, he had a turbulent boyhood. His parents separated when he was eight, and his mother took the children to Sweden, where he spent almost a year.

"I didn't think it was final," he says. "It seemed like a holiday."

His mother relented; they came back to London and his parents resumed their business partnership, but slept in separate rooms. Islam says he was forever trying, and failing, to reconcile them. His father was known as "Belos" - The Mad One. "He'd lose his temper," says Islam. "That's all."

And yet the fear of madness is a recurrent theme in Stevens's interviews.

"I meant upset, not deranged," says Islam. "I know there was only one Napoleon."

He attended Hammersmith Art College but left after a year, and got his chance to record after he met Mike Hurst, who produced his early hits such as "I Love My Dog" and "Matthew and Son". On archive film, Stevens, dancing awkwardly in close-fitting dark suits, appears profoundly uncomfortable.

"What you have to understand," says Kim Fowley, "is that Cat Stevens was extremely shy. I'd written the words for 'Portobello Road' but I didn't have a tune, so I showed them to Cat. He was too shy to work on it with me in the room. He took half an hour to produce that wonderful melody. But he wouldn't perform it in front of me. He went into a call box and sang it down the phone."

During his first major UK tour - with Englebert Humperdinck and Jimi Hendrix - Stevens told a reporter he needed a bottle of brandy to get on stage.

"That sounds exaggerated," Islam says. "It was port and brandy. I suppose it was more or less a bottle, of the mixture."

"Before you went on?"

"Yes. I don't think I did a bottle every night, but I always drank something to get me up there."

Stevens smoked heavily. "I keep wondering," he told the NME in 1967, "what the inside of my lungs must look like."

He got his answer in March of the following year. "I'd had this cough," he recalls. "Then one day, when I was sat at the piano, I coughed and I saw blood."

"On the piano keys?"

"That's how I remember it, yes. When I saw blood, I said, 'Something is wrong here.' I had a check-up and they told me I'd got TB." Left untreated, a specialist later explained, he would have had a fortnight to live. At the time, did he suspect he was going to die?

"I wasn't sure. That's what was troubling."

In the year that he spent recovering, he wrote frantically and immersed himself in Brunton's writing. "There's a point in The Secret Path where Brunton writes: 'You will never be satisfied until you reach the truth.' I can remember thinking, 'I wish I'd never read that.'"

"Why?"

"Because once I'd read those words, I couldn't rest. I didn't want to leave this world without knowing where I was going," he says. "I wanted to find a place of peace, where nothing could bother me - not even death."

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When he re-emerged in 1969, he had more than 40 new songs and released three triumphant albums in 15 months on Chris Blackwell's Island label: *Mona Bone Jakon* (his pet phrase for penis), *Tea For The Tillerman* and *Teaser And The Firecat*.

Stevens - though hugely popular - was never exactly fashionable. "At a rock festival, if you saw a man in flares, carrying a copy of *Tea For The Tillerman*," John Peel tells me, "you could be absolutely certain he was a member of the drug squad." But Stevens, unlike most of his contemporaries, could fill Madison Square Gardens two nights running, whether he had a record out or not.

An object of desire on both sides of the Atlantic, he was never tempted to marry.

"I was always looking for a woman as good as my mother," he says.

His best-known girlfriend, actress Patti D'Arbanville, is supposed to have left him for Mick Jagger.

"I don't remember that," says Islam.

For most men, it's probably true to say that having their partner dump them for the lead singer of the Rolling Stones is the kind of experience unlikely to slip their mind, but the intimate life of Stevens is an area that Islam, understandably enough, is not eager to revisit. His reply to my question: "You went out with Carly Simon, didn't you?" goes like this:

"The Royal Albert Hall show is a great event. Some people will come along to see me as I am now."

"So you're definitely not the subject of *You're So Vain*."

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His lively bachelorhood makes it all the more remarkable that his 1979 alliance with Fauzia Mubarak Ali, the daughter of a Surbiton accountant, should have been an arranged marriage. Islam brought her home to meet his mother, who approved. The bad press he's had from Princess Cheyenne, he says, is explained by the fact that she was the other woman he was thinking of marrying.

Did he really fly to America to get his teeth fixed? "Yes," says Islam, "and they've lasted me to this day."

"Which goes to show how right you were."

"You should do anything to the best of your ability."

His days of worldly indulgence must seem to have occurred in another lifetime.

"As a Muslim," he says, "I would be horrified to think of some of the things I did."

"What things are those, then?"

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And Stevens explored more modes than most. In the interviews he gave in the mid-1970s, the singer's conversation is increasingly dominated by such subjects as Zen, numerology, flying saucers, colour analysis and astrology. He took to carrying around a wooden staff he introduced as *Amberthwiddle*, and at one point wore a swastika - a gesture intended to reclaim the symbol's original association with divine light, but which prompted one critic to advise him that he could "shove his peace train up his ass".

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Did he take a lot of LSD?

"I took it once purposefully. The second time I was spiked it. But I never revisited that place. For me, it was too much. You can become so submerged in the unreal that you can't call for help. In the real world, we are lucky enough to be able to cry out."

His epiphany occurred in Malibu in 1976.

"I went swimming in the ocean," he says. "Then I tried to get back to shore but the current was pulling me out to sea. I had no strength left. I could see my manager on the beach. I couldn't even wave, I was so tired. I said: God, if you save me, I'll work for you.' At that moment this wave came - just a gentle wave - but suddenly I was swimming back with the energy that I needed."

Some might call that coincidence.

"Some might. But I don't believe that the earth and the universe are here by coincidence. When I got back to shore, I was aware that I had made a commitment."

A few months later his brother David, who'd been in Jerusalem, gave him the Koran. Stevens began to attend Regent's Park Mosque and auctioned off his instruments. He took the name Yusuf (Joseph), he says, because his story in the Koran moved him to tears.

"What happened to Amberthwiddle?"

"I threw Amberthwiddle in the sea."

In contrast to the bewildering complexity of his earlier musings, there is a calm and a dignity about Islam these days. The only time he gets really animated is when I mention the Rushdie affair, at which point he produces a tape machine and presses record.

"Do you believe you were deliberately tricked," I ask him, "that day in Kingston?"

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We go on to discuss some of the more robust aspects of Sharia, a subject on which - while Islam is no zealot - his views diverge significantly from the Western liberalism he once advocated. He is visibly weary of having to defend every nuance of Koranic law as implemented by every Islamic regime on the planet. As the best-known British Muslim, it's something he's become accustomed to: his position is rather like that of a solitary American who has wandered into a remote Chinese village and is held to account for every deed ever committed in the name of the US.

We leave the park and walk across to a local cafe, where Islam takes a keen interest in the CDs on the sound system. I ask him where Stevens got that distinctive staccato quality in his phrasing - it sounds as though it might have come from a black American artist. "I think it might have been Nina Simone," he says. "I always loved her records."

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"When I met Yusuf, it was in a restaurant," Cerys Matthews told me. "I sang him How Can I Keep From Singing?', because I thought it was a crying shame he'd given it up. I didn't realise that his love of music had continued, away from the pop scene. For a person to have the courage to follow a different path, and their own truth, is something I find infinitely inspiring."

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Does he have a guitar, then?

"I don't have one. No."

"Is there one in your house?"

"There's one in the studio."

"Have you played it recently?"

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The more I talk to him about this, the more clearly I can picture him creeping into his studio in the early hours, strapping on a Telecaster and turning his amplifier up to 11.

"Waiter!" he calls out. "The bill."

The event at the Albert Hall, as he emphasises, is not a Cat Stevens concert. But for many long-standing fans this rare appearance by their hero, under whatever name, will be like an explosive moment of gratification after 27 years of abstinence. The chatroom on his website is full of messages from all over the world, from admirers planning to take over entire hotels near the venue with a view to celebrating his music long into the night, after he's left the stage to what seems certain to be the greatest ovation of his life.

Not that wild applause in this distinguished arena is likely to turn the singer's head. As he walks away from the spotlight, down to his dressing-room, Yusuf Islam's mind will be focussed, as it so often is, on another form of judgment, in a distant and more daunting place.

The Very Best of Cat Stevens' is out now on Universal Records. The Night of Remembrance concert is at the Royal Albert Hall on 20 October. Call 020 7589 8212 for tickets. For full details go to www.yusufislam.org.uk

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Section: FEATURES

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Byline: ROBERT CHALMERS Morning has broken: Islam holds assembly at one of his four Islamia schools, above; and showing Prince Charles around in 2000

Body

My last day of research into the life of Yusuf Islam began in the British Library, which houses two volumes of his writings on Islamic philosophy, and ended in the Dirty Water Club in north London, where Kim Fowley, his one-time collaborator, was on stage French kissing a woman far 40 years his junior. "Come and join us," the 64-year-old American shouted, over the deafening grind of his garage band, pointing to a teenage girl in the audience. "I am richer than your pimp."

On my way to the venue, I'd been reading *The Secret Path* by the English mystic Paul Brunton - the text which set Cat Stevens on a course that would see him abandon popular music, embrace the Muslim faith and adopt the name by which he has been known since 1977.

"Are we spirit entities - bright and radiant from God, temporarily housed in our bodies?" Brunton wrote. "Or are we mere lumps of animated matter - no better than monkeys?"

This last question is one that Fowley's every gesture seemed to answer with a resounding yes. He soon lost all interest in singing, preferring to simulate intercourse with one of the women he'd coaxed up on stage, pausing occasionally to make comments of such startling lewdness that the band due to go on after him refused to perform at all, instead reading out a statement condemning his performance as "degrading and obscene".

"I was disgusting, I know," Fowley told me afterwards. "But there were lesbians here tonight. They bring out the worst in me."

If you were looking for an illustration of the unhinged extremes of the world Islam renounced, it would be hard to improve on this evening with Fowley, a maverick performer who has worked with the Beach Boys and the Byrds, among others. And yet Fowley has a unique place in Cat Stevens's history: he wrote the lyrics for the singer's debut recording, "Portobello Road", which was the B-side of "I Love My Dog" in 1966 and one of the most charmingly atmospheric songs Stevens ever released. In recent years, the two men's paths have not crossed: Islam considers that picking up a guitar might be considered an act of blasphemy. Fowley's main worry seems to be that he might not manage to be profane enough.

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"I Love My Dog", I tell Islam, when we meet, on a bright autumn afternoon outside Queens Park in north-west London, was the first single I ever bought. But for some reason it is "Portobello Road", in which the acoustic arrangement anticipates Stevens's later hits, which has haunted me since - perhaps, I explain, because I've never been able to make out the opening two lines. I don't seriously expect him to be able to help with this, and yet, 37 years on, as we walk across the park, he recites the lyric without hesitation.

"What key's it in?"

"C."

I mention that I saw his co-author a couple of nights earlier. Islam's eyes shift slightly.

"How was that?"

I tell him.

I expected him to arrive in his robes, but he's wearing corduroy trousers, a sweater and an anorak. His beard has been cut to a less formidable length than I've seen in some pictures. He leads the way to a bench, in a quiet garden, fenced off from the rest of the park. Islam is modest, engaging, and immediately likeable. Strange as it may sound of a man of 55 who has a past, there's an unfeigned naivete about his manner. He has retained the London accent he acquired when he was growing up above his father's cafe in New Oxford Street. Formerly on the books of the agent who handled John Osborne and Peter Finch, Islam gives the impression of someone constantly striving to speak in a way some would define as correct: he often says "one" rather than "you", but still drops the odd "H" when fired up.

Passers-by appear not to recognise the man who sold 50 million albums in a career lasting little more than a decade, with international hits such as "Moonshadow", "The First Cut Is The Deepest", "Peace Train", "I Can't Keep It In" and "Wild World".

It's been 27 years (barring a brief appearance at a charity concert) since he gave a live performance. A week tomorrow he will make his return to the stage, hosting a concert at London's Royal Albert Hall in aid of the four Islamic schools he's set up a few minutes' walk from here. He'll be performing some of his old repertoire, including "Peace Train", with a South African vocal group. Sharing the bill will be Prince Naseem Hamed.

"Is the Prince going to sing?"

Islam laughs. "I don't know what he's planning. I thought we'd situate him close to the Muslim rap group."

Absence has not diminished the singer's appeal for a new generation: Islam has been working on a composition for one of his greatest fans, Cerys Matthews; Boyzone covered his 1970 hit "Father and Son" and the same tune was shamelessly appropriated by the Flaming Lips for their 2002 track "Fight Test". Not that Islam will have come across Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots.

"Oh, I did," he says. The resulting dispute was settled out of court. "Quite honestly," he adds, "I was honoured. It was a nice version of a nice song."

When speaking for publication, he is a curious combination of innocence and profound suspicion. He hasn't forgotten the day in February 1989, when an undercover reporter attended a speech he gave in Kingston-on-Thames, and he was asked about the fatwa on Salman Rushdie. From his response, which he insists was grossly misrepresented, the Today newspaper ran the headline "Kill Rushdie says Cat", engendering a reputation Islam has never quite shaken off.

There are subjects he prefers to avoid, and Rushdie is prime among them. He is worried, he says, that this article may not adequately describe his charity work - a legitimate concern in that, properly chronicled, his ministry would fill a book. Whereas many entertainers perform minimal acts of philanthropy, then wear them like a plume, for Islam

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charity is his life - whether he's acting as a peace envoy in Iraq, an ambassador for Unicef, or delivering aid to Sarajevo.

He was recently refused entry to Israel after that country's intelligence service suggested he had knowingly contributed to the war chest of Hamas - an allegation which, given his life-long commitment to peace and transparent integrity, seems nothing short of risible. Cat Stevens's royalties have been the mainstay of his four "Islamia" schools, the oldest of which celebrates its twentieth anniversary this month. Only one receives state funding (an entitlement Islam lobbied for 12 years to secure); the others remain private, from choice. He sent his own five children to the schools, which consistently top academic tables in Brent.

"I always had a conscience about money," he says, "and felt a responsibility to share." The current focus of his charity work is Small Kindness, which he founded in 1999. "It looks after orphans, mainly," he says, "in areas of the Balkans where there is gross poverty."

Some might perceive an inconsistency between his wariness of stringed instruments, and the fact that he bankrolls good causes from his back catalogue. His relationship with his past is an ambivalent one, as I discover when I mention the main website dedicated to Cat Stevens. It contains numerous press cuttings, not all of which venerate him. One reporter, I tell the former star, refers to Stevens as "the best bullshitter in the world". Another details his relationship, shortly after he converted to Islam, with Lucy Johnson, who had formerly worked as a stripper in Boston under the name Princess Cheyenne. In the article, she complains that "he says we should give up everything, then flies to Washington just to get his teeth capped". It's an allegation which casts some doubt on the bold indifference to dental catastrophe ("If I ever lose my mouth/All my teeth, north and south...") he professed in "Moonshadow". The whole website, I suggest, bears witness to his admirable candour.

"Do you mean catstevens.com?" Islam gives me a look which indicates he has no idea that the Princess is up there. "That's not under my total control."

The same site offers Cat Stevens mugs, coasters and wall-clocks - all, no doubt, lucrative sources for his good works.

"If people raise money in my name," he says, "sometimes I am unaware of it. I don't think we receive any funds from those things."

"Who does?" "I don't know. I'm not responsible for that."

It's hard to believe now, but there was once a time when rock stars were envied not just for their looks, wealth and exotic companions, but for their philosophical insights. For most performers, a sudden conversion to Eastern religion was simply an indication that they had been taking too many hallucinogens: it was a recognised hazard of the profession. And in time, in the vast majority of cases, it went away. When Stevens became a Muslim, the general assumption was that he'd soon return to his old recreations - smoking and drinking for England, baking his fudge cake (which, on one occasion, his mother tasted, liked, and spent the afternoon in a state of altered consciousness) and generally behaving in a way which was - to quote an associate from his secular days, "not exactly celibate".

But in Stevens's case, an inquiring mind and a sense of morality were evident from the first days of his childhood. Born Steven Demetre Georgiou, he was the son of Stavros, a Greek-Cypriot, and Ingrid, a Swedish Baptist. Steve, like his brother David, who manages him, had a Catholic education. His sister Anita is rumoured to have locked him in a cupboard when he had impure thoughts.

"We all went to Catholic school," Islam says. "Anita took that seriously."

"So if you had a predisposition to guilt..." "My education brought it out perfectly, yes. Anita is a good soul."

"But she did shut you in a closet."

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"Right."

In and out of the cupboard, he had a turbulent boyhood. His parents separated when he was eight, and his mother took the children to Sweden, where he spent almost a year.

"I didn't think it was final," he says. "It seemed like a holiday."

His mother relented; they came back to London and his parents resumed their business partnership, but slept in separate rooms. Islam says he was forever trying, and failing, to reconcile them. His father was known as "Belos" - The Mad One. "He'd lose his temper," says Islam. "That's all."

And yet the fear of madness is a recurrent theme in Stevens's interviews.

"I meant upset, not deranged," says Islam. "I know there was only one Napoleon."

He attended Hammersmith Art College but left after a year, and got his chance to record after he met Mike Hurst, who produced his early hits such as "I Love My Dog" and "Matthew and Son". On archive film, Stevens, dancing awkwardly in close-fitting dark suits, appears profoundly uncomfortable.

"What you have to understand," says Kim Fowley, "is that Cat Stevens was extremely shy. I'd written the words for 'Portobello Road' but I didn't have a tune, so I showed them to Cat. He was too shy to work on it with me in the room. He took half an hour to produce that wonderful melody. But he wouldn't perform it in front of me. He went into a call box and sang it down the phone."

During his first major UK tour - with Englebert Humperdinck and Jimi Hendrix - Stevens told a reporter he needed a bottle of brandy to get on stage.

"That sounds exaggerated," Islam says. "It was port and brandy. I suppose it was more or less a bottle, of the mixture."

"Before you went on?"

"Yes. I don't think I did a bottle every night, but I always drank something to get me up there."

Stevens smoked heavily. "I keep wondering," he told the NME in 1967, "what the inside of my lungs must look like."

He got his answer in March of the following year. "I'd had this cough," he recalls. "Then one day, when I was sat at the piano, I coughed and I saw blood."

"On the piano keys?"

"That's how I remember it, yes. When I saw blood, I said, 'Something is wrong here.' I had a check-up and they told me I'd got TB." Left untreated, a specialist later explained, he would have had a fortnight to live. At the time, did he suspect he was going to die?

"I wasn't sure. That's what was troubling."

In the year that he spent recovering, he wrote frantically and immersed himself in Brunton's writing. "There's a point in The Secret Path where Brunton writes: 'You will never be satisfied until you reach the truth.' I can remember thinking, 'I wish I'd never read that.'"

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"Waiter!" he calls out. "The bill."

The event at the Albert Hall, as he emphasises, is not a Cat Stevens concert. But for many long-standing fans this rare appearance by their hero, under whatever name, will be like an explosive moment of gratification after 27 years of abstinence. The chatroom on his website is full of messages from all over the world, from admirers planning to take over entire hotels near the venue with a view to celebrating his music long into the night, after he's left the stage to what seems certain to be the greatest ovation of his life.

Not that wild applause in this distinguished arena is likely to turn the singer's head. As he walks away from the spotlight, down to his dressing-room, Yusuf Islam's mind will be focussed, as it so often is, on another form of judgment, in a distant and more daunting place. n

The Very Best of Cat Stevens' is out now on Universal Records. The Night of Remembrance concert is at the Royal Albert Hall on 20 October. Call 020 7589 8212 for tickets. For full details go to www.yusufislam.org.uk

BACK ON THE PEACE TRAIN; NEXT WEEK, YUSUF ISLAM, A DEVOUT MUSLIM CHARITY WORKER
FROM NORTH

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Body

Meet rabbi Hershel Gluck and Ismael Amann. They are good friends who delight in confounding expectations even as tensions rise in the Middle East. Michael Skapinker finds they are far from alone in advocating mutual understanding. Portrait by James D. Ross. Reportage photography by Chris Steele-Perkins

RABBI HERSHEL GLUCK BUSTLES THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE EAST LONDON BOROUGH of Hackney, pausing only to accept a fellow Orthodox Jew's congratulations on the birth of his first grandchild. He turns the corner and bounds up the stairs of the local Muslim community centre, where he is admitted with a flurry of handshakes and shouts of "Rabbi!" from a group of young men hanging around the entrance hall.

Rabbi Gluck is at home here. He strides into an inner room, tosses his black hat onto a chair, revealing his skullcap underneath, and greets two friends Ismael Amaan, a Muslim community leader, and Mohamed Munaf Zeena, head of the Council of Indian Muslims.

The three men are leading lights in the Muslim Jewish Forum, which they boast is the most tightly-knit example of co-operation between the two faiths anywhere in the UK, and, Rabbi Gluck claims, in the world. The grey-bearded Rabbi Gluck and the black-bearded Amaan are photogenic local celebrities, having appeared on a much-discussed BBC news programme about how Muslims and Jews can live as friends in the same community.

The two are considering a national tour, in which they will appear together in Muslim communities that have never seen a Jew and Jewish communities that know few Muslims, as well as large areas of the country that have never seen either group. "There are many parts of the UK where a Jew or Muslim is considered a mythical character, both by each other and by the country at large," says Rabbi Gluck, who enjoys telling stories about the sensation that Jewish and Muslim friendship creates. "I remember meeting a senior Muslim cleric. When we kissed each other the taxi driver said he thought he was dreaming."

Members of the forum constantly remark on how much they have in common. Both sides are deeply religious, follow strict dietary laws and believe in single-sex education. Amaan recalls that when the local education authority suggested that a largely Muslim girls' school should admit boys, it was Ian Sharer, an Orthodox Jew and leader of the Liberal Democrats on Hackney council, who led the successful fight to have the proposal quashed. Sharer says that when he recently attended a Muslim wedding at a Hackney mosque, "I was amazed at how similar the services are".

But it is not only religious Muslims and Jews, often following an agenda at odds with the wider, more permissive society, who have this sense of sameness. So do secular Jews on the left, who have campaigned with Muslims

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against racism and for the rights of asylum seekers. "I've noticed at meetings that even Jews and Muslims who are assimilated or lapsed tend to gravitate towards each other," says Rabbi Gluck.

Jews, religious and secular, observing the Muslims' struggle to establish themselves in the UK, cannot help but remember their own families' travails a few generations earlier.

"Many Jews want to reach out to Muslims," Melanie Phillips, the Daily Mail journalist, wrote in her regular column in the Jewish Chronicle. "They are like us in so many ways. We see in them our own grandparents and great-grandparents, facing dislocation and prejudice as recent immigrants." Hackney's forum is not the only place where British Jews and Muslims meet. There is the Three Faiths Forum, which brings together Jews, Muslims and Christians, and the Manor House Group, made up of Jewish and Muslim leaders who get together several times a year to discuss theological issues. The Maimonides Foundation, dedicated to forging closer ties between the two faiths, sponsors a range of activities, including visits between Jewish and Muslim schools, Jewish-Muslim university groups and the Daughters of Abraham, which brings together Muslim and Jewish women.

There is Yad Arts, which organises concerts and club nights for Jewish and Muslim performers, and Dream Dialogues, an art project involving 80 Muslim and 80 Jewish participants.

There are individual acts of inter-faith solidarity too. When someone painted anti-Muslim slogans on the walls of Birmingham's central mosque, Rabbi Leonard Tann of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation telephoned the local radio station to express his outrage. And when Rabbi Shmuli Pink of the Leicester Hebrew Congregation was assaulted in the street, local Muslim (and Christian) leaders offered to walk him home from the synagogue. (The offer was declined as unnecessary.) But while these Muslim and Jewish contacts are numerous and growing, neither side can avoid the obvious: relations between the two communities are under enormous strain. For all the mutual recognition of what they have in common, there are issues that bitterly divide British Jews and Muslims. These are not British issues, although they have consequences for the communities' lives in Britain; they arise from events thousands of miles away.

First among them is the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians, but there are others too. Most Muslims strongly opposed the war in Iraq. Jews were more divided: although several were prominent in the anti-war movement, the harsh anti-Israeli -and what some Jews perceived as anti-Semitic tone of much of the opposition to the war made many uncomfortable.

Muslim extremists, such as Abu Hamza, the north London cleric fighting an attempt by the UK government to deprive him of his British citizenship, and the Al-Muhajiroun movement, which commemorated the September 11 attacks with an event called "A Towering Day in History", have added to the atmosphere of suspicion lingering among certain sections of the Jewish community.

The biggest shock to community relations came in April, when Israel announced that two British Muslims had been responsible for a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv that killed three people. Fuad Nahdi, publisher of Q-News, a Muslim magazine, wrote in The Guardian that the bombing did not surprise him. "What I find astonishing is that it took place in Tel Aviv, not Manchester. The descent into extremism of parts of the British Muslim community has been a long process, though 'community' leaders remain in a state of denial over the mess." Some of those involved in Muslim-Jewish dialogue believe it is best to avoid talking about Israel altogether. Others argue that there is no point ignoring it, as it hangs over every discussion. At the Muslim Jewish Forum in Hackney they often talk about the Middle East, as friends who know each other well enough to disagree.

Neither Muslim nor Jewish attitudes to the Israel-Palestinian conflict are monolithic; there is a wide variety of views on both sides. Orthodox Jewish attitudes to Israel cover a wide range too, from the small Nature! Karta movement, which is stridently anti-Zionist and appears at anti-Israel rallies, to those who do not recognise the legitimacy of the state of Israel, through to the fervently nationalistic.

What of Rabbi Gluck, whose synagogue is independent of any wider movement? "I am not a Zionist," he says, "but I certainly care passionately for Jews that live in that part of the world and for their rights." He loathes suicide attacks against Israelis, and his Muslim colleagues have no problem sharing his feelings. "We don't condone the

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killing of innocent people," says Zeena. "The loss of any innocent life is to be condemned." The forum issued an unequivocal statement after the Tel Aviv bombing. "Whilst the British Muslim population has strong feelings regarding the Palestinian-Israeli situation, only a peripheral element advocates such illegal and un-Islamic acts," it said. "The vast majority of the Muslim community in the UK condemns such action, and seeks to remove from its midst rogue elements that spew forth such hatred and violence." When they come together to issue such statements, the Jewish and Muslim leaders of Hackney build on a long tradition. Jews and Muslims have lived together in the area for decades. Jews settled here in large numbers after their arrival, mostly from Eastern Europe, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. When Muslims began arriving in the 1960s, they found Jews more receptive than many of the other established residents. "Jewish houses would have Muslim tenants, whereas others would say 'no blacks'," says Amaan. "Those little things right at the beginning made a very big difference."

Individual Jews became legendary for their helpfulness. Many Muslim arrivals went to David Elias, the Calcutta-born leader of London's Indian Jews, for advice on housing and jobs. Elias died last year, but the new generation of local Muslim leaders, such as Amaan and Zeena, still talk of him.

While many Jews moved away from Hackney to suburbs in north and west London, the strictly religious remained to form the largest concentration of Orthodox Jews in Europe. They share neighbourhoods, such as Stamford Hill, in north London, with a growing Muslim population. Relations are largely civil, but not always so. When Muslim youths started pelting a local synagogue with rotten fruit, Jewish leaders asked the police for help to no avail. The attacks continued. The synagogue turned to the forum instead. Rabbi Gluck contacted Amaan, who went along to speak to the youths. The fruit throwing stopped. That, the two sides say, is one of the most important things they can do: defuse incidents before they get worse.

Away from Hackney, however, daily friction and co-operation are less common. In much of the rest of London, where the majority of Britain's 300,000 or so Jews live, few have the sort of daily contact with Muslims that is common in Hackney. There are plenty of London businesses, law firms and accountancy practices where Muslims and Jews work alongside one another, but generally the two communities live separate and parallel lives.

Outside the inter-faith groups, many Jewish and Muslim leaders and commentators have harsh words for each other. In the same article in which she observed how much Jews and Muslims have in common, Melanie Phillips wrote: "When it comes to Israel, many so-called moderate Muslims cease to be moderate at all. They simply abandon truth, logic and fairness; and the truly terrifying thing is that so many appear impervious to factual, objective, fair-minded argument." Neville Nagler, director general of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, urges people not to lump all Muslims together, as some were inclined to do after the Tel Aviv bombing. "We've always been careful not to tar all Muslims with the terrorist brush. We've always encouraged people to regard the Muslim community as a peace-loving community." He adds, however, that since the mid-1990s, the Board has been warning government officials that terrorists and would-be terrorists were active in the UK. There are some Muslim activists in Britain who have links with Hamas, which is responsible for many of the suicide bombings in Israel, says Nagler. The news of the involvement of British Muslims in the Tel Aviv bombing was not a surprise to him.

On the other hand, Nagler emphasises that the Board is in regular contact with the Muslim Council of Britain, which both sides regard as the most broadly representative Muslim body. "Relations are generally professional," he says. "We have disagreements on some issues but we're perfectly happy to work with them on others."

When the farm Animal Welfare Council recently proposed banning the traditional Muslim and Jewish methods of animal slaughter, where the animal is not stunned before it is killed, the bodies co-operated in their response.

Iqbal Sacranie, the Muslim Council's secretary general, who also describes relations as "reasonably good", reels off several other examples of Muslim-Jewish unity, including sitting together on government committees on inner-city regeneration. The two communities co-operated to support the inclusion of a question on religious affiliation in the 2001 census. He also points out that the Jewish community, which, because it is regarded as a racial group, is protected by Britain's anti-discrimination legislation, has supported demands that religious discrimination be outlawed too, which would give Muslims the same protection.

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But even as these two bodies strive to be civil to one another, the tension occasionally rises to the surface. Inayat Bunglawala, the Muslim Council's media secretary, upset the Board of Deputies with a letter to the Jewish Chronicle in April, in which he called the creation of Israel a "terrible mistake". Nagler says the Muslim Council needs to clarify its view on the subject. "I don't know if that's their concerted official opinion or not. I think it's important to try to establish that," he says.

Did Sacranie approve of Bunglawala's letter? "We will always have individuals who will have a view on such an important " matter," he says, carefully. But whatever people think about how the state of Israel was established or the way in which it has expanded into Palestinian lands, "the fact is it's there," he says.

"We have the two communities in the Middle East at the moment, whether we like it or not. They are there. They are going to exist. The only question for us is how they should co-exist and respect each other's entities. And that will only take place if we have respect for international law." And international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions provide for two states, one for Israelis and one for Palestinians? "Fair enough," he says.

What of the involvement of the two British Muslims in the Tel Aviv bombing? Sacranie says he is not prepared to accept at face value the Israeli government's announcement that the bombers were British. He insists that the circumstances are still unclear, not least how the body of one of the alleged bombers was found floating in the sea. "However, if there is evidence of a clear involvement of the two British Muslims, which we doubt there's a clear doubt at the moment then of course our position is very clear: that we, as British Muslims, are guided by the teachings that this is not acceptable." British Muslim involvement in suicide bombing, whether in the Middle East or Kashmir, is "criminal" and contrary to Islamic teaching, he says.

But Sacranie is not prepared to condemn suicide bombings by Palestinians. The Palestinians are fighting an occupation, he says. "It's been said: what do they have left now? They've been fighting this war of occupation now for quite some time, without any arms, without any tanks or whatever, (with) stones all their lives." When Palestinians become suicide bombers, "who am I to either condemn or condone it?" Sacranie is unyielding on another point of dispute with the Jewish community: the Muslim Council's refusal to participate in Britain's annual Holocaust memorial day, which was first observed on January 27, 2001.

The Council, he says, does not seek to minimise the importance of the Holocaust. "The issue of the Holocaust has been very clear, and if you look at our press releases it's absolutely clear: there's the fullest sympathy and understanding with the Jewish community over the atrocity that happened." But the lesson, he emphasises, is that genocide must not be allowed to happen again, and the organisers of Holocaust Memorial day refuse to recognise that it is happening again to the Palestinians. It is a mosque and view that infuriates the Jewish community, but Sacranie is unrepentant. "People would argue that what is happening in Palestine is not genocide, but does genocide mean that we have to see tens of thousands of people being killed at a stroke to classify it as genocide?"

Palestinians are being killed constantly, he says. "That is genocide as well."

Sacranie has his own complaints about many Jewish commentators who, he says, are far too quick to condemn any criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic. When Muslims express an opinion "against the brutalities committed by the state of Israel, that is somehow construed as though we are anti-Semitic," he says. "It is tragic, because this curtails the right to express a view."

THE ATMOSPHERE IS FAR LESS CHARGED AT A MEETING AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS in early July, where yet another group of Muslims and Jews is gathering. The streets outside the Palace of Westminster are bristling with armed police and a long queue is waiting to be frisked. But that is not because the police are expecting any inter-faith trouble. It is the centenary of the Rhodes Trust, which brings Rhodes scholars to Oxford, and security has been stepped up because Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair are due to attend.

A smaller crowd of Jews and Muslims slips inside and makes its way to the Moses Room.

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Looming over the proceedings is a picture of Moses bringing the tablets of the law down to the Israelites. The symbolism is not lost on those assembled beneath. "Moses is someone that our two communities share," says Lord Simon Haskel, the Jewish co-host for the evening.

There are some familiar faces present: Rabbi Gluck and Amaan are in whispered conversation. The event is presided over by Dr Richard Stone, who was an adviser to the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and is president of the Jewish § Council for Racial Equality and head of a commission into Islamophobia. The aim of the evening is to present a study detailing as many examples of Jewish-Muslim co-operation as the two young researchers, Fiona Hurst and Mohammed Nisar, can find. Their study runs to 31 pages and a second report is planned.

Once again, the speeches are full of references to the common experience of Muslims and Jews. Lord Nazir Ahmed, the other co-host of the occasion, says Muslims should see Jews as allies in their fight against prejudice. "Nobody knows better than the Jewish community, who have themselves been victims of discrimination in the past," he says.

Abduljalil Sajid, a Brighton-based imam, tells the meeting about a trip to Tel Aviv and Taba, in Egypt, in the company of Stone. The imam was due to speak on Islamophobia; Stone on anti-Semitism. Chatting on the flight, they decided to deliver each other's speech.

Speaker after speaker says that it is in the UK that the two communities must get along. "I always say, 'let's keep Israel-Palestine out of the discussion'. We washed up here in this north-west corner of Europe for all sorts of reasons," says Stone.

The only cautionary note comes from Keith Kahn-Harris, a sociologist who helped with the Jewish-Muslim report. No one really knows the extent to which all these groups and projects reflect grass roots links between ordinary Muslims and Jews, he says. "A lot of this dialogue goes on between leaders. Jews and Muslims interact on a daily basis and I think we need to know more about what happens there."

THERE IS A LOT HAPPENING AT Highbury, home of Arsenal Football Club, on a sweltering Sunday afternoon in mid-July. Muslim and Jewish children aged between nine and 12 mostly boys, but girls too are rushing around two indoor football pitches. As they stream off for a half-time break, Mehri Niknam, the Iranian-born Jewish organiser, frantically

The football programme, now in its third year, recruits children by contacting Jewish and Muslim schools, synagogues, mosques and community centres. The foundation is named after Moses Maimonides, medieval Judaism's foremost philosopher, who was born in Muslim Spain in 1135, spent much of his life in Egypt and wrote in Arabic and Hebrew. Niknam, the foundation's executive director, says the aim of the Arsenal scheme is to take children too young to have preconceived ideas, mix them up in teams and let them get on with it. If their parents meet and chat, all the better.

There is not much chatting in the parents' viewing gallery on this final Sunday of the event. As at any swimming pool, park or playground, the parents are keeping one eye on their kids and hanging around until it is time to go home. Nabeel Gul, a Muslim investment banker, whose son has gone off on a group tour of the famous old stadium, says of the event: "It's great. Catch them while they're young. They're just children playing together. It's the normality of it. I was born in London and in my school we had all types. We had Jewish kids as well. I hate to say it, but some of my best friend. " Have the Muslim and Jewish parents struck up any friendships? "Not really," he says. "Maybe you're expecting too much. It's only three Sundays."

Craig Pollack, a Jewish solicitor, is reading his newspaper while his son dashes after the ball. "With my hand on my heart, I can't say the inter-faith thing brought him here. He sees them all as kids, to be honest. But I think these are troubling times for the Jewish and Muslim communities and it's encouraging to see that they can get things together and that this goes off without a hitch." Some of the children understand the point of the exercise entirely. Michael Franklin, an engaging and ferociously articulate 11-year-old, emerges pink-faced from his exertions on the pitch. "It's great. We get to play football at Arsenal, we get to go on the tour and I think that it promotes inter-faith. The first

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way to get peace is to get people to meet each other." Michael dashes off with a shriek to demand a hug from the passing "Gunnersaurus", a clearly revered Arsenal mascot in a green dinosaur costume and Arsenal cap and shirt. "I'm a passionate Arsenal fan," Michael explains by way of apology when he returns. What has he learnt from these three Sunday kickabouts? "That's a tough one. I don't think I would have been prejudiced to start with, but, sadly, my social circles don't extend much beyond Judaism. I go to a Jewish school." Have the organisers succeeded in bringing people together? "I think it's emphasised the message they're trying to get through." All the children are wearing Maimonides Foundation T-shirts with the slogan "Harmony through Dialogue". What does it mean to them? "That you should respect others. We are all on the same planet," says Sohail Shah, who is coming to the end of his time at a north London primary school. Did he make Jewish friends on the course? "Lots." Does he think he will see them again? Probably not. The Jewish kids do not live near him. "It's a pity," he says. "I'd like to learn a lot of their skills." Interesting. What sort of skills? Sohail throws out a don't-be-stupid look. "Football skills." Arsenal officials have brought along the FA Cup, which the club retained this year, and put it on a low table for the children to ogle. The course over, they march up one by one to receive a certificate from Kami Shaaban, Arsenal's towering Egyptian goalkeeper, who managed a few games for the club before breaking his leg.

The formalities over, the young footballers are told to sit down in rows. Like all kids at the end of a long and sweaty day, they chat, laugh and punch each other. But when Niknam says, "Hands up those who know what inter-faith is," a fair number of hands shoot up. "Yes?" she asks one boy. "It means different people come together," he says.

In a final speech, Niknam says, "We hope that you will go back to row schools, friends and families and tell them it doesn't matter which religion you belong to. We are all living in this country. We are all British. We are all friends. Does that make sense?" "Yes," they say, a little uncertainly. Niknam raises her voice. "Does that make sense?" "Yes!" they roar.

M Michael Skapinker is the FT's management editor.

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India's 'lab' for divisive politics Half-century of pluralism under attack

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Body

Gujarat state is the testing ground for fundamentalists'Hindutva' strategy of demonizing Muslims to solidify powerClad in a traditional sari, Abeda Begum could be any Hindu woman hunched over her work, rolling incense sticks for 30 cents a day.

But to her Hindu neighbours across the street, she is a marked woman: a Muslim, living in a marked home, on the wrong side of the divide.

The address stencilled on her doorframe - IRC 212 - announces a shelter donated by the local Islamic Relief Committee. It also signifies something more stark.

This was ground zero for the Hindu fundamentalist pogrom that left nearly 2,000 Muslim dead in the coastal state of Gujarat last year. In an explosion of mob violence that stunned the world, Begum lost her home - and some loved ones.

Now, many Indians fear the country's secular foundations are also being shaken.

In the aftermath of the riots, Gujarat's Hindu fundamentalist government handily won re-election on a platform of "Hindutva" - an ideology that stresses the Hindu-ness of India and the pre-eminence of its religious majority. Nationalist politicians whipped up communal passions on the campaign trail by demonizing the Muslim minority and effectively sanctifying the pogrom.

Today, not a single perpetrator has been successfully prosecuted by the state government.

That miscarriage of justice prompted a stinging rebuke of Gujarat by the federal supreme court, which last month ordered a retrial because of alleged witness-tampering.

Yet from her perch along the muddy, garbage-strewn alley where chickens and cows jostle for space with pedestrians, Begum saw it all: the slaughter that spared the animals but claimed so many humans.

Her Muslim neighbours fled for their lives. Their Hindu attackers charged down the path in hot pursuit. And the state police watched from the sidelines.

There is a dead end where the mob of thousands doused her Muslim neighbours with kerosene and burned 92 of them to death. Among them were the mother and sister of Begum's husband.

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She looks after one of the orphaned survivors, 12-year-old Samina Begum, daughter of her slain sister-in-law. They work together rolling the incense sticks with their blackened hands, their only source of rupees since Begum's husband was let go by Hindu employers in an economic boycott.

"I'm doing all this work because the Hindus won't keep Muslim workers any more and our houses were destroyed, so we have to start from scratch," Begum says plaintively, adjusting the folds of her purple sari.

"I've left everything to the Almighty."

The flowing saris worn by women like Begum often leave their midriffs partly exposed, which might seem immodest in an Islamic country. But here it is the local Hindu fashion, adopted by Muslims as their own in a state where people of both religions wear the same clothes, speak the same Gujarati dialect and watch the same movies.

Yet they remain worlds apart.

A busy boulevard at the end of the muddy path is the green line that jaywalkers never traverse.

Downtown, the Sabarmati River that is holy to Hindus is rarely crossed by Muslims.

And in the old city, an historic red-brick wall has been sealed off and reinforced by barbed wire to block human passage.

Fundamentalists proudly call Gujarat a testing ground for their hard-line ideology of Hindutva. And Ahmedabad is on the front lines of a battle that could remake the country's religious landscape, as politicians apply the lessons of Gujarat to next year's national elections.

"Now, politics in India will be based on Hindutva," boasted Praveen Togadia, international secretary-general of the fundamentalist Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) or World Hindu Council.

Basking in the triumph of Gujarat's fundamentalists, he described the state as a "Hindutva lab" for India, which he vowed will one day be a Hindu Rashtra, or Hindu nation. When that happens, "all Hindutva opponents will get the death sentence."

The orgy of rioting that erupted in Gujarat last year was the culmination of decades of communal hatred in the Hindu heartland of northwestern India, a place that is perhaps burdened by too much history and too little tolerance.

News spread quickly in February, 2002, when a Muslim mob burned a train carrying Hindu activists returning from a trip to the temple town of Ayodhya, 1,000 kilometres away in Uttar Pradesh state.

The VHP had been campaigning to build a new Hindu temple on the ruins of the 16th-century Babri mosque - which its members had razed a decade earlier, claiming it stood on the birthplace of their god-king Lord Ram.

(This month, VHP supporters resumed their protests in Ayodhya, prompting police to deploy tear gas and riot sticks in arresting more than 17,000 people. Uttar Pradesh authorities were determined to prevent a repetition of the 1992 mosque demolition that sparked nationwide riots.)

Against that backdrop, Begum feared trouble last year when she got wind of the violence at Godhra railway station, 100 kilometres to the east. Hearing that 58 VHP activists had been burned to death, she braced for another cycle of retaliation.

What she hadn't counted on was the calculated retribution of the Gujarat government. While Hindu mobs attacked innocent civilians, state authorities egged them on or watched in silence.

In a report on the violence, *We Have No Orders To Save You*, the New York-based monitoring group Human Rights Watch concluded that senior state officials were complicit in the carnage, allowing the ringleaders to go free and covering their tracks.

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In the eyes of Idrish Pathan, that verdict still stands today. He remembers every detail of the attacks, right down to the moment someone severed his forearm.

"The mob was blind," Pathan says softly. "Someone chopped my hand with a dagger."

He motions awkwardly to his stump, then discreetly hides his arm behind his T-shirt.

A motorized rickshaw driver, he was forced into retirement at age 22 because he could not steer his vehicle with just one hand.

Now, he volunteers for Action Aid, a local group trying to foster communal harmony in the neighbourhood.

But his own attempts at securing justice have proved futile.

"The police did nothing," he says dejectedly. "They were all with the Hindu mob."

When Pathan approached police to identify his assailant, he says, they shooed him away with a warning: "This is retaliation for Godhra."

Shomit Mazumdar lives on the other side of the divide.

Like Pathan, he nurses grievances about the injustices of communalism - though he rues the loss of land, not a limb. Mazumdar, 29, is still seething that he had to sell his family home in Ahmedabad's old city at a loss because of communal tensions.

"If I'd had that property, things would have been different," he says bitterly. "I would have had more for my lifestyle."

He rages not only about the spectre of Islamic violence but also the menace of Muslim men seducing Hindu women.

"Muslim boys, even married ones, try to have friendships with Hindu girls. I tell you, most Muslim guys are very good looking, and Hindu girls are very innocent - once they give you their heart, it's easily broken.

"I personally feel they're spoiling the lives of these Hindu girls. Our blood gets hot. We can't stand them."

It's a common refrain among fundamentalists. A VHP pamphlet urges Hindus to "ensure that our sisters/daughters do not fall into the love-trap of Muslim boys" and calls for an economic boycott of Muslims.

Mazumdar's hopes for redress lie in the VHP's vision of Hindutva that would transform secular India into a unified Hindu state.

Renouncing the past half-century of pluralism, he wants Gujarat and all of India to embrace the religion of the majority Hindus, who make up 80 per cent of India's 1 billion people.

"With Hindutva, we're trying to maintain and protect ourselves," says Mazumdar, dressed in a crisp shirt, pressed pants and polished loafers as he sits in an air-conditioned office near the river.

"This is what we call Hindutva. It's a way to protect us against our only enemy, the Muslims."

He has no blood on his hands, has never wielded a sword against people like Pathan.

During the riots, he was safely behind police lines on the Hindu side of the bridge spanning the sacred Sabarmat River, where he now lives and works. But Mazumdar has no regrets about the bloodshed and hatred for which Hindutva is often faulted.

"It's time that the Hindus fight violence with violence," he says approvingly. "We're being taught how to protect ourselves.

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"It was very necessary to respond to Godhra. Now is not the time to follow Gandhi's way."

Gujarat is Gandhi's home state, the place whence he preached pluralism and non-violence. His serene ashram, or religious retreat, sits on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, though it attracts few visitors today.

In deference to Gandhi's principles, alcohol is still banned in Gujarat. But the blood still flows and the hatred spills over. The Mahatma's teachings are largely ignored.

Today, the Congress party that was Gandhi's power base is in opposition both locally and nationally. In its place, Gujarat is governed by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Chief Minister Narendra Modi, whose wide-eyed denunciations of Muslims made him notorious - and also won him another term in power.

Modi not only failed to protect Muslims from mobs but famously offered them only half the financial compensation promised to Hindu victims.

Among Modi's most promising lieutenants is Mayaben Kodnani, a gynecologist and political firebrand who sits in the provincial assembly. She can rouse Hindu crowds on the streets but is poised and soft-spoken in her tastefully furnished home.

Flanked by sculptures of Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of learning, Kodnani explains that Hindu tolerance has reached its limit.

"You see, the Hindus are never aggressive - they are peace-loving," she begins, fingering her gold necklace absent-mindedly.

"But from birth, when a Muslim child is still innocent, his brain is washed so that he believes he will go to heaven if he converts kaffirs (infidels) or else kills them."

Hence, the Hindu backlash.

"They were provoked by the Muslim people," Kodnani says. "I think the mentality of Hindus is becoming aggressive. How much longer can we tolerate this?"

Muslims are also disloyal to Mother India, she argues.

"During cricket matches, the Muslims here cheer for Pakistan."

In the face of such provocations, Kodnani says, Hindutva is the solution. If Muslim babies are inculcated from birth with talk of jihad, Hindus must rally to their own patriotic propaganda so their religion can claim its rightful place, she believes.

"Everyone who is living in Hindustan (India) must be a Hindu. Hindutva is a way to make them patriotic."

Local politicians like Kodnani, and the top leadership of the ruling BJP in New Delhi, draw their inspiration from their fellow travellers in the Sangh Pariwar - the "family" of hard-line Hindu movements.

The heart and soul of the family is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), or National Volunteer Corps. Boasting more than 36,000 social programs, it is arguably the most successful non-governmental organization in Indian civil society today.

Its vast network of charitable organizations makes it a formidable presence at the grassroots, whether offering aid after natural disasters or building medical clinics and schools. In the same way that Islamic fundamentalist groups like ***Hamas*** and the Muslim Brotherhood make inroads in the Middle East, the RSS reaps substantial political dividends from its charitable work.

"Hindutva is political Hinduism in the same way as Islamic fundamentalism is political Islam," says Ravi Nair, executive director of the South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre.

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The basic building block of the Hindutva corps is the shakha, a local "unit" that moulds boys into the loyal foot soldiers of a paramilitary movement. At dawn and dusk every day across India, thousands of boys gather under the saffron flag of the RSS and pledge allegiance to Hindutva.

Dressed in khaki shirts and shorts accented with saffron scarves, two dozen boys assemble outside a park in downtown Mumbai at sunset for their daily training. Each recruit salutes the flag sharply with a hand that chops the air and smacks the chest.

The boys dutifully sweep the grounds, then snap to attention at the sound of a whistle. For an hour, they drill and chant, sing and play games. It is not merely male bonding but a Hindutva indoctrination session.

"Hindutva gives me happiness," exclaims Nikhil Sabnis, 16, a volunteer who leads the drills. "These boys are from poor families. They lack the money to buy cricket bats and balls. Here, they learn about Indian history and culture."

And Hindu pride.

"You see the discipline?" exults Sanjay Patel, 39, a VHP district vice-president. "The continuity is important, like a mantra. Every day, all over India, millions of people participate at the same time."

But the shakha is about more than fun and games. There are summer training camps across the country where children learn martial skills, recalling the RSS's fascist roots as a nationalist movement founded in the mid-1920s and modelled on the Nazi party.

The long-standing RSS slogan, "One nation, one people, one culture," is reminiscent of the Nazi chant, "One people, one Reich, one Fuehrer." Another popular slogan, "Awakening of Hindus is awakening of the nation," is the antithesis of Gandhian pluralism.

Muslims are not the only villains in their sights. The group's incendiary campaign against Christian missionaries culminated in the 1999 murder of missionary Graham Staines and his two sons when a Hindu mob burned their car. Last month, an Indian court convicted 13 people for the murders.

But Hindutva's flirtation with fascism and fundamentalism is leavened by its dedication to good deeds.

On a tour of Mumbai's slum areas, Patel wears a traditional white kurta pyjama outfit as he points out computer labs and dressmaking lessons provided by the VHP. There is a mobile clinic to dispense medicines for the poor and new classrooms that foster future loyalty among underprivileged students.

A jovial man with a flowing beard, Patel is a professional engineer who is keen to show off the VHP's charity work. He resents the unflattering media coverage that focuses on his group's destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya.

"Now," he frowns, "we are known only for one thing - Ayodhya."

A few moments later, however, he forgets himself and returns to his obsession with Ayodhya, posing beside a VHP van decorated with a colourful mural of the proposed new Ram temple painted beside a picture of the Hindu god-king.

A Hindi slogan alongside the image of Ram proclaims: "Take the name of the Lord to every house and the temple will be built in Ayodhya."

Patel explains proudly that this is a "cow-saving chariot," one of 500 specially outfitted vans that tour the countryside to discourage the slaughter of an animal considered sacred by Hindus.

This popular campaign is a perfect vehicle for the VHP's broader agenda, deftly blending religious reverence for cows with political ambitions for bricks and mortar.

By tending the grassroots, the VHP is building a groundswell of support and leaving its rivals in the dust, says Nair, the human-rights advocate.

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"You're talking about moulding the formative minds of children," he says. "A militaristic view is inculcated in children and they very easily become foot soldiers, stormtroopers. It starts as morning drills, but later it becomes thuggery."

Nair credits the Hindutva activists for rolling up their sleeves to win the hearts and minds of India's devout rural masses.

The VHP's hard work stands in sharp contrast to the lethargy of secularists and leftists who lack the commitment of Gandhi's generation a half-century ago, he says.

"The Hindu fundamentalists are the only ones who go village to village and hold meetings."

For RSS national spokesman Ram Madhav, shakhas and the Ayodhya temple campaign hold the potential to touch and transform every Hindu.

"We appeal to his heart and soul, not just the political animal in him," he explains at RSS headquarters in New Delhi.

"These are the kinds of things that make a mark on you if, at age 6, you start singing patriotic songs," he says enthusiastically. "And yet we are portrayed as the killers of Gandhi!"

In fact, it was a Hindu fundamentalist and former RSS member, Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Gandhi in his New Delhi residence in 1948, five months after India won independence.

Godse faulted the Mahatma for being too soft on the Muslims - and betraying his Hindu heritage - when agreeing to partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan.

It is still possible to retrace Gandhi's final steps in the manicured garden where he was shot and died almost instantly. Many of those who make the pilgrimage to his stately colonial bungalow mourn not only the Mahatma's passing but also the fading of his influence.

"Let all of us, Hindus, Mussulmans (Muslims), Parsis, Sikhs, Christians live amicably as Indians, pledged to live and die for our motherland," reads a quotation from Gandhi affixed to a pillar in the central hall. His inspirational message is muted, however, by a sign at the rear exit directing visitors to "the path along which Gandhi walked to the prayer ground on his last day."

A line of cement footsteps in the shape of his sandals eerily marks the way.

On this day, a group of office workers - Christian and Hindu - has come together to pay homage to Gandhi.

They have few illusions that his legacy has much resonance in modern India. Their own friendships defy religious boundaries, yet they are not sanguine about their fellow Indians.

"Today's generation doesn't know what Gandhi stood for, they're not taught about Gandhi," says Krishna Joshi, 41, who works as a researcher.

A Hindu, she blames the communal violence in Gandhi's home state on political gamesmanship that has distorted her normally tolerant religion.

"Gandhi believed in protecting the minority," adds her Christian co-worker, Premi Britto. Today, she adds, "he would be disappointed, deeply pained and sorrowed."

At the Gandhi Museum near his burial place, a Muslim scholar toils in the desolate library, a lone figure beneath the ceiling fans. Asad Mohammed Khan, 29, worries that Hindutva threatens to replace the Mahatma's message of secularism.

"Ghandi said that unity is strength," Khan explains. "But now some people want to destroy that India."

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"They want a battle between Hindus and Muslims and so you see it all over the media: Hindutva, Hindutva."

Poring over leather-bound volumes of the Mahatma's collected works in the "Gandhiana" section, the scholar has no doubt what his verdict would be.

"Gandhi was a great man," Khan says. "He would oppose Hindutva."

But Gandhi is long gone, and the Congress party he fostered as a vehicle of secularism is in retreat.

Today, the BJP and its ideological cousins are in the ascendant, recasting the education system, rewriting textbooks to glorify Hindu history, promoting Hindutva to reverse decades of supposed Gandhian appeasement of religious minorities.

In his private mansion in the exclusive Golf Links enclave of the national capital, VHP president Vishnu Hari Dalmiya, a wealthy industrialist, entertains top government ministers and plots strategy for a Hindu revival.

The secularism of India's founding fathers "is not working, it's not working," says Dalmiya, 75, sitting in his study surrounded by statues of Hindu gods.

"The minority classes are getting much more privileges than the Hindus - the Hindus are neglected."

More than half a century after partition, "the Muslims still have the upper hand," Dalmiya asserts, adding that they should have been expelled back then.

Distracted by a hangnail on his ring finger, he summons a servant with a pair of cuticle scissors, then returns to his theme: Foreign influences - by which he means Islamic, Christian and Western - are diluting India's Hindu heritage.

"Among the young, there is no doubt of a cultural invasion coming from the Western world," Dalmiya frets. "The young generation, you find most of them in jeans, and young people don't pay much attention to religious rituals - they celebrate Christmas, they celebrate Valentine's Day, they celebrate birthdays with cake and candles."

Only Hindutva can protect the majority from the 120 million Muslims who amount to a "fifth column" and from the external threats separating women from their saris.

"They must practise their own culture, practise their own dress. I find the sari so graceful a dress. Women look so beautiful, I don't know why they go after jeans."

The VHP's doomsday scenarios are familiar to Syed Shahabuddin, a former diplomat who now heads the All India Muslim Consultative Committee.

His cramped offices are across town from Dalmiya's Golf Links enclave, in the heart of an Islamic slum where the sewers are overflowing and the garbage is piled high.

Shahabuddin believes the government he once served has been hijacked by Hindu fundamentalists. He says Hindutva has become a slave of history, obsessed with past grievances, from the Muslim conquest of 500 years ago to the partition of the subcontinent just over 50 years ago.

In the Hindutva view, "Muslims were responsible for partition, so Muslims are really Pakistani fifth columnists," Shahabuddin explains.

"They're trying to instil an ideology of hatred and fear in the Hindu mind. Hindutva is reaching fascist proportions."

As appalled as he was by the massacre in Gujarat, Shahabuddin fears Hindutva's hidden agenda is more insidious.

With Muslims making up an estimated 12 per cent of India's 1 billion people, they are too numerous to expel or exterminate; instead, the strategy is to hem them in with Hindutva.

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"They're wise enough to realize that Muslims can't be liquidated or pushed out of India, so they're making life difficult for them," Shahabuddin says. "But Hindutva, if it tries to obliterate the religious identity of Muslims, the Muslims will not stand for it."

Among the targets of the Hindu mobs that ran riot in Ahmedabad last year was a dilapidated mosque in the centre of the old city.

The Hajrat Pir Noorsha Dargah mosque is next door to the police commissioner's office, though the security forces did nothing when it was overrun.

The structure sustained heavy damage and the holy books were blackened by fire. But the mufti, 40-year-old Akbar Miyan Bapu, is back in his mosque, sheltering under its corrugated roof.

Bapu takes solace from the fact he survived the attack along with two attendants - who happen to be Hindus.

Indeed, Hindu devotees still come to the shrine, seeking cures and other miracles from the Sufi saints who are revered in this mystical strain of Islam.

Looking back on the fighting and suffering, the mufti ponders his fate. He seems a picture of serenity, his hands stained with saffron and his eyelids painted with kohl.

"Whatever has happened has happened," Bapu muses, rubbing his eyes after a midday nap.

"Though this is a religious site for Muslims, 90 per cent of the worshippers are Hindus. They walk around the mosque four times."

The mosque's enduring attraction for people of all faiths is no great mystery. Bapu's Hindu attendant sits cross-legged on the dirt-encrusted mat, awaiting his explanation.

"Whosoever comes here, whether Hindu or Muslim, seeks favours by praying before God," the mufti says. "God is great." "It's time that the Hindus fight violence with violence. We're being taught how to protect ourselves"

'Among the young, there is no doubt of a cultural invasion coming from Western world'

Graphic

ROY MADHUR/Reuters Hindu activists demonstrate in Ayodhya last weekend in a Vishwa Hindu Parishad rally that drew thousands to the temple town where the VHP continues to campaign for the construction of a temple on the ruins of the 16th-century mosque its members razed in 1992. RAJESH KUMAR SINGH/AP Hindu fundamentalists rally in Allahabad on Oct. 12 as authorities banned public gatherings in several northern districts to prevent activists from meeting in Ayodhya, the temple town at the centre of years of Hindu-Muslim violence. Determined to prevent a repetition of the 1992 razing of Ayodhya's Babri mosque, which sparked a round of bloody nationwide riots, police deployed tear gas and riot sticks in arresting more than 17,000 people. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star VHP district vice-president Sanjay Patel poses with a "cow-saving chariot," one of 500 special vans deployed to rally the faithful against the slaughter of an animal deemed sacred by Hindus. Painted on its side is a portrait of Lord Ram and a mural of the temple the VHP wants to build in his honour in Ayodhya. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star Abeda Begum and Samina Begum, 12, daughter of Begum's slain sister-in-law, roll incense sticks as a neighbour boy looks on. "I'm doing all this work because the Hindus won't keep Muslim workers any more and our houses were destroyed, so we have to start from scratch," says Begum, who watched a Hindu mob kill 92 of her Muslim neighbours, including Samina's mother, in last year's Ahmedabad rioting. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star Mufti Akbar Miyan Bapu, 40, sits serenely in his Hajrat Pir Noorsha Dargah mosque, which was damaged by mobs in last year's Ahmedabad riots. "Whatever has happened has happened," Bapu says. RAJESH KUMAR SINGH/AP Hindu

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Byline: Martin Regg Cohn Asia Bureau

Body

Gujarat state is the testing ground for fundamentalists'Hindutva' strategy of demonizing Muslims to solidify powerClad in a traditional sari, Abeda Begum could be any Hindu woman hunched over her work, rolling incense sticks for 30 cents a day.

But to her Hindu neighbours across the street, she is a marked woman: a Muslim, living in a marked home, on the wrong side of the divide.

The address stencilled on her doorframe - IRC 212 - announces a shelter donated by the local Islamic Relief Committee. It also signifies something more stark.

This was ground zero for the Hindu fundamentalist pogrom that left nearly 2,000 Muslim dead in the coastal state of Gujarat last year. In an explosion of mob violence that stunned the world, Begum lost her home - and some loved ones.

Now, many Indians fear the country's secular foundations are also being shaken.

In the aftermath of the riots, Gujarat's Hindu fundamentalist government handily won re-election on a platform of "Hindutva" - an ideology that stresses the Hindu-ness of India and the pre-eminence of its religious majority. Nationalist politicians whipped up communal passions on the campaign trail by demonizing the Muslim minority and effectively sanctifying the pogrom.

Today, not a single perpetrator has been successfully prosecuted by the state government.

That miscarriage of justice prompted a stinging rebuke of Gujarat by the federal supreme court, which last month ordered a retrial because of alleged witness-tampering.

Yet from her perch along the muddy, garbage-strewn alley where chickens and cows jostle for space with pedestrians, Begum saw it all: the slaughter that spared the animals but claimed so many humans.

Her Muslim neighbours fled for their lives. Their Hindu attackers charged down the path in hot pursuit. And the state police watched from the sidelines.

There is a dead end where the mob of thousands doused her Muslim neighbours with kerosene and burned 92 of them to death. Among them were the mother and sister of Begum's husband.

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She looks after one of the orphaned survivors, 12-year-old Samina Begum, daughter of her slain sister-in-law. They work together rolling the incense sticks with their blackened hands, their only source of rupees since Begum's husband was let go by Hindu employers in an economic boycott.

"I'm doing all this work because the Hindus won't keep Muslim workers any more and our houses were destroyed, so we have to start from scratch," Begum says plaintively, adjusting the folds of her purple sari.

"I've left everything to the Almighty."

The flowing saris worn by women like Begum often leave their midriffs partly exposed, which might seem immodest in an Islamic country. But here it is the local Hindu fashion, adopted by Muslims as their own in a state where people of both religions wear the same clothes, speak the same Gujarati dialect and watch the same movies.

Yet they remain worlds apart.

A busy boulevard at the end of the muddy path is the green line that jaywalkers never traverse.

Downtown, the Sabarmati River that is holy to Hindus is rarely crossed by Muslims.

And in the old city, an historic red-brick wall has been sealed off and reinforced by barbed wire to block human passage.

Fundamentalists proudly call Gujarat a testing ground for their hard-line ideology of Hindutva. And Ahmedabad is on the front lines of a battle that could remake the country's religious landscape, as politicians apply the lessons of Gujarat to next year's national elections.

"Now, politics in India will be based on Hindutva," boasted Praveen Togadia, international secretary-general of the fundamentalist Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) or World Hindu Council.

Basking in the triumph of Gujarat's fundamentalists, he described the state as a "Hindutva lab" for India, which he vowed will one day be a Hindu Rashtra, or Hindu nation. When that happens, "all Hindutva opponents will get the death sentence."

The orgy of rioting that erupted in Gujarat last year was the culmination of decades of communal hatred in the Hindu heartland of northwestern India, a place that is perhaps burdened by too much history and too little tolerance.

News spread quickly in February, 2002, when a Muslim mob burned a train carrying Hindu activists returning from a trip to the temple town of Ayodhya, 1,000 kilometres away in Uttar Pradesh state.

The VHP had been campaigning to build a new Hindu temple on the ruins of the 16th-century Babri mosque - which its members had razed a decade earlier, claiming it stood on the birthplace of their god-king Lord Ram.

(This month, VHP supporters resumed their protests in Ayodhya, prompting police to deploy tear gas and riot sticks in arresting more than 17,000 people. Uttar Pradesh authorities were determined to prevent a repetition of the 1992 mosque demolition that sparked nationwide riots.)

Against that backdrop, Begum feared trouble last year when she got wind of the violence at Godhra railway station, 100 kilometres to the east. Hearing that 58 VHP activists had been burned to death, she braced for another cycle of retaliation.

What she hadn't counted on was the calculated retribution of the Gujarat government. While Hindu mobs attacked innocent civilians, state authorities egged them on or watched in silence.

In a report on the violence, *We Have No Orders To Save You*, the New York-based monitoring group Human Rights Watch concluded that senior state officials were complicit in the carnage, allowing the ringleaders to go free and covering their tracks.

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In the eyes of Idrish Pathan, that verdict still stands today. He remembers every detail of the attacks, right down to the moment someone severed his forearm.

"The mob was blind," Pathan says softly. "Someone chopped my hand with a dagger."

He motions awkwardly to his stump, then discreetly hides his arm behind his T-shirt.

A motorized rickshaw driver, he was forced into retirement at age 22 because he could not steer his vehicle with just one hand.

Now, he volunteers for Action Aid, a local group trying to foster communal harmony in the neighbourhood.

But his own attempts at securing justice have proved futile.

"The police did nothing," he says dejectedly. "They were all with the Hindu mob."

When Pathan approached police to identify his assailant, he says, they shooed him away with a warning: "This is retaliation for Godhra."

Shomit Mazumdar lives on the other side of the divide.

Like Pathan, he nurses grievances about the injustices of communalism - though he rues the loss of land, not a limb. Mazumdar, 29, is still seething that he had to sell his family home in Ahmedabad's old city at a loss because of communal tensions.

"If I'd had that property, things would have been different," he says bitterly. "I would have had more for my lifestyle."

He rages not only about the spectre of Islamic violence but also the menace of Muslim men seducing Hindu women.

"Muslim boys, even married ones, try to have friendships with Hindu girls. I tell you, most Muslim guys are very good looking, and Hindu girls are very innocent - once they give you their heart, it's easily broken.

"I personally feel they're spoiling the lives of these Hindu girls. Our blood gets hot. We can't stand them."

It's a common refrain among fundamentalists. A VHP pamphlet urges Hindus to "ensure that our sisters/daughters do not fall into the love-trap of Muslim boys" and calls for an economic boycott of Muslims.

Mazumdar's hopes for redress lie in the VHP's vision of Hindutva that would transform secular India into a unified Hindu state.

Renouncing the past half-century of pluralism, he wants Gujarat and all of India to embrace the religion of the majority Hindus, who make up 80 per cent of India's 1 billion people.

"With Hindutva, we're trying to maintain and protect ourselves," says Mazumdar, dressed in a crisp shirt, pressed pants and polished loafers as he sits in an air-conditioned office near the river.

"This is what we call Hindutva. It's a way to protect us against our only enemy, the Muslims."

He has no blood on his hands, has never wielded a sword against people like Pathan.

During the riots, he was safely behind police lines on the Hindu side of the bridge spanning the sacred Sabarmati River, where he now lives and works. But Mazumdar has no regrets about the bloodshed and hatred for which Hindutva is often faulted.

"It's time that the Hindus fight violence with violence," he says approvingly. "We're being taught how to protect ourselves."

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"It was very necessary to respond to Godhra. Now is not the time to follow Gandhi's way."

Gujarat is Gandhi's home state, the place whence he preached pluralism and non-violence. His serene ashram, or religious retreat, sits on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, though it attracts few visitors today.

In deference to Gandhi's principles, alcohol is still banned in Gujarat. But the blood still flows and the hatred spills over. The Mahatma's teachings are largely ignored.

Today, the Congress party that was Gandhi's power base is in opposition both locally and nationally. In its place, Gujarat is governed by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Chief Minister Narendra Modi, whose wide-eyed denunciations of Muslims made him notorious - and also won him another term in power.

Modi not only failed to protect Muslims from mobs but famously offered them only half the financial compensation promised to Hindu victims.

Among Modi's most promising lieutenants is Mayaben Kodnani, a gynecologist and political firebrand who sits in the provincial assembly. She can rouse Hindu crowds on the streets but is poised and soft-spoken in her tastefully furnished home.

Flanked by sculptures of Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of learning, Kodnani explains that Hindu tolerance has reached its limit.

"You see, the Hindus are never aggressive - they are peace-loving," she begins, fingering her gold necklace absent-mindedly.

"But from birth, when a Muslim child is still innocent, his brain is washed so that he believes he will go to heaven if he converts kaffirs (infidels) or else kills them."

Hence, the Hindu backlash.

"They were provoked by the Muslim people," Kodnani says. "I think the mentality of Hindus is becoming aggressive. How much longer can we tolerate this?"

Muslims are also disloyal to Mother India, she argues.

"During cricket matches, the Muslims here cheer for Pakistan."

In the face of such provocations, Kodnani says, Hindutva is the solution. If Muslim babies are inculcated from birth with talk of jihad, Hindus must rally to their own patriotic propaganda so their religion can claim its rightful place, she believes.

"Everyone who is living in Hindustan (India) must be a Hindu. Hindutva is a way to make them patriotic."

Local politicians like Kodnani, and the top leadership of the ruling BJP in New Delhi, draw their inspiration from their fellow travellers in the Sangh Pariwar - the "family" of hard-line Hindu movements.

The heart and soul of the family is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), or National Volunteer Corps. Boasting more than 36,000 social programs, it is arguably the most successful non-governmental organization in Indian civil society today.

Its vast network of charitable organizations makes it a formidable presence at the grassroots, whether offering aid after natural disasters or building medical clinics and schools. In the same way that Islamic fundamentalist groups like ***Hamas*** and the Muslim Brotherhood make inroads in the Middle East, the RSS reaps substantial political dividends from its charitable work.

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The basic building block of the Hindutva corps is the shakha, a local "unit" that moulds boys into the loyal foot soldiers of a paramilitary movement. At dawn and dusk every day across India, thousands of boys gather under the saffron flag of the RSS and pledge allegiance to Hindutva.

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The boys dutifully sweep the grounds, then snap to attention at the sound of a whistle. For an hour, they drill and chant, sing and play games. It is not merely male bonding but a Hindutva indoctrination session.

"Hindutva gives me happiness," exclaims Nikhil Sabnis, 16, a volunteer who leads the drills. "These boys are from poor families. They lack the money to buy cricket bats and balls. Here, they learn about Indian history and culture."

And Hindu pride.

"You see the discipline?" exults Sanjay Patel, 39, a VHP district vice-president. "The continuity is important, like a mantra. Every day, all over India, millions of people participate at the same time."

But the shakha is about more than fun and games. There are summer training camps across the country where children learn martial skills, recalling the RSS's fascist roots as a nationalist movement founded in the mid-1920s and modelled on the Nazi party.

The long-standing RSS slogan, "One nation, one people, one culture," is reminiscent of the Nazi chant, "One people, one Reich, one Fuehrer." Another popular slogan, "Awakening of Hindus is awakening of the nation," is the antithesis of Gandhian pluralism.

Muslims are not the only villains in their sights. The group's incendiary campaign against Christian missionaries culminated in the 1999 murder of missionary Graham Staines and his two sons when a Hindu mob burned their car. Last month, an Indian court convicted 13 people for the murders.

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A jovial man with a flowing beard, Patel is a professional engineer who is keen to show off the VHP's charity work. He resents the unflattering media coverage that focuses on his group's destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya.

"Now," he frowns, "we are known only for one thing - Ayodhya."

A few moments later, however, he forgets himself and returns to his obsession with Ayodhya, posing beside a VHP van decorated with a colourful mural of the proposed new Ram temple painted beside a picture of the Hindu god-king.

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"These are the kinds of things that make a mark on you if, at age 6, you start singing patriotic songs," he says enthusiastically. "And yet we are portrayed as the killers of Gandhi!"

In fact, it was a Hindu fundamentalist and former RSS member, Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Gandhi in his New Delhi residence in 1948, five months after India won independence.

Godse faulted the Mahatma for being too soft on the Muslims - and betraying his Hindu heritage - when agreeing to partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan.

It is still possible to retrace Gandhi's final steps in the manicured garden where he was shot and died almost instantly. Many of those who make the pilgrimage to his stately colonial bungalow mourn not only the Mahatma's passing but also the fading of his influence.

"Let all of us, Hindus, Mussulmans (Muslims), Parsis, Sikhs, Christians live amicably as Indians, pledged to live and die for our motherland," reads a quotation from Gandhi affixed to a pillar in the central hall. His inspirational message is muted, however, by a sign at the rear exit directing visitors to "the path along which Gandhi walked to the prayer ground on his last day."

A line of cement footsteps in the shape of his sandals eerily marks the way.

On this day, a group of office workers - Christian and Hindu - has come together to pay homage to Gandhi.

They have few illusions that his legacy has much resonance in modern India. Their own friendships defy religious boundaries, yet they are not sanguine about their fellow Indians.

"Today's generation doesn't know what Gandhi stood for, they're not taught about Gandhi," says Krishna Joshi, 41, who works as a researcher.

A Hindu, she blames the communal violence in Gandhi's home state on political gamesmanship that has distorted her normally tolerant religion.

"Gandhi believed in protecting the minority," adds her Christian co-worker, Premi Britto. Today, she adds, "he would be disappointed, deeply pained and sorrowed."

At the Gandhi Museum near his burial place, a Muslim scholar toils in the desolate library, a lone figure beneath the ceiling fans. Asad Mohammed Khan, 29, worries that Hindutva threatens to replace the Mahatma's message of secularism.

"Ghandi said that unity is strength," Khan explains. "But now some people want to destroy that India."

India 's 'lab' for divisive politicsHalf-century of pluralism under attack

"They want a battle between Hindus and Muslims and so you see it all over the media: Hindutva, Hindutva."

Poring over leather-bound volumes of the Mahatma's collected works in the "Gandhiana" section, the scholar has no doubt what his verdict would be.

"Gandhi was a great man," Khan says. "He would oppose Hindutva."

But Gandhi is long gone, and the Congress party he fostered as a vehicle of secularism is in retreat.

Today, the BJP and its ideological cousins are in the ascendant, recasting the education system, rewriting textbooks to glorify Hindu history, promoting Hindutva to reverse decades of supposed Gandhian appeasement of religious minorities.

In his private mansion in the exclusive Golf Links enclave of the national capital, VHP president Vishnu Hari Dalmiya, a wealthy industrialist, entertains top government ministers and plots strategy for a Hindu revival.

The secularism of India's founding fathers "is not working, it's not working," says Dalmiya, 75, sitting in his study surrounded by statues of Hindu gods.

"The minority classes are getting much more privileges than the Hindus - the Hindus are neglected."

More than half a century after partition, "the Muslims still have the upper hand," Dalmiya asserts, adding that they should have been expelled back then.

Distracted by a hangnail on his ring finger, he summons a servant with a pair of cuticle scissors, then returns to his theme: Foreign influences - by which he means Islamic, Christian and Western - are diluting India's Hindu heritage.

"Among the young, there is no doubt of a cultural invasion coming from the Western world," Dalmiya frets. "The young generation, you find most of them in jeans, and young people don't pay much attention to religious rituals - they celebrate Christmas, they celebrate Valentine's Day, they celebrate birthdays with cake and candles."

Only Hindutva can protect the majority from the 120 million Muslims who amount to a "fifth column" and from the external threats separating women from their saris.

"They must practise their own culture, practise their own dress. I find the sari so graceful a dress. Women look so beautiful, I don't know why they go after jeans."

The VHP's doomsday scenarios are familiar to Syed Shahabuddin, a former diplomat who now heads the All India Muslim Consultative Committee.

His cramped offices are across town from Dalmiya's Golf Links enclave, in the heart of an Islamic slum where the sewers are overflowing and the garbage is piled high.

Shahabuddin believes the government he once served has been hijacked by Hindu fundamentalists. He says Hindutva has become a slave of history, obsessed with past grievances, from the Muslim conquest of 500 years ago to the partition of the subcontinent just over 50 years ago.

In the Hindutva view, "Muslims were responsible for partition, so Muslims are really Pakistani fifth columnists," Shahabuddin explains.

"They're trying to instil an ideology of hatred and fear in the Hindu mind. Hindutva is reaching fascist proportions."

As appalled as he was by the massacre in Gujarat, Shahabuddin fears Hindutva's hidden agenda is more insidious.

With Muslims making up an estimated 12 per cent of India's 1 billion people, they are too numerous to expel or exterminate; instead, the strategy is to hem them in with Hindutva.

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"They're wise enough to realize that Muslims can't be liquidated or pushed out of India, so they're making life difficult for them," Shahabuddin says. "But Hindutva, if it tries to obliterate the religious identity of Muslims, the Muslims will not stand for it."

Among the targets of the Hindu mobs that ran riot in Ahmedabad last year was a dilapidated mosque in the centre of the old city.

The Hajrat Pir Noorsha Dargah mosque is next door to the police commissioner's office, though the security forces did nothing when it was overrun.

The structure sustained heavy damage and the holy books were blackened by fire. But the mufti, 40-year-old Akbar Miyan Bapu, is back in his mosque, sheltering under its corrugated roof.

Bapu takes solace from the fact he survived the attack along with two attendants - who happen to be Hindus.

Indeed, Hindu devotees still come to the shrine, seeking cures and other miracles from the Sufi saints who are revered in this mystical strain of Islam.

Looking back on the fighting and suffering, the mufti ponders his fate. He seems a picture of serenity, his hands stained with saffron and his eyelids painted with kohl.

"Whatever has happened has happened," Bapu muses, rubbing his eyes after a midday nap.

"Though this is a religious site for Muslims, 90 per cent of the worshippers are Hindus. They walk around the mosque four times."

The mosque's enduring attraction for people of all faiths is no great mystery. Bapu's Hindu attendant sits cross-legged on the dirt-encrusted mat, awaiting his explanation.

"Whosoever comes here, whether Hindu or Muslim, seeks favours by praying before God," the mufti says. "God is great." "It's time that the Hindus fight violence with violence. We're being taught how to protect ourselves"

'Among the young, there is no doubt of a cultural invasion coming from Western world'

Graphic

ROY MADHUR/Reuters Hindu activists demonstrate in Ayodhya last weekend in a Vishwa Hindu Parishad rally that drew thousands to the temple town where the VHP continues to campaign for the construction of a temple on the ruins of the 16th-century mosque its members razed in 1992. RAJESH KUMAR SINGH/AP Hindu fundamentalists rally in Allahabad on Oct. 12 as authorities banned public gatherings in several northern districts to prevent activists from meeting in Ayodhya, the temple town at the centre of years of Hindu-Muslim violence. Determined to prevent a repetition of the 1992 razing of Ayodhya's Babri mosque, which sparked a round of bloody nationwide riots, police deployed tear gas and riot sticks in arresting more than 17,000 people. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star VHP district vice-president Sanjay Patel poses with a "cow-saving chariot," one of 500 special vans deployed to rally the faithful against the slaughter of an animal deemed sacred by Hindus. Painted on its side is a portrait of Lord Ram and a mural of the temple the VHP wants to build in his honour in Ayodhya. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star Abeda Begum and Samina Begum, 12, daughter of Begum's slain sister-in-law, roll incense sticks as a neighbour boy looks on. "I'm doing all this work because the Hindus won't keep Muslim workers any more and our houses were destroyed, so we have to start from scratch," says Begum, who watched a Hindu mob kill 92 of her Muslim neighbours, including Samina's mother, in last year's Ahmedabad rioting. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star Mufti Akbar Miyan Bapu, 40, sits serenely in his Hajrat Pir Noorsha Dargah mosque, which was damaged by mobs in last year's Ahmedabad riots. "Whatever has happened has happened," Bapu says. RAJESH KUMAR SINGH/AP Hindu

fundamentalists rally in Allahabad on Oct. 12 as authorities banned public gatherings in several northern districts to prevent activists from meeting in Ayodhya, the temple town at the centre of years of Hindu-Muslim violence. Determined to prevent a repetition of the 1992 razing of Ayodhya's Babri mosque, which sparked a round of bloody nationwide riots, police deployed tear gas and riot sticks in arresting more than 17,000 people. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star Abeda Begum and Samina Begum, 12, daughter of Begum's slain sister-in-law, roll incense sticks as a neighbour boy looks on. "I'm doing all this work because the Hindus won't keep Muslim workers any more and our houses were destroyed, so we have to start from scratch," says Begum, who watched a Hindu mob kill 92 of her Muslim neighbours, including Samina's mother, in last year's Ahmedabad rioting. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star VHP district vice-president Sanjay Patel poses with a "cow-saving chariot," one of 500 special vans deployed to rally the faithful against the slaughter of an animal deemed sacred by Hindus. Painted on its side is a portrait of Lord Ram and a mural of the temple the VHP wants to build in his honour in Ayodhya. Martin Regg Cohn/Toronto star Mufti Akbar Miyan Bapu, 40, sits serenely in his Hajrat Pir Noorsha Dargah mosque, which was damaged by mobs in last year's Ahmedabad riots. "Whatever has happened has happened," Bapu says.

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G2: The Clinton interview: 'Mandela helped me survive Monicagate, Arafat could not make the leap to peace, and for days John Major wouldn't take my calls': On the eve of the publication of his eagerly anticipated \$ 10m autobiography, Bill Clinton speaks exclusively to Alan Rusbridger and Jonathan Freedland in New York

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Body

The stars have come out, just as they always did. There's Uma Thurman, hair beacon-blond. Glenn Close gives a little wave, taking up her place just a few seats away. Spike Lee is here somewhere. Officially, they've all come to the Skirball Center in New York's SoHo district for a movie premiere. But the truth is that tonight is only peripherally about a film. The performance this starry, liberal crowd really want to see is by the man who became the most divisive figure in American life since Richard Nixon, the man who was hailed, even by his enemies, as the most gifted politician of the post-war era. They're here to witness the rebirth of Bill Clinton.

First, comes the movie, *The Hunting of the President*, a highly partisan documentary which sets out to confirm the truth of Hillary Clinton's famous declaration that her husband was the victim of a "vast rightwing conspiracy". The film recalls it all: the Whitewater land deal; the Arkansas state troopers who claimed to have procured women to feed the then Governor Clinton's gargantuan sexual appetites; Paula Jones; Monica Lewinsky; and finally Kenneth Starr, the witchfinder-general bent on joining all these dots and turning them into a legal offence grave enough to unseat the president. The audience, Democrats all, hiss the villains and cheer the heroes.

Until the lights come up and there, on stage, is the hero himself. He looks like an ageing nightclub singer, as he saunters to the front of the stage, microphone in hand, hair now soft-white. The room is an ovation, of course, and Clinton basks in it. It's like the campaign rallies of old which is appropriate because, in a way, that's exactly what this is.

For Clinton, who has spent all his adult life campaigning, is once again out to sell himself to the American people. This time he is not asking for high office. Instead he seeks vindication, pleading his case in a 957-page autobiography. Starting today, he will embark on a round of TV events and public appearances, criss-crossing the US with the same packed itinerary as a presidential candidate.

Part of it is given over to an exclusive interview with the Guardian, which is also the only British newspaper granted access to the book, published tomorrow. In a hotel near his home in Chappaqua, New York, he speaks of the scandal that nearly brought him down and how he learned to let go of his rage. He talks about the war in Iraq and

G2: The Clinton interview: 'Mandela helped me survive Monicagate, Arafat could not make the leap to peace, and for days John Major wouldn't take my calls': On t....

his quest for peace in the Middle East. He speaks of his friend, Tony Blair - and the wife who might one day succeed him into the White House.

The Middle East - from triumph to failure

He may no longer be in office, but he still lives on CST - Clinton Standard Time. Aides pop in and out of the anonymous hotel conference room to explain that "The president is running about half an hour late." They're back 20 minutes later to explain that he is now an hour behind schedule. Finally, we are told to ready ourselves an hour and a half after our appointment was due to begin.

He is still preceded by a flurry of activity: his secret service detail acting as the advance guard who enter any room before he does. Like all previous US chief executives he will keep the 24-hour protection - and the title, Mr President - for the rest of his life.

And then he is there, tall, slimmer than he was in office, and with a face craggier than you remember. When he first ran for president in 1992, rivals teased him as a chubby "Bubba", a good ol' boy from the south with a taste for junk food and a waistline to match. He cuts a different figure now: the international statesman in sharp navy suit, salmon-pink tie, Oxford shirt and shoes brought to a military shine.

Nor does he turn on the megawatt smile and charm that used to be a feature of his every campaign appearance. His handshake is not the full body grip so memorably described by Joe Klein in *Primary Colors*: it is cordial. The eyes seem faraway. Perhaps the great campaigner never turned on the klieg-light charm for mere journalists. Or maybe, now that he is no longer an office-seeking politician, his style has changed.

He brightens though when the initial smalltalk turns to a pastime that is a passion: golf. He has just spent two hours with Klein: the two men are both weekend players, and he reels off details of Klein's home club. He knows every fairway. Then it's time for business. "OK, guys," he says. "Shoot."

We start with the one area that came tantalisingly close to handing him a golden legacy: the Middle East. With trademark Diet Coke in hand, Clinton rattles off the details of the Israel-Palestine conflict as confidently as he did when he was leading the global effort to end it. Percentages of territory, death tolls on both sides - he is a walking database. It's hardly a surprise. The attempt to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians was one of the constant threads of his presidency, bringing one of its greatest successes - the 1993 handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn - and a lethal failure, the ill-fated peace talks at Camp David in 2000.

My Life is full of fond reminiscences of the early days of that effort: how he advised Arafat not to wear a pistol for that signing ceremony, how he and his aides devised a physical manoeuvre that would prevent the Palestinian leader attempting to kiss Rabin as well as shake his hand.

But he also details the deterioration of the process, giving his account of the Camp David debacle that led to the outbreak of the intifada that still rages. Clinton's version is that Israel's Ehud Barak was ready to make enormous concessions but that Arafat was not able to "make the final jump from revolutionary to statesman . . . he just couldn't bring himself to say yes".

Just before Clinton left office, Arafat thanked him for all his efforts and told the president he was a great man. "Mr Chairman," I replied, 'I am not a great man. I am a failure, and you have made me one.'

We ask whether that leaves Clinton convinced, as the Israelis are, that so long as Arafat is there, there is no Palestinian partner for peace. No, he says, President Bush and Ariel Sharon make a mistake if they think they can ignore the veteran Palestinian leader.

"Unless they just want to wait for him to become incapacitated or pass away or unless they seriously believe they can find a better negotiating partner in Hamas . . . then they need to keep working to make a deal."

G2: The Clinton interview: 'Mandela helped me survive Monicagate, Arafat could not make the leap to peace, and for days John Major wouldn't take my calls': On t....

He adds that the Israeli hope, also backed by Bush, of bypassing Arafat and dealing instead with a new Palestinian prime minister - Abu Mazen in the first instance - was fine in principle but it was "a step too far to expect a new prime minister, who had no following remotely equal to Arafat's, to, in effect, take his power away."

It was no good asking the prime minister to "publicly neutralise Arafat and render him ceremonial because he still controls too much of the security forces. He won't let that happen. He's too smart."

A power-sharing arrangement with Arafat was the most Bush and Sharon should have aimed for. Sidelining Arafat completely is, even according to a man who has good reason to resent him, not an option.

All this comes in long, detailed answers - often delving into deep history, with a detour on the way - structured into "three main goals" or "four reasons". Suddenly you understand why the Clinton White House - especially in the new president's first few months - became notorious as a talking shop, with poli cymaking meetings turning into late-night "bull" sessions. The habit extended to Clinton's dealings with world leaders: face-to-face encounters stretching to three or four in the morning. This is a man who can talk.

But at times there are also flashes of what, the previous night, one supporter had called "a hideous indiscipline". He was speaking about Clinton's impromptu post-movie appearance on stage, intended to last no more than 10 or so minutes, but stretching to an often-rambling 35.

There was the same mix of intellectual brilliance - a riff summarising the entire sweep of American political history - and looser passages where he almost seemed to lose the thread. Four years out of office, the former president had seemed a bit like a prize fighter no longer quite at his peak.

But here he is, now, wielding perfect recall and a searching analysis. What of Sharon's plan unilaterally to withdraw from the Gaza Strip? "If it's done in the right way, I think it's a good thing. The idea that Israel as the stronger partner . . . is strong enough to unilaterally make concessions, I think that is a very good thing - with two provisos. One is I don't think it should be done in a way that humiliates the Palestinians. If they're going to do it, they ought to just do it and do it in a dignified manner. Figure out what to do with the settlers and settlements, and if America needs to help financially to relocate them, then we ought to do that, whatever needs to be done.

"The second thing is, it cannot appear that 'This is the scrap we are throwing you from our table.' What the message of the Gaza withdrawal needs to be is, 'Here is a demonstration of our good faith . . . Now if you will give me security and give up the (Palestinian refugees') right of return' - as Arafat's already said he would do when he accepted my parameters - 'if you will do these things and work with us in good faith, more will follow.' Then I think good things will happen." In other words, Clinton welcomes the Israeli pullout plan if it is Gaza first, rather than Gaza only. He recognises that this might not be how Sharon sees it; the former president admits that the Israeli PM still regards the West Bank as crucial to Israel - a view not shared by Rabin or Barak or, he adds, himself.

Either way, Israel has to act. Clinton explains that continued occupation is a "loser" for Israel. "If they don't let the Palestinians in the occupied territories vote the way they let the Palestinians in pre-67 Israel vote, then they're an apartheid state. If they do let them vote then they won't be a Jewish state after a while." So they have to act. Besides, "I still think there's a deal to be had."

Iraq - low on the danger list

One of My Life's most arresting passages describes the handover meeting Clinton had with his successor in December 2000. George Bush reckoned the biggest security issues he would face would be national missile defence and Iraq. "I told him that, based on the last eight years, I thought his biggest security problems, in order, would be Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida; the absence of peace in the Middle East; the standoff between nuclear powers India and Pakistan, and the ties of the Pakistanis to the Taliban and al-Qaida; North Korea; and then Iraq."

Besides advertising his own prescience, Clinton seems to be making a point - that Iraq was fairly low, fifth, on the list of priorities, and that, by implication, his successor went on to slay the wrong dragon.

G2: The Clinton interview: 'Mandela helped me survive Monicagate, Arafat could not make the leap to peace, and for days John Major wouldn't take my calls': On t....

Yet when we ask the former president about Iraq, his answer is not so straightforward. Like the Democrats' nominee for the White House, John Kerry, Clinton's position is nuanced. The unkind would say it is confused, or at least political - designed to stay firmly on the fence.

On the one hand, he says, he would have acted like Kerry. "I would have voted, I confess, if I had been a senator, I would have . . . voted to give (the president) the authority to attack Iraq because Saddam Hussein in the past had never done anything that he wasn't forced to do. And we were in this post-9/11 era and I thought it was imperative that we find out whether he had this stuff."

Clinton knew from his own time in office that there were "unaccounted-for stocks of chemical and biological agents (in Iraq) which could be weaponised" and that they could fall into the wrong hands.

That much might comfort the pro-war camp. But opponents will also find much to cheer in Clinton's remarks. The day we meet, initial reports from the independent commission investigating 9/11 conclude that there was no link between Saddam and the attacks on New York and Washington. "That's what I always thought," says Clinton, his gaze firm and steady. "From the minute it happened, I was virtually positive it was al-Qaida. I don't think Iraq had the capability to pull it off."

Clinton reckons the danger list he had given Bush still remains the most accurate. "In terms of their own ability to act against us or the Israelis, I always felt that al-Qaida and bin Laden were a much bigger threat and that the Middle East was a bigger problem, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because it fed all this other stuff."

In his view, Iraq was worth inspecting for WMD, but the United Nations was the way to get the job done. "My view was that we shouldn't attack until the UN inspectors are finished and they can say, 'He (Saddam) did or did not comply.'" For that reason, and to help Blair, Clinton started working the phones, lobbying the leaders of Mexico and Chile to vote for the famous second UN resolution on Iraq - because it would have given Hans Blix and his team a few more weeks and might have got "America to defer military action."

Clinton's wariness of US engagement in Iraq had another source. "I worried we'd be underdeployed in Afghanistan - and might make the same mistake as we made in the 1980s when the US walked away after the Soviets left."

But don't Republicans keep saying that toppling Saddam was Clinton policy too? "Our policy had been, since 1998, regime change, but our policy toward Castro had been regime change, too, and we hadn't invaded Cuba! There is more than one way to pursue that objective."

The special relationship - Blair's dilemma

The conversation moved naturally to his old friend Blair, for whom he clearly retains a warm regard. He's at pains to tell "British readers" how they should understand the nature of Blair's dilemma.

Nevertheless, asked if the "special relationship" was strong enough to bear a British prime minister speaking his mind frankly on issues that divided the two countries, he answers with an immediate and unequivocal: "Yes."

Clinton said he had much sympathy over the fix Blair was in over Iraq. "He had a very bad Hobson's Choice. If he says, 'Well, the UN didn't ratify this' and he walks away, it makes Europe happy but it imperils the transatlantic alliance and it still doesn't do anything to strengthen the UN. If he stays with President Bush - at a minimum, he's gonna have to do something about whatever it is there on the WMD side, and he gives himself the chance to be the person who put the transatlantic alliance back together - and he hasn't hurt the UN any more than it's going to be hurt anyway.

"I think he thought: 'In for a dime, in for a dollar. There's no good answer, this is the less bad alternative.' I think some of the criticisms he got in Britain didn't appreciate how hard he had tried to get that other UN resolution through."

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Clinton also defends Blair by highlighting the positions the prime minister had taken against Bush on a number of issues. "Tony's been in favour of the comprehensive test ban treaty, he's for the international criminal court - you know, he didn't advocate abandoning the ABM treaty. He's for the Kyoto accord on climate change and has done far more than America has to meet his targets.

"As far as I know Tony Blair's never embraced the new nuclear policy developed by President Bush - small-scale nuclear weapons and a new one that breaks concrete bunkers. So I don't think it's quite fair to see all of his foreign policy through the lens of Iraq."

Clinton's admiration for Blair does not exclude his predecessor, especially over Ireland. "I particularly admired John Major because it was harder for him than it was for Blair because he needed the Unionists in parliament to sustain a narrow majority and yet he consistently tried to do the right thing. So I always thought Major never got enough credit for what he did on Ireland. He had a weaker hand to play than Margaret Thatcher in her heyday and I thought he played it about as well as he could."

But he does not conceal moments of tension in the relationship - moments where the two fell out publicly without any significant damage to the transatlantic alliance. "He had to be critical of my visa for Gerry Adams because it put him in a very difficult position. He wasn't politically able to say anything good about it, even if he thought it had any merit. For days he refused to take my phone calls. The press reported I was mad at him (over allegations that the Major team had helped George Bush's 1992 campaign, by seeking to dig up dirt on Clinton from British files relating to Clinton's two-year stint at Oxford.) I was never mad with John Major, though I didn't mind people thinking I was mad because, you know, it always gives you a little psychological advantage."

Monica - the couch months

There is a flash of anger only once in our exchange - at the mention of his chief persecutor, Kenneth Starr. It had been the same night before, as he railed against Starr's pursuit of his friends and former colleagues.

Clinton's book describes his agony as "the darkest part of my inner life" was dragged into full public scrutiny - initially as he tried to outwit Rutherford Institute (a rightwing foundation) lawyers acting for Paula Jones as they delved into his personal life. It was these lawyers who first advanced a legal definition of "sexual relations" which, in Clinton's mind, "seemed to require both a specific act and a certain state of mind on my part and did not include any act by another person." Clinton's decision to adopt this strict legalistic definition later cost him dearly.

"What I had done with Monica Lewinsky was immoral and foolish," he says in the book. "I was deeply ashamed of it and I didn't want it to come out. In the deposition (in which he denied "sexual relations") I was trying to protect my family and myself from my selfish stupidity."

He sees the affair as a resurfacing of "old demons", dating back to his earliest years. "I didn't like everything I learned about myself or my past, and it pained me to face the fact that my childhood and the life I'd led since growing up had made some things difficult for me that seemed to come more naturally to other people."

The book sheds some light on that, not only lovingly recalling the characters and adventures of a boyhood in 1950s Arkansas, but also revealing the pain of a boy unconfident about his looks and weight, raised in a household riven by "abuse" - chiefly at the hands of his alcoholic and violent stepfather Roger Clinton. The former president says that it was at this young age that he learned to lead "parallel lives". "When I was a child my outside life was filled with friends and fun, learning and doing. My internal life was full of uncertainty, anger and a dread of ever-looming violence. No one can live parallel lives with complete success; the two have to intersect."

When faced with the Lewinsky allegations, he soon realised his tactic of denial was "a terrible mistake" - but became determined not to let Starr use his sexual misbehaviour to drive him out of office. What appalled him most was that - as he fought on many legal fronts - he also found himself lying to his family and closest supporters.

G2: The Clinton interview: 'Mandela helped me survive Monicagate, Arafat could not make the leap to peace, and for days John Major wouldn't take my calls': On t....

"I was misleading everyone about my personal failings. I was embarrassed and wanted to keep it from my wife and daughter. I didn't want to help Ken Starr criminalise my personal life, and I didn't want the American people to know how I'd let them down. It was like living a nightmare. Though she was right about the nature of our opposition, seeing Hillary defend me made me even more ashamed about what I had done."

He finally broke the truth to Hillary after a "miserable, sleepless night" on August 15 1998. "She looked at me as if I had punched her in the gut, almost as angry at me for lying to her in January as for what I had done. All I could do was tell her I was sorry . . . I still didn't fully understand why I had done something so wrong and stupid; that understanding would come slowly, in the months of working on our relationship that lay ahead."

Later the same day he talked to Chelsea. "I was afraid that I would lose not only my marriage, but my daughter's love and respect as well."

That same day, the news was dominated by the Omagh bomb, which killed 28 people. In the following days Hillary and Chelsea were supportive in public. In private they were barely speaking to Clinton, who was now sleeping on a couch in a small living room adjoining the couple's bedroom. "I deserved a kicking, all right, but I was getting it at home, where it should have been administered."

When pressed, Clinton offers a political analysis for the "hysteria" which led to his impeachment. He describes an ever more bitter fight between the right and the left over the role of government, a picture complicated by the rise of the fundamentalist Christian right. He argues that, rather than fight on ideology, the right increasingly targets the personal lives of progressive public figures, whom they genuinely believe morally unfit for office. He urges Democrats to stick to arguments - which they can win - rather than personal vendettas.

We ask whether, as a Christian himself, he had been able to forgive Starr. "I couldn't have done it without two people, both in Africa," he says. "One was a Rwandan woman, a survivor of the slaughter. She lived next to a Hutu couple. Their children played together for 10 years. The couple rat 'em out. They come and crack her across the back with a machete and she's left for dead. She wakes up in a pool of blood and looks around and her husband and her six children are dead. She's the only survivor. And she said, 'I screamed at God for letting me live with all them dead and then I realised I must have been spared for some purpose. It could not be something as mean as vengeance.'

"What was the lesson for me? What I went through was a tea party compared to that woman. I lost nothing compared to what she did. You know, I had my reputation in tatters, I was bankrupted, I was enraged because other people were persecuted who were completely innocent. It was nothing.

"The other person who helped me was Nelson Mandela. He told me he forgave his oppressors because if he didn't they would have destroyed him. He said: 'You know, they already took everything. They took the best years of my life, I didn't get to see my children grow up. They destroyed my marriage. They abused me physically and mentally. They could take everything except my mind and heart. Those things I would have to give away and I decided not to give them away.'

"And then he said: 'Neither should you.' And he said when he was finally set free he felt all that anger welling up again and he said, 'They've already had me for 27 years . . . I had to let it go'. You do this not for other people but for yourself. If you don't let go it continues to eat at you."

Clinton was finally allowed back off the couch at some unspecified time after admitting his infidelity to Hillary and being cleared by the Senate. "I almost wound up being grateful to my tormentors: they were probably the only people who could have made me look good to Hillary again."

Hillary - the next Clinton presidency?

The current book tour is the latest Clinton campaign - but it's unlikely to be the last. What of the former president's wife, now in the Senate representing New York? Does she have what it takes to be president?

G2: The Clinton interview: 'Mandela helped me survive Monicagate, Arafat could not make the leap to peace, and for days John Major wouldn't take my calls': On t....

He smiles at the thought. She considered running this year, he admits, but instead "wanted to honour her commitment to the people of New York" to serve a full term in the senate. Political convention demands that he say Kerry will triumph this year? "He has a slightly better than 50-50 chance to win," says Clinton - and that therefore there will be no Democratic vacancy for eight years. So maybe that could be Hillary's moment?

"We have no idea what the future holds. If, you know, eight years from now or sometime in the future she got a chance to serve, I have no doubt about her skills. She is the ablest person I've ever known in public life. And she does some things better than I do, better than I ever do. She is very well organised, she is very strong . . . I have no doubt she could do it . . . Who knows what will happen in the future?"

We ask him about the red and blue crocheted band around his right wrist - an incongruous clash with the statesman attire. For the first time in the interview he becomes emotional, the voice catching and his eyes redening. "I've worn it for two years. I went there (to Colombia) and met these unbelievable kids from a village on the edge of the rainforest where the narco-traffickers are dominant," he says. "They sang and danced for peace and I fell in love with these kids. I asked them to perform at the White House one Christmas. They came with the culture minister, a magnificently attractive woman called Consuelo. The bad guys hated these kids because they made them look like what they are. The guerillas couldn't kill these children, so they murdered her . . . I can still hardly talk about this.

"Two years ago they asked me back and I said, 'I'll come, but you've got to bring those kids to see me.' So I turn up - and the children greeted me at the airport, along with the new culture minister - the niece of the murdered woman. And they gave me this bracelet, which I've never taken off."

And, with that, he is up on his feet, posing for a photograph and out - ready for the next stop in the campaign that never ends.

My Life by Bill Clinton is published by Hutchinson. To order a copy for £22 plus p&p (rrp £25), call the Guardian Book Service on 0870 836 0875. On Guardian Unlimited - guardian.co.uk/usa/clinton - From Arkansas to the Oval Office, the Clinton years as the Guardian reported them.

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THE HUMAN COST OF THE 21ST CENTURY'S FIRST WAR IS ALREADY
ENORMOUS.

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Byline: PAUL VALLELY A US soldier guards inmates in Guantanamo Bay; Transporting detainees by plane from Afghanistan to Cuba; Raed Hijazi, a suspected al-Qa'ida member, on trial in Jordan; Spanish police arrest a suspected al-Qa'ida terrorist Yaser Esam Hamdi is led away by a soldier of the Northern Alliance near Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, on 1 December 2001. He is now held in a secret location

Body

Privately, the Americans admit that torture, or something very like it, is going on at Bagram air base in Afghanistan, where they are holding an unknown number of suspected terrorists.

Al-Qa'ida and Taliban prisoners inside this secret CIA interrogation centre - in a cluster of metal shipping-containers protected by a triple layer of concertinaed wire - are subjected to a variety of practices. They are kept standing or kneeling for hours, in black hoods or spray-painted goggles. They are bound in awkward, painful positions. They are deprived of sleep with a 24-hour bombardment of lights. They are sometimes beaten on capture, and painkillers are withheld.

The interrogators call these "stress and duress" techniques, which one former US intelligence officer has dubbed "torture-lite". Sometimes there is nothing "lite" about the end results. The US military has announced that a criminal investigation has begun into the case of two prisoners who died after beatings at Bagram. More covertly, other terrorist suspects have been "rendered" into the hands of various foreign intelligence services known to have less fastidious records on the use of torture.

What is perhaps most disturbing about all this is that the US officials who have leaked the information have not done so out of a need to expose something that they see as shameful. On the contrary, they have made it clear that they wanted the world to know what is going on because they feel it is justified.

No fewer than 10 serving US national-security officials - including several people who have been witnesses to the handling of prisoners - came forward to speak to The Washington Post, which has published the most graphic account of what is going on in Bagram, and in several other unnamed US interrogation centres across the world. "If you don't violate someone's human rights some of the time, one told the paper, "you probably aren't doing your job". He and the others involved are, in effect, saying: we are doing these things because we have to, and we want the world to know.

In one sense, there is nothing new in this. British forces used five similar techniques - hooding, forced standing, deprivation of sleep, subjection to noise, and deprivation of food and drink - in Northern Ireland. (The European

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Court of Human Rights ruled, in 1978, that these did not constitute "torture", but found that such methods were "inhuman and degrading", and therefore illegal under various treaties.) But there is a key difference. Where the British authorities were shamefaced about such practices, leading figures in the US are today aggressively unapologetic.

The changed mood is clear in official circles. "After 9/11, the gloves came off," the head of the CIA's Counterterrorist Centre, Cofer Black, told a joint hearing of the House and Senate intelligence committees. One Harvard law professor, Alan Dershowitz, has even raised the idea that - despite the fact that the US is a signatory to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - permission for torture could be granted by judicial warrant.

To be concerned about this is not to minimise the threat posed to the civilised world by organisations such as al-Qa'ida - amorphous, mercurial, and motivated by a fanatical fundamentalism that sees martyrdom as a prize, not a price. America has the crater that was the World Trade Centre at its heart as a constant reminder of the gravity of that threat.

Nor is it to deny the importance of the thorough interrogation of suspects. The CIA director George J Tenet estimates that worldwide attempts to capture or kill terrorists have eliminated about a third of the al-Qa'ida leadership - and of these successes, almost half have come about from information gained in interrogations. The captures of the al-Qa'ida leaders Ramzi Binalshibh in Pakistan, Omar al-Faruq in Indonesia, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri in Kuwait and Muhammad al-Darbi in Yemen, were all partly the result of information gained in Bagram. An al-Qa'ida plot to blow up warships in the Straits of Gibraltar was reportedly foiled by information obtained from a detainee in Guantanamo Bay.

CIA interrogation techniques are sophisticated and successful. Detainees are confronted with a thick file, often containing only dummy text, to give the impression that so much is already known that resistance is futile. Lies about al-Qa'ida are told to generate uncontrolled indignation in which key intelligence is let slip. In a technique known as "the Spinoza method", the captive is relentlessly questioned on events he cannot know anything about - leading him to tell what he does know by way of psychological compensation.

"The interrogations of Abu Zubaida al-Qa'ida's head of external operations - see box drove me nuts at times," said General Wayne Downing, the Bush administration's deputy national-security adviser for combating terrorism, until he resigned in June 2002. "He and some of the others are very clever guys. At times, I felt we were in a classic counter-interrogation class: they were telling us what they thought we already knew. Then, what they thought we wanted to know. As they did that, they fabricated and wove in threads that went nowhere.

"But, even with these ploys, we still get valuable information and they are off the street, unable to plot and co-ordinate future attacks."

But some interrogation techniques go further than many feel is acceptable. Amnesty International has written to President Bush protesting at reports that interrogators holding Khalid Sheikh Mohammed - who, the CIA says, masterminded September 11, the Bali nightclub bombing, and much more - are also holding his two sons, aged seven and nine, as a bargaining tool. Mr Bush has not replied. There can only be "zero tolerance" when it comes to dealing with a man responsible for the deaths of thousands - and the threat to many more.

Yet, when it comes to the holding of children, or the business of torture, the following question arises: when is all this intelligence bought at too great a cost? It is not a question with an easy answer.

What is clear is that something is being eroded in our idea of what should be the ethical norms by which a civilised country acts. The shift is about more than simply a revision of the unwritten rulebook on torture. There is a new tolerance of the suspension of due legal process; of detention without trial; of refusing prisoners legal representation; and of imprisoning unconvicted suspects in harsh conditions. There is a new willingness to risk insults to religious minorities and foreigners - and the

increased social tension that this inevitably produces.

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Such shifts are not restricted to the US. All across the globe - from China to Chechnya, Israel to Indonesia, the UK to Uzbekistan - similar changes have occurred (see graphic on pages 2 & 3). The rhetoric of the "war on terror" is everywhere being used by governments as the pretext for untrammelled action against rebels and dissidents. Continent by continent, the figures of those "missing" in the so-called war on terror mount to a staggering minimum, according to our calculations, of 12,117 individuals. Were we to have included prisoners of war in Iraq in the calculation, it would be more than 15,000.

Nowhere is this new paradigm of diminished human rights more clearly epitomised than in Guantanamo Bay, the US naval base in Cuba, which has become the main prison for al-Qa'ida and Taliban suspects. The 680 detainees are in a legal limbo. The American military has refused to consider them prisoners of war, even though a majority were captured on the battlefield. They have not even been charged, let alone tried or convicted. They have no access to lawyers. Interrogation is sporadic and varies in length and intensity.

When, last year, three detainees - the British citizens Shafiq Rasul and Asif Iqbal, and the Australian national David Hicks - tried to take the US authorities to court, the presiding judge ruled that the US courts had no jurisdiction over Guantanamo inmates. Instead, an order by President Bush has established military tribunals as the forum for dealing with those accused of terrorism such as the September 11 attacks. Ten detainees are due to appear, in secret, before these tribunals soon, US officials said this month.

Yet, even though US officials privately admit that as many as 10 per cent of those detained may well be innocent - some 41 people have been released so far, including two farmers in their mid-seventies who the US authorities eventually admitted had just been caught in the wrong place at the wrong time - they are all kept in punitive conditions of confinement.

Those released spoke for the first time last week of their treatment. For the initial few months they were kept in small wire-mesh cells, about 6ft by 8ft, covered by a wooden roof, but open at the sides to the elements. The prisoners were taken out only once a week for a one-minute shower. In the fifth month of their imprisonment, they went on hunger strike and were thereafter allowed to shower for five minutes and exercise for 10 minutes once a week, walking around the inside of a 30ft-long cage.

Even if the confinement of unconvicted men is essential to the security of the Western world, it is not clear on what grounds their imprisonment should be so harsh. It is like an Alice-in-Wonderland world of punishment first, trial later - if ever.

But Guantanamo Bay is far from the only place where basic human rights are suspended. Earlier this month, the US Department of Justice's internal watchdog, Inspector General Glenn Fine, issued a hard-hitting report on the treatment of aliens held on immigration charges in connection with the investigation of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

He found more than 1,200 people had been detained, and 766 held for prolonged periods using immigration charges as a pretext. The Justice Department has refused to release names of the detainees, and has conducted hearings against them in secret. The FBI had failed to distinguish between suspected terrorists and illegal aliens uncovered in its trawl. No more than a handful have been charged with a terrorism-related crime, and many were kept in detention even after their immigration cases had been resolved and they had been ordered to be deported to their home countries.

Many are detained under highly restrictive conditions, including "lock down" for at least 23 hours a day in permanently illuminated cells; handcuffs, leg-irons, and heavy chains; a limit of one legal phone call per week and one social call per month. FBI officials frustrated the efforts by detainees' attorneys, families, and even law enforcement officials, to determine where the detainees were being held, and a pattern of physical and verbal abuse was uncovered at one detention centre in Brooklyn, New York. "While our review recognised the enormous challenges and difficult circumstances confronting the Department in responding to the terrorist attacks, we found significant problems in the way the detainees were handled," said Inspector General Fine.

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In this country, human-rights groups such as Amnesty and Liberty have made similar complaints about the UK. By contrast with European countries such as the Netherlands, France and Italy - where suspected terrorists have, by and large, been charged and taken through the courts - new legal measures have been introduced in Britain under the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA), which permit the Home Secretary to designate a foreigner a suspected terrorist, and deport or detain them without trial. In addition, the UK, uniquely, has opted out of the section of the European Convention on Human Rights that guarantees everyone the right to a fair trial. Most recently, the Home Secretary announced that people could be held for 14 days without charge under the 2000 Terrorism Act.

Most of those detained under the 2001 act are held in Belmarsh or Woodhill top-security prisons, where they are classified as Category A and are subjected to the most restrictive regime - locked up for 22 hours a day in single cells 3m by 1.8m, whose access to natural light is limited by the wire mesh on the windows. They are conditions of detention that Amnesty says amount "to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment".

"These people have not been charged or tried - some haven't even been interviewed by the police," says John Wadham of the civil-rights group Liberty. Moreover, he asks, if these people are so dangerous that they must be locked up so restrictively, why does the Home Office's system permit them to leave if they can find any country that will take them?

There is more to all this even than concerns about civil liberties. It raises levels of suspicion of foreigners and religious minorities in a way that is already having an impact on the lives of Muslims, and others, creating increased social and racial tensions. Anyone who is male, Muslim and Arab - as were the 19 hijackers on September 11 - is, to many people, automatically a terrorist suspect. This would be crassly comic were it not so serious, as in the case of the two men who stopped to pray in a Texas parking lot and were arrested for "suspicious activity"; or the Muslim detainees in New York served pork at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

There is more to this than ignorance and stereotyping. It breeds animus, too. Recent months have seen a Muslim interpreter banned from a British prison for refusing to remove her headscarf, or Muslim men strip-searched in front of **female** officers in a US detention centre. And another British prison put a detainee on "basic regime" for three weeks - which meant he lost one of the two hours to be spent out of the cell and a cut in visiting time. His offence? During a prayer service, a prison guard entered the room and told them to finish earlier than expected. When the man leading the prayers did not reply, because Islamic practice is that one is unable to speak in the middle of prayer, he was punished.

The problem goes beyond religion. A new xenophobia is abroad. In Connecticut, a resident told police that he had heard two "Arabs" talking about anthrax. Whereupon police officers arrested two Pakistani men suspected of having had the conversation at a gas station. They also hauled in an Indian businessman who was minding the station temporarily for his uncle, the owner. The man was held for 18 days and then released without charge or compensation.

It is, of course, easy to pick up the glaring flaws in the system. It is in the nature of terrorism that its victory is against the ordinary decencies of daily life. Those who are charged with fighting terror have a potent argument when they say that - with an enemy that, by definition, refuses to fight fair - there may be times when the law-enforcers cannot fight fair if they are to win.

Suggestions to the contrary generate irritation and impatience. The US Attorney General John Ashcroft had a tetchy message for civil-liberties activists. "To those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty," he said, "my message is this: your tactics only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America's enemies, and pause to America's friends. They encourage people of goodwill to remain silent in the face of evil."

Yet there is a balance to be struck here. If common sense tells us that someone is a fanatical bomber, then it may seem madness to allow that person to proceed unchecked. The danger is that, for short-term gain, we risk making the world not a safer place but a more dangerous one by curtailing human rights, embittering minorities,

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undermining the rule of international law, and allowing governments that are violating the Geneva Conventions by their interrogation procedures, to hide from scrutiny.

There is a grim irony in the fact that Amnesty International can now visit any prison in the whole of Afghanistan, except one, Bagram - the one run by that great champion of openness and freedom, the United States.

There is danger, self-evidently, from terrorism. But there is danger, too, that we are being changed by our response to that terror. If the terrorists can goad us into undermining part of what it is that makes us different from them, then they will win a victory of a different kind.

UK

402 arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000. 49 have been charged, mostly with immigration offences, and are awaiting trial; five have been convicted - three for membership of banned organisations. Another 15 are detained as a "risk to national security" under Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001. They can't be deported because of death penalty or torture in their home country, though two have since left the UK of their own volition. Rest are locked up for 22 hours a day in single cells, at Belmarsh top- security prison and HMP Woodhill, with restricted access to lawyers and families.

US

1,200 detained, at least 484 still held. Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn has 84 detainees; Passaic County Jail in New Jersey has 400. Plus secret sites. US government refuses to release identities of detainees. Inspector General of US Department of Justice last week confirmed abuses reported by human rights groups: prolonged detention without charge, denial of access to legal counsel, and excessively harsh conditions of confinement including "lock down" for at least 23 hours per day; handcuffs, leg irons, and heavy chains; and a limit of one legal telephone call per week.

CUBA

The 680 men held Camp Delta, Guantanamo Bay, are described by the Americans as among the "hardest of the hard core" of al-Qa'ida terrorist suspects from more than 40 countries. Mainly Afghans and Pakistanis, about 150 Saudis and 83 Yemenis, but also nine Britons, some Australians, and six Algerians picked up in Bosnia. All are held without charge or trial; Washington insists Geneva Conventions don't apply; US courts refuse to exercise jurisdiction. Detainees live in wire cages and are subjected to CIA and MI5 interrogations. Senior defence officials have told US media off the record that as many as 10 per cent may be innocent. All are denied access to legal counsel. Only allowed out for two 15-minute exercise breaks a week. At least 28 suicide attempts to date.

SYRIA

At least one "war on terror" suspect has been held by Syria, which the US regards as a sponsor of terrorism and a user of torture. The alleged al-Qa'ida leader Mohammed Haydar Zammar was transferred there by US operatives. German government has been strongly critical of his detention, since Zammar holds joint German and Syrian citizenship.

GEORGIA

Georgian troops detained "several" suspected al-Qa'ida members last autumn and handed them over to the US after a raid on the Pankisi gorge - home to refugees fleeing Chechnya. Russia and the US both claim it is a haven for al-Qa'ida. A US-sponsored operation involves 60 US military personnel and British anti-terrorism experts.

ISRAEL

900 Palestinians held in administrative detention, without charge or trial. Most have no access to lawyers. Israeli authorities characterise all armed Palestinian activity as terrorism, and justify Israeli military actions as a part of the

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global "war on terror". Last year, the Knesset passed the Illegal Combatants Law, which enables the military to hold individuals indefinitely on the basis of assumption rather than proven guilt.

CHECHNYA

Some 1,300 people have vanished since September 11. Disappearances currently running at the rate of 60 a month. In first two months of this year there were 70 murders, 126 abductions, and 25 cases in which corpses were found. Prisoners are routinely beaten and tortured.

UZBEKISTAN

"Thousands" imprisoned since September 11. Uzbekistan has used the "war on terror" to justify its longstanding campaign to eliminate Islamists. Western governments, particularly the United States, are now less critical of the Uzbek human rights record.

AFGHANISTAN

3,000 Taliban and al-Qa'ida prisoners are held in Bagram airbase and Jowzjan prison. Bagram is a CIA interrogation centre, practising "stress and duress" or "torture-lite". Prisoners are blindfolded and thrown into walls, kept standing or kneeling for hours, in black hoods or spray-painted goggles, bound in painful positions, subjected to loud noises and deprived of sleep, with a 24-hour bombardment of lights. At least two detainees have died after being beaten. Bagram is off-limits to the Red Cross.

SPAIN

50 held. The aftermath of September 11 brought a further crackdown on Basque separatists. Spain's anti-terror laws permit the use of incommunicado detention, secret legal proceedings, and pre-trial detention for up to four years.

MOROCCO

Infamous for torture. Has detained at least 35 terrorist suspects in the wake of the five simultaneous Casablanca suicide bombs. Another 100 have been "referred" there by US

EGYPT

Between 100 and "several thousand" al-Qa'ida suspects have been transferred from Afghanistan to Egypt, where the secret police use full-blown torture techniques. Hundreds of domestic suspects have been arrested and taken before military or state security courts since 11 September.

JORDAN

Between 100 and "several thousand" al-Qa'ida suspects have been transferred from Afghanistan to Jordan, where security services use torture including sleep deprivation, beatings on the soles of the feet, prolonged suspension with ropes and extended solitary confinement.

LOCATIONS UNKNOWN

There are a number of secret US detention centres overseas where due process does not apply. The CIA undertakes a "false flag operation" using fake decor and disguises meant to deceive a captive into thinking he is imprisoned in a country with a reputation for brutality, when, in reality, he is still in CIA hands.

DIEGO GARCIA

An unknown number of prisoners are held in US base on the Indian Ocean island leased from the UK. US interrogators impersonate nationals of countries known to use torture, in an effort to disorientate captives.

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IRAQ

3,087 PoWs and interned civilians still held in 19 centres by coalition forces. The 5,905 other PoWs have now been released in accordance with Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention. US forces are still rounding up "civilian" Iraqis suspected of involvement with paramilitary squads and may ship them to Guantanamo Bay.

SAUDI ARABIA

Unknown number of detainees. During interrogations, US officials observe through one-way mirrors.

CHINA

At least 400 Chinese Muslims have been jailed since China took advantage of the "war on terror" to deepen its crackdown on ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang province. China claims 500 members of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), financed by Osama bin Laden, fought with the Taliban and in Chechnya. ETIM is now on the US State Department list of terrorist organisations.

INDIA

At least 300 detained under the new 2002 Prevention of Terrorism Act. The law is used against Muslim separatists in Kashmir, but also against other Muslim activists.

INDONESIA

30 people held under terrorism decrees. Since the Bali bomb, links have been assumed between local Islamist movements and al-Qa'ida. Police conduct public interrogations of suspects and use detainees in public re-enactments of the crime. New laws are imminent to allow police to detain suspected terrorists for questioning for up to six months. The broad definition of terrorism could include political dissenters.

NEW DEFINITIONS OF TORTURE

Abu Zubaida is said to be the most important terrorist in detention. Al-Qa'ida's head of external operations was shot in the groin during his capture in a joint FBI and Pakistan security forces operation in Faisalabad in March 2002. US security officials suggested that Zubaida's painkillers were used selectively in the beginning of his captivity. "His wound wasn't life-threatening," a military police officer said with a shrug. "He survived."

The admission gives some idea of the range of "stress and duress" activities which one former US intelligence officer has described as "torture-lite". The techniques are more psychologically tormenting than physically brutal but they include being tied in painful positions, subjected to deafening sounds and blinded by bright lights.

USE OF HOLDING CHARGES

Lotfi Raissi was arrested in London the week after the September 11 attack. The US authorities sought his extradition claiming he was a flight instructor of some of the hijackers. Their evidence reportedly included video footage. The extradition warrant, however, was based on "holding charges" claiming Mr Raissi had failed to disclose, on an application for a US pilot's licence, a minor theft conviction. He was detained in prison for five months before a British judge threw the extradition application out, saying there was no evidence of any terrorist activity.

Amnesty says the US sought Mr Raissi's extradition because of his profile: a Muslim, an Algerian, a pilot and a flight instructor.

ACQUITTED BUT STILL DEPORTED

Adnan Abdelah claimed political asylum on his arrival in the UK in April 2001. He was arrested after bragging about the September 11 attacks and knowledge of bombs. At his trial in May 2002 at Newcastle Crown Court, Abdelah denied charges of membership of a proscribed organisation (*Hamas* iz as-din-al-quezzem) and one charge of

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witness intimidation. On 23 May, the judge ruled there was no case to answer and directed the jury to clear Abdelah. He remained in immigration detention pending an asylum appeal, after which, on 19 December, he was deported to Morocco. The Attorney General has now referred the decision to acquit Abdelah to the Court of Appeal.

CIVIL JUSTICE

Some terrorists, after being held under immigration laws, are dealt with through normal processes in criminal courts. Two Algerian asylum-seekers living in Leicester, Baghdad Meziane, 37, and Brahim Benmerzouga, 30, (left) were held by immigration officials for four months but were then charged under the Terrorism Act 2000 with criminal offences in connection with a plan to bomb the US Embassy in Paris. The men were subsequently jailed for 11 years for financing Islamic terrorism. An appeal is pending for both cases.

Civil rights groups want all detainees to be subjected to full legal process, like this, or released.

MILITARY JUSTICE

Jose Padilla, who also used the name Abdullah al-Mujahir, is a US citizen arrested at Chicago's international airport in May 2002 in connection with an alleged conspiracy to detonate a radioactive "dirty bomb" on a US city. But he was transferred to military custody at a naval base on the basis of an order by President Bush designating him an "enemy combatant".

A US district court has upheld the President's authority to do this, but ruled Mr Padilla was entitled to access to a lawyer. The government has appealed, arguing that this would hinder its ongoing interrogation of him. Mr Padilla has no access to his attorney pending the appeal. "Padilla's case is troubling," says Amnesty, "as he was arrested on suspicion of a crime which would place him within the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system."

UNREASONABLY HARSH TREATMENT?

Mahmoud Abu Rideh came to the UK in 1995 and was granted refugee status in 1997. The Home Office accepted that he had been the victim of torture while imprisoned in Israel. He was arrested as a terrorist suspect in December 2001 and was detained at Belmarsh high security unit. Like the other terrorist suspects he was locked in his cell for 22 hours a day. He became suicidal and carried out acts of self-harm. Belmarsh authorities branded him a troublemaker; Amnesty said the conditions of his detention amounted to cruelty.

It was planned to transfer him to Broadmoor. Psychiatrists opposed this but were over-ruled and he was transferred to the top security mental hospital. In January 2003, Mahmoud was sent back to Belmarsh. He is now on a hunger strike.

DENIED ACCESS TO LAWYERS

Yaser Esam Hamdi was arrested during the war in Afghanistan, reportedly after surrendering to the Northern Alliance. He was detained in Guantanamo Bay until he was found to be a US citizen. He was transferred to a secret location in the US in April 2002. He is being held without access to a lawyer or his family.

In January 2003, a US court upheld the government's right to designate a citizen as an "enemy combatant" and hold him or her indefinitely, without charge and the ability to see a lawyer. Part of the basis for the court's decision was an affidavit by a military bureaucrat indicating Hamdi was a good intelligence resource for the government whose value would be lessened if he were given access to lawyers. The ruling dooms Hamdi to legal limbo unless the Supreme Court reverses it.

Other detainees have had access to lawyers denied, but the Hamdi case makes the practice legal.

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End of Document

Kerry's Undeclared War

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Byline: By Matt Bai

Matt Bai, a contributing writer, is covering the presidential campaign for the magazine.

Body

As New York and Washington were under attack on Sept. 11, 2001, a film crew happened to come upon John Kerry leaving the Capitol. The brief moment of footage, included in a BBC documentary called "Clear the Skies," tells us something, perhaps, about Kerry in a crisis. The camera captures Congressional aides and visitors, clearly distraught and holding onto one another, streaming down the back steps of the Capitol building in near panic, following the bellowed instructions of anxious police. Off to one side of the screen, there is Kerry, alone, his long legs carrying him calmly down the steps, his neck craning toward the sky, as if he were watching a gathering rainstorm. His face and demeanor appear unworried. Kerry could be a man lost in his thoughts who just happens to have wandered onto the set of a disaster film.

"I remember looking up at the sky as I walked down the steps," Kerry told me recently, when I asked him about the film clip. He said that he and other members of the Senate's Democratic leadership had just watched on television as the second plane hit the World Trade Center, and shortly after that they heard the sonic boom of an explosion and saw, through a large window, the black smoke rise from the Pentagon. "We'd had some warning that there was some airplane in the sky. And I remember seeing a great big plane -- I think it was a 747 or something -- up there, but it wasn't moving in a way that, you know, I was particularly concerned. I remember feeling a rage, a huge anger, and I remember turning to somebody and saying, 'This is war.' I said, 'This is an act of war.'"

After leaving the Capitol on that terrible day, Kerry walked across the street to his office in the Russell Senate building, where he made sure that his staff had been evacuated and was safe. Reluctant to leave Capitol Hill, he watched TV coverage in his office and saw the second tower fall. He called his older daughter, Alexandra, who was living in New York, and his wife, Teresa, who was in Washington. Those who saw Kerry that morning recall mainly that he was furious, an emotion, those close to him say, that comes easily to him in times of trial. He thought it was a mistake to shut down the Capitol, to show terrorists that they had the power to send the United States government into hiding.

"You know, my instinct was, Where's my gun?" Kerry told me. "How do you fight back? I wanted to do something." That evening, sitting at home, he called an aide and said he wanted to go to New York that very night to help the rescuers; he was ultimately convinced that such a trip was logistically impossible. In the days ahead, Kerry would make two trips to ground zero to see what remained of the carnage.

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With the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the geopolitical currents that Washington had spent half a century mastering shifted all at once. It isn't clear how long it took Kerry -- a senator for nearly 20 years and, in September 2001, an undeclared candidate for the presidency -- to understand the political magnitude of that change. George W. Bush and his advisers got it almost instantly. Few men get to be president, and far fewer get to be president at a critical, transformative moment; Bush, seizing the opportunity, recast himself as the accidental protagonist of a new and dramatic national narrative. Less than a year removed from a disputed election, he set about elbowing his way into the small pantheon of modern presidents -- F.D.R. after Pearl Harbor, Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis -- who led the nation in profound moments of peril.

Before the smoke had even dissipated over Manhattan, Bush presented the country with an ambitious, overarching construct for a new era in foreign relations. "The war on terror," as he put it, was this generation's test of military and ideological resolve, different from the ones that came before with regard to tactics, perhaps, but not in the magnitude of the challenges or the ambition of the enemy. Bush explained that Al Qaeda and its allies and imitators would constitute a new kind of menace in the years ahead, stealthier and less predictable than past enemies. And yet, in their opposition to American principles and the threat they posed to the nation, he suggested, the Islamic terrorists were the equivalent of Hitler and Stalin, and defeating them would require the same steel and the same conviction that guided America in the last century's campaigns.

While Bush and much of the country seemed remade by the historic events of 9/11, Democrats in Washington were slow to understand that the attacks had to change them in some way too. What adjustments they made were, at first, defensive. Spooked by Bush's surging popularity and the nation's suddenly ascendant mood of patriotism, Democrats stifled their instinctive concerns over civil liberties; and whatever their previous misgivings about intervention, many Congressional Democrats, a year after the terrorist attacks, voted to give Bush the authority to invade Iraq.

What few Democrats did at the time was think creatively about the new world of foreign policy. The candidates who began their runs for the presidency last year, from Dennis Kucinich and his peace platform on the left to Joe Lieberman and Dick Gephardt on the other side of the spectrum, attacked the president's foreign policy from different directions, but if any new ideas emerged during those months, they were soon drowned out by the booming anti-war voice of Howard Dean. When Kerry emerged as the most palatable alternative, he at first ran mostly on the viability of his personal story, focusing more on his combat experience in Vietnam than on any plan to fight Al Qaeda or remake Iraq. Only since Labor Day has Kerry begun to sharpen his distinctions with Bush on national security and foreign policy. In a series of combative speeches and statements, and in a crisp performance at the first head-to-head debate, Kerry has argued that Bush's war in Iraq is a disaster, that troops should be brought home before the end of the next presidential term and that the Iraq war is a "profound diversion" from the war on terror and the real showdown with Al Qaeda.

What Kerry still has not done is to articulate clearly a larger foreign-policy vision, his own overarching alternative to Bush's global war on terror. The difference between the two men was clear during the foreign-policy debate in Florida 10 days ago. Kerry seemed dominant for much of the exchange, making clear arguments on a range of specific challenges -- the war in Iraq, negotiations with North Korea, relations with Russia. But while Kerry bore in on ground-level details, Bush, in defending his policies, seemed, characteristically, to be looking at the world from a much higher altitude, repeating in his brief and sometimes agitated statements a single unifying worldview: America is the world's great force for freedom, unsparing in its use of pre-emptive might and unstinting in its determination to stamp out tyranny and terrorism. Kerry seemed to offer no grand thematic equivalent.

Inside liberal think-tanks, there are Democratic foreign-policy experts who are challenging some of Bush's most basic assumptions about the post-9/11 world -- including, most provocatively, the very idea that we are, in fact, in a war. But Kerry has tended to steer clear of this conversation, preferring to attack Bush for the way he is fighting terrorism rather than for the way in which he perceives and frames the threat itself.

The argument going on in Washington has its roots in the dark years of the cold war. Just about everyone agrees that many factors contributed to America's triumph over world communism -- but people differ on which of those factors were most important. The neo-conservatives who shaped Reagan's anti-Soviet policy and now shape

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Bush's war on terror have long held that the "twilight struggle" with the Soviet empire was won primarily as a result of U.S. military intervention in several hemispheres and of Reagan's massive arms buildup, without which democracy and free markets could not have taken hold. Many liberals, on the other hand, have never been comfortable with that premise; while they acknowledge that American military power played a role, they contend that the long ideological struggle with communism ended chiefly because the stifling economic and social tenets of Marxism were unsustainable, and because a new leader emerged -- Mikhail Gorbachev -- who understood that. They see Islamic fanaticism, similarly, as a repressive ideology, born of complex societal conditions, that won't be defeated by any predominately military solution.

In the liberal view, the enemy this time -- an entirely new kind of "non-state actor" known as Al Qaeda -- more closely resembles an especially murderous drug cartel than it does the vaunted Red Army. Instead of military might, liberal thinkers believe, the moment calls for a combination of expansive diplomacy abroad and interdiction at home, an effort more akin to the war on drugs than to any conventional war of the last century.

Even Democrats who stress that combating terrorism should include a strong military option argue that the "war on terror" is a flawed construct. "We're not in a war on terror, in the literal sense," says Richard Holbrooke, the Clinton-era diplomat who could well become Kerry's secretary of state. "The war on terror is like saying 'the war on poverty.' It's just a metaphor. What we're really talking about is winning the ideological struggle so that people stop turning themselves into suicide bombers."

These competing philosophies, neo-conservative and liberal, aren't mutually exclusive, of course. Neo-cons will agree that military operations are just one facet, albeit the main one, of their response to terrorism. And liberals are almost unanimous in their support for military force when the nation or its allies face an imminent and preventable threat; not only did the vast majority of liberal policy makers support the invasion of Afghanistan, but many also thought it should have been pursued more aggressively. Still, the philosophical difference between the two camps, applied to a conflict that may well last a generation, is both deep and distinct. Fundamentally, Bush sees the war on terror as a military campaign, not simply to protect American lives but also to preserve and spread American values around the world; his liberal critics see it more as an ideological campaign, one that will turn back a tide of resentment toward Americans and thus limit the peril they face at home.

Perhaps the most pressing question of the presidential campaign is where John Kerry stands in this debate. The man who would be the first Vietnam veteran to occupy the Oval Office has doggedly tried to merge both worldviews, repeatedly vowing to fight both a more fierce and a more restrained, multifaceted war on terror. Aides say this is evidence of his capacity to envision complex solutions for a complex world; voters, through the summer and early fall, seemed less impressed. In a typical poll conducted by The Washington Post and ABC News just before the first presidential debate, only 37 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that Kerry would make the country safer. A New York Times/CBS News poll conducted in mid-September found that half the respondents thought Bush would make the right decisions to protect the nation from terrorism, compared with only 26 percent who said the same thing about Kerry.

More surprising than the poll numbers, though, is the sense of frustration, expressed not just by voters but by some in Kerry's own party, that even at this late hour, Kerry's long-term strategy for defeating the terrorists remains so ethereal. "You will lose, and we will win," Kerry told America's enemies in the most memorable line of his convention speech in late July. "The future doesn't belong to fear. It belongs to freedom." But how will we win? How do you root out and destroy Islamic radicals while at the same time capturing the "hearts and minds" of Islamic students? When John Kerry said, on Sept. 11, 2001, "This is war," what precisely did he mean?

On an evening in August, just after a campaign swing through the Southwest, Kerry and I met, for the second of three conversations about terrorism and national security, in a hotel room overlooking the Ferris wheel on the Santa Monica pier. A row of Evian water bottles had been thoughtfully placed on a nearby table. Kerry frowned.

"Can we get any of my water?" he asked Stephanie Cutter, his communications director, who dutifully scurried from the room. I asked Kerry, out of sheer curiosity, what he didn't like about Evian.

"I hate that stuff," Kerry explained to me. "They pack it full of minerals."

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"What kind of water do you drink?" I asked, trying to make conversation.

"Plain old American water," he said.

"You mean tap water?"

"No," Kerry replied deliberately. He seemed now to sense some kind of trap. I was left to imagine what was going through his head. If I admit that I drink bottled water, then he might say I'm out of touch with ordinary voters. But doesn't demanding my own brand of water seem even more aristocratic? Then again, Evian is French -- important to stay away from anything even remotely French.

"There are all kinds of waters," he said finally. Pause. "Saratoga Spring." This seemed to have exhausted his list. "Sometimes I drink tap water," he added.

After months of having his every word scrutinized by reporters and mocked by Republicans, Kerry appeared to sense danger in the most mundane of places. Interviewing him reminded me at times of what I'd read in "Tour of Duty," the historian Douglas Brinkley's flattering account of Kerry's service in Vietnam. The Swift boat crews on the Mekong Delta and the Ca Mau Peninsula did not aspire to be heroic, although they were. Kerry and the young sailors were given patrol missions that seemed unnecessarily dangerous; their job was essentially to prove the point that Americans could traverse the windy rivers of the delta, rife with Vietcong, and lure the enemy out into the open. They traveled slowly and kept watch in all directions, and if their leader got them from point A to point B and back again without serious casualties, he had done his job.

Kerry seems to find presidential politics in the era of Karl Rove as treacherous as riverine warfare, and he has run for the presidency in much the same way. From the beginning, Kerry's advisers said that the election would be principally a referendum on Bush, whose approval ratings, reflecting public anxiety over Iraq and a sluggish economy, were consistently low for a president seeking re-election. All Kerry had to do to win, the thinking went, was to meet a basic threshold of acceptability with voters and avoid doing or saying anything that might be fatally stupid. The riverbanks were lined with hostile Republicans and reporters, lying in wait for him, and Kerry's goal as he sailed upriver was simple: Stay down. Exercise caution. Get to November in one piece.

Which is exactly what it's like to interview Kerry as he runs for the presidency; he acts as if you've been sent to destroy him, and he can't quite figure out why in the world he should be sitting across from you. When I met him for our first conversation, in his cabin aboard the 757 that shuttles his campaign around the country, Kerry didn't extend his hand or even look up to greet me when I entered, and he grew so quickly and obviously exasperated with my questions about his thoughts and votes on Iraq that he cut the interview short. (Embarrassed aides later told me he had been abruptly roused from a nap.) He was far more gracious in our subsequent conversations about terrorism and foreign policy, but he still spent a lot of the time repeating phrases from his stump speech. ("You will lose, we will win," and so on.) What some politicians -- Bill Clinton comes to mind -- might have considered an opportunity to persuade and impress voters, Kerry seemed to regard only as an invitation to do himself harm.

Kerry's guardedness has contributed to the impression that he does not think clearly or boldly about foreign policy. In his short but fascinating book titled "Surprise, Security and the American Experience," the Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis suggests that Bush's framework for fighting terrorism has its roots in the lofty, idealistic tradition of John Quincy Adams and Woodrow Wilson. (The book was so popular in the White House that Gaddis was invited over for a discussion.) "What Bush is proposing is quite long-term, quite radical and quite Wilsonian," Gaddis told me when we spoke; when I asked him about Kerry, he said: "I don't know where Kerry is on this. I don't have the slightest clue."

Kerry's adversaries have found it easy to ridicule his views on foreign policy, suggesting that his idea of counterterrorism is simply to go around arresting all the terrorists. This is what Dick Cheney was getting at when he said last month that there was a danger, should Kerry be elected, that "we'll fall back into the pre-9/11 mind-set, if you will, that in fact these terrorist attacks are just criminal acts, and that we're not really at war." These barbs have some resonance, largely because Kerry is so obviously defensive about them; talking to him, you sometimes get the sense that he would gladly throw on a pair of night-vision goggles and abduct a member of his own staff if he

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thought it would prove he could be as tough on terror as his opponent. (When I asked one Kerry adviser what it was that voters needed to know about Kerry and terrorism, he replied without hesitation. "That he's strong and tough," he said. "In the case of John Kerry, unlike Dick Cheney and George W. Bush, he's looked people in the face and shot them dead.")

It's perhaps not surprising, then, that Kerry hasn't been eager to challenge Bush's grand notion of a war on terror; such a distinction might sound weak, equivocal or, worse yet, nuanced. It's equally unsurprising that, in the recent Times poll, 57 percent of the respondents said Kerry hadn't made his plans for the country clear, and 63 percent believed he said what he thought people wanted to hear, rather than what he actually thought. This reflected savage Republican attacks on Kerry's character, to be sure, but it probably also had something to do with the fact that he hadn't made his plans clear and seemed to be saying what he thought people wanted to hear.

When I asked Kerry's campaign advisers about these poll numbers, what I heard from some of them in response was that Kerry's theories on global affairs were just too complex for the electorate and would have been ignored -- or, worse yet, mangled -- by the press. "Yes, he should have laid out this issue and many others in greater detail and with more intellectual creativity, there's no question," one adviser told me. "But it would have had no effect."

This is, of course, a common Democratic refrain: Republicans sound more coherent because they see the world in such a rudimentary way, while Democrats, 10 steps ahead of the rest of the country, wrestle with profound policy issues that don't lend themselves to slogans. By this reasoning, any proposal that can be explained concisely to voters is, by definition, ineffective and lacking in gravitas. Other Kerry aides blame the candidate and his coterie of message makers, most of whom are legendary for their attack ads but less adept at thinking about broad policy arguments. "If you talk about this the right way, then the American people, or most of them, will get it," one of Kerry's informal advisers told me. "But you've got to have guts."

This is the Republican line on Kerry -- that he lacks guts. Kerry's often wobbly attempt to be both like and unlike Bush in his approach to terrorism and the war in Iraq enabled the Bush team, by the time Kerry and I spoke in August, to portray him, devastatingly, as a "flip-flopper" who careens from one position to another. In our conversation, Kerry seemed unusually sensitive to these allegations, to the point where he seemed unwilling to admit to having evolved or grown in the way that politicians -- or human beings, for that matter -- generally do. When I asked Kerry how Sept. 11 had changed him, either personally or politically, he seemed to freeze for a moment.

"It accelerated -- " He paused. "I mean, it didn't change me much at all. It just sort of accelerated, confirmed in me, the urgency of doing the things I thought we needed to be doing. I mean, to me, it wasn't as transformational as it was a kind of anger, a frustration and an urgency that we weren't doing the kinds of things necessary to prevent it and to deal with it."

Kerry did allow that he, like other Americans, felt less safe after 9/11. "Look, until a few months ago," he said, referring to the time before he was enveloped in a Secret Service escort and whisked around on charter planes, "I was flying like everybody else, you know, going through things. Absolutely, I've looked at people very carefully on an airplane. I'd look at shoes. I'd check people who I thought might be a little squirrely. Going into crowded events, I feel very much on the alert."

Bush attacked Kerry earlier in the campaign over this question of whether the war on terror was really a war. ("My opponent indicated that he's not comfortable using the word 'war' to describe the struggle we're in," Bush said, although whether Kerry had actually said that is debatable.) Now that I'd heard Holbrooke and others say flat out that we weren't in an actual war, I wanted to hear what Kerry thought. Is this a real war, or a metaphorical one? I asked him. Is "war" the right word to use?

"There's a danger in it," Kerry said, nodding. "But it's real," he went on, meaning the war itself. "You know, when your buildings are bombed and 3,000 people get killed, and airplanes are hijacked, and a nation is terrorized the way we were, and people continue to plot to do you injury, that's an act of war, and it's serious business. But it's a different kind of war. You have to understand that this is not the sands of Iwo Jima. This is a completely new, different kind of war from any we've fought previously."

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Kerry told me he would stop terrorists by going after them ruthlessly with the military, and he faulted Bush, as he often does, for choosing to use Afghan militias, instead of American troops, to pursue Osama bin Laden into the mountains of Tora Bora, where he disappeared. "I'm certainly, you know, not going to take second seat to anybody, to nobody, in my willingness to seek justice and set America on a course -- to make America safe," Kerry told me. "And that requires destroying terrorists. And I'm committed to doing that. But I think I have a better way of doing it. I can do it more effectively."

This was a word that Kerry came back to repeatedly in our discussions; he told me he would wage a more "effective" war on terror no less than 18 times in two hours of conversations. The question, of course, was how.

"I think we can do a better job," Kerry said, "of cutting off financing, of exposing groups, of working cooperatively across the globe, of improving our intelligence capabilities nationally and internationally, of training our military and deploying them differently, of specializing in special forces and special ops, of working with allies, and most importantly -- and I mean most importantly -- of restoring America's reputation as a country that listens, is sensitive, brings people to our side, is the seeker of peace, not war, and that uses our high moral ground and high-level values to augment us in the war on terror, not to diminish us."

This last point was what Kerry seemed to be getting at with his mantra of "effectiveness," and it was in fact the main thrust of his campaign pitch about terrorism. By infuriating allies and diminishing the country's international esteem, Kerry argued, Bush had made it impossible for America to achieve its goals abroad. By the simple act of changing presidents, the country would greatly increase its chances of success in the global war on terror. Both candidates, in fact, were suggesting that the main difference between them was one of leadership style and not policy; just as Bush had taken to arguing that Kerry was too inconstant to lead a nation at war, Kerry's critique centered on the idea that Bush had proved himself too stubborn and arrogant to represent America to the rest of the world.

But when you listen carefully to what Bush and Kerry say, it becomes clear that the differences between them are more profound than the matter of who can be more effective in achieving the same ends. Bush casts the war on terror as a vast struggle that is likely to go on indefinitely, or at least as long as radical Islam commands fealty in regions of the world. In a rare moment of either candor or carelessness, or perhaps both, Bush told Matt Lauer on the "Today" show in August that he didn't think the United States could actually triumph in the war on terror in the foreseeable future. "I don't think you can win it," he said -- a statement that he and his aides tried to disown but that had the ring of sincerity to it. He and other members of his administration have said that Americans should expect to be attacked again, and that the constant shadow of danger that hangs over major cities like New York and Washington is the cost of freedom. In his rhetoric, Bush suggests that terrorism for this generation of Americans is and should be an overwhelming and frightening reality.

When I asked Kerry what it would take for Americans to feel safe again, he displayed a much less apocalyptic worldview. "We have to get back to the place we were, where terrorists are not the focus of our lives, but they're a nuisance," Kerry said. "As a former law-enforcement person, I know we're never going to end prostitution. We're never going to end illegal gambling. But we're going to reduce it, organized crime, to a level where it isn't on the rise. It isn't threatening people's lives every day, and fundamentally, it's something that you continue to fight, but it's not threatening the fabric of your life."

This analogy struck me as remarkable, if only because it seemed to throw down a big orange marker between Kerry's philosophy and the president's. Kerry, a former prosecutor, was suggesting that the war, if one could call it that, was, if not winnable, then at least controllable. If mobsters could be chased into the back rooms of seedy clubs, then so, too, could terrorists be sent scurrying for their lives into remote caves where they wouldn't harm us. Bush had continually cast himself as the optimist in the race, asserting that he alone saw the liberating potential of American might, and yet his dark vision of unending war suddenly seemed far less hopeful than Kerry's notion that all of this horror -- planes flying into buildings, anxiety about suicide bombers and chemicals in the subway -- could somehow be made to recede until it was barely in our thoughts.

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Kerry came to his worldview over the course of a Senate career that has been, by any legislative standard, a quiet affair. Beginning in the late 80's, Kerry's Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations investigated and exposed connections between Latin American drug dealers and BCCI, the international bank that was helping to launder drug money. That led to more investigations of arms dealers, money laundering and terrorist financing.

Kerry turned his work on the committee into a book on global crime, titled "The New War," published in 1997. He readily admitted to me that the book "wasn't exclusively on Al Qaeda"; in fact, it barely mentioned the rise of Islamic extremism. But when I spoke to Kerry in August, he said that many of the interdiction tactics that cripple drug lords, including governments working jointly to share intelligence, patrol borders and force banks to identify suspicious customers, can also be some of the most useful tools in the war on terror.

"Of all the records in the Senate, if you don't mind my saying, I think I was ahead of the curve on this entire dark side of globalization," he said. "I think that the Senate committee report on contras, narcotics and drugs, et cetera, is a seminal report. People have based research papers on it. People have based documents on it, movies on it. I think it was a significant piece of work."

More senior members of the foreign-relations committee, like Joe Biden and Richard Lugar, were far more visible and vocal on the emerging threat of Islamic terrorism. But through his BCCI investigation, Kerry did discover that a wide array of international criminals -- Latin American drug lords, Palestinian terrorists, arms dealers -- had one thing in common: they were able to move money around through the same illicit channels. And he worked hard, and with little credit, to shut those channels down.

In 1988, Kerry successfully proposed an amendment that forced the Treasury Department to negotiate so-called Kerry Agreements with foreign countries. Under these agreements, foreign governments had to promise to keep a close watch on their banks for potential money laundering or they risked losing their access to U.S. markets. Other measures Kerry tried to pass throughout the 90's, virtually all of them blocked by Republican senators on the banking committee, would end up, in the wake of 9/11, in the USA Patriot Act; among other things, these measures subject banks to fines or loss of license if they don't take steps to verify the identities of their customers and to avoid being used for money laundering.

Through his immersion in the global underground, Kerry made connections among disparate criminal and terrorist groups that few other senators interested in foreign policy were making in the 90's. Richard A. Clarke, who coordinated security and counterterrorism policy for George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, credits Kerry with having seen beyond the national-security tableau on which most of his colleagues were focused. "He was getting it at the same time that people like Tony Lake were getting it, in the '93 -'94 time frame," Clarke says, referring to Anthony Lake, Clinton's national security adviser. "And the 'it' here was that there was a new nonstate-actor threat, and that nonstate-actor threat was a blended threat that didn't fit neatly into the box of organized criminal, or neatly into the box of terrorism. What you found were groups that were all of the above."

In other words, Kerry was among the first policy makers in Washington to begin mapping out a strategy to combat an entirely new kind of enemy. Americans were conditioned, by two world wars and a long standoff with a rival superpower, to see foreign policy as a mix of cooperation and tension between civilized states. Kerry came to believe, however, that Americans were in greater danger from the more shadowy groups he had been investigating -- nonstate actors, armed with cellphones and laptops -- who might detonate suitcase bombs or release lethal chemicals into the subway just to make a point. They lived in remote regions and exploited weak governments. Their goal wasn't to govern states but to destabilize them.

The challenge of beating back these nonstate actors -- not just Islamic terrorists but all kinds of rogue forces -- is what Kerry meant by "the dark side of globalization." He came closest to articulating this as an actual foreign-policy vision in a speech he gave at U.C.L.A. last February. "The war on terror is not a clash of civilizations," he said then. "It is a clash of civilization against chaos, of the best hopes of humanity against dogmatic fears of progress and the future."

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This stands in significant contrast to the Bush doctrine, which holds that the war on terror, if not exactly a clash of civilizations, is nonetheless a struggle between those states that would promote terrorism and those that would exterminate it. Bush, like Kerry, accepts the premise that America is endangered mainly by a new kind of adversary that claims no state or political entity as its own. But he does not accept the idea that those adversaries can ultimately survive and operate independently of states; in fact, he asserts that terrorist groups are inevitably the subsidiaries of irresponsible regimes. "We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients," the National Security Strategy said, in a typical passage, "before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends."

By singling out three states in particular- Iraq, North Korea and Iran -- as an "axis of evil," and by invading Iraq on the premise that it did (or at least might) sponsor terrorism, Bush cemented the idea that his war on terror is a war against those states that, in the president's words, are not with us but against us. Many of Bush's advisers spent their careers steeped in cold-war strategy, and their foreign policy is deeply rooted in the idea that states are the only consequential actors on the world stage, and that they can -- and should -- be forced to exercise control over the violent groups that take root within their borders.

Kerry's view, on the other hand, suggests that it is the very premise of civilized states, rather than any one ideology, that is under attack. And no one state, acting alone, can possibly have much impact on the threat, because terrorists will always be able to move around, shelter their money and connect in cyberspace; there are no capitals for a superpower like the United States to bomb, no ambassadors to recall, no economies to sanction. The U.S. military searches for bin Laden, the Russians hunt for the Chechen terrorist Shamil Basayev and the Israelis fire missiles at Hamas bomb makers; in Kerry's world, these disparate terrorist elements make up a loosely affiliated network of diabolical villains, more connected to one another by tactics and ideology than they are to any one state sponsor. The conflict, in Kerry's formulation, pits the forces of order versus the forces of chaos, and only a unified community of nations can ensure that order prevails.

One can infer from this that if Kerry were able to speak less guardedly, in a less treacherous atmosphere than a political campaign, he might say, as some of his advisers do, that we are not in an actual war on terror. Wars are fought between states or between factions vying for control of a state; Al Qaeda and its many offspring are neither. If Kerry's foreign-policy frame is correct, then law enforcement probably is the most important, though not the only, strategy you can employ against such forces, who need passports and bank accounts and weapons in order to survive and flourish. Such a theory suggests that, in our grief and fury, we have overrated the military threat posed by Al Qaeda, paradoxically elevating what was essentially a criminal enterprise, albeit a devastatingly sophisticated and global one, into the ideological successor to Hitler and Stalin -- and thus conferring on the jihadists a kind of stature that might actually work in their favor, enabling them to attract more donations and more recruits.

This critical difference between the two men running for the presidency, over what kind of enemy we are fighting and how best to defeat it, is at the core of a larger debate over how the United States should involve itself in the Muslim world. Bush and Kerry are in agreement, as is just about every expert on Islamic culture you can find, that in order for Americans to live and travel securely, the United States must change the widespread perception among many Muslims worldwide that America is morally corrupt and economically exploitative. It is this resentment, felt especially strongly among Arab Muslims, that makes heroes of suicide bombers. The question vexing the foreign-policy establishment in Washington is how you market freedom. Is the establishment of a single, functioning democracy in the Middle East enough to win the "hearts and minds" of ordinary Muslims, by convincing them that America is in fact the model for a free, more open society? Or do you need to somehow strike at the underlying conditions -- despotism, hopelessness, economic and social repression -- that breed fundamentalism and violence in the first place?

"You've got to do something to acknowledge the gulf that exists between the dispossessed Arab world and us, because it's huge," says Bob Kerrey, the former Democratic senator who is now president of New School University and who served on the independent 9/11 commission. "We don't have enough money, we don't have enough parents who are willing to give up their sons and daughters, to win this with our Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. We don't have the bodies to do it. So if you don't have a real agenda of hope that's as hard-headed and tough as your military and law-enforcement agenda, we're not going to win this thing."

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The neo-conservatives have advanced a viral theory of democracy. In their view, establishing a model democracy in the Arab world, by force if necessary, no matter how many years and lives it takes, would ultimately benefit not only the people of that country but also America too. A free and democratic Iraq, to take the favorite example, will cause the people of other repressive countries in the region to rise up and demand American-style freedom, and these democratic nations will no longer be breeding pools for nihilistic terrorists. Like so much of Bush's policy, this kind of thinking harks directly back to the cold war. The domino theory that took hold during the 1950's maintained that an ideological change in one nation -- "going" communist or democratic -- could infect its neighbor; it was based in part on the idea that ideologies could be contagious.

Bush crystallized the new incarnation of this idea in his convention speech last month, notable for the unapologetic sweep and clarity of its vision. "The terrorists know that a vibrant, successful democracy at the heart of the Middle East will discredit their radical ideology of hate," the president said. "I believe in the transformational power of liberty. As the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq seize the moment, their example will send a message of hope throughout a vital region. Palestinians will hear the message that democracy and reform are within their reach, and so is peace with our good friend Israel. Young women across the Middle East will hear the message that their day of equality and justice is coming. Young men will hear the message that national progress and dignity are found in liberty, not tyranny and terror."

Kerry, too, envisions a freer and more democratic Middle East. But he flatly rejects the premise of viral democracy, particularly when the virus is introduced at gunpoint. "In this administration, the approach is that democracy is the automatic, easily embraced alternative to every ill in the region," he told me. Kerry disagreed. "You can't impose it on people," he said. "You have to bring them to it. You have to invite them to it. You have to nurture the process."

Those who know Kerry say this belief is in part a reaction to his own experience in Vietnam, where one understanding of the domino theory ("if Vietnam goes communist, all of Asia will fall") led to the death of 58,000 Americans, and another ("the South Vietnamese crave democracy") ran up against the realities of life in a poor, long-war-ravaged country. The people of Vietnam, Kerry found, were susceptible neither to the dogma of communism nor the persuasiveness of American "liberation." As the young Kerry said during his 1971 testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "We found most people didn't even know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. They wanted everything to do with the war, particularly with this foreign presence of the United States of America, to leave them alone in peace."

Biden, who is perhaps Kerry's closest friend in the Senate, suggests that Kerry sees Bush's advisers as beholden to the same grand and misguided theories. "John and I never believed that, if you were successful in Iraq, you'd have governments falling like dominoes in the Middle East," he told me. "The neo-cons of today are 'the best and the brightest' who brought us Vietnam. They have taken a construct that's flawed and applied it to a world that isn't relevant."

In fact, Kerry and his advisers contend that the occupation of Iraq is creating a reverse contagion in the region; they say the fighting -- with its heavy civilian casualties and its pictures, beamed throughout the Arab world, of American aggression -- has been a boon to Al Qaeda recruiters. They frequently cite a Pentagon memo, leaked to the media last year, in which Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld wondered whether Al Qaeda was recruiting new terrorists faster than the U.S. military could capture or kill them. "God help us if we damage the shrine in Najaf," Richard Holbrooke told me on a day when marines surrounded insurgent Shiites inside the shrine, "and we create a new group of Shiites who some years from now blow up the Statue of Liberty or something like that, all because we destroyed the holiest site in Shiism."

If forced democracy is ultimately Bush's panacea for the ills that haunt the world, as Kerry suggests it is, then Kerry's is diplomacy. Kerry mentions the importance of cooperating with the world community so often that some of his strongest supporters wish he would ease up a bit. ("When people hear multilateral, they think multi-mush," Biden despaired.) But multilateralism is not an abstraction to Kerry, whose father served as a career diplomat during the years after World War II. The only time I saw Kerry truly animated during two hours of conversation was when he talked about the ability of a president to build relationships with other leaders.

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"We need to engage more directly and more respectfully with Islam, with the state of Islam, with religious leaders, mullahs, imams, clerics, in a way that proves this is not a clash with the British and the Americans and the old forces they remember from the colonial days," Kerry told me during a rare break from campaigning, in Seattle at the end of August. "And that's all about your diplomacy."

When I suggested that effecting such changes could take many years, Kerry shook his head vehemently and waved me off.

"Yeah, it is long-term, but it can be dramatically effective in the short term. It really can be. I promise you." He leaned his head back and slapped his thighs. "A new presidency with the right moves, the right language, the right outreach, the right initiatives, can dramatically alter the world's perception of us very, very quickly."

"I know Mubarak well enough to know what I think I could achieve in the messaging and in the press in Egypt," Kerry went on. "And, similarly, with Jordan and with King Abdullah, and what we can do in terms of transformation in the economics of the region by getting American businesspeople involved, getting some stability and really beginning to proactively move in those ways. We just haven't been doing any of this stuff. We've been stunningly disengaged, with the exception of Iraq."

"I mean, you ever hear anything about the 'road map' anymore?" he asked, referring to the international plan for phasing in peace between Israel and the Palestinians, which Kerry supports. "No. You ever hear anything about anything anymore? No. Do you hear anything about this greater Middle East initiative, the concepts or anything? No. I think we're fighting a very narrow, myopic kind of war."

It is not a coincidence that Kerry's greatest success in the Senate came not during his long run of investigations but in the realm of diplomacy. He and John McCain worked for several years to settle the controversy over P.O.W.-M.I.A.'s and to normalize relations with Vietnam -- an achievement that Kerry's Senate colleagues consider his finest moment. "He should talk about it more," Bob Kerrey said. "He transformed the region." In the same way, John Kerry sees himself as a kind of ambassador-president, shuttling to world capitals and reintegrating America, by force of personality, into the world community.

He would begin, if sworn into office, by going immediately to the United Nations to deliver a speech recasting American foreign policy. Whereas Bush has branded North Korea "evil" and refuses to negotiate head on with its authoritarian regime, Kerry would open bilateral talks over its burgeoning nuclear program. Similarly, he has said he would rally other nations behind sanctions against Iran if that country refuses to abandon its nuclear ambitions. Kerry envisions appointing a top-level envoy to restart the Middle East peace process, and he's intent on getting India and Pakistan to adopt key provisions of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. (One place where Kerry vows to take a harder line than Bush is Pakistan, where Bush has embraced the military ruler Pervez Musharraf, and where Kerry sees a haven for chaos in the vast and lawless region on the border with Afghanistan.) In all of this, Kerry intends to use as leverage America's considerable capacity for economic aid; a Kerry adviser told me, only slightly in jest, that Kerry's most tempting fantasy is to attend the G-8 summit.

Kerry's view, that the 21st century will be defined by the organized world's struggle against agents of chaos and lawlessness, might be the beginning of a compelling vision. The idea that America and its allies, sharing resources and using the latest technologies, could track the movements of terrorists, seize their bank accounts and carry out targeted military strikes to eliminate them, seems more optimistic and more practical than the notion that the conventional armies of the United States will inevitably have to punish or even invade every Islamic country that might abet radicalism.

And yet, you can understand why Kerry has been so tentative in advancing this idea. It's comforting to think that Al Qaeda might be as easily marginalized as a bunch of drug-running thugs, that an "effective" assault on its bank accounts might cripple its twisted campaign against Americans. But Americans are frightened -- an emotion that has benefited Bush, and one that he has done little to dissuade -- and many of them perceive a far more existential threat to their lives than the one Kerry describes. In this climate, Kerry's rather dry recitations about money-laundering laws and intelligence-sharing agreements can sound oddly discordant. We are living at a time that feels

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historically consequential, where people seem to expect -- and perhaps deserve -- a theory of the world that matches the scope of their insecurity.

Theoretically, Kerry could still find a way to wrap his ideas into some bold and cohesive construct for the next half-century -- a Kerry Doctrine, perhaps, or a campaign against chaos, rather than a war on terror -- that people will understand and relate to. But he has always been a man who prides himself on appreciating the subtleties of public policy, and everything in his experience has conditioned him to avoid unsubtle constructs and grand designs. His aversion to Big Think has resulted in one of the campaign's oddities: it is Bush, the man vilified by liberals as intellectually vapid, who has emerged as the de facto visionary in the campaign, trying to impose some long-term thematic order on a dangerous and disorderly world, while Kerry carves the globe into a series of discrete problems with specific solutions.

When Kerry first told me that Sept. 11 had not changed him, I was surprised. I assumed everyone in America -- and certainly in Washington -- had been changed by that day. I assumed he was being overly cautious, afraid of providing his opponents with yet another cheap opportunity to call him a flip-flopper. What I came to understand was that, in fact, the attacks really had not changed the way Kerry viewed or talked about terrorism -- which is exactly why he has come across, to some voters, as less of a leader than he could be. He may well have understood the threat from Al Qaeda long before the rest of us. And he may well be right, despite the ridicule from Cheney and others, when he says that a multinational, law-enforcement-like approach can be more effective in fighting terrorists. But his less lofty vision might have seemed more satisfying -- and would have been easier to talk about in a political campaign -- in a world where the twin towers still stood.

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Graphic

Photos: Candidate in Motion Kerry in St. Louis in September. (video by Taryn Simon)

Taking Sides: Kerry disagrees with the democracy-at-gunpoint doctrine. "You can't impose it on people. . . . You have to invite them to it. You have to nurture the process." (Photographs by Taryn Simon for The New York Times)

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Fern Holland's War

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Body

Late one night this past March in the Babylon Hotel, on the banks of the Euphrates River, Fern Holland sat alone in her office writing e-mail -- unwinding, she wrote to a friend, with a glass of Johnnie Walker and listening to Michelle Branch singing "All You Wanted." She had many things on her mind, and among them was figuring out where she could get a bulldozer so she could help two Iraqi women get their land back.

The Babylon Hotel, in Hilla, about an hour's drive south of Baghdad, used to be a regular haunt of Saddam Hussein's intelligence agents. Now it was home to Holland's employer, the south-central regional branch of the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority. The Hilla office was responsible for governing the Shiite heartland of Iraq. Holland, who was 33, had practiced law for several years in her native Oklahoma and worked as a human rights legal adviser in West Africa before she signed up in July of last year to help bring democracy and the rule of law to Iraq. "Whatever the Bush administration's motive was for invading Iraq, it didn't matter to Fern," a friend of hers in Tulsa told me. An idealist tempered by realism, Holland was a doer, not a doubter.

Since her arrival in Iraq, she and her Iraqi assistant, Salwa Oumashi, had fertilized a broad swath of the middle Euphrates region with ideas of change. She organized human rights groups, opened women's centers and acted as a strong advocate for Iraqi women's rights. She was working 18-hour days, seven days a week, and still, she wrote to a friend: "I wish I had more hours in the day. . . . It's crazy and is driving me crazy because I really love these people and I see the potential and I just can't give enough to do them justice."

Sitting at her computer that night in March, she sent an e-mail message back to Tulsa to her close friend Stephen Rodolf, for whose law firm she worked from 1993 to 1999. She told him about two women from a nearby farming village who had come seeking her aid in a legal dispute:

"They are widows. They wear all black, all you can see is their faces -- no hair or neck. They don't wear gloves though and you can see their hands -- very rough hands, dry and cracked and evidence of broken fingers from years ago, and huge knuckles from years of manual labor. Their faces wrinkled and dark, no makeup, but 2 small faded blue circles on their chins -- tattoos. One of Saddam's thugs grew crops on their land and they thought they could remove him upon liberation. No such luck. He built a house on their land and refused to leave. They have court orders and everything and nobody will move the guy. Everyone's afraid of him. So much for the rule of law. I'm

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going to see him Saturday morning, along with the little ladies, the manager of the new women's center, the judge, and a couple Iraqi policemen. These little ladies reminded me of my mother. Salt of the Earth."

Two days later, Fern showed up at the judge's courthouse in Kifl, a farming village about 12 miles from Hilla. The judge was impressed by her knowledge of Iraqi law. Holland promised, in her slight Oklahoma lilt, that she would bring an Internet cafe to his rice-farming village, which boasts the tomb of the prophet Ezekiel. He agreed with her when she said, "No one should jump over a woman's rights," but with all the suffering people in Iraq, he was a little puzzled why this slight, 5-foot-2, fiery American, with golden hair and sky blue eyes, was putting so much energy into this particular case. The judge pointed out how shameful it is to destroy somebody's house -- so much so that no local would dare to carry out his order to do so. Tribal or religious leaders usually mediate such quarrels.

Still, he gave his word to implement the ruling that he had himself issued, but on one condition: Holland had to bring the bulldozer.

"A bulldozer?" cried Adly Hassanein back at the Babylon Hotel. An elegant Egyptian-American human rights adviser with the C.P.A., Hassanein worked closely with Holland and shared her commitment. "Fern," he said, "that is an Israeli act." He begged her to let it go: it's family business; it's local culture. She smiled at him. She knew Hassanein's paternal routine. "They can't just harass women this way, Dr. Adly," she said.

Three days later, on a warm spring Tuesday, Holland collected some petty cash, found a bulldozer and a driver and returned to Kifl. The judge set off with 30 policemen following the bulldozer. The man's house was demolished. The "salt of the earth" got back their property. And in Holland's mind another step had been taken toward getting Iraqis to trust in the rule of law.

Arabs have a saying about meddling in family affairs: Put yourself between the onion and its skin, and you'll just get a bad smell. Holland also had a saying: If I don't do it, nobody will. Baghdad red tape infuriated her. She needed to be invested in Iraqi lives, and she was not going to serve up democracy by remote control from inside a fortress of barbed wire and concrete blast walls. The C.P.A. had already earned such a reputation for governing from the secure green zone in Baghdad that "green-zoned" had become a term for "safe but clueless."

From early in her life, Holland harnessed a go-it-alone, pioneer mentality to a Wilsonian belief in universal human rights and self-determination. As an American, she felt a moral obligation to the world, despite or maybe because of her decidedly rough beginnings. As one of Holland's Oklahoma neighbors told me: "You will never convince me that someone didn't leave that girl on the doorstep of that home. Because she's so different. And in that tiny town in Oklahoma, influences that touch on the problems of the world and the bigger picture of humanity just don't surface. She was just born with some light that comes from nowhere."

That tiny town was Bluejacket, a place of rolling pastures, wide, daunting skies, one store and 300 people -- as heartland America as Hilla is heartland Shiite Iraq. Fern, the youngest of five children, always considered the Holland farm in Bluejacket her home, although she lived and went to school a few miles away in Miami, a sports-proud, mostly Baptist community of about 13,000 settled by land-rushers and what the locals refer to as the "civilized Indian tribes."

Bluejacket was horses and fishing ponds, firing shotguns with her brothers and sisters; Miami was where her family fell apart, one summer afternoon, when Fern was 4 and her mother tried to kill herself. Her father was a charming, hard-drinking rancher who taught at a junior college and didn't know how to respond to his wife's suicide attempt. He put her in an institution where the doctors gave her electroshock treatments.

"After that, Fern didn't talk for a long time," her sister Vi says. Her parents split up. Fern became her mother's guardian angel, and over time, her mother became her hero as she resurrected herself at 40, working days as a secretary at a boron plant and studying at night for a psychology degree until she became a counselor for addicts and the mentally ill. When Fern was 12, her father died of a heart attack. There was pandemonium all around, her brother Joe Ben remembered when I met him recently in his mobile home north of Tulsa. But Fern sat quiet. When Joe Ben caught her pensive stare, she just said, "I wonder where he is now." Fern never got any special treatment,

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Joe Ben said, contemplating his sister's journey so far from Bluejacket. "There wasn't Aristotle or Socrates around to teach her," he said. "She just did it. Maybe being raised tough did it."

What is "it"? "Making herself perfect," Vi says. Fern got straight A's while working at Tastee-Freez and Radio Shack. She was the family's peacemaker, comedian and natural athlete. She was pretty and popular, a friend to the ostracized, class salutatorian and homecoming queen. She was an honor student in psychology at Oklahoma University, then flew off to see the world, which to her meant saving it. She tended children dying of nuclear-disaster-related diseases in a Russian hospital. She taught kids in a squatter camp in South Africa. She thought about medical school but concluded that the law, as she wrote in her law-school application, was the best means to "create the most equal and just global society obtainable." She got her law degree in Tulsa, then began handling medical malpractice suits while helping Vi take care of her mother, who was dying of emphysema. It was all preparation. A year after she buried her mother in the Bluejacket cemetery, she gave up her partner-track position, joined the Peace Corps and found herself in the Namibian bush not far from the Angolan border.

But if she sometimes did saintly things, she was a hard-living saint. In high school she loved to drive fast, blasting the Violent Femmes, and stay out late at the lake with a bottle of vodka and her best friend, Angie. Her vacations were on the wild side: jumping out of planes, diving with sharks, hiking alone in the snowy Himalayas with a busted knee and summer clothes.

Holland was not, and never claimed to be, a team player. She was an interventionist: getting her Oklahoma friends to send computers to Namibia to bring the Internet to the bush; rousing homeless people in New York City from their slumbers to give them what was left of her meal. As Joe Ben said: "Fern was tough. If she got mad, thought somebody was a bully, sure she could bulldoze his house down."

Two years ago, Holland moved to Washington, D.C., hoping to plug into the international-aid scene. She joined the firm of Woodley & McGillivray while looking out for pro bono work abroad. The American Refugee Committee sent her to Guinea to investigate claims that workers for certain nongovernmental organizations were demanding sex from Sierra Leonian and Liberian refugees, women and children, in exchange for humanitarian aid. Not satisfied with documenting the crimes, she proposed setting up a legal-aid clinic in the camps so abused women and children could pursue their cases in court. "Everyone thought, Come on, this is Africa," recalled Colleen Striegel of the American Refugee Committee. "We didn't think it was realistic. But she looked into Guinean law and learned that Guinea had signed on to international conventions against discriminating against women and children." That was enough. She persuaded the committee to go for the idea and began training local attorneys.

Holland was passionate about spreading the legal-aid clinics to other camps. But her firm did not want her making any more pro bono trips. Without much dithering, she decided to leave her six-figure job at the firm, went to work at Starbucks on a morning shift and spent the rest of her time trying to raise money for the Guinean project and pursuing, with her law professor John Norton Moore, the idea of an African Institute for Democracy. But it was the spring of 2003, and the only game in Washington was Iraq.

Babil, home of ancient Babylonia, is often called "the white flower." The Euphrates lolls through Babil, watering willows, eucalyptus and acres of date palms. The people in Hilla, Babil's capital, for the most part welcomed coalition troops as liberators. A mostly Shiite community, Hilla had lost thousands of men during the Iran-Iraq war and the disastrous, American-inspired 1991 uprising against Saddam. In the spring of 2003, after the Baathists were overthrown, the people of Hilla dug up mass graves to look for their relatives. I was traveling there at the time and, in some of the bleakest stretches of desert, watched men praying, "God is the only god," as they heaved remains from the heavy earth: shirts crumpled around skeletons, toe bones tucked in sandals, leg bones clanking like gourds. A man in a dishdasha, drenched in sweat, was searching for his wife among neatly lined-up piles in white shrouds. Inside one he found a black abaya crumpled as if the woman had melted. There was no jewelry, no shoes, just a mulch of henna-colored bones, hair and nails. He had no way of knowing who she was, but he broke down anyway. I looked at my interpreter, a Kurd from Halabja, whom I'd been traveling with since before the war began, and I could see as we drifted slowly from pit to pit that he just wanted to sink and die. One of the men shadowing a grave pointed inside. "This is America," he said. "They lie here because of America. I'm sorry if you

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are American, but tell your countrymen that's why they are here. The father Bush betrayed us and brought Saddam back, and look what he did."

It was graves like these that convinced Holland she had to stay in Iraq. As Stephen Rodolf, her Tulsa lawyer friend, recalled the story: "I was telling Fern about the protest in the U.S. against our being there, and the fact that the lack of W.M.D.'s was invalidating everything we went in for. She said: 'I don't know anything about W.M.D. But I can tell you this countryside is littered with the graves of men, women and children murdered by this regime.' " She was collecting testimony for future war-crimes trials from Shiite survivors of Saddam's massacres -- hair-raising tales of escape, of being buried alive beneath the dead, of identities hidden for 12 years until Saddam's fall. Some of these survivors formed the human rights associations that sprouted up across the south that spring.

Babil was ripe for the idealistic vision of Mr. Mike, as Mike Gfoeller, an Arabic-speaking American diplomat and the regional C.P.A. coordinator, was affectionately known. Gfoeller had a plan to open human rights and women's centers and tribal democracy centers in each of the five Shiite provinces he governed. Holland picked up Mr. Mike's vision and went flying, with her focus sharpened on the mission of democracy education and liberating Iraqi women.

Within a month, the crumbling, two-story building she identified in Hilla was a spanking-new women's center with computers and Internet access, sewing machines, a gym, an auditorium for democracy lectures and a kitchen where the local women could cater for the new Iraqi Olympic boxing team. Holland soon identified five more suitable buildings, one in every province.

It was an exciting time. Visions were grand. Cash was flowing by the truckload from Baghdad. Because it was confiscated money from Saddam's coffers that the U.S. was distributing and not official American funds, there were almost no regulations on how it was spent. As Rachel Roe, a reservist and lawyer who was rebuilding the legal system in Najaf, told me: "Fern showed up in the palace in Baghdad looking for the head of democracy and human rights to see what's the plan and found some 21-year-old political appointee who had no idea what was going on. Someone would just say, 'O.K., take this cash, put it in a backpack and build democracy centers.' It was insane. I was looking for guidance on Iraqi law and was met by a 22-year-old American in charge of the Ministry of Justice who said, 'Don't worry about that, I'm pretty sure we're going to rewrite that constitution anyway.' This is a country of 23 million people, and we're there with no plan for what we're going to do. So we just started figuring it out ourselves."

They had little time. The money and fancy gear generated envy, and Iraqi men were not accustomed to envying women in a fight over resources. In both Hilla and Karbala, the C.P.A. had kicked out religious parties from government-owned buildings to install the women's centers. A cleric "destroyed the reputation of a woman on the town council whom I'm very fond of and I love her kids," Holland wrote in an e-mail message to a colleague in Washington. "She was the driving force for the women's group, and now has withdrawn. . . . She's being called a Baathist and a Zionist, etc. . . . My brain is on overdrive trying to hold these fragile groups together. It's like you're on the verge of something explosive and just trying to contain it."

In the evenings, after a jog along the river inside the compound, Holland would eat, but not much, then begin her nightly e-mail to family and friends, to Republicans and Democrats and nonprofit organizations. She sought money and experts to implement the Bush administration's vision of democratizing the Middle East. "Islamic fundamentalism is spreading across the south-central region," she wrote in one letter, seeking money to hire professors. "Education is the key for democracy to take root," she continued. "People must know what it is and believe in democracy if we expect them to be motivated to protect it." She wanted to reach the "middle-of-the-road types who are very religious in their faith but not violent" before the Shiite religious parties engulfed the south, and before the confiscated Saddam cash, and perhaps America's commitment to teaching democracy, dried up. The local parties had 30 years of experience organizing underground cells against Saddam. They had money and they had those powerful campaign billboards -- party founders portrayed as sympathetic martyrs, just like the pictures of Shiism's beloved martyrs Hussein and Ali.

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So what started as a humanitarian endeavor to liberate Iraqi women quickly shaped into a political battle. It was the war after the war, and in the Shiite heartland, Holland and her assistant, Salwa Oumashi, were at this war's center. Oumashi's mother, a Christian Syrian widow who'd lost a son to Saddam, was growing anxious for her daughter. But Oumashi and Holland would always tell her, "If we don't take this opportunity now to fight for rights, we won't have another chance for 50 years." When Gfoeller rolled out his idea for a "heartland conference" at Hilla's university, gathering women activists as the vanguard for a democracy movement and a new political leadership, "Fern single-handedly took over the organizing, renovating dormitories at the university, arranging travel," recalled her onetime boss at the United States Agency for International Development, where she worked before the C.P.A. "She went gangbusters with visibility. She knew heavy hitters in D.C. Condoleezza Rice did a video-con message to the participants. Fern took it to greater heights than we ever imagined."

On Oct. 4 of last year, L. Paul Bremer III, the head of the C.P.A., choppered in and told the women that the Heartland Conference was one of the most exciting events he'd been to. He made a tour of Holland's women's center. Photos were snapped. What Bremer didn't stick around to see were the angry men outside threatening to bomb the place or the slogans that went up overnight on the university campus: "C.P.A., Americans, British don't intervene in Iraqi affairs." And: "These strange women are here to spread knowledge that doesn't belong to our culture." The elite, secular Iraqi women who had recently returned from exile were unnerved by the backlash. Conservative women from the holy city of Najaf, just half an hour away, resented the conference and its dubious teachings. Each group of women shouted down the speakers of the other groups. When Zainab Al-Suwaij, an Iraqi who was brought up by her grandfather, a revered ayatollah, gave a talk about the need for separation of church and state, even she was heckled, despite her Islamic credentials.

Suwaij told me later that Holland had taken a leadership position and tried to please everyone, but it was impossible. "It was very tense," Suwaij said. "My bodyguards would hear the men outside talking about Fern. They hated her. She was a threat to them. She was nervous and didn't know what was happening, and I told her: 'Be careful. These people you are dealing with are smiling in your face and at the same time putting up slogans against you and sending women to find out what's going on here.' Even I didn't feel safe."

Suwaij hadn't been back to Iraq in many years -- she went into exile after participating in the 1991 anti-Baathist uprising -- and she said: "Basra, my home, used to be a modern port city. After I came back, almost all the women were covered. The mentality of the people changed. The wars, the sanctions. They are generous and sweet when you visit, but they are cynical and don't trust people. The political parties are controlling their minds and the women's activities. . . . You find Hezbollah offices in Basra. Hamas offices in Nasiriya."

Last November, Holland persuaded families in Karbala and Najaf to allow her to take some women to Washington, New York and Boston for democracy seminars and to meet President Bush. She even included some of the conservative Najafi women. One Iraqi lawyer returned to her home in Najaf to find an effigy of herself hanging on her door with the word "spy." She dropped all her activities. One close Iraqi friend of Holland's recalled riding a minibus in Najaf with a simple man who told him, "My uncle, these foreigners have come to take our wives to foreign lands."

Fern Holland was making a name for herself. Those she touched called her Barbie, the doll, the white dove or the angel dropped from the sky. But there were also the other names that adhere to Westerners -- spy, Jew -- and, in her case, dangerous agent injecting Western notions in the minds of good Muslim women. Oumashi too, who had lived for a time in the United States and brought back her American clothes and airs and ideas about women's liberation, was considered an American agent. They were, after all, touching Najaf, the center of the Shiite world. It is the home of the shrine of Ali and of the Shiites' most sacred burial ground, where millions have transported their dead for burial in the city's catacombed cemetery. Billions of dollars were at stake from the pilgrim industry, as was the power to define much of the Shiite majority's future in the new Iraq. The last thing male religious leaders wanted was Holland and Oumashi teaching women that they had the power to select their own leaders.

By February of this year, Holland was busy getting a women's center up and running in Karbala, 12 miles northwest of Hilla, despite strong local opposition. It was not just a matter of struggling with local religious conservatives, though that would have been enough in a city built around the tomb of the Shiite martyr Hussein.

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Just across the street, Karbala's policemen worked in a blighted station house while Holland and Oumashi unloaded new computers and other fancy goods for the sole benefit of Karbala's women. The police were not even being paid any longer; the interior ministry had stopped sending money to the provinces, despite the desperate need for security. Why were the Americans spending their money in this way? In Friday sermons, clerics loyal to the young militant Moktada al-Sadr spread rumors: "You know what the Americans are doing in these centers, my brothers? They are offering free abortions. You know what these Internet centers are doing? They are offering free porn to the students of the Hawza [the Shiite seminary]."

Bremer flew in for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the women's center with an entourage of private bodyguards and Western reporters. He extolled the talents of the Iraqi women -- all of whom were draped in black from crown to toe. The C.P.A. needed some good-news stories, and the liberation of Iraqi women -- which the administration had increasingly trumpeted as the insurgency failed to crumble and no weapons of mass destruction could be found -- read well back home. The more Iraq spun out of control, the more sugary were C.P.A. Hilla's press releases. "During the past few weeks, the coalition has given out more than 1,000 soccer balls to children," read one. "The children always come running up . . . happy smiles on their faces."

But inside the center, the women were worried about their men and the lack of jobs. Dr. Amal, a young farm veterinarian whom Holland had chosen to direct the Karbala center, asked Bremer what he planned to do for Iraq. "Always it was the same promises -- democracy, participation of women in the political future," she told me last summer. But no jobs. Companies, Bremer told her, couldn't come into such an insecure environment. Bremer touted the free market, borders flung open, no restrictions on goods. But in truth there was no free market. Bechtel and Halliburton were stepping in to do the work of the government ministries that had employed so many Iraqis. These companies were hiring foreign workers and security guards from around the world, paying enormous salaries, while young Iraqi men sat idle.

On March 9, the same day Holland went to Kifl and the house was bulldozed, she and Oumashi were scheduled to visit Karbala. Adly Hassanein, the avuncular Egyptian human rights adviser, later told me that he had urged Holland to skip her Karbala visit. Tensions were high in the city. A week earlier, suicide bombers tore apart hundreds of Shiite pilgrims congregated around the shrine of Hussein.

Holland told Hassanein she had to go, but she'd be quick and turn back if the roads were bad. She had a special appointment at the women's center. The previous summer, she began a close working relationship with Ahmed Alhilaly, an investigative judge, and Mohammed Alkinany, a lawyer. Together, the two men founded the Karbala human rights center. They never had any money, and they and Holland joked about forming a ballet company, with Alkinany as the lead dancer because he was so fat. On a trip home over Christmas, "she didn't forget to get the ballet slippers," Alhilaly remembered when I spoke to him in July. He and Holland had arranged a surprise gift-giving ceremony for the morning of March 9 to give Alkinany his dancing shoes. Alhilaly filmed the event and Holland gave a speech about how lucky she was to have discovered people like them who truly wanted to build a new Iraq.

Holland and Oumashi shared a lunch of fesenejoon -- chicken with dried-pomegranate sauce -- with the women on the Karbala center's board and began explaining how the money would be distributed when the C.P.A. left in June. Bob Zangas, an idealistic marine who fought in the invasion of Iraq and returned as a civilian, was upstairs giving a lecture about media ethics and the possibility of installing a radio station for women.

Well before sundown, Holland, Oumashi and Zangas headed out of Karbala with Salman Majeed, a translator who lived outside town. Majeed had taken Zangas to take pictures around Karbala that afternoon. "Fern was asking Bob about what he'd seen," Majeed recalled. "He was so excited describing the shrine and downtown. He'd taken pictures of faces, banana sellers, watch sellers, people celebrating the birthday of Al Hussein."

They dropped off Majeed and stopped at a tea stall on the crowded streets of Hindiya, then got back on the road, Holland at the wheel, driving past the blossoming farms. She often teased her worried sisters and brothers by saying Hilla was just like Bluejacket: "Peaceful. Birds chirping. Kids playing. Elderly walking hand in hand."

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As the three sped along a flat, desolate stretch of road 20 minutes from Hilla, a white police truck gunned its engine and veered alongside her Daewoo. Bursts of AK-47 rounds blasted through Holland's windshield. Her car swerved across the highway median and jolted still into a scraggy verge. The gunmen vaulted out of the pickup and fired again at Oumashi, who was crouched in the back, her arms covering her head.

Fifteen minutes later, Brigadier Qais Al Mamouri, the police chief of Hilla, whom Holland had befriended, showed up at the scene. "I pulled them out of the car with my hands," he told me. Holland was leaning into Zangas as if she were sleeping. "Fern had been driving," Mamouri said, "and most of the bullets targeted her. The man was shot in the head, but the bullets were fired 360 degrees around the car. Probably 30 or more."

Mamouri sent his officers across the fields and down dirt roads and before dark six policemen from the Karbala station were captured in a white Nissan pickup with supposedly hot AK-47's and pistols, which used the same types of bullets that were found at the scene. A witness had apparently noticed one of the gunmen shouting at Oumashi in Arabic, leading investigators to conclude that the gunmen knew their victims. The Hilla police arrested the men and turned them over to Polish and American forces. And the case appeared to be closed just as suddenly as the murder had ended the lives of Bob Zangas, Salwa Oumashi and Fern Holland.

That night, Abu Amir, on guard at the Hilla women's center, got a phone call from a friend in the police force. He couldn't believe the news. He thought of a night when had Holland pulled in from Jordan and was unpacking her car under a streetlamp, her hair radiant like the sun. Amir rushed out and told her to get inside for fear such a beauty would be abducted. But killed? He drove to the hospital. He opened the freezer drawer and talked to her, touching her hair. In tears he told her, "You don't deserve this."

Before dawn in Oklahoma City, Viola Holland, Fern's sister and best friend, was text-messaging her boyfriend because she couldn't sleep. The phone rang at 5 a.m. with a call from a friend in Washington saying she'd read something on the Internet about three people killed outside Hilla. Vi phoned the Pentagon looking for information. Then came the call from a general at the Pentagon and a simultaneous knock at the door -- two men in uniform from Fort Sill. She asked them to sit quietly for a few minutes while she composed herself.

Holland and Zangas were the first American civilian employees of the C.P.A. to be killed in Iraq. The murders had a lock-down effect. When Steve Moore, a democracy promoter and fellow Oklahoman, was e-mailed about the murder, he had to break the news to Salwa Oumashi's sister, Suhair, who was his interpreter and sat in the next office. "I had to tell Salwa's family," Moore told me. "And everything you might imagine about telling someone's mother that their daughter is dead. . . . It was absolutely awful." Suhair immediately quit the translating job. Oumashi's family became terrified of contact with foreigners. "Fern had been killed for doing what we both do, and so after that, I started thinking, Well, how long do I want to stay here?" Moore said. "What do I want to accomplish?" He'd been in country for nearly eight months. He decided it was time to move on.

Although the Shiite insurgency, the battles in Falluja, the kidnappings and the beheadings would not begin for another month, the us-versus-them atmosphere had already begun to take over the Shiite world. Women began receiving increasingly graphic death threats. "Fern changed my life," said Sausam al Barak, a chemical engineer and board member at the Hilla center. "She was the best face of America." But when I met her in May, Barak was holed up home with several armed guards posted outside. Women at the various centers read the March 9 murders as a clear augury of their own future. Iraqis who danced with the infidels would die like the infidels.

In Baghdad after the murders, I met Manal Omar, an American activist who has worked all over the Arab world and is director of Iraq's branch of Women for Women International, which in Hilla and Karbala operated out of Holland's centers. Omar immediately froze the work in the south after March 9. The previous day, she noted, had seemed so propitious. March 8 was international women's day; the interim constitution was signed, and it included a goal of 25 percent participation by women in the projected parliament. Holland had worked hard with Iraqi colleagues to ensure this, and it had seemed time for celebration. "It was pure ecstasy," Omar remembered. "And then the next day, pure terror."

That same morning of March 9, Omar's own staff members were ambushed on the way to Karbala and survived only by their driver's wits. The murders that day "challenged all my absolute beliefs," Omar recalled. "Fern and I had

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the same approach. No guns. Community outreach. Don't hide behind walls. Don't alienate the women. After her death, I thought maybe we're wrong."

Holland's story immediately took on mythic qualities. Rumors spread in Baghdad that she'd been riddled with 79 machine-gun bullets, a palpable symbol of Iraqi wrath against America. And in a way her story slipped effortlessly into a parable about American exceptionalism. Headstrong, reckless, idealistic, Americans have always believed in the power of will -- that one man or woman with enough faith and tenacity can at some moment pull off his or her vision. It happens here, in America, often enough. But in much of the rest of the world, the willful individual, moiling away against the system, may attain nobility in some moral order but is nonetheless fated to be crushed. These two perspectives are colliding in Iraq. The collision may, in the future, give way to some fruitful synthesis. For now, the result of the occupation is mostly carnage.

As if suspecting that Holland's death might breed doubts, one of her colleagues at the C.P.A. in Baghdad wrote to me: "Fern had no patience for the narcissistic anguish about the legitimacy of American power that now pervades the foreign-policy establishment, and that is all about what Americans feel about themselves. For Fern it was all about the Iraqi people and what she could do to help this obviously tortured people pull themselves out of the morass of repression."

But how do you separate Fern's humanitarian mission from the politics of American occupation?

Just off the banks of the Tigris in Baghdad stands an Alhambresque blue-and-white house, with peeling columns and faded arches -- a rare relic of old Baghdadi architecture in an impoverished neighborhood. Zainab Salbi's grandfather owned the house, and now she's using it as a center for Women for Women International, which she founded in 1993. Women for Women receives grants from the U.S. government, and when I traveled in Iraq this past spring, several fatwas and notices were circulating in the mosques forbidding Iraqis from working with foreigners. One of the Women for Women trainers, cloaked in a black abaya, told me: "Our society doesn't understand our relation with Americans, and that's why I and all of us are afraid. Anyone dealing with Americans -- friendship, work -- they're considered a spy. In my neighborhood, one of the clerics on the municipal council was threatened once to get off. The next time, they killed him."

The conservative, poor women I saw had all received approval to be at the center from their husbands and brothers. The program's goal is to lead women to financial independence and educate them about their rights. In one room a trainer was telling the women: "A woman cooks kuba and gives it to her husband to sell in the market. She must learn to ask her husband for a salary. She must speak out and ask for her rights. No one will give them to her." Then she added: "We mustn't work against the men. I have to help my husband, so he will demand even more for me."

One woman arrived late because her nephew, who drove a Kia-brand taxi, disappeared three days earlier, on the same day that three Kia taxis were blown up in a car-bombing. They were trying to find him or his remains. Another woman was absent because her nephew had been killed in a shootout. Every day this summer there were more such stories of killing and dying.

The center's director was completely rattled -- and like so many Iraqis these days wouldn't dare speak English on her cellphone if she was on the street. She talked about how patient Holland had been. And she said: "The Shia took the sweets from America and now their real face will appear. They want us to be like Iran. Iran is funding them with money, guns and people because the borders are open. They don't want women's rights or democracy. I am Shia. I know. They call America the biggest devil." It was an outburst made in anger and fear, but with regard to the religious parties, much of it was true.

As I left the center, one of the trainers told me how much Holland had changed the image of Americans and said she hoped such people would appear again. Yet everywhere I went, that idealistic, generous side of America was curdling, overwhelmed by cultural dissonance.

When I'd arrived in Karbala, the city was still in shock from the uprising of the Mahdi Army and a week of heavy American bombardment. The smell of rotting flesh baking in the noonday sun suffused the pilgrim hotels and the old

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market. Around the shrine to Hussein, crowds gathered in front of a small TV playing video of an American tank being attacked. The police station across from the women's center was ringed by Bulgarian tanks and American Bradleys. Most of the police fled the day the Mahdi Army rose.

I stopped in at the Karbala women's center, a two-story yellow and brown building set back behind a gated garden. A Bulgarian soldier was playing a video war game to a Metallica song in the reception room. His comrades were camped out with their machine guns and ammo boxes in the library amid the potted plants and democracy pamphlets and copies of the Swiss constitution. Bullets had pierced the monitors in the computer rooms and destroyed the windows. A machine gun on a tripod was perched beneath small posters with political aphorisms that were a testament to Holland and Oumashi's ambitious dreams: "A society of sheep must in time beget a government of wolves" (Bertran de Jouvenal); "Those against politics are in favor of the politics inflicted upon them" (Bertolt Brecht); "A great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep" (Saul Bellow).

Some of the women had come back to check the place out only to be handed a decree, announcing a new board, from the offices of Sayyid Farqat Qizwini, a cleric who had managed to endear himself to the C.P.A. A few days later the phone calls began -- You'll be followed and killed if you don't abandon the women's center. The C.P.A. had financed the sleek new Regional Center for Democracy in Hilla and appointed Qizwini director. The day before Bremer left Iraq, he flew down to Qizwini's for a photo op and a ceremony of encouragement. "He was just a great press release to send to the White House: 'Big religious figure, tortured by Saddam, saying great things about the liberation of Iraq,' " remarked Adly Hassanein. Nonetheless, Hassanein, too, found it expedient to accept Qizwini: "He opened up a place for us to teach democracy for people who didn't want to be seen as collaborating with the coalition."

After Holland's death, the C.P.A. gave Qizwini \$5 million in cash to administer all the provincial centers for democracy, human rights and women. However, it seemed that the human rights activists and women were refusing to submit. By empowering Qizwini, the C.P.A. had tried to create an alternative the Shiite establishment, but he had no credibility among Iraqis. "Fern would be rolling in her grave if she knew a man was running her centers," said Manal Omar of Women for Women International's branch in Baghdad. "Most of my staff is Shia, I am a practicing Muslim, we are all god-fearing women, but we're pulling out of those centers because of the unclear organizational structure. We love and respect the religious groups but need to preserve our independence when we are working with the women." The boardmembers Holland had chosen in Karbala were all young women who swore they would remain independent even if it meant they'd have no budget.

John Berry, the Karbala C.P.A. director and a seasoned Arabic-speaking foreign-service officer, had not had his optimism dented in the least. He was barricaded in a fortified compound inside a trailer on the outskirts of town and, despite everything that had gone wrong -- "we thought most people knew we were the good guys" -- he was proud of what he'd accomplished in less than a year. The C.P.A. had given way to the interim Iraqi government under Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. Berry saw his own job as having been exhilarating. "For the first time," he said, "I was running a province. Where does a guy go from here?" At times, he said, he'd felt like a medieval king taking petitions. "By golly this was a golden opportunity for Americans to interface with Arabs, to play a mentoring role with Iraqis and change the way they think," he said.

"I think we can take credit for a lot here," Berry continued. "I formed the provincial council and got the governor elected." In fact, there had been no election. Berry selected the council after a half-hour interview with each candidate, testing him or her on the fundamentals of democracy.

Holland had not been impervious to this kind of maneuvering. In Najaf, when Bremer's office saw that religious parties were going to win the provincial council elections, Bremer canceled them. Shortly thereafter the Najaf C.P.A. director was nearly killed and fled the country. Adly Hassanein told me that, in order to get more women on the council, John Berry simply drew up a list inside his trailer. "There was no democratic process at all, and Fern helped him by getting women's names to put on the list," Hassanein said. "They were all good people. But do they represent the will of the society? No. They weren't elected. So immediately they're 'our guys.' I wanted Fern out of this. Working on the ground to advocate for women's rights is different than working from the top and imposing your

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views. The backlash was that Moktada al-Sadr's people pressured 60 to 70 percent of the women in the council, and they withdrew."

In conversation, Abu Saddiq, the hospitable local representative of the religious party Sciri (the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq), immediately brought up the 11 women appointed to the 40-member provincial council. "I told the American representative: 'In the American Congress you don't even have that percentage. Why here in the religious city of Karbala? It's possible for you to develop our country in science, or by building factories and general services, but you can't change our traditions. Our religion is like a nail in the wall. When you hit the nail it doesn't come out. It goes deeper.' "

Who killed Holland, Oumashi and Zangas? As I drove around the region, I met many women and men who wept when they remembered Holland. But I was discovering that there were plenty of people who wanted her and Oumashi out of the south. Zangas, it seems, was simply in the wrong car. The Karbala police chief, a portly and friendly man known as General Abbas, told me one morning in May that the police officers accused of killing Holland had been released from Abu Ghraib prison two days earlier. Ballistics tests done by the F.B.I. didn't produce a match, so the men were presumed to be innocent.

In Hindiya, a notoriously seedy crossroads town where Holland stopped shortly before being killed, I met some farmers from the same tribe as the arrested policemen. At first they denied knowing anything, but later one of them said: "Don't think it was some spontaneous decision made that day. Everyone knew those 'journalists' were spies. A lot of special groups were watching them for a long time before they planned and killed them." In Hilla, the special police told me a small clique connected to Sadr's sharia court in Najaf ordered Holland's killing. An investigative lawyer in Najaf told me that her death was ordered by a 27-year-old self-proclaimed ayatollah in Hindiya, whose fanatical followers had killed American M.P.'s in Karbala and who has since disappeared. A judge in Baghdad told me it had to be Sciri or Dawa, the two most organized religious parties; Holland was becoming too successful at organizing women in Najaf, he said, and the clerics and political parties there had some bizarre notion that she was a Jew trying to create an espionage base for Israel. An American lawyer told me that the F.B.I. suspected her killing was connected to Kifl. It appeared that the woman who had chiefly instigated the bulldozing was a cousin and sister-in-law to the man whose house was destroyed. There were also rumors in Kifl -- whose Jewish population fled to Israel in the 1950's -- that Israel was sending agents to collect information on formerly Jewish properties. "Imagine you put your finger in that ball of fire?" Adly Hassanein said.

Americans working in Iraq blamed the occupation. The Shiite south was initially expected to be quiet. For Washington's political reasons, and out of an unwillingness to bring in more U.S. troops, the south was mainly handed over to a coalition of the least enthusiastic nations, who have demonstrated above all else a talent for conflict avoidance. "Everyone in Najaf will tell you that this was the second great betrayal of the Shia by the Americans," said Rachel Roe, the Army legal adviser working with marines in Najaf.

A State Department official in Washington told me: "We're responsible for her death. When you push someone with a greater sense of urgency to get their good-news stories done, and when you bring down Jerry Bremer for high-profile ceremonies with helicopters and bodyguards so he can take credit for liberating Iraqi women, after he flies off, the person caught in the crossfire is Fern. And we had a responsibility to protect her. We didn't."

In the lobby of one of Najaf's pilgrim hotels I met Fuad al-Turfi, a stout, white-turbaned cleric and a spokesman for Moktada al-Sadr. I expected him to have harsh words for Holland's work on women's rights. I was stunned when his eyes became red as he began talking about her. He said that Sadr had sent him to the inauguration of the Najaf human rights center. He met Holland there. She offered him cake. "She was so courteous," he told me as he smiled at the memory. "She had such good behavior."

He was dizzy for days after he heard she had been killed, he told me. "This is not our behavior," he said. "It's against the dignity of the Iraqi. She was a woman. She was unarmed. She came for humanitarian reasons and human rights. And I said, 'What will the good-intentioned people in the U.S. think of us?' To me her murder is a historical crime." Embarrassed, he whispered that he kept Holland's photograph as his computer's screen saver.

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Turfi bore the Americans no ill will, but was astounded at how badly they'd mishandled the Shiites -- not supporting the police, not securing the borders and most of all, welcoming every religious faction into politics except Moktada al-Sadr and his followers. The results, he said, were the growing popularity of Sadr as a revolutionary hero and the gun-toting young men outside the hotel trading shop talk -- Rocket the tank in the treads, not the turret -- and yearning for martyrdom.

Turfi said that Sadr's office had sent him to Karbala to investigate the murder. He said he had discovered that a tribal man angry over her work in Hindiya had told his buddies at the Hindiya police station that she was a spy. "He followed her with the local police and they killed her," he said. "He's called 'Aja,' a nickname meaning sandstorm, because he has such a temper. We say in our slang this man 'reached the devil hour,' that he could kill a woman."

Hassanein, however, didn't buy any of these theories in particular. He said that when he spoke to Iraqis about the murder, their answer was simple: "She crossed the line. She went deep into the land of male superiority. She was trying to bring with her a very Westernized women's-empowerment program, and she hit the wall. Whether there's a specific group or an individual or anything, it has to do with the religious beliefs in the region and it has to do with the folkways."

Holland probably knew what she was up against and, despite her indefatigable energy and will, was beginning to have doubts. A week before her death, she made the 20-hour journey from Jordan -- where she took some judges and lawyers to a conference -- to Hilla with Ahmed Alhilaly, the investigative judge from Karbala, who later fled Iraq to save his life. Holland was upset. She said she felt that too much money was being spent on buildings and not people. "She always said, 'We have to build people before buildings,' " Alhilaly recalled. "She loved those words. She asked me how we can change Iraqis. I told her we need years, not months. We know nothing about democracy or human rights or freedom." And then he recalled that she said to him: " 'I've failed. I've discovered I've been fighting for nothing.' "

Alhilaly protested, but Holland went on, he said: " 'I went back to America to get another contract with the C.P.A. to continue with you, to establish the women's centers and human rights centers. But if you want the truth, I didn't find almost anyone who is working for his community. Everyone is out for himself.' " Alhilaly suggested she go back home. "But she said: 'No. I'll wait. Every step is difficult, but we have to give some time to your people, and we can win three here, three there. It will make a difference.' She had lovely dreams. But they are still just dreams. They killed her and our dreams with her.' "

Shortly before I left Iraq, I went to a Baghdad provincial council meeting with a council member, Siham Hamdan. She lives in Baghdad's impoverished Sadr City and had spent several days with Holland in Washington. A professor of English literature at Mustansirya University in Baghdad, Hamdan tried to explain why Iraq's young men had revolted. "We did nothing for them in a year," she said. "No jobs. No projects. No water, services, sewage, electricity."

And then there was the cultural miscommunication, which seems to have been complete. The American military has its code of ethics and behavior; the Iraqis have their dignity; and the two have only clashed. She said she spent her last night in Washington touring the city with Holland and had met some of her friends. "I came to believe she was wonderful," Hamdan said. "She told me she wanted to come back to Iraq because she loved the people and couldn't leave them anymore."

The conversation reminded Hamdan of E. M. Forster's "Passage to India." She valued Forster for understanding that some English conventions were wrong, and that he needed to change the colonial mentality: "He tried to tackle this in all his novels until he made this final clash -- personal, religious, political, social, cultural, all in one time, in one place in the caves." She was describing the novel's climax, when two Englishwomen visit the Marabar Caves with their Indian male friends, and the young Miss Adela Quested comes flying out of the darkness accusing the Indian doctor of assaulting her. "From that point every party tries to defend his own," Hamdan said. "And what began as an attempt at friendship and understanding ends in misunderstanding, failure and total chaos. And the final sentence is marvelous." As Hamdan recalled it, the English colonial, Fielding, asks the Indian doctor if they can ever be friends again: "And the doctor answered: 'Not yet. Not now.' " Hamdan laughed, then said: "Sometimes I

feel what's happening between Iraqis and Americans is just like this: 'Not yet. Not now.' I can have an excellent understanding on the personal level but understanding between our nations is somehow impossible."

Actually, the novel ends a little differently than Hamdan remembered and, in the context of Iraq today, perhaps more prophetically. The Indian doctor on his horse rages at his old friend Fielding: "Clear out, you fellows, double quick, I say. We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's fifty-five hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then' -- he rode against him furiously -- 'and then,' he concluded, half kissing him, 'you and I shall be friends.' "

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: The women's center in Karbala that Fern Holland helped open despite strong opposition from local clerics. It was damaged during the Mahdi Army uprising. (Photograph by Stephanie Sinclair/Corbis, for The New York Times)

Fern Holland with several of the women at the center in Hilla. Among those who benefited from her stubborn idealism, she was beloved. To many Iraqi men, she was a provocative interloper. (Photograph from the Holland Family)

The possibility of empowerment came suddenly to Iraqi women with the American-led occupation. Though the Coalition Provisional Authority championed women's rights from the start, threats from conservative clerics have grown steadily with the Shiite insurgency.

Fearing for their lives, the relatives of Salwa Oumashi pose in the shadows to mask their identities. Oumashi, Fern Holland's Iraqi assistant, was murdered with Holland.

In the religious Shiite heartland of the south -- and even in the women's centers of the conservative slums of Baghdad, above -- Fern Holland's vision of women's rights still seems a long way away. (Photograph by Stephanie Sinclair/Corbis, for The New York Times)

Load-Date: September 19, 2004

Hamas leader is murdered;

Irish News

August 22, 2003

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Section: Pg. 15

Length: 183 words

Body

AN ISRAELI helicopter fired five missiles at a car carrying a senior Hamas leader in Gaza City yesterday, killing him and two of his bodyguards.

Ismail Abu Shanab was decapitated by the strike, and 15 bystanders were wounded, including women and children, hospital officials said.

The missile attack came two days after a Hamas suicide bomber blew himself up on a Jerusalem bus, killing 20 people.

Abu Shanab's estate car was slowing down to avoid a large stone in the road when the first missile crashed into it, witnesses said. A second quickly followed, another witness said.

Three scorched bodies were pulled from the burning car.

Two were identified as bodyguards, and it appeared Abu Shanab had been decapitated by the strike.

There was no immediate comment by the Israeli military.

In the past, Israel has repeatedly killed wanted Palestinians in targeted missile attacks.

Israel had suspended the practice after militants declared a unilateral truce on June 29.

Earlier that month, Israel fired missiles at the car of another Hamas leader, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, who escaped with minor injuries.

Load-Date: August 26, 2003

HAMAS WRONG TO GLORIFY SUICIDE BOMB MOTHER'

Daily Post (North Wales)

January 27, 2004, Tuesday

Copyright 2004 The Liverpool Daily Post & Echo Ltd

Section: NEWS; Pg. 16; Newspaper

Length: 183 words

Body

THE Palestinian terror group **Hamas** has risked alienating some supporters by glorying in its mother-of-two suicide bomber.

It has posted photos on its internet site of Reem Raiyshi, its first **female** bomber, posing with her two young children.

The move is in defiance of Palestinian critics who say the Islamic militant group was wrong to send the 22-year-old on a mission that left her toddlers without a mother.

One picture shows Raiyshi in camouflage dress holding an assault rifle in one hand while cradling her three-year-old son, Obedia, in the other arm.

Hani Almasri, a writer in the Palestinian newspaper Al-Ayyam, said the images hurt the Palestinian cause and that **Hamas** had gone overboard with its use of military symbols.

Two weeks ago, Raiyshi left Obedia and Doha with her husband, and blew herself up at a border crossing in the Gaza Strip, killing four Israelis.

More than 400 Israelis have been killed in suicide attacks. Most of those attacks have been carried out by **Hamas**.

Although Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades have used **women** bombers, none of them was married or a mother.

Graphic

Reem Rayishi in a video filmed by the terror group **Hamas** just before she killed herself and four Israeli soldiers

Load-Date: January 29, 2004

LETTERS; HAMAS SUICIDE WARNING PROVES KILROY WAS RIGHT

The Express
January 23, 2004

Copyright 2004 EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS

Section: LETTERS; Pg. 55

Length: 38 words

Body

HAMAS spiritual leader, Sheikh Yasin, announced that **Hamas** will increasingly dispatch **female** suicide bombers in a 'new beginning' for Palestinian **women**.

Does this not prove how accurate Kilroy-Silk was?

P Simpson, Pinner, Middlesex

Load-Date: January 23, 2004

The Killing of the Hamas Leader

The New York Times
March 23, 2004 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2004 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 4; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22

Length: 114 words

Body

To the Editor:

Re "Leader of Hamas Killed by Missile in Israeli Strike" (front page, March 22):

Sheik Ahmed Yassin and his terrorist organization, Hamas, have been responsible for relentless terrorist activities unleashed on innocent men, women and children. Ideals of peaceful coexistence and negotiated settlements were not part of his vocabulary; rather, he was committed to ruthless murder and to wiping Israel off the map.

Sheik Yassin was to Israel what Osama bin Laden is to the United States. The war on terror is a war against those who perpetrate terrorist crimes, and Sheik Yassin's death is good news to those who want to see terrorism end.

SHOSHANA BULOW
Bronx, March 22, 2004

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: March 23, 2004

Hamas a threat, too

Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

April 22, 2004 Thursday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Length: 91 words

Body

IF news was received that Osama bin Laden had been killed, apart from the followers of Islam, I suggest the rest of the world would be relieved.

Why then is the killing of the head of the terrorist organisation *Hamas* any different?

This group targets mostly innocent civilians, *women*, children and Westerners, and their leader encouraged suicide bombers to kill in situations where they were sure of many casualties.

A speech by an Israeli ambassador to the United Nations spelt out loud and clear the reason for the killing.

Alaire Dunlop Robina

Load-Date: April 22, 2004

HAMAS FIGHTERS WAGING WAR AGAINST INNOCENTS

The Express
September 11, 2003

Copyright 2003 EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS

Section: LETTERS; Pg. 53

Length: 121 words

Body

HAVING enjoyed coffee and cake with friends in Cafe Hillel in West Jerusalem just a few weeks ago, I was devastated by Tuesday's terrorist attack.

I waited some time for a table as it was so popular, queueing behind young people and families - Jewish and Arab. Tuesday's attack deliberately targeted these people - innocent men, women and children - and highlights yet again the fact that Hamas is not 'fighting occupation' but waging a war against innocent civilians.

The death of any innocent bystanders is tragic - but the continued deliberate targeting of innocent bystanders by Hamas is a totally different matter. While terrorist groups like this continue to exist, peace will continue to elude us.

Alan Senitt, London N3

Load-Date: September 11, 2003

Calling Hamas by wrong name

The Toronto Star
September 11, 2003 Thursday
Ontario Edition

Copyright 2003 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: LETTER; Pg. A31

Length: 107 words

Body

Double suicide blast kills 13 in Israel

Sept. 10.

Could someone please explain to me why the Star continues to refer to members of the group **Hamas** as "militants," when the Canadian government, as well as the United States and now the European Union, have listed this group as an outlawed terror group?

I think it is time that the Star rethought its terminology to one that truly befits these persons who seek out unarmed, innocent **women** and children.

Packing their explosive payloads with ball bearings and nails to increase the potential to kill and maim, these are not "militants," they are nothing less than terrorists.

Stephen Reisch, Richmond Hill

Load-Date: September 11, 2003

LETTER: HAMAS HYPOCRISY

The Independent (London)

March 26, 2004, Friday

Copyright 2004 Independent Print Ltd

Section: First Edition; COMMENT; Pg. 32

Length: 177 words

Byline: DAVID KREIKMEIER-WATSON

Body

Sir: P J Stewart's letter of 19 March takes a rather rosy view of the experience of Jewish communities that previously lived under various Middle Eastern despots.

The fact that the votes of these communities overwhelmingly go to the "hawks" on the Israeli political scene seems to indicate that they and their descendants do not view things in quite the same light.

Indeed, it is the other Jewish communities in Israel (the "European" Jews as P J Stewart calls them) that are the main supporters of a more conciliatory line towards Arab neighbours, be it via the left-wing parties or organisations such as Peace Now.

As for the failure of the so called European Jews to fit into the Middle East, is P J Stewart suggesting that Israelis should abandon democracy for a feudal kingship or military dictatorship; abandon the rule of law for arbitrary fiat; abandon all realistic concepts of equality for women and then slash their GDP by two thirds for good measure? That's what it would take for Israel to "fit in" with its neighbours.

DAVID KREIKMEIER-WATSON

London EC1

Load-Date: March 26, 2004

A Murderous Group

The New York Times
June 17, 2003 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2003 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 6; Editorial Desk; Pg. 26

Length: 139 words

Body

To the Editor:

Re "Defining **Hamas**: Roots in Charity and Branches of Violence" (news article, June 16):

While it may be true that **Hamas** provides much needed services to the Palestinians, it is laughable that **Hamas** would receive even an iota of legitimacy through these actions.

The fact that **Hamas** carries out murderous attacks against civilians should relegate the entire group to the top of every country's list of terrorist organizations.

There can be no legitimacy for a group in which any of its members carry out terrorist attacks. If the Democratic or Republican Parties had a "military wing," the entire party would be condemned. Likewise, **Hamas** must be condemned in full and not afforded any credit for doing "good" while it slaughters innocent men, **women** and children on Israeli buses.

AVRAHAM GOLDBERG
New York, June 16, 2003

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: June 17, 2003

Israel's strike put in context

Australian Financial Review

June 12, 2003 Thursday

Late Edition

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 66

Length: 117 words

Body

Let's put Israel's strike against **Hamas** leader Abdel Aziz Rantizi in context. **Hamas** is an organisation that is committed to the destruction of Israel and sees the killing and maiming of Israeli men, **women** and children by all means available as the most virtuous of pursuits. **Hamas** rejected all efforts by the new Palestinian leader, Mahmud Abbas, to agree to end violence and instead launched a new wave of attacks on Israelis that left scores dead and wounded. I fail to understand why Israel is expected to show restraint in dealing with the leadership of this evil organisation. Israel is committed to the Middle East road map, but (unlike **Hamas**) is not committed to suicide.

Ari Bergman,

Elsternwick, Vic.

Load-Date: April 5, 2012

Thousands bury leader

MX (Melbourne, Australia)

March 23, 2004 Tuesday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 146 words

Body

THREATS FLY

Hundreds of thousands of angry Palestinians flooded Gaza's streets today to bury **Hamas** founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

The killing of Yassin threatened to deepen the conflict, with militants pledging unprecedented retaliation, including veiled threats against the US.

Chants of "revenge, revenge" rose from the huge crowd.

Salman Bdeiri, 24, a **Hamas** supporter crying near the mosque, said: "We will get revenge for every drop of blood that spilled from (Yassin)."

To protect against attacks, Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza, banning Palestinians from Israel, and placed security forces inside Israel on high alert.

More than 200,000 Palestinians, some carrying billowing green **Hamas** flags, poured into the streets of Gaza City for Yassin's funeral procession.

Mourners jostled to touch Yassin's flag-draped coffin, and **women** chanted and threw flowers and sweets.

Load-Date: March 23, 2004

DOOM & GLOOM

MX (Melbourne, Australia)

August 18, 2004 Wednesday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 175 words

Body

FIVE DIE IN HAMAS HOME EXPLOSION

AN EXPLOSION tore through the home of a senior Hamas militant in Gaza today, killing five people and wounding the owner and about a dozen other Palestinians, medics said.

The cause of the explosion in the home of Ahmed al-Jabari, a senior commander in the Izz el-Deen al-Qassam Brigade, Hamas's armed wing, was not immediately known.

MUTATED MUSHROOMS POISON SIX

SIX children died and a dozen others were taken to hospital in Clug, Romania, in the past three days after eating poisonous mushrooms picked by their parents.

Doctors said they believe the mushrooms the children were given are usually good to eat but had mutated into a poisonous kind.

COSMETICS PLANT BLAST KILLS TWO

TWO women died in an explosion at a beauty products factory in the Algerian capital of Algiers today.

A civil defence official said the blast, which destroyed the plant and came shortly after workers had left for the day, had probably been caused by alcohol used in the production process.

"We found them burned to death," the official said.

Load-Date: August 18, 2004

Mum kills four in bombing

MX (Melbourne, Australia)

January 15, 2004 Thursday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 187 words

Body

SUICIDE BLAST

A Palestinian mother of two blew herself up at the main border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip today, killing four Israelis and wounding seven people.

The militant Islamic group **Hamas** and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed joint responsibility for the suicide bombing, which they said was to avenge Israel's killing of Palestinians.

Smiling as she cradled an assault rifle in a videotape she left, Reem Al-Reyashi, 22, professed love for her children a boy, 3, and a girl of 18 months.

The attack, she said, was meant to turn her body into "deadly shrapnel".

The **Hamas** militant blew herself up in a terminal where Palestinian labourers from the fenced-in strip were being put through Israeli security checks before entering a nearby industrial complex.

"Glass and black smoke flew everywhere. Arabs were screaming, Jews were screaming," a Palestinian witness said.

The army said the dead included three soldiers and one Israeli civilian. Four Palestinians were among the wounded.

It was the first time **Hamas** had used a **female** suicide bomber, saying potential male bombers now faced security "obstacles".

Load-Date: January 15, 2004

**Women in suicide pact;
MARTYRS**

MX (Melbourne, Australia)

March 24, 2004 Wednesday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 11

Length: 81 words

Body

Female relatives of assassinated **Hamas** spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and hundreds of **women** followers gathered at his home today pledging their willingness to blow themselves up in Israel.

"Of course we're ready. We **Hamas women** have a role to play in the resistance, including martyr attacks," one of Yassin's sisters-in-law said.

"It's our duty to resist, to struggle and even to blow ourselves up in the face of the enemy. **Women**, men and children," another 21-year-old woman said.

Load-Date: March 24, 2004

BOMBER AND CHILD

Western Daily Press

January 27, 2004

default

Copyright 2004 Bristol United Press

Section: News; Other; Others; Pg. 2

Length: 107 words

Body

Hamas has posted photographs on its internet site of its first **female** suicide bomber posing with her two young children.

The move was in defiance of Palestinian critics who say the Islamic militant group was wrong to send 22year-old Reem Raiyshi on a mission that left her toddlers without a mother.

One picture shows Raiyshi with son Obedia. Another shows her in a bedroom, gazing at Obedia and her 18month-old daughter, Doha.

Two weeks ago, Raiyshi blew herself up at a border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel, killing four Israelis.

In the past 39 months more than 400 Israelis have been killed in 108 suicide attacks, mostly by **Hamas**.

Load-Date: January 28, 2004

Quotable

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

June 19, 2003 Thursday

Copyright 2003 Woodward Communications, Inc.

Section: Pg. A4

Length: 107 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

"In this country, even the doors, the tiles and the ceiling have ears.
Everything you do or say is reported to the authorities. You cannot trust anybody."

- Ahmed, a taxi driver in Mauritania, complaining of blacks' second-class citizenship in the Arab-dominated society.

"**Hamas** is fighting for our rights. If (Abbas) wants to fight **Hamas**, he will be fighting the whole nation."

- Ahmed Henawi, on Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

"This remains the largest humanitarian crisis on the planet right now with the smallest amount of response."

- Anne Edgerton of Refugees International, on the escalating sexual abuse of girls and **women** in Congo.

Load-Date: June 19, 2003

Israel Levels 3 Palestinian Authority Buildings

The New York Times
October 26, 2003 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2003 The New York Times Company

Section: Section 1; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 149 words

Byline: Reuters

Dateline: NETZARIM JUNCTION, Gaza Strip, Sunday, Oct. 26

Body

The Israeli Army blew up three partly constructed 13-story Palestinian Authority buildings in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, sending shock waves from the explosion miles away.

Security officials said the buildings in al-Zahrah had been used by militants to observe troop movements before an attack by **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad on the nearby Jewish settlement of Netzarim on Friday in which three soldiers were killed, two of them **women**.

That attack came days after a high-level meeting in Syria between the leader of Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Shallah, and a senior **Hamas** leader, Khaled Mashal, in which they agreed to enhance "field cooperation."

The Syrian foreign minister, Farouq al-Shara, said in an interview with the London Sunday Telegraph that Syria may target Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights, captured by Israel in the 1967 war, if Israel carried out any further attacks against Syria.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: October 26, 2003

ROW OVER PRISONERS MAY PUT TRUCE AT RISK

Daily Post (North Wales)

July 8, 2003, Tuesday

Copyright 2003 The Liverpool Daily Post & Echo Ltd

Section: NEWS; Pg. 12; Newspaper

Length: 144 words

Body

ISRAEL'S offer to release some prisoners might backfire as Palestinians demand freedom for all 5,000 prisoners -a dispute that could endanger the week-old truce.

Israel's Cabinet yesterday set out guidelines for releasing prisoners, and reports said the total freed would be several hundred.

They would include inmates near the end of their sentences or held without charges, those under the age of 18 or over 60, and women, Israeli officials said.

Members of militant groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad that oppose peace with Israel, and Palestinians who carried out or planned violent attacks against Israelis would not be included.

"Not releasing all prisoners will shape a major violation and cancel the initiative (truce)," said Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi. Nafez Azzam of the smaller Islamic Jihad said, "all prisoners must be released without discrimination".

Load-Date: July 8, 2003

Madonna cancels Israel dates

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

May 27, 2004 Thursday Final Edition

Copyright 2004 Metroland Media Group Ltd

Section: NIGHTLIFE; Pg. F5; NEWS

Length: 169 words

Body

Madonna says she has cancelled three Israeli stops on her Re-Invention tour because of violence in the region, including the killing of the leader of the militant group **Hamas**.

Madonna, who kicked off her worldwide tour in Los Angeles this week, told Access Hollywood that her manager wouldn't let her travel to Israel because of the "attack on the leader of **Hamas**."

Associated Press

"It's not a good idea to go there and do concerts," she told the syndicated entertainment TV show.

London tabloids had reported that the singer backed out of the Israeli stops after an unidentified Palestinian group threatened her and her children, Lourdes, 7, and Rocco, 3.

Asked by Access Hollywood if she had been threatened, she replied: "No, if I had my way, I'd go. My manager wouldn't let me."

Madonna, who practises Jewish mysticism known as Kabbalah, included provocative images in the tour, such as video footage of a Palestinian boy and an Israeli boy walking arm-in-arm, and simulated sex during a tango with a **female** dancer.

Load-Date: May 27, 2004

Three stops and you're out: Madonna won't be performing in Israel

Hamilton Spectator (Ontario, Canada)

May 26, 2004 Wednesday Final Edition

Copyright 2004 Metroland Media Group Ltd

Section: PEOPLE; Pg. G05; News

Length: 174 words

Body

Madonna says she has cancelled three Israeli stops on her Re-Invention tour because of violence in the region, including the killing of the leader of the militant group **Hamas**.

Madonna, who kicked off her worldwide tour in Los Angeles, told Access Hollywood that her manager wouldn't let her travel to Israel because of the "attack on the leader of **Hamas**."

The Hamilton Spectator/London tabloids had reported that the singer backed out of the Israeli stops, scheduled for September, after an unidentified Palestinian group threatened her and her children, Lourdes, 7, and Rocco, 3.

Asked by Access Hollywood if she had been threatened, she replied: "No, if I had my way, I'd go. My manager wouldn't let me." Madonna, who practises Jewish mysticism known as Kabbalah, included provocative images in the tour, such as video footage of a Palestinian boy and an Israeli boy walking arm-in-arm, and simulated sex during a tango with a **female** dancer. The 18-city tour ends Sept. 5 in Paris with stops in Las Vegas, New York, Toronto, Manchester and London.

Graphic

Photo: Robert Galbraith, Reuters;

Load-Date: May 26, 2004

ARAFAT DEFIANT AS ISRAEL THREATENS HIS EXPULSION

Daily Post (North Wales)
September 12, 2003, Friday

Copyright 2003 The Liverpool Daily Post & Echo Ltd

Section: NEWS; Pg. 12; Newspaper

Length: 175 words

Body

YASSER Arafat remained defiant in his West Bank headquarters yesterday as the Israeli security Cabinet debated expelling him, with one minister suggesting he should be killed.

"No one can kick me out," the Palestinian leader said at his Ramallah compound.

Asked if he would leave of his own accord, he said, "definitely not".

Seeking a dramatic response to the latest **Hamas** suicide bombings, Israeli foreign minister Silvan Shalom said a majority of his colleagues support the expulsion idea.

However, the United States continues to oppose expulsion, and it was unclear whether Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will override his Cabinet, despite growing public pressure in Israel for drastic action.

Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz went even further - saying expelling Arafat was the least Israel should do, and that killing him should be considered.

The Israeli military has begun making preparations for Arafat's possible expulsion, said a security official. Israeli troops took over two buildings near Arafat's headquarters, one the Palestinian Culture Ministry.

Graphic

Palestinian **women** look at the wreckage of a car next to the destroyed house of **Hamas** leader Mahmoud Zahar in Gaza City yesterday. Zahar survived an Israeli air strike on Wednesday that killed two people; Picture: KEVIN FRAYER

Load-Date: September 15, 2003

Palestinian Women Protest Aid Freeze

The New York Times
November 11, 2003 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2003 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 4; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3

Body

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: In Gaza City yesterday, Palestinian women waved photographs of their children as they demanded that the Palestinian Monetary Authority cancel its freezing of bank accounts of Islamic charities that distributed donations to needy and bereaved families. The United States pressed for the move, saying the groups were linked to Hamas.
(Photo by Reuters)

Load-Date: November 11, 2003

Bomber kills 4

The Advertiser

January 15, 2004 Thursday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 34

Length: 68 words

Body

JERUSALEM: A **female** Palestinian suicide bomber blew herself up yesterday at the main crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, killing four people.

At least seven others were injured. Witnesses said the bomber was a woman waiting in line to pass through to the Israeli side.

The Islamic militant group **Hamas** and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades issued a joint claim of responsibility, according to a TV station.

Load-Date: January 14, 2004

End of Document

SUICIDE BOMBER ON INTERNET

Western Mail

January 27, 2004, Tuesday

Copyright 2004 Western Mail and Echo Ltd

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4; Newspaper

Length: 72 words

Body

HAMAS has posted photos on its internet site of its first **female** suicide bomber posing with her two young children.

The move was defiance of Palestinian critics who say the Islamic militant group was wrong to send Reem Raiyshi, 22, on a mission that left her toddlers without a mother. The pictures show Raiyshi in camouflage dress holding an assault rifle in one hand while cradling her three-year-old son, Obedia, in the other arm.

Load-Date: February 9, 2004

End of Document